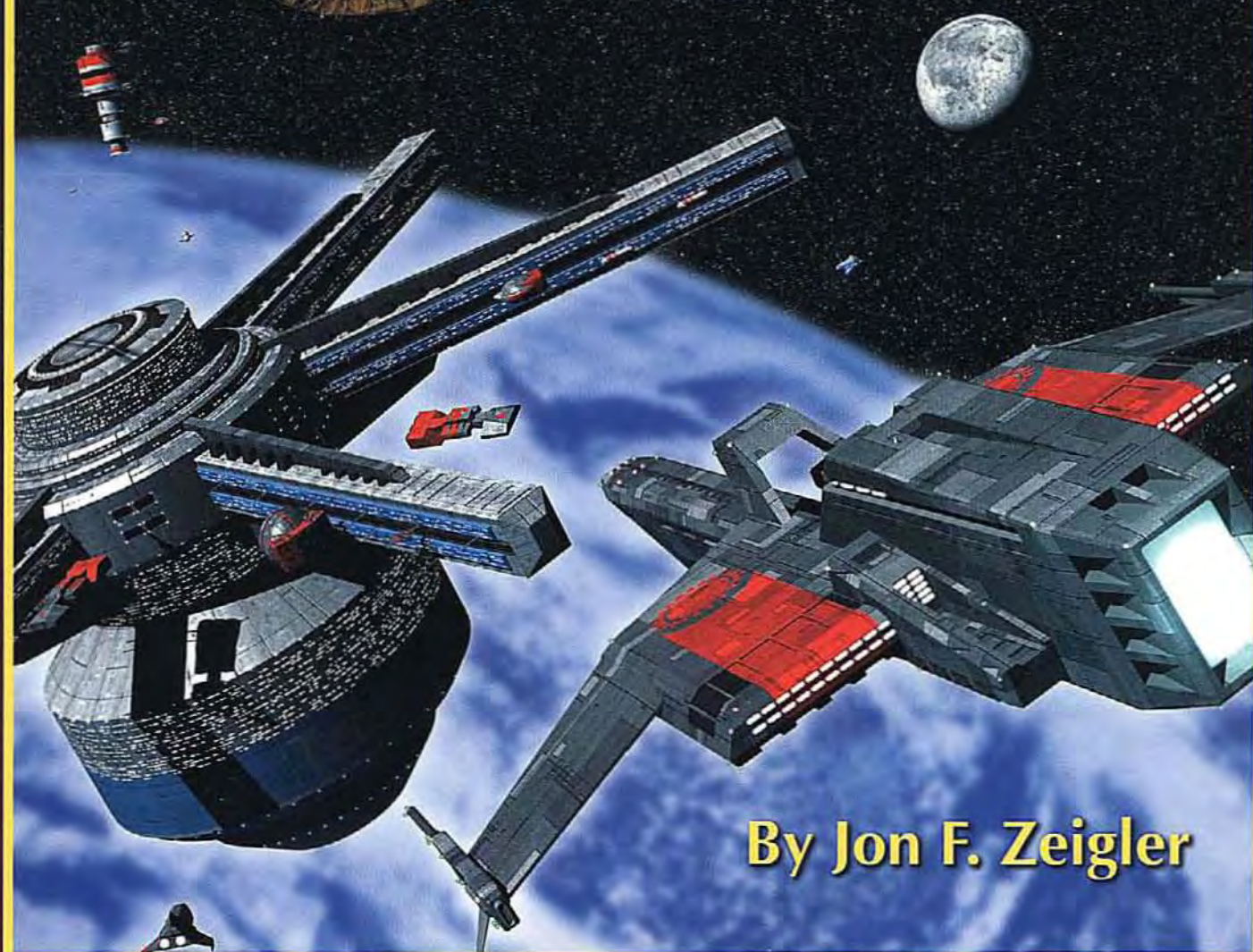


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RIM OF FIRE

The Solomani Rim Sourcebook

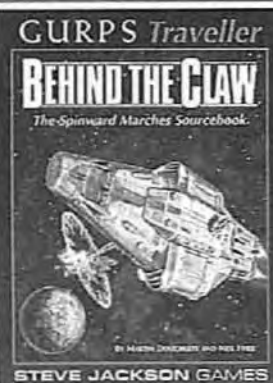
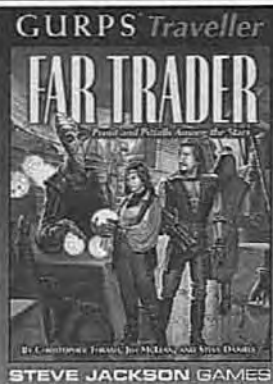
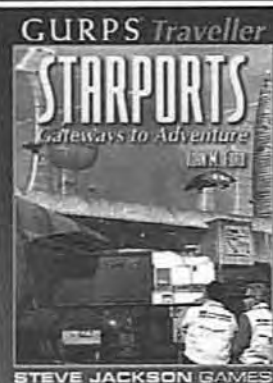


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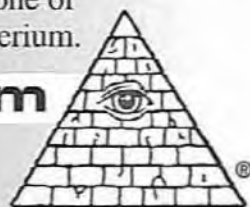
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RIM OF FIRE



The Solomani Rim Sourcebook

By JON F. ZEIGLER

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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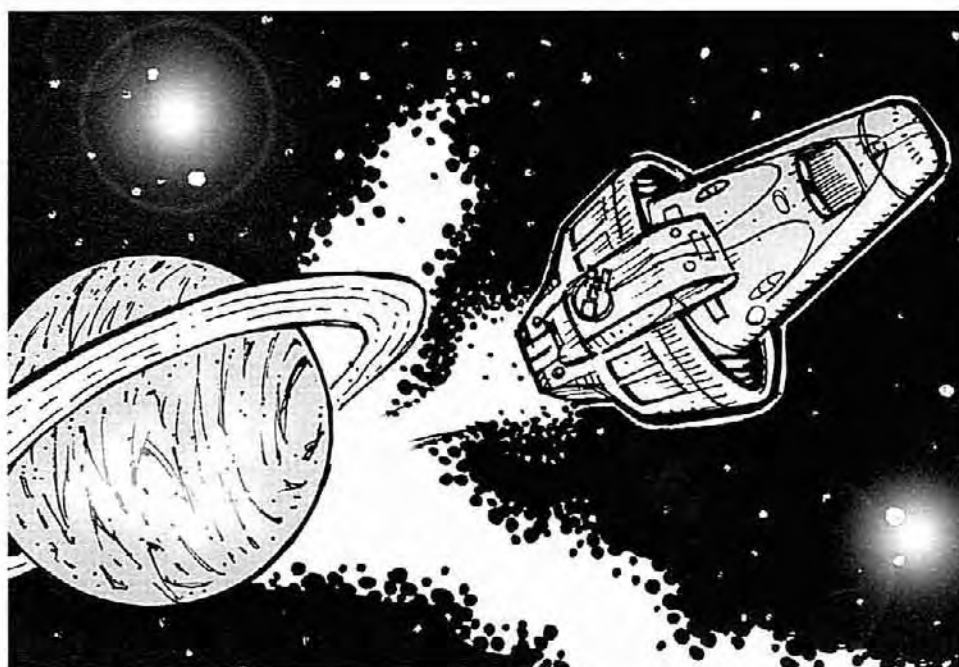
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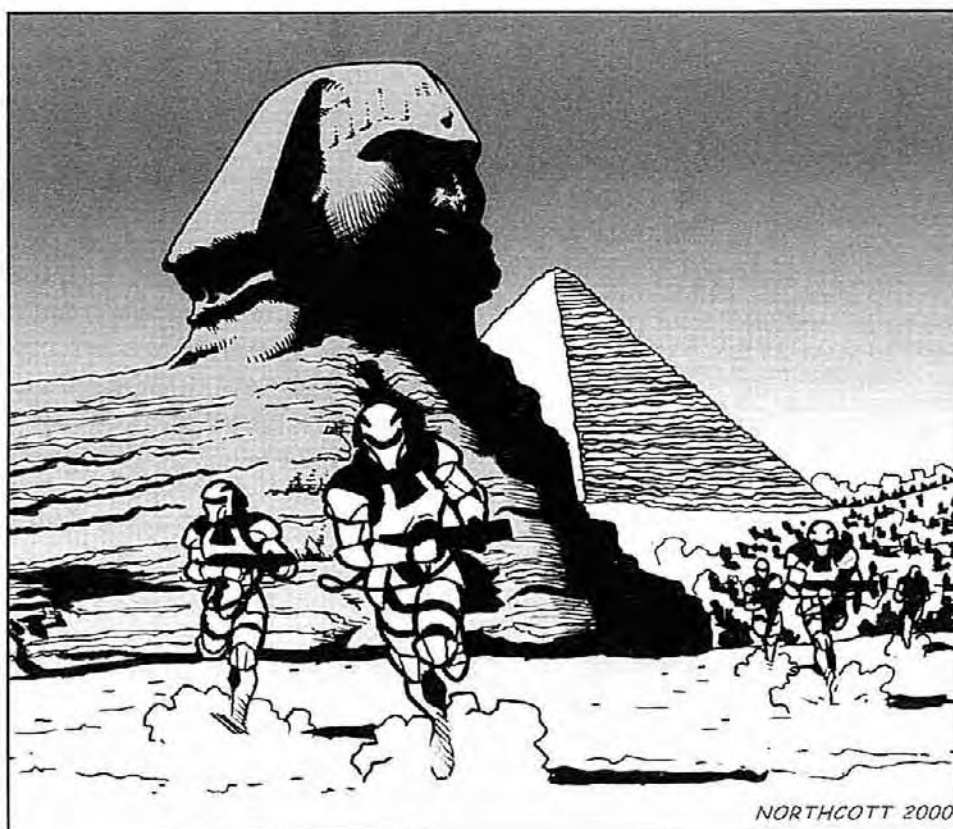
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About GURPS

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

The *GURPS Traveller Rim of Fire* web page is at www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/solomanirim/.

Page References

Any page reference that begins with a B refers to *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition Revised*; e.g., p. B144 refers to page 144 of *Basic Set*. CI refers to *Compendium 1*, GT to *Traveller, Second Edition*, T:AI to *Traveller Alien Races 1*, T:BC to *Traveller Behind the Claw*, T:FT to *Traveller Far Trader*, T:SM to *Traveller Star Mercs*, and VE to *Vehicles, Second Edition*. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

Introduction

In 1982, GDW published *Supplement 10, The Solomani Rim*, for classic *Traveller*. This gave the game a second "official" setting, but the effect was greater than a simple expansion. The Spinward Marches were a frontier region, still under development in some areas, only loosely tied to the history of the Imperium as a whole. The Solomani Rim was an ancient, densely populated region, its historical roots stretching back to Humaniti's beginnings. It was a place of revolutions, epic wars, and the clash of great ideologies. In a sense, *Traveller* was born in the Marches, but it grew up on the Rim.

A lot has changed in the real world since the first time we saw the Solomani Rim. Even so, many of the issues that drove the Rim setting are still with us: the evils of intolerance, the balance between public law and private freedom, the rightful place of Humaniti in the universe. The Rim can offer us not only rousing adventure, but also the chance to think about things that truly matter.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jon F. Zeigler has been a science-fiction fan since the cradle (literally). He has been playing *Traveller* since about 1980. In 1988, he discovered *GURPS* and hasn't looked back since, although he is thoroughly pleased to be able to contribute to the *Traveller* legend while writing for his favorite game system. He and his wife and son live in Maryland, where he works for the U.S. government as a mathematician. In his spare time, he reads history and the occasional science-fiction or fantasy novel. He is the author of *GURPS Greece* and *GURPS Traveller First In*, and has also done freelance work for FASA's *Shadowrun* and *Earthdawn* product lines.



ABOUT THE LINE EDITOR

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

JOURNAL OF THE TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY

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

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

The Domain of Sol

The Solomani Rim sector lies on the fringes of the Third Imperium. It is an ancient, densely populated region with a rich mixture of local cultures. Despite its distance from Capital, it is of grave importance to the Imperium. The worlds of this region tend to have higher population, more advanced technology, and more reliance on trade than those anywhere else in the Imperium. As a result, the Solomani Rim is the Imperium's most populous and productive sector. It contains only about 3% of the Imperium's worlds, but almost 10% of its population and over 40% of its total interstellar trade. Meanwhile, for 6,000 years the Rim has been a flashpoint for galactic conflict, and peace seems unlikely to break out in the near future.

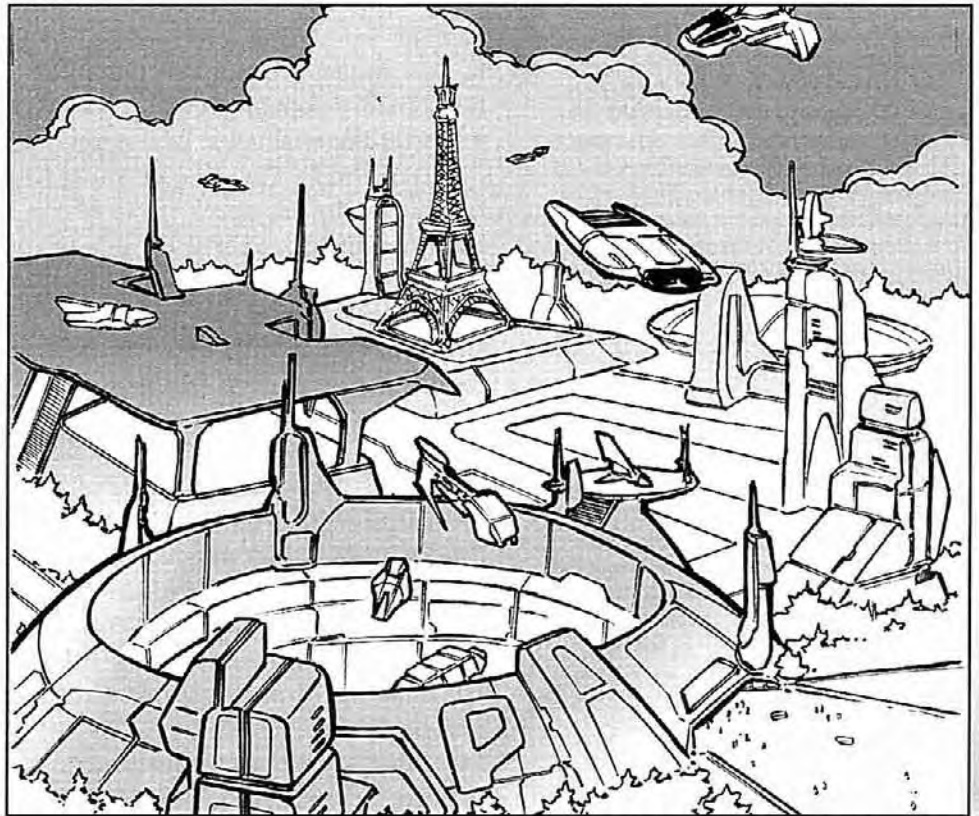
Today, most of the Solomani Rim sector is Imperial territory. Its history as part of the Third Imperium goes back centuries, but for part of that time the sector was part of a semi-independent interstellar state: the Solomani Autonomous Region. When relations between the Solomani and the Imperium broke down, the two parties embarked on a series of confrontations which ended in the bloodiest war in Imperial history. About a century after that war's end, Imperial control of the region remains incomplete. Many worlds within the Imperial sphere still resent the presence of what they consider an oppressive invader. Meanwhile, about one-quarter of the sector remains entirely outside Imperial control. The Solomani worlds which remain "free" are members of the Solomani Confederation, an interstellar state rivaling the Imperium. Tensions between the two powers remain strong.

IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT

The Imperium is a vast interstellar civilization. At its highest level it includes a distinctive society, composed of those who engage in interstellar activities and politics: nobles, administrators, military officers, merchants, explorers, and so on. The "Imperial" culture built by these individuals is fairly uniform, but cosmopolitan and respectful of local diversity. It values science and technology, but is cautious in its approach to innovation.

Being Solomani

The term *Solomani* has several meanings. In the simplest sense, the Solomani are Humans of Terran descent, whose ancestors were left behind to continue their evolution on the Human home world. Some people use the term more strictly, to indicate Humans of *purely* Terran descent, with little or no admixture from populations which were transplanted to other worlds by the Ancients. The term also has cultural and political connotations. It may be used to indicate a Human who mostly follows cultural values developed on Terra. It may also indicate a member of the Solomani Movement, a political organization (see pp. 55-56). This book uses the term to reflect all of these meanings. Which connotation is meant should usually be clear from context, although it should be remembered that Imperial citizens themselves are often sloppy with the term.



How to Become a Noble

The simplest method of obtaining noble status is to inherit it. Most of the Imperium's noble titles are hereditary, passed from the holder to one of his heirs. The usual practice is to pass the title to the firstborn son or daughter, although this does not always happen. A noble may pass his title to a later-born heir, if the firstborn is clearly not worthy of it. A noble with more than one title may also divide them among his heirs as he sees fit.

Inheritance of a noble title requires several things. First, the heir must *agree* to accept the title. Sometimes prospective heirs do not want the responsibility inherent in a patent of nobility. The Emperor must confirm the heir's right to assume the title, and can refuse such confirmation. The heir must also demonstrate continuing loyalty to the Imperium, swearing personal oaths of fealty to the Emperor and to the Emperor's successors. If any of these conditions are not met, then the Emperor has several options. He may allow the title to lie vacant for a generation, although this is rarely done. Alternatively, he may choose another member of the same family to hold the title, creating a new line of succession. He may even displace the former line, appointing a new family to hold the noble rank or abolishing the title entirely.

If one is not lucky enough to be born to a title, it is still possible to earn one. There are several ways of going about this, all of which involve heroic (or at least very diligent) efforts in Imperial service.

Imperial nobles fall into three categories. The most prestigious are the *high nobles*, those members of the aristocracy who act as personal representatives of the Emperor and administer territories within the Imperium. Citizens are (rarely) elevated to the high nobility for political support in office, victory in a military command, or economic contributions. Such awards only follow service which has a significant impact on the Imperium as a whole, and which is beyond anything one might reasonably expect from any Imperial citizen. A position in the high nobility almost always carries with it a fief or feudal estate.

Rank nobles gain their titles as a result of their position in Imperial society. Two sub-classes exist: *local nobility* and *administrators*. Local nobles represent the Imperium on worlds not administered by the high nobility. These nobles make up the majority of the Imperial aristocracy. Although they are only equivalent to barons or knights in precedence, they are still hereditary members of the peerage.

Continued on next page...

It respects the rule of law as the best means for producing a healthy society. It considers a certain level of internal conflict to be healthy, but places limits on that conflict so that it does not become too destructive. Its political structures are feudal in nature, with its most powerful members held to a strict code of honor and duty.

The Imperium officially maintains only indirect control over its member worlds. Every Imperial member obeys certain general laws: weapons of mass destruction may not be used against planetary targets, slavery is forbidden, piracy and smuggling are forbidden, and so on. Member worlds also pay taxes to the Imperium, and allow the Imperium some control over their foreign policy. Finally, member worlds agree to recognize the authority of the Imperium and its representatives. In return, they have considerable autonomy to manage their own internal affairs.

THE ARCHDUKE OF SOL

Imperial governance is expressed through the Imperial nobility. The Emperor is the supreme sovereign authority throughout the Imperium, but in practice he delegates his authority down through a vast hierarchy of nobles.

On the Rim, the Emperor is directly represented by the Archduke of Sol. This important noble is the Emperor's viceroy, not only in the Solomani Rim sector, but in the entire Domain of Sol (including the Diaspora, Old Expanses, and Alpha Crucis sectors). He is considered to wield the Imperial authority within his own domain, unless directly overruled by the Emperor. He has overall control of all Imperial military forces within his domain, whether or not he is a military officer himself. He is responsible for using those forces to enforce Imperial law. He has the authority to pass laws within his domain to deal with local situations, although such laws must be ratified by the Emperor. He must also promote Imperial interests, using military force, economic sanctions, or legal or political pressure to correct local problems. Without specific Imperial authorization, he may not intervene directly in the internal affairs of an Imperial member world. Still, even without such authority, he has many tools with which he can influence conditions within his domain. Indeed, due to the sheer size of his domain's population and economy, the Archduke of Sol is probably the most powerful Imperial noble who is not himself a member of the Emperor's family.

The current Archduke of Sol is Kieran Langos Adair. His family is actually rather new to the upper ranks of the nobility. His great-grandmother Arielle Adair began her career as a minor member of the baronage in the Massila sector. As a younger child, she had little chance to inherit her father's barony, so she joined the Imperial Navy and rose to the position of Grand Admiral through sheer personal ability. She was the supreme commander of Imperial forces during the Solomani Rim War (see pp. 56-61), and was named Archduchess of Sol by the Emperor Gavin at the conclusion of that conflict. Since then, tradition has led almost all the inheritors of the Domain of Sol to serve as naval officers before taking up their archducal office.

Kieran Adair, born in 1064, does *not* fit the family mold. As the eldest of three siblings, Adair might have been expected to enter the Navy, and indeed his younger brother and sister have both distinguished themselves in naval service. Instead, the young nobleman entered the Imperial Diplomatic Corps. There has been much speculation on how Adair's family might have felt about this move, but to all appearances the old Archduke supported his son. Adair himself does not speak of the matter.

Adair spent most of his career as a diplomat in the Reaver's Deep and Dark Nebula sectors, representing Imperial interests to the independent worlds and client states of the region. During this period he had many dealings with the

Solomani Confederation, and became one of the Diplomatic Corps' recognized experts on Solomani ideology. His final posting was to Kusyu, where he acted as a *charge d'affaires* assisting the Imperial Ambassador to the Aslan Hierate. This assignment was cut short in 1102, when his father fell ill. He returned to the domain capital in the Diaspora sector to be invested as Archduke, taking power immediately as his father's health failed.

In some ways, Kieran Adair anticipated the Emperor's recent decisions increasing the power and authority of the archdukes. He used his authority to the greatest extent possible from the moment he assumed his archducal throne, trying to solve the many social and political problems of his domain. Hoping to improve contact with the most critical sector of his domain, he abandoned the old domain capital in the Diaspora sector and moved to Muan Gwi, in the Solomani Rim sector. Despite the distance between the Rim and Capital, he also struck up a close relationship with Emperor Strephon. Naturally, their correspondence is under Imperial seal, but rumor has it that Adair and the Emperor are as much friends as colleagues. Some believe that Adair's advice helped convince the Emperor to restore the authority of the archdukes, thus working against the pressures which tend to divide the Imperium along lines of local culture. Many conservatives within the Moot dislike the Archduke as a result, but his staunch loyalty to the Imperium and his clear ability to govern have helped him avoid serious conflict.

Like his counterpart Norris, Archduke of Deneb, Adair has not yet married or produced an heir. His heir apparent is his younger brother, Capt. Alister Adair, Imperial Navy, who also serves on his staff as senior military advisor. There has been much speculation about the Archduke and various noble ladies of the Rim, but Adair is careful not to lend any of these rumors too much credibility. He apparently feels that his choice of a bride is a political weapon, best used by holding it in reserve.

NOBILITY OF THE RIM

Nobles are the lawmaking and policy-enforcing officers of the Imperium. They command ships, advise planetary governments, wield great wealth, patronize the arts, and support the sciences. Any adventurer in a region as politically and culturally volatile as the Rim must take the actions of the nobility into account.

The Ranks of Nobility

In the Solomani Rim sector, there are 10 dukes who owe fealty to Archduke Adair. Each is associated with one of the 10 subsectors which exist as full administrative units under Imperial control.



How to Become a Noble

[Continued]

Meanwhile, administrators are senior officials within the Imperial bureaucracy. Some positions in the upper ranks of the bureaucracy are open only to the peerage. If a citizen of common birth reaches those ranks, he is rewarded with a noble title, which may be as high as a dukedom. Such a title is tied to the government position in question, and is not hereditary. The holder usually receives a monetary stipend from the Imperium in addition to his normal income.

Finally, *honor nobles* earn their titles through heroism in the military, unusual success in a commercial enterprise, or unusual innovation or discovery in the sciences. Honor titles are usually of knightly or baronial rank, although the Emperor will once in a great while create a marquise for this purpose. Such titles are again not hereditary, and normally carry no special reward, fief, nor stipend.

All titles within the peerage are acquired through *letters of patent*, issued by the Emperor. Such appointments are traditionally published in the Holiday List (on the first day of the new year) and in the Birthday List (on the Emperor's birthday). The Holiday List usually contains all new honor titles, while the Birthday List contains all new high titles. Titles of rank nobility are usually announced whenever the new holder of the office is appointed.



In most sectors, one duke rises to prominence and stands as sector duke, but this is not currently the case in the Solomani Rim sector, where Archduke Adair himself acts as Sector Duke. The Duchess of Dingir and the Duchess of Suleiman are currently the most likely contenders for such a position, but neither wishes to compete for it when such competition might undermine the Archduke.

Each duke has oversight responsibility for one of the sector's numbered fleets, along with the attached Imperial Marine formations and any Imperial Army units stationed in his territory. Dukes have some role in

Historical Societies

A lot of history has happened on the Rim, and many a local adventurer has encountered the debris left behind. Cargo containers hold ancient (if not Ancient) artifacts. Solomani agitators spout odd historical propaganda. Indigent researchers need help as they travel the stars, looking for proof for their pet theories. When situations like this turn up, adventurers need to know who to go to for help. These two historical institutions are particularly active on the Rim, and can be used as resources:

Reinhardt Foundation

Established in 856 by a Terran billionaire and philanthropist, the Reinhardt Foundation subsisted on income from the founder's estate for many decades, but since the Solomani Rim War it has also received Imperial patronage. It is still based on Terra, but has operations throughout the Solomani Rim (and beyond). The Foundation is devoted to "historical archaeology," the use of archaeological methods to assist in the study of known periods of history. Where surviving records are sparse, or where the "official" history is clearly slanted, then the Foundation digs for new evidence. The Foundation is also interested in uncovering the experiences of people who were simply ignored by recorded history: slaves and working-class people, women on patriarchal worlds, minor races under the First Imperium, and so on. The Foundation normally has dozens of digs (and other research projects) under way at the same time on different worlds. Its staff is considered expert on the provenance and meaning of historical artifacts from all over the Rim.

Continued on next page . . .

making Imperial law and policy in their subsectors, although this role is strictly limited and is subject to the approval of the Archduke. A duke normally resides on the capital world of his subsector, where his main fief is located. Dukes normally have many lesser holdings elsewhere, either through personal ownership or through the holding of lesser noble titles along with the duchy. For example, the Duke of Arcturus is the absolute ruler of a wide territory on Jael, that land being near the starport and incorporating several minor cities. The Duke also holds a smaller estate on Lamarck in his capacity as Marquis of that world, a position he inherited from his mother. Meanwhile, as a wealthy industrialist he *personally* owns factories, media centers, agricultural combines, and other businesses on several worlds in the sector. All of this gives him a great deal of personal influence, over and above the authority he holds as an Imperial official.

The next level of noble rank is that of count. There tends to be one count for every four to six worlds within a subsector. Counts act as direct supporters of the subsector duke, helping him to coordinate interstellar affairs in his territory.

Below this on the social hierarchy is the marquis. Each marquis is associated with a single world, usually a high-population planet with a Class IV or V starport.

Below the level of marquis falls the baronage. Barons are the lowest class of noble still considered part of the peerage, and they occupy the majority of the upper-level positions in the Imperial bureaucracy. Barons outnumber the other Imperial peers by a large factor. There is usually at least one marquis or baron on every self-governing Imperial world, no matter how unimportant. A high-population world may have one marquis and *dozens* of barons in residence! Any single baron has relatively little power. In mass, however, the baronage has tremendous influence on Imperial policy. Even Archduke Adair must consider the currents of opinion among the barons before making critical decisions.

Noble Factions

The nobles of the Rim are always divided among many ephemeral power blocs and interest groups, according to the situation of the moment. These factions can be divided into three rough groups. Each has its roots in the so-called Solomani period, during which the sector formed part of the Solomani Autonomous Region (see pp. 55-56).

Although the Solomani Autonomous Region was nominally part of the Imperium, its governing regime was strongly anti-Imperial in sentiment. The Solomani government refused to work through the existing system of Imperial

nobility, and indeed tended to persecute nobles who remained steadfast in their fealty to the Emperor. The Solomani period was therefore a difficult one for Imperial aristocrats. A few families (the so-called "Resistance Houses") remained in residence throughout the period, quietly keeping the flame of Imperial loyalty alive. Many other nobles (from the "Exile Houses") fled the region for the Imperial core, abandoning the worlds they once held until the Imperium could properly extend its rule over the Rim once again. These two groups tend to have very different attitudes regarding Imperial policy.

The Resistance Houses have bred a cadre of tough-minded, pragmatic nobles. These aristocrats are usually not interested in any kind of radical ideology. They are also not very militant, seeking peaceful solutions to the Rim's problems whenever possible. Above all, they want the Imperial government to work well and ensure justice for all the Rim's people. Their commitment to the Imperium is generally quiet, but it is passionate and deep. The Duchess of Suleiman is the most prominent member of this faction.

Exile House nobles, on the other hand, tend to be radical and combative. As they see it, they were dispossessed by the Solomani government. They want the Solomani to be punished and prevented from ever causing trouble again. Members of Exile families tend to be advocates of renewed war against the Solomani Confederation (see pp. 22-30). They are likely to work against the Confederation using every means at their disposal, and may be biased in favor of non-Solomani within their own territories. Exile Houses tend to be very outspoken in their support of the Imperium, much more so than members of the Resistance faction. This may be because they feel they have something to prove, given the choice their ancestors made to abandon the Rim. The Exiles are most often led by either the Duke of Arcturus or the Marquis of Ascalon (see p. 68).

The third group of Rim nobles does not form such a coherent political bloc. Many noble houses of the Rim died out during the period of the Solomani Sphere. Since the Imperium reconquered part of the region, the Emperors have elevated many families in order to fill out the ranks of the sector aristocracy. Members of these "New Houses" are hard to characterize. They run the gamut from radical pacifists to extreme militants, from moderate to fiercely anti-Solomani sentiments. If they have an overall tendency, it is *ambition*. Their most prominent member is Archduke Adair himself, but the Duke of Ultima is as much of a formal leader as they possess.

MILITARY RULE

In general, Imperial government does not interfere in the internal affairs of its member worlds. The Solomani Rim is unusual in that it is riddled with exceptions to this rule. The 12 subsectors held by the Imperium are recently conquered territory.

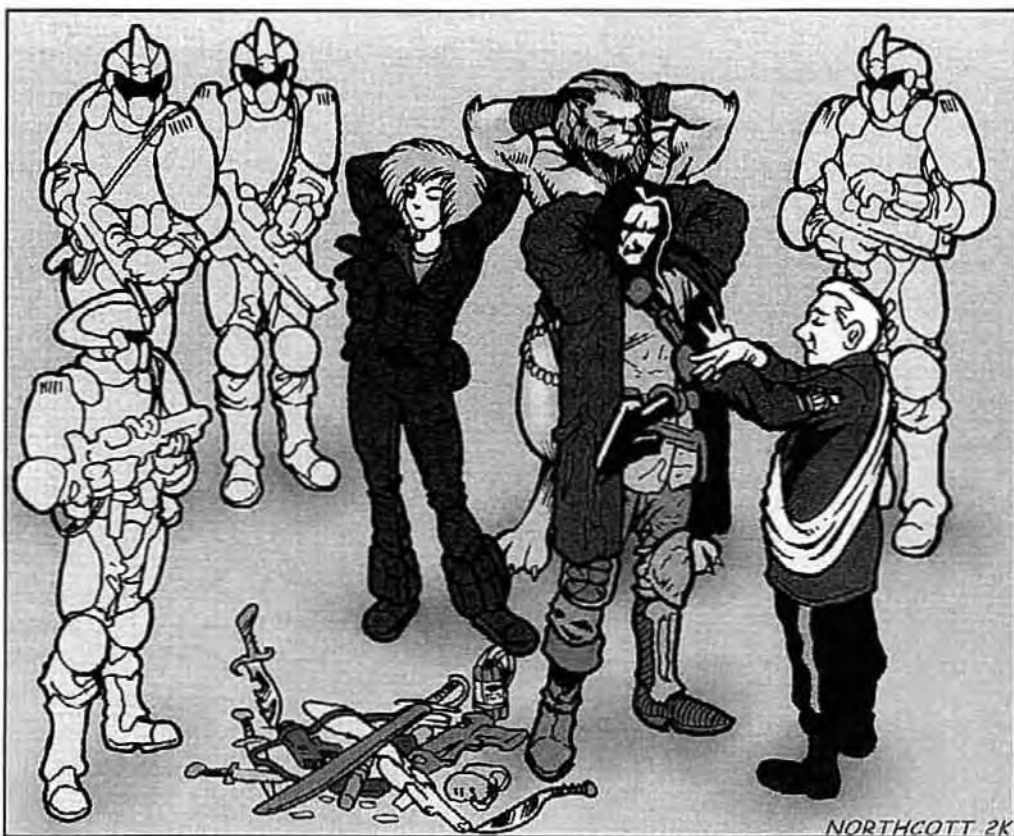
Historical Societies

[Continued]

The Aushenyo

The Aushenyo is a Vegan *tuhur* (see p. 32) with a long history of its own. Its foundation dates back to the time of the Interstellar Wars. It is sometimes considered a society of "historians," but in fact the truth goes far beyond that. These Vegans are not interested in "history" in the usual Human sense. To them, the doings of the great and powerful, the political propaganda of mighty empires, are all barely relevant. The Aushenyo, or "Rememberers," simply believe that no sentient life deserves to be forgotten. Everyone who ever lived has some unique morsel of experience that must be recorded and made available for all future generations. To that end, the Aushenyo have compiled what may be the most extensive historical archive in the galaxy.

This *Aushenyo Scholium* is located on Asterr Tyui in the Vegan District. It is a treasure trove of socioeconomic data, historical analysis, and eyewitness testimony, reaching back over 15,000 years and covering almost all of charted space. Aushenyo researchers (both Vegan and Human) can be found almost anywhere, recording events as they happen and interviewing people of all walks of life. Adventurers are particularly likely to run into Aushenyo historians, wanting to record *their* unique experiences for posterity...



NORTHCOTT 2K

Mercenary Units of the Rim

The following are a few of the more famous mercenary units of the sector. Many smaller and more obscure units exist, as the Rim is full of opportunities for mercenary soldiers.

Kaiear Legion

In the last days of the Solomani Rim War, the Imperium organized a brigade of Aslan *ihatei* to fight in the Battle of Terra. The *Kaiear Brigade* was so successful that some of its members stayed together after the war, forming the current battalion-sized unit. The legion is primarily a TL10 striker unit, but it has several extremely well-trained commando teams. It still recruits mostly male Aslan *ihatei*, although it usually has a few Human and female Aslan members. Naturally, the legion tends to fight for land as often as for money, giving the allotments to its retired members as mustering-out benefits. So many young Aslan males attempt to sign on that the legion can afford to be very selective in its recruiting.

Michigan Rifles

This is a well-known mercenary unit, organized as a battalion of TL10 light infantry. It specializes in military-police and garrison assignments. Records indicate that the unit existed on Terra under the Old Earth Union, and it claims to have been in existence since as far back as the Rule of Man. It has a good reputation, but a recent dispute with the planetary government of Ugarup (see 1117, p. 20) has reduced its ability to find good tickets.

New Bavarian Freikorps

The Freikorps originally hails from Saxe in the Solomani Confederation, but during the Solomani Rim War it switched sides and fought for the Imperium. Almost all of its current members are Imperial citizens who have never seen Saxe. The Freikorps is a TL10 light infantry battalion, specializing in security assignments but known for its occasional striker work.

Skorzeny's Tigers

The Tigers are one of the largest and most famous mercenary units on the Rim. The Tigers are organized as a TL11 grav infantry regiment, capable of orbital assault. They have a superb reputation for training and discipline. Founded by Hermann Skorzeny in 985, the Tigers fought for the Imperium in the Battle of Terra at the climax of the Solomani Rim War. To this day, the unit is feared and hated by Solomani patriots.

A number of worlds still resent the fact of Imperial occupation. Where Imperial institutions have yet to be accepted by a world's population, the Imperium keeps the world in a state of military rule. As the Imperium conquered the Solomani Rim sector, all worlds were placed under military rule for some period of time. Some worlds actually welcomed the return of the Imperium. In particular, the Vegan worlds (see pp. 31-33) were never truly placed under a military regime. Others were returned to self-governing status over time, as local populations and governments demonstrated that they could live under Imperial authority.

Today, over a century after the close of the Rim War, 29 worlds in the sector are still under military rule. Almost all of these are in the band of territory immediately adjacent to the border with the Solomani Confederation.

Military rule is an extended kind of martial law. It represents a substitution of military procedures for the normal workings of the local legal system. A world under military rule is occupied by Imperial Army forces, supported by units from the other Imperial armed services. The senior Army officer on-planet is also the chief governing official for the world, as long as the state of military rule lasts. He has wide-ranging authority to enforce Imperial law, keep the peace, and prevent acts of rebellion or sabotage. In particular, he has the authority to detain civilians without substantial evidence of their involvement in illegal activity (something which is normally not allowed under Imperial law).

Visitors to an occupied world should proceed with caution if they plan on bending or breaking Imperial law. They will find that the occupying force is as willing to detain offworlders as natives. Those accused of crimes are tried in military courts. Weapons codes on occupied worlds are particularly strict. Aside from active-duty Imperial personnel, no one is permitted to carry a weapon in public, and the local citizens are not even permitted to *own* most weapons.

Of course, the commander of an occupation force does not have complete discretion to govern the planet as he wishes. The Imperial Army maintains an extensive body of policy on the governance of occupied worlds, which the



commander is expected to follow. The ultimate goal of any such occupation is the return of the world to self-governing status as a loyal member of the Imperium. This tends to prevent arbitrary repression by the occupying forces.

Several conditions must be met before a world can be taken off military-rule status. There must be one or more Imperial nobles in residence, equivalent to those the world would have if it were a member of the Imperium in good standing. There must be a functioning local government, which is competent to administer the world and has demonstrated loyalty to the Imperium. Finally, there must be no evidence of continuing acts of rebellion among the general populace. This last requirement is usually the most difficult to meet. Occasional incidents are not an obstacle, if it's clear that the general populace does not support them and the local government is able to control the situation.

When all of these conditions have been met, the Imperium sets a date for the world to be returned to local control. The event usually involves elaborate ceremony and a great deal of festivities. For example, when the Terran Occupation Force was withdrawn in 1110, the planetary celebrations lasted for most of a year, with an intensity that sometimes bordered on open riot. The Imperial military forces remaining on the planet, assigned to the Imperial Naval Base and Xboat way station, behaved with extreme professionalism in the face of many provocations.

CORPORATIONS OF THE RIM

In the Imperium and its neighboring states, there are billions of tiny local businesses with only a few employees, millions which have planetwide markets, and a few monster corporations which have offices throughout the Imperium. The following section describes businesses fitting all these descriptions doing business in Solomani regions.

MEGACORPORATIONS

The biggest and rarest businesses are the megacorporations, great commercial combines which have tremendous influence on everything that happens in the Imperium and far beyond.

A typical megacorporation is organized as a joint stock company, with shareholders throughout the Imperium. The Imperial family almost always owns a small portion of the outstanding shares (usually about 5%), while most of the remainder is held by various noble houses or by other megacorporations. Private investors without noble connections usually hold less than 25% of a megacorporation's stock.

Megacorporations are *huge*. Most are organized just as a much smaller business would be: a board of directors, a CEO, and various other senior corporate executives. On the other hand, even a small megacorporation will have *hundreds of millions* of employees. The sheer complexity of its operations, scattered across vast distances, makes any megacorporation impossible for its leaders to manage personally. The upper-level executives normally spend their time making general policy and planning high-level strategy. They don't even try to stay in contact with the day-to-day (or even year-to-year) operation of every branch of the company. As a result, regional managers can usually run local operations as they see fit.

Megacorporations often have more influence than the Imperial government over local events. They own property (sometimes whole planets), compete with local businesses, and influence local politicians. The only limit on a megacorporation's actions is the constant need to avoid any direct confrontation with the Imperium.



Vilani Business Practices

Most Imperial businesses are much like the 21st-century Terran corporation writ large. Their main interest is profit, and employees are hired solely to help further the quest for this profit. In most such corporations, the obligations between employee and employer are strictly limited. In theory, at least, the employee is always free to look for work elsewhere, and the employer has no interest in the employee's off-duty time.

Vilani-owned businesses are different. In traditional Vilani society, the conception of "free enterprise" is nonexistent. Vilani businesses are not intended for the pure pursuit of profit, divorced from all other concerns. They are regarded as integral parts of society, with obligations beyond those of institutional survival. During the First Imperium, all Vilani corporations had a very paternalistic attitude toward their employees. Once hired, an employee could expect to be employed for life, with many of his "private" needs provided by his employer. The corporation would house him, entertain and educate him, help him find a marriage partner, educate his children, and give them jobs in their turn. In return, the employee gave up a great deal of privacy and control over his own life.

Today, this paternalistic attitude survives in many of the larger Vilani-owned businesses, especially the four great megacorporations (Makhidkarun, Naasirka, Sharurshid, and Zirunkariish). This approach to business is accepted by the Vilani minority in the Solomani Rim sector, but many Solomani find it disturbing. Furthermore, the Vilani megacorporations (and their associated noble houses) were the force which broke the back of the Solomani Movement at Court (see *Birth of the Solomani Movement*, pp. 55-56). The Movement therefore regards these four corporations as specific enemies, frequently using harsh rhetoric, boycotts, or sabotage against them. The Vilani megacorporations all do a great deal of business on the Rim, but relationships with Solomani populations there are often uneasy. All four megacorporations tend to maintain a higher level of armed security than they would elsewhere in the Imperium.

This does not prevent megacorporations from taking illegal or unethical actions, but it does tend to keep such actions covert. A manager who brings Imperial disfavor down on a megacorporation is likely to be repudiated by his superiors, with drastic consequences for himself and his agents.

Strangely, although the Solomani Rim sector is one of the longest-settled regions of charted space, it is currently a venue for fierce competition between megacorporations. Under the Solomani, factionalism and the government's "open competition" policy tended to prevent the formation of such wide-ranging firms.

Also, as the Solomani grew more anti-Imperial in sentiment, megacorporations based in the Imperium found it harder and harder to operate in the open. After the Solomani Rim War, however, hundreds of worlds were thrown open to megacorporate investment. The resulting free-for-all has yet to die down, and has caused a great deal of unethical activity as the great combines jockey for market share.

Delgado

Delgado was founded quite recently (in 997) as a manufacturer of military equipment, with a bent toward miniaturization technology. It has extensive holdings in mining, refining, publishing, antiquities trading, and even the toy industry. Its first fortunes were made in military contracting during the Solomani Rim War. As Imperial forces moved to rimward, Delgado factors were usually only weeks behind the front. Today, the core of Delgado activities is in the Solomani Rim, although its operations span the Imperium.

Delgado is notorious for its hiring practices, which tend to underpay new employees and give them little chance for career advancement. New hires who don't work out are not simply fired, but blackballed. They will find it difficult to find work anywhere else. On the other hand, those who put forth great effort can earn "privileged employee" status, with generous pay, superb benefits, and fast-track career paths. This carrot-and-stick approach helps Delgado keep costs down and profits high. It also encourages local managers to cut corners or engage in shady tactics in pursuit of profit, leading to recent conflicts with several planetary governments on the Rim.



General Products

Founded soon after the Civil War, General Products made its break into megacorp status by being the prime contractor for the first Imperial Xboat system. Today, it is a prominent manufacturer of starships, spaceships, and heavy machinery. Its products are known for relatively low cost and adequate (although not superb) quality.

In recent years, its divisions elsewhere in the Imperium have been plagued with disastrous accidents and technological failures, leading to an overall drop in stock prices. On the other hand, the megacorporation is actually doing well on the Rim, helping to offset losses elsewhere.

General Products owns several large facilities in the sector, notably at Dingir, Khiirshag, and Shululsish. It has a very good reputation, and has rarely been known to bend the law.





GSbAG

This corporation *claims* to have originated on Terra before the Interstellar Wars, as a consortium of preexisting space industries. Indeed, company propaganda claims that Geschichtkreis Sternschiffbau AG was the first private corporation to produce jump-capable starships on Terra. There is no evidence for this, and in fact the first historical record of the corporation dates to late in the Long Night, on Sylea. Today, GSbAG is no more active on the Rim than anywhere else.

GSbAG (nicknamed "Gas-bag") is unusual in that it specializes in one industry (starship construction) and has done so throughout its history. This specialization has yielded truly superb products. GSbAG ships are expensive, but universally regarded as being of the highest quality. The company is one of only two authorized to manufacture personal vessels for the Imperial family, and it is a major contractor for the Imperial Navy. Several Class V starports in the Rim host small GSbAG shipyards. The company's corporate security and counterespionage forces are among the best in the Imperium.

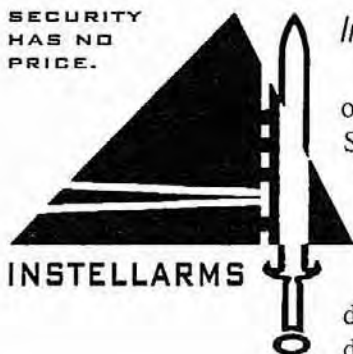
Hortelez et Cie

This banking and investment house offers a wide variety of financial instruments: mutual funds, insurance, loans to planetary governments, mercenary bonding, venture capital, and so on. It issues letters of credit for businesses and wealthy individuals, which are accepted anywhere in the Imperium and in many places beyond. Among the Imperial elites, an account with Hortelez et Cie is a status symbol pursued almost as eagerly as a personal yacht.

The financial resources of Hortelez et Cie are truly immense. It has great influence in all sections of the Imperium, despite its lack of industrial plant or military forces. It is also widely known to deal in information of all kinds. The corporation does not itself engage in espionage, but it is usually willing to buy information from "freelancers" and sell it no matter what the source. Hortelez et Cie has superb internal information security, employing the best computer intrusion and security experts in the business.

Hortelez et Cie is very active in the Solomani Rim, with major branches on every high-population world in the Imperial sphere, and local offices on almost every other world. Strangely, the corporation does not usually act as a mercenary clearinghouse on the Rim, even though its subsidiaries elsewhere often do. This may be due to a conscious decision not to compete with Ichiban Interstellar (see p. 17) in its home market.

SECURITY
HAS NO
PRICE.



Instellarms

Instellarms is centered in the coreward regions of the Imperium, but is also very active in the Solomani Rim. It was founded soon after the Civil War by a retired mercenary Colonel, and still primarily supplies mercenary forces and their hardware needs. Instellarms manufactures, buys, and sells military hardware of *almost* every kind. It does not deal in weapons of mass destruction, nor does it sell warships.

1102

The new century was only 2 years old when Archduke Etienne Adair succumbed to the effects of Urikan's disease, at the age of 79. Before the Archduke's death, his son Kieran Adair returned from his posting in the Dark Nebula sector to be invested as the new Archduke. Kieran soon proved to be more active and aggressive than his father, and so his accession is generally considered the beginning of "modern" history on the Rim.

The government of Scaramouche was turned over to the planet's citizens, after the brief but scandal-ridden term of Imperial Governor Rosa Demetriou. The majority of the planet's Imperial garrison, present due to the anti-Imperial Unity Uprisings of several years before, was withdrawn. Local government soon degenerated into the near-anarchy that prevails today.

1103

Ringil Urshukaan, until last year the acting governor of Scaramouche, resigned his commission as a General in the Imperial Army. The move was ostensibly in protest over accusations leveled against him by his civilian successor. Soon after his resignation, however, he accepted a position as president of Lamarck Minerals, LIC (see p. 21).

In several major cities on Fenris, open fighting broke out between the Elk Lodge and its pro-Imperial rival, the Society for Galactic Peace. Despite Imperial military intervention, several thousand civilians were killed during six days of street warfare.

1104

The former moderate regime on Ludmilla was defeated in planetwide elections by the ManFirst Party, an organization dedicated to the cause of Human supremacy. Tensions between the planet's Human population and its Vegan minority immediately began a rapid rise. Connections between ManFirst and the Solomani Party have been alleged, but not proven.

1105

The Imperium abandoned its experiment of sponsoring pro-Imperial Lodges on Fenris. The local Society for Galactic Peace was disbanded, and strict weapons-ownership restrictions were reimposed on all existing Lodges.

1106

The nation of Waothan, on Esperance, applied to the Emperor to be joined with the nearby Vegan District. The application sparked the first crisis of the new Archduke's reign, as a general war nearly broke out between Waothan and its Human rival states. Archduke Adair sent his brother Alister to Capital to confer with the Emperor on the matter.

News of the Fifth Frontier War reached the Rim, setting off a series of terrorist attacks and civilian protests on several worlds in the Imperial border zone. Fenris, Gashidda, and Terra were particularly affected.

On Terra, a terrorist attack destroyed a dike holding back the waters of the Libyan Sea, causing a new flood down the ancient course of the Nile River. Several thousand people were killed, and the Cheops Historical Site near Gizeh was badly damaged. The Rule of Terra organization later claimed responsibility, although Imperial officials treated the claim with skepticism.

1107

In orbit around Pagliacci, the passenger liner *Cote d'Azur* was seriously damaged in the course of what authorities later determined was a botched piracy attempt. The alleged pirates were later captured near Dion starport and taken into Imperial custody.

The Imperial interdiction of Scaramouche – imposed after the Unity Uprisings of 1098 – was lifted. The last Imperial troops were withdrawn as well. The Travellers' Aid Society's class-A facilities were reopened at Brogan's Down Starport.

It also operates a number of mercenary units in various regions of the Imperium, including both ground forces and specialized starship squadrons.

One little-known fact about Instellarms is that it is the only megacorporation in which the Imperial family holds no direct share. The reasons behind this are lost to history, but common speculation has it that the founder of the company had close business ties to Arbellatra, the victorious Admiral of the Civil War who re-established the Imperial dynasty. According to this theory, then-Regent Arbellatra gave up the Imperial share in the company, in exchange for some other consideration never revealed to the general public.

Most Class V starports in the Imperial section of the Rim have an associated Instellarms demonstration-negotiation facility. The usual customer at such facilities is the corporate or government client. Meanwhile, outlets of an Instellarms subsidiary (Interstellar Ordnance) can be found on almost any world, offering military-surplus weapons and equipment for the individual buyer. Instellarms has a reputation for scrupulous honesty, a requirement in its business. Security at its facilities is always very tight and very well-armed.



Ling-Standard Products

Ling-Standard Products began as a mining firm, and is still very active in that industry. Today, it also produces a wide variety of products, including electronic equipment, vehicles, starships and starship subsystems, computer systems and software, small arms, and more. It also runs a relatively small banking subsidiary, mostly out of the desire to provide its own financing when possible. Finally, LSP maintains a significant freighter fleet of its own.

LSP has a variety of facilities in the Solomani Rim. It does not maintain large military forces of its own, but is not unwilling to hire mercenaries to provide security or apply pressure when needed. LSP has a rather shady reputation, and is willing to bend Imperial or local law whenever the situation seems to require it.

Makhidkarun

This company has the name of one of the great bureaux which shared the administration of the First Imperium. Company propaganda makes much of the connection, but in fact all that can be established for certain is that the company's origins predate the Long Night. Makhidkarun specializes in the communications and entertainment industries. It manufactures specialized electronic equipment and computers, and also publishes musical recordings, videos, books, magazines, art reproductions, and other expressive media. A subsidiary trades in gourmet foods, wines, and other delicacies.

Makhidkarun has historically enjoyed relatively little success in the Solomani Rim. Since the Solomani Rim War, its regional managers have used some questionable tactics to penetrate Rim markets. As a result, Makhidkarun has a relatively poor reputation in the sector, despite its considerable prestige elsewhere in the Imperium.



Naasirka

Another Vilani corporation of uncertain (but ancient) origins, Naasirka specializes in the manufacture of information-storage equipment, computers, and robots. Its research facilities are second to none, and it aggressively recruits the



best graduates in mathematics, computer science, and engineering. Naasirka is the largest contractor for communications and computer equipment to the IISS Communications Office, supplying the specialized electronics filling the Xboat hulls built by General Products. Naasirka also has a transport division, which operates throughout the rimward regions of the Imperium.

In the Solomani Rim, the partnership with General Products is quite close, as the two corporations cooperated intimately in reopening local markets after the

Solomani Rim War. Today, the largest Naasirka facilities on the Rim are co-located with major General Products shipyards. The Naasirka installation at Shululsish is particularly large, and engages in cutting-edge research into robotics and artificial intelligence.

SuSAG

Schunamann and Sohn AG is the market leader for a wide variety of chemical, pharmaceutical, and biotech products. Its first fortunes were made in the psi-drug industry, but by the time of the PsionicSuppressions (see pp. GT54-55) it had diversified and could survive the loss of its initial market. The corporation has a rather bad reputation, due to (often false) allegations of unethical Human testing or poor safety practices. Since its facilities are often the targets of sabotage, it maintains a large and very well-equipped security force.

SuSAG has extremely wide-ranging operations, with factories and markets far beyond the borders of the Imperium. It even owns a number of subsidiaries in the Solomani Confederation, although it keeps these relationships as secret as possible to avoid rousing anti-Imperial sentiments. SuSAG has often engaged in covert military ventures to protect its interests outside the Imperium, usually involving mercenary units hired through blind agents.



Sharurshid

The name of Sharurshid has a long history on the Rim, as the Vilani bureau of that name had primary responsibility for governing the Rim Province in First Imperium days. The current megacorporation has no obvious connection to those times. Sharurshid trades primarily in luxury goods, and owns no major manufacturing facilities of its own. Its factors and brokers can be found on almost every important world of the Imperium, buying local goods and selling precious luxury items from distant stars. Sharurshid brokers are renowned as hard but honest bargainers. Graduates of the corporation's business school are much sought after for their negotiating skills.

Although Sharurshid is often a target for pro-Solomani agitators, it has a strong presence on the Rim. In particular, it has extensive operations on Terra, where it is a major exporter of wine, beer, whiskey, coffee, and tobacco. Its transport line carries cargoes throughout the sector.



1108

Aquitaine society was swept with enthusiasm for the coronation of the young, brilliant, and popular Queen Marie III. The coronation was the social event of the year throughout the Capella subsector. Ambassadors and representatives from all over the Solomani Confederation attended, and even an Imperial diplomatic team made an appearance.

A racer named Terrance Schnelling won the Lightcourse Run, a celebrated race set between Hamicar and Twylo in the Solomani Confederation, in a major upset, defeating the odds-on favorite and several other prominent racing teams.

An investigation of the *daghadasi* harvests on Bellerophon led to a series of indictments against officials of Seaharvester LIC. Several corporate officials were later convicted of fraud, smuggling, sabotage, and violations of local eco-protection laws. Seaharvester's parent company, SuSAG (see p. 15), avoided being tarred by the charges by cooperating in the investigation and disavowing the executives involved.

After a high-profile escape from the Imperial prison on Newcomb, the Imperial Ministry of Justice launched an investigation into corruption and crime at the installation. The warden and several guards were replaced, but conditions for the prisoners improved very little.

1109

Emperor Strephon formally rejected Waothan's application to join the Vegan District. The move led to widespread protests among the Vegan citizens of Waothan, but is generally believed to have averted all-out war on Esperance.

The influential ex-Imperial Army General Ringil Urshukaan was murdered while visiting Lamarck Minerals facilities in the Arcturus Belt. A well-known Solomani agitator was arrested soon afterward and charged with the killing. Urshukaan's death had wide-ranging political effects, increasing anti-Solomani sentiments among many influential business leaders in the Harlequin and Arcturus subsectors.

Veedback, the hottest new amp-rock band in the sector, went on an extended tour through the Imperial border zone, ending with a gala pre-independence performance on Terra. To the music world's astonishment, Veedback's road crew suffered no deaths and only minor injuries during the entire tour.

1110

The subsidized passenger liner *Ad Astra* was sabotaged while jumping from Scandia to Dismal. Stranded deep in the gravity well of the Dismal system's gas giant, the liner was very nearly lost before the crew (and some of the passengers) managed to jury-rig the ship's power plant and maneuver drive. After securing more substantial repairs at Dismal starport, the ship managed to complete its journey to Peraspera and Terra. Imperial authorities suspected SolSec involvement, but no proof was ever found.

On day 292, Terra was formally turned over to its civilian government and the Imperial occupation was terminated. The planetwide celebrations which followed strained the ability of Terran security forces to respond, and considerable anti-Imperial violence took place. Fortunately, no incidents forced the Imperial forces remaining on the planet to intervene.

1111

The *Tyrol*, a passenger liner registered on Terra, limped into Lagrange starport after a mysterious jump-drive accident. Three engineering crew were reported dead. A retired Imperial Navy officer, Cmdr. Ansel Churner, was hospitalized as a result of direct exposure to jumpspace. This was the first recorded case of "jump sickness," possibly because Humans exposed directly to jumpspace normally do not survive. Soon after the incident, a team of naval and civilian specialists took over the accident investigation, pushing aside the starport's usual accident inspection team on naval authority.

1112

The young Baronet Enkidu hault-Fionbrea succeeded his father as Duke of Harlequin, after the old Duke was killed in a duel. The young Duke immediately made clear that his political position would be even more radically anti-Solomani than that of his father.

The Imperium established Research Station Epsilon on Cymbeline. The subsidized liner *Ad Astra* was put on retainer by Imperial officials, allowing them to charter the ship on demand to ferry staff and equipment to the new station.

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Sternmetal Horizons, LIC

Sternmetal Horizons

Sternmetal is primarily involved in mining operations. It competes fiercely with Ling-Standard Products, although Sternmetal is more concerned with running mines than with manufacturing mining equipment. Sternmetal's heavy-industrial division specializes in power-plant equipment of all sizes, ranging from the power systems for personal vehicles all the way up to the power plants for large industrial facilities or cities.

Finally, Sternmetal is the largest manufacturer of food-synthesis equipment in the Imperium. Corporate operations tend to fall at the far ends of the planetary-development spectrum. Sternmetal establishes new industrial or mining colonies in frontier areas, but it also provides critical infrastructure for the massive world-girdling cities of high-population worlds.

Sternmetal is extremely active on the Rim, maintaining massive power and food-synthesis installations on most of the sector's numerous high-population worlds. This enormous market gives the megacorporation a great deal of influence. Few of the sector's planetary governments or Imperial nobles are willing to cross the megacorporation. Fortunately, Sternmetal has a good reputation and is not usually known to engage in shady business practices.

Tukera Lines

Tukera specializes in passenger and freight transport, operating a vast fleet of merchant ships throughout the Imperium. Most Tukera routes follow the Xboat lines. The company engages in some speculative trade, but for the most part it concentrates on the steady flow of high-volume traffic along the main trade corridors. Tukera is a fierce competitor, willing to go to great lengths to secure monopoly control over the shipping routes in a region. It uses its vast wealth and political connections to gain control of local ports, shutting out its competitors. Tukera's intelligence service, the Vemene, is extremely ruthless.

Currently, Tukera is engaged in a long-running conflict with several local shipping lines in the Solomani Rim. Its ultimate goal is complete domination of the Rim's major trade routes, similar to the near-monopoly it holds in some regions of the Imperial core. Archduke Adair opposes this move, but the Tukera family's marriage ties to the Imperial family prevent him from taking decisive action.



Zirunkariish

Unlike the other major Vilani megacorporations, Zirunkariish has a clear historical origin. It was founded by the noble Shiishugins family late in the Long Night. Today, it is the megacorporation most closely associated with the Imperial family, due to marriage links with the Shiishuginsas going back to the reign of Emperor Zhakirov. Zirunkariish is primarily concerned with banking, real estate, capital investments, and insurance underwriting. Most of its operations are centered on

high-population, fully developed worlds. One of its divisions, however, specializes in developing long-term investments with moderate-technology planets which are trying to improve their economic base. Zirunkariish has a superb reputation as a sound financial institution that not only obeys Imperial law but actually cooperates closely with the Imperium.



Zirunkariish is active on the Rim, particularly in the Ultima and Albadawi subsectors, where it has a number of partnerships with developing worlds. Because of its Vilani ownership and its direct connections to the demise of the Solomani Movement, Zirunkariish is a primary target for pro-Solomani agitators. As a result, the corporation has invested in a small but well-trained cadre of corporate bodyguards. Most Zirunkariish officials in the sector travel with one or more security officers, depending on their rank and the local situation.

MAJOR CORPORATIONS

There are a number of corporations which approach megacorporate levels of influence in the Solomani Rim sector, but do not range over the entire Imperium.

Galactic Arbitrations

Galactic Arbitrations is a subsidiary of Sharurshid, offering specialized legal counsel, negotiation, and arbitration services throughout the Solomani Rim sector. The company has special expertise in resolving local conflicts arising from cultural differences. Its primary customers are the Imperial high nobility, megacorporations, and planetary governments.

Ichiban Interstellar

The oldest mercenary clearinghouse in the Solomani Rim, Ichiban Interstellar claims a history stretching back at least to the Rule of Man. Ichiban provides all manner of services for the mercenary commander or his clients: advertising, referrals, escrow of payments, bonding, arbitration, sale and repair of military equipment, and so on. Ichiban also acts as an information broker, with a staff of military and political intelligence experts among the best in the sector.

The company owns very little of its own manufacturing, preferring to buy equipment in bulk from other corporations and sell at a markup to mercenary units or individuals. The company's primary supplier is Instellarms, and the two firms enjoy a very good relationship. A persistent (but unconfirmed) rumor has it that Ichiban Interstellar maintains a private cadre of extremely skilled "cyber-ninjas" with cybernetic or biotechnical enhancements.

Saxe Transport

Saxe Transport is headquartered in the nation of New Bavaria, on Saxe in the Near Boötes Cluster. It is the largest shipping line in the cluster, which in turn dominates the economy of the subsectors just rimward of the Imperial border. Saxe Transport operates both small and large freighters, and is known to have the most luxurious passenger accommodations in the Solomani Confederation. Solomani Party policy is to use Transstar (see p. 18) for all official travel, but Solomani officials have become adept at finding bureaucratic justification for the use of Saxe Transport ships, instead. Saxe Transport was recently purchased in a hostile takeover by Lysander Production of Prometheus (see p. 21).

Solar Shipping

This corporation provides freight and passenger service along the major trade routes within Imperial territory. It was founded under Solomani rule, but after the Rim War it was forced to abandon its lines in Solomani territory. The abandoned routes became Solomani Shipping (see p. 18).

Solar Shipping maintains transshipment agreements with that company. In many respects the two corporations still operate as if they are one.

1112

[Continued]

Robert haut-Beaudoin, Duke of Dingir and Sector Duke of the Solomani Rim, announced his retirement and abdication in favor of his daughter Erika. A few weeks later, Archduke Adair declared his intention to move the capital of the Domain of Sol to Muan Gwi, from its previous location in the Diaspora sector. The wording of the announcement indicated that the Archduke intended to act as Sector Duke himself, as soon as the task of moving the capital was finished.

After years of planning and political maneuvering, the Archduke approved a proposal submitted by the Duke of Banasdan to establish a direct Xboat link between Banasdan and Pajang. The first Xboat flights along the new link began about mid-year, and had an immediate positive impact on the Duke's ability to govern his subsector.

Jeffrey Long, a reporter for the *Phoenix Sun* news organization, was detained by Imperial authorities late in the year. No charges were ever filed, and Long's family failed in all attempts to win his release. The *Phoenix Sun* released information confirming that Long was engaged in an extended investigation on their behalf, but refused to reveal the subject, claiming that Imperial authorities had invoked the Official Secrets Act.

1113

Alessandra Ribiera da Silva, prime minister of the new civilian government of Terra, was named first Marchioness of Terra by the Emperor. Archduke Adair personally visited Terra in order to preside at the new peer's investment ceremony. The occasion was marred by pro-Solomani protests, but there was little violence and the ceremony took place as planned.

The Imperial Ministry of Commerce announced the release of a radical new design for ship's transponders. The new design was asserted to use several breakthroughs in electronics design and coding theory, producing a truly tamper-proof, unforgeable transponder. The ministry announced that an acceptance period would be established, during which the Imperial Navy and several prominent merchant lines would experiment with the new device. If results were positive, then the new transponders would be made a requirement for all ships registered in Imperial space.

1114

The Imperial megacorporation Ling-Standard Products signed a memorandum of understanding with the local firm Lamarck Minerals. The two firms agreed to form a strategic partnership, within boundaries set by the Imperial Ministry of Commerce.

The new domain capital on Muan Gwi became operational this year. The domain-level offices of the Imperial bureaucracy were in place, as was most of the Archduke's personal staff. Archduke Adair himself did not take up residence on Muan Gwi until early in 1115.

1115

The murder of a prominent tribal elder on Catseye set off a series of violent skirmishes between clan groups, as long-standing rivalries flared into vendetta. Offworlders were advised to remain within the starport and avoid areas controlled by the warring clans, and the planet was designated an Amber Zone until such time as the situation could resolve itself.

Baroness Katrin Sovolas, a minor member of the extensive Tukera clan, arrived in the Solomani Rim this year to take control of Tukera's operations in the sector.

1116

The Rule of Terra organization claimed responsibility for a terrorist bombing of the Parliament building on Mirabilis. Justifying their attack on a Solomani world, the Rule of Terra spokesman pointed to the Mirabilis government's pro-Imperial stance. "Those who would treat with enemies of the Race must themselves be treated as enemies of the Race."

The government of Ludmilla announced that it would no longer provide protection for Vegan shipping lines transiting the Boskone system. This set off new tensions in Boskone and prompted a new "arms race" among corporate security forces in the system.

An archaeological dig on New Kodiak Island on Nusku was placed off-limits to civilian traffic by order of the planetary Duma. Speculation has been rampant about what the Reinhardt Foundation might have found at the site, but planetary officials have so far released no comment.

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Solar Shipping is currently embroiled in fierce competition with Tukera Lines, and some observers fear that a full-scale trade war may erupt soon. The Archduke is watching the situation closely.

Solomani Shipping

Solomani Shipping operates the old Solar Shipping (see above) routes which now fall outside of Imperial territory. This corporation, too, is facing difficult times. Although it does not have to compete with Tukera Lines, the line has been steadily losing ground for years to Transstar. Solomani Shipping officials suspect that the losses are due to deliberate discrimination on the part of the Solomani government.



Thinking Machines

Thinking Machines, Inc. is the foremost maker of robots and artificially intelligent computers in the Solomani Confederation. It is an open secret that TMI, based in the Near Boötes Cluster and operating across the Confederation, is actually a fully owned subsidiary of Naasirka. TMI has occasional difficulties in public relations or politics due to its relationship with an Imperial (and *Vilani*) megacorp. The situation is generally tolerated because of the quality of TMI products, but widespread knowledge of the relationship is one factor behind the occasional local backlash against advanced computer technology.

Transstar

Often called the "only Solomani megacorporation," Transstar is the largest transportation line in the Solomani Confederation. Its influence does not extend more than a few parsecs into Imperial space, however, and so most Imperial business experts do not regard it as a true megacorporation.

Transstar is actually wholly owned and operated by the Solomani Party. Its political connections grant it access to every market in the Confederation, and its profits provide a significant portion of the Party's operating budget.

It operates a wide variety of freight transports, but its passenger ships all tend to be rather spartan and uninviting. Since Solomani Party policy is to travel via Transstar when on Party business, the line can depend on a semi-captive passenger market. Subsequently, Transstar tends to keep passenger-related expenses low.

MINOR CORPORATIONS

A number of businesses are noteworthy for some reason, although they do not have sector-wide influence.

Acreidiat Lines

This merchant line operates both passenger and freight service throughout the coreward half of the sector. It is a well-established firm, slowly growing and consolidating its holdings.

Ad Astra

The *Ad Astra* is a jump-3 capable subsidized passenger liner registered on Scandia (in the Arcturus subsector). It operates on a fixed route between Scandia and Terra, roughly parallel to the Solomani border. It has more than once become embroiled in cross-border intrigues.

APS&V

Allied Prefabricated Ships and Vessels is a shipyard operations corporation, based in the Magyar sector but with several facilities in the spinward portion of the Solomani Rim. It is primarily concerned with the construction of small to medium-size merchant vessels, using thoroughly tested designs licensed from other firms.

1116

[Continued]

Queen Marie III of Aquitaine announced her betrothal to Ian Kellerman, one of the ephors of nearby Polyphemus. The new dynastic alliance signaled a shift in political power within the Near Boötes Cluster, to the detriment of the more moderate commercial factions which once dominated the Boötean League.

The Solomani shipping line Saxe Transport was purchased in a hostile takeover by Lysander Production of Polyphemus. The line's new owners promised to allow their new subsidiary to operate independently, offering the same high-quality service.



1117

The Michigan Rifles were forced to abandon their contract on Ugarup after a dispute with the Gurungan government. A tense two-day standoff took place at the planet's starport as the Duke of Ultima's huscarles landed to take temporary control of the Human Enclave. Cooler heads prevailed and the Michigan Rifles left the planet peacefully. The new contract to police the enclave was awarded to the New Bavarian Freikorps.

The planetary government of Kukulcan fell to a military coup. After nationalizing the planetary fleet and slaughtering all known SolSec agents, the new regime announced its secession from the Confederation, which immediately interdicted the planet and prepared to take stronger measures to put down the rebellion. Imperial ships were ordered out of the subsector.

The ongoing civil war in the nation of Mondragon on Saxe heated up, as off-world forces became involved. A chapter of the Strongheart Society (based on Sequoyah) was invited by the Mondragon government to help police the region around Mondragon's second-largest city. The chapter became directly involved in the fighting after rebel forces launched a surprise attack well behind loyalist positions. Later, the Stronghearts were engaged by Umar's Light Brigade, a mercenary unit in Polyphemian service. The mercenaries were defeated, but the Stronghearts took heavy casualties, leading Sequoyah to lodge protests with the Boötean League and the Confederation.

1118

Solomani fleet elements from several subsectors were sent to put down the Kukulcan rebellion, setting off a full-scale civil war within the Kukulcan subsector. For reasons unknown, the Solomani admiral in charge delayed. This gave rebel forces enough time to make preemptive strikes at the Confederation Naval Base at Caprice and the Class V starports at Trapezus and Thetis. When the loyalist fleet finally moved against Kukulcan itself, the rebel world's navy met it and won a hard-fought victory.

After the Battle of Kukulcan, the Solomani High Command decided to simply lay siege to the rebel world and wait for economic hardship to rein in the secessionists. SolSec infiltrators who had reached Kukulcan began a campaign of sabotage and assassination against the rebel regime. At first, this strategy appeared effective, although Kukulcan's fleet continued to mount raids against the interdicting forces.

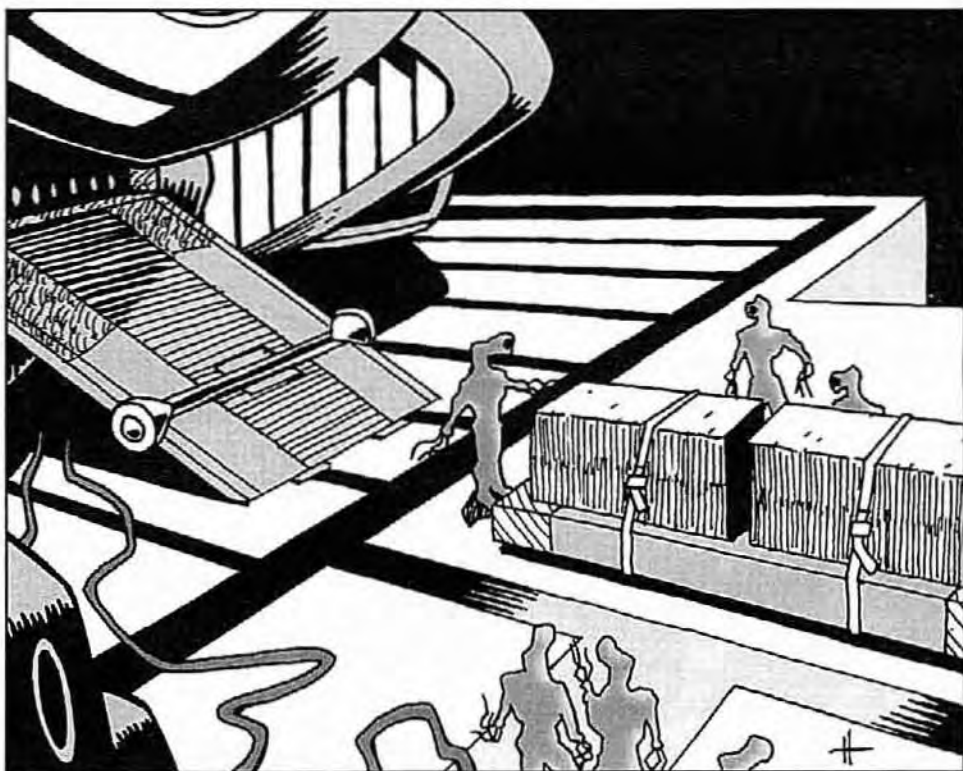
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ConTech

This firm is based in the Dark Nebula sector, but has a few branch offices in the Solomani Rim. It was established by the noted philanthropist Roberto Conwell, to delve into the mysteries of the life sciences. It is still supported by Conwell's investments and by the patronage of the Solomani government.

Crown Lines

The transport service Crown Lines was founded as a tool of several planetary governments in an ongoing economic war with Kukulcan, in the Kukulcan subsector. The line serves Ochre, Skanderberg, Thetis, Trapezus, and Laputa (also in the Kukulcan subsector). It has been developing trade links farther out, into the rest of the Solomani Confederation and even across the Imperial border. Crown Lines has gained a stranglehold on most trade routes out of its home subsector, virtually isolating Kukulcan and causing a political revolution on that planet (see p. 128).



Ewm Shao Gwi

Most Vegan interstellar trade is dominated by a single enterprise. Ewm Shao Gwi is organized on paper like an Imperial corporation. In fact, it is also a *tuhuir* or Vegan subculture, with its own traditions and laws (see p. 32). This particular *tuhuir* has existed for thousands of years, and has always been involved in the distribution of resources. Construction of a trade fleet was a natural outgrowth of this cultural trend. Ewm Shao Gwi operates primarily within the Vegan District, but has limited passenger and freight service to worlds within six parsecs of the Vegan border.

Farmines

This corporation is based on Ascalon, and runs mining and resource-development ventures throughout the Suleiman subsector. Recently, it has

entered into a long-term agreement with the Duke of Ultima to invest in developing economic opportunities in that subsector as well.

Lamarck Minerals

Lamarck Minerals is based in the Arcturus subsector, but also has facilities and markets elsewhere in the sector. It specializes in industrial mining equipment and operations, especially on hostile worlds or in planetoid belts. Its operations are profitable, but it is known for very poor labor relations and unethical business practices.

Langren Center

Located on Ochre, the Langren Center is a high-profile research foundation working primarily in electronics and software engineering. It is rumored to have some kind of connection to the Solomani government, although the exact nature of this connection is unknown. The center is well-known for the quality of its research and the eccentricity of many of the researchers. Security there is not particularly tight.

Lysander Production

Lysander Production is one of the largest corporate institutions on Polyphemos, with subsidiaries throughout the Capella subsector. It specializes in heavy manufacturing, producing capital equipment for other industrial firms.

Probable Technologies

This research firm is based in the Capella system in the Solomani Confederation. Its primary purpose is exploration, and it has sponsored a number of expeditions into the uncharted regions to rimward of the Solomani Rim.

Silk Road Factors

This small transport line operates about a dozen small jump-3 merchant ships on routes which straddle the border between the Imperium and the Solomani Confederation. It specializes in avoiding legal or political "entanglements." Silk Road provides superbly responsive service to customers who don't wish to use the normal border crossings (or the much larger shipping firms which monopolize those crossings).

Six-Star Services

This is a small transport company, operating six tramp freighters along the minor trade routes of the Harlequin subsector. All six ships and the corporation itself are registered on Champa.

Triple-G Resources

This corporation specializes in mining and mineral refining, with a number of facilities in the Banasdan and Arcturus subsectors.

Tsyasha Kwa

Tsyasha Kwa is a Vegan *tuhuir*, associated with Ewm Shao Gwi (see p. 20). It is a producer of small, high-quality starships for both military and commercial use. Tsyasha Kwa architects are famous for the quality of their custom designs, and are often sought out by Imperial nobles or adventurers who want a one-of-a-kind personal starship. The *tuhuir* is centered on Hsuishlesh (see pp. 88-89), but has facilities at several other Class V starports in the Vegan District.

1118

[Continued]

Dismayed by its navy's failure in the Kukulcan crisis, the Solomani central government began to reorganize its military forces. SolSec began a systematic purge of "disloyal elements" in the officer corps. By year's end, thousands of "politically unreliable" officers had been cashiered. Some were shot, while others were sent to re-education camps. In a few cases, friends or families were also imprisoned for their complicity in "crimes against the Cause." Defections to the Imperium reached an all-time high late in the year.

1119

On the first day of the new year, SolSec Coordinator Marya Kibaki was assassinated. Officially, the culprits were a conspiracy of Confederation Navy officers, outraged at the continuing purges. The new Coordinator, Elias Treleven, was himself an ex-military officer, although his background was Army rather than Navy. Although the purges continued for several months after he took power, he curbed their worst excesses.

Violent revolution broke out on Kilenur, driving the planet's ruling Tyrant into exile on Arkiirkii. He soon returned, however, with the support of Imperial forces. The revolt was put down with remarkable brutality, leaving behind several million dead and handing the Solomani Confederation a major propaganda victory. After the planet was secured, Kilenur system was interdicted by the Imperial Navy for the duration of the emergency.

1120

On the first day of the year, the Archduke of Sol announced that the Solomani Rim would also receive a visit from a member of the Imperial Household during the Emperor's Jubilee Year. In a break from usual practice, Archduke Adair even revealed the visitor's identity: the Empress Iolanthe herself. Concessions to security prevented the Archduke from discussing her itinerary.

Reactions to the news have been varied but passionate. Authentic Movement (see *The Authentic Movement*, pp. 60-61) members throughout the sector see her as a natural supporter, due to her interest in preserving ancient and developing cultures. On the other hand, the possibility of the presence of a *Vilani* Empress on the Rim has driven many radical Solomani into frothing fits. During her visit, the Empress is likely to serve as a lightning rod for many of the sector's tensions.

CHAPTER TWO

The Rim States



In one sense, the Solomani Rim is not as complex an environment as other regions on the Imperial frontier. Instead of a dozen rival and client states, the Imperium must only deal with one: the Solomani Confederation. Minor Human and alien races are relatively scarce as well.

Of course, the diversity of Solomani society means that this apparent simplicity is only an illusion. In practice, on the Rim the Imperium often finds itself making policy in a cultural minefield.

THE SOLOMANI CONFEDERATION

In their own region of space, the Solomani have built a society very different from that of the Imperium. Most of the differences derive from the Confederation's dedication to a single ideology, the Solomani Cause (see *The Solomani Cause*, p. 23). Three institutions support the Confederation's government: the Solomani Party, the Confederation military, and Solomani Security or "SolSec."

This triumvirate acts to ensure that the Confederation never strays far from its intended purpose. If any of the three grows too powerful, or threatens to abandon the Cause, the other two cooperate to bring it back into line.

As with the Imperium, the Confederation (officially) exerts control only over interstellar affairs, allowing individual worlds to govern themselves as they see fit. Member worlds can be anything from open democracies to brutal dictatorships, and they exhibit considerable cultural variety. In practice, the Confederation's control of interstellar activity is relatively intrusive. For example, Solomani citizens who wish to travel between worlds need a Confederation passport, issued by a department of SolSec. Most of the large Solomani corporations which participate in interstellar commerce are closely tied to the Solomani Party, and some of them are wholly owned by the Party. Interstellar trade is regulated to a degree not found in the Imperium, although businesses of any size can do well if they have good Solomani Party connections.

Meanwhile, the Confederation's major institutions intervene in member-world matters more than their Imperial counterparts do. The most obvious manifestation of this is the fact that the Solomani Party has a legal monopoly on all political activity.

Meanwhile, SolSec has in varying degrees infiltrated the population of every Solomani world, and sometimes acts to deal with individuals or groups who would turn too far away from the Solomani Cause.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The Confederation's central government is rarely an effective institution on its own. It instead serves as a field of battle for Party officials, military officers, and SolSec administrators, who compete to wield the most influence in the government's affairs. Even so, the government proper plays an important role as the visible manifestation of the Solomani state.

The Secretariat

The supreme governing body in the Solomani Confederation is the Secretariat. This is an assembly of representatives from each member world or state within the Confederation. Representatives are technically "elected," although the method of election is different for each world. Some representatives are chosen by majority vote, others are appointed by local government officials, others hold hereditary seats, and so on. Representation is based on the gross domestic product of each electoral district, so that districts making a greater contribution to the Confederation's economy have more delegates. Some worlds with small economic bases are below the threshold that would bring them a single delegate. These worlds are normally grouped into local districts which co-operate to choose delegates. The only requirement for delegates to the Secretariat is that each must be a member in good standing of the Solomani Party.

The Secretariat's primary power is to set the budget for various institutions of the central government, including SolSec and the Confederation military. Aside from this, the Secretariat's power to pass laws is strictly limited. Laws and resolutions require the supporting vote of a super-majority of all delegates. Even when laws are passed, they are not automatically binding on the member worlds of the Confederation. The Secretariat's power is limited to interstellar events, and it cannot interfere in the internal affairs of member worlds. Further, the Secretariat's directives have sometimes been ignored by member worlds or alliances within the Confederation.

The Secretary-General

One of the Secretariat's functions is to elect the Secretary-General from among its members. Elections are held every four years, or whenever the office falls vacant for any reason. The Secretary-General can hold office for any number of terms, but is subject to recall if the Secretariat can muster the needed super-majority. Since he is also a Delegate to the Secretariat, he can also be recalled by his home district according to local procedures.

The Secretary-General is the foremost executive official in the Solomani Confederation, but in practice his power has strict limits. In particular, he shares power with the other members of the High Council (see p. 24). The council runs the civilian ministries of the Confederation government, and also acts as supreme command over the Solomani Grand Fleet and Army. The Secretary-General is the titular head of the High Council – he presides over its meetings, and he has the strongest voice in choosing new members for it. However, he has no ministerial portfolio of his own and cannot always command the loyalty of other Council members. His power derives from the fact that the Secretariat chose him and supposedly supports him, but this is a very unsteady base.

THE SOLOMANI PARTY

The Solomani Party is the sole organization under which all official political and governmental activity takes place. No other political party is permitted to exist within the Confederation. It also exists (sometimes illegally) on almost every world with a significant Solomani population within about 20 parsecs of the Confederation border.

In theory, any Human of Solomani descent is automatically a member of the Solomani Party. Every Confederate citizen who is eligible for membership will have been exposed to the Party's principles by the time he completes his basic education. Due to apathy, a lack of time or energy, or a disagreement with the Party's basic principles, many Solomani choose not to participate in Party activities that are not mandatory.

The Solomani Cause

The Solomani Cause is the dominant ideology of the Solomani Confederation. In the simplest terms, adherents of the Cause believe that Humans are superior to all non-Human sentient species, and that Humans of Solomani descent are superior to all other Humaniti. This superiority implies that Solomani are best fit to rule the Imperium, or any other interstellar state. Every being has his natural place in the scheme of things, and Solomani superiority means that their natural place is in the highest positions of power and responsibility. Indeed, other races and species would be more content if allowed to pursue their own natural purposes, leaving the heavy responsibility of government in Solomani hands. Solomani ideologues believe no sane society would organize itself in any other way.

Adherents to the Cause advance many historical arguments to "prove" Solomani superiority. Terrans developed advanced technology with extreme rapidity, overtaking the Vilani technological standard within mere decades after contact. The Terran Confederation conquered the entire Vilani Imperium, despite starting with only a tiny fraction of the population and industrial base. In the Rule of Man, the "decadent" Vilani Imperium enjoyed centuries of prolonged existence under Solomani guidance. The Third Imperium expanded rapidly while Solomani held every position of leadership, but expansion ceased once Vilani and others began to share power.

Discovery of the Ancients, and their role in propagating Humaniti, has led to a set of arguments for Solomani biological superiority. It is clear that some of the offshoot races were subjected to genetic tinkering during the Ancient period. Solomani advocates claim that these modifications were intended to make the transplanted Humaniti more subservient and better *tools* for the Ancients. In short, "tamed" animals. According to this view, the unmodified Solomani are naturally wild creatures, with all the original Human dynamism.

One aspect of Solomani political theory addresses the question of the legitimacy of interstellar government. The Third Imperium traces its claim to legitimate authority back through the Sylean Confederation and the Rule of Man, all the way to the First Imperium. Adherents of the Cause, however, reject the authority of the First Imperium. Since the Rule of Man retained the Vilani bureaucracy and renounced the preeminence of Terra, it too was unacceptable as a source of legitimate authority. Indeed, the Terrans who established the Rule of Man were "traitors to their race" for trying to integrate, rather than dominate, the conquered Vilani territory. Radical Solomani claim that they inherit the mantle of the old Terran Confederation, that being the only polity ever to unite all Solomani under an exclusive banner.

Solomani Characters

Despite the radically different structure of Solomani society, Solomani characters can be designed along similar lines to Imperials as described in *GURPS Traveller*. A few additional guidelines include:

Military Rank

Solomani in the Confederation military, or serving actively in the Home Guard, will have a level of Military Rank appropriate for their position. Retired veterans, and Home Guard members not on active duty, will hold Courtesy Rank.

Members of SolSec will also hold Military Rank at some level. As a general guideline, a monitor or agent will hold SolSec Military Rank one level higher than the Military, Administrative, or Courtesy Rank he holds in his "public" job. If he holds no other kind of Rank, his Military Rank in SolSec will generally be one higher than his Social Status (at least 0, though, even if Status -2 or worse).

Note that this means that serving military officers who are also SolSec monitors or agents will have *two* kinds of Military Rank at the same time. Such a character does not need to pay for both advantages separately. He simply pays for the higher of the two levels, and makes a note of his lower "effective rank" in the other situation. Note that this feature of SolSec service is one reason why Solomani adventuring parties might tolerate a known monitor or agent among their number. Such a character will represent SolSec within the Party, but will also have access to SolSec records and resources.

SolSec administrators also hold Military rather than Administrative Rank, equivalent to the rank they would need to command the same number of subordinates in the armed services.

Party Rank

Members of the Solomani Party who actually hold political office will normally have some level of Party rank. Treat this as Administrative Rank, with the appropriate costs and perquisites. At the low end, Rank 1 is normal for members of a Supervisory Committee. Delegates to the Secretariat normally have Rank 6, High Council members Rank 7, while the Secretary-General is the only Party member with Rank 8. Ranked members of the Party will normally have a Duty which takes up some or all of their time. It is entirely possible for someone to have high Status without having high Party rank, but characters with high Rank should probably have high Status to match. As a guideline, it is reasonable for any character with Party rank to have Status one level lower, barring other factors.

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Life Within the Party

Those who do participate find that there is a wide range of activities to engage in. A committed Party member will join the Sons (or Daughters) of Terra as a young adult. He will take courses in Solomani history and ideology, beyond the basic curriculum required for all citizens. If he is concerned with racial "purity," he may trace his ancestry and undergo genetic testing to establish his own pure-Solomani origins. He will attend Party meetings within his local community or at his workplace. He may even run for political office at a local level. Even if he has no interest in politics for its own sake, he knows that most leadership positions within Solomani society are open only to Party members in good standing.

Truly committed members may make the Party itself their life's work. These career politicians spend their lives circulating among Party leadership positions, elected and appointed government offices, the Solomani diplomatic corps, and managerial jobs within the Party's business holdings. Such individuals do not have simple political *connections*; they have actual *rank* within the Party (see sidebar). They may even attend the great Party congresses. Local congresses are held annually on each Solomani world. The General Congress is held every four years at the Solomani capital, to elect Party officers and set a political direction for the Confederation as a whole. Officially, a General Congress does not directly affect the elections to the Secretariat which always take place a few months later. However, most of the back-room negotiating which helps decide who will sit in the Secretariat (and even who will become Secretary-General) is done at the General Congress.

Party Organization

The Solomani Party is organized in a strict hierarchy of committees and ruling councils. Individual Party members are organized into cells of about 10 members each. Usually, all members of a given cell live in the same area or work in the same place. As a result, a cell will often act as a neighborhood watch group or workers' social committee. Ten cells are grouped under a single Party Committee, and each cell elects one member to act as its representative to the committee. Ten Party Committees are grouped under a single Supervisory Committee, and so on. Most members of local cells or Party Committees are "ordinary" members of the Party, who actively participate but are not career politicians. Members of the Supervisory Committees are usually candidates for long-term Party work, and above that level almost all participants are career Party members.

At the top of the Party hierarchy is the High Council, a team of 10 executive ministers who oversee the day-to-day workings of the Solomani government. The High Council always includes the Secretary-General and the Coordinator of SolSec. The other eight members are chosen by the Secretary-General, subject to SolSec approval. One peculiarity of the system is that the members selected by the Secretary-General do not lose their positions when he is replaced. As a result, each new chief executive of the Confederation faces the possibility that the rest of the council will oppose him.

Factions

The Solomani Party is not a monolithic organization. While all members support the principles of the Solomani Cause, they disagree widely on how to promote the Cause. Indeed, for some citizens the Cause is actually of minor importance, something to which one pays lip service while pursuing other goals. Such disagreements often rest on local history and cultural factors. As a result,

the Solomani Party is divided into *factions* (see *Solomani Factions*, p. 28). Each faction has its own agenda, and its own interpretation of the basic ideology of the Solomani Cause.

In effect, while the Solomani Confederation *appears* to be a one-party state, it is actually divided among a multitude of parties. All of the local factions operate under the name of the Solomani Party, but they can pursue very different short-term goals. On democratic worlds, the local Solomani Party factions behave very much like independent political parties, agreeing only on interstellar policy and the basic doctrine of the Solomani Cause. Such branches of the Party compete for power through open elections and other democratic mechanisms. On more repressive planets, the Solomani Party is more likely to be unified, as one faction stamps out all the others.

The Party tolerates factionalism because it has no choice. Political opinions within Solomani society vary too widely for the Party to insist on anything beyond simple adherence to the Solomani Cause. Solomani political theorists also believe that competition has a positive benefit. As various factions within the Party struggle for supremacy, the competition theoretically gives the Solomani Movement the flexibility it needs to adapt to changing circumstances. Of course, some observers claim that the *real* positive effect of Solomani factionalism is that it keeps the Solomani too busy tearing each other down to be a serious threat to their neighbors.



THE SOLOMANI MILITARY

The Solomani maintain armed forces for many of the same reasons as the Imperium. The Confederation's military is a tool for defense and for the advancement of foreign policy.

Solomani Characters

[Continued]

Reputation

Characters who are known to be of pure Solomani descent may take a positive Reputation (Pure Solomani). Such a Reputation is unlikely to give more than a +2 reaction bonus, and is usually only good among other followers of the Solomani Cause. It may be associated with an Odious Personal Habit (Boasts about ancestry).

Secrets

Many a Solomani citizen carries a secret, whether it be political disloyalty, a taint of non-Solomani blood, or a hidden association with SolSec. It would be reasonable for almost any Solomani character to have a Secret disadvantage at the -5-point level. SolSec secret monitors and covert agents should have a -10-point Secret, or more if they are engaged in active espionage.

Social Status

The Solomani Confederation does not use titles of nobility, although local planetary governments may be organized along aristocratic lines. Instead, Social Status in the Confederation usually comes from Solomani Party connections. Most citizens, uninvolved in Party affairs, will have Status 0. Status 1-2 indicates a citizen who is active in the Party or has some commercial, military, or political connections. Status 3+ is generally reserved for true Party activists, committed to promoting the Solomani Cause and the pursuit of a political career. Members of the High Council of the Confederation have Status 6.

Social Stigma

Characters who are clearly not Solomani will carry some level of Social Stigma when in Solomani society. A Human who can pass for Solomani, but isn't, would carry a Secret rather than a Social Stigma (remember that Solomani exhibit a lot of ethnic diversity, so many non-Solomani Humans can easily pass as Solomani). A Human who cannot pass for Solomani would be considered members of a "minority group" for -10 points. Non-Humans of Terran descent, including Dolphins or Vargr, would also have a -10-point Social Stigma. Non-Humans who are not of Terran descent (such as Aslan, Droyne, or Hivers) would be considered "outsiders" for -15 points.

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Solomani Characters

[Continued]

Typical Mental Disadvantages

Solomani show great diversity in culture and psychology, so assigning Solomani characters a "standard load" of psychological features would be misleading. The typical Imperial view of the Solomani would suggest Fanaticism (Solomani Cause) and Intolerance (all non-Solomani). The idealized Solomani view of themselves would suggest Curious, Overconfident, and Sense of Duty (Solomani). Deciding which of these a specific Solomani character might actually have (if any) is up to the GM and players.

Straight Man

"So I meet this Solly in a bar, and we get to talking. After a while I can't stand it any more. So I ask him, 'You're Solomani, right?' And he says, 'Right.' I ask, 'So you guys think that the Ancients took all the other Humans off to be their servants, right?' And he says, 'Right.' 'And you guys got left behind?' He says, 'Right.' 'So how come, if your ancestors were the ones the Ancients thought couldn't be trusted to make a dry martini or wipe their shoes before coming in, you're saying you're superior to the rest of us?' He thinks about it. And then he bangs my head into the table."

—Comedian Anton Wilson Peale

A Solomani Rebuttal

"We often hear criticism of our society from the Imperium. You should ask yourself whether the testimony of a self-serving witness is worth hearing."

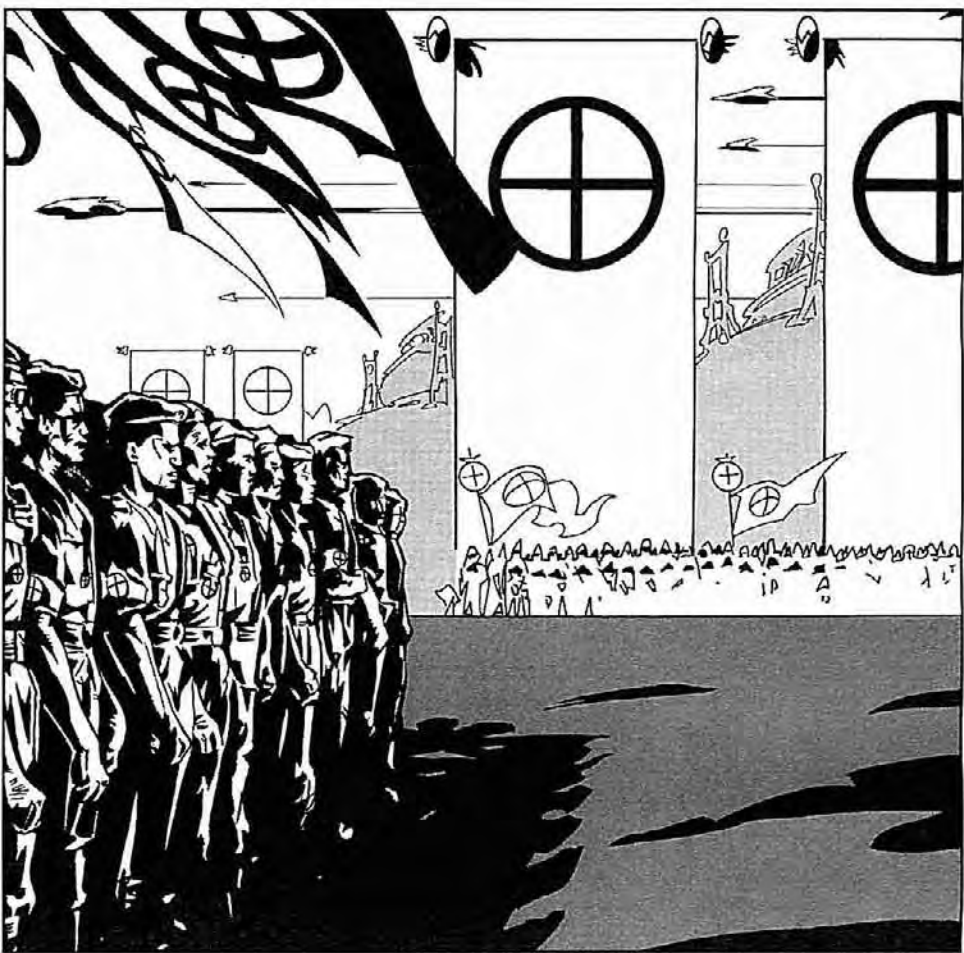
"We Solomani believe that it is the manifest destiny of Human beings to explore the entire Galaxy, even the Universe. To turn away from that challenge is to deny the inmost nature of Humanity."

"We Solomani believe in the freedom and the responsibility of the individual. Every one of us has the opportunity and the obligation to test his own limits, earning all that he can with the investment of his own life. Every accomplishment is a triumph for the individual and a part of the greater glory of Solomani history. To refuse to strive for such victories is to deny the individual."

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Unlike its Imperial counterpart, the Solomani military also has a very direct role in maintaining internal order within the Confederation. It enforces the law even at the local level, it suppresses dissension, and it maintains the peace. Such peace-enforcement missions sometimes turn violent. Even when the Confederation is involved in open conflict with its neighbors, part of its forces remain engaged in internal affairs.

The Confederation military is divided into two armed services: the Navy and the Army. The Grand Admiral and the General of the Armies both sit on the High Council. They have substantial input into both internal politics and foreign policy.



The Solomani Navy

The Solomani Navy is the "senior service" within the Confederation. In a holdover from Imperial practice, the Solomani maintain individual fleets at the subsector level. In wartime, these subsector fleets are formally integrated into the Solomani Grand Fleet, but in peacetime each is managed more or less independently. Even so, the Solomani Navy has a high degree of centralized control, and may be more responsive than the Imperial fleet to the directives of its central government.

The Solomani Navy assumes several functions which are handled by separate agencies within the Imperium. For example, the Navy handles the exploration, survey, and message-transmission functions which the Imperium assigns to its Scout Service. The Navy also includes the Confederation Marines, a relatively small but well-trained force which is used primarily for rapid-reaction and ship-boarding applications.

The Solomani Army

In contrast to the Navy, the Solomani Army is a decentralized service. Most of its units are provided by the Confederation's member states. Although these units are officially part of the active Solomani Army, they tend to remain on their home worlds unless called up by the central government. A few units are officially in full-time Confederation service. These are carefully recruited from a variety of worlds, provided full indoctrination in Solomani ideology, and given the best of training and equipment. They tend to be elite armored divisions, commandos, drop troops, or military-police regiments. In peacetime, these Confederation units are the sharp edge of internal and foreign policy. In wartime, they form the hard core of the massed Solomani Army.

The Home Guard

Each member world in the Solomani Confederation maintains a substantial military reserve force, the Home Guard. A world's Home Guard always has an Army component, and worlds with substantial starport facilities usually raise naval Home Guard units as well. Any adult citizen not on active duty in the Confederation military is encouraged (sometimes quite strongly) to join the military reserves. The main duty of the Home Guard is to defend the individual member worlds of the Confederation from invasion. Home Guard units are also used for public works and disaster relief, and are sometimes called up for counter-insurgency missions. Officers for the Home Guard are drawn from the ranks of retired active-duty Confederation military officers.

One side effect of the Home Guard is increased factionalism within the Solomani Confederation. Although Home Guard units are officially under Confederation control, they are often more loyal to their home worlds than to the Confederation as a whole. Further, the existence of the Home Guard means that a large minority of Solomani citizens has military training. As a result, many local uprisings against the Confederation are driven by rebel Home Guard units.

Another feature of the Solomani military is its relative inability to project power. Solomani worlds actually devote a *higher* percentage of their economy to military spending than their Imperial counterparts, but much of this greater spending is devoted to the Home Guard. As a result, the Solomani are able to defend themselves with fierce tenacity, but would have difficulty launching a large-scale invasion of any of their neighbors. This fact has done much to maintain the balance of power in this region of charted space.

Mercenaries

Since member worlds in the Confederation have even more autonomy than their counterparts in the Imperium, conflict between them is endemic. Furthermore, the Home Guard system provides a large pool of trained manpower for mercenary recruitment. As a result, Solomani space is a busy market for mercenary forces of all kinds.

The Confederation government tolerates this situation, and has even been known to hire the better mercenary units for its own purposes. Some Solomani mercenary units are even willing to accept tickets in Imperial space, although Imperial authorities frown on this.

SOLOMANI SECURITY (SOLSEC)

Given the divisions within the Solomani government, the Solomani Party, and the military, it may be hard to see what holds the Solomani Confederation together at all. Solomani Security is the "glue" that keeps the Confederation from flying apart.

A Solomani Rebuttal

[Continued]

"We Solomani also believe that society exists for the benefit of all. This is why we guarantee a minimum standard of living for our people. As Solomani citizens take risks, they know that they can fall back on the strength of Solomani society when the risks fail. We know that some people will never be able to succeed in our society, but we support such people willingly because we believe it is the duty of the strong to protect the weak. To do otherwise is to deny the imperative of compassion."

"Now tell me, how dare the Imperium laugh at us and call us criminals?"

"In the Imperium, social connections count for far more than personal ability. Every spark of individual worth is pawned to gain advantage in the struggle for social status. Economic life is locked in the grip of the megacorporations, and anyone who is not useful to the tycoons is cast aside. No one is allowed to dream or aspire to new things. Society is as still and unchanging as the grave. Such was the old, anti-Human Vilani civilization, which the Imperium is determined to recreate."

"To distract their people from these evils, the Imperium can only point to SolSec. Yes, we have the monitors of Solomani Security, but they exist only to ensure that Imperial propaganda won't turn weaker minds against our Cause. A Solomani should be proud of his actions and be willing to stand by them when challenged. A Solomani who has nothing to hide is a Solomani who has nothing to fear. It is unfortunate that so much of our taxes and so many of our best young minds must be devoted to the military and SolSec, but the fight for our freedom requires sacrifice."

"Perhaps one day the Imperium will be governed by the people and not by the Emperor. Perhaps the megacorporations will fade and true free enterprise will spring up. Perhaps a commoner will be able to rise as high as a duke on his own merits. When that day comes, then we can stop resisting the Imperium. Until then, we will never surrender."

*—from a campaign speech,
delivered 116-1120 by
Solomani Party leader
Arieh Shoval*

Solomani Factions

The Solomani Party has a lot of factions. Trying to distinguish among them is difficult, as there are many subtle shades of difference, and individual Party members tend to move back and forth among them. Generally, any faction can be defined by describing its position on each of five political hot issues.

Racial Purity: Although no faction of the Solomani Party rejects the notion of Solomani superiority, some are more committed than others to maintaining that superiority by force. Purists support some degree of forceful suppression for all non-Solomani. Moderates are more willing to press for universal civil rights, arguing that Solomani superiority will demonstrate itself more clearly in a pluralistic society. Some liberals even see Solomani superiority as being cultural rather than biological, and are willing to accept non-Solomani and even some non-Humans who adhere to Solomani cultural ideals.

Centralism: As the power of the Confederation's central government has grown, debates have sprung up over the proper role of that government with respect to the member worlds. Centralist factions want to further strengthen central control. Federalists want more guarantees for local autonomy. Generally, the Old Solomani worlds (see *The Two Confederations*, p. 29) tend toward federalism. Newer colonies are centralists.

Expansionism: Much of Solomani space is thinly settled, and exploration and colonization continue to rimward. Isolationist factions want to call a halt to this expansion, consolidating and developing existing territory. Expansionist factions press for continued territorial expansion. Radical expansionists even call for expansion into Aslan or Hiver territory.

Violence: Ever since the end of the Rim War, Solomani have engaged in a bitter debate over the proper method for promoting the Cause. Violent factions support using "any means necessary," including war or terrorism. Pacifist factions believe that the Cause would be better served by renouncing violence, allowing negotiation with neighbors on more open terms.

The Imperium: Long-term relations with the Imperium are a real sticking point in Solomani politics. Anti-Imperials want to renew the conflict, taking back the territory lost a century ago and even moving to take over the Imperium as a whole. Pro-Imperials believe that detente would benefit the Solomani. A few radical pro-Imperials even suggest rejoining the Imperium as a whole.

Since the Rim War, the Confederation has been dominated by a coalition which is moderate, centralist, mildly expansionist, pacifist, and mildly pro-Imperial. Given the current set of political crises, however, a drastic shift in *all five* platform planks is beginning to appear possible.

Its mission is "the maintenance and protection of the Solomani Cause against all enemies," with the understanding that such enemies may as easily come from inside as outside the Confederation. SolSec's job is to keep the Solomani Party, the military, the member worlds, and *every Solomani citizen* firmly in support of the Solomani Cause, no matter how diverse the methods they use to promote that Cause.



Monitors

The primary tool used by SolSec in pursuit of its mission is the recruitment of *monitors* from the Solomani populace. Monitors hold normal positions within Solomani society: factory workers, bankers, maintenance technicians, doctors, teachers, soldiers, attorneys, and so on. Their job as monitors is to report on the political views expressed by those around them, both in words and in deeds. They are informers, filing reports on chance-met strangers, co-workers, friends, even family members.

Some monitors are *open monitors*, who wear SolSec insignia every day and make no secret of their affiliation. Others are *secret monitors*, who keep their connection to SolSec carefully hidden. Their number and the relative size of the "open" and "secret" branches varies widely from world to world. No one outside SolSec knows how many monitors there are.

SolSec concentrates its monitoring attention on military officers, interstellar merchants, important businessmen, local government officials, politically active citizens, religious leaders, and so on. Ordinary citizens who have no influence and don't travel widely are not usually subject to close monitoring. On the other hand, any Solomani citizen who takes part in interstellar society is likely to be monitored. This particularly includes PCs!

One special role for open SolSec monitors is in the military. Most Confederation military formations include "political officers" who are accredited as SolSec monitors. These staff officers advise their military superiors on the political implications of their actions. In effect, they act as "watchdogs" to ensure that unit commanders stay loyal to the Solomani Cause. Most officers of Army rank Major or Naval rank Lieutenant Commander can expect to have an open SolSec monitor on their staff, and officers of higher rank must always have a political officer. Political officers are not in the chain of command. They generally have military rank one step lower than that of their assigned officer, while

also holding SolSec rank which is roughly equivalent to his. Naturally, the existence of political officers doesn't mean that *secret* monitors are not present throughout the Confederation military.

SolSec monitors compose their reports themselves, and enter them into a Confederation-wide computer system. SolSec's computers use advanced content-processing systems to reduce the need for Human analysis. Reports are coded for source and reliability, and become part of the massive data files maintained on everyone within the Solomani Sphere.

SolSec monitors who travel between stars can enter their reports at any Class III or better starport, or at any connected terminal on worlds which have their own public computer net.

Agents

Aside from the monitors, who watch but do not act, SolSec also recruits agents from the general population. Agents rarely work openly. Instead, they take up positions within Solomani society and wait to implement the orders of their superiors. For many Solomani citizens, it's bad enough not knowing which of their friends is a SolSec monitor. Far worse is not knowing which authority figure with power over their lives is a SolSec *agent*.

If a SolSec monitor files a negative report about a Solomani citizen, a variety of things can happen. At the very least, other monitors will be assigned to watch the potential dissident more closely. If his disloyalty becomes an obvious threat, then SolSec can use a variety of techniques to remove him from society. On totalitarian worlds, SolSec usually has a close relationship with the local police-state apparatus. In such a case, the dissident can simply be made to disappear.

In more open or democratic societies, SolSec must work more subtly. Perhaps the dissident finds himself out of work and unable to find a new job. Damaging information about him might become public, causing him to be rejected by his community. His utility service may suddenly be cut off, or his creditors may suddenly demand payment of his loans in full. He may be framed for a crime and arrested by local police.



The Two Confederations

Imperial citizens often think of the Solomani Confederation as a grim police state. In fact, the Confederation Charter allows member worlds a great deal of independence in managing their internal affairs. As a result, few worlds within the Confederation really fit the stereotype.

This contrast is particularly obvious in those sections of the Solomani Sphere which were well-established before the birth of the Solomani Cause. These "Old Solomani" worlds were colonized long before the foundation of the Solomani Sphere. Indeed, some of them were settled during the Rule of Man. None of them were ever members of the Imperium. All of them have dynamic local cultures, which originated independently from the Solomani Movement's ideals. The most notable example of this phenomenon is in the Near Boötis Cluster in the Capella and Gemini subsectors.

The Old Solomani worlds are usually loyal members of the Confederation. Their populations remember the Vilani Empire with fear and the Rule of Man with pride. On the other hand, they took no part in the political upheavals that gave rise to the radical Solomani Movement. As a result, they are committed to the Solomani Cause, but their commitment is more reserved than that of the newer colonies. Of course, as demonstrated by the ongoing Kukulcan secession crisis (see p. 128), the division between Old Solomani worlds and the rest of the Confederation can sometimes lead to open conflict.

Naturally, the whole apparatus of Party and SolSec exists on the Old Solomani worlds, but its relationship to local society is more ambiguous. The Solomani political machine must move more carefully than on the worlds where it has held power from the first settlement. The local Party is likely to be more moderate, and divided into a wider variety of factions. SolSec will tend to work subtly, discrediting or bankrupting dissidents rather than simply "disappearing" or killing them.

Ironically, despite their more ambiguous commitment to the Solomani Cause, the Old Solomani worlds have made many crucial contributions to the Solomani Confederation. Their educational systems produce brilliant statesmen and innovative scientists. Their industrial production drives the Solomani economy. Their military units tend to be well-trained and well-equipped, and generally have good morale. Without the Old Solomani worlds, the Solomani Confederation might indeed have become the comic-opera dictatorship most Imperial citizens consider it to be. With them, the Solomani present a serious and continuing challenge to Imperial authority.

Elias Treleven

Elias Treleven was born in 1067 on Culdee, in the Kukulcan subsector. At the age of 17, he volunteered to serve in SolSec, and was placed in the Confederation Army as a covert agent. Treleven's military career was aided by subtle SolSec manipulation behind the scenes, but he also showed considerable talent as a soldier. After earning a commission in 1089, he performed brilliantly in a variety of command assignments, honing his natural talent for leadership. During this period he was three times awarded the Blood Crest for battle injuries, and he was also decorated with the Order of Sol for valor. His politics were impeccable, and in 1096 he was chosen as a Delegate from the Army to the General Congress of that year. Two years later he reached the rank of major.

Unfortunately, while serving as military attaché to a diplomatic mission in the Spica sector, he was forced to reveal his SolSec affiliation. Despite this, he succeeded in his covert mission and returned to be placed in SolSec administration. His subsequent rise through SolSec ranks was rapid, especially after he served on the personal staff of Ivar Maclaurin (SolSec Coordinator from 1107 to 1115). In 1117 he personally intervened in the Kukulcan secession crisis, and although the situation was not resolved cleanly, his own reputation was improved. This made him the best candidate for Coordinator after the sudden demise of Marya Kibaki (SolSec Coordinator from 1115 to 1119, assassinated by a bomb placed in her personal grav transport).

Treleven's physical condition has deteriorated since his days in military uniform, and he is now slightly obese. He is still a crack shot and competent open-hand fighter. Unlike his last two predecessors, he is uninterested in political gamesmanship, except where it is necessary to secure his personal survival. Instead, he has turned his leadership talents to winning the loyalty of SolSec's upper echelons, turning the agency into a keen-edged weapon against internal dissension and external enemies alike. Given the divisions endemic to Solomani society, Treleven is in a position to become the most powerful man in the Confederation. His ultimate ambitions are known to no one.

If all else fails, SolSec can arrange for the dissident's assassination. Depending on local circumstances, the assassins will pay more or less attention to making the death look like an accident.

Some SolSec agents are trained for more traditional roles in foreign intelligence or counter-espionage. These are spies, saboteurs, and assassins who go into action against external threats to the Solomani Cause. They are usually well-trained and have superb "tradecraft."

SolSec and Solomani Society

The attitude of Solomani citizens toward SolSec monitors varies. In some societies, open monitors are regarded as public servants, rather like neighborhood police or safety officers. Elsewhere, open monitors may be cautiously mocked for their willingness to mind other people's business. The presence of secret monitors sometimes makes ordinary Solomani a little paranoid, policing their own speech and actions to conceal any hint of disloyalty. Regardless of their actual opinions, Solomani citizens usually publicly state their support for the monitoring program.

As a whole, SolSec is narrowly focused on a single mission with respect to the Solomani Cause. As a matter of policy, it avoids becoming embroiled in disputes over the minutiae of Solomani ideology. It also tries not to be used as a way for Solomani citizens to gain revenge against business or political rivals. SolSec policy is to concern itself only with clear, provable instances of sedition or treason. Solomani who openly speak out against the Solomani Cause, or betray the Confederation to foreign forces, are in trouble. More subtle differences of opinion are left to be resolved through the normal competition between

Solomani Party factions. Naturally, this general policy is sometimes broken by specific SolSec administrators, especially on worlds where SolSec has close ties to a local police state.

Since SolSec's vigilance is directed in large part inward, it often finds itself in an adversarial position with respect to the Solomani Party and the Confederation's military. Naturally, factions within the Party maintain their own intelligence organizations, trying to neutralize the threat of SolSec to themselves and direct SolSec toward their rivals. The Solomani Grand Fleet and Army also maintain military intelligence organizations, which are used not only to compile information about potential military threats, but also to defend against SolSec.

The result of all this is a constant invisible power struggle among the various Solomani institutions. Often the general population falls in the middle. Many a Solomani citizen has had to deal with the death or disappearance of a loved one, not even knowing *who* was behind their loss. SolSec? A death squad operated by a radical Party faction? Army or Naval Intelligence? The world's local secret police? A big corporation's security detail? Pride in Solomani superiority can be hard to maintain, given the silent civil war that sometimes rages within Solomani society.



THE VEGAN WORLDS

The Vegans are a minor starfaring race with a long history. They have never dominated the Rim, and in fact their psychology makes them a poor candidate for empire. Even so, their efficiently peaceful society and great technical ability has always made them a factor to contend with.

Today, Imperial policy toward Rim politics leans heavily on the Vegan Autonomous Region, a group of star systems which acts almost as an independent client state within the Imperial borders.

VEGANS

Vegans are actually not native to the Vega system, which has no habitable world of its own. Instead, they evolved on nearby Muan Gwi, from a species of presentient browsing herbivores who were adapted to a cool, arid environment.

Vegan Physiology

Present-day Vegans are vaguely humanoid, bisexual, and warm-blooded, with an upright bipedal posture. They average slightly over 7' in height, but their low-gravity origin makes them much less robust than Humaniti. They are physically rather weak, and cannot live on high-gravity worlds. The head, as in Humaniti, is a sensory appendage and brain case. Auditory organs are located in a collarlike structure around the neck, and are somewhat more sensitive than Human ears. Vegans have two eyes, but these are located inside the fleshy hood that dominates the head, covered by a transparent eyelidlike structure. This eye-covering has polarizing properties, protecting the eyes from glare as well as from windblown dust. It can be retracted when not needed. The eyes themselves are large, and can pick up radiation well into the infrared portion of the spectrum. The skull is fixed firmly in place, so the head as a whole cannot turn, but the hood containing the eyes can itself move through a large arc.

The mouth is a vertical slit in the upper thoracic region, with paired breathing/vocal slits to either side. Two mandibles are located in the upper chest, where they grind plant food between their opposing sets of teeth (Humans often find it very disturbing to watch Vegans eat). The urogenital opening is a vertical slit located on the front of the lower abdomen. To Human eyes there are no clear external differences between the sexes, although Vegans have no difficulty telling each other apart.

Where the forearm and hand would be on a Human, Vegans have three tentacles which serve as manipulative organs. These tentacles are more flexible than Human fingers but apparently yield no greater fine-manipulation ability, and actually provide a slightly inferior grip. Vegan legs end in broad, splayed feet, which serve to prevent them from sinking into soft sand. Other adaptations to a desert environment include a thick integument which covers the torso, its convoluted surface rich in blood vessels which allow the efficient radiation of heat. Vegans do not need to sweat, and all of their body orifices can be sealed tightly to prevent unnecessary moisture loss.

Vegans can expect to live 200 standard years before feeling the effects of age. There are records of Vegans reaching twice that age, especially where advanced medical technology is available.

Vegan Psychology

Vegans are calm creatures, lacking many of the passions which drive Humaniti. They are relatively unambitious, both as individuals and as a species. To a Vegan, wealth is a good thing to have, but it is far from the most important pursuit. Meanwhile, power is a terrible burden rather than an addiction.

Vegans and Humaniti

Vegans have spent most of their history as starfarers dealing with Humaniti. Their dealings began during the First Imperium, when the earliest Vegan Polity came under Human rule. The experience was not a pleasant one, as the natural diversity of Vegan culture was crushed under the Imperial insistence that all subject races accept Vilani traditions. As a result, the Vegans welcomed Terran victory during the Interstellar Wars, allying with the expanding Terran state early on. The Vegan Polity prospered under the Rule of Man, and suffered very little damage during the Long Night.

With the advent of the Third Imperium, the Vegan Polity was dissolved in accordance with Imperial policy. Vegans, like all sentient beings, had full civil and political rights under Imperial law. The polity was too large to be allowed existence within the Imperium, which generally preferred to deal with single worlds. The Vegans adapted, even allowing certain members of the Guardian *tuhir* to accept noble titles from the Empress Jacqueline.

After the Civil War, relations between the Vegans and the Imperium soured, and the native Vegan aristocracy was discontinued. By the time the Solomani Autonomous Region was established, Human immigrants represented many Vegan worlds within the Moot, a trend which proved to be disastrous. Under the Solomani, the Vegans were badly oppressed. Human colonies were established on many Vegan worlds to maintain Solomani influence. By 800 the entire Vegan region had come under direct Human rule, with Solomani governors installed in every system. For 200 years the Vegans were reduced to second-class citizenship on their own worlds.

The Rim War liberated the Vegans, and indeed the Imperium deliberately established the Vegan Autonomous District as a counterweight to those Solomani worlds which remained outside Imperial control. In effect, the old Vegan Polity has been resurrected as a client state within the Imperium itself. Officially, the Vegan government is staunchly loyal to the Imperium. Privately, many Vegans have acquired a distrust for Humaniti. This is not helped by the fact that Vegans are so long-lived. Many of today's most influential Vegans lived under Solomani occupation and saw the violence of the Rim War during their youth. Meanwhile, the Solomani populations remaining within the district are notorious troublemakers, tending toward violent adherence to the Solomani Cause. These tensions have been somewhat reduced by the Archduke's decision to relocate the capital of the Domain of Sol to Muan Gwi, but it will probably be a long time before Vegans are perfectly comfortable with their Human neighbors.

Vegan Racial Template

This 41-point template portrays Vegans. They are often encountered by anyone who travels, trades, or intrigues in the Rim. Vegan psychology is very similar to Human in some respects, so the races tend to get along very well.

Vegans average about 7', 2" tall, and weigh about 230 lbs.

Attributes

DX +1 [10].

Although Vegans are physically larger than Humans, they are slender and not very robust. As a result, an average Vegan is no stronger or tougher than an average Human. Vegans are somewhat more sure-footed and agile than Humans, although their manual dexterity is inferior (see below).

Advantages

Acute Hearing +1 [2], Cool [1], Extended Lifespan 2 [10], Infravision [15], Nictating Membrane 1 [10], Polarized Eyes [5], and Sensitive [5].

Vegans also get +1 to Survival (Desert) skill [1].

Vegans tend to be serene creatures, keenly interested in the thoughts and emotions of others. As a result, they tend to acquire a great deal of wisdom during their very long lives. Vegan adaptations to their home environment include the protective shield over their eyes and their ability to see into the infrared. Because of the construction of their head and eyes, Vegans may not buy the Peripheral Vision advantage.

While the advantage is not mandatory for Vegan characters, many Vegans have the equivalent of Common Sense.

Disadvantages

Congenial [-1], Dull [-1], G-Intolerance [-10], Humble [-1], and Poor Grip [-5].

Vegans like the company of others, especially those who belong to the same *tuhuir*. A Vegan will also enjoy the company of like-minded aliens. They are not very innovative, tending to stick to known methods and long-established traditions.

Vegans evolved at 0.5 standard gravity, and use an increment of 0.1 G rather than the Human standard of 0.2 G to calculate the effects of a different gravity.

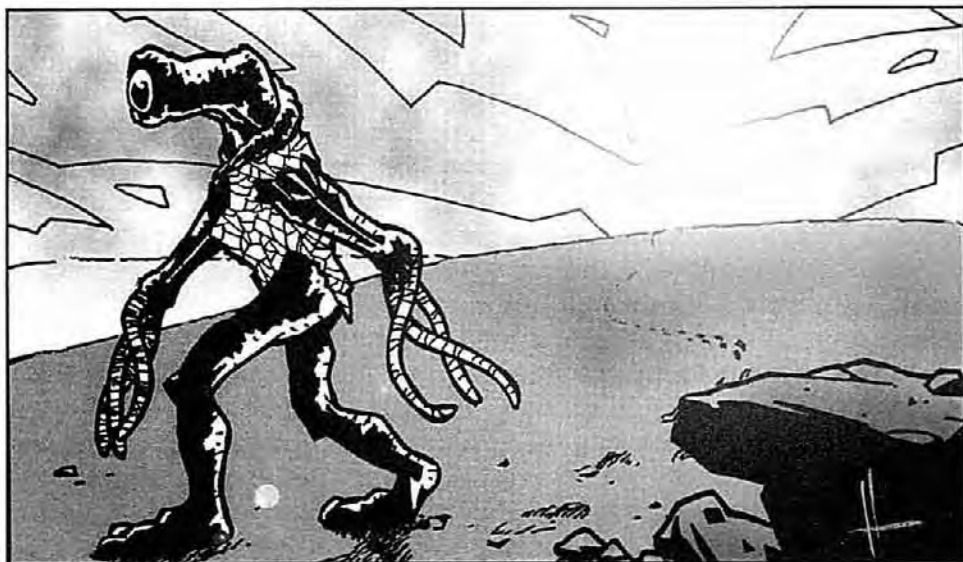
An adult Vegan will normally possess a Code of Honor or related disadvantage, representing commitment to the ideals of their *tuhuir*. Anyone playing a Vegan should work out the details of this Code of Honor with the GM. A typical *tuhuir* would impose at least -10 points of disadvantages.

Many Vegans encountered outside the Autonomous Region are not considered adults in their own society (see main text). Such Vegans are still searching for their self-identity and have not formed strong moral commitments. Such Vegans may make appealing player characters.

A Vegan in a position of social prominence is usually acutely uncomfortable, and few members of the species will accept any kind of high office for more than a few years at a time. The driving force behind a Vegan is *aesthetic* rather than acquisitive. To a Vegan, life is a work of art rather than a struggle for survival. He is happiest when he is able to live his life according to his innermost principles.

This artistic approach to life, combined with the Vegan's basic pacifism, gives rise to the unique social structure of the Vegan species. Vegan society is divided into hundreds of groups called *tuhuir*. *Tuhuir* is difficult to translate into Galanglic, but it might be best rendered as *culture*, *philosophy*, or *tao*. Each *tuhuir* has its own customs and traditions, its own interpretation of the proper way to live. Archaeology shows that the *tuhuir* were once separate societies, each associated with a particular geographic location like the nation-states of ancient Terra. Today, however, the *tuhuir* are intermingled in complex patterns.

Membership in a *tuhuir* is not hereditary. When a Vegan approaches sexual maturity (at about the age of 50 standard years) he leaves his family's home and begins a period of search, which may last for many years. Eventually, the individual chooses a *tuhuir*, committing himself to it for life. Only then is he considered an adult, ready for mating and mature responsibilities. In practice, about half of all Vegans enter the *tuhuir* of their parents (the exact percentage varies between *tuhuir*). Some rare individuals find that they enjoy the search as a way of life, and never join a *tuhuir*. These "pilgrims" are sometimes regarded disparagingly by other Vegans, but in fact they are often the race's greatest innovators. Most new *tuhuir* are founded by pilgrims who are able to construct a genuinely new set of principles for themselves, attracting others by the strength and aesthetic merit of their ideals.



Vegan Politics

Conflict between Vegan *tuhuir* is not unknown, but it is restrained by the Vegan Covenant. This is a written "constitution" which defines the minimal rights of all individual Vegans, and forbids the various *tuhuir* from using mass violence against each other. The covenant's origins are lost in the distant past, but it is thought to be at least 10,000 years old, going back to the first great era of exploration and cultural interaction on Muan Gwi. It has been translated dozens of times with changes in Vegan language, and over the millennia it has acquired a huge body of supporting legal and philosophical commentary. Although most Vegans have no religion in the Human sense, they do regard the covenant with the same reverence Humaniti would feel for a sacred document. All legitimate *tuhuir* obey

it, although there are rare heretical *tuhuir* who reject it. These renegades commit such crimes as forcing their young to remain within their *tuhuir* of birth, maintaining *tuhuir* of slaves, or carrying on violent vendettas against other *tuhuir*.

Each *tuhuir* has its own leadership structure and its own laws, and each acts as an effectively independent government over its own members. The Vegan Autonomous District as a whole is governed by a single *tuhuir* whose name translates roughly as "Guardians of the Inviolable Covenant." The Guardians have existed in one form or another for thousands of years. Today, they act as an efficient civil service which manages every Vegan-ruled world. They mediate between the other *tuhuir*, keeping conflicts from getting out of hand and enforcing obedience of the covenant. They also manage the Vegan species' foreign policy, pursuing diplomatic contacts with the Imperium and other governments. Finally, they support warrior *tuhuir* who act as the district's internal police and planetary defense forces.

This rule by one *tuhuir* works surprisingly well, possibly because the Guardians have one of the lowest rates of inheritance of all the major *tuhuir*. Guardians tend to have few children, and those children almost never choose to return to the *tuhuir*. As a result, the Guardians are more like a monastic order than a hereditary aristocracy, and they must attract young members from every other *tuhuir* in order to function. This gives them the experience with a multitude of traditions necessary to mediate among hundreds of widely varying *tuhuir*.

MINOR RACES

The Solomani Rim is actually rather lacking in non-Human sentient species. Aside from the Vegans, no other species native to the region has wide-ranging importance. As if to make up for this, however, Humans have brought several highly intelligent species with them from Terra.

DOLPHINS

Fully sentient Dolphins are members of the species *Tursiops galactis*, which was developed through genetic engineering from the presentient Atlantic bottlenose dolphin. The presentient species still exists, though primarily confined to Terra. The uplifted species was developed during the Interstellar Wars period, to aid Human colonists on worlds with substantial oceans. Today they live on many worlds throughout the Solomani Rim. They do not travel often and they do not settle worlds independently.

An adult *Tursiops galactis* can be up to about 10' long, weighing over 800 lbs. He is slate gray in coloration, shading to white on the belly. A layer of tough fat under the skin gives some protection. A Dolphin can swim at about 25 miles per hour, and can move much faster in short bursts. Dolphins are air-breathers, but can remain submerged for up to an hour at a time. They have been adapted so as to be able to breathe a variety of polluted atmospheres, as long as sufficient oxygen content is present. The presentient dolphin had no manipulative organs (other than its mouth), but *Tursiops galactis* has been given short finger-like projections along the edges of its flippers. These are useless on their own, but can be used to operate waldos or other artificial manipulative devices. A Dolphin which must move in Human society normally wears a mobility suit, which has waldos and uses gravitic support for mobility.

Dolphins can be aggressive creatures in the wild, but they are generally friendly to Humaniti and have never been known to attack them without provocation. The main obstacle to Dolphin-Human interaction is the difficulty in communication. Very few Humans have ever managed to learn any of the Dolphins' natural speech. A few Dolphins can approximate Human language, but their vocal apparatus is too different to produce the proper sounds.

Dolphin Racial Template

This 98-point template represents the "uplifted" Dolphins encountered in the Solomani Rim. The ancestral "wild" species is smaller, less intelligent, and has a number of other features which differ from this template.

An adult Dolphin averages about 9' 8" and weighs about 800 lbs.

Attributes

ST +6 [42], DX +1 [10], IQ -1 [-10], HT +2 [20].

Dolphins are strong and massive, but average slightly less intelligence than the Human norm. ST is bought with the -40% "No fine manipulators" limitation.

Advantages

Acute Hearing +3 [6], Alertness +2 [10], Blunt Teeth [0], Cool [1], Damage Resistance 1 [3], Early Maturation [5], Enhanced Move (Swimming) [10], Extra Hit Points +2 [10], Filter Lungs [5], Less Sleep 1 [3], Nictating Membrane 1 [10], Oxygen Storage [14], Peripheral Vision [15], Pressure Support [10], Sensitive [5], Sonar Vision [25], 3D Spatial Sense [10], and Ultrasonic Speech [25].

Dolphins get Acrobatics at DX [4], Gesture at IQ+3 [1], and Tracking at IQ-1 (aquatic only) [1].

Dolphins have a superb echo-location capability in addition to their vision and other senses. They are physically tough and can swim quickly. Their respiratory systems have been altered to deal with atmospheric contaminants. They reach adulthood about twice as fast as Humans, relative to their full lifespan. They are slightly empathic, and can "read" the body language of Humans and other Dolphins. They receive a number of other special abilities due to their aquatic origins and physical structure.

Disadvantages

Aquatic [-40], Chauvinistic [-1], Chummy [-5], Horizontal [-10], Inconvenient Size [-10], Increased Life Support [-10], No Manipulators [-50], Nosy [-1], and Short Lifespan 1 [-10].

Dolphins cannot function out of water, requiring a mobility suit or environment tank if they are going to travel on land. A properly equipped mobility suit can also circumvent their No Manipulators disadvantage while worn. Dolphins also require about twice as much food as Humans.

While generally friendly toward other species, Dolphins are always aware of racial differences. They are very social, with a highly developed sense of curiosity.

Though not technically Mute, Dolphins do treat non-aquatic vocal languages as M/VH. (Humans, in turn, treat the Dolphin language as M/VH, too.) This does give a +3 bonus to their Gesture skill (already factored into it), but does not give any additional disadvantage points.

Gurungan Racial Template

This 12-point template represents the insular Gurungan race. Anyone traveling in or near the Ultima subsector might come across a small group in an environment tank, disdainfully interacting with aliens. Intelligent but enigmatic, they make interesting patrons and even better villains.

A Gurungan female averages about 6" from crown to tentacle tips, and weighs about 250 lbs. Gurungan males are much smaller and non-sentient.

Attributes

ST +1 [10], DX -1 [-10], HT +3 [30].

Gurungan are large, robust creatures, although they are somewhat less agile than Humans and their manipulatory organs are slightly less versatile.

Advantages

Acute Hearing +5 [15], Ambidexterity [10], Collected [5], Extra Arms (Total of six, normal length) [40], Extra Flexibility [10], Sharp Teeth [5], Sonar Vision [0], and Ultrasonic Speech [0].

Gurungan are virtually blind in the visual spectrum, but they have a sonar sense that is at least the equal of a Terran Dolphin's. They are also unusually tough-minded, almost immune to fear. They have six tentacles, which are quite flexible and can all be used with equal facility.

Gurungan pay no points for Sonar Vision or Ultrasonic Speech because these serve in lieu of standard vision and speech.

Gurungan also get +2 to Free Fall skill [2] and +1 to Tactics skill [2].

Disadvantages

Aquatic [-40], Bad Grip [-10], Callous [-6], Congenial [-1], Hive Mentality [-20], Intolerance (All non-Gurungan) [-10], and Invertebrate [-20].

Gurungan have no bony structure, maintaining body shape through the use of pressurized interior vacuoles and tubules. They can operate out of water for brief periods with life-support equipment, but they hate to do so. Their preferred aquatic environment requires expensive life support during space travel or prolonged land visits. They use their full Move when swimming, reduced to a Move of 2 when out of water. Gurungan tentacles are not good at tasks which involve a firm manipulative grip.

Gurungan are ruthless and never take the suffering of others into account. They prefer company – *Gurungan* company – as part of their race-before-individual mentality. They take no thought for personal advancement or comfort, and have no instinct for self-preservation.

Most Gurungan intensely dislike dealing with outsiders.

One solution is the Delphinese language, a kind of pidgin which uses sign language and a set of sounds that both Humaniti and Dolphins can easily generate. Most uplifted Dolphins understand Delphinese, except for a few which have been raised in societies completely divorced from all contact with Humaniti. Computer translation gear can also help bridge the linguistic gap.

Dolphins generally detest Gurungan (see below). The feeling is mutual.



OTHER UPLIFTED SPECIES

Aside from Dolphins, Terrans tampered with a number of other species to make them more useful partners in the colonial enterprise. For example, chimpanzees, gibbons, gorillas, and orangutans were all altered for greater intelligence and various other desirable traits. An uplifted elephant was smaller, more intelligent, and had better manipulative ability than its ancestors, though not truly sapient. A non-Vargr neo-dog species was created as well. It also failed to achieve Human levels of intelligence; Vargr reactions to these "half-breeds" vary as widely as Human reactions to chimpanzees. None of these species ever became as widespread or numerous as Dolphins, but they might still be encountered on various worlds of the Rim.

GURUNGAN

Native to Ugarup, this aquatic species is little-known outside its own small corner of the Imperium. The Gurungan have had an uneasy relationship with Humaniti for thousands of years. When contacted by the First Imperium, they were at a Stone Age level of technology. The Vilani exploited their homeworld's resources ruthlessly. After the Interstellar Wars, the Terrans took a more liberal approach with the Gurungan, allowing them to acquire advanced technology in trade. Today the Gurungan industrial economy is still dependent on outside trade, since the Gurungan have a great deal of difficulty producing their own high-tech goods. They are extremely canny negotiators, however, and have usually been able to get what they want from Humaniti.

A Gurungan vaguely resembles an octopus, with a bulbous upper body and six flexible tentacles. Their bodies contain a hollow cavity which can generate a wide range of sonic vibrations, giving rise to both speech and a sophisticated sonar sense. Between the tentacles, at the base of the upper body, is a toothy maw. Since Gurungan are creatures of deep water, and their home world's red dwarf sun gives off little visible light, they have evolved without eyes. Instead, they use sonar to examine their surroundings. They are also sensitive to chemical traces in the water.

Gurungan breathe oxygen dissolved in seawater. They are most comfortable in water with a combination of salts and impurities similar to that found in the oceans of their homeworld. Barring this, any other kind of salt water is acceptable. A Gurungan exposed to air will be irritated, then uncomfortable, then in great agony, dying in less than an hour. Gurungan can suffer severe internal injuries when exposed to gravity without the support of their water environment. Gravitic "support suits" exist, but few Gurungan can afford them. Gurungan can survive indefinitely in zero gravity, provided that they can breathe and are kept moist.

Gurungan possess an odd psychology, and have very different concepts of causality and object classification from those of Humaniti. The most prominent example of this is a kind of "racial solipsism." Gurungan believe that all events throughout the entire universe are caused by the will of various Gurungan or of the Gurungan species as a whole. If an event surprises a Gurungan, she assumes that other Gurungan caused it. This gives rise to a distinctive speech pattern when dealing with outsiders: they address themselves or other Gurungan who are present, never non-Gurungan.

Meanwhile, Gurungan have little concept of individuality, but have a very strong race-consciousness. As a result, most Gurungan are willing to undergo great hardship or even death to advance the fortunes of their species as a whole. They mistrust all other sentient beings, considering them to be unpredictable and dangerous. On the whole, the Gurungan ability to understand and engage in commercial trade often blinds Humaniti to the areas in which their minds are weirdly different. As a result, Humaniti who are used to trading with the Gurungan are often unpleasantly surprised by their actions as soon as the relationship goes beyond the commercial realm.

Only Gurungan females are sentient. The males are much smaller creatures which enter into a parasitical relationship with their mates. Indeed, during mating the male Gurungan attaches himself permanently to the female. Eventually almost his entire body atrophies away, leaving only a bump on the female's surface. As a result, Gurungan have almost no concept of gender or sexuality. They consider such ideas strange and obscene, and think of two-gendered races as consisting of two distinct species living in an unnatural relationship.



Encounter With the Gurungan

"Finally, I was shown into the chamber where the 'pods' were swimming in their environment tank. Strange-looking creatures, they were. Especially when they opened their mouths. And I could have sworn they were watching me, even though they didn't have eyes.

"After a minute or so, a voice came from the translator bolted to the side of the tank. 'The Human is here, as we predicted,' it said. That set me back for a moment, since I didn't have an appointment.

"Does this suggest an opportunity for us?" the translator asked. It sounded like the same voice. 'Let us examine and taste it.'

"Then they waited. After a while, I realized they were waiting for me. I cleared my throat, hoping that I couldn't take that last comment literally, and said, 'I'm told that you are looking for some replacement parts for an LSP robotic mining drill. I may be able to deliver if you can provide me with the specifications.'

"They sloshed around in their tank, in dead silence although they looked agitated. Then, 'Is it associated with the needed segments? These? And these?'

"I couldn't see any of them operating a control, but a screen next to the translator came alive. A specifications list scrolled by, pretty fast. I caught most of it, enough to see that I could probably fill the order. 'Yes, I can provide these parts.'

"There was a weird chattering noise, then the same voice said, 'It is associated. We must thank the others for their consideration. We must consider what gift is appropriate in response.'

"I was starting to get into the swing of it by then, so I responded at once. 'The parts are worth 17,000 Imperial credits, or the equivalent in gold or platinum. They can be provided as soon as I'm paid. Uh, as soon as the gift is delivered.'

"We chase a false echo," said the voice. 'The ones who made this Human cannot expect such an exorbitant gift. Perhaps 16,000 credits would be appropriate.'

"All right," I said at once. Better to unload the equipment quickly than have them give up on the deal. I needed the money a lot more than I needed black-market machine parts. It worked out all right, after that. They were almost understandable as we arranged for payment and pickup, even though they still sounded as if they were talking it all out among themselves. It wasn't until I got back to my office that I realized I was shaking. Something about them just didn't sit well with my reptile brain, I guess."

*—the journals of
freelance broker Kai Perrine*

STARSHIPS

Solomani Confederation starships very rarely exceed TL11. TL12 ships would need be imports, difficult to maintain in peace and impossible in war. Most civilian and small military starships are constructed at a TL10 standard, and can be drawn up using the modular design sequence in *GURPS Traveller*.

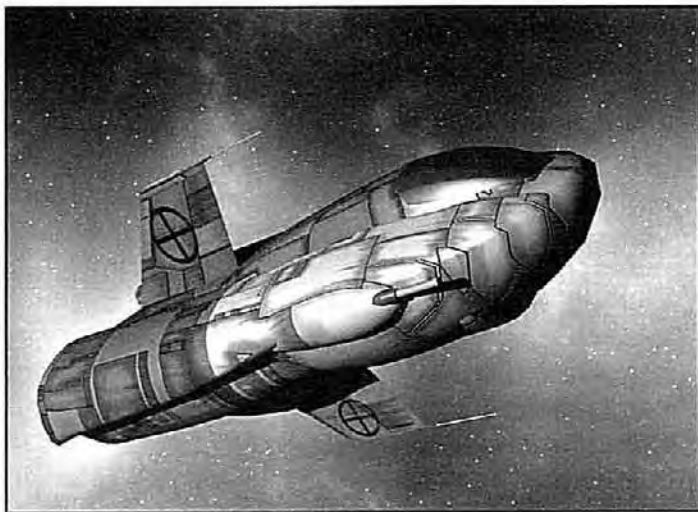
Solomani designs are usually similar to those found in the Imperium, with a few classes showing Aslan influence. Armed Solomani ships rely on laser weapons more heavily than their Imperial counterparts. Smaller starships often arrange weapons in fixed mounts rather than in turrets. The Solomani normally use unmodified Imperial designs for small craft.

TL10 URIEL-CLASS 200-TON ESCORT

This ship class is designed for long-range, long-duration protection missions. It can often be found escorting merchant convoys in dangerous regions of space. Solomani privateers sometimes adapt the design for commerce raiding, although a relative lack of cargo space makes the ship impractical for large-scale piracy. The hold is normally filled with provisions and munitions for long-range voyages in any case.

The class design was based on Aslan patterns encountered along the spinward borders of the Solomani Sphere. Ships in the class are usually named after deities or divine beings from various Terran mythologies.

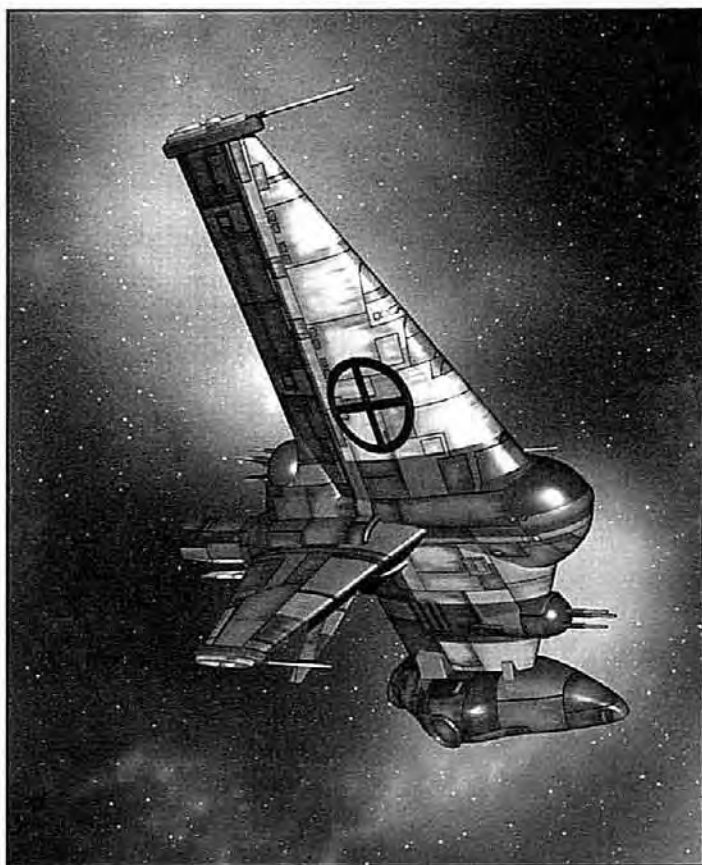
- **Crew:** Captain/pilot, navigator/sensor operator, engineer. Captain and engineer often double as gunners in combat, while the navigator is usually trained as a medic.
- **Design:** 200-ton SL Hull, DR 100, 2 Lasers and 2 Missile Racks are installed in fixed mounts. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 38 Maneuver, 10 Jump, 80 Fuel, 3 Staterooms, 1 Low Berth, 1 Utility, 1 Fuel Processor, 10 Cargo.
- **Statistics:** EMass 440.2, LMass 490.2, Cost MCr60.2, HP: 22,500. Size Modifier: +8.
- **Performance:** Accel 3.1 Gs (3.45 Gs empty), Jump 4, Air Speed 2,757.



TL10 COLUMBUS-CLASS 200-TON FLEET COURIER

The *Columbus*-class courier is designed for the transmission of information between Solomani fleet elements. It carries orders, messages, news, and reports between Solomani Navy task forces and their bases. It is also used by SolSec to convey monitor reports and other intelligence data.

The fleet courier is sometimes turned over to senior SolSec or Solomani Party officials for use on official business. PCs with SolSec or Party rank of 6 or higher (see *Solomani Characters*, p. 24) may have access to such a ship. This counts as a 51-point Ship Patron advantage (see p. GT84). The ship is theoretically for official use only, but in practice the holder may normally use it as he pleases. It comes with a monthly budget of up to Cr10,000 for fuel and incidental expenses (excess funds revert to the Solomani Party or SolSec).



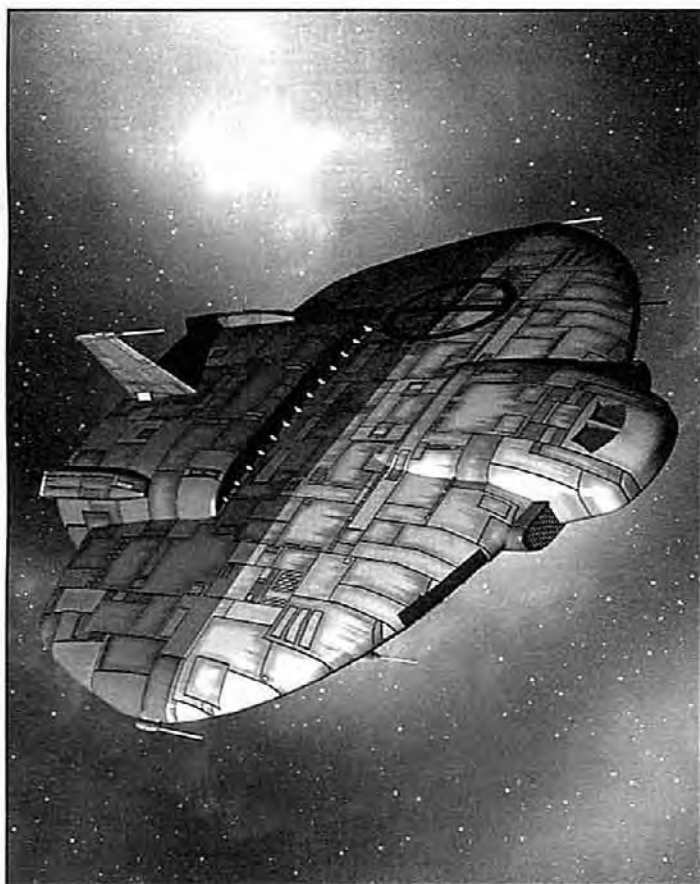
- **Crew:** Captain, pilot/sensor operator, navigator/commo operator, medic, engineer, and two gunners.
- **Design:** 200-ton SL Hull, DR 100, 2 Turrets with 3 Lasers each. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 28 Maneuver, 8 Jump, 60 Fuel, 7 Staterooms, 1 Utility, 1 Fuel Processor, 1 Vehicle Bay (20-ton gig), 7.5 Cargo.
- **Statistics:** EMass 397.2, LMass 479.7, Cost MCr52.6 (does not include gig, usually MCr5.7), HP: 22,500. Size Modifier: +8.
- **Performance:** Accel 2.34 Gs (2.82 Gs without cargo or gig), Jump 3, Air Speed 2,250.

TL10 ADAM SMITH-CLASS 400-TON FREE TRADER

This moderate-sized merchant vessel is typical of the ships used by small corporations or individual entrepreneurs within the Solomani Confederation. It is rarely seen within the Imperial part of the Solomani Rim, since its jump-2 drives are insufficient to cross the Rimward Gap. In Solomani space it is ubiquitous.

Solomani corporations are like their Imperial counterparts in the practice of lending "free trader" ships to their favored employees. The *Adam Smith* class is the type of merchant vessel most often used for such patronage. If a PC has access to such a ship, it counts as a 59-point Ship Patron advantage. This assumes that the ship's owner skims off 25% of all profits. Many individual ship masters modify the basic design for their own use.

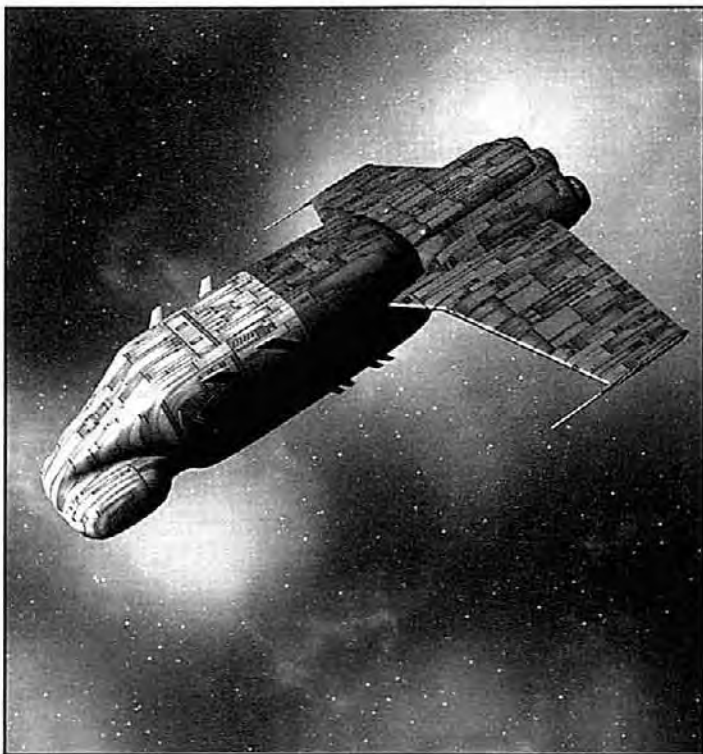
- **Crew:** Captain/pilot, navigator/sensor operator, two engineers, and steward/medic.
- **Design:** 400-ton SL Hull, DR 100. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 36 Maneuver, 12 Jump, 80 Fuel, 13 Staterooms, 1 Utility, 1 Vehicle Bay (20-ton gig), 1 Fuel Processor, 113.5 Cargo.
- **Statistics:** EMass 481.3, LMass 1,093.8, Cost MCr66.2 (does not include gig, usually MCr5.7), HP: 37,500. Size Modifier: +9.
- **Performance:** Accel 1.32 Gs (2.99 Gs without cargo or gig), Jump 2, Air Speed 2,078.



TL10 INDEPENDENCE-CLASS 1,000-TON PATROL CRUISER

These cruisers are the ships most often encountered patrolling space near worlds or along major trade routes in the Solomani Confederation. They are used to enforce customs regulations, perform inspections, and defend small merchant ships. They are designed to overpower any ship likely to fall into the hands of pirates or "freelance" adventuring groups. These ships have rather cramped and austere quarters, and long-term duty aboard them is not popular.

Solomani patrol cruisers are usually named after famous seagoing vessels from Terran or Solomani history.



- **Crew:** Captain, pilot, navigator, sensor operator, commo operator, five engineers, medic, cutter pilot, and 10 gunners. The gunners also double as ship's troops. Up to two squads of marines can also be carried for ground-to-orbit operations, although this requires that all but two staterooms be used with double occupancy.
- **Design:** 1,000-ton SL Hull, DR 100, 10 Turrets with 3 Lasers each. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 140 Maneuver, 50 Jump, 400 Fuel, 22 Staterooms, 2 Utilities, 2 Vehicle Bays (one for a 50-ton Modular Cutter per pp. GT142-143, one for a spare 30-ton Module), 4 Fuel Processors, 18.5 Cargo.
- **Statistics:** EMass 1,856.6, LMass 2,121.1 (including standard load of Modular Cutter, Passenger Module, and triple-Laser Weapons Pod module), Cost MCr284.7 (does not include Modular Cutter or modules; standard loadout costs MCr14.7), HP: 67,500. Size Modifier: +10.
- **Performance:** Accel 2.64 Gs (3.02 Gs without cargo or small crafts), Jump 4, Air Speed 2,815.

History



Astrographic Slang

Several terms in common use in the Solomani Rim refer to local astrographic features. These terms appear frequently in this chapter, but may also be used by veteran travelers.

Corridor: Ancient term for a chain of jump-2 accessible worlds in the Sol sub-sector, stretching from Terra to Nusku. The Corridor channeled interstellar travel before the development of jump-3 drives, and was a primary battleground in the Interstellar Wars.

Outback: Term which has changed in precise meaning, but generally applies to a set of worlds to trailing or rimward of Terra. During the Interstellar Wars, "the Outback" referred to the scattering of red-dwarf stars accessible by jump-1 travel from Fenris or Prometheus (sometimes including Ember, Loki, and Dismal). Under the Rule of Man, the term was more generally applied, taking in all the worlds to trailing and rimward of Terra which had never been colonized by Vilani. Today, the term is normally only used in the vicinity of Terra, with its original meaning.

Rim Main: A chain of jump-1 accessible worlds stretching all the way across the Solomani Rim sector. Within the Solomani Rim, the Main begins in the Harlequin sub-sector, runs through the Vegan District, and ends in the Albadawi subsector. The Rim Main is a principal trade route and has considerable strategic importance.

Rimward Gap: An almost-continuous band of space stretching across the Solomani Rim sector containing no stars, which requires a deep-space stopover or at least a jump-3 ship to cross. The Rimward Gap passes a few parsecs to rimward of Terra, and marks the boundary of ancient Vilani expansion in the region.

Sirius Gap: The Sirius system sits between the old Terran colony at Fenris and the cluster of worlds centered on Shulimik. Bypassing Sirius requires a jump-3 ship or better. In ancient times, there was no way for ships to refuel in the Sirius system, so passing between Fenris and Shulimik or Markhashi required considerable logistical planning. This fact was of strategic significance during the Interstellar Wars, and again during the Long Night. Today, the Sirius Gap has been "filled in" by a complex of refueling stations at Sirius.

The Solomani Rim has a very long history. Interstellar civilization has been continuously present for over 7,000 years. Travelers here will find little scope for exploration of new territory, but they can still get lost in the complex interactions of hundreds of local civilizations.

THE FIRST IMPERIUM

Although Humaniti originally evolved on Terra, the first Human interstellar civilization appeared about 160 parsecs coreward, on Vland. As Vilani influence slowly expanded, various minor races acquired the jump drive from Vilani traders. This often led to a chain of technology transfers across dozens of parsecs, as each new interstellar civilization made contact with its own trade partners out in the galactic wilderness. By about -6000, direct Vilani control had reached only about 60 parsecs out from Vland, but the jump drive had already reached the Rim at third hand.

The Vegans were the first race native to the Rim to receive the jump drive and establish an interstellar state. They were not as inherently conservative as the Vilani, but their numbers tended to grow very slowly, and they were not interested in far-ranging exploration. By -5000, Vegan colonization extended about 5 parsecs out from Muan Gwi and had stopped there.

At about the same time, the Vilani established their first foothold in the Rim, at Karpaty (then called Lakish). The Vilani were then engaged in the centuries-long Consolidation Wars, bringing every known interstellar culture under their own direct authority. Early reconnaissance indicated that the Vegans were the last independent civilization to rimward, with nothing but unexplored wilderness beyond. The Vilani therefore expanded methodically down the Rim Main until they came into direct contact with the Vegan Polity, about -4450. Once the Vilani had built an advance base on Shulgiasu, they opened hostilities. The Vegan warrior *tuhuir* acquitted themselves well in space battle, but they were hopelessly outmatched when confronted on the ground by robust Human troops. In -4404 the Vegans surrendered and accepted Vilani rule.

After the Vegan conquest, the Vilani continued to expand to rimward and spinward along the Rim Main, but the main effort of the Consolidation Wars went elsewhere. The bureau Sharurshid eventually took over all responsibility for administering the Rim Province. Further colonization was slow, but a few worlds in the Albadawi subsector were colonized by the time all further exploration was brought to a halt (about -4000). In -4038, what was to become the Solomani Rim sector was organized as a province of the Ziru Sirka, with its first capital at Shulgiasu.

About -3500, a dissident group fled the Imperium and set up a minor state centered on Dingir. Eventually this state became powerful enough to warrant Imperial intervention, and about -3400 the Imperium conquered it. The Vilani expanded no further, hampered by the Rimward Gap and by sheer administrative inertia. Fatefully, the Imperial advance had stopped a mere 3 parsecs from preindustrial Terra.

RISE OF THE TERRANS

The critical feature of Terran civilization was its diversity. The population of Terra was divided into hundreds of distinct cultural groups. Some of these groups had sovereign nation-states with their own territory, while others did not. During the planet's industrial era, international conflict was endemic, with the largest nation-states threatening at any time to plunge the entire planet into general war. At the time of the first Terran manned spaceflight (the *Vostok 1* probe, in -2560) this had already happened twice, the second war involving the use of nuclear weapons.

The next few decades were a time of almost constant crisis. Wars large and small occurred all over the planet. Even the largest, wealthiest nation-states suffered internal conflict. Meanwhile, the uncontrolled growth of industrial civilization was disrupting the planet's ecological balance, leading to climate change and the destruction of wild ecosystems everywhere. Eventually the major nations of Terra realized that their survival depended on closer cooperation. The Treaty of New York (signed in -2499) placed much of the military force of the most important nations under the direct control of the United Nations. The UN had up to this point been a simple forum for international debate, with no real power of its own. Now the "great powers" of Terra granted it significant authority, and began to use it as a tool for managing the conflicts and crises of the time.

One of the most important agencies of the new UN was the United Nations Space Coordination Agency. Many nations had their own "space programs," but the UNSCA had the authority to coordinate between these in matters such as traffic control, orbit assignment, and radio frequency allocation. While handling these mundane responsibilities, the UNSCA also became a clearinghouse for all of the information that space exploration generated. While international competition in space remained fierce, the UNSCA played an important role in preventing that competition from turning violent.

By about -2460, scientific outposts had been established on Luna, Mars, Mercury, and Ceres. Space resource exploitation and industry were beginning to grow rapidly. One of the most ambitious projects of the time was a series of long-range colonial expeditions, sponsored primarily by the European Union. At least a dozen medium-sized planetoids were hollowed out, fitted with reaction drives, and manned with crew and colonists in cold-sleep.



Human Taxonomy

All of the Human subspecies known to Imperial science are members of the *hominid* family, which originated on Terra perhaps 5 million years ago. The hominids evolved naturally on Terra for most of their history, responding in particular to the ice ages of the Pleistocene period (from about 2 million years ago).

When the Ancients first visited Terra about -300,000, the planet had recently emerged from such an ice age. The most advanced hominid at the time was an "archaic" version of *Homo sapiens*. This species was capable of abstract thought, had some linguistic capability, and could use technology (including chipped-stone tools, cured animal hides, and the deliberate control of fire). What happened next is unclear, but Terran paleontology shows that *Homo sapiens* spread rapidly into new environments and gave rise to several new subspecies, including *Homo neanderthalensis* and "modern" *Homo sapiens*. Eventually, modern *Homo sapiens* displaced or absorbed all other Human subspecies on Terra, so that all present-day Solomani are descended from this stock.

Meanwhile, the Ancients took samples of *Homo sapiens* stock with them back to the stars. To the Ancients, Humans were apparently servants on the order of clever pets, sapient beings who could be taught to perform simple tasks. Fostered by the Ancients, Human populations were established on at least 50 different worlds. Unfortunately, within a few thousand years the Final War began, and the Ancients destroyed themselves. Humans living on the Ancient worlds were decimated, the survivors forced to fall back on the skills of a more primitive existence.

While the Ancient civilization prospered, the Ancients apparently performed genetic experiments on some of their Human subjects, leading to divergence between the scattered Human populations. This tendency was amplified after the Final War, when all of these tiny groups were forced to survive under conditions very different from those of old Terra. The natural result was rapid evolution in dozens of different directions. Today, there are 46 known surviving Human subspecies. The process of speciation remains incomplete among Humans. A biologist's definition requires that different species cannot successfully breed with each other, but all of the known Human subspecies are at least somewhat interfertile. To be sure, some combinations are rare, or require medical intervention to bring about.

First Contact?

There are a number of strange elements in the commonly known story about Terran-Vilani contact. To this day, some Imperial historians suggest that at least some Terrans knew a great deal more about the Vilani than is normally believed, even *before* the American expedition to Barnard's Star in -2424.

For example, there is the whole question of why the Americans chose Barnard's Star as their target. Years before, various deep-space telescopes had already detected an Earthlike planet at Alpha Centauri (later named Prometheus). Indeed, in -2468 the European Union had launched the greatest of its generation ships toward Alpha Centauri, and in -2424 the world community expected to hear from the new colony at any time. Against such a prospect, the American statement that "scientific reasons" justified the choice of Barnard's Star rang hollow and was widely criticized in the world media. Some European journalists observed (rather caustically) that the Americans simply wanted to avoid playing messenger for the new Prometheus colony. In retrospect, another possible justification for the choice was that the American government *knew ahead of time* that the expedition would contact aliens at Barnard's Star.

The source of such putative knowledge is unknown. Perhaps some renegade Vilani, or a member of an Imperial subject race, had secretly been in contact with the United States government. Or perhaps the "Roswell" legend was true after all. Actually, there may be no reason to indulge in such wild speculation. Once the Terrans had the jump drive themselves, it would have been natural to examine astronomical records for evidence of nearby interstellar civilizations. By -2424, the Sandage Deep-Space Telescope and other similar instruments were extremely powerful. It was (barely) theoretically possible for the emissions generated by Vilani starships to be detected even at the distance of Barnard's Star, 2 parsecs away. The American government owned the Sandage telescope, and so could have had secret access to such results.

The first (and one of the largest) of these "generation ships" was sent to the nearby Alpha Centauri system, where an Earthlike world was already known to exist. Others were designed to scatter through the galaxy, finding Human-compatible planets for settlement. The project was immensely expensive, but a Promethean spirit had settled over Terra, and it seemed that nothing was beyond the Human grasp.

During this period, the UNSCA maintained a number of scientific-research stations throughout the Terran system. The UNSCA licensed the technology produced by these labs to the various national and corporate space forces, gaining a source of income independent of the UN's tax base. Indeed, such licenses eventually began to pay a significant portion of the overall UN budget, increasing the UN's independence and improving its reputation.

One of the labs, in the asteroid belt, was charged with developing reactionless drives for cheap interplanetary transportation. By -2458 this lab had succeeded in producing the first reactionless thrusters, but it remained open to work on further improvements. It was here, in -2434, that the Terrans first developed the jump drive.

At first, the prototype jump drive was extremely limited in range. It was used only within Sol system, as a fast means of reaching the outer planets or the cometary cloud. After several generations of improvement, the United States Space Force first tried an interstellar expedition. Jump-drive ships operating from a base at Luna made several trips to a point in deep space, about 1 parsec coreward of Sol. After a makeshift fuel depot had been established there, the Americans launched a full-scale expedition to Barnard's Star. The expedition spent a year at the target star, returning in -2424. The expedition had been planned as a triumphant testimony to American technology, but in the end the astronauts returned in secret. At the orders of their superiors, they reported to a specially called session of the UNSCA governing board.

The American expedition had contacted intelligent life: the Vilani crew of a small prospecting base. To everyone's astonishment, the "aliens" were biologically Human, but they belonged to a culture that had no Terran roots. They claimed to be citizens of an interstellar state whose border was only a few parsecs from Sol, an empire which was ancient, vast, and immensely powerful. They were, if anything, *amused* by their Terran guests.

The news took some time to sink in, and was met with a variety of reactions, from sheer denial to stark terror to unbridled optimism. For most, however, the reaction was one of *fear and anger*. The Vilani presented a terrible threat, and a kind of insult as well.

THE INTERSTELLAR WARS

Knowledge of the Imperium was a tremendous spur to Terran space development. Expeditions were sent to meet with the Vilani on Barnard, and later to visit the more populous worlds of the Imperial Rim Province. Meanwhile, the UN quietly repealed many of the treaties and agreements that had limited the military uses of space. Most of the major nation-states immediately began building starships and experimenting with space weaponry. The European colony at Alpha Centauri was contacted and brought back into the main body of Terran civilization. The United States set up an outpost at Barnard's Star, even while the Vilani continued to prospect and mine the system. Both Terra and the new colonies built fortifications and ground defenses.

Along with all of this activity was an almost frantic effort to reduce the Vilani technological advantage. The UN, various national governments, and a host of private entities all began heavy investment in research. Meanwhile, a few

Terran entrepreneurs made overtures to the Vilani themselves, trading medical and biological technology in exchange for examples of Vilani engineering. The Vilani probably felt that they got the better end of the bargain, not realizing how quickly the Terrans would reverse-engineer the technology they received. One critical item developed during this period was a Terran version of the Vilani jump-1 drive, allowing the Terrans their first easy access to the nearest stars.

The Vilani apparently neither noticed nor cared about any of this activity. To them, the Terrans were simply one more minor race on the fringes of civilization, or possibly an *alliance* of minor races (the Vilani at first failed to understand Terran ethnic diversity). As the Terrans took every opportunity to assert their rights, Imperial officials negotiated, but soon grew impatient with these new and arrogant barbarians.

Tensions rose and armed forces on both sides began edging toward a provocation. Finally, in -2408, a Vilani merchant caravan approached too near the American base at Barnard, ignoring the base's traffic-control signals. The Americans opened fire, destroying two of the ships before the rest could get out of range.



Lorette Strider (-2468 to -2408)

Lorette Kathryn Strider was born in -2468 in Kansas City, Kan. At the age of 8 she avidly followed NASA's Comet Halley Intercept Mission, forming an ambition to become an astronaut which never left her. After attending the University of Arizona, she joined the U.S. Space Force. She worked on the construction of the Oceanus Procellarium facility on Luna and was the first commander of Phobos Station. The greatest turning point in her career came in -2427. In that year, she was selected to command the international crew of *StarLeaper One*, the first Terran interstellar mission to use the new jump drive. Her mission to Barnard's Star led to first contact with the Vilani.

Following the Vilani contact, Strider accepted a position with the United Nations as one of the first envoys to the Imperium. Her natural linguistic ability permitted her to learn Old High Vilani relatively quickly. She traveled on several occasions to Barnard and Agidda in order to establish contacts with the Vilani and learn more about them. Strider worked hard to promote understanding between Terrans and Vilani, and was a leading advocate for peace even as the threat of war loomed. In -2408, Strider left for the Barnard system aboard the American frigate *Jefferson*, carrying a last-ditch proposal to avoid conflict.

She was too late. The *Jefferson* was attacked by a Vilani warship and destroyed, the first major Terran casualty of the First Interstellar War. Today, Lorette Strider is a heroic figure of Solomani history. Patriotic paintings of the *StarLeaper One* crew hang in schools and government buildings on almost every world in the Confederation.

Yukio Hasegawa (-2466 to -2381)

Hasegawa was a Japanese industrialist, who rose through the ranks of one of the most conservative of that nation's *keiretsu*. He was a quiet but canny businessman, with a deceptively gentle demeanor that often fooled business rivals into fatally underestimating him. Upon becoming CEO of his firm in -2406, he began heavy investment in space industries, becoming one of the prime movers behind the Japanese interstellar program. In -2400, he established the Free Traders Foundation, a non-profit organization intended to encourage the growing free-trade movement. Hasegawa was a tireless proponent of open markets and interstellar trade, championing the foundation against the frequent disfavor of the Terran Confederation and the open hostility of the Imperial government. Much of the later acceptance of Terran goods by Vilani populations can be attributed to Hasegawa's work. So can the trade disputes that eventually led to the Second and Fourth Interstellar Wars.

Technologies of the Interstellar Wars

GMs who wish to run games set during the Interstellar Wars period will need to take rapidly changing technologies into account. Early in the period, the Terrans worked hard to acquire superior Vilani technology and rush it into production. Later, Terra actually pulled ahead of the Vilani technological standard and began to apply weapons and techniques which the Imperium could not match. When designing vehicles and starships for this period, GMs are advised to use the *GURPS Vehicles* rules as modified by *GURPS Traveller*, rather than the modular design system presented in *GURPS Traveller* itself.

Vilani Technology

Throughout the Interstellar Wars, the Vilani Imperium was a "mature" TL9 culture. It had access to advanced reactionless thrusters (use the TL10 "super thrusters" from *GURPS Vehicles*) and its starships had up to jump-2 range. The primary ship-to-ship weapons used by the Imperium were kinetic-kill missiles, with beam weapons used mostly in a point-defense role.

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The First War

At the time, the Vilani province was overseen by Gov. Shana Likushan (see sidebar, p. 44). She was no warrior, but such a provocation simply couldn't be ignored. In -2407, she mounted a punitive expedition, which engaged a collection of Terran national squadrons at Barnard. The Terrans found themselves at a severe disadvantage. Their ships were still technologically inferior, despite frantic efforts to upgrade. Worse, their command structure was inexperienced and poorly integrated. The experienced Vilani commanders laid down withering long-range missile fire, and were able to defeat the Terran fleet in detail.

Had the Vilani pressed their advantage, they could have seized Barnard or even mounted a credible attack against Terra itself, but the fleet commander on the scene decided that the barbarians had been sufficiently punished, and withdrew his forces. This gave the Terrans critical time to assess their mistakes, rebuild their fleets, and prepare for the next encounter. Meanwhile, they launched a campaign of commerce raiding, hitting Vilani shipping in every system within reach.

In -2401, the Vilani launched another punitive expedition toward Barnard, but this time the Terrans were ready. A new class of light attack craft or "missile boats" returned Vilani missile fire, taking heavy casualties but badly damaging the invading fleet. Soon afterward, Gov. Likushan offered an unofficial agreement, recognizing Terra's claim to the Barnard system in exchange for a promise to stay out of Imperial space. As was the case with many of the Interstellar Wars, both sides considered themselves the victors. While the Vilani simply turned back to matters they considered more important, the Terrans were tremendously energized by their "victory" over a vastly superior force.

The first war demonstrated that the Imperium was too great a challenge for the various Terran nations to meet without a strong centralized command. Immediately after the armistice, the UN admitted delegations from the colonies and changed its name to the United Worlds. The expanded organization drafted a set of comprehensive reforms which would transform it into a viable world government. In -2398 these reforms were codified in the form of a new charter, which most of the important member-states ratified over the next few years. The new interstellar state would henceforth be named the Terran Confederation.

Another difficulty that had to be overcome was the Imperial advantage in technology. Several crash programs set out to improve the technical base of Terran military forces. The greatest success of these efforts came in -2398, when the UNSCA released specifications for a jump-2 drive. This broke a monopoly the Vilani had held for thousands of years, and made it theoretically possible for the Terrans to carry an offensive into Vilani space.

The Second War

Despite Gov. Likushan's hopes, the Terrans did not meekly avoid further provocation. The Terrans still felt fenced in by Vilani control of nearby space, and were willing to defy the Imperium to find room for expansion. Terran ships explored Vilani space with or without permission, making covert contact with local populations, spying out local defenses, searching for some way past the Imperium. Meanwhile, an alliance of Terran "Free Traders" (see sidebar, p. 46) was quickly making inroads into Vilani commerce. Finally, the governor decided to mount another punitive expedition into Terran space.

The Vilani fleet expected to reach Barnard without incident, but in fact it was delayed by a Terran screening force at Agidda. The unified Terran fleet soon arrived. The subsequent Battle of Agidda (-2397) was the first main-fleet engagement involving large ships on both sides. It left both fleets unable to press

the attack, but the Terrans can be considered the victors. They retained control of Agidda and soon established a base there.

What followed was a kind of "false war," where neither side made any attempt at significant offensive action. The Vilani tried to keep the Terrans fenced in, while the Confederation began a strategy of mounting commerce raids across the Sirius Gap. After a few years of this, it became obvious that something was distracting the Vilani. Terran Intelligence discovered that Gov. Likushan had sent over half the provincial fleet elsewhere in the Imperium. In fact, the governor was playing a double game, trying to keep the Terrans at arm's length while intervening in an Imperial civil war. Encouraged, the Confederation mounted a raid directly against Nusku (-2389). Although the Terrans were driven off with heavy losses, the raid prompted Gov. Likushan to seek a means to end the fighting. After a desultory raid on Procyon designed to give the Imperium the final battle honors, she signed a treaty. The agreement made the Terrans official allies of the Imperium, with nominal control over everything between Agidda and Procyon.



The Third War

Likushan's successor, Kadur Erasharshi, was not one to underestimate the Terrans. Despite the treaty, he spent years preparing for renewed war against the Confederation. He moved the sector capital to Dingir in order to cut down on communication lag to the front lines. He also invested heavily in military construction. In -2378 he launched surprise attacks against Procyon and the new Terran outpost at Agidda.

Technologies of the Interstellar Wars

[Continued]

Terran Technology

When Terra first contacted the Vilani, it was at an "early" TL9 stage of development. Terrans had access to a slow reactionless drive (use the TL10 "standard thrusters" from *GURPS Vehicles*). Since the available drives were so slow, long-range missiles were not practical, so Terran military doctrine rested heavily on beam weapons. The first Terran jump drive had jump-1 range, but was extremely wasteful of fuel (assume doubled fuel consumption per jump).

After first contact, Terran scientists quickly reverse-engineered the more efficient Vilani jump-1 drive. The resulting drive had "normal" fuel consumption according to the *GURPS Traveller* ship-design rules. It came into common use about -2415, in time for the First Interstellar War. Terran maneuver drives remained slow and inefficient, however, so the Vilani advantage in missile combat could not be matched. This led to disastrous Terran defeats in the early stages of the First Interstellar War. The more efficient Vilani-quality maneuver drives became available about -2405, leading to the increased use of missiles and a new class of "missile boats." Just after the war, Terran scientists developed the jump-2 drive (in -2398). This drive was quickly pressed into military service and was standard equipment on all warships by -2395.

Terran innovation in non-military fields lagged behind, but by -2360 Terra could be considered to be at the Vilani standard in all areas. The Terran Confederation was a mature TL9 society at this point. Indeed, in a few fields (notably computers and medical technology) the Terrans had surpassed the Vilani standard and might have been at early TL10.

Without superior Vilani models to reverse-engineer, the pace of Terran advancement slowed at this point. The breakthrough into early TL10 did not come until about -2285, with the development of a jump-3 drive and the first meson weapons. The appearance of a more advanced reactionless thruster came a few years later (the TL11 "standard thrusters" from *GURPS Vehicles*). These innovations were quickly put to military use and played an important part in the Terran conquest of the Imperium.

By -2250 the Terran Confederation was a mature TL10 society. At this point technological innovation slowed, so that the Confederation (and the Rule of Man) remained at TL10 for the rest of its existence.

Shana Likushan (-2460 to -2378)

Shana Likushan was appointed governor of the Rim Worlds in -2411, as the result of an intrigue among high-level Sharurshid officials. Likushan's faction had lost the power struggle, and she always viewed her posting to the Rim as an exile. She held even the Vilani of the Rim in contempt, and barely noticed the existence of Terran "savages."

She was rather inept as a military commander, but was highly skilled at negotiating in such a way as to save the appearance of Imperial power. Her usual pattern in wartime was to inflict casualties on the Terran Navy, withdraw without doing real damage to Terran interests, negotiate a settlement, and present the result to her superiors as a decisive victory. As a result, during her tenure as governor the Terrans were able to consolidate their position considerably.

After intervening in the Imperial civil war of -2393 to -2387, Likushan was summoned to Vland and rewarded with a position in the highest ranks of Sharurshid. Her memoirs of her time as governor were widely read, and may have played a role in preventing the Imperium as a whole from taking the Terran threat seriously. These memoirs survive to this day, and make rather amusing reading for Solomani sympathizers.

The Secret of My Success

"When dealing with these barbarians, the most important consideration was to act with great firmness, but to always allow them an opportunity to save their petty sense of dignity. I mounted punitive expeditions when their insolence required it, but for the most part I permitted them free rein in their corner of the wilderness. So long as they never approached important worlds, why not allow them to play with their starships? They spent a great deal of effort to search out barren pieces of rock, and squat upon them like dukhu-beasts on their sandbars. This exercise pleased them very much, and caused their leaders to strut about with pride. Being named allies of the Imperium made them almost insufferable in their conceit. Still, this did no harm; it distracted them from making mischief, and it provided us with much amusement. We can afford to smile at the pride of children. If the children begin to think themselves adults, and meddle in adult affairs, then there is time enough to punish their arrogance."

— Shana Likushan,
Sojourn in the Wilderness
(published circa -2380)

Taking personal command of the forces on the scene, he maneuvered to draw the Terrans into a pitched battle between main fleets. Although the Terrans had addressed their shortfalls in training and technology, they were still unable to stand up to an experienced Vilani commander at the top of his form. The Imperium won a decisive victory, destroying almost the entire Terran fleet at very little cost to themselves.

The Vilani then mounted a methodical campaign down the Corridor, capturing first the Agidda outpost and then the Barnard colony. By -2376 Sol system itself was wide open to the enemy. Fortunately for the Terrans, the Vilani campaign was already grinding to a halt. Erasharshi was suffering extreme logistical problems, and was also coming under considerable pressure from interests which wanted him back at the capital, managing the province rather than persecuting unimportant barbarians in the wilderness. Hoping for a decisive victory, he launched an attack on Terra itself.

This proved to be a fatal miscalculation. Fanatical Terran resistance destroyed much of the Vilani fleet and forced Erasharshi to withdraw. Erasharshi returned to Imperial space, resigned to wait for the Terran response which no other Vilani official believed would ever come.

The Confederation's counteroffensive finally got underway four years later. After defeating a new Vilani invasion in the Battle of Junction (-2370), the reconstituted fleet set out up the Corridor. In -2366 the Terrans arrived at Nusku and fought a full fleet engagement against the Imperium. Terran ships were no longer inferior to Imperial models, and Terran officers and crew were now thoroughly experienced. The result was a major defeat for the Imperium. Planetary bombardment allowed Terran troops to land, facing stiff but insufficient resistance. Once Nusku was secured, the Confederation offered a cease-fire, which Gov. Erasharshi was compelled to accept.

The Fourth and Fifth Wars

After the Third Interstellar War, a long period of relative peace began. The first three wars had transformed Terran society, creating the first true world government and giving many people a sense that their destiny lay among the stars. The threat of the Vilani was still present, but it seemed more distant, and most Terrans were tired of war. It was time, many felt, to enjoy peace and consolidate the gains already made.

During this period (-2366 to -2349) the interstellar colonies flourished. The populations of Earthlike worlds such as Prometheus and Mirabilis rose rapidly, as millions left Terra to make a new life. The Outback outposts also grew into healthy industrial colonies. Finally, Terrans settled in large numbers on Nusku, coming into contact with a Vilani civilian population for the first time. The Terran experience on Nusku during the so-called Empty Peace was the first seed of the Rule of Man.

The eventual return of tensions was due to Terran trade ventures into Vilani space. The Terrans were now outstripping the Imperial technological standard. Meanwhile, the concept of *competition* was rather new to the Vilani, who had always managed economic activity through traditional guilds and the centralized control of the bureaux. Suddenly, Terran free traders and corporations were everywhere in the Rim Province, producing superior (or just *cheaper*) products which undercut the traditional price structure. Some Vilani rejected Terran goods out of respect for tradition, but many others did not. The result was economic upheaval, the likes of which had not been seen in the Imperial province in centuries.

The governor of the time was Sharik Yangila, yet another relatively bold strategist (see sidebar, p. 49). She spent much of the Empty Peace preparing for

conflict: introducing new ship designs, developing new tactical methods, expanding patrols of the trade lanes, and mounting an extensive intelligence campaign to measure Terran weaknesses. By -2352, she felt ready to trigger a conflict, and imposed a steep tariff on all Terran goods entering the Imperium. Trade carried on regardless, avoiding Imperial customs inspectors by way of free-trader smuggling. This gave the governor the *casus belli* she desired.

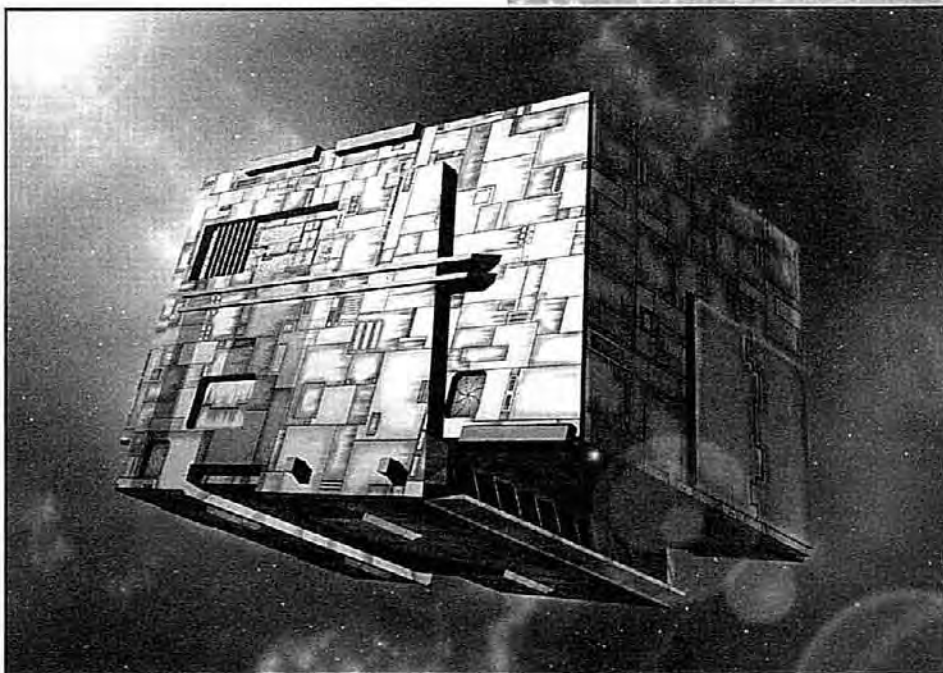
The initial Vilani raid was against Fenris, destroying the Terran Naval Station and shipyard there. The Vilani withdrew before the Terran Navy could respond, but this made no difference. With the Procyon outpost compromised, the whole Terran colonial structure in the Outback was vulnerable. Much of the Terran fleet had to be diverted to shoring up this flank. Meanwhile, the Vilani mounted several probing attacks in the Nusku system over a period of six months in -2348. This cautious approach paid off, allowing the Vilani to do considerable damage without letting the Terrans move in to close range. In the third attack, the Imperial forces were able to reach the vicinity of Nusku itself and land troops. By year's end, Nusku had been liberated by the Imperium.

The Confederation was not exactly idle during all this, but its leaders discovered that the Empty Peace had sapped Terra's ability to fight. Military budgets had been reduced, and military industries had been converted to civilian use. Worse, the citizens were not prepared for war. These problems were all correctable, but it took time before a substantial force of ships and men could be gathered. By then, Nusku had fallen and the Vilani were beginning to mount new probes across the Sirius Gap. Even if the Vilani launched no further offensives, the Confederation faced a long and difficult war.

Facing a difficult military situation, the Confederation tried diplomacy. Envoys went to Dingir, literally begging for peace in very meek terms. Gov. Yangila was naturally pleased at this turn of events, thinking that she had done more than any other Vilani to humble the stiff-necked Terrans. She magnanimously agreed to a peace, on the condition that Terra respect the trade tariffs and keep to its own space.

Most historians consider the peace of -2346 to have ended the Fourth Interstellar War, but in fact the Confederation never went off a war footing. The economic might of the Terran colonial empire soon made itself felt, in a military buildup of unprecedented speed. Three years after the armistice, a new fleet launched a surprise attack against Nusku. Meanwhile, small detachments raided Vilani commerce and attacked the naval station at Shuruppak. Both campaigns were successful, with the Vilani fleet damaged and Nusku back under Terran control by the end of -2340.

The Vilani failed at first to assemble any coherent response. The governor had been required to send ships to Daibei Province, to help put down a local rebellion. Fortunately for the Vilani, the Terran offensive against Nusku cost so many ships that the Confederation required time to rebuild.



Kadur Erasharshi (-2425 to -2363?)

Kadur Erasharshi was Shana Likushan's successor as governor of the Rim Worlds, taking office in -2386 after Likushan's departure for Vland.

Erasharshi was that rare entity, a bold Vilani, a throwback to the time when the First Imperium had conquered worlds by the thousands. He served for years on Likushan's staff, and acted as an envoy to Terra immediately after the First Interstellar War. More than any other influential figure in the Rim Province, he understood the threat the Terrans posed to the Imperium.

He was also an effective military commander, with superb tactical skills and a reasonable grasp of strategy. Unfortunately for him, he was not an effective diplomat, and during his rapid rise to power he made many enemies among powerful interests in the Rim Province. These enemies struck during the Third Interstellar War, depriving Erasharshi of vital support just as he was about to launch the final campaign against Terra itself.

By the time the war ended, Erasharshi was a broken man, weary of the struggle, facing charges of treason levied by his personal enemies. Three years after the armistice, he dropped out of history. He was most likely recalled to Vland in disgrace, to be banished or executed.

His very existence was apparently expunged from Imperial records, as often happened to those judged traitors to the Imperium. As a result, he is known only from Terran histories of the Interstellar Wars period.

Umar bin-Abdallah al-Ghazali (-2438 to -2340)

After the Third Interstellar War, Terran commercial interests worked hard to penetrate Vilani markets, sensing the vast potential for profit.

One of the most prominent "merchant adventurers" of the period was Umar al-Ghazali, from -2365 the CEO of the High Frontier Development Consortium, a moderate-sized multinational corporation of the time. He was a devoted Muslim, but very cosmopolitan in outlook and superb at the game of international business.

After the Third Interstellar War, he caused High Frontier to invest heavily in new manufacturing plants on Nusku, also building a fleet of small, fast trading ships. High Frontier joined the rapidly expanding Free Traders Foundation, and made vast profits selling Terran communications and computer equipment to the Vilani.

It was widely suspected, but never proven, that High Frontier's merchant fleet was also acting as an espionage force in cooperation with Confederation Intelligence.

After the Imperium imposed trade sanctions against the Confederation, al-Ghazali ordered the fleet to continue operating, avoiding Imperial customs patrols by any means necessary. This action made him an instant celebrity, labeled "Prince of the Smugglers" by the Western media because of his distant relationship to the Omani royal family.

Once the Fourth Interstellar War broke out, High Frontier went on a war footing in support of the Terran Navy.

Umar al-Ghazali survived three assassination attempts and lived to the age of 98, to the day of his death capably leading the High Frontier commercial empire from his headquarters in the Lagrange-5 settlement.

The next Terran offensive did not begin until -2337, and this time the Imperial Navy was able to keep the Terrans at bay. The frontier outpost at Markhashi was lost, but the most important worlds of the province remained secure.

The reversal in Vilani fortunes forced Gov. Yangila to step down in -2335. Her successor was a relative nonentity, who decided to cut Vilani losses. He offered a cease-fire which allowed the Terrans to retain their toehold across the Sirius Gap. Never again would any Vilani governor be able to take the offensive against the Terrans.

The Sixth War

The uneasy peace left the matter of Terran trade into Vilani space unresolved. Vilani customs patrols were still under orders to enforce the tariffs, but many inspectors began to turn a blind eye to violations of Imperial trade policy. Under the new governor's administration, the Vilani of the Rim began to fragment, with different factions appearing and trying to deal with the Terran threat in different ways.

The Sixth Interstellar War began in -2327 with a Vilani raid on Markhashi. The governor claimed that the raid was mounted by "renegade corsairs" not under the control of the Imperium. So far had the province's political structure decayed that this may have been the truth, but the Confederation was not inclined to let the Vilani off easily. The Terran response was a trade embargo, along with a main-fleet invasion of Vilani territory, which was apparently aimed at the old subsector capital of Gashidda.

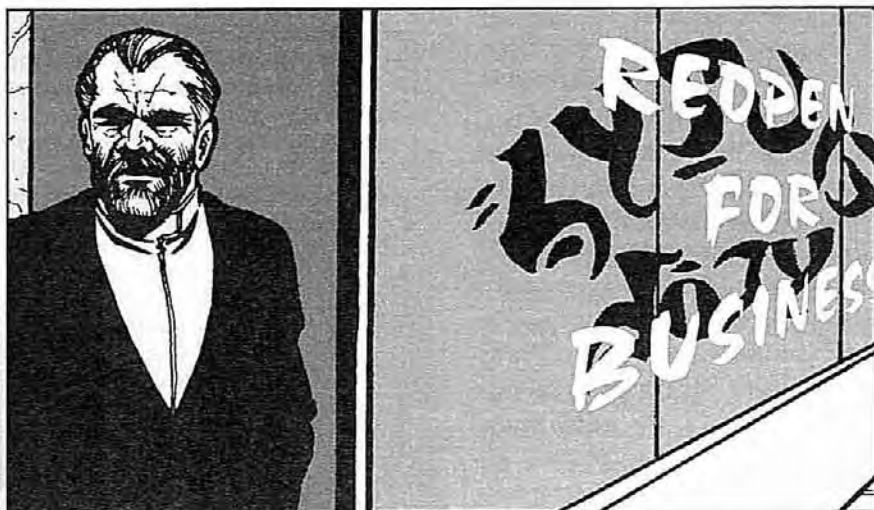
The main fleets clashed at Shuruppak in -2325, and the Vilani were decisively defeated. The Confederation set up its own station at Shuruppak, isolating the Vilani worlds of Iilike and Shulimik, and then began a campaign to conquer those worlds. This was a difficult operation due to very effective Vilani ground defenses. Even so, both planets had fallen by -2322. The Imperial Rim Province was by this time suffering from a deep economic depression, hampering efforts to rebuild the provincial fleet. With no way to defend the provincial core, the governor sued for peace in -2321. Immediately afterward, he and other provincial leaders sent a delegation to Vland, to ask for Imperial assistance against the Terran barbarians.

The Seventh War

In fact, the power of the Imperium was fast becoming more illusion than reality. Other provinces were already beginning to resist Imperial power, and

various "barbarian" forces were causing severe losses elsewhere. In particular, at about this time the Vargr began a devastatingly successful series of raids against the Imperial coreward frontier, a region much closer to Vland itself than the Rim Province. Despite all this, officials of the central government took enough notice of the Rim's difficulties that an Imperial capital ship division was gathered and dispatched. Most Imperial officials were certain that this would be enough power to put the upstart Terrans in their place. A few, more realistic, merely hoped that this would be true.

The capital ships arrived in the Rim Province in -2317. The fleet's commander





had direct orders to place himself at the governor's disposal and win a glorious victory. It soon became obvious that this kind of assistance was less than helpful, as the Rim Province was in poor economic condition and could barely support the expense of maintaining several dozen battleships. A hasty attack was mounted against Shuruppak in -2316, but although the Terran base there was sacked the naval battle was inconclusive. By -2313 the Vilani offensive had bogged down without making any further territorial gains, and the Imperial battleships were withdrawn.

The Terran counterattack began with a series of raids against several outposts in the "wilderness" between Dingir and Gashidda. Meanwhile, commerce raiders struck deep into Vilani territory to wear away at the Imperial will to fight. It was soon clear that the Vilani were in no condition to present organized resistance. In -2308 they sued for peace, ceding the trailing half of the Dingir subsector to the Terrans.

A relatively long period of peace followed the Seventh War. During this time the slow retreat of Vilani power on the Rim became a rout. With the addition of several Vilani worlds, the Terran industrial base could now outproduce the Rim Province's military budget by a factor of three or four to one. New ship designs were being placed into service, clearly superior to anything the Vilani could field. Meanwhile, the Vilani hold on the province was disintegrating. Almost all of the outposts between Shuruppak and Dingir were simply abandoned. In those last days, a kind of fatalism settled over the Vilani capital at Dingir. Some wealthy Vilani packed up and fled for the Imperial core, while the rest simply waited to make whatever accommodation they could with the Terran conquerors.

Endgame

The Eighth War began with a disorganized Vilani attack on Karkhar. The Terran forces were far stronger than the Vilani had anticipated, and the attack was soundly defeated. The Confederation responded with a feint toward Gashidda, and all-out attacks against both Ishkur and Dingir. The Vilani put up almost no effective resistance, and Dingir fell in early -2291. This freed the Terran commander on the scene, Fleet Admiral Manuel Albadawi, to finally break the frontier wide open.

In -2290 Albadawi seized and fortified Ensulur (today named Oudh), thus cutting off the entire rimward section of the Rim Main. He then left about half his fleet to guard Ensulur, taking the remainder down the Main in a series of lightning campaigns.

Terran Biowarfare?

One area in which the Terrans had a clear advantage over the Vilani was in medicine and biotechnology. The native life of Vland was based on a biochemistry quite different from that of Terra. Thus, when the Vilani were transplanted by the Ancients, they found themselves in a relatively benign environment in which local viruses were unable to invade Human cells.

In contrast, Terran Humans remained in an environment rich in organisms that could cause disease in Humans. Once Terran civilizations appeared, many "crowd diseases" evolved specifically to prey on dense urban populations. Vilani medical science never developed past various surgical techniques, without even requiring antiseptics! Terran science, on the other hand, was *driven* to discover all the secrets of life, down to the details of biochemistry and genetics.

During the Interstellar Wars, one of the most powerful Terran weapons was the pool of Terran diseases. Beginning around -2365, a series of plagues began to spread through Vilani populations, especially in the Rim Province. The Vilani were utterly confused by these plagues, but they soon realized that they could always be traced to contact with Terrans. Some historians have suggested that the trade tariffs decreed by the provincial government in -2352 were partially motivated by a desire to limit physical contact with the "plague-ridden" Terrans.

Recently, historians have recovered records of the initial Terran occupation force on Nusku (-2366 to -2361). These records have yielded priceless information about the first epidemics in a Vilani civilian population. Terran doctors in the occupation government were able to recognize the "plagues" as outbreaks of simple Terran viral diseases, particularly measles, influenza, and mumps.

The doctors were appalled at the death toll in a population that had no evolved resistance. At the same time, they were able to mass-produce vaccines which saved millions of Vilani lives. The incident was crucial in winning the support of the Nusku populace for the Terran Confederation.

Throughout the Interstellar Wars and the early Rule of Man, Terran diseases continued to wreak havoc among the worlds of the Vilani Empire. The Terran military soon learned to expect an outbreak of plague on each conquered Vilani world, and began to have medical facilities ready to go in as soon as a given world was secured.

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Terran Biowarfare?

[Continued]

The knowledge of vicious Terran plagues probably did much to demoralize the Vilani. On the other hand, the knowledge that the Terrans would act to defeat the plagues helped convince many worlds to offer no resistance when the Terrans arrived.

Despite the best Terran efforts, however, whole Vilani populations were decimated. This "die-off" is one reason why so many Vilani worlds on the Rim ended up with majority-Solomani populations. (Naturally, the difference in birthrates was more important. The Vilani traditionally restrained their population growth, while Terran immigrants typically set off a population explosion on every world they settled.)

Many Vilani sympathizers and conspiracy theorists have suggested that the Terran Confederation deliberately engineered some diseases to decimate Vilani civilian populations. Certainly the Terrans did research on bioweapons, especially once the Vilani vulnerability to such weapons became clear. There is no credible evidence of the use of engineered diseases, since all the identifiable disease organisms involved were known on Terra before spaceflight.

Even so, it is possible that unscrupulous Terrans sometimes deliberately exposed Vilani to these "natural" (but deadly) diseases.

Over the next two years he secured Apishlun (now Gaea), Shikashu (now Tonopah), and Duriim. During these campaigns, Albadawi displayed not only tactical brilliance but a rare command of grand strategy. The main Vilani fleet was left cut off at Gashidda, unable to continue operating as Albadawi cut every supply line into the Imperial core. By -2285 that fleet was helpless, forced to surrender as soon as Terran forces arrived at Gashidda. Meanwhile, the Vegans finally took a hand, rising up in revolt against the Vilani as soon as Albadawi was in a position to support them. The Vegan Polity was refounded in -2286. Faced with the possible loss of the entire Rim Province, the Vilani sued for peace. The Treaty of Ensulur (-2284) ended the Eighth War, with the Imperium ceding all of its territory rimward of Vega to the Terrans.

During the Eighth War, Terran scientists had made two critical breakthroughs in naval technology: the jump-3 drive and meson weapons. These innovations came too late to be used by Albadawi during his campaigns, but Terran fleets were quickly overhauled once the Treaty of Ensulur was signed. Meanwhile, direct contact between Terra and the Vegans proved extremely fruitful.

The Eighth War finally brought the situation on the Rim to the direct attention of the Emperor. Unfortunately, events in the Imperium had reached a crisis state. Faced with internal dissension and external threats on several fronts, the Emperor himself had to make a crucial decision. The Vilani Core Fleet would be dispatched to the Rim to crush the Terrans once and for all. This was probably a wise choice, given what the Emperor knew at the time. Although the Vargr raiders were close to Vland, they did not pose a threat to the legitimacy of Imperial rule. On the other hand, the appearance of a powerful *Human* rival state on the Rim might tempt whole sectors to defect. For thousands of years, no force had ever defeated the Core Fleet, and although deploying it so far from Vland carried its own risks, no one expected the Terrans to survive. There was some truth to this estimation. Had the full force of the Imperium been thus brought to bear at any time in the last 120 years, the Confederation could not have held out against it. Now such force would be brought to bear, but the time for action had passed.

In -2278, Terran Intelligence became aware that a massive Imperial fleet was working its way down the Rim Main. Albadawi, now the Commander-in-Chief of Terran Forces, made final preparations. In -2277 the Vilani fleet reached its main depot at Shulgiasu, and an Imperial envoy issued a formal declaration of war against the Terran Confederation.

At first, the Vilani thought they were succeeding. While traversing Vegan space they met Terran and Vegan squadrons, who made hit-and-run raids but never stayed to fight for long. Then Albadawi sprang his trap. Using



jump-3 raiding forces, he threatened the Vilani line of communications back to the Imperium. This caused the Vilani to abandon their methodical advance and turn back toward Shulgiasu. At Muan Kwoyen, Albadawi surprised the Vilani with numbers far greater than they had expected. It was during this battle that the Terrans first used meson weapons against the Vilani. The Imperium had never developed meson weapons of its own, and knew of them only from fearful space legends. Now the Core Fleet faced the mythical "certain death weapon" in bitter reality, as its proudest ships were induced to explode from within.

The subsequent engagement was a devastating defeat for the Imperium. Less than 10% of the Imperial armada ever escaped from the Rim Province. The rest was captured or destroyed as the Terran fleet leapfrogged up the Rim Main in pursuit. No formal armistice ever concluded the Ninth Interstellar War, but most historians place the war's end in -2266 with the Terran capture of Arkiirkii. At this point, the Confederation's forces paused for a few years to consolidate their territorial gains. Still, fighting between Terran and Vilani forces never wholly ceased, and the Terrans were almost constantly on the offensive until the final collapse of the Imperium.

THE RULE OF MAN

Once the threat of the Vilani was finally gone, a schism became evident between the Terran armed forces and the Confederation's central government. Most of the Terran military was manned by colonials: recent emigrants from Terra, third- or fourth-generation settlers from the colony worlds, even Vilani who were now loyal citizens of the Confederation. These colonials had little or no psychological connection to Terra. Many of them had lived among the Vilani for generations, and carried no anti-Vilani prejudice. Indeed, as the Vilani accepted Terran rule so readily, the Navy found it easy to see them as friends deserving of respect and protection. Meanwhile, even after two centuries of colonial expansion, the Confederation government was still dominated by Terra, and most of the people of the homeworld still hated and feared the Vilani.

Thus, while the Navy moved to provide the Vilani with just and humane government, the Confederation itself was debating how best to divide up the spoils. In -2204 the Secretariat voted to transfer control of the occupied territories directly to Terra, to be administered as spoils of war.



Sharik Yangila (-2411 to -2333?)

Sharik Yangila was an oddity in the Imperium, a non-Vilani who achieved high rank within its hierarchy. Both talented and ambitious, Yangila joined Sharurshid as a minor bureaucrat in -2393.

Despite her non-Vilani birth, her talent and attention to detail were quickly recognized, and she was soon assigned to the *Ishindagashii* (Sharurshid's intelligence service). Here, her ruthless ambition was allowed to flourish as she clawed her way from a lowly field agent's billet to positions of increasing responsibility.

In -2378 Yangila was dispatched to the Rim as a senior agent. She quickly came to understand the Terrans as perhaps no Vilani ever could. With this understanding, coupled with her brutal ruthlessness in disposing of rivals within the *Ishindagashii*, she became indispensable to Gov. Kadur Erasharshi. In -2371, he appointed her as head of the *Ishindagashii* in the Rim Province. When Erasharshi faltered, she seized her opportunity and maneuvered herself into position as his successor.

With her appointment as governor in -2366, she saw that defeating the Terrans would boost her career. Yangila meticulously planned for the glorious war that she needed. With the end of the Fourth War in -2346, she appeared to have achieved her goal. Yangila knew that the Terrans had not been crushed. However, she believed that by the time they could become a threat again, she would be gone from the Rim.

This was her fatal miscalculation. In -2343 the Terrans reopened hostilities for which she was not prepared. After the Vilani defeat, she was relieved of her post and forced into retirement. This was not quite the end of this remarkable woman. In -2333 she attempted to defect to the Terrans!

During her flight from the Imperium, her ship entered jump at Zaggisi and was never heard from again. Her ultimate fate remains unknown, but rumors and sightings of her continued on the Rim for many years.

Manuel Albadawi (-2339 to -2267)

Manuel Albadawi was born on Terra. His father was an Arab civil engineer, his mother a Spanish biotechnician. The two of them normally worked as independent consultants in desert-reclamation technology. Thus the young Albadawi spent his formative years moving from place to place in North Africa and the Middle East, wherever his parents traveled on assignment. After the Sixth Interstellar War, the elder Albadawis received a lucrative contract to perform environmental studies on the newly conquered Vilani world of Iilike. At first young Manuel stayed behind on Earth, but at the age of 18 he followed his parents to attend the new Terran University on Iilike. The once-Vilani world remained his home for the rest of his life.

Albadawi originally intended to follow his father's career and become an engineer. The experience of interstellar travel and social contact with Vilani changed his plans. Although he liked the Vilani he met, he despised their Imperium and regarded Terran civilization as manifestly superior. When the Seventh Interstellar War broke out, he patriotically enlisted in the Terran Navy, with a commission since he had gone through the NOTC program at university. Intelligent, hard-working, and loyal, he was promoted quickly, reaching the rank of Lieutenant Commander by war's end. During peacetime he continued a fast-track career, reaching the rank of Rear Admiral in time for the resumption of hostilities.

In -2292, Albadawi was promoted to Fleet Admiral and placed in charge of the Terran force investing Dingir. His oversight of the last days of the siege was competent, but it was his brilliant campaign into what is now the Albadawi sub-sector that won him his reputation. More than any other commander, Albadawi was responsible for the great Terran conquests of the Eighth Interstellar War. He was a natural choice to serve as Grand Admiral of the Terran Navy, a post he held from -2280. After commanding Terran forces during the critical battles of the Ninth Interstellar War, Albadawi retired in -2273 at the age of 66. His last years were spent at home on Iilike, serving as a civilian advisor to the Navy and composing his memoirs.

Today, Albadawi is still remembered on Iilike as a planetary hero. He is also a heroic figure to the Solomani Movement, as a Terran leader who never settled for anything less than total victory over the Vilani. Most historians (especially in the Solomani Confederation) regard Albadawi as the greatest Terran military commander of the Interstellar Wars period.

This would make every Terran citizen an instant millionaire, at the cost of reducing the citizens of the Vilani Empire to permanent serfdom. Thus far, the people of the Vilani Empire had accepted Terran rule, but such a move would doubtless set off widespread revolt and bring about the final collapse of interstellar civilization.

The New Imperium

At the time, the Commander-in-Chief of Terran Forces was Grand Admiral Hiroshi Estigarribia (see sidebar, p. 52). He immediately recognized the dangers inherent in the Confederation's plan. In response, he mounted a coup which secured system defenses and command centers throughout Sol system. Once the critical facilities were secured, he proclaimed himself regent of the Vilani Imperium and protector of Terra. He called for all Terran military forces, wherever located, to swear *personal* fealty to him. The Terran Confederation was dissolved without any appreciable resistance, although political unrest was common on Terra for years afterward.

Terran Fleet Headquarters at Dingir became the capital of a new interstellar government, the *Rule of Man*. The bureaucratic center of the empire remained on Vland at first. Hiroshi Estigarribia never actually assumed Imperial honors himself, preferring to rule as regent for the Vilani imperial line, which may have been extinct by then but still provided a convenient fiction. When he died, his chief of staff seized power and crowned himself Emperor Hiroshi II. Hiroshi II transferred all governmental functions from both Dingir and Vland to a more centrally located world in the Massilia sector, renamed bilingually as Hub/Ershur. This world remained the capital of the Rule of Man for almost 400 years. During this time, all of the successors of Hiroshi II accepted coronation, and they came to refer to Estigarribia as Emperor Hiroshi I in an attempt to legitimize their claim to Imperial honors.

Ironically, the worlds hardest to integrate into the new system were Terra and its oldest colonies. With the dissolution of the Terran Confederation, a new governing structure had to be devised for these worlds from scratch. The Rule of Man solved this problem by allowing each world considerable local autonomy, but preventing the formation of multiworld alliances. Political authority on Terra itself was restored to the old nation-states, which still existed although they had been largely irrelevant for decades. For a time, this had the effect of dividing the Terran population, preventing any unified resistance to the authority of the Rule of Man.

During the Rule of Man, large numbers of Terrans emigrated to Vilani worlds in the old Rim Province and elsewhere in the Imperium. Terrans became very powerful wherever they went, as leaders, administrators, bureaucrats, industrialists, scientists, or consultants. Once the Rule of Man was established, Terran colonization of new worlds actually slowed to a crawl. Most Terrans preferred to make their fortunes in Vilani space rather than suffering the hardships involved in building a planetary civilization from scratch. Thus, many of the Vilani worlds of the Rim Province now came to have mixed or Terran-majority populations. Meanwhile, many worlds equally close to Terra, but located to rimward, remained uninhabited until after the Long Night.

THE LONG NIGHT

In the end, nothing the Terrans did could save the Vilani Imperium. Only a decisive break with the past could have put civilization on a new track, and the Rule of Man was not such a break, relying as it did on so many institutions of the old Imperium. By -1900 it was clear that the Rule of Man was in slow decline. Individual worlds chose more and more to go their own way.



Adventurers found it easier to turn pirate than to search out new trade opportunities. Naval commanders intrigued and occasionally came to blows over the Imperial succession. Finally (in -1776) the central government's financial system collapsed and the Long Night came.

The Rim did relatively well during the Long Night. During the Rule of Man, Vilani institutions had been decisively shattered in the Rim Province. Many worlds to rimward had never been ruled by the Vilani at all. As a result, most local governments had the flexibility they needed to adapt to the slow decline of interstellar trade. In some areas, the interstellar economy stopped short of complete collapse.

It was during this period that the Solomani first came into contact with two new starfaring species, both of them non-Human and both of them unknown to the Vilani Imperium. In -1980 contact was made with the Aslan to spinward, beginning a long and often combative relationship. As the Long Night closed in, Solomani to trailing encountered the Hivers (in -1802). Hivers and Solomani immediately took an interest in each other, opening links of trade and cultural exchange. Solomani relations with the Hivers have generally been uneasy, but they are not normally hostile.

The Terran Mercantile Community

The Long Night came early to the Rim, which lost contact with the central government about -1850. The provincial government at Dingir continued to rule in the Emperor's name for another century and a half, keeping the peace and enforcing the trade regulations of the Rule of Man. This government finally collapsed in -1690 after years of ruinous budget deficits left it unable to maintain the provincial fleet.

The Imperial Collapse

The later Interstellar Wars were a consistent round of success for the Terrans. The defeat of the Vilani Core Fleet in -2276 was a devastating blow. Long-resentful worlds seized the opportunity to revolt, many of them defecting as soon as Terran forces reached them. The Imperium could no longer command the loyalty of the forces opposing the Terran advance, much less mount a credible counteroffensive. Even when the Imperium could theoretically have mustered superior force, its citizens simply had no more will to resist. By -2250 it was taking longer to secure new worlds and integrate them into the Confederation than it was taking to conquer them in the first place. As a result, the pace of advance was determined by the Confederation's bureaucracy rather than by the military.

Late in the Nth Interstellar War (-2235 to -2219) the last significant Imperial fleet was ordered to the Massilia sector to face the Terrans. Rather than obey, the fleet commanders mutinied, turning against Vland itself and bringing down the Imperial government. After some debate, the mutinous fleet commanders and the mid-level Imperial bureaucracy formed a delegation to meet the Terrans. In -2219 they offered the complete surrender of the Vilani Imperium and all its subject worlds. The Interstellar Wars were over.

After the fall of the Vilani Imperium, Terran military commanders acted quickly to secure their new empire. Over the next 15 years, over 100,000 naval officers were dispatched to the various worlds of the Imperium. Their task was not to set up a wholly new government, as any attempt to do so would have meant the final collapse of interstellar civilization. Instead, the military governors were charged with providing a new source of *legitimate authority* for the existing Imperial government. They were to maintain peace and order, allowing the local bureaucracies to keep the machinery of government in operation. Even that task was tremendous. In some cases, Terran ensigns were faced with governing whole worlds, and commanders who had previously been entrusted with no more than a light cruiser were now administering whole subsectors. That the Terran officers could succeed at all was due to the devotion of billions of local Vilani bureaucrats, who continued to execute their own duties despite the fall of the Imperium.

Hiroshi Estigarribia (-2261 to -2182)

Despite his later position as champion of colonial and Vilani rights, the Rule of Man's founder was originally from Terra itself. He was born in Lima, Peru, to a family with no military tradition. His father was a robotics specialist of mixed Basque-Quechua ancestry, while his mother was an expert in ancient history from an old Peruvian Japanese family.

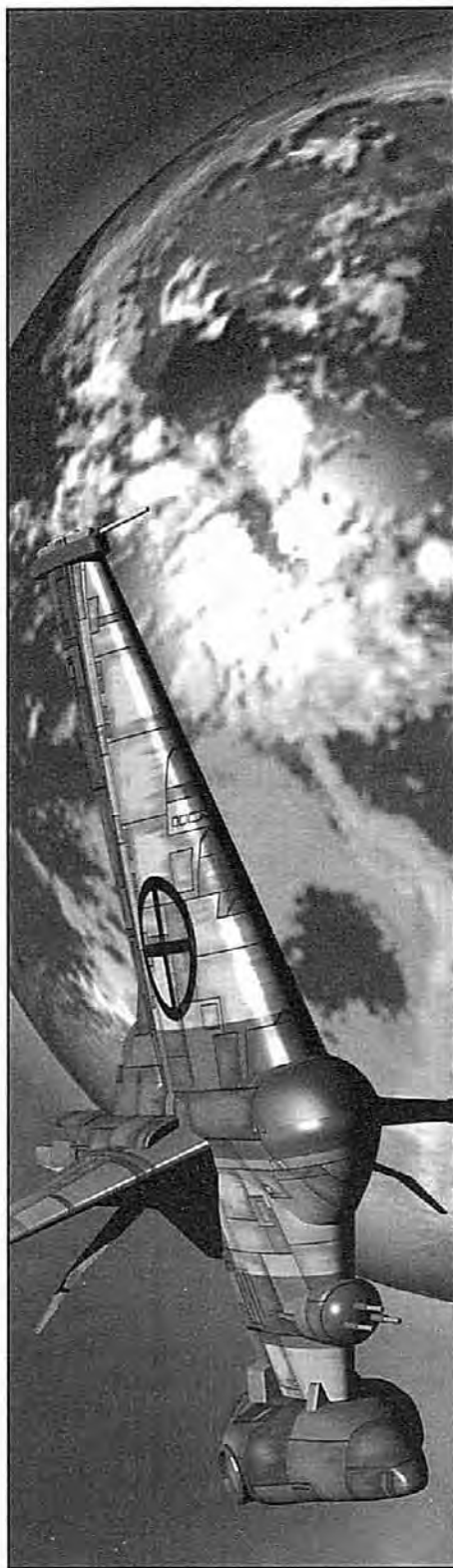
When the boy was 3, his parents moved to Ecuador, where his father had accepted a position at the Confederation Naval Research Facility at Quito. Estigarribia grew up hearing stories about battles against the Vilani and adventures under distant suns. By this time, native-born Terrans were no longer likely to join the Navy. Estigarribia was determined, however, and rejected his family's pleas to pursue a planetbound career. He entered the Confederation Naval Academy and graduated with high honors.

Estigarribia proved to be a superb commander. He earned the respect of his subordinates by being an aggressive leader, willing to throw himself into the hottest part of any situation and do or die. He served with great distinction during the Nth Interstellar War. In -2224 he was in command of the battleship *Temujin* in the Battle of Three Suns, serving as Flag Captain to Fleet Admiral Leon Gerasimov. When Gerasimov was killed by a lucky hit on the flag bridge, Estigarribia saved the flagship, took command of the fleet, and won the battle in a stunning reversal.

Estigarribia's heroic act made him a Rear Admiral, one of the youngest in Terran Navy history. It also earned him adulation, with news media on 100 worlds dubbing him the "Terran Alexander." This flattered Estigarribia greatly. He was an admirer of the Macedonian warlord, and saw many parallels between his hero's career and the Terran conquests.

By the time the Vilani made their final surrender, Estigarribia was in a uniquely critical position. As a famous war leader, he had the trust and admiration of the Terran colonies. As a native-born Terran, he was regarded as politically reliable by the Confederation's civilian government. Thus, in -2209, he was the natural candidate to be named Grand Admiral of the Terran Navy, replacing the Lagash-born Arpad Kovacs, who was "encouraged" to retire.

Unfortunately, the Terran politicians who regarded themselves as Estigarribia's masters badly miscalculated his loyalties. Like his hero Alexander, he regarded himself as the champion of *all* the people now under his authority, Terrans, colonists, and Vilani alike. Thus when the crisis came in -2204, Estigarribia seized power for himself, to hold in trust for all the peoples of the new Rule of Man.



By that time, a new institution represented Terran interests. The Terran Mercantile Community was ostensibly a simple trade association involving Terra and her oldest colony worlds. Its merchant fleets dominated the trade routes in the Sol and Arcturus subsectors. The Rule of Man imposed severe restrictions on the armament of non-Imperial fleets, but the TMC's merchant fleet was notorious for moving right up to the line that separated commercial ships and naval vessels. This fleet made Terra and its fellow worlds in the TMC a formidable commercial force.

After the final collapse of the Rule of Man, the TMC continued to operate, and indeed expanded its operations for a time. Although it avoided taking the role of a true interstellar government, its armed fleets did much to defend its trade partners.

At first, it maintained close trade links with all the old Terran colonies between Mirabilis (to rimward) and Lagash (to coreward). By about -1500, however, the most distant ports were no longer profitable. The TMC was suffering losses due to the so-called "Reaver's Alliance," a group of pirate states based to spinward.

Meanwhile, even on Terra there was a trend toward isolationism and planetary self-sufficiency. Society had become inward-looking and static, interested mainly in providing a stable and comfortable existence for the planet's billions. Slowly the TMC gave ground, abandoning its more distant trade links.

Deep Night

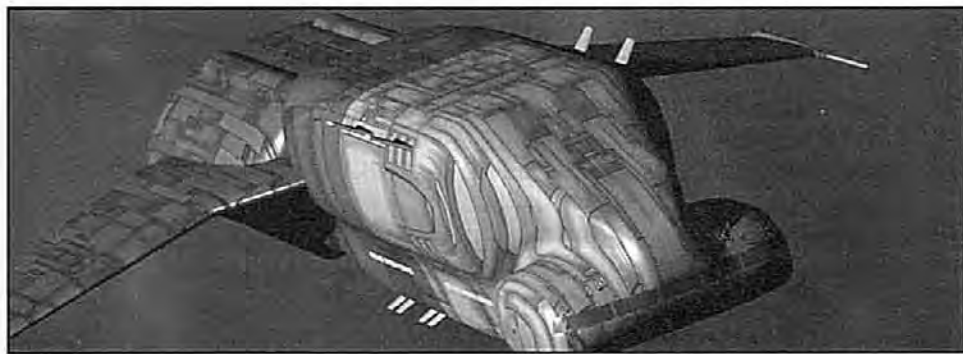
Pirate activity came to an end by about -1400, as there was no longer enough commerce to prey upon. From that point, interstellar travel was rare

and extremely dangerous. Only the most ambitious or foolhardy dared strike out across deep space. Occasionally one of the isolated worlds might refurbish an old starship and try to explore. Others built long-range colonial expeditions based on sublight "cold-sleep" ships, hoping to find new worlds to settle far beyond known space. Most often, an adventurer from one of the few starflight-capable worlds would strike out into the wilderness, to trade or to carve out an empire for himself. Few of these ventures ever amounted to anything.

The presence of Aslan in the Solomani Rim is usually glossed over by historians, but it was highly significant. While Humaniti was sunk in its private Dark Age, the Aslan were ranging widely and enjoying a period of cultural growth. For most of the Long Night, various ambitious Aslan clans made the difficult journey through the Magyar sector into the Solomani Rim. Few of these wandering Aslan came to settle, but eventually most long-range trade fell into their hands. There is evidence that Aslan-Human cooperation during this period sometimes went much further (see *The Sword Worlds Expedition*). Unfortunately, the era of Human-Aslan cooperation came to an abrupt end in -1120. As the Aslan Border Wars began to spinward, the sudden souring of relations triggered a wave of isolationism in the old Rim Province. Even those worlds which had maintained interstellar contacts decided to "turtle up" and defend their own small corners of the galaxy.

Several "pocket empires" were established at this time, sustaining themselves through the rest of the Long Night. The Dingir League was established by a remnant of the Rule of Man's naval administration. It included every world within 5 parsecs of Dingir, and was known for the ferocity of its defense against corsair, Aslan, or Terran encroachment. The Easter Concord covered most of the worlds within 10 parsecs of Easter, an unusually wide range for an interstellar state during the Long Night. Finally, the Vegan Polity survived the Long Night almost intact, although here too the prevailing policy was one of isolationism.

The Terran Mercantile Community was not immune to the trend. In -1110 it reconstituted itself as an actual interstellar state, holding the worlds from Barnard to Ys and from Dismal to Sirius. After a short but bitter war against the Dingir League, this "Old Earth Union" embarked on a policy of defensive isolationism. Over the next few centuries it occasionally had aggressive episodes, but these generally had no results. The Dingir League and Vegan Polity were firm opponents, and the worlds of the Arcturus subsector were uninterested in Terran rule. About -400 an adventurist government tried to establish a foothold in the Near Boötes Cluster, but the attempt simply pushed the Cluster worlds to form their own interstellar state (see p. 118). Only as the Long Night drew to a close did Terra once again establish commercial and political links with distant worlds.



THE THIRD IMPERIUM

The Long Night did not end all at once. In the last centuries of the chaos, many worlds or pocket empires attempted to expand into the space around them, only to fall back due to opposition, economic overstretch, or apathy. Sooner or later, one of these ventures was sure to succeed. The one that did was centered on the planet Sylea, in the Core sector. There, under the leadership of the dynamic noble-industrialist Cleon Zhunastu, the Sylean Confederation transformed itself into the Third Imperium.

The Sword Worlds Expedition

Late in the Long Night, the region known as the Sword Worlds was colonized in the Spinward Marches (starting about -400). Local tradition claims that the colonists came directly from Terra. Although most Imperial researchers accept this claim, a few have expressed doubts, arguing that no ethnic faction in the Old Earth Union could have supported such a venture. Even if one group could, it would have been virtually impossible to reach the Spinward Marches directly from Terra through the whole length of old Imperial space. The idea seems particularly implausible given that there were many habitable but unoccupied worlds much closer to Terra. Thus, revisionist historians have theorized that the Sword Worlds were colonized by Solomani from the region of Vland, not from Terra itself.

Recently, however, Imperial researchers working in the Aslan Hierate have uncovered new evidence for the Terran origins of the Sword Worlds colony. Working with the *eakh'ahfyafteirle* ("hunters for ancient honor") of clan *Wah-toi*, they have studied records from the time of the Border Wars. Apparently, sometime around -410 the clan incurred a massive debt of honor to a Human "clan" called the *Khara'ye*, the name possibly being a transliteration of the Germanic name *Gram*. According to the records, these Humans were from Terra itself, and had given clan *Wah-toi* some unspecified (but apparently impressive) assistance. Rather than settle the Humans in their own space, the clan called in enough favors to have them granted passage through the Hierate, across the route to the other side of the Great Rift. The fate of this first set of explorers is not recorded, but records from several decades later suggest that a few *Khara'ye* were still relying on the honor-debt to cross Aslan space. Further investigation of this matter may yield fascinating insights into Human and Aslan history late in the Long Night.

The truth of this legend isn't certain, but players who are interested in the Aslan might find the course of the Sword Worlds colonization to be the basis for a superb long-range campaign...

The Solomani Hypothesis

Speculation has always thrived as to why Humaniti is found on so many worlds. The Vilani first concluded that Humans had originated on a single world and been scattered by some unknown means. The discovery of numerous Ancient ruins seemed to point to them as the likely agency. The major remaining question was the identity of the race's birth planet.

During the Vilani Imperium, the most likely candidate was Urinishu, in the Antares sector. Urinishu hosted a number of species obviously biologically similar to Humans (rodents, antelope, whales, even monkeys and apes), but it was in the midst of a deep glacial period and the fossil record was scanty.

When the Terrans appeared, some saw evidence that they hailed from the Human homeworld. The Rule of Man spread that notion widely, claiming that the Ancients were in fact a previously unknown Human civilization originating on Terra. This "Archon Thesis" was spread wide, but after the Rule of Man's collapse many rejected the notion as mere Terran propaganda. No physical evidence for the claim existed.

During the early Third Imperium, the Archon Thesis was revived by a mixed group of Solomani nobles and scientists. This faction pushed for the expansion of the Third Imperium, hoping to find proof of their hypothesis and return Terran-born Humaniti to its rightful place. Cleon I was happy to co-opt this enthusiasm, and lent official support to the theory.

In 102, however, Magis Sergei haut-Devroe proposed a competing "Solomani Hypothesis," claiming that Humaniti did indeed originate on Terra, but that the Ancient civilization was itself non-Human in origin. He based his work on numerous Second Imperium texts, mostly extracts from ancient scientific journals known to have been printed on Terra. Haut-Devroe was also able to prove that Urinishu could *not* be the Human homeworld, that instead it had once been the equivalent of an Ancient zoological preserve.

Quarrels between haut-Devroe's supporters and those of the Archon Thesis lasted for centuries as the Third Imperium expanded. Indeed, the ideological debates that resulted were fertile ground for the later growth of the Solomani Movement. By about 400, however, the Archon Thesis was effectively abandoned. Examination of a variety of Ancient sites revealed that their civilization was almost certainly non-Human in origin. The recognition of Terra as the Human homeworld was almost universal by this time, however. In 588, after the Old Earth Union was incorporated into the Imperium, a small historical expedition was sent to Terra. To no one's great surprise, it was able to conclusively prove haut-Devroe's Solomani Hypothesis.

Reaching the Rim

The initial wave of Imperial expansion was to coreward and spinward, taking advantage of good relations between Sylea and Vland which had been established centuries before. Thus the first regions to receive Imperial attention were along the Great Rift, and even across it (in the Deneb and Spinward Marches sectors). To rimward, there were rumors of the Aslan, and of large and powerful pocket empires dominated by Solomani. Cleon I and his immediate successors decided that it would be better to consolidate territory closer to home before taking on such challenges. Indeed, Cleon I actually forbade official expansion past the Massilia sector during his reign.

Eventually, after decades of expansion and the Pacification Campaigns, the Imperium felt secure enough to move to rimward. The Imperial Interstellar Scout Service first entered the Solomani Rim about 100, making contact with the four major states as well as a number of isolated worlds. The Imperial strategy, as fixed by the Emperor Artemsus, was not one of conquest. Instead, the Imperium would act to encourage inter-world trade and commerce, eroding old barriers and acting as an honest broker in disputes. With patience and a consistent policy, Artemsus hoped that the Rim States would eventually be persuaded of the benefits of Imperial membership.

The strategy worked, although it took longer than even Artemsus might have feared. By 200 the Rim States were trading freely with each other, and opening communication into the wilderness surrounding them. The Easter Concord was particularly adventurous during this period, working with the IISS to open up many worlds. Unfortunately, before the process of integrating the Rim could be completed, another challenge appeared nearby. For centuries, the so-called Aslan Border Wars had been going on between Aslan clans and the Solomani splinter states of the Reaver's Deep, Dark Nebula, and Magyar sectors. Now, as the Imperium expanded into the region, it became entangled in countless local skirmishes and blood-feuds. For many years, Imperial diplomacy and military force had to concentrate on areas spinward of the Solomani Rim sector.

Integration of the Rim

At this point another obstacle intervened – a simple incompatibility between the Imperial system and the common traditions of the Solomani Rim. The Vilani Imperium and the Rule of Man had both worked through a hereditary aristocracy, but among the Solomani of the Rim the idea had never taken deep hold. Only in the Easter Concord was there a viable remnant of the Second Imperium's system of nobility. The other splinter states used different social structures, and resisted the idea of establishing an aristocracy as part of the process of joining the Imperium. To be sure, this obstacle had been met before as the Imperium expanded, but never on such a wide scale. Thus, after the Easter Concord joined the Imperium in 426, the pace of Imperial expansion slowed for a time. The Vegan Polity, Dingir League, and Old Earth Union had long since accepted client-state status, but they stubbornly resisted any offer of full membership. This state of affairs was not helped by the assassination of Empress Nicholle and the period of non-dynastic Emperors which followed. The shaky regimes of these Emperors did not encourage confidence in Imperial stability.

Finally, in the reign of the Empress Jacqueline I, the Imperium mounted a concerted effort to incorporate the Solomani Rim. One of Jacqueline's first actions as Empress was to grant the Dingir League's request for admission, in 582. The Vegan Polity was then subjected to intense diplomatic and economic pressure, and was intimidated into accepting Imperial rule in 586. This left only the Old Earth Union independent, but after a referendum it, too, joined the

Imperium in 588. Jacqueline always intended to bring the rest of the Rim into the Imperium, but the effort was cut short by her assassination in 606. Many of the Solomani states of the Magyar and Alpha Crucis sectors remained outside the Imperium, as did the Boötean League.



THE SOLOMANI MOVEMENT

During the Civil War, the Solomani Rim occasionally served as the jumping-off point for a march on the Imperial core. For example, the Barracks Emperors Joseph and Marava both had power bases in the new rimward provinces. The struggle had no lasting effect on the Rim, however. Far more fateful was the appearance of a new ideology among certain sections of the Solomani nobility: the Solomani Cause (see sidebar, p. 23).

The Solomani Autonomous Region

After the Civil War, the Imperium continued to face internal threats to its stability, most notably the Solomani Movement. After Margaret I reached adulthood, the solution she embraced was to allow the rimward portions of the Imperium to go their own way under Solomani leadership. In 704 the Empress signed a charter for the Solomani Autonomous Region, an area which would nominally remain part of the Imperium, but which would have almost complete powers of self-government. The new governing authority in the region would be set up by the leaders of the Solomani Movement. The Autonomous Region would be centered on Terra and would extend for 50 parsecs in all directions (hence the name "Solomani Sphere").

Birth of the Solomani Movement

The Third Imperium, like the Rule of Man and the Sylean Federation before it, was built on a Solomani aristocracy. Although the Imperium established equal rights before the law without consideration of race, in practice the Imperial power structure was wholly dominated by Solomani until the disaster of the Civil War. Pro-Solomani agitation was occasionally known even in the earliest days of the Third Imperium. Some Solomani nobles suggested that the capital should be moved to Terra as soon as that world could be relocated and contacted.

The Civil War was almost entirely a Solomani affair. Between Jacqueline I and Arbellatra, there were dozens of major and minor contenders for the throne, *every one of whom* was of pure (or nearly pure) Solomani descent. The Navy which fought the war was commanded by an officer corps which was predominantly Solomani. The Imperial Moot, which occasionally acted as a referee in the contest, was also controlled by Solomani nobles.

One side effect of the Civil War was dramatic growth in the influence of old Vilani noble houses, especially those which controlled megacorporations based in the Vland sector. These houses began extending their influence in the Imperial bureaucracy as early as the reign of Cleon IV (about 500). By the time of Jacqueline's accession they had become an important power at the Imperial court. During the Civil War, this Vilani power-bloc deliberately avoided involvement in the struggle, concentrating instead on maintaining stability and good government in regions hit hardest by the war. After Arbellatra's victory, the Vilani threw their support behind her regency and eventually were the first to suggest that she take the throne.

This growth of Vilani influence did not sit well with some Solomani nobles. Even during Jacqueline's reign, they began to develop and spread the ideology that eventually became the Solomani Cause. The core group of supporters was small at first, but the chaos of the Civil War led to rapid growth. Nostalgic and reactionary movements sprang up in various parts of the Imperium, many of them committed to the idea of Solomani superiority. Once the war was over, the Imperial court was again dominated by Solomani nobles and naval officers, many of whom were now members of the Solomani Movement.

Continued on next page . . .

Birth of the Solomani Movement

[Continued]

The last years of Arbellatra's reign were a time of tension at court. Those Solomani nobles who belonged to the Movement had grown high-handed, stopping at nothing to exclude outsiders (especially Vilani) from the Empress' inner circle. This tended to alienate Vilani factions, who continued to be loyal to the Imperium but were not above retaliating against Solomani arrogance by any available means. Upon Arbellatra's death in 666, all of the contending factions converged on her son Zhakirov.

Fortunately, Zhakirov turned out to be a tough-minded and foresightful Emperor. He saw that the Solomani Movement would only divide the Imperium at a time when it desperately needed unity. Early on, he publicly rejected the principles of the Solomani Cause, and began appointing to his advisory council from outside the circle which had supported his mother. At first, these advisors were Solomani who were not adherents to the Cause, but he later took the unprecedented step of appointing Vilani. In 679 he made the final break and married Antiamia Shiishuginsa, a member of the powerful Vilani family which controlled the megacorporation Zirunkariish. In 684, their mixed-blood daughter Margaret was born and immediately proclaimed the heir to the throne. The Imperium was firmly on a track that would lead to greater diversity in the highest circles of power.

This broke the power of the Solomani Movement at court, but Zhakirov died of natural causes before he could deal conclusively with the Movement. The new Empress Margaret was a 4-year-old child, and although Antiamia was on the regency council that ruled in Margaret's name, she did not control that council. The Movement remained powerful in some parts of the Imperium, and threatened to return to power at court by fair means or foul. The Movement began to use anti-Imperial rhetoric at this time, leading to actual revolts against Imperial authority on some Solomani-majority worlds. These revolts were always put down, but during this so-called "regency period" the prospect of a general Solomani insurrection always loomed over the Imperium.

For decades, relations between the Imperium and the Autonomous Region were relatively cordial. Trade continued, technological exchanges continued, and the sphere continued to pay taxes to the Imperial Treasury. The Solomani did as they pleased, but refrained from challenging the authority of the central government. Over time, the Solomani Movement consolidated its control over the Autonomous Region, building an interstellar empire based on principles very different from those of the Imperium.

Under the rule of the Solomani Movement, worlds with dominant Solomani populations did well. The Imperium had discouraged (though not strictly prohibited) multiworld governing structures, insisting that the Imperium itself should provide all such functions for its member worlds. The Solomani Movement was more willing to allow worlds under its control to manage their own affairs, setting up multiworld alliances to pursue their own interests. Trade boomed during the period of the Autonomous Region, as did competition.

On the other hand, non-Solomani within the sphere suffered greater and greater oppression as time passed. Non-Solomani (and especially non-Humans) were shut out of interstellar politics, prevented from trading on equal terms, and excluded from the new colonial expansion to rimward. In fact, non-Solomani worlds were subject to colonization by imported Solomani populations. These colonies were often composed of members of the Movement fleeing "persecution" back in the Imperium. When they arrived, they invariably took over planetary government and reduced the existing population to second-class status. The Vegans suffered particularly badly during this period, with Solomani governors and Solomani colonies imposed on all of their worlds.

THE SOLOMANI RIM WAR

By about 860, the Solomani Movement had triumphed throughout the Autonomous Region. Aside from a continuing problem with the Aslan to spinward, no significant planetary or interstellar state remained independent of the Movement's control. By this time, the Movement's anti-Imperial ideology had reached its peak, and the pretense of Imperial sovereignty had been nearly abandoned. In 871 the Movement reorganized the sphere as a new interstellar government, the Solomani Confederation.

Solomani Provocations

The new government existed primarily to organize the Movement's rule over the sphere. It also claimed to be the only legitimate Human interstellar government. In effect, the Solomani Sphere had declared its independence from the Imperium. The foundation of the Confederation was roundly ignored at the Imperial court. The Empress Tomutova II publicly declared that the Solomani had full authority to organize their internal affairs as they saw fit, within the charter of 704.

Eventually, it became clear that the Confederation was pursuing a course not only independent of Imperial policy, but incompatible with it. Tomutova's successor, Margaret II, had no interest in subjugating the Solomani, but she was committed to the notion of universal sentient rights. About 920 she began receiving appeals for protection from several worlds inside the Solomani Sphere. These worlds, most of which had non-Solomani majorities, petitioned the Empress to be excluded from the Solomani Autonomous Region and governed directly by the Imperium. Overruling her advisory council, Margaret granted most of these petitions, and ordered the Imperial Navy to enforce the transitions.

The Solomani had grown used to being ignored, but now they had to deal with large-scale incursions into "their" space, as naval forces moved to protect

those worlds now under direct Imperial control. When Confederate forces attempted to harass shipping moving from or to these worlds, the Imperial Navy responded vigorously and forced Solomani units to back down. By the late 930s, skirmishes between Imperial detachments and Solomani "privateers" were common in the Daibei, Diaspora, and Old Expanses sectors. The Confederation tried to avoid a confrontation, not feeling ready for a full-scale war, but this only encouraged other worlds to seek Imperial protection. Finally, in 940 the Solomani Confederation lodged a formal protest at the Imperial court, alleging Imperial meddling in its internal affairs in violation of the charter of 704. The Empress responded by revoking the Solomani charter, ordering the reintegration of Terra and the rest of the Autonomous Region into the Imperium.

Margaret's strategy had two threads. First, she planned to step up diplomatic and economic pressure on the Solomani, encouraging more and more worlds to peacefully return to direct Imperial rule. Meanwhile, Imperial military force was to be massed along the border of the Autonomous Region, preparing for full-scale war if the situation demanded it. At first the strategy seemed to be working, but then Margaret died of natural causes and left the throne to her grandson Styryx.

The new Emperor proved to be a weak ruler, more interested in the pleasures and intrigues of the Imperial court than in the mechanics of governance. He allowed the diplomatic effort against the Solomani to continue, but at first failed to support it personally or allocate resources to the military buildup. This allowed the Confederation many years in which to make plans, consolidate its territory, and build a respectable military force of its own. By 970 the Emperor had matured somewhat, and began to take an interest in matters of grand strategy. About this time he appointed a senior naval commission to plan a war against the Solomani Confederation. Unfortunately, before the plan could be put into effect the Third Frontier War broke out (979-986). This war could not be seen as anything but an Imperial defeat, and in the public outcry that followed the Emperor himself was forced to abdicate.

Opening Moves

When news of the abdication reached Terra, the Confederation government saw its chance to strike. In late 989 the Confederation formally declared itself independent of the Imperium, and asserted its claim to the entire Solomani Sphere. The new Imperial Emperor Gavin declared a state of open war in 990.

At first, the war seemed to go very well for the Solomani. Although sizable Imperial fleets were already stationed along the border, they were inferior in strength to the massed Navy of the Solomani Confederation.

Fate of the Aristocracy

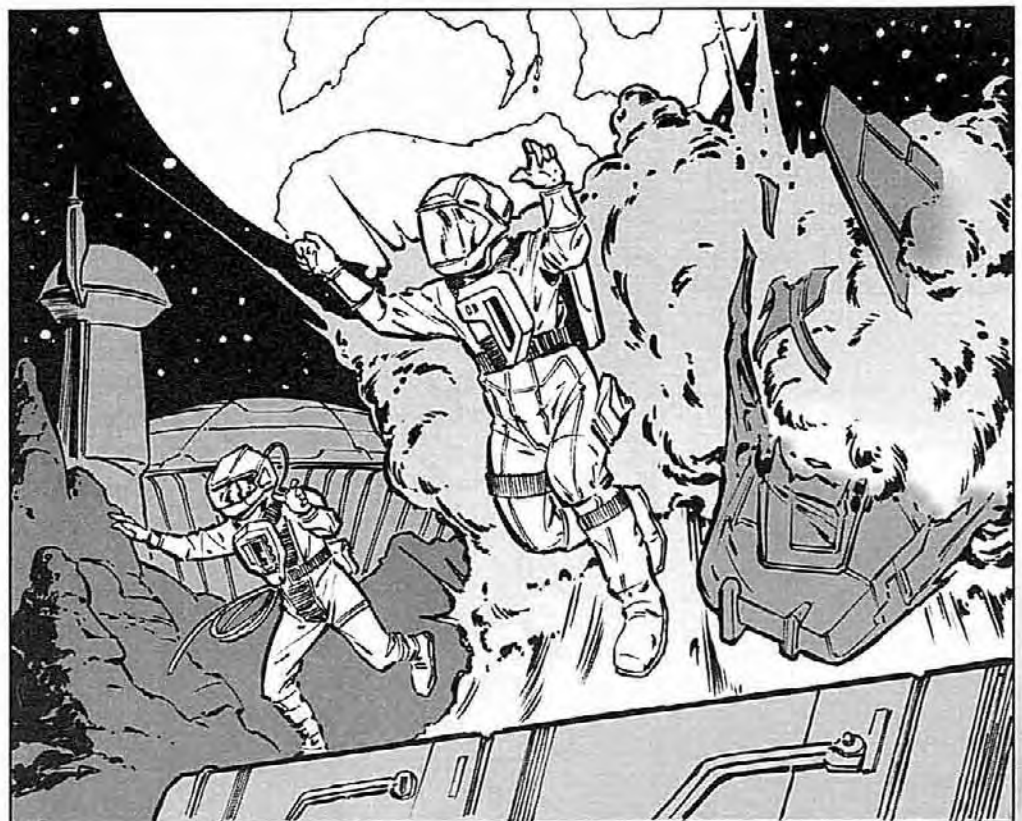
One of the first major changes the Solomani Movement made in its space was to reform the Imperial system of hereditary aristocracy.

The notion of noble titles was not abolished outright, but the nobility no longer had any specific function in the management of interstellar government. The role once taken by the nobility was now undertaken by the Solomani Movement, which limited membership based on race rather than class.

Meanwhile, the Emperors no longer issued new patents of nobility for worlds inside the Solomani Sphere. Nobles residing in the sphere could pass the title on to their heirs, but the Emperors also refused to confirm such a transfer if the heir was a member of the Solomani Movement.

As a result, by about 760 the institution of Imperial nobility had almost vanished in the sphere. Many noble families had died out for lack of an eligible heir. Others moved to the Imperial core, where they continued to represent their home worlds in the Moot in absentia. A few stubborn houses remained in existence on the Rim, but they lived under increasingly harsh conditions as the Movement's anti-Imperial bias deepened.

This division of the rimward Imperial aristocracy eventually gave rise to the two main factions present today (see pp. 8-9).



Solomani Imperialism

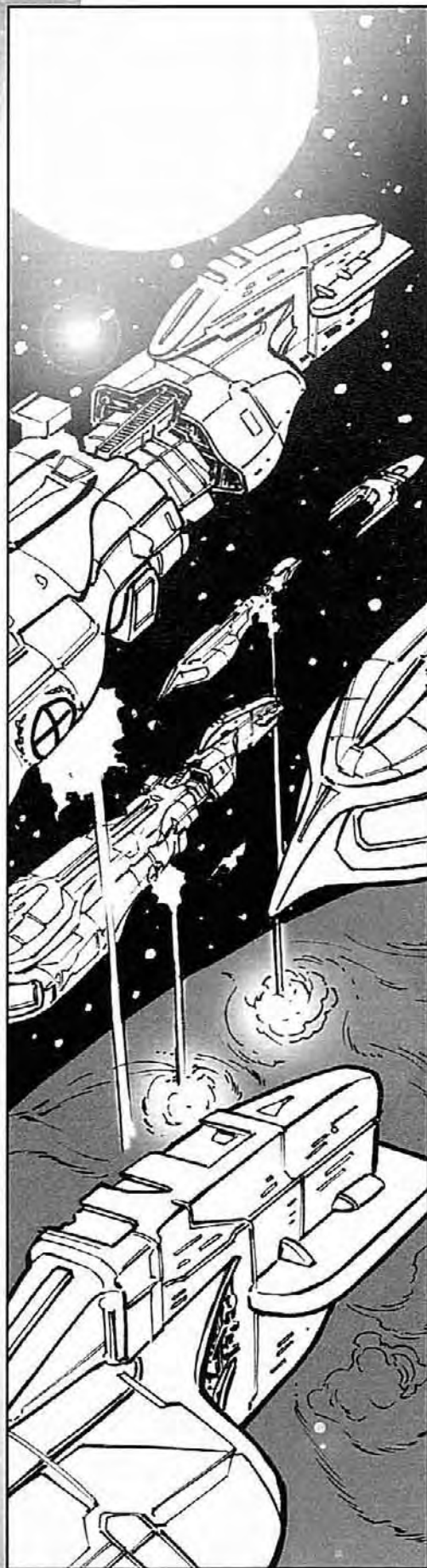
The original charter for the Solomani Sphere, issued by the Empress Margaret I, set aside a spherical region which extended far beyond the then-current borders of the Imperium. The new sphere theoretically included many Solomani splinter states in the Magyar and Alpha Crucis sectors, as well as a vast region of unsettled space to rimward of Terra.

Once the Solomani Movement was secure in its new territory, the Solomani began a process of absorbing the entire sphere. Imperial client states and independent polities in the region were forced to accept the rule of the Solomani Movement. New worlds were colonized by pure-Solomani populations. Protests from the worlds thus absorbed were ignored by the Imperium.

Conflict between the Solomani and the Aslan also dates from this time. The original treaty between the Imperium and the Aslan Hierate had established a wide buffer zone running from Reaver's Deep rimward to the Canopus sector. Many Solomani states existed within this zone, but the Imperium had agreed to allow these states to reach their own accommodations with the Aslan.

The government of the Solomani Autonomous Region was not so forbearing, especially since the charter territory almost included Kusyu itself. The Solomani Movement regime pressed hard to spinward, absorbing the independent Solomani states and trampling over all the ancient agreements with the Aslan. The Aslan clans considered this to be a violation of treaty, and pressed back. Conflict in the old border zone never reached the epic level of the old Border Wars, but local wars and skirmishes were almost constant.

Formal protests from the *Tlaukhu* were treated politely by the Imperium, but had no effect.



Solomani offensives in the Daibei and Diaspora sectors dealt heavy damage to the Imperial Navy, and regained almost all the worlds lost to the Imperium since the reign of Margaret II. The first check to Solomani ambitions came in 993, when a drive into the Old Expanses met with near-fanatical resistance and was repulsed with heavy losses.

Had the Confederation continued on the offensive, the war might have gone very differently. Instead, the Solomani high command abandoned their plans for further expansion in order to rebuild their losses. The Imperium sensed the shift to a defensive posture, and began a strategy of harassing raids and short-term offensives designed to keep the Solomani off-balance. Here, the Confederation's civilian government made its critical mistake. Ordering that every border world had to be defended, it forced the Confederation Navy to react to Imperial tactics. As the Solomani lost men and ships defending unimportant worlds, they were unable to regain the initiative. By 998 the Imperium had gained a strategic advantage, as its superior industrial strength made itself felt.

Solomani Defeat

In that year, the Imperium launched the last phase of the war by starting a steady advance into the heart of the Solomani Sphere. The strategy called for two attacks along parallel lines, moving through the Diaspora sector into the Solomani Rim to converge on Terra. Lesser task forces spread out from the main axis of attack to isolate a number of worlds, creating a huge pocket of Solomani territory cut off from the rest of the Confederation. The Imperial High Command theorized (correctly) that the Solomani would be unwilling to leave Terra undefended, and would not try to relieve any forces cut off in the pocket. This would allow the Imperial Navy to defeat any unsupported Solomani forces in detail.

The strategy proved effective. Although the Solomani occasionally won a tactical victory, they were unable to halt the main advance. In 1001 the Imperial fleet liberated Muan Gwi and secured the Vegan District. This gave the Imperium a firm foothold in the Solomani Rim, supplied by the extensive shipyard facilities of the Vegan worlds. With this advance base in Imperial hands, the final conquest of the Confederation seemed assured.

In response, the Confederation embarked on a desperate gamble, consolidating its remaining forces into a single Grand Fleet under its ablest Admiral, Ivan Wolfe. Wolfe had analyzed the Imperial strategy and contrived a plan which might allow the Confederation to stop the attack short of Sol. The Imperial 17th Fleet was advancing along the old Corridor toward Terra, while the 1st Fleet was striking from Vega toward Dingir. Wolfe saw that the second advance was likely to be slow, since the Imperial fleet commander in charge was cautious. He therefore met the advance guard of the 17th Fleet at Agidda, and inflicted a major defeat. He then shifted his forces to Dingir, hoping to defeat the 1st Fleet and force the Imperium to withdraw.

In the end, Wolfe underestimated the commanders of the Imperial 17th Fleet. They were able to rally their forces quickly and effect a pursuit of the Solomani Grand Fleet. As a result, when Wolfe engaged the Imperial 1st Fleet at Dingir (early in 1002), he was surprised by the sudden appearance of the 17th Fleet in his rear. In the subsequent battle the Solomani Grand Fleet was scattered and largely destroyed. Wolfe gathered the remnants of his fleet and retreated deeper into Solomani territory, leaving Terra undefended by main fleet elements.

The Invasion of Terra

The Imperial High Command decided that Terra would have to be invaded and taken by force, in order to end forever all claims of Solomani superiority. Imperial planners believed that the fall of Terra would completely demoralize the Solomani and prompt a collapse of the entire Confederation. To mount the invasion, a sizable fraction of all Imperial forces along the front was gathered into a single assault force. The invasion was launched in the second quarter of 1002. Terra had been packed with ground troops and planetary defenses, and the hard-fought campaign lasted until nearly the end of the year. In the end, the Imperium conquered the planet, but the cost of the Battle of Terra was so high that further advances into Solomani territory were postponed.

Meanwhile, the fall of Terra did not have the hoped-for effect on Solomani resistance. Imperial strategists had failed to take the "new territories" rimward of Terra into account. These worlds had been settled almost exclusively by Solomani. They were loyal to the Solomani Cause, and independent enough to carry on the struggle even with Terra in Imperial hands. Meanwhile, Wolfe's fleet had used the breathing space to regroup, establishing a forward base in the Near Boötes cluster and preparing for a counteroffensive. When it became clear that the Confederation was ready to continue fighting, the Imperial High Command negotiated a temporary armistice with Wolfe and his staff.

Both civilian governments were now concerned with the strain the war had placed on their economies. Some Solomani fanatics demanded an immediate counterattack, and threatened to relieve Wolfe if he didn't move immediately to liberate Terra. Wolfe, on the other hand, was reluctant to squander more lives. Backed by the Boötes Cluster worlds and other moderate elements, Wolfe managed to make his position stick. Although no formal peace treaty has ever been signed, the armistice of 1002 is considered to have been the end of the Solomani Rim War.

COLD WAR

After the armistice, Ivan Wolfe stepped down as supreme commander of Solomani forces. Despite his defeat at Dingir, he emerged from the war with an excellent reputation, due to his military skill and his firm stand against prolonging the war.

Margaret Speaks

"... This is the paradox of the open society: It tolerates every social value except that of intolerance. A commitment to diversity has always been a source of tension in our Imperium, and yet we welcome that tension as the price we pay for our greatest strength. Diversity brings us creativity and innovation, even while it also brings us the self-criticism we need to remain free of error."

"It is regrettable that the proud name of the Solomani, once associated with the highest Human ideals, has now become a synonym for bigotry and racism. It was Solomani who taught the galaxy how to build an open society, but our brothers in the Autonomous Region have abandoned their own creation. For all their pride, they have dishonored the glorious accomplishments of the ancestors they revere. For all that they claim to love liberty, they have sold their own freedom in exchange for the right to oppress others. For all that they claim to recognize Imperial sovereignty, they have chosen to abandon all that our Imperium represents."

"No longer."

"As of this day, we revoke the charter of the Solomani Autonomous Region, and we require all agencies of our government to take any steps necessary to bring that region under direct Imperial rule."

"Signed, Margaret II, Protector of Terra"

*— Orders in Council,
day 292 of year 940 Imperial*

Solomani Terrorism

Ever since the Rim War, the Imperium has had to face all the problems of controlling a resentful, occupied population. Terrorism is a common event in the Imperial portions of the Solomani Rim sector.

There are many small terrorist groups in the sector, all connected with the Solomani Party and all fond of striking at Imperial targets. The most prominent of these is the Rule of Terra (see p. GT58). This "classic" form of terrorism actually seems to be on the decline in recent years, possibly because of more effective anti-terrorist measures being taken by the Solomani Confederation.

In recent years, there have been rumors of a new Solomani terrorist group, most often called the "Brotherhood of Orion." Little is known of the group beyond its name, as it seems to shun publicity and rarely claims responsibility for its attacks. Imperial authorities are said to be investigating, but they have so far made no public statement about the group or the level of threat it presents.

The Authentic Movement

Johann Kramm was a Solomani anthropology professor living on Shadusham (in the Imperial Core). In 988, he published *The Authentic Experience*, a combination history text and self-help manual that became an instant best-seller.

Kramm's thesis was that high-technology civilization deadens the Human spirit by forcing everyone into the same homogeneous culture. He believed that Humans need variety and mystery for their spiritual health, and that the best place to find such things was in other people. Accordingly, he recommended learning about and living in an ancestral culture, consciously adopting its customs and folkways in daily life.

"Few men can construct themselves wholly from the products of their own imagination," he wrote. "Choose instead to live as your ancestors did, and you will be on the path to an identity that is uniquely yours. Perhaps then you will have something *authentic* to share with your fellow men."

In one sense, Kramm's message was nothing new. Cultural revival movements have taken place many times, on every Human world. On the other hand, Kramm placed value on *all* ancient cultures, and attempted to avoid the bigotry often attached to such movements.

He also turned out to be a very persuasive man, both in print and in person, and his ideas caught the imagination of many people. By the time of his death in 1005, billions of people in the Core sector and elsewhere were following his prescription. Thus was born the Authentic Movement.

In most of the Imperium, this movement has the status of a harmless hobby. A member begins by studying his family history, looking for ancestors who lived under cultural values which were interesting but different from those of his present-day society. Upon finding an appealing historical culture, the authenticist will study it minutely and try to adopt its ways as far as possible. He will wear authentic costume, learn about ancient social and religious beliefs, and adopt some of the ethical values of his ancestors.

Dedicated members attend classes where they learn to speak and write their ancestors' language, even if that language is only known through linguistic reconstruction. Vilani authenticists often hark back to the First Imperium, while Solomani and minor-race members settle on one of the myriad historical cultures of their homeworlds.

Continued on next page . . .



He was a natural candidate as spokesman for the new moderate coalition which dominated the Confederation's government. As such, he was elected Secretary-General of the Confederation in 1004.

During his eight-year term, Wolfe carried out a series of political and military reforms designed to strengthen the Confederation. He established a new capital at Home, in the Aldebaran sector about 30 parsecs rimward of Terra. He took steps to encourage economic growth, establishing new industrial centers to replace those lost to the Imperium. He also instituted the Home Guard system to provide trained reserves for the Confederation's armed forces.

Although Wolfe is generally recognized as an able statesman, not all of his reforms had the effects he expected. Many of the political and economic concessions he granted took root, promoting local power centers at the expense of the central government. The Home Guard system also encouraged factionalism, as local militias did not always support the views of the provincial or Confederation governments. As worlds found they could act independently, the power of the central government diminished even more.

Meanwhile, the Imperium reintegrated the occupied section of the Solomani Sphere (amounting to about 25% of the original Confederation territory). Most of the worlds of the Solomani Rim were placed under military rule, as a first stage in rebuilding normal Imperial institutions. Meanwhile, the Vegan Autonomous Region was chartered in 1004, effectively reviving the old Vegan Polity as a counterweight to the Solomani Confederation. This bought the loyalty of the Vegans, and created a power base from which Imperial interests along the new border could be managed.

Eventually, the new situation stabilized in a form that holds to the present day. The Imperium continues to refuse recognition of the Solomani Confederation, and the Confederation continues to refuse to recognize Imperial sovereignty over any part of the old Solomani Sphere. Even so, the armistice of 1002 has turned into an informal detente. Trade missions from both sides routinely cross the border, and there are many informal contacts between Imperial authorities and their opposite numbers in the Confederation. Of course, formal diplomatic relations are probably years if not decades away.

The Imperial position is to allow the Solomani Confederation to exist, provided that it causes no trouble in Imperial territory. Terrorist incursions are tolerated, so long as the Confederation government makes a good-faith effort to prevent anti-Imperial violence. In general, the Imperium has tolerated the existence of cells of the Solomani Party within its borders, provided that these cells take no violent action in pursuit of their political goals. The Imperium has maintained an aggressive anti-terrorist campaign ever since the armistice. This campaign has been moderately successful, especially since the breakup in 1045 of the Phoenix Project (see p. GT53).

The Confederation's position is more complex. On the one hand, the Confederation cannot actively support anti-Imperial violence, because that would bring down the Imperium's wrath and disrupt the highly profitable trade that has grown up between the two states. On the other hand, any action which might undercut the Solomani Movement would anger many of the Confederation's citizens, many of whom still support the Solomani Cause. Thus, the Confederation government cannot recognize Imperial sovereignty, condemn pro-Solomani activities within the Imperium, or openly act against pro-Solomani terrorists. The central government officially supports the Solomani Movement, both inside and outside the Imperium, but it does not provide financial or military aid to any Solomani Party within occupied territory. Meanwhile, it unofficially tries to discourage pro-Solomani violence, even cooperating covertly with Imperial authorities to do so.

The Authentic Movement

[Continued]

Meanwhile, every authenticist is taught to respect the cultural choices of other people. Indeed, authenticists often engage in a kind of friendly competition in which they share their ancestral cultures with one another. Groups within an authenticist "fellowship" gain informal status by presenting traditional forms of cuisine or entertainment, and can score a coup even more effectively by helping other groups with research or presentation.

For example, at a meeting of one authenticist fellowship, a group descended from Scots might share haggis, meat pies, scones, or other foods of traditional Scottish origin. The Arab group might reciprocate by bringing mezzes, falafel, and kebabs to the next gathering – but it would earn even more admiration by sponsoring authentic Highland games or a bagpipe exhibition! This kind of amiable rivalry is designed to bring authenticists together and prevent the Movement from becoming a flash-point for cultural warfare. As one might expect, it doesn't always work . . .

The Authentic Movement reached the Solomani Rim about 1010, soon after the end of the Solomani Rim War. There it soon took on more serious social and political overtones. At first, Imperial authorities discouraged the Authentic Movement in their own territory, fearing that it would fan the flames of Solomani intolerance.

Soon it became apparent that the opposite was happening. Solomani authenticists tended to become engaged in a single historical Terran culture, losing interest in the monolithic worldview of the Solomani Movement. Further, those who joined the Authentic Movement seemed to become more tolerant and respectful of other people's cultural backgrounds. Some Solomani of mixed ancestry were even taking an interest in old Vilani culture!

As a result, by about 1050 Imperial officials had gone from disapproval to cautious encouragement of the Authentic Movement. Cynics claim that this support is simply a ploy to divide the Solomani, encouraging them to acquiesce in Imperial rule. Other observers point out that the Imperial society is more respectful of cultural diversity, so it's natural for authenticists to be more open toward the Imperium.

In either case, authenticism remains quite popular on many worlds in the Imperial portion of the sector. It is likely to be a continuing force in the evolution of Rim society, a counterweight to the racist ideology of the Solomani Movement.

Worlds

The Solomani Rim sector contains 400 worlds, with a total population of over 1 trillion people. For each subsector, this chapter lists the worlds in two tables. Some of the most important or unique worlds are described in detail, while others are left undescribed so that GMs can develop them as they see fit.

World Data Tables

The two-column table for each subsector (starting on p. 63) contains the basic data needed to describe each world.

Hex: Identification number of the hex occupied by the world on the sector map.

Name: The world's official name.

Allegiance: The "allegiance code" for the world. *Imp* indicates a member world of the Third Imperium. *Ind* indicates an independent world. *Sol* indicates a member world of the Solomani Confederation. *Veg* indicates a world within the Vegan Autonomous Region, officially a member of the Third Imperium but directly governed by the Vegan Polity. A single asterisk (*) indicates a subsector capital, while a double asterisk (**) indicates either the sector capital (Dingir) or the capital of the Domain of Sol (Muan Gwi).

Zone: The "travel zone" designation currently published for the world by the Travellers' Aid Society. A Green Zone world is one that is safe to visit in the course of routine travel. An Amber Zone is moderately hazardous, and visitors should exercise caution (see p. GT19). A Red Zone is extremely dangerous and is usually off-limits to travel (see p. GT56).

Starport: The classification of the starport (see p. GT64). This can range from 0 (indicating that there is no starport at all) through V (indicating the largest and busiest starports). After the starport class may appear one or more codes indicating the presence of military bases. An *N* indicates a Naval Base (which includes the equivalent of a Scout Base within the Solomani Confederation). A *D* indicates a Naval Depot. An *S* on a world within Imperial space indicates the presence of a Scout Base. A *W* indicates the presence of an IISS Way Station, a nexus on the Imperial Xboat system.

Diameter: The diameter of the world, in miles. *Asteroids* indicates that the main "world" of the system is a set of asteroid-belt settlements.

Gravity: The surface gravity of the world, in standard gravities. This figure is not given for asteroid-belt "worlds."

Atmosphere: Description of the world's atmosphere. *None* indicates no atmosphere at all. Oxygen-Nitrogen atmospheres

are listed as *Trace*, *Very Thin*, *Thin*, *Standard*, *Dense*, or *Very Dense*. Usually, only thin, standard, or dense atmospheres are breathable by Humans. A (T) indicates that the atmosphere is "tainted," including contaminants or a mix of gases that Humans cannot easily breathe. Tainted atmospheres may be polluted as defined in *GURPS Space*, or they may simply lack enough oxygen to support Human life. *Exotic* atmospheres contain no oxygen and are actually poisonous to Human life, requiring at least a self-contained oxygen supply for survival. *Corrosive* atmospheres are even more hostile and poisonous, requiring not only a sealed oxygen supply but also a vacc suit or other full-body protective gear. For more details, see *GURPS Space*.

Hydrographic Percentage: The percentage of the world's surface covered by its "hydrosphere." On most worlds, the hydrosphere is composed of water oceans (which may be frozen on cold worlds). Worlds with exotic or corrosive atmospheres may have hydrospheres composed of more unusual substances.

Climate: The overall climate of the world. The climate category can be interpreted in terms of average surface temperature (see p. S157). Two climate categories are used here but not listed in *GURPS Space*. *Torrid* climate is actually uninhabitable for Humans, representing an average surface temperature higher than 140° F. *Frigid* climate is similarly uninhabitable, representing an average surface temperature below -40° F.

Population: The population of the world.

Government Type: The overall classification of the world's society (see p. S168 and p. GT123). *Anarch* indicates anarchy, *AthDem* indicates an Athenian democracy, *Bureau* indicates a bureaucracy, *Clan* indicates a clan/tribal society, *Corporate* indicates a corporate state, *Dictator* indicates a dictatorship, *Merit* indicates a meritocracy, *Oligarch* indicates an oligarchy, *RepDem* indicates a representative democracy, *Techno* indicates a technocracy, and *Theo* indicates a theocracy. *Captive* indicates a world which does not have self-government, but is ruled from somewhere else (see the narrative description of the world for details). *Military* indicates a world which is ruled directly by Imperial military authorities. *Multiple* indicates a "balkanized" world with no unified administration. Instead, it is owned by multiple societies, which may each have a different form of government.

Control Rating: The Control Rating prevalent on the world.

Tech Level: The Tech Level prevalent on the world (or in the world's dominant society, if there is more than one).

World Trade Number: The World Trade Number for the world, computed using the rules from p. T:FT11.

Navigation Data Tables

The one-column table for each subsector (starting on p. 65) gives astrographic data, describing the other contents of each world's star system. These figures are useful in developing secondary worlds, or in using the detailed rules in *GURPS Traveller Far Trader* or *GURPS Traveller First In*.

Hex: Number of the hex occupied by the world on the sector map.

Name: The world's official name.

Primary: The spectral classification of the world's primary star (see *GURPS Space* or *GURPS Traveller First In*).

Companions: The spectral classification of any companion stars in the star system.

Gas Giants: The number of gas-giant planets in the star system. If any gas giants are present, some starships will be able to perform "wilderness refueling" by skimming the atmosphere of one.

Planetoid Belts: The number of planetoid belts in the star system. If the main world of the system is itself an asteroid belt, then these planetoid belts will be in addition to the main world.

Orbit: The radius of the main world's orbit around its primary star, in astronomical units or AU (see p. S146). An asterisk (*) indicates that the main world is actually the moon of another planet, probably a gas giant. In this case, the figure given is the radius of that planet's orbit around the primary star.

Moons: The number of moons orbiting the main world. For the purposes of this table, a *large moon* is at least 100 miles in diameter and may be thousands of miles in diameter. A *small moon* is no more than 50 miles in diameter and may be only a few miles across.

ULTIMA SUBSECTOR

The Ultima subsector is so named because it has always been a backwater, far from trade routes and main regions of colonization. The subsector was only thinly settled during the First Imperium, and a dearth of attractive worlds caused Terran colonists to stay away. The region suffered badly during the Long Night, with several worlds being simply abandoned for lack of external trade or supplies. Recovery has been slow.

The duchy of Ultima is a recently revived title, the current Duke being the first since the Solomani Movement abolished the nobility in this region. Duke Huang Qingguo was born to a commoner family on Cathay, in the nearby Vega subsector. Before being named Duke of Ultima, he had a successful career as an economist and had risen to high rank in the megacorporation Zirunkariish. With the appointment, the Emperor hoped to encourage economic development in the subsector, and the Duke has attacked this challenge with a will. Unfortunately, his enthusiasm has often been thwarted by the sheer magnitude of the problem. In particular, he faces resistance from the nationalist government of Darrukesh and the xenophobic Gurungan.

Pro-Solomani sentiment in the subsector is fairly weak. Under the Solomani the region's development was ignored, and while the Imperials have done no better they are at least trying.

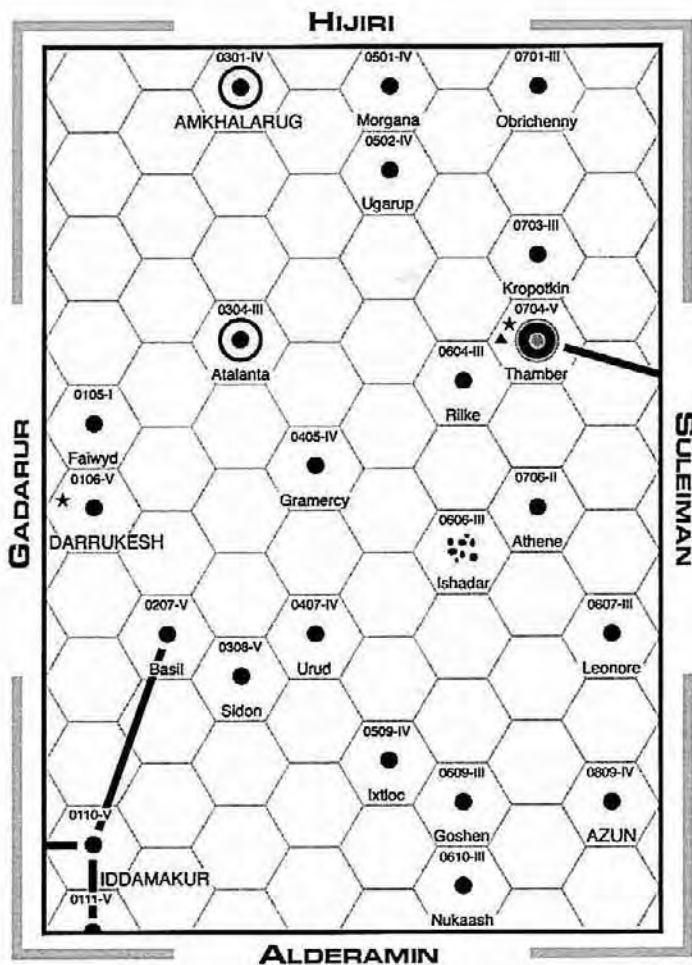
0105 FAIWDYD (IMPERIAL)

A consortium of Darrukesh industrialists settled Faiwyd about 1030. They wanted to create an industrial colony shielded from the crushing taxation and regulation of their homeworld. Although the colony has nominal political independence, it has suffered from mismanagement and has never attained economic self-sufficiency. Currently it is completely dependent on imports from Darrukesh, even for basic life support.

ULTIMA SUBSECTOR WORLDS

HEX	ALLEGIANCE		STARPORT	GRAVITY		HYDROGRAPHIC %			POPULATION	CR	WTN			
	NAME	ZONE	DIAMETER	ATMOSPHERE	CLIMATE	GOV TYPE	TL							
0105	Faiwyd	Imp	Green	I	5,300	0.54	None	None	Very Hot	750,000	Merit	6	7	2.5
0106	Darrukesh	Imp	Green	V-N	4,400	0.58	Dense	48%	Hot	8.2 billion	Oligarch	6	10	5.5
0110	Iddamakur	Imp	Green	V	7,200	0.82	Standard (T)	87%	Normal	3.2 billion	Dictator	6	7	5.0
0207	Basil	Imp	Green	V	8,200	0.75	Thin (I)	20%	Chilly	31 million	Oligarch	1	11	5.0
0301	Amkhalarug	Imp	Amber	IV	4,100	0.56	Thin (T)	29%	Warm	6.7 billion	Dictator	6	11	5.5
0304	Atalanta	Imp	Amber	III	4,300	0.53	Standard (T)	57%	Very Cold	5,000	Captive	5	10	3.0
0308	Sidon	Imp	Green	IV	6,200	0.40	Corrosive	86%	Frigid	920,000	AthDem	1	10	4.0
0405	Gramercy	Imp	Green	IV	2,900	0.57	Very Thin	None	Frigid	560,000	AthDem	3	8	3.5
0407	Urud	Imp	Green	IV	1,400	0.08	None	None	Frigid	870,000	RepDem	1	11	4.0
0501	Morgana	Imp	Green	IV	10,000	1.38	Dense (T)	97%	Warm	120 million	Captive	1	10	5.0
0502	Ugarup	Imp	Green	IV	8,300	0.97	Dense (T)	98%	Hot	800 million	Dictator	6	10	5.0
0509	Ixtloc	Imp	Green	IV	4,700	0.50	Very Thin	None	Hot	17,000	Merit	4	10	3.5
0604	Rilke	Imp	Green	III	5,200	0.72	Dense (T)	99%	Cool	5,800	Captive	5	9	3.0
0606	Ishadar	Imp	Green	III	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Torrid	82 million	Multiple	4	9	4.5
0609	Goshen	Imp	Green	III		5,400	0.94	Standard (T)	68%	Tropical	350,000	Oligarch	1	9
0610	Nukaash	Imp	Green	III	2,300	0.29	Thin (T)	74%	Frozen	36 million	AthDem	1	9	4.5
0701	Obrichenny	Imp	Green	III	5,800	0.70	Thin (I)	31%	Hot	1.6 million	Techno	4	10	4.0
0703	Kropotkin	Imp	Green	III	4,000	0.50	Thin (I)	38%	Chilly	2.4 million	Dictator	4	10	4.0
0704	Thamber	Imp (*)	Green	V-NS	4,300	0.43	Thin	38%	Frigid	630 million	Bureau	5	11	5.0
0706	Athene	Imp	Green	II	6,100	0.56	Corrosive	95%	Frigid	35	Corporate	0	12	2.0
0807	Leonore	Imp	Green	III	2,800	0.22	Trace	None	Frigid	630,000	Multiple	4	9	3.5
0809	Azun	Imp	Green	IV	4,000	0.59	Standard (T)	58%	Very Cold	26 billion	Dictator	6	9	5.5

Key on pp. 62-63.



0106 DARRUKESH (IMPERIAL)

Darrukesh was first settled late in the First Imperium, after a long period of terraforming which gave the planet a breathable atmosphere and wide (but shallow) seas. Its population and culture are still mostly Vilani. During Solomani rule, the population was kept under the control of a police state for the benefit of a small Solomani elite. The Rim War brought about a popular revolution, which was supported by the Imperial Navy. A Vilani junta seized control and imposed wide-ranging reforms, trying to return Darrukesh to the political and cultural traditions of the First Imperium. Today, Darrukesh is governed like the ancient Vilani Empire in miniature. An Emperor holds nominal sovereignty over the star system, while real power is in the hands of an *Igsiirdi* controlled by the planet's largest corporations.

The government of Darrukesh levies very high taxes and is extremely intrusive, stamping out any deviation from a strictly defined Vilani norm. Despite this, the people enthusiastically support their government. Nonconformists, including those Solomani who did not flee the revolution, have a very difficult time on Darrukesh. Some of these have settled (not always voluntarily) in the system's rich outer planetoid belt. Conditions are harsh there, but settlers can make a good living, and the system government tolerates greater social diversity in the asteroid colonies.

The rulers of Darrukesh are loyal to the Imperium, but they also have a clear long-range agenda of their own. The Darrukeshi remember the Long Night, and even worse, the

"betrayal" of Empress Margaret I which delivered their world into Solomani hands. Privately, they have resolved never again to be wholly dependent upon the Imperium. They have built up a powerful military force of their own, ostensibly for "system defense." They have also created an economic sphere of influence stretching several parsecs in all directions. Darrukeshi interests have often hired mercenaries to intervene in the affairs of other worlds. As a result, the Duke of Ultima regards Darrukesh as the most serious challenge to his plans for developing the subsector.

Since the Rim War, Imperial planetographers have expressed concern about the long-term viability of Darrukesh as an inhabited world. During the terraforming phase, the Vilani gave the planet a very thick atmosphere to offset its naturally cold climate. It now appears possible that this was overdone. Darrukesh may be slowly sliding into a runaway-greenhouse state, which would render the planet completely uninhabitable. The *Igsiirdi* has firmly refused to cooperate with Scout Service attempts to study the planet's long-term climate.

0110 IDDAMAKUR (IMPERIAL)

Iddamakur is a marginally habitable world. The high oxygen content of the atmosphere causes lung irritation and metabolic problems. Even those native to the world must wear reducing respirators if they plan on strenuous outdoor activity. Local conditions also make natural fire an almost constant problem. Even in moist climates, flammable materials will burn merrily at the slightest spark. As a result, the planet's land life is scattered and primitive, mostly consisting of plant species which use the frequent wildfires as part of their life cycle. On the other hand, the oceans teem with life, some of which is edible by Humans. Civilization on Iddamakur tends to cling to islands and shorelines, relying on fishing and aquaculture for survival.

Iddamakur was uninhabited until the Solomani era, when it came into use as a prison planet. Non-Humans, Vilani, even



Solomani who rejected the precepts of the Cause were all exiled to Iddamakur in great numbers. Different populations of dissidents were distributed among the planet's 12 small continents and numerous archipelagoes. Aside from crude life-support equipment, technology higher than TL5 was forbidden. Sea travel between groups was also prohibited.

After the Rim War, Iddamakur was liberated, but the planet's low tech base and divided population were formidable barriers to development. The different groups struggled among themselves at first, and a slide into complete barbarism appeared inevitable. About 1025, however, the planet was unified by a warlord named Adkhar Watanabe. Watanabe began his career by gaining the loyalty of the planet's Aslan population. He used diplomacy to persuade other groups to cooperate, and when that didn't work he used the Aslan for intimidation. As Lord Protector Adkhar I, he made an alliance with the megacorporation Zirunkariish, leading to the construction of a Class V starport on the planet. The starport made Iddamakur a gateway into the Magyar sector, and brought in some desperately needed hard currency.

Since Adkhar I, the Lord Protectors have ruled with an iron hand, moving mountains to prevent war, disease, and starvation. The first Lord Protector's great-grandson still rules today as Toshiro II, with the enthusiastic support of the populace. Although the planet continues to labor under severe disadvantages, many of its people feel that this is an exciting time to be alive. Iddamakur, once known as "the world without a future," is today a world of great opportunity.

Given the settlement's origins, it's natural that Iddamakur is probably more violently anti-Solomani and pro-Imperial than almost any other world in the sector. Many of the planet's inhabitants are ethnic Solomani, but they reject the Solomani Cause and are likely to mob anyone preaching racist theories.

0304 ATALANTA (IMPERIAL)

Atalanta is a colony sponsored by the Darrukesh government. It is similar to the asteroid colonies within Darrukesh system itself, a place where Darrukeshi nonconformists can go to live free of most of the homeworld's laws. The world is an Amber Zone due to the aggressively hostile nature of many native plants and animals. These native lifeforms sometimes make incursions even into the Human zone, and travel in the wilderness is extremely dangerous.

0501 MORGANA (IMPERIAL)

Morgana is a Gurungan colony, established soon after Ugarup joined the Third Imperium. Centuries of isolation during the Solomani period caused the Morganites to evolve a society very different from that of the homeworld. After the Rim War, Ugarup reasserted its claim to Morgana, but without an interstellar Navy of its own the homeworld has had great difficulty imposing its authority over the colony.

0502 UGARUP (IMPERIAL)

Ugarup is a backwater world, the home planet of the Gurungan species (see pp. 34-35). Humans find it hellishly uncomfortable. The planet's tide-locked nature makes for

ULTIMA SUBSECTOR NAVIGATIONAL DATA

HEX	NAME	PRIMARY	COMPANIONS	GG	PB	ORBIT	MOONS
0105	Faiwyd	M2 V	M6 V	1	2	0.15	-
0106	Darrukesh	K6 V	M0 V, M4V	3	2	0.48	-
0110	Iddamakur	K1 V	M0 V	3	0	0.60	1 small
0207	Basil	K5 V	-	4	3	0.48	-
0301	Amkhalarug	F7 V	M3 V	4	0	1.58	3 small
0304	Atalanta	M1 V	M6 V	3	0	0.40	-
0308	Sidon	K4 V	-	3	0	2.80	3 small
0405	Gramercy	F6 V	-	0	0	2.60	2 small
0407	Urud	M7 V	-	2	0	0.33*	-
0501	Morgana	M2 V	-	3	2	0.18	-
0502	Ugarup	M5 V	-	2	0	0.13	-
0509	Ixtloc	K4 V	M6 V	0	0	0.42	-
0604	Rilke	G3 V	-	0	2	1.18	2 small
0606	Ishadar	K0 III	M4 V	5	2	5.00	-
0609	Goshen	M1 V	M8 V	0	0	0.30	-
0610	Nukaash	M5 V	M5 V	0	2	0.18	-
0701	Obrichenny	F5 V	-	5	0	1.56	1 large
0703	Kropotkin	M1 V	-	0	2	0.39	-
0704	Thamber	G4 V	-	2	1	1.94	1 small
0706	Athene	M6 V	M7 V	5	2	0.16	-
0807	Leonore	M8 V	-	2	1	0.18*	-
0809	Azun	G2 V	-	0	1	1.90	2 small

Key on p. 63.

extreme variation in climate, with the oppressive heat of the day face shading into the freezing cold of the night face (and a belt of constant storms in between). Despite the harsh conditions, there are fortunes to be made here. The Gurungan are a rich market for high-tech goods, especially computers and industrial equipment which they cannot easily manufacture in their underwater environment. In exchange, they provide strictly controlled access to the riches of the Ugarup oceans, including dozens of plant and animal species with pharmaceutical or luxury value. Despite their distaste for outsiders, the Gurungan are canny negotiators, and have built their entire civilization on the basis of offworld trade.

Very little is known about Gurungan society, which carries on its affairs far from Human observation. The Gurungan are ruled by a monarch called the All-Mother. It appears that she has almost absolute authority to interpret and enforce the "ordinaments" which make up planetary law. She is supported by a Ruling Tribunal, which is responsible for the infrequent process of making new ordainments. The All-Mother is regarded with instinctive deference by all Gurungan. When she dies, a struggle for succession ensues among members of the tribunal. These power struggles appear to involve complex political debates and physical displays of dominance.

For centuries, the Gurungan have forbidden offworlders from leaving the Human Enclave, a single island about 50 miles long in the heart of the day face. About 150,000 offworlders live in the enclave, which contains the starport as well as a domed city designed for Humans. The Enclave is a rough town, where fortunes can be made or lost overnight and almost anything can be had for a price. Most Gurungan law does not apply in the enclave, and in fact the Gurungan appear willing to tolerate almost any activity that does not disrupt trade. Control of the enclave is in the hands of a mercenary garrison, under contract to the planetary government.

This contract comes up for renewal every 36 Ugarup years (about every 3.7 standard years), and there is fierce competition for it among the mercenary units of the Rim.

Under the Solomani, the Gurungan were forbidden space travel, but this hardly mattered as offworld trade continued to come to the enclave. Since the Rim War, the enclave has become the fief of an Imperial Baron, who represents Ugarup in the Moot. In actuality the barons of Ugarup have been nearly ignored by the Gurungan, who prefer to deal through their mercenary hirelings. The current Baron resides at Capital, simply drawing income from the fief he hasn't seen in years. In his absence, corruption in the enclave has grown steadily worse.

0604 RILKE (IMPERIAL)

Rilke is a colony world, settled from Thamber and still ruled from there.

0606 ISHADAR (IMPERIAL)

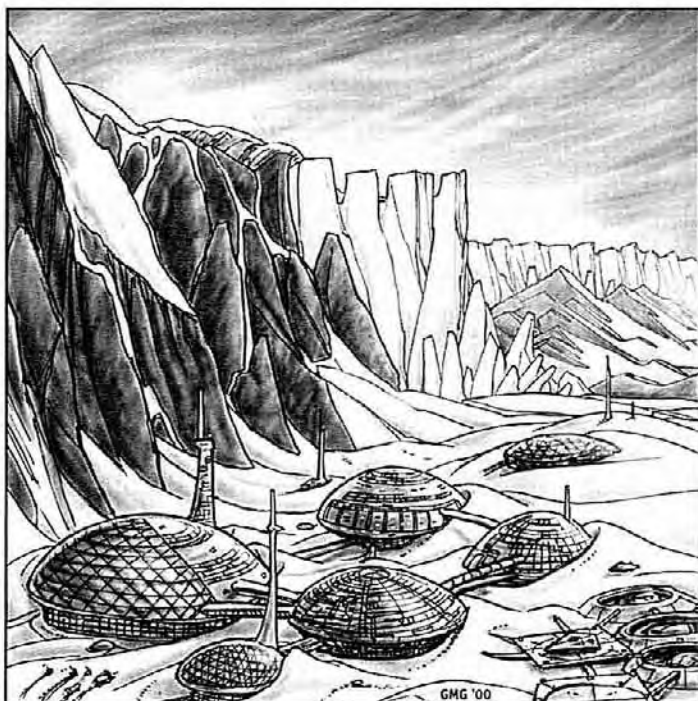
The Ishadar system has been inhabited for about 2,000 years, the first asteroid colonies being built by refugees from Azun about -900. Over the centuries, the initial colony has fissioned several times, and other settlers have arrived to establish enclaves of their own. Today, the Ishadar Belt includes 14 major asteroid colonies and countless minor settlements scattered throughout the star system. Each major settlement in Ishadar system is self-governing, behaving much like an independent city-state. Most of the major states are run by oligarchies or dictatorships, although there are a few democratic cities and at least one theocracy.

The Ishadaran states lack advanced technology, but the standard of living in most settlements is reasonable. Local resources are plentiful, aside from a relative lack of water and other volatiles (driven out of the inner system when the primary star became a red giant). The various states are widely scattered throughout the system, and have no reason to compete for critical resources. As a result, while violence on the individual level is fairly common, organized warfare between states is unknown. The main area of competition is for external trade. Ishadar is strategically located to serve as a minor nexus of trade routes across the subsector, so free traders and small corporate freighters transit the system frequently. The Ishadaran states compete to attract this traffic, offering refueling, repairs, brokerage services, warehousing, and recreation for ship's crews. Success in this competition yields prestige and access to superior foreign technology. Failure means that a state must suffer through years or decades of isolation.

The present dominant state in the Ishadar Belt is Shamma's Rock, a hollowed-out asteroid located on the inner edge of the main belt. The Rock has a class III starport, and is well-known for the sophistication of its bankers and the quality of its recreational facilities. Unfortunately, a fast-growing population has put strain on its ancient life-support systems. An alliance of other states is currently preparing to put an end to Shamman pre-eminence, by investing in an expensive scheme to recover a water-bearing asteroid from the system's cometary cloud. Once the allies have access to several cubic miles of water ice, they expect to be able to win concessions from Shamma's Rock in exchange for water and hydrogen fuel.

0704 THAMBER (IMPERIAL - SUBSECTOR CAPITAL)

Thamber is a harsh and forbidding world. All native life forms are adapted to extreme cold. Many of them use natural compounds which act as antifreeze, lowering the freezing point of their body fluids well below the natural freezing point of water. Even so, all Thamber native animals hibernate for up to 90% of their lives, waiting for the rare seasons warm enough to allow water to melt and run over the surface. The evolutionary history of Thamber is of great interest to Imperial scientists, who have yet to explain how complex life could have evolved there in the first place. Humans on Thamber live in dome or tent cities, usually sending robots out onto the surface if they must manage outdoor industries.



Thamber was abandoned during the Long Night, and resettled by Solomani colonists about 200. For centuries, the Republic of Thamber was a beacon of economic growth and social progress. In the early Solomani era, however, the Republic was taken over by a so-called Progressive Alliance. This political party proceeded to modify election procedures and civil rights to suit itself, effectively destroying the democracy. Elections are still held today, but officials have so much control over who may be placed on the ballot that they effectively choose their own successors.

The people of Thamber are not overly pleased with their government, but rebellion has been generally ineffective. During the Rim War, the deputies took the precaution of declaring for the Imperium at the first opportunity. Instead of toppling a government loyal to the Solomani Cause, the Imperial Navy actually found itself supporting the Thamber government against its own citizenry. There have been several outbreaks of rebellion since the Rim War, but the current regime has maintained the police-state apparatus that held sway during the Solomani period. Any kind of serious dissension is usually dealt with quickly.

Despite the political deadlock, the people of Thamber are cosmopolitan in outlook and very welcoming of offworlders. The most unusual feature of Thamberite society is the frequency of violence, ranging from fistfights up to open murder. Thamberites tend to settle disputes among themselves violently rather than going through official arbitration (which most citizens don't trust, anyway). Popular entertainment is also quite violent, with an emphasis on combative sporting events and action-adventure drama.

The Duke of Ultima maintains his residence on Thamber, although his relations with the local government are cool. He has been subtly supporting the local Authenticist Movement (see sidebar, pp. 60-61) as a means of undermining the current regime and encouraging reforms. Many Thamberites have taken an interest in their ancestral cultures, and a revival of ancient music, literature, and clothing styles is taking place as a silent protest against government repression.

0706 ATHENE (IMPERIAL)

Athene is the site of an outpost owned by the Imperial megacorporation Makhidkarun. No previous survey had found anything of value on the world, so of course rumors abound as to what Makhidkarun may be up to on the world. Corporate security is tight; any strange visitors to the system will be monitored very closely.

0809 AZUN (IMPERIAL)

Azun is an unusual world in several respects. Normally a world its size, placed so far from its primary star, would be a frozen desert. Somehow, during Azun's formation it received a high concentration of iron and heavier metals, making it extremely dense for its size.

Also, about 1 billion years ago Azun experienced intense volcanism, causing the formation of a thick atmosphere and extensive liquid-water oceans. Today the planet has cooled, but its atmosphere and hydrosphere remain extensive, and primitive native plant life is in the process of pouring free oxygen into the air. It will be millions of years before Azun is naturally habitable, but for now Humans can survive on the surface for long periods, with respirators and the appropriate cold-weather gear. Meanwhile, large regions have turned out to be suitable for agriculture, using various hardy and cold-adapted crop species.

During the Long Night, Azun was thrown on its own resources, and (about -1000) suffered a period of severe overpopulation. At this time, the world acquired its other unique feature: a network of arcologies covering most of the planet's surface. A typical Azunian arcology is a soaring structure, impressive even in a gravitic civilization. The base consists of four or more legs, each extending about half a mile outward along the ground. Above this is the central core, which extends all the way up through the structure to its maximum height of almost 2 miles. In most of the arcologies, the top third of the core widens considerably, into a structure with a distinct rectangular cross-section. Flanking this are two towers, which flare out to rise independent of the main structure. An arcology will normally shelter over 1 million people. The base is given over to hydroponic farming, while industrial enterprises are housed

in the core. Residential, commercial, and recreational districts are in the upper levels and the towers.

The society that has grown up in the Azunian arcologies is very inward-looking. The typical arcology is completely self-contained, and has few windows opening on the outside. When Azunians travel from one arcology to another, they normally use an underground transport net which connects all the communities. To an Azunian, the home arcology is all of the universe that counts. The natural environment of Azun is regarded with distaste, a wild and uncomfortable place to be visited only when absolutely necessary.

Strangers to the arcology are met with mistrust, especially if they are from offworld. Azunians have evolved a social code which stresses calm, quiet courtesy at all times, to a degree that foreigners find very difficult to accept or imitate.

An arcology environment, especially at TL9, is fairly delicate and requires constant oversight. As a result, arcology law tends to be very strict and enforcement is decisive. Azunian arcologies have elaborate security systems, complete with camera surveillance which constantly monitors all public areas. Even private residences can be monitored under certain conditions. Meanwhile, every resident carries a tracer implant which allows security to monitor his movements and automatically prevent him from entering restricted areas. Visitors to an arcology also receive tracers as part of their guest badges. This makes illegal activity very difficult (though not impossible) to carry out.

Citizens of Azun do not find all this regimentation to be onerous. Indeed, they find it comfortable, and give their security forces a great deal of trust and respect. For their part, arcology security forces are normally polite, helpful, and *very firm*.

Almost all of Azun's arcologies are managed by a professional technical caste, under the leadership of a single executive. This person, variously titled mayor, city manager, or chief administrator, has almost absolute authority within his own arcology. Government on the planetary level is very weak, concerned mostly with managing the planet's starport. The planetary government is generally led by the chief executive of one of the dozen arcologies closest to the starport.

Despite Azun's insular culture, the planet is the focus of a great deal of interstellar trade. Azun straddles an important trade route between the Suleiman and Alderamin subsectors. As a result, Azun's arcologies often engage in fierce competition for commercial or political advantage. Such conflicts are rarely violent. Sabotage is limited to systems which are not essential to the survival of an arcology's populace, and violence against individuals is almost unheard of. Even the security forces of an arcology generally use nonlethal methods when they must apply force.

There exists an "exile" population outside the arcologies, composed of dissidents, loners, back-to-nature enthusiasts, and those who have been banished for serious but non-capital crimes. Without the support of any city, the exiles generally find life on the surface to be harsh and dangerous. Whether living alone or in small communities, the exiles often provide a lucrative market for smugglers from offworld, particularly since trading with them does not require circumventing all the oppressive security found elsewhere on the planet.

SULEIMAN SUBSECTOR WORLDS

HEX	NAME	ALLEGIANCE	ZONE	STARPORT	DIAMETER	GRAVITY	HYDROGRAPHIC %		POPULATION	CR	WTN			
							ATMOSPHERE	CLIMATE		GOV TYPE	TL			
0902	Porlock	Imp	Green	III	4,200	0.38	Very Thin	32%	Very Cold	880 million	Techno	3	9	4.5
0903	Bethe	Imp	Green	IV	3,800	0.36	Very Thin (T)	18%	Hot	5.7 million	Multiple	4	9	4.0
0907	Llewellyn	Imp	Green	IV	1,900	0.15	None	None	Frigid	540,000	Merit	6	10	4.0
0909	Ganelon	Imp	Green	III	4,000	0.40	Very Thin	None	Normal	350	Corporate	1	9	2.5
0910	Poseidon	Imp	Green	II	8,100	1.09	Exotic	98%	Warm	70	Captive	6	10	2.0
1002	Khedish	Imp	Amber	V	5,300	0.56	Thin	62%	Cold	320 million	Merit	6	12	5.5
1007	Shaabipili	Imp	Green	V-N	5,300	0.54	Thin	28%	Cool	850 million	Multiple	3	12	5.5
1105	Coriolanus	Imp	Green	V-S	2,000	0.12	Very Thin	74%	Frigid	470 million	Multiple	4	11	5.0
1107	Tammuz	Imp	Green	V	7,000	0.88	Thin	42%	Normal	6.0 billion	Dictator	6	12	6.0
1110	Quaver	Imp	Green	V	1,000	0.06	Trace	12%	Frigid	710 million	Techno	6	12	5.5
1201	Akimasi	Imp	Green	III	8,000	1.13	Exotic	50%	Normal	25,000	Techno	3	6	3.0
1202	Sase	Imp	Green	III	3,200	0.53	Thin (T)	67%	Chilly	22 million	Merit	6	9	4.5
1205	Biggles	Imp	Green	IV	1,900	0.14	Very Thin	69%	Frigid	2.5 billion	Captive	3	9	5.5
1207	Ascalon	Imp	Green	V	5,300	0.59	Standard	24%	Very Hot	21 billion	Dictator	6	11	6.0
1304	Vanefa	Imp	Green	V	4,800	0.60	Standard	29%	Cool	5.6 billion	Dictator	4	12	6.0
1306	Rimmon	Imp	Green	0	2,100	0.16	Very Thin (T)	22%	Cold	None	None	0	0	0.0
1402	Gulimaru	Imp	Green	III	7,300	0.95	Exotic	60%	Normal	30 million	Merit	6	9	4.5
1404	Esterhazy	Imp	Green	III	3,000	0.30	Very Thin	48%	Very Cold	96,000	AthDem	0	10	3.0
1405	Azaremiid	Imp	Green	V	7,000	0.81	Standard	64%	Cold	18 billion	Multiple	1	10	6.0
1406	Catseye	Imp	Amber	III	1,900	0.15	Very Thin (T)	22%	Frozen	730,000	Multiple	4	9	3.5
1504	Suleiman	Imp (*)	Green	V-N	10,400	1.54	Standard	40%	Warm	9.6 billion	Merit	6	12	6.0
1505	Rossgy	Imp	Green	V	7,000	0.89	Dense	54%	Tropical	43 million	Bureau	4	11	5.0
1507	Ai Jabry	Imp	Green	V	6,800	0.91	Standard	47%	Normal	9.3 billion	Dictator	6	11	5.5
1510	Imarir	Imp	Green	V-N	2,400	0.37	Thin	None	Cool	300 million	Multiple	4	12	5.5
1604	Dolfuss	Imp	Green	IV	1,300	0.12	None	None	Torrid	640,000	RepDem	4	11	4.0
1607	Madder	Imp	Green	III	5,400	0.54	Very Thin	23%	Tropical	93,000	Oligarch	0	8	3.0
1609	Okefenokce	Imp	Amber	III	3,100	0.35	Very Thin	68%	Frigid	810 million	Captive	5	10	4.5

Key on pp. 62-63.

SULEIMAN SUBSECTOR

This subsector is dominated by the Azaremiid Cluster, a jump-1 accessible group containing several high-population, high-technology worlds. During the Long Night, the cluster was an important part of the Easter Concord. Even after the concord was absorbed into the Imperium, the worlds of the cluster maintained close ties. Important members of the coalition included Vanefa, Azaremiid, Ai Jabry, Rossgy, Dolfuss, and Suleiman itself. Shazam and Yeremyh, across the border in the Concord subsector, also took part. To this day, these worlds cooperate on a variety of economic issues, maintaining common industrial standards and a formal mechanism for resolving trade disputes. This has made them extremely prosperous, with dense trade links stretching out into the surrounding subsectors.

Recently the cluster's prosperity has led several nearby worlds to raise protests against the cluster's "unfair trade tactics." These protests have been championed by the Marquis of Ascalon, who hopes to promote a new trade network in opposition to the cluster's worlds. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Commerce is considering an investigation into whether the cluster's economic institutions violate Imperial policy.

The Duchess of Suleiman is Ariana Zabiya hault-Karalan. She is a political moderate, a member of one of the Resistance Houses (see p. 9). Although her public persona is gentle and unassuming, she is in fact a skillful politician who rarely settles for less than complete victory in any dispute. The local conflict over trade policy is one factor contributing to an ongoing feud between the Duchess and the Marquis of Ascalon.

The worlds of the Suleiman subsector have never been deeply committed to the Solomani Cause, even during the Solomani period. As a result, the subsector went over to the Imperium without much of a struggle during the Rim War, and suffered little damage. Today the Cause gets very little support in this region, and indeed the subsector is the home of many radical anti-Solomani nobles.

0910 POSEIDON (IMPERIAL)

The settlement on Poseidon is a scientific outpost, established by the government of nearby Quaver.

1002 KHEDISH (IMPERIAL)

Khedish is a classic example of a *resonant world*, a planet which avoids being tide-locked to its primary by rotating three times every two orbits. Thus, as Khedish traces its orbit, the same face is presented to the primary at *every other* closest approach. The extremely long days and eccentric orbit cause radical temperature changes. Indeed, the same spot can go from frigid to warm climates in the course of a single "year." In turn, the temperature shifts give rise to violent weather, especially around dawn and sunset. Most food crops evolved on more "normal" worlds have no chance to survive on Khedish. Native plants are often edible, however, and some have been domesticated. Meanwhile, civilization on Khedish tends to cluster close to the shorelines in the equatorial zone. This tempers the annual climate changes, and also gives access to the planet's abundant sea life.

Khedish was settled by Vilani during the First Imperium, and was never heavily settled by Terrans under the Rule of

Man. Late in the Long Night, the planet was swept by the teachings of Sagashkhar, a prominent local philosopher who taught an ethic of stoicism, public service, and absolute nonviolence. To this day the Khedishi are extremely pacifistic.

Khedishi nonviolence was severely tested during the Solomani period. The Solomani rulers imposed on the planet were unusually arrogant and high-handed, thoroughly alienating the Khedishi within a few years. By the time of the Rim War, the Khedishi had raised the art of passive resistance to a superb level.

As a result of the Solomani experience, the Khedishi are highly xenophobic. Khedish is officially a loyal Imperial world, but in practice the inhabitants are unrelentingly hostile to all offworlders. Visitors are in little physical danger, but they are very likely to be swindled, cheated, harassed, or robbed. The Khedishi government is required to protect the rights of any Imperial citizen, but in fact local police forces are extremely inefficient at investigating crimes against outsiders.

Khedish is governed by an elaborate bureaucracy, whose members are selected from the population. Every citizen takes a series of tests as he completes his formal education. These tests measure the technical and administrative skills necessary to manage various government functions, as well as mastery of classical Khedishi literature and the precepts of Sagashkhari philosophy. Youths who score well on these tests can easily find "fast-track" jobs in the bureaucracy, and may reach the planet's governing body (the High Assembly) after a long career in government. Most offworld trade is handled by a government agency, whose members are carefully chosen for their ability to tolerate offworlders. Khedish maintains no standing military forces, instead relying on offworld mercenaries for system defense and traffic control.

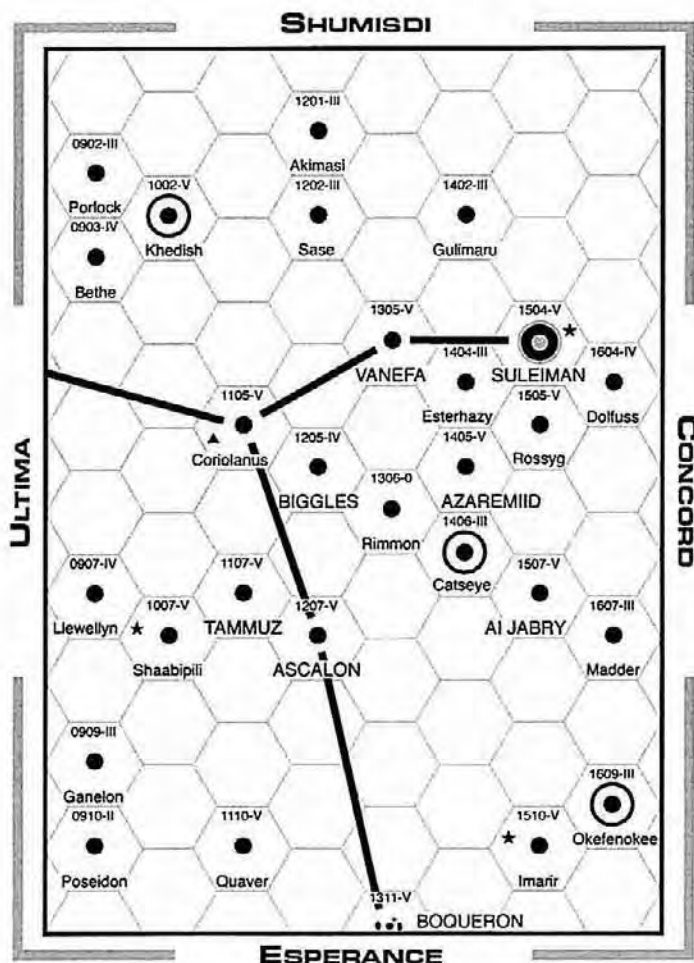
1110 QUAVER (IMPERIAL)

Quaver is the outermost large moon of a Jupiter-sized gas giant. It was first settled about -500 by the Easter Concord, which needed a frontier outpost in the region. The settlement remained small until about 200, when trade between the various Rim States began to pick up. Quaver became a crossroads system, where traffic from the Easter Concord, the Vegan Polity, and the worlds of the Alderamin subsector all converged. The population grew, new businesses were established, and the starport was upgraded several times. Quaver eventually became a full member of the Easter Concord, and joined the Imperium in 426.

After independence, Quaver was originally governed as a corporate state. Business leaders formed a Syndicate Council to manage the settlement, mostly for their own benefit. Soon an underclass grew, surviving by way of an elaborate black-market economy. The situation was unstable, especially after the Solomani Movement began encouraging unrest among the underclass. In 756 there was a bloody revolution and the rule of the syndics was toppled. Soon the Solomani Party drove out all other factions and re-established the police state once used by the syndics. The resulting dictatorship survived the Rim War by setting aside Solomani ideology and declaring for the Imperium at a crucial moment.

After the Rim War, the dictator who had delivered Quaver into Imperial hands hoped to be made the new Marquis. To his

surprise, the Emperor appointed an offworlder, instead. The first Marchioness was a Vilani business leader who had made her reputation as a senior official of the new megacorporation Delgado. Officially, her only duty was to act as a liaison between Quaver and the Imperium. Unofficially, her goal was to bring down the local government, which she and other Imperial officials regarded as too opportunistic to be trusted. As soon as she arrived, she began working to undermine the Quaver dictatorship, a policy which was carried on by her successors. Political change was slow, but in the end the dictators lost the will to hold onto power. The last dictator resigned and went into exile on Ascalon during the bloodless "oxygen revolt" of 1117.



Today, Quaver is undergoing rapid change. A transition council of engineers and labor leaders has been formed, and is busy redesigning the government. The police state is being dismantled, and many oppressive laws have been removed from the books. True democracy has little precedent on Quaver, but the final government structure seems likely to be a technocracy which is relatively open to citizens' needs. Unfortunately, corruption and crime are on the rise. The inefficient industries once owned by the state are failing, and were it not for the rapid growth of external trade the world economy would now be in deep recession. The people of Quaver have a great deal to do before their world can reach its potential.

1201 AKIMASI (IMPERIAL)

Akimasi is a proto-Terran world, very similar in condition to Terra or Vland more than 2 billion years ago. The climate is comfortable for Humans and the atmosphere is not actively toxic, but the planet has no native photosynthetic life and so there is no free oxygen available. Although there have been sporadic attempts at terraforming the planet, it remains a true frontier world, one of the few in the populous Rim.

Akimasi was first explored by the Vilani Empire, and subsequent expeditions occurred several times after the Third Imperium took control of the region. Actual settlement did not occur until about 800, with the first colonists being Solomani from worlds in the Diaspora sector. The settlers established a base on Akimasi's moon, and began a concerted effort at terraforming. For a time, the project seemed to be going well, with the first large-scale facilities on the planet's surface being built around 980. Soon thereafter there were revelations of corruption and bribery on the part of the Akimasi Development Authority. In the subsequent legal wrangling, the Akimasi colony was effectively cut off from outside support.

The situation might have resolved itself cleanly, but the Rim War intervened. In the chaotic years that followed, the Akimasi colonists found it expedient to declare their independence. This left 25,000 people in charge of an entire planet, without enough agricultural or industrial capacity to support themselves. The colonists were forced to abandon the lunar base, and spent years struggling to maintain their single dome-city. Fortunately, Imperial authorities arrived before the colony's life support broke down completely. Since the Rim War, Akimasi has been receiving IISS assistance in maintaining critical life-support systems, in exchange for cooperation in a long-term study of local planetology.

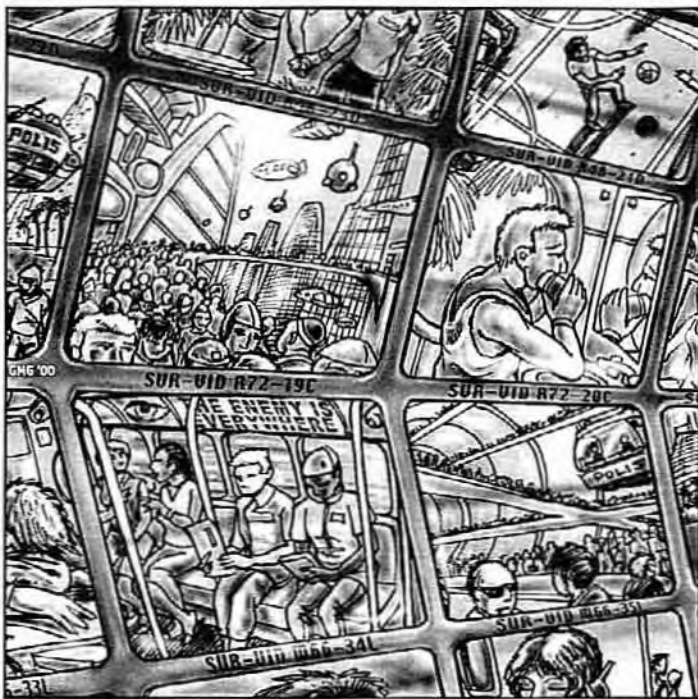
Today, the Akimasi colony is governed by its engineers and technicians, under the leadership of an elected chief executive. The government is mostly concerned with maintaining the colony's critical systems, and commands the loyalty of almost all citizens. As a result, laws on Akimasi are strict only in matters dealing with the common environment, and the planet's citizens otherwise enjoy considerable personal freedom. The chief executive is currently engaged in a series of delicate negotiations with various offworld interests, including the IISS, the government of nearby Vanefa, and the Imperial megacorporations Sternmetal Horizons and Zirunkariish. The challenge facing the colony is to gain the industrial investment and technology base it desperately needs, *without* being swallowed whole.

1205 BIGGLES (IMPERIAL)

Biggles was made a protectorate of Ascalon after the Solomani Rim War. Supposedly, this situation was to last only until the planetary populace could construct a working government of its own. Ascalon has deliberately intervened on several occasions to ensure that this does not happen. One reason for this intransigence is the world's strategic value. Biggles is on several major trade routes, and gives Ascalon a great deal of leverage in the ongoing economic conflict with the Azaremiid Cluster worlds.

1207 ASCALON (IMPERIAL)

One billion years ago, Ascalon was very much like a young Terra, with substantial oceans and the beginnings of native life. Unfortunately, Ascalon did not enjoy many of Terra's advantages. Already the system's primary star is approaching the end of its stable lifespan, and as it brightens Ascalon is slowly being baked. Meanwhile, the planet's once-mighty oceans have almost vanished, as the star's UV-rich light breaks down water vapor in the planet's upper atmosphere. Simple animal life clings stubbornly to existence, clustering around the salty seas in the former ocean bottoms, leaving uninhabited the high, bitter plateaus which were once the entirety of the world's land area.



Such a marginal world might have been left unsettled, but soon after the planet's discovery by the First Imperium it was discovered to be a rich source of certain industrial metals. The Vilani also found that the ocean bottoms could be made prime agricultural land, given enough fresh water for irrigation. Massive desalination and pumping facilities were built, allowing sea water to be used as far away as the edges of the continental plateaus. When the Terrans arrived, they found a thriving civilization and a population in the hundreds of millions.

Ascalon became a major trading center and naval base during the Rule of Man, and many Terrans came to settle among the Vilani. Most of these were cultural conservatives from Europe and the Middle East, hoping to preserve religions and ways of life which were being abandoned on Terra itself. The resulting religious diversity made for a dangerous mixture, especially since the Ascalon colonists tended to be intolerant of the beliefs of others.

While the Rule of Man lasted, the people of Ascalon kept the peace, but about -1700 there was a period of social and religious strife that claimed many lives. According to the records of the time, peace returned after an alliance of Christian,

Moslem, and Vilani technicians seized control of the planet's irrigation systems. The technicians forced the warring factions to agree to a cease-fire, then called for a constitutional convention which established the Kingdom of Ascalon. Under the terms of the constitution, the King was also "Defender of All Faiths," and one of his primary duties was to prevent religious strife by enforcing the right of all citizens to worship as they pleased. The solution apparently worked, as records on Easter indicate that Ascalon was a stable and prosperous world when it joined the Easter Concord some 200 years later.

Most Ascalonians had no interest in the Solomani Cause, and the planet was always restless under Solomani rule. During the reign of Empress Margaret II, the kingdom declared itself independent of the Solomani Sphere and called for Imperial protection. It was too far from the Imperial frontier to receive an effective naval presence, but Ascalon's own planetary Navy was strong enough to discourage any Solomani attack. The planet did come under siege during the Rim War, but it mounted fanatical resistance and was still free when the Imperial Navy reached the area.

After the Rim War, the kings felt it necessary to take extraordinary measures to hold the absolute cooperation and loyalty of their subjects. As a result, the citizens of Ascalon today live under a totalitarian regime, of a strictness that is unusual even on the Rim. The kingdom allows some economic and religious freedom, but the citizens have no political rights. Voice and camera monitors are everywhere, tied together by an advanced computer network and controlled by the Royal Ministry of Truth. All but the most trivial crimes are punishable by maiming or death, and demonstrated disloyalty to the King's authority is not viewed as a trivial crime. Offworlders are not subject to such strict penalties, but they do face legal harassment if they violate local law.

The office of Marquis of Ascalon fell vacant during the Solomani period, so in 1008 the Emperor named a just-retired Imperial naval officer, Commodore Moira Lansky, as Marchioness of Ascalon. In 1015 she surprised her supporters at court by marrying King Rogier II. As a result of that marriage, the subsequent kings of Ascalon have also carried the Imperial title of Marquis. Despite his status as a "mere" planetary noble, the King has almost absolute authority over Ascalon, a very high-population and high-technology world. As a result, he generally enjoys extensive influence in the sector and even in the Imperial Moot.

The current King, Rogier III, served in the Imperial Navy in his youth. He is a fiery proponent of anti-Solomani politics, supporting the violent suppression of the Solomani Movement and a renewal of war against the Solomani Confederation. In this, and in his leadership of the anti-Cluster alliance, he is in constant opposition to Duchess hault-Karalan.

1405 AZAREMIID (IMPERIAL)

Azaremiid is colder than most Humans find comfortable, but is otherwise quite pleasant. It was first colonized by Vilani explorers about -4500. After the Ninth Interstellar War, Terran colonists began to arrive, mostly from North America and Russia. As was usual for that period, the Terrans got along well with their Vilani predecessors, intermarrying and building a

unified society over the next few centuries. Unfortunately, Azaremiid suffered badly during the Long Night. The Rule of Man withdrew from the Azaremiid Cluster early on, leaving Azaremiid itself vulnerable to corsair attack. A particularly fierce assault occurred about -1800, ending in the use of nuclear weapons against several major population centers. In the chaos which followed, the central government collapsed and the planet's populace was forced back to bare survival. When explorers from Easter arrived about -1550, they found the planet divided into a number of independent states, all struggling to maintain a TL5 standard of living.

The Easter Concord could do little to help Azaremiid recover, but the occasional trade visit did much to help the various local governments consolidate what they had. Slowly, frontier areas were brought back under the rule of law, new industries were built, and offworld technology was applied to the planet's problems. As the planet recovered, the new nation-states often came into conflict with one another. Cultural strife, revolution, and war scarred Azaremiid history for most of the Long Night, delaying full recovery for centuries. The Imperium brought peace, but then Azaremiid came under the governance of the Solomani Movement. Locally, the Movement was particularly strong in the nation-state of Arcadia, which used offworld support to shore up its militant police-state regime. In a series of wars, Arcadia conquered the planet and held it for the Solomani Cause.

During the Rim War, the TL8 forces of the Arcadian state were no match for Imperial Marines, and the pseudo-fascist regime soon fell. Afterward, the other nation-states of Azaremiid re-established themselves with Imperial support.

SULEIMAN SUBSECTOR NAVIGATIONAL DATA

HEX	NAME	PRIMARY	COMPANIONS	SG	PB	ORBIT	MOONS
0902	Porlock	M8 V	D	3	1	0.07	-
0903	Bethe	M6 V	M6 V	2	1	0.12	-
0907	Llewellyn	M3 V	D	2	2	2.40*	-
0909	Ganelon	M5 V	-	2	1	0.16	-
0910	Poseidon	M8 V	-	2	1	0.04	-
1002	Khedish	M7 V	D	2	2	0.08	-
1007	Shaabipili	M0 V	-	4	1	0.40	-
1105	Coriolanus	M1 V	D	0	1	1.50*	-
1107	Tammuz	M7 V	-	3	2	0.24	-
1110	Quaver	F2 V	-	5	3	12.5*	-
1201	Akimasi	F4 V	D	2	1	1.93	1 large
1202	Sase	M5 V	-	4	1	0.19	-
1205	Biggles	K2 V	-	0	0	1.40	1 small
1207	Ascalon	F6 V	D	3	2	1.63	-
1304	Vanefa	M1 V	-	2	1	0.44	-
1306	Rimmon	G5 V	-	0	2	1.20	1 small
1402	Gulimaru	M5 V	-	2	1	0.16	-
1404	Esterhazy	M8 V	-	2	0	0.07	-
1405	Azaremiid	K5 V	K9 V, M6 V	2	1	0.49	-
1406	Catseye	M7 V	-	0	1	0.42	-
1504	Suleiman	M7 V	-	2	0	0.08	-
1505	Rossy	M5 V	M8 V, D	4	1	0.39	-
1507	Ai Jabry	A9 V	D	0	2	2.88	2 large
1510	Imarir	M8 V	-	4	3	0.06	-
1604	Dolfuss	G4 V	-	2	0	0.82	-
1607	Madder	K0 V	-	2	0	0.49	-
1609	Okefenokee	K7 V	-	5	2	0.73	-

Key on p. 63.

By 1015, they had formed a cooperative alliance. This Azaremiid League still controls the planet to this day, presenting a united face to the Imperium while allowing its member states to manage their own internal affairs. Arcadia itself regained its independence in 1076, and presently holds non-voting membership in the League.

The Azaremiid starport is located in the nation-state of Krasnaya, the most economically and technologically advanced nation on the planet. Krasnaya has an unusually open society, allowing almost unlimited freedom of movement, expression, and economic activity. The Krasnayan economy is busy, with most citizens constantly looking for new job or business opportunities. Visitors are often surprised to find that local citizens are permitted (even *encouraged*) to carry any but the most powerful weapons in public. They are also likely to be trained in weapons use and tactics, as one of Krasnaya's few strict laws requires all adult citizens to undergo annual militia training. Krasnayan society suffers a fair amount of firearm violence, but other crimes are almost unknown there. Offworlders should be aware that random passersby are entirely likely to draw weapons and involve themselves in any armed dispute that takes place.

1406 CATSEYE (IMPERIAL)

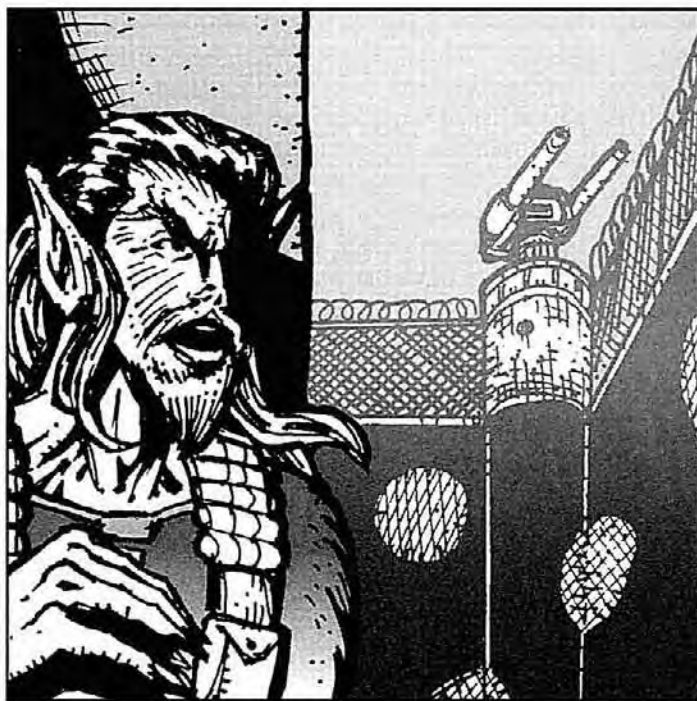
Catseye has recently been designated an Amber Zone, due to an outbreak of violent feuds between the planet's rival clan alliances.

1504 SULEIMAN (IMPERIAL - SUBSECTOR CAPITAL)

Suleiman is unusually large for a planet so close to its primary star, but that size does much to make the planet habitable. The night face of this tide-locked world is heated by atmospheric circulation, leaving the day face Earthlike and pleasant. Meanwhile, the planet's atmosphere and unusually powerful magnetic field do much to protect the surface from radiation and energetic particles put out by the primary star's occasional flare episodes.

Suleiman has been inhabited since Vilani times. Early in the Rule of Man it was heavily colonized by Terran immigrants, most of them from Turkey and central Asia. At the time these regions were enjoying a cultural and scientific boom, the so-called "Turkish Renaissance." For about 40 years, many of Terra's most prominent scientists and political leaders were Turks, the Confederation's military forces saw a flood of Turkish recruits, and millions of Turks emigrated to the old Vilani territories to seek their fortunes. Suleiman was at the heart of this movement, the primary destination for emigration and a jumping-off point for ventures deeper into Vilani space. The mixture of Turkish and Vilani culture on Suleiman gave rise to a dynamic and prosperous society, which even weathered the fall of the Rule of Man with little difficulty.

Early in the Long Night, Suleiman received a third wave of immigration: Aslan *ihatei* from some distance to spinward. Few other worlds in this region have significant Aslan populations, and historians have unearthed no records to indicate how this settlement took place. A local tradition holds that it was Suleimani explorers who first made friendly contact with the Aslan. Today,



about 10% of the planet's population is racial Aslan. During centuries of isolation from the Hierate, they have taken up the culture of their Human neighbors, abandoning the way of *Fteir*.

Suleiman joined the Imperium along with its fellow worlds in the Easter Concord. The local Solomani Movement was not very strong, although there was a pro-Solomani faction in the planet's government when the Autonomous Region was established. This faction soon took over the planet with offworld support, and the era known as the "Dark Times" began. People with any Vilani ancestry (most of the planet's Human population) were deprived of civil and political rights. The Aslan population was enslaved, forced to work in dirty or high-risk industries for little or no pay. Those who objected were rounded up and placed in prison camps on the planet's night face.

Resistance to the Solomani regime was quiet, but very stubborn. The Dukes of Suleiman remained in residence, robbed of all rights and privileges by the government, but doggedly maintaining visible ties to the Imperium. An underground resistance movement helped oppressed citizens (especially Aslan) to hide and survive. Acts of sabotage or assassination took place, despite savage government response. Finally, during the Rim War the movement began active rebellion against the Solomani regime. The Duke went into hiding and acted as a principal leader of the movement, directing attacks against government centers from a hidden command post on the night face.

After the war, Suleiman began a painful process of reconstruction. Today, the planet is again prosperous and at peace, at least on the surface. The Authentic Movement is very popular on Suleiman, with many Humans engaged in reviving the values of the old Turkish Renaissance. Citizens with Solomani sympathies are careful to not speak of them out loud. Visitors find the Suleimani to be a practical, outgoing people, polite and easy to do business with.

There remain tensions between the planet's Aslan and Human populations. While most Aslan recognize that not all

Humans were involved in the persecutions, they still have difficulty trusting Humans as they once did. Many Aslan are showing renewed interest in *Fteir* and the traditions of the Hierate. This is partially a reaction against Human (i.e., Solomani) cultural values, partially a consequence of the increasing popularity of Authenticism.

1609 OKEFENOCKEE (IMPERIAL)

Okefenokee is a planetological puzzle. Its atmosphere, although very thin, is a breathable oxygen-nitrogen mix. Despite its tiny size, it boasts extensive deposits of water ice. These features might imply terraforming, but there is no historical or archaeological evidence of any such process. When the first colonists arrived, they simply found the air and ice as they are today. All mysteries aside, the planet's unusual features did make it relatively easy to settle. Underground or domed cities have a ready, natural source of water and air.

Okefenokee was charted but never colonized by the First Imperium. A small scientific outpost was established under the Rule of Man. When the Long Night fell, the scientists and their families chose not to flee the planet. Instead, they dug in and survived as best they could. The society they built managed to survive the Long Night with very little support from offworld. By the time Okefenokee was absorbed by the Third Imperium, it had a thriving TL9 economy and a population of about 50 million.

Trouble began after the Solomani Confederation was established. The neighboring planet Mudge had long suffered from a massive overpopulation problem, and was desperately seeking a way to relieve the pressure. In 886 the pro-Solomani regime ruling Mudge went to the Confederation government to file a claim to Okefenokee. Okefenokee raised legal and political obstacles for a time, but in 900 the Confederation recognized Mudge's claim. Mudge immediately invaded Okefenokee with mercenaries and its own troops. Once the planet was secure, the original inhabitants of Okefenokee were pushed aside, and a flood of new colonists arrived. Soon the planet's economy and life-support systems were being overloaded. Native representatives protested, but were ignored.

During the Rim War, Okefenokee tried to shake off its colonial status, but Mudge was better able to negotiate with Imperial authorities as they entered the region. The Imperial Navy confirmed Mudge's claim to the planet, and so far no protests have managed to win a revision of the policy. Today, the colonization continues, as does a low-level guerrilla war which has been raging since about 1050. A small but determined cadre of guerrillas hides out in the planet's rough terrain, using sabotage and terrorism against the colonial regime. Meanwhile, Mudge continues to use homeworld troops and offworld mercenaries to keep the population in line.

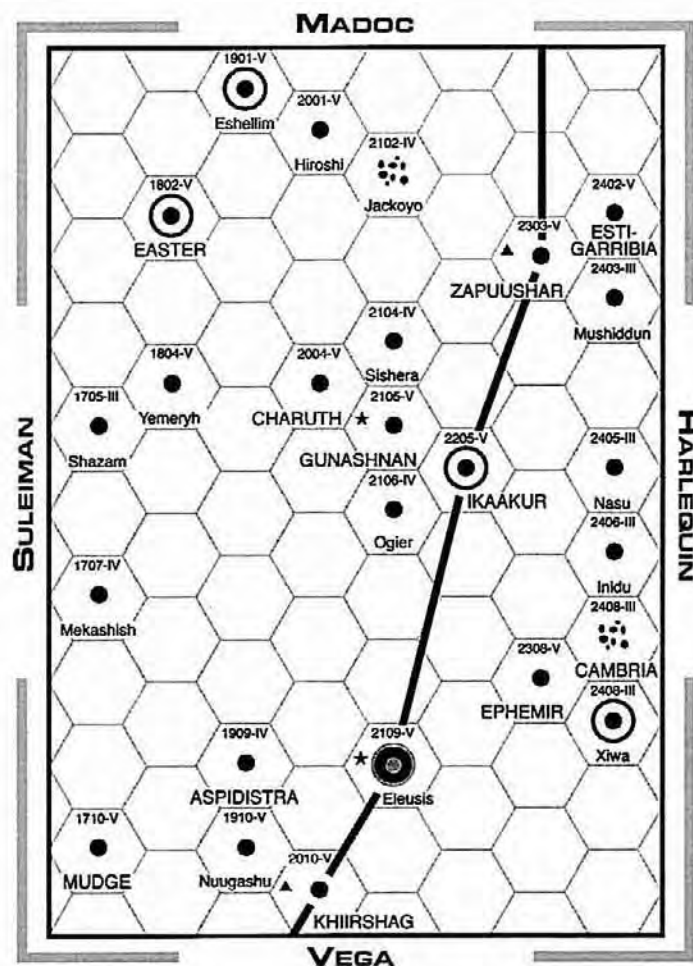
The outermost planet in the Okefenokee system is an astronomical oddity: a small gas giant in a highly eccentric and inclined orbit. A short expedition to the planet was mounted in 1086, discovering that it was *much* older than the rest of the system, possibly as much as 12 billion years old. That would make the planet a holdover from the formation of the galaxy, probably captured by Okefenokee's primary sometime in the last few million years. Further investigation may be of considerable scientific value.

CONCORD SUBSECTOR

This subsector takes its name from the old Easter Concord (circa -1100 to 426). After the collapse of the Rule of Man, the major worlds of the area (including those of the Azaremiid Cluster and a few in the Diaspora sector) formed a union for mutual defense. They were successful in standing off corsair raids, and secured a bastion of civilization which lasted throughout the Long Night. The Easter Concord was formally dissolved upon the admission of its member worlds into the Third Imperium.

Under the Solomani, the subsector declined in importance, as the major trade routes to the Old Expanses and Hiver territory passed to trailing. With the reassertion of Imperial authority, worlds along the main Xboat link to the Core have enjoyed generous assistance resulting in new prosperity. Trade is also on the rise along a route crossing the subsector between Khiirshag and Nasu, bringing even more income for the worlds to rimward. Unfortunately, with this new prosperity comes conflict. The main trade routes through this subsector are currently the central focus for ongoing competition between Solar Shipping and Tukera Lines (see p. 16).

The Duke of Concord is William Royce Sergetov-Delacruz, a former naval officer descended from petty nobility of the Imperial Core. He is a charismatic and popular figure, who spends most of his time traveling from world to world to keep an eye on events within his demesne.



CONCORD SUBSECTOR WORLDS

HEX	NAME	ALLEGIANCE	ZONE	STARPORT	DIAMETER	GRAVITY	HYDROGRAPHIC %		POPULATION	CR	WTN			
							ATMOSPHERE	CLIMATE		GOV TYPE	TL			
1705	Shazam	Imp	Green	III	3,700	0.30	Trace	10%	Frozen	430	Captive	4	12	3.5
1707	Mekashish	Imp	Green	IV	5,900	0.75	Standard (T)	64%	Warm	2.9 million	Dictator	6	9	4.0
1710	Mudge	Imp	Green	V	4,000	0.57	Standard	31%	Normal	32 billion	Oligarch	6	10	6.0
1802	Easter	Imp	Amber	V	10,300	1.48	Variable	68%	Tropical	4.9 billion	Multiple	4	12	6.0
1804	Yeremyh	Imp	Green	V	5,500	0.45	Very Thin (T)	None	Cool	53 million	Dictator	6	12	5.0
1901	Eshellim	Imp	Amber	V	6,900	0.98	Standard	99%	Normal	220 million	Dictator	6	11	5.0
1909	Aspidistra	Imp	Green	IV	2,100	0.26	None	None	Torrid	1.7 billion	Oligarch	6	11	5.5
1910	Nuugashur	Imp	Green	V	5,000	0.47	Very Thin	47%	Frigid	11 million	AthDem	4	11	5.0
2001	Hiroshi	Imp	Green	V	4,000	0.75	Thin	81%	Chilly	19 million	Multiple	2	11	5.0
2004	Charuth	Imp	Green	V	7,100	0.97	Dense	59%	Normal	5.5 billion	Merit	5	11	5.5
2010	Khiirshag	Imp	Green	V-W	6,800	0.78	Dense (T)	100%	Warm	9.5 billion	Dictator	6	12	6.0
2102	Jackoyo	Imp	Green	IV	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Frigid	520,000	Corporate	0	9	4.0
2104	Sishera	Imp	Green	IV	2,100	0.19	Very Thin	30%	Very Cold	890 million	Techno	2	11	5.0
2105	Gunashnan	Imp	Green	V-N	7,900	0.83	Thin	42%	Normal	1.4 billion	Bureau	4	11	5.5
2106	Ogier	Imp	Green	IV	800	0.05	None	None	Torrid	330 million	Merit	6	10	5.0
2109	Eleusis	Imp (*)	Green	V-N	7,100	0.97	Dense	94%	Tropical	950 million	Oligarch	1	11	5.0
2205	Ikaakur	Imp	Amber	V	2,400	0.14	Thin	64%	Frigid	6.2 billion	Dictator	5	12	6.0
2303	Zapuushar	Imp	Green	V-S	7,800	0.80	Thin	77%	Cool	1.2 billion	Bureau	4	10	5.5
2308	Ephemir	Imp	Green	V	6,300	0.80	Standard (T)	50%	Hot	7.2 billion	Bureau	6	12	6.0
2402	Estigarribia	Imp	Green	V	4,800	0.67	Standard	64%	Normal	12 billion	Dictator	6	10	6.0
2403	Mushiddun	Imp	Green	III	5,800	0.48	Trace	None	Very Cold	950 million	Merit	6	10	4.5
2405	Nasu	Imp	Green	III	3,000	0.17	Very Thin	44%	Frigid	300	Captive	5	12	3.0
2406	Inidu	Imp	Green	III	5,900	0.65	Corrosive	100%	Frozen	12,000	Corporate	2	10	3.0
2407	Cambria	Imp	Green	IV	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Cold	9.3 billion	Dictator	6	11	5.5
2408	Xiwa	Imp	Amber	III	2,900	0.20	None	None	Very Cold	510,000	Military	5	9	3.5

Key on pp. 62-63.

The Duke nominally supports Archduke Adair, but he does his best to remain neutral in the sector's political conflicts and insists that his subordinates do the same. He regards his primary duty as ensuring the loyalty of his subsector to the Imperium, and in this he has been quite successful.

1705 SHAZAM (IMPERIAL)

The outpost on Shazam is operated by the government of nearby Yeremyh.



1710 MUDGE (IMPERIAL)

See *Okefenokee*, on p. 73.

1802 EASTER (IMPERIAL)

Easter is the only moon of its system's largest gas giant, Eshkarun, a true brown dwarf several times as massive as Jupiter in the Terran system. During the formation of the star system, Eshkarun very nearly formed as a double planet, but the secondary core of planetary formation never reached the "runaway accretion" stage that would have formed a second co-orbiting gas giant. This secondary core became Easter.

Long ago, while Easter was still red-hot with the heat of its formation, it orbited much more closely to Eshkarun. Tidal forces pulled the moon into an ellipsoidal form, with the long axis pointing through Eshkarun. Today Easter's orbit is much wider (again due to tidal interactions), but the moon's solid body retains this ellipsoidal shape. The atmosphere and oceans, less rigid, have fallen into a more spherical configuration. As a result, conditions on Easter vary dramatically from place to place. The two ends of the ellipsoid are considered the moon's "poles" by local cartographers. Both of them are bone-dry and in near-vacuum. Meanwhile, the equatorial region is deep ocean, with air so hot and dense as to be unbreathable. In the mid-latitudes there are two bands of habitable territory, with the one toward Eshkarun having a Hot climate and the other having a Warm climate. Most of Easter's population lives in this second band, where conditions are most comfortable for Humans. Of course, even in these zones there are considerable obstacles to travel. Easter is a massive world, and its deserts, oceans, and mountain ranges are all on a very grand scale.

Easter was first colonized by the Vilani about -4800, and was later settled by large numbers of Terrans. Some worlds

with similar histories became ethnically homogeneous over the centuries, but this did not happen on Easter. The various ethnic groups settling the planet formed separate enclaves, each cherishing its own language and culture. Easter was politically unified throughout this period, with each region electing representatives to a planetary parliament. It was this government which formed the nucleus of the Easter Concord.

Easter's fortunes began to decline with the dissolution of the Concord. Trade declined markedly, and there were no more contributions from the Concord worlds for the maintenance of the alliance. The planetary economy slumped into a long recession. Then the Solomani Party took over the world government (about 750) and began a systematic purge of all Vilani influences. Since some regions of the planet were majority-Vilani, and all had accepted some elements of Vilani culture, the purge led to decades of social upheaval.

The overthrow of the local Solomani Movement came only after a vicious civil war, with considerable suffering among the world's civilian population. Afterward, the Imperium negotiated a settlement among all the warring factions which broke the planet into regional nation-states. This brought relative peace, but it destroyed any chance Easter might have had to regain its dominant place in the subsector. Easter is now some distance off the Xboat routes, and has lost its original position as subsector capital. Anger over this situation led to recriminations among the new regional states, further ensuring that the world would have great difficulty reversing its misfortunes.

Easter is still racked by international conflict. Furthermore, none of the regional states have the wholehearted support of their citizenry, and their governments are often unstable. There has been no global military conflict, although minor wars and insurrections are common, many of them with the participation of offworld mercenaries. Easter has been declared an Amber Zone due to this ongoing political and social unrest.

2001 HIROSHI (IMPERIAL)

Hiroshi is a small and chilly world with a thin atmosphere, but most of the equatorial zone is hospitable to Human life. The original settlement was Vilani, and even after the Interstellar Wars few Terrans ever came to settle. Early in the Rule of Man, a Buddhist organization based on Terra chose Hiroshi for the site of an isolationist colony. Thousands of monks, priests, and laymen came, hoping to establish a community devoted to reflection and ritual. As it turned out, the Buddhist way of life was quite compatible with Vilani tradition. Many of the Vilani population accepted at least some Buddhist ideas. The planet never became a theocratic state, but the local religion (an offshoot of Zen Buddhism with distinctly Vilani overtones) remains important.

Hiroshi was never entirely cut off from interstellar civilization. It joined the Easter Concord very early, and was an important link between Easter itself and the Concord worlds of the Diaspora sector. After 800 it came under a Solomani Party government, but there was no serious repression, and trade with nearby worlds continued. After the Rim War, Hiroshi resumed its quiet but significant place in Imperial society. It remains a major gateway between the Solomani Rim and Diaspora sectors.

The population of Hiroshi is divided among four major nation-states and a number of sovereign free cities. Some major

Buddhist monasteries are politically independent in their own right. Conflict between states is not entirely unknown, but there has been no open war on the planet for centuries. Most states maintain no standing armies, only local constabularies.

For centuries, Hiroshi has been a world of wide fields, scattered villages, and small cities devoted to light industry. Local society has deliberately chosen to avoid urbanization, heavy industrialization, or the unrestrained use of high technology. Even so, the local lifestyle is not one of peasant ignorance. Every citizen is expected to have at least a basic education in local and galactic history, mathematics, and the sciences. High technology is applied to give everyone a simple but comfortable standard of living. Most citizens work on the land, not because they must do so to survive, but because local tradition holds that farming and gardening are spiritually healthy.

One unusual feature of Hiroshian society is the importance of higher mathematics. At some point late in the Long Night, it became common to associate meditation with work on mathematical theorems. Finding an elegant proof to a theorem in abstract algebra or geometry was considered equivalent to a moment of *satori*. Monks and pious laymen alike began to have the text of their proofs engraved on wooden or bronze plaques, for display in local shrines. Complex geometric motifs began to appear in popular and sacred art. Today this tradition remains healthy, manifesting itself in unique local art forms and an unusual number of talented mathematicians among the populace.

2010 KHIRSHAG (IMPERIAL)

Khirshag is an ancient world, billions of years older than Vland or Terra, and it is dying. The last major episode of tectonic activity took place about 60 million years ago.

CONCORD SUBSECTOR NAVIGATIONAL DATA

HEX	NAME	PRIMARY	COMPANIONS	GG	PB	ORBIT	MOONS
1705	Shazam	G0 V	-	1	1	1.48	3 small
1707	Mekashish	M8 V	-	2	2	0.04	-
1710	Mudge	G5 V	-	2	2	1.04	-
1802	Easter	M3 V	D	3	0	0.30*	-
1804	Yeremyh	M8 V	-	3	0	0.04	-
1901	Eshellim	A5 V	D	2	1	2.53	1 large
1909	Aspidistra	A5 III	-	2	2	3.00	-
1910	Nuugashur	M5 V	-	2	0	0.20	-
2001	Hiroshi	G6 V	-	0	2	0.94	2 small
2004	Charuth	F6 V	-	2	0	1.78	1 large
2010	Khirshag	M3 V	-	3	0	0.26	-
2102	Jackoyo	F8 V	M0 V	0	0	4.05	-
2104	Sishera	M0 V	-	2	0	0.40	-
2105	Gunashnan	M0 V	D	2	0	0.37	-
2106	Ogier	M8 V	-	0	0	0.03	-
2109	Eleusis	F1 V	-	2	1	2.10	4 small
2205	Ikaakur	K3 V	M8 V, D	5	1	2.85*	-
2303	Zapuushar	M6 V	M7 V	5	0	0.12	-
2308	Ephemir	G9 V	D	2	0	0.62	-
2402	Estigarribia	G4 V	M0 V	0	2	0.92	2 small
2403	Mushiddun	K4 V	-	3	2	0.50	-
2405	Nasu	F9 V	D	1	0	6.80*	-
2406	Inidu	M7 V	-	3	1	0.24	-
2107	Cambria	K2 III	-	3	1	11.5	-
2408	Xiwa	M3 V	-	3	0	0.30	-

Key on p. 63.

Since then, the planet's evolution has been dominated by erosion. The last continents have been worn down by wind and wave, and the oceanic depths have been filled in. As a result, the entire planet is now covered by shallow oceans with deep layers of quartz sand at the bottom. Without volcanic activity to replenish certain mineral nutrients, the biosphere is slowly dying out. Even the sea's plant life is disappearing, and the atmosphere is slowly becoming unbreathable as excess carbon dioxide builds up. Imperial scientists estimate that within another 1,000 years, the planet will be uninhabitable outside of sealed habitats.

Despite the local conditions, Khiirshag has received several waves of settlement from the First Imperium onward. In recent centuries, the Human population has reached levels which the dying planet's natural resources can no longer support. The government has responded with draconian population-control policies. The planetary economy is tightly managed by the government, with almost every commodity (other than water, air, and sand) strictly rationed. Violation of the rationing laws, even by offworlders visiting the planet's surface, can carry extremely heavy penalties.

Of course, visitors to Khiirshag may not need to visit the surface at all. Since the Solomani period, government and business interests have invested heavily in orbital habitats. The government's long-range goal is to evacuate most of the planet's billions into space, using Khiirshag itself only as a gravitational anchor and a source of water and air. Over 1 billion of the planet's citizens already live in the orbital colonies, which are among the most extensive in the sector. These orbital installations include an IISS way station and a massive shipyard complex. Every Imperial megacorporation involved in shipbuilding has facilities here, including one of the largest General Products shipyards in existence.

2109 ELEUSIS (IMPERIAL - SUBSECTOR CAPITAL)

Eleusis is an unusual world, fewer than a billion years old and yet possessed of a rich local ecosphere. A number of plant and animal species have been imported over the centuries of Human habitation, but history shows that when Humans first arrived Eleusis already had its own ecology. After thousands of years of Human settlement, Imperial scientists are still trying to determine how such a young planet could have evolved advanced life forms so quickly. Meanwhile, the puzzle inspired the planet's current name. In ancient Eleusis, on Terra, a "mystery cult" flourished around the worship of a fertility goddess. A Terran naval officer with a classical education named the planet after reading old Vilani studies of its biological enigmas.

Mysterious or not, Eleusis is a very hospitable world. The climate is comfortable for most Humans. The native ecosphere is closely compatible with Human biochemistry, and the planet's crust is rich in many industrial metals. Eleusis was settled early (about -4600) by the Vilani. It was also a popular destination for Terran colonists under the Rule of Man, most of these tracing their ancestry to sub-Saharan Africa.

Today, the citizens of Eleusis tend to be tall and robust, with very dark skin (high melanin production is an advantage under

the bright F1 primary). Eleusinean society is dominated by a hereditary aristocracy, headed by a Council of Elders which includes the leaders of the 12 seniormost families. Commoners have limited political rights, although their civil and personal rights are extensive and well-protected.



Government on Eleusis is very unobtrusive, the only serious restrictions being in the area of population control. The Eleusineans value their uncrowded society, and so the planet's population has been fixed for centuries at about 900 million. Each citizen has a "right of replacement," which allows him or her exactly one child. Violation of the reproductive laws is taken very seriously. Immigration and extra child-rights are carefully balanced against the "excess" deaths not offset by the basic right. The goal of these laws is to keep the planet's population well *under* the numbers that it could support, given TL11 technology.

Meanwhile, weapons restrictions are almost nonexistent. Almost every citizen, male or female, goes armed in public. Although citizens may own and carry even portable energy weapons, the most common sidearm is a long, thin sword of distinctive local style. Eleusinean law allows dueling, and many personal disputes are resolved on the field of honor rather than in the legal system. Such duels are rarely to the death. At times, an informal duel (what an offworlder might call a "brawl") occurs on the streets or in another public place. Such uncontrolled fights are dangerous to participants and bystanders alike.

Eleusis has an elaborate culture of the sword. A code of courtesy controls how the sword is worn, when it may be drawn, and how even informal duels are to be conducted. Schools of swordsmanship are found everywhere. Local literature makes heavy use of metaphors derived from the art of swordsmanship, and there is an entire school of poetry devoted to the qualities of fine swords. Eleusinean swords (and swordmasters) are much sought after throughout the sector.

Eleusis was never very strongly committed to the Solomani Cause, and indeed many a member of the Movement came to grief on the planet after offending a master swordsman of Vilani descent. Today, the world is a very loyal member of the Imperium. Duke Sergetov-Delacruz – while not of Eleusinean descent – has won considerable respect among the local populace by reaching high rank in the *gendao* school of swordsmanship.

2205 IKAALKUR (IMPERIAL)

Seen from space, Ikaakur is a typical gas-giant moon, much of its surface covered by a thick layer of ice. Closer examination reveals that the moon is continually being subjected to tidal stresses, flexing in response to its gas-giant primary and the other nearby moons. This flexing keeps Ikaakur's solid core warm and heats the water ice covering most of the surface. As a result, there is a vast liquid-water ocean under Ikaakur's ice, complete with its own ecology.

Ikaakur's native life exists without photosynthesis. The basic energy sources are hot vents on the rocky ocean bottoms. Aside from the heat that keeps the ocean liquid, these vents provide a rich mix of sulfur compounds which can be metabolized by native life forms. As a result, Ikaakur's ecology is at its richest on the bottom of the oceans, while most life forms avoid the coating of ice at the top. Native life is completely inedible to Humans, being based on a very different biochemistry. Some native species do yield luxury products and pharmaceuticals, however. None of the native life is known to be sentient, although there are persistent rumors of intelligent (and shy) creatures who live far from the Human zones.

Human settlement on Ikaakur has three segments. There are extensive sealed habitats and underground cities on the moon's "continents," serving the starport and vital industries. Several habitats have also been built under the ice in shallow water, serving as bases for exploitation of the moon's maritime resources. Finally, a significant fraction of the population lives a nomadic existence near the ocean floor, in submersible vehicles or ocean-bottom habitats. This last portion of the populace is the most involved in studying and using the moon's native ecology.

During the First Imperium, the Ikaakur system was nearly uninhabited. A Vilani refueling station was established on a different moon of the same gas giant, but Ikaakur itself remained virtually unexplored. A Terran expedition of about -2100 first discovered the moon's oceans, and subsequent expeditions categorized the native life forms and their uses. Colonization followed, and by the time the Long Night fell a thriving settlement existed on the moon. Ikaakur was a minor member of the Easter Concord from its foundation.

During the Solomani period, Ikaakur and its almost-purely Terran population supported the Cause. Indeed, Ikaakur was particularly difficult to reduce when Imperial forces arrived in the area. The surface installations were vulnerable to attack, but the Navy had a great deal of difficulty securing all of the under-ice settlements. Even after the moon's government surrendered, a number of Solomani leaders appear to have fled to the ocean bottoms to avoid capture. Their ultimate fate is unknown, but rumors persist.

Today, Ikaakur is a loyal Imperial world, with only sporadic pro-Solomani unrest. Even so, expeditions to the deepest oceans seem more likely to come to grief than was the case a century ago. It remains to be seen whether this is the result of hidden Solomani guerrillas or something more mysterious. In any event, the occasional political unrest and the dangers of travel under the Ikaakur ice sheet have earned the moon an Amber Zone rating.

2405 NASU (IMPERIAL)

Nasu is a gas-giant moon somewhat like Ikaakur. The Ikaakur government is sponsoring ongoing exploration of the world to determine if it also has sub-surface oceans worth exploiting.

2406 INIDU (IMPERIAL)

Inidu was purchased by SuSAG from the government of Cambria in 425, just before the Easter Concord was absorbed into the Imperium. The planet still hosts SuSAG research and manufacturing facilities. Although the starport and main settlement are loosely controlled, the SuSAG installations themselves are under very tight security.

2408 XIWA (IMPERIAL)

In 1095 the two major nations on Xiwa engaged in a war using nuclear weapons. Almost every city dome was breached, and over 80% of the population died before Imperial Marines could intervene. Most of the remaining population lives in small settlements far from the old cities. Xiwa remains under Imperial military rule, as all efforts to reconstruct a local government have failed. Because the population is so scattered, law enforcement is sporadic outside the Imperial garrison enclaves.



HARLEQUIN SUBSECTOR

During the Solomani period, this subsector was a busy and prosperous region in the heart of Confederation territory, lying directly on the main route between Terra and the Old Expanses. The Rim War changed all that. Afterward, Harlequin was close to the Imperial border, cut off from most of the old trade routes to trailing, and the main Imperial Xboat lines passed by the subsector. As a result, the region has been economically stagnant for much of the past century.

Many worlds in this subsector retain Solomani sympathies, but only in a few cases has longing for the old days given rise to anti-Imperial rebellion. The Solomani Confederation publicly expresses solidarity with local cells of the Solomani Party, but this support does not extend to encouraging open resistance to the Imperium.

The Duke of Harlequin (Enkidu hault-Fionbrea) is a young man, having attained his position quite recently upon the sudden death of his father. He is technically a member of the Resistance faction (see p. 9), but is much less moderate than most of his faction colleagues. He is strongly opposed to the Solomani Cause, and he has been willing to take ruthless measures to prevent rebellion in his province. His truculent style has alienated many within his demesne, and may soon bring him into a confrontation with Archduke Adair.

2509 SCARAMOUCHE (IMPERIAL)

In some respects, Scaramouche resembles many other tidelocked but habitable worlds. The atmosphere is primarily composed of nitrogen and oxygen, and would be breathable were it not for the presence of a significant amount of free chlorine. The planet's simplest plant life, the equivalent of Terran algae, long ago evolved the ability to break chlorine out of the salts present in seawater. As a result, the air today contains not only chlorine, but hydrochloric acid vapor and even complex chlorine compounds such as phosgene. Scaramouche's oceans and rivers are a weak solution of hydrochloric acid and chlorine "bleach." Native life forms can tolerate high levels of chlorine, but Terran life finds the unfiltered air and water to be extremely poisonous. Even small amounts can insinuate themselves into a life-support system and cause injury or death.

The planet is of little value, mostly because the slightly acidic environment causes fierce chemical weathering. Agriculture outside of sealed habitats is doomed to failure. The native life is completely inedible and even toxic. Chemical erosion prevents the formation of useful metal-ore deposits. As a result, Scaramouche has no significant exports, and is dependent on offworld mining and industry for its high-technology infrastructure.

HARLEQUIN SUBSECTOR WORLDS

HEX	NAME	ALLEGIANCE	ZONE	STARPORT	DIAMETER	GRAVITY	ATMOSPHERE	HYDROGRAPHIC %	CLIMATE	POPULATION	GOV TYPE	CR	TL	WTN
2502	Jade	Imp	Green	III	4,100	0.79	Standard (T)	52%	Normal	710 million	Dictator	6	10	4.5
2506	Gadden	Imp	Green	II	7,900	0.94	Dense (T)	28%	Cold	390	Anarchy	0	8	2.5
2509	Scaramouche	Imp	Amber	V	7,200	0.90	Corrosive	60%	Warm	310,000	Anarchy	2	9	4.0
2601	Ukarin	Imp	Green	IV	3,800	0.39	Very Thin	30%	Cold	59 million	RepDem	1	10	4.5
2602	Gashurzid	Imp	Green	V	6,400	0.99	Thin	60%	Normal	260 million	Dictator	5	12	5.5
2603	Miskatonic	Imp	Green	V	4,400	0.72	Dense	73%	Tropical	210 million	Captive	2	9	5.0
2608	Beatus	Imp	Green	V	6,100	0.95	Dense	75%	Normal	8.0 billion	Merit	6	11	5.5
2703	Alpher	Imp	Green	V	8,300	1.06	Standard	59%	Warm	2.3 billion	Bureau	4	11	5.5
2704	Okotah	Imp	Green	II	3,000	0.26	Very Thin (T)	46%	Very Cold	40	Anarchy	2	9	2.0
2708	Azure	Imp	Amber	IV	3,100	0.25	Very Thin	37%	Frozen	290 million	Oligarch	6	9	5.0
2807	Phireene	Imp	Green	V	4,000	0.57	Standard	89%	Chilly	820 million	Bureau	3	10	5.0
2808	Umber	Imp	Green	IV	7,300	0.88	Standard (T)	70%	Cool	23,000	Captive	2	10	3.5
2902	Aosta	Imp	Green	V	4,300	0.51	Thin	29%	Chilly	17 billion	AthDem	4	12	6.5
2905	Arkiirkii	Imp (*)	Green	V-NW	5,900	0.62	Standard	96%	Normal	590 million	Dictator	6	12	5.5
2906	Kesirisu	Imp	Green	IV	3,500	0.20	Dense (T)	100%	Frigid	180,000	Anarchy	1	9	4.0
2910	Huy Brascal	Imp	Green	V-N	1,900	0.16	Thin	51%	Frigid	4.7 billion	Merit	6	12	6.0
3001	Karpaty	Imp	Green	V	4,300	0.74	Dense	35%	Cold	8.1 billion	Techno	2	12	6.0
3006	Szygy	Imp	Green	III	1,000	0.08	None	None	Frigid	87 million	AthDem	1	8	4.0
3008	Janosz	Imp	Green	V-S	5,000	0.71	Standard	40%	Normal	8.2 billion	Multiple	5	9	5.5
3009	Shapam	Imp	Green	III	2,100	0.14	Very Thin	20%	Frigid	710,000	Oligarch	2	10	3.5
3010	Kirillishur	Imp	Green	III	6,800	0.85	Exotic	40%	Normal	100,000	RepDem	2	11	3.5
3101	Carlyle	Imp	Green	IV	9,200	1.24	Corrosive	46%	Frozen	140 million	Captive	3	10	5.0
3102	Khiggun	Imp	Green	IV	7,900	1.00	Exotic	35%	Warm	7.9 million	RepDem	2	11	4.0
3106	Rann	Imp	Green	V	6,300	1.00	Standard	42%	Cool	4.4 billion	Merit	5	12	6.0
3107	Iipshidan	Imp	Green	III	5,200	0.75	Thin (T)	41%	Cool	360,000	Oligarch	2	9	3.5
3108	Cambyses	Imp	Green	IV	2,100	0.36	Thin (T)	60%	Frozen	3.2 billion	Merit	5	9	5.5
3109	Champa	Imp	Green	V-S	5,900	0.67	Standard	25%	Warm	8.5 billion	Dictator	6	8	5.0
3201	Palnu	Imp	Green	V	4,300	0.74	Dense	41%	Tropical	9.3 billion	Bureau	6	11	5.5
3202	Opar	Imp	Green	I	4,800	0.53	Exotic	98%	Chilly	230	Captive	6	11	2.0
3203	Irashnar	Imp	Green	IV	900	0.04	Very Thin	11%	Frigid	82,000	Oligarch	5	12	4.0
3204	Rith	Imp	Amber	III	5,100	0.49	Very Thin	65%	Cool	820 million	Multiple	3	10	4.5
3208	Kilennur	Imp	Red	IV	5,400	0.74	Dense (T)	52%	Normal	510 million	Dictator	6	9	5.0
3209	Pagliacci	Imp	Green	III	7,000	0.98	Thin	41%	Chilly	65 million	Oligarch	2	6	4.0

Key on pp. 62-63.

It is not known when Scaramouche was first colonized. Local tradition holds that the world was founded sometime during the Long Night. The first settlers appear to have been very ill-prepared for the task of surviving on such a harsh world, and much of their early history has been lost. Today's inhabitants are a tough, quarrelsome, fiercely independent breed, almost pure Solomani in descent, with little respect or liking for "soft" offworlders. Scaramouche took at once to the Solomani Cause, but its citizens were always a thorn in the side of even the Confederation. After the Rim War, Scaramouche was always a single provocation away from violent anti-Imperial rebellion.

The most recent such provocation came in the late 1090s, when an Imperial governor and a Marine brigade were sent to prop up the shaky native government. The Unity Uprisings that followed were notable for excesses on both sides. The Imperial governor used harsh measures and was able to quash the rebellion, but all attempts at rebuilding a stable planetary government have failed. Scaramouche has theoretically been under native rule since 1102, but in practice the planet is now divided among dozens of splinter factions, many associated with the Solomani Party. Today, Scaramouche is still in a condition of violent anarchy, except for the Imperial enclave around the starport.

2603 MISKATONIC (IMPERIAL)

Miskatonic was originally a Vilani colony, but was abandoned and later recolonized by Solomani during the Long Night. The colony was established from nearby Alpher, and relations with the homeworld have remained very cordial. Miskatonic today enjoys considerable local autonomy, but officially remains a protectorate of the Alpher government.

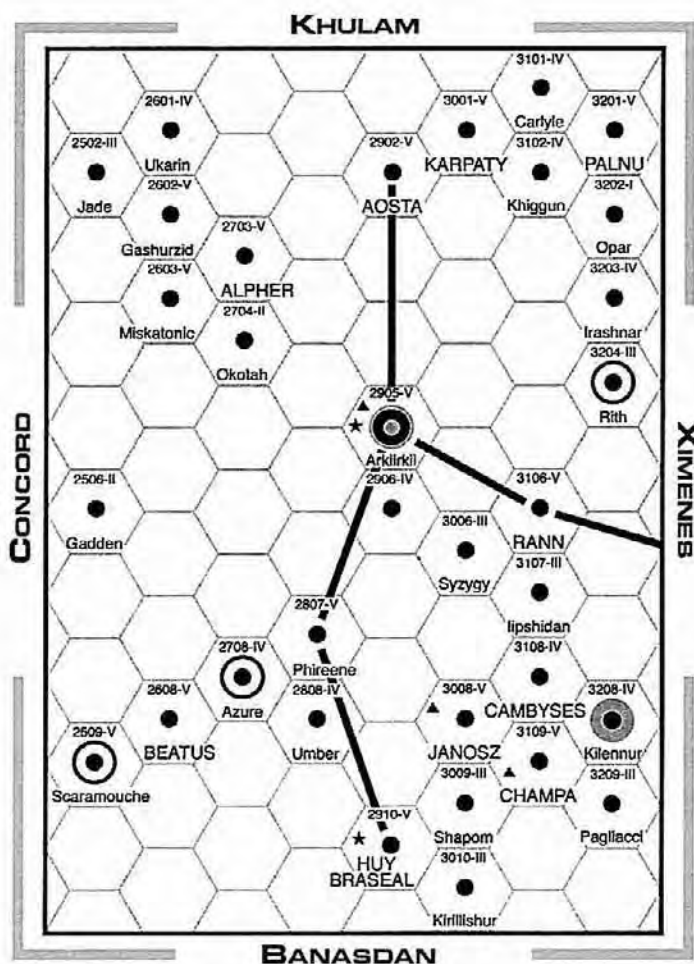
2808 UMBER (IMPERIAL)

Umbur is a relatively recent colony, established by nearby Phireene.

2902 AOSTA (IMPERIAL)

Often called the "Gateway to the Solomani Rim," Aosta sits at a crucial junction of trade routes leading into the Solomani Rim sector from both Diaspora and the Old Expanses. Aosta itself is an inhospitable world, tide-locked to its primary star, cold and dry, with no native life above the level of bacteria. It is mineral-poor, and there are no planetoid belts in the system to be mined for resources. In short, the people of Aosta have been given almost no assets to work with, and must rely on offworld trade for all their economic and social needs. Despite their handicap, they have been extremely successful over the centuries.

Aostan society is based on a strange mix of capitalism and socialism. All but the smallest commercial enterprises are organized as privately owned joint stock companies. However, by Aostan law all such companies are employee-owned, and there are strict legal limits on the size of any one individual's share. Even heavy investment will not yield a controlling share in a firm, unless the investors are also willing to become employees and lend their skills directly to the success of the enterprise. Senior managers are not exempt from this principle. While their salaries and shares are likely to be larger than

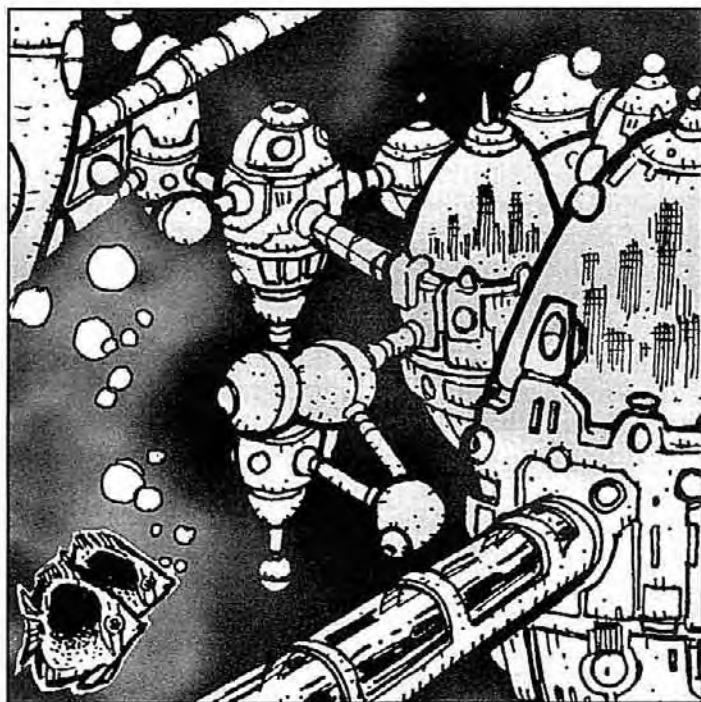


those of entry-level workers, the difference is strictly limited by law and custom.

Offworld firms are not required to grant ownership shares to their Aostan employees, but most such businesses do so as a matter of good employee relations. This is particularly true of the Imperial megacorporations, which grant stock options more generous than those offered anywhere else in the sector. Some megacorporate employees opt to take their share of ownership in the form of a merchant starship. As a result, Aostan free-trader captains can be found throughout the sector.

The laws controlling ownership of commercial firms are nearly the sum total of Aostan economic regulation. Almost all other business decisions are left to employee-owners operating under their corporate charters. Aostans claim that this arrangement is necessary to ensure that economic activity is governed by democratic mechanisms. Indeed, Aosta is ruled as a participatory democracy on many levels. Local districts make policy using an "electronic town meeting" system. Most legislation on the planetary level is driven by voter initiatives. The business of tracking all the complexities of government is aided by a network of computers. Meanwhile, the permanent institutions of government are small, and contract many functions to private firms.

Aostans are known for being innovative, energetic risk-takers, always interested in turning a profit. They also have a reputation for cut-throat competition, underhanded dealing, and semi-criminal enterprises. Visitors to the planet often find it to be a place of vast opportunity, as long as they read the fine print on any contracts they sign.



2905 ARKIIRKII (IMPERIAL - SUBSECTOR CAPITAL)

Arkiirkii is another resonant world, rotating three times every two orbits. The ocean tides raised by its primary star are tremendous. The few scattered landmasses are significantly reduced in size or even completely submerged at every high tide. Most of the planet's people live in undersea habitats, or in floating cities that move to stay well clear of land. Arkiirkii's only ground starport is located near the top of a dormant shield volcano, which forms the center and highest point of the planet's largest landmass. This is one of the few locations never threatened by the rising waters of high tide, and it suffers relatively little from the violent storms that hammer every land area sometime during the noon season.

Arkiirkii was first colonized by the Vilani about -4900, and since Terran settlement was light the planet's population is still mostly of Vilani descent. As a result, Arkiirkii was effectively an occupied world throughout the Solomani period. Violent uprisings were rare, but many dissidents used the planet's vast oceans and violent storm weather to hide from Solomani oppression.

The Marquises of Arkiirkii stayed in residence on the planet throughout the Solomani period, spending over a century in hiding and out of contact with the Imperial court. During the Rim War, the then-Marchioness (Shana hault-Fionbrea) came out of hiding, contacted Imperial forces as they advanced into the sector, and was able to prove her claim to the title most Imperials believed defunct. In recognition of her support as leader of the Arkiirkii resistance, the Emperor not only confirmed her claim but elevated her to the duchy of Harlequin. Her family has held both the subsector and direct rule over Arkiirkii ever since. Their tenure has at times been uncertain and plagued with scandal, but so far the family has managed to avoid losing its position.

Since the Rim War, the government of Arkiirkii has imposed stiff legal sanctions against the planet's Solomani minority. Known Solomani are forced to live apart from the rest of the population. They may not own property above a certain value, and they must maintain a spotlessly clean legal record if they are to hold a job. There are also strict miscegenation laws, forbidding marriage or sexual relations between Solomani and Vilani. Penalties for violations of these laws can be very stiff, up to and including forced sterilization and long prison sentences. Offworlders of Solomani descent are also subject to these laws, although they face nothing worse than deportation. Meanwhile, offworlders who declare themselves as Solomani (or even have "Solomani-sounding" names) are likely to face subtle harassment and discrimination. The Duke of Harlequin has come under considerable pressure to lift these policies, as they are a political embarrassment to the moderate faction among the sector's nobility. So far, these pleas have met with no response.

2910 HUY BRASEAL (IMPERIAL)

Late in the First Grand Survey, the IISS also performed a general investigation of the Solomani Rim sector (then outside Imperial borders). During that period, an IISS ship discovered an extremely rich planetoid belt with an added bonus. Orbiting just outside the belt was a small planet, not particularly rich in mineral resources, but covered with extensive deposits of water ice. The belt was an economic prize even by itself, but with such a handy source of water, development would be particularly easy. The Imperium claimed the system and began granting mining concessions about 420, and the process of settlement accelerated after the nearby Easter Concord joined the Imperium. The icy planet that soon became the focal point of activity in the system was named Huy Braseal.

The Huy Braseal settlement grew with extreme speed, especially after facilities were built to convert mined-out planetoids into space habitats. By the beginning of the Solomani period the system's population was already approaching 1 billion, and the local manufacturing and shipyard industries were among the busiest in the sector. Under the Solomani, Huy Braseal was the subsector capital, a major naval base, and an important link in trade routes into the Old Expanses.

All of that ended with the Rim War. The Imperial Navy conquered the system after an extended siege. The battle did a great deal of damage to the shipyard and other facilities, and several civilian habitats were destroyed. Today, Huy Braseal is an Imperial Naval Base, but due to the loss of trade the system's economy has yet to recover. The Imperial district is fairly modern and prosperous, but elsewhere conditions are slowly decaying. Factories and shipyards are half-idle. Belt mining operations must scrape to survive. Individual habitats turn inward, building strange isolated societies that are hostile toward outsiders.

Given the conditions, it's inevitable that Huy Braseal should be a hotbed of pro-Solomani sentiment. Some districts on Huy Braseal itself, and many of the insular habitats, are controlled by factions of the Solomani Party. Imperial

Intelligence believes that the system is infested with Solomani agitators and agents, using the vast expanse of the main belt to hide from Imperial surveillance. The Imperial Navy and the loyalist local government both mount heavy patrols of the system, and Imperial counterintelligence teams are very active, but the task is simply too overwhelming. Barring a general uprising and full-scale military response, Huy Brascal is likely to be a base for Solomani covert activities for the foreseeable future.

3009 SHAPAM (IMPERIAL)

Shapam was colonized about 500 from nearby Champa, and served as a place of refuge for the old aristocracy of that world after a democratic revolution in 583. The new regime was relatively happy to grant the Shapam colony independence, in exchange for promises that the nobles would never attempt to return to their homeworld. Shapam is still ruled by descendants of those noble families, who have by and large managed the colony's affairs very well. In fact, today Shapam has advanced much further in technology than Champa, due to a far-sighted program of infrastructure investment.

Today, Shapam is important primarily as a refueling station for low-jump ships on the Rim Main. Other income is derived

from tourism. In the last century, Shapam has positioned itself as a highly exclusive luxury resort. The moon's gas giant primary has a truly spectacular system of icy rings, and excursion craft are always available for ring tours. Meanwhile, on Shapam itself one can indulge in a wide variety of pleasures: gambling, fine dining, live entertainment, interactive holodrama, narcotic drugs, even sexual adventures of all kinds. Local law is very tolerant of any activity in which a visitor might want to engage, so long as no one is coerced or harmed in the process.

Naturally, corruption and crime are occasional problems on Shapam, although the oligarchs maintain an effective police force. Many an Imperial noble or prominent businessman has fallen victim to scandal after being careless in his indulgences here. Even the parents of the present Duke of Harlequin appear to have run afoul of such a scandal, although the details never reached the public.

Meanwhile, the Imperium has placed Imperial Research Station Alpha on Shapam, in an otherwise uninhabited region far from the resorts. Security is tight, and station personnel are strictly forbidden to visit the resorts. Rumors abound as to the subject of research. The oligarchs of Shapam have openly expressed confidence in the Imperial station's safety, and are also apparently happy with the income derived from the Imperial lease.

Because of the resort district, the Imperial research station, and the relative proximity of the Solomani border, Shapam might seem to be an ideal setting for espionage activity. It is not publicly known whether Imperial or Solomani Intelligence are involved on Shapam, but spy novelists and the popular press have often speculated.

HARLEQUIN SUBSECTOR NAVIGATIONAL DATA

HEX	NAME	PRIMARY	COMPANIONS	GG	PB	ORBIT	MOONS
2502	Jade	M6 V	-	5	1	0.09	-
2506	Gadden	M6 V	-	3	2	0.19	-
2509	Scaramouche	M4 V	D	0	0	0.21	-
2601	Ukarin	G6 V	-	2	0	1.14	1 small
2602	Gashurid	M2 V	-	0	1	0.26	-
2603	Miskatonic	M2 V	-	5	1	0.24	-
2608	Beatus	A2 V	M8 V	4	0	6.32	1 small
2703	Alpher	G0 V	M2 V	4	1	1.20	-
2704	Okotah	K9 V	-	0	0	0.42	-
2708	Azure	G2 V	D	1	2	1.45	1 large
2807	Phireene	F7 V	-	2	0	1.97	-
2808	Umber	M3 V	D	0	2	0.26	-
2902	Aosta	M4 V	-	3	0	0.28	-
2905	Arkiirkii	M0 V	M3 V	0	0	0.25	-
2906	Kesirisu	M3 V	M8 V	3	2	1.85*	-
2910	Huy Brascal	F5 V	-	0	2	4.90	-
3001	Karpaty	M3 V	M6 V	1	2	0.29	-
3006	Syzygy	F0 V	-	2	3	12.8*	-
3008	Janosz	M4 V	D	1	2	0.16	-
3009	Shapam	F9 V	-	1	0	7.50*	-
3010	Kirillishur	F5 V	M8 V	3	1	1.76	1 large
3101	Carlyle	K8 V	M5 V	1	1	0.37	-
3102	Khiggun	M6 V	D	5	3	0.15	-
3106	Rann	K9 V	M5 V	0	0	0.47	-
3107	Iipshidan	M3 V	-	4	3	0.31	-
3108	Cambyes	M1 V	-	2	2	0.35	-
3109	Champa	G8 V	M7 V	4	2	0.86	1 small
3201	Palnu	G3 V	-	3	2	1.17	1 small
3202	Opar	G7 V	D	0	1	0.98	2 small
3203	Irashnar	G8 V	-	2	0	4.00*	-
3204	Rith	M4 V	-	3	2	0.14	-
3208	Kilennur	M8 V	D	2	2	0.06	-
3209	Pagliacci	M5 V	D	3	1	0.17	-

Key on p. 63.

3101 CARLYLE (IMPERIAL)

Carlyle was a steadfast supporter of the Solomani Movement before the Rim War. After conquering the system, Imperial authorities chose to assign control of the planet to the loyalist government of nearby Palnu rather than impose an Imperial occupation force. This arrangement worked well, since relations between Carlyle and Palnu had always been good despite the two worlds' political differences. Today Carlyle remains a trust territory administered from Palnu.

3202 OPAR (IMPERIAL)

The settlement on Opar is a scientific outpost maintained by the government of Palnu.

3208 KILENNUR (IMPERIAL)

Until quite recently, Kilennur was an unimportant backwater planet, unusual only for the degree of the local government's despotism. Since the Rim War, the world had been governed by a series of ruthless Tyrants who also held the Imperial title of Marquis of Kilennur. These monarchs ruled with an iron fist, but they also built a close relationship with several Imperial megacorporations, bringing plenty of investment and the resultant prosperity. Although the people of Kilennur disliked their rulers, they generally avoided dissension. That is, until the Holiday Revolt.

On the first day of 1119, riots broke out in almost every major urban area on the planet. The Tyrant's elite troops were outnumbered, especially after regular constabulary forces sent to contain the rioters joined them, instead. Within 30 days, the Tyrant was forced to flee for the subsector capital, vowing to return with Imperial assistance to crush the revolt. After fierce fighting against loyalist forces, the rebels secured the starport and most of the planet. The rhetoric and actions of their "Free Republic" were strongly anti-Imperial. Indeed, a number of Imperial nobles and offworld businessmen were murdered by Republican death squads.

The revolution was doomed, of course. The Marquis won the support of the Duke of Harlequin by suggesting that the revolt was the leading edge of a Solomani offensive into the subsector. With the Duke's consent, he returned with Imperial forces. Orbital bombardment of several key rebel positions was followed by invasion. By Day 100, the Free Republic had gone down in a welter of blood.

Today, Kilennur is still recovering from the short but terrible civil war. The planet is still under naval interdiction, although the Tyrant and his megacorporate allies are pressing for a lifting of sanctions. Meanwhile, the Tyrant's secret police are working overtime, supported by Imperial operatives, to round up the ringleaders of the revolt. Outside observers have raised the issue of multiple violations of the Rules of War, on the part of both rebel forces and the Tyrant's huscarles. Imperial authorities above the subsector level have not yet taken action.

Imperial Intelligence finds the Kilennur revolution to be particularly disturbing. Although it was anti-Imperial in nature, it does not appear to have been pro-Solomani. Indeed, several of the ringleaders were of mixed or Vilani descent, and racial ideology played no part in their rhetoric. Very little evidence has surfaced to indicate outside aid for the rebels from the Solomani Confederation. How the revolt could have sprung up so quickly *without* Solomani assistance is a question of deep interest to Imperial officials. Of course, the nature of the Imperial response to the revolt is providing pro-Solomani propagandists with plenty of material.

One unique feature of Kilennur is the presence of a Droyne enclave, in an isolated region of the planet's southern hemisphere. This group may be the farthest significant Droyne population to rimward. The Droyne of Kilennur have been present since First Imperium days, and one interstellar government after another has respected (or enforced) the enclave's isolation. The most recent estimates place the Droyne population at about 10 million, living at a TL9 standard. What role the aliens may have played in the Holiday Revolt is unknown, and indeed it is unknown whether they even *noticed* the upheaval. The authorities enforcing the planet's interdiction are particularly harsh regarding any attempt to contact the Droyne.

3209 PAGLIACCI (IMPERIAL)

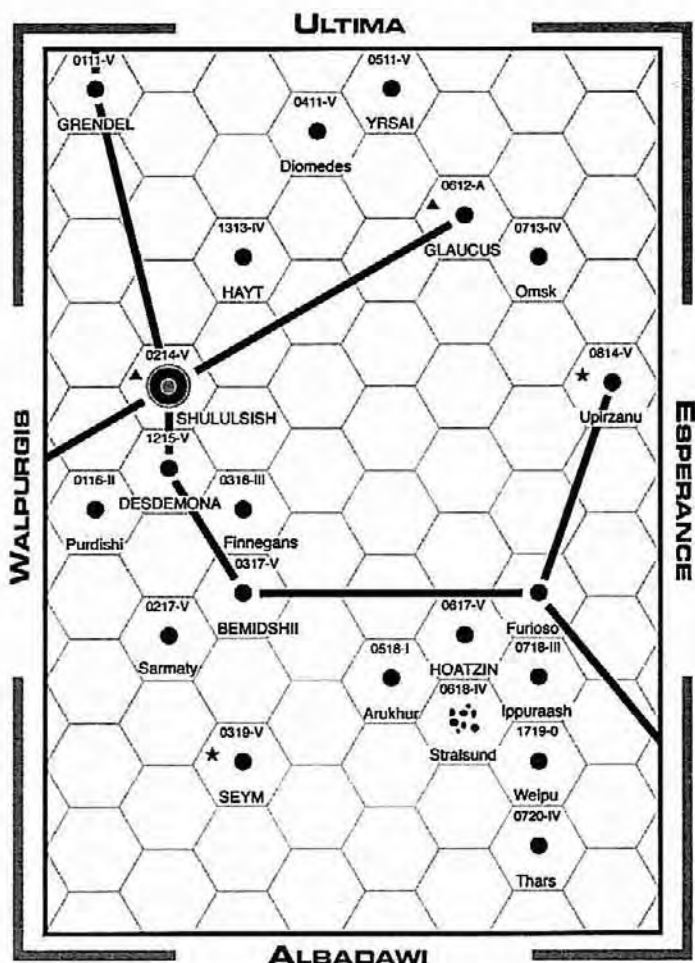
Pagliacci is a backwater agricultural planet, most of which is uninhabited and unexplored. It is occasionally used as a stopover by ships heading toward Solomani or Hiver territory, but it otherwise plays little role in the subsector economy.

ALDERAMIN SUBSECTOR

Alderamin, also known as Alpha Cephei, is a bright star visible from Terra and the brightest star in the subsector that bears its name. The Alderamin subsector is off the main trade and communication routes, but it is nonetheless prosperous and peaceful. Although the area includes a number of habitable worlds, colonization during the First Imperium was thin. After the Interstellar Wars, Terran immigrants flooded in, soon outnumbering and absorbing the Vilani.

The senior Imperial noble in the subsector is Iwoahlarko, an Aslan noble with two completely different roles in the subsector's affairs. As Duke of Alderamin, he spends most of his time at the subsector capital on Shululsish. As *ko* of the clan *Iwoahlar*, he holds wide lands and is quite influential among the Aslan population of Sarmaty (see p. 84). Duke Iwoahlarko is descended from Aslan clan chiefs who led a long resistance against the Solomani Movement on Sarmaty. He himself served in the Imperial Marines, where he rose to the rank of Colonel. He is a good Duke, sophisticated and diplomatic, although he can take on the persona of a headstrong Aslan bully when it suits him. Although it pains him to admit it, his status in Aslan society is actually lower than in Imperial society (his clan, while significant, is not one of the greater ones). Even so, he takes his duty in each role equally seriously.

Unfortunately Duke Iwoahlarko is entering his declining years and has no clear heir, his only son having been killed



ALDERAMIN SUBSECTOR WORLDS

HEX	NAME	ALLEGIANCE	ZONE	STARPORT	GRAVITY	DIAMETER	ATMOSPHERE	HYDROGRAPHIC %	CLIMATE	POPULATION	GOV TYPE	CR	TL	WTN
0111	Grendel	Imp	Green	V	8,900	1.20	Standard	98%	Warm	8.2 billion	Merit	6	11	5.5
0116	Purdishi	Imp	Green	II	6,200	0.71	Trace	None	Hot	85	Captive	5	11	2.0
0214	Shululsish	Imp (*)	Green	V-S	5,400	0.80	Dense	42%	Cool	32 billion	AthDem	1	12	6.5
0215	Desdemona	Imp	Green	V	7,100	0.86	Standard	87%	Normal	3.6 billion	Bureau	6	11	5.5
0217	Sarmaty	Imp	Green	V	8,200	1.07	Dense	92%	Warm	440 million	Multiple	4	12	5.5
0313	Hayt	Imp	Green	IV	3,900	0.40	Very Thin (T)	8%	Cold	3.7 billion	Bureau	6	11	5.5
0316	Finnegans	Imp	Green	III	3,400	0.50	Standard (T)	91%	Cool	320,000	Oligarch	2	9	3.5
0317	Bemidshii	Imp	Green	V	5,300	0.58	Standard	69%	Normal	2.8 billion	Merit	5	11	5.5
0319	Seym	Imp	Green	V-N	900	0.17	None	None	Hot	4.0 billion	Oligarch	6	10	5.5
0411	Diomedes	Imp	Green	V	8,000	1.08	Standard (T)	71%	Warm	76 million	Dictator	5	12	5.0
0511	Yrsai	Imp	Green	V	6,100	0.72	Standard	32%	Normal	34 billion	Bureau	6	12	6.5
0518	Arukhar	Imp	Green	I	1,900	0.35	None	None	Torrid	5,300	Captive	3	11	2.5
0612	Glaucas	Imp	Green	V-S	7,900	0.97	Dense	60%	Warm	5.9 billion	Dictator	6	12	6.0
0617	Hoatzin	Imp	Green	V	9,100	0.91	Standard	72%	Cool	5.3 billion	Merit	4	11	5.5
0618	Stralsund	Imp	Green	IV	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Frigid	52 million	Dictator	6	11	4.5
0713	Omsk	Imp	Green	IV	4,700	0.41	Trace	8%	Frozen	120,000	RepDem	4	9	4.0
0717	Furioso	Imp	Green	V	9,000	1.66	Corrosive	46%	Hot	33 million	Captive	1	10	5.0
0718	Ippuraash	Imp	Green	III	1,700	0.14	None	None	Torrid	7.1 million	Corporate	1	9	4.0
0719	Weipu	Imp	Green	0	4,900	0.47	Thin (T)	30%	Cold	None	None	0	0	0.0
0720	Thars	Imp	Green	IV	6,700	0.86	Exotic	72%	Cool	79 million	Bureau	4	10	4.5
0814	Upirzanu	Imp	Green	V-N	9,000	1.09	Corrosive	48%	Frigid	97 million	Techno	1	12	5.0

Key on pp. 62-63.

while serving in the Marines like his father. The possibility of a vacancy among the sector's dukes is giving rise to a good deal of political maneuvering, both among the Alderamin aristocracy and at the Archduke's court.

The Alderamin subsector was once reasonably loyal to the Solomani Cause, but the Imperium has managed to sway the Solomani population away from racist ideology. Led by the Aslan dukes, the re-established Imperial aristocracy has concentrated on diplomacy and economic development rather than confrontation. At present, the primary conflict in the subsector is between Tukera Lines and Solar Shipping. As in the Concord subsector, the two great shipping lines are competing fiercely for market share. Here, the main field of conflict is an extremely profitable set of routes along the arc from Yrsai to Shululsish to Hoatzin.

0116 PURDISHI (IMPERIAL)

The Purdishi settlement is a very recent "seed colony," established by dissidents from nearby Desdemona. The Desdemona government claims sovereignty over Purdishi, but in practice few of the homeworld's laws are enforced here.

0214 SHULULSISH (IMPERIAL - SUBSECTOR CAPITAL)

Shululsish is a young, metal-rich world. It is quite dense and has sufficient gravity to retain a thick atmosphere. Meanwhile, the native life has evolved quickly, giving the planet a diverse ecosphere and a hospitable oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere. Thus, Shululsish is quite Earthlike, despite being small and a fraction of Earth's age.

Shululsish was colonized fairly late in the First Imperium's expansionistic phase, about -3900. By the time of the Interstellar Wars, there was a thriving Vilani civilization on the planet. During the Ninth Interstellar War, Shululsish was a secondary

objective of the Terran fleets, moving to secure their flanks before a lightning campaign up the Rim Main. The planet came under heavy bombardment and much of its infrastructure was destroyed. The Rule of Man subsequently neglected the planet's development, although many Terran colonists arrived to mingle with the Vilani population. By the fall of the Long Night, the local society had fallen back to TL6 and was living a simple pastoral existence.

About the same time that the Third Imperium was founded, Shululsish enjoyed an industrial and scientific renaissance. Computer technologies were rediscovered and applied, binding the planet's population into a seamless web of intercommunication. Many worlds have undergone a "network revolution" when reaching TL7 or TL8, but on Shululsish the transformation was unusually far-reaching. Before long, every citizen could effortlessly contact others all over the planet, access a variety of published media, or tap into the extensive planetary data banks. When IISS and Easter Concord contact teams arrived about 300, they found a healthy and rapidly progressing culture ready for immediate integration into interstellar society. Indeed, computer and telecommunications experts from Shululsish soon commanded high wages on the worlds of the Easter Concord.

Today, Shululsish has a unique form of government: the *Adishamer*, or "totality of citizens." There is no representative sovereignty on the planet, as all legislative decisions are made by the citizens themselves. Any citizen may propose a new law at the local, regional, or planetary levels. A proposed law is evaluated by citizen focus groups and teams of legal experts to ensure that it is logically sound, does not contradict existing law, and has a chance of passage. If it passes muster, it is broadcast to the citizenry through the computer network. Citizens examine the proposed law, and use the network to gather the information needed to decide on its merits. After a set period, a vote is taken and the new law stands or falls based on the result. Repeal of existing laws is handled in similar fashion.

ALDERAMIN SUBSECTOR NAVIGATIONAL DATA

HEX	NAME	PRIMARY	COMPANIONS	SGG	PB	ORBIT	MOONS
0111	Grendel	F4 V	D	2	0	1.40	2 small
0116	Purdishi	M1 V	-	4	3	0.23	-
0214	Shululsish	F8 V	-	4	0	1.81	1 large
0215	Desdemona	G8 V	M8 V	3	0	0.75	1 small
0217	Sarmaty	M5 V	-	3	0	0.14	-
0313	Hayt	M4 V	M6 V	0	1	0.28	-
0316	Finnegans	G1 V	M8 V	0	2	1.30	2 small
0317	Bemidshii	G9 V	M8 V	2	1	0.77	-
0319	Seym	M3 V	D	3	2	0.19	-
0411	Diomedes	F4 V	-	0	0	1.75	2 large
0511	Yrsai	G0 V	M5 V	2	0	1.31	2 small
0518	Arukhur	M3 V	-	2	2	0.13	-
0612	Glaucas	M8 V	D, D	2	3	0.04	-
0617	Hoatzin	F4 V	-	4	3	1.93	-
0618	Stralsund	A7 III	-	0	2	16.3	-
0713	Omsk	M0 V	-	3	0	0.44	-
0717	Furioso	M0 V	-	3	1	0.23	-
0718	Ippuraash	K0 V	-	4	1	0.29	-
0719	Weipu	K8 V	M8 V	2	0	0.41	-
0720	Thars	M0 V	-	4	1	0.40	-
0814	Upirzanu	M2 V	-	4	2	0.92	1 large

Key on p. 63.

Executive offices on Shululsish are normally filled for 30 local days at a time. A few offices are filled through general elections, but most are filled through random selection. A person thus chosen to hold office must meet minimum qualifications, but most citizens of Shululsish are familiar enough with the workings of government to hold any office. In any case, each office comes with its own staff of legal or technical experts, to advise the current office-holder of his options. Executive office is sometimes regarded as a nuisance, but most citizens take their occasional tour of "government duty" seriously. Indeed, many regard it as a refreshing change of pace and a chance to serve the community. Meanwhile, citizens normally spend an average of an hour per day on government-related activity, learning about proposed laws and gathering the information necessary to vote wisely.

This distinctive form of government breeds a sense of great egalitarianism. There are wealthy and poor individuals on Shululsish, but the poorest citizen is on equal footing with the wealthiest in his exercise of political power. As a result, there are few obvious class distinctions on Shululsish. Even Imperial nobles native to the world live much like any other citizen. Many of the planet's citizen-statesmen enter Imperial service, making Shululsish one of the sector's primary recruiting points for the Imperial military and bureaucracy. Meanwhile, Shululsish is one of those planets where offworlders can have a great deal of influence on local politics. Non-citizens may not vote, but they may use the planetary network to spread information, take part in political discussions, or even propose new laws.

Shululsish maintained its unique social system under the Solomani Movement, although the planet was forced to grant pure-bred Solomani a number of special privileges. These laws were repealed immediately after the Rim War. Today, there are several factions of the Solomani Party active on the planet, but none have much influence. Meanwhile, the Authentic Move-

ment is growing fairly popular, with many citizens reviving the folkways of the Shululsish Renaissance.

0217 SARMATY (IMPERIAL)

Most of the citizens of Sarmaty are Human; however, the second-largest nation on the planet, Aorhtoi, is 95% Aslan. Aorhtoi represents one of the largest traditionalist populations of Aslan within the Solomani Rim. The Human nations of Sarmaty have adopted some Aslan words and customs, although this has not prevented conflict between the two races.

0518 ARUKHUR (IMPERIAL)

Arukhur is the site of a mining colony, owned by corporate interests based on Hoatzin.

0617 HOATZIN (IMPERIAL)

Hoatzin and its star system are an astrophysical puzzle. Although the system is relatively young, it is almost devoid of heavy elements. Even iron is in short supply, and historically it has often been treated as a precious metal. For example, local currency does not include metallic coinage, and stainless steel or titanium-alloy jewelry is considered quite fashionable among the wealthy. Local customs based on metal scarcity are rather outdated now that industrial metals can be imported in bulk, but they still linger among conservative Hoatzins.

Hoatzin itself is quite habitable, although its low metal content causes odd planetological behavior. Some regions of the planet are tectonically unstable, suffering frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. There is plenty of land surface, however, and civilization has been able to cluster away from the most dangerous territory.

Hoatzin was sparsely settled by the Vilani starting about -4000, but the planet's extreme metal-poverty discouraged large-scale settlement. The first major influx of Human colonists came after the Ninth Interstellar War. Many of the Terran settlers were from South America, although the colony had a great deal of ethnic diversity and no one Terran culture dominated the mix. The settlement was particularly hard-hit during the Long Night, when it was no longer possible to import heavy metals for industry. Somehow, the Hoatzins made do with substitutes: stone, local hardwoods, and a variety of ceramics.

About 300, scouts from the Easter Concord reopened contact with Hoatzin. They found a thriving TL7 society, democratic and open-minded, with no heavy industry but a number of superb handicrafts. For several centuries, Hoatzin exported luxury goods such as animal pelts, rare woods, and *objets d'art*. Development was slow but steady.

Under the Solomani, the pace picked up considerably. The government imposed by the Solomani Movement pressed a claim to the nearby worlds of Arukhur and Furioso, establishing mining colonies to supply new industrial development on Hoatzin. Close trade ties were also established at this time with the Stralsund Belt, providing more industrial materials.

Although the people of Hoatzin resented their Solomani overlords, the period did bring about rapid economic growth and prosperity. In the wake of the Solomani Rim War, Hoatzin

became a loyal Imperial world, and continued the long process of industrialization.

Today, Hoatzin is a study in contrasts. Most cities and towns still belong to Old Hoatzin, offering a way of life that harks back to the Long Night. Buildings tend to be low to the ground, and the cities sprawl over wide regions of countryside. Business, politics, and social life are all pursued at a leisurely pace. Buildings, vehicles, and personal objects are designed as much for beauty as for utility. Metal is used only where no substitutes are available. Meanwhile, the industrial New Cities are soaring, dirty, hectic places, where profit is everywhere and precious metals actually go to waste.

Most native Hoatzins prefer not to live in the New Cities, and if they must work there they are willing to commute long distances. Many of the industrial centers have a substantial immigrant population. Tension between these two sides of Hoatzin society has been rising ever since the end of the Rim War. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that pro-Solomani feeling is concentrated in the New Cities. Many Solomani industrialists remained behind after the Rim War, and some of these have never reconciled themselves to the Imperium. Although they have sponsored little violent resistance, some of them are suspected of engaging in subtler forms of treason.

0618 STRALSUND (IMPERIAL)

The Stralsund Belt is an unusually dense and rich asteroid field, circling the bright giant star Alderamin. Mining operations in the belt produce a number of important exports. Rigid social controls and high technology support its massive population.

0717 FURIOSO (IMPERIAL)

Furioso is an extremely hostile world. Its atmosphere is a corrosive mix of nitrogen and sulfur compounds, and its oceans are composed of a sulfuric acid solution. Despite this, the planet serves as the focus for mining and industrial operations throughout the star system. The system is governed as a provincial division within the government of nearby Hoatzin, and local residents are considered full citizens of Hoatzin's republic.

0814 UPIRZANU (IMPERIAL)

There is little to recommend Upirzanu for settlement. It is too far from its red dwarf sun to receive much heat, its atmosphere is a corrosive mix of ammonia and methane, its seas are composed of an exotic ammonia-water mixture. Despite all this, Upirzanu is one of the few worlds in the sector hostile to Human life and yet settled during the First Imperium.

The first colony was established about -2800, as Vilani dissidents fled from nearby Dimmurak to avoid both local and Imperial oppression. Upirzanu was little-known and never visited, being so hostile and so far off the main trade routes. The dissident faction built their city near the ocean but deep underground, hoping to shut out not only the hostile environment but also any possible intruders. Over centuries, the colonists carved out a vast underground realm using fusion power, deep mines, and water from the surface. They built their gardens, plazas,

factories, and residential warrens as deep as half a mile into the planet's crust.

The colony survived and avoided Imperial attention. It was still thriving about -2100 when a Terran expedition finally discovered its existence. The Rule of Man absorbed Upirzanu but left most local institutions alone. Few Terrans ever came to live, aside from a small military garrison and the occasional solitary migrant. When the Long Night came, the Rule of Man abandoned the planet, and the Vilani moved on as if nothing had happened to break their isolation. Only about 450, when the Third Imperium arrived in the area, did Upirzanu become truly involved in interstellar society.



Today, Upirzanu remains a Vilani world, although a number of traditional features of Vilani society have changed a great deal in response to the local conditions. The *shulgilii* caste has become entirely ceremonial, and there is no recognizable aristocracy. Most social power is held by a caste of structural and environmental engineers, technicians who are crucial to everyone's survival.

Almost all construction on the planet's surface is still underground, and even the downport is mostly built beneath the planet's surface. Indeed, most citizens of Upirzanu are agoraphobes, fearing exposure to open spaces. Many of them are completely unable to travel offworld, and spend their entire lives in the caverns.

Upirzanu has an extensive array of orbital installations, and its large moon has also been extensively developed over the past two centuries. These offworld facilities include a large highport and an Imperial Naval Base. The majority of people living and working in these space facilities are recent immigrants or transients. A wide cultural gap exists between these Imperials and their Upirzanan managers, and tensions often flare into legal disputes or even open violence.

ESPERANCE SUBSECTOR WORLDS

HEX	NAME	ALLEGIANCE	ZONE	STARPORT	DIAMETER	GRAVITY	HYDROGRAPHIC %		POPULATION	CR	WTN			
							ATMOSPHERE	CLIMATE		GOV TYPE	TL			
0912	Fafhrd	Imp	Green	III	5,700	0.64	Very Thin (T)	None	Hot	86 million	Captive	2	6	4.0
0913	Kitchener	Imp	Green	IV	10,300	1.60	Corrosive	82%	Very Cold	5.3 million	RepDem	3	10	4.0
0914	Alphanor	Imp	Green	V	9,200	1.24	Dense	78%	Normal	1.3 billion	Bureau	3	12	6.0
0918	Lompoc	Imp	Green	III	3,900	0.37	Thin (T)	42%	Chilly	4.0 million	Oligarch	2	9	4.0
0919	Cuchulain	Imp	Green	V	9,800	1.30	Thin	62%	Normal	7.6 billion	Dictator	6	9	5.5
1011	Anacreon	Imp	Green	V	5,400	0.81	Standard	18%	Warm	110 million	RepDem	1	12	5.5
1020	Tisiphone	Imp	Green	IV	6,100	0.71	Very Thin (T)	40%	Cool	840 million	Merit	3	12	5.5
1111	Dimmurak	Imp	Green	V	6,000	0.68	Thin	71%	Normal	7.7 billion	AthDem	2	11	5.5
1116	Esperance	Imp	Amber	V-N	4,200	0.50	Standard	82%	Warm	520 million	Multiple	5	12	5.5
1117	Mashaddun	Imp	Green	III	8,800	1.16	Dense (T)	36%	Cold	690	Corporate	0	10	3.0
1119	Muan Irrzudh	Veg	Green	V	6,200	0.78	Standard	99%	Cool	83 million	Merit	4	10	5.0
1120	Hsuishlesh	Veg	Green	V-N	6,000	0.70	Thin (T)	39%	Chilly	3.5 billion	Merit	4	12	6.0
1214	Boskone	Imp	Green	I	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Torrid	32	Captive	6	11	2.0
1216	Ludmilla	Imp	Green	V	4,000	0.41	Thin	62%	Cool	220 million	Bureau	6	11	5.0
1218	Tunshaon Tyo	Veg	Green	V	5,000	0.56	Thin	37%	Normal	6.8 billion	Merit	4	12	6.0
1219	Umieh	Veg	Green	IV	1,100	0.09	None	None	Frigid	610 million	Merit	4	11	5.0
1311	Boqueron	Imp	Green	V	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Frigid	9.2 billion	Dictator	5	10	5.5
1316	Heironymus	Imp	Red	0	4,900	0.47	Very Thin	None	Cold	7.6 million	AthDem	1	6	0.5
1318	Ahhunsal	Veg	Green	I	5,000	0.46	Very Thin (T)	6%	Frozen	25	Merit	4	12	2.5
1320	Hsivyu	Veg	Green	V	900	0.10	Very Thin	31%	Frigid	62 million	Merit	4	12	5.0
1417	Hokchor	Veg	Green	III	6,000	0.68	Thin (T)	69%	Warm	910,000	Merit	4	10	3.5
1418	Muan Ialour	Veg	Green	V	5,400	0.52	Thin	58%	Cool	180 million	Merit	4	11	5.0
1419	Ninshien	Veg	Green	IV	5,000	0.82	Dense (T)	99%	Tropical	830 million	Merit	4	10	5.0
1511	Oort	Imp	Green	V	5,200	0.83	Standard	35%	Warm	770 million	Bureau	4	12	5.5
1512	Ymir	Imp	Amber	V	6,000	0.62	Exotic	60%	Chilly	70 million	Multiple	1	12	5.0
1515	Dzim Zhia Gwi	Veg	Green	V	4,100	0.52	Thin	57%	Cool	28 billion	Merit	4	12	6.5
1516	Ewmiak	Veg	Green	V	4,200	0.43	Thin	24%	Normal	6.0 billion	Merit	4	12	6.0
1517	Flanders	Veg	Green	V	7,000	0.83	Thin	50%	Hot	31 billion	Merit	4	12	6.5
1519	Bellerophon	Veg	Green	V	8,200	1.05	Dense	99%	Warm	2.4 billion	Merit	4	11	5.5
1616	Orruilton Tyui	Veg	Green	IV	1,300	0.10	Very Thin (T)	12%	Frigid	6.6 million	Merit	4	10	4.0
1619	Tyudhuar	Veg	Green	III	5,200	0.83	Dense (T)	94%	Very Hot	61 million	Merit	4	9	4.5

Key on pp. 62-63.

ESPERANCE SUBSECTOR

This subsector is not an independent political unit. About half its worlds are within the Vegan District and are governed from Muan Gwi, while the other half are under the jurisdiction of the Duke of Alderamin. The Rim Main runs through the Vegan part of the subsector, and this region booms with trade. Other worlds are quieter, but none of them are truly cut off from the interstellar community. The Esperance subsector is near the heart of the great web of trade routes that is the lifeblood of the Solomani Rim.

Outside the Vegan District, a number of the worlds in this subsector are torn by social or political conflict. Several have substantial Vegan minorities, and tension between Humans and Vegans runs high. Pro-Solomani sentiments are common among the local Human populations, complicating the situation further.

0912 FAFHRD (IMPERIAL)

Fafhrd was once a prosperous and densely populated world, but about 500 a civil war led to the destruction of most of the planet's city-domes. Many fled into the planet's wastelands, surviving in caravans of powered vehicles, struggling heroically to obtain water and breathable air. These survivors became nomads, developing a profound mistrust of industrialization and high technology. Today, Fafhrd's remaining cities are

unable to maintain their own central systems, and depend on imported goods for most of their needs. The cities are loosely governed from nearby Anacreon as colonial territories. The nomads acknowledge no outside authority.

1011 ANACREON (IMPERIAL)

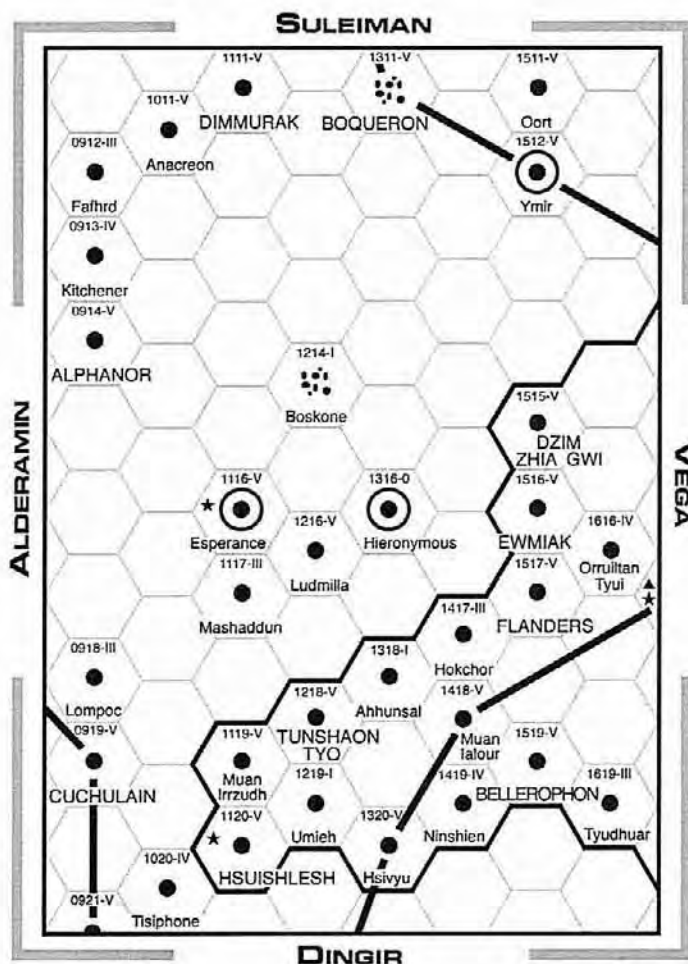
Anacreon huddles close to its red-dwarf primary, and is tide-locked as a result. The planet's day face is a hot, arid desert, while its night face is an icy wasteland. The "shadow zone" in between is the only region where Human comfort is possible, but over the centuries this region has been thoroughly terraformed. The sunward shore of the Ring Ocean was seeded with a Terran ecology millennia ago, and the coastal plains are now quite comfortable for Human life. Indeed, a relatively small population, an open and democratic society, and high-technology industries have given Anacreon's people the highest standard of living in the subsector.

Like most worlds in this part of space, Anacreon was originally settled by the Vilani. This settlement was fairly sparse, however, and real development of the planet did not begin until the Terran conquest. After the Ninth Interstellar War, large numbers of Terran immigrants arrived, most of them from the United Kingdom and other members of the Commonwealth of Nations. This immigration overwhelmed the native Vilani population, so that the present-day society is entirely Solomani in character.

The people of Anacreon are not xenophobic, and in fact they welcome foreign visitors, but they do not willingly accept outsiders into local society. For centuries, the government has maintained strict control over immigration, hoping to maintain a high standard of living and minimize cultural contamination. Anyone with money to spend can obtain a tourist visa to visit Anacreon, but these are usually issued for no more than a few weeks. Those wishing to *settle* on Anacreon must be Human, preferably of Solomani ancestry, wealthy in their own right, and willing to assimilate into local culture. Non-Humans are not welcome as immigrants. This especially applies to Vegans, despite the fact that Anacreon would be quite comfortable for them.

This exclusionist attitude fits in well with Solomani ideology, and in fact Anacreon was once an enthusiastic supporter of the Solomani Movement. Over time the relationship soured, as the Solomani regime repeatedly violated the sovereignty of planetary government. By 950 most Anacreonians felt that, Solomani or not, these offworlders had no business on their planet. When the Solomani Rim War broke out, Anacreon lent only token support to the Confederation, and went over to the Imperium without much struggle. Today, Anacreon is a loyal member of the Imperium. Pro-Solomani sentiments remain, but expressions of these are normally limited to the peaceful observance of Solomani holidays.

Anacreon has a monarch who acts as head of state, but the actual powers of the King or Queen are strictly limited. Real authority lies in the hands of the planet's Parliament and its elected first minister. Taxes are extremely low and economic regulation nearly nonexistent. The only intrusive local laws control weapon ownership, but even military-grade hardware is generally legal to own as long as it is registered and the owner is well-trained in its use. Since Anacreon maintains no standing Army, members of the citizen militia can generally get permits for any weaponry they want. Offworlders are somewhat more restricted, of course.



Anacreon's economy is self-sufficient in all primary resources. Its most important exports are luxury goods and computer equipment. Tourism is an important local industry, and in fact Anacreon is a popular destination for more adventurous members of the petty Imperial nobility. Local attractions tend toward strenuous (and slightly dangerous) outdoor sports such as wind-sailing, hang-gliding, cliff-diving, desert-racing, and mountain-climbing. Although safety standards are high, a number of tourists are injured or killed each year.

1116 ESPERANCE (IMPERIAL)

Esperance is a "compromise" between the kinds of worlds that Vegans and Humans each find comfortable. The gravity is light, but the air is thick enough for Human comfort and there is plenty of water. This has made the planet a focal point for conflict between the two species.

Esperance was not originally settled by Vegans. Instead, a Vilani colony was established about -4300. Under the Rule of Man, Terran colonization was intensive, coming mostly from South America and submerging the original Vilani population. It was about this time that the inland steppes of Bolivar, the planet's largest continent, were settled by Vegan colonists. This Vegan settlement was relatively slow, but it continued throughout the Long Night. In fact, the Vegan presence on the planet did much to mitigate the effects of the Long Night on Esperance.

When Esperance was admitted to the Third Imperium (in 593) the planet was divided among about 40 independent nation-states. Most of these retained elements of Hispanic culture. On the other hand, the central portions of Bolivar were owned by the nation of Waothan, a prosperous, densely populated state whose population was 95% Vegan. Due to its large population and technological advantage, Waothan dominated Esperancian politics. Naturally, in the Human-dominated states this caused resentment of Waothan and of Vegans in general.

About 720 the Solomani Movement came to power in most nations on Esperance, but Waothan resisted. The result was a planetary war, which ended in the occupation of Waothan and the reduction of the Vegan population to second-class status. The occupation was overturned when Esperance was retaken by the Imperium, but Waothan's economy and society had been wrecked.

A century later, the Vegans and Humans of Waothan are still trying to reconstruct their former prosperity. Meanwhile, several of the Human states of Esperance have pro-Solomani leanings and a deep-seated mistrust of Vegans. The result has been a "cold war."

Waothan and its principal opponent, the pro-Solomani nation of Nueva Argentina, constantly maneuver for domination of the planet. No open military conflict has occurred between the principals, but they have often intervened to prop up allied regimes in minor states. Offworld mercenaries are often able to find employment on Esperance, fighting in one of the resulting brushfire conflicts. Meanwhile, espionage and political intrigue are common. The Vegans are actually quite good at infiltrating their enemies' bases of power, using Human Waothani as spies. Offworlders who come to the planet on business are likely to be pulled into one intrigue or another, so the TAS has designated the entire planet an Amber Zone.

The Imperium has "refereed" the contest by placing a naval base on Esperance, hoping to keep matters from getting out of hand. It has otherwise refused to get involved. Indeed, the Emperor turned down a recent application from Waothan to be incorporated into the Vegan District. Archduke Adair and the Navy both advised Strephon that any such move would probably ignite full-scale war on the planet.

1117 MASHADDUN (IMPERIAL)

Mashaddun is owned by the Imperial megacorporation SuSAG, which is exploring the biochemical properties of local plant and animal life.

1120 HSUISHLESH (IMPERIAL)

Hsuishlesh was colonized relatively late in history, being unoccupied until the Ninth Interstellar War. The formal Terran-Vegan Alliance of -2275 assigned the planet to the newly liberated Vegan Polity, and this agreement held throughout the Rule of Man and into the Long Night. As a result, Vegan settlement was fairly intensive from about -2270 but large-scale Human immigration did not occur until the Solomani period.

Hsuishlesh is not a particularly hospitable world. The local photosynthetic life is scanty, and so the atmosphere is not only thin but almost devoid of free oxygen. Humans visiting the

ESPERANCE SUBSECTOR NAVIGATIONAL DATA

HEX	NAME	PRIMARY	COMPANIONS	GG	PB	ORBIT	MOONS
0912	Fafhrd	K5 V	-	5	0	0.33	-
0913	Kitchener	F7 V	M1 V	2	2	1.66	1 large
0914	Alphanor	K2 V	-	1	2	0.53	1 small
0918	Lompoc	M8 V	D	0	1	0.06	-
0919	Cuchulain	G9 V	-	3	2	0.61	-
1011	Anacreon	M8 V	-	3	1	0.05	-
1020	Tisiphone	F2 V	M0 V	4	0	2.26	3 small
1111	Dimmurak	M2 V	-	4	0	0.28	-
1116	Esperance	G6 V	-	1	1	0.93	1 small
1117	Mashaddun	G0 V	-	0	2	1.67	2 small
1119	Muan Irrzudh	K6 V	M0 V	0	0	0.35	-
1120	Hsuishlesh	M3 V	-	3	2	0.30	-
1214	Boskone	K2 III	-	2	0	7.75	-
1216	Ludmilla	F9 V	-	3	1	1.54	1 large
1218	Tunshaon Tyo	M1 V	-	2	1	0.34	-
1219	Umieh	M4 V	-	2	2	2.50*	-
1311	Boqueron	M8 V	D	1	0	0.15	-
1316	Heironymus	F9 V	M8 V	3	1	1.68	3 small
1318	Ahhunsal	M8 V	-	2	0	0.07	-
1320	Hsivvyu	F7 V	-	0	2	12.2	-
1417	Hokchor	G0 V	M1 V, M5 V	2	0	1.13	3 small
1418	Muan Ialour	M7 V	D	2	1	0.10	-
1419	Ninshien	G9 V	-	4	2	0.71	1 small
1511	Oort	A1 V	M8 V	4	2	6.67	1 large
1512	Ymir	M5 V	-	2	0	0.18	-
1515	Dzim Zhia Gwi	F8 V	D	0	0	1.74	-
1516	Ewmiak	F8 V	-	5	0	1.53	3 small
1517	Flanders	F7 V	M0 V	2	0	1.33	3 small
1519	Bellerophon	M1 V	-	3	3	0.32	-
1616	Orruiltan Tyui	F9 V	-	4	0	3.95	-
1619	Tyudhuar	G0 V	-	2	1	1.10	1 large

Key on p. 63.

planet must wear a compressor/filter apparatus at all times outdoors. Meanwhile, the planet is colder than even Vegans find comfortable. Most of the planet's water is frozen, and only in the tropical regions is there liquid surface water year-round. Population centers tend to cluster in the equatorial zone, in the form of domed or underground cities.

Hsuishlesh has no particularly important natural resources, although there are enough to supply local industry. The system has extensive asteroid-mining operations, as well. The planet's main importance is its highly strategic location. Hsuishlesh sits astride the Rim Main, and is the main transfer point for low-jump ships entering the Vegan District from rimward. Although the Hsuishlesh port is not one of the busiest of the sector, it does host one of the most diverse collections of ships and cargoes to be found anywhere. The planet's economy is dominated by interstellar commerce. A significant portion of planetary industrial production supports the starport, shipyards, and naval base.

Like most Vegan worlds, Hsuishlesh suffered social and political repression under the Solomani. The world was never inviting enough to attract large numbers of Humans, however, and most of the Solomani colonists left the planet after the Rim War. The current Human minority (about 5% of the population) is thoroughly cosmopolitan and pro-Imperial. The Solomani Party has a few cells on the planet, but these are widely scattered and powerless.

Hsuishlesh is home of a new philosophical movement, founded about 1080 by a Human citizen named Shana Hailiang. Her *Tao Gwi* is based on the principles of Vegan society. Her essential precept is that Humans, too, should live in *tuhuir* which they choose for themselves, committed to their chosen principles but living in peace with those who travel different paths. Hailiang's followers study the Vegan language and use it among themselves, claiming that it encodes philosophical insights which cannot be expressed in any Human language. Hailiang is approaching the age of 90, but still teaches actively and travels throughout the Imperial portion of the sector for speaking engagements. *Tao Gwi* is so far restricted to Hsuishlesh, although it is beginning to attract attention from other Human populations in and near the Vegan District. The Solomani Movement opposes it strongly, but the Archduke has shown cautious interest, several times inviting Hailiang to his court for consultation.

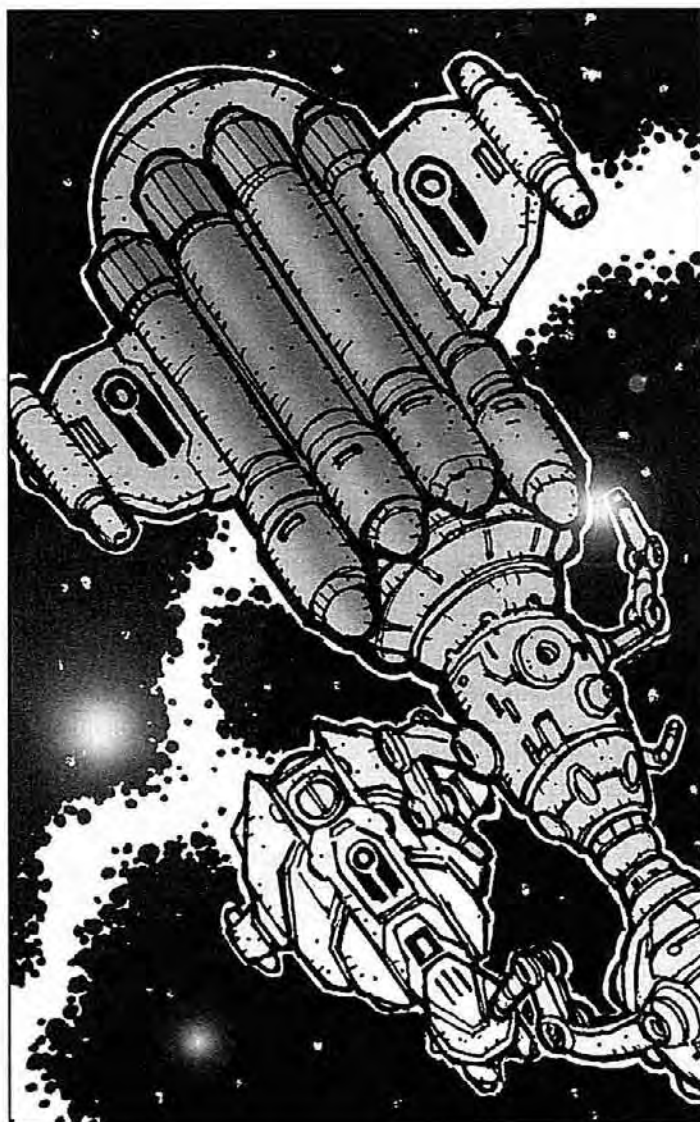
1214 BOSKONE (IMPERIAL)

Boskone is an example of the oddities that can arise due to the forces of interstellar trade. The Boskone system itself is dominated by a "gravel belt," a thin scattering of stony planetoids with no metals or ices worth mining. Yet the system's position in the midst of a region of thinly scattered stars means that the important Alphanor-Dzm Zhia Gwi trade route has no other convenient place to stop for fuel. Diverting through the Esperance Cluster would add a significant amount to the cost of the millions of tons of goods which use the route every week. Thus the "worthless" Boskone system has become one of the most significant systems in the region due to its strategic location.

The situation became acute after the Solomani Rim War, when trade in and out of the Vegan District reached its current high levels. Various Imperial shipping lines built refueling stations on the moons of Boskone system's outer gas giant, manned by robots or transient crews. These stations were crucial to timely transit of the system, since most of the megafreighters using the route were (and still are) unable to perform gas-giant skimming themselves. The stations were also critical tools of corporate competition, as each was closed except to ships of its own line. As competition intensified, trade war became a common occurrence in Boskone system. Stations were sabotaged, and there were a number of fires between various corporations' security forces. By about 1050 a detente had been established, but tensions remained high.

In 1053, the government of nearby Ludmilla filed a claim to the (officially uninhabited) Boskone system, offering to provide security to all major shipping lines in the system for a fee. Although this came close to a tax on transient vessels, which is forbidden by Imperial policy, the proposal was accepted by the Ministry of Commerce and all of the competing megacorporations using Boskone. Ludmilla received a healthy source of funding for its planetary navy, while all of the corporate interests finally had a neutral third party to provide security. The relationship worked quite well, and Boskone became a quiet and routine place.

Today, Boskone is still lively with transient merchant traffic. Dozens of megafreighters drop into the system every day to



refuel at the various stations. Free traders and ships of minor shipping lines also traverse the system, although these must actually skim the gas giant for fuel. Meanwhile, most of the system (including the Boskone belt itself) is uninhabited and unvisited. The only "permanent" population in the system is a solar-activity monitoring station maintained in the belt by the Ludmilla Navy. There are persistent rumors of secret installations and bases in the belt, used by pirates or smugglers, but so far nothing tangible has surfaced.

In 1116, the new government of Ludmilla found a legal pretext to cease protection of the major Vegan shipping lines in Boskone. This has forced the Vegans to hire their own security, setting off a new "arms race" in the system. Open trade war has not broken out as yet, but the Vegans are not likely to tolerate Ludmillan discrimination for much longer.

1216 LUDMILLA (IMPERIAL)

Ludmilla has a large Vegan minority, but its Vegan citizens are under considerable pressure since the rise in 1104 of a Human-supremacist government. Imperial officials are investigating claims of non-violent but intense discrimination against Vegan offworlders.

1311 BOQUERON (IMPERIAL)

Boqueron was declared an Amber Zone for a number of years, due to an ongoing internal rebellion.

In 1117, a peace accord was reached between the rebels and a government headed by the "First Citizen," and the subsequent reforms have proven fairly successful. Boqueron was granted Green Zone status in 1119.

1316 HEIRONYMUS (IMPERIAL)

The origins of the Heironymus settlement are lost in time. The planet itself is of no value, with no open water and no known mineral resources. Visits were rare even after the Third Imperium annexed the subsector about 590. Early IISS surveys of the region list the planet as completely uninhabited.

In 756, however, a merchant vessel was forced to make an emergency landing on Heironymus and discovered Human settlers. According to Captain Katanga, the people he encountered were courteous and helpful. They spoke a strange dialect of Galanglic, full of archaic words and pronunciation, but they were definitely Solomani in origin.

To his astonishment, they also openly displayed psionic powers, several of them exhibiting telepathic or telekinetic ability in his presence. Katanga reported that the natives never threatened him openly, but he was only too glad to finish his repairs and leave.

Katanga's shipwreck took place years before the Psionics Suppressions (see p. GT54). Even so, the possible presence of a whole population of psions unnerved the Solomani officials on nearby Ludmilla. They sent a follow-up expedition, which discovered no trace of the supposed Heironymus settlement. Soon Katanga's report was being repeated as a ghost story of the spacelanes, but from that time forward the Solomani enforced the isolation of Heironymus by putting the planet under interdiction.

After the Third Imperium reasserted its authority over the region, the Scout Service sent another expedition to Heironymus. This time, the presence of a Human settlement was obvious. Careful covert observation revealed that the population indeed included a significant number of active psions. Imperial authorities briefly considered sterilizing the planet, but cooler heads in the Scout Service's contact & liaison branch prevailed. The Emperor Gavin confirmed the interdicted status of Heironymus.

Since then, the Scout Service has made no attempt to contact the settlement or even to send in covert observers. With telepathy active on the planet, it would be difficult for even deep-cover observers to go undetected.

Long-range observations show that the Heironymus colony is definitely Solomani in origin, and may have been in place as far back as the closing centuries of the Long Night. The inhabitants appear to be TL8 or 9 in environmental technology and possibly in the biological sciences, but are at TL6 for all other areas. As many as 15% of the populace may have some level of psionic ability. The society is apparently open, democratic, and egalitarian.

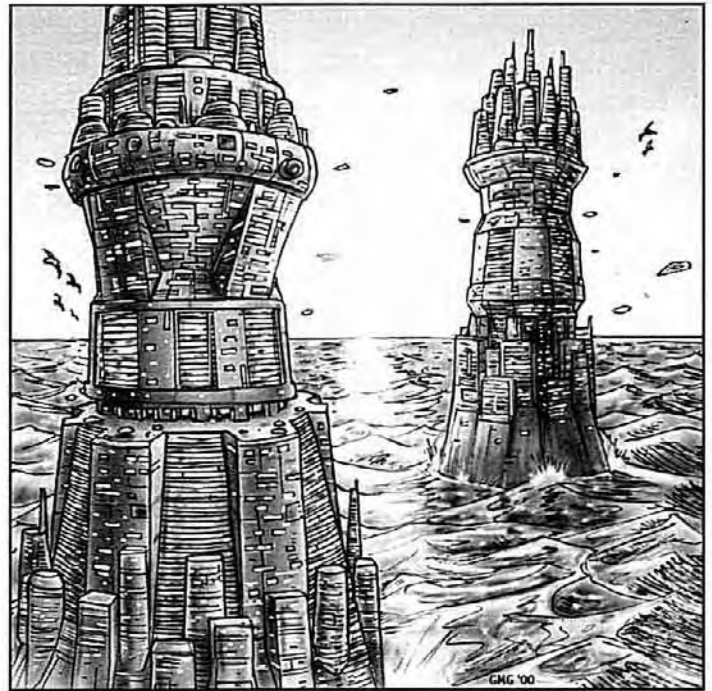
The IISS has been completely unable to trace the colony's exact origin, or discover the reasons for its unique features.

1517 FLANDERS (VEGAN)

Although Flanders is governed as part of the Vegan Autonomous District, its population is almost entirely Human since its surface gravity is too high for Vegan comfort. Early settlement took place under the Vilani. During the Rule of Man, massive Terran immigration (mostly from Western Europe) made Flanders a distinctively Solomani world. Despite this, relations with the Vegans have been easy for centuries, and the planet is currently comfortable with its status under Vegan administration.

1519 BELLEROPHON (VEGAN)

Bellerophon is unusual in that it is not tide-locked to its red dwarf primary. Its inhabitants are primarily Human, of Greek and Turkish descent. Most of the population lives in a scattering of "pylon cities," tall, slender arcologies which rest in shallow water and reach over a mile into the sky. Others live a high-tech but nomadic existence in the open ocean, following the great *daghadas* or "mountain island" beasts. These creatures frequently reach lengths of more than a mile, and support entire ecologies of their immature forms and dependent species. The nomads live off the *daghadas* herds, but kill no more than they need to survive. In contrast, commercial interests based in the cities have sometimes applied industrial methods to the *daghadas* harvest, with potentially catastrophic results for the planetary ecology.



Until recently, the *daghadas* herds were being aggressively hunted by Seaharvester LIC, a corporation interested in harvesting a rare broad-spectrum drug found in some *daghadas*. After allegations of illegal hunting, however, the Vegan authorities cracked down on poaching and enacted stricter conservation measures. As a result, the relationship between city-dwellers and nomads is returning to its usual aloof amity.

VEGA SUBSECTOR WORLDS

HEX	ALLEGIANCE			STARPORT	GRAVITY		HYDROGRAPHIC %			POPULATION	CR	WTN		
	NAME	ZONE	DIAMETER	ATMOSPHERE	CLIMATE	GOV TYPE	TL							
1711	Kasaan	Imp	Green	V	7,100	0.99	Dense	49%	Normal	12 million	Techno	4	11	5.0
1717	Muan Gwi	Veg (**)	Green	V-NW	4,300	0.50	Thin	62%	Cool	41 billion	Merit	4	12	6.5
1718	Hsuilzish	Veg	Green	IV	6,200	0.68	Standard (T)	84%	Warm	76 million	Merit	4	11	4.5
1720	Vega	Veg	Green	V	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Torrid	34 million	Merit	4	11	5.0
1813	Wanish Tyo	Veg	Green	V	6,000	0.62	Very Thin	None	Very Cold	510 million	Merit	4	11	5.0
1814	Tsamis	Veg	Green	V	5,300	0.53	Thin (T)	68%	Normal	5.3 billion	Merit	4	12	6.0
1816	Muan Issler	Veg	Green	V	2,800	0.37	Thin	43%	Frozen	13 billion	Merit	4	12	6.5
1818	Ashtagz Tyui	Veg	Green	III	3,000	0.51	Thin (T)	81%	Normal	86 million	Merit	4	11	4.5
1911	Depot	Imp	Green	V-D	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Frigid	6.9 million	Captive	6	12	5.0
1912	Galishgu	Imp	Green	IV	1,600	0.10	Very Thin (T)	22%	Frigid	82 million	Dictator	6	10	4.5
1917	Asterr Tyui	Veg	Green	V	6,100	0.70	Standard	61%	Cool	8.3 billion	Merit	4	12	6.0
1919	Merganser	Veg	Green	V	8,900	1.32	Thin (T)	16%	Hot	73 million	Merit	4	11	5.0
2011	Andiirish	Imp	Green	IV	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Frigid	860,000	Techno	3	11	4.0
2012	Cathay	Imp	Green	V-N	7,800	1.00	Standard	63%	Normal	36 billion	Theo	6	11	6.0
2015	Duikin Tyui	Veg	Green	V	3,100	0.28	Trace	None	Frigid	520 million	Merit	4	11	5.0
2017	Hariksiat	Veg	Green	V	3,200	0.31	Thin (T)	85%	Cold	240 million	Merit	4	12	5.5
2114	Sithuan Hsarr	Veg	Green	III	7,900	1.04	Corrosive	61%	Cool	46,000	Merit	4	11	3.0
2118	Dzadwahtyan	Veg	Green	V	7,000	0.98	Dense	48%	Normal	55 million	Merit	4	11	5.0
2213	Hsuardzan	Veg	Green	III	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Frigid	4.0 million	Merit	4	10	4.0
2218	Muan Kwoyen	Veg	Green	V-N	6,100	0.70	Standard	58%	Cool	3.1 billion	Merit	4	12	6.0
2312	Menelaus	Imp	Green	V	8,200	1.08	Standard	51%	Normal	2.1 billion	Oligarch	6	9	5.5
2319	Shulgiasu	Veg	Green	V	6,800	0.81	Thin	83%	Warm	8.9 billion	Merit	4	12	6.0
2411	Surt	Imp	Green	V-N	5,000	0.86	Very Thin (T)	12%	Frigid	3.4 billion	Bureau	5	11	5.5
2414	Isseydo	Imp	Green	III	2,300	0.13	Thin (T)	78%	Frigid	830 million	RepDem	4	10	4.5
2415	Shani	Imp	Red	0	3,700	0.25	Trace	21%	Frigid	280,000	Techno	2	8	0.0
2418	Khalikkam	Imp	Green	IV	6,400	1.09	Trace	None	Very Hot	3.4 million	Captive	2	10	4.0
2419	Zayeel	Imp	Green	III	4,400	0.40	Very Thin	31%	Cold	190 million	Dictator	4	7	4.5
2420	Arrukir	Imp	Green	IV	5,400	0.86	Dense (T)	99%	Tropical	50 million	Multiple	6	9	4.5

Key on pp. 62-63.

VEGA SUBSECTOR

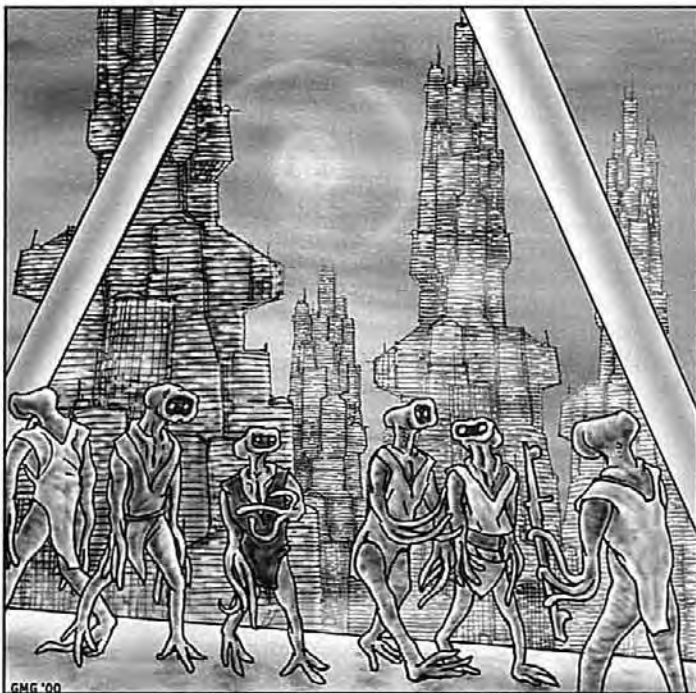
Like the Esperance subsector, this subsector is not a cohesive political unit. Most of it is within the Vegan District, while the rest is attached to the Concord or Banasdan subsectors. In practice, the Archduke of Sol has tremendous local influence. His seat is on Muan Gwi itself, and he enjoys good relations with both the Vegan authorities and the Imperial dukes of Concord and Banasdan.

Most of the worlds within the district are inhabited entirely by Vegans, although a few high-gravity planets are occupied instead by Humans under Vegan administration. Some strain exists between the two races, although relations are generally more amicable than in the neighboring Esperance subsector.

1717 MUAN GWI (VEGAN, DISTRICT CAPITAL, DOMAIN CAPITAL)

In many ways, Muan Gwi is the most important world in the Solomani Rim: homeworld of the Vegans, capital of the Vegan Autonomous District, capital of the Domain of Sol, the most densely populated and productive world in the sector. Only Terra exerts comparable influence over the sector economy, but Muan Gwi has the advantage of sitting directly on the Rim Main. Muan Gwi starport is in fact one of the busiest in the entire Imperium. Many a free trader visiting the system has been awed by the sheer magnitude of local shipping traffic. Over 100 million passengers use Muan Gwi's starport per year.

The world's six highports, spaced equally around a synchronous orbit of the planet, each serve an average of about one 100,000-ton megafreighter *per hour*, along with countless smaller ships. Each highport is unique, having been built at a different time and to a different design, but the smallest of them is a rough cylinder 3 miles long.



Most of this massive traffic goes to Muan Issler, the "second Vegan homeworld" one parsec away. Other ships carry Vegan goods a tremendous distance up and down the Rim Main, penetrating markets as far away as Aslan space and the Old Expanses.

A visitor to Muan Gwi would be hard-pressed to find a spot on the planet that has been left untouched by industrial civilization. The planet's cities are vast hives, full of massive arcologies and grav-supported buildings which soar miles into the atmosphere. Almost every square mile of non-urban countryside is allocated to various "factory farming" cooperatives. The entire planet has been carefully engineered for the task of supporting tens of billions of Vegan lives. By day the cities impale the sky, reaching higher than the planet's highest mountains. By night, Muan Gwi's continents are a blaze of artificial light.

The Vegans of Muan Gwi are diverse and cosmopolitan. Even after thousands of years of interstellar civilization, there remain more distinct *tuhuir* (see p. 32) here than in the rest of the Vegan District put together. Most of the homeworld *tuhuir* are in favor of the current Vegan role in the Imperium, having suffered badly under Solomani occupation. A small (but sometimes vocal) minority objects to the Imperial presence, or indeed to any Vegan involvement with Humans.

There is a small Human minority resident on Muan Gwi (about 1% of the population). Most of these are associated with the planet's extensive Imperial infrastructure, including a very large naval base, the largest IISS way station in the sector, the administrative complex which acts as the capital of the Domain of Sol, and the residence of Archduke Adair himself. The

Human population contains a significant number of Solomani from the occupation era, but these were people who took no part in atrocities or exploitation of the Vegans. Pro-Solomani arguments are occasionally heard at the Archduke's court, but never from the Human residents of Muan Gwi.



VEGA SUBSECTOR NAVIGATIONAL DATA

HEX	NAME	PRIMARY	COMPANIONS	SGG	PB	ORBIT	MOONS
1711	Kasaan	G2 V	M8 V	0	2	1.24	1 small
1717	Muan Gwi	M2 V	-	2	2	0.21	-
1718	Hsuilzish	M1 V	-	5	0	0.42	-
1720	Vega	A0 V	-	0	2	4.35	-
1813	Wanish Tyo	M2 V	-	2	0	0.38	-
1814	Tsamis	K1 V	-	3	1	0.57	-
1816	Muan Issler	M7 V	-	4	3	0.17	-
1818	Ashtagz Tyui	G6 V	-	3	0	0.97	-
1911	Depot	M6 V	D	2	0	0.25	-
1912	Galishgu	M3 V	-	3	2	0.95*	-
1917	Asterr Tyui	M8 V	-	3	1	0.05	-
1919	Merganser	M3 V	-	0	0	0.21	-
2011	Andiirish	F5 V	-	2	9	4.80	-
2012	Cathay	M5 V	-	5	2	0.14	-
2015	Duikin Tyui	G0 V	-	3	2	6.25*	-
2017	Hariksiat	F0 V	M0 V	0	2	5.28	2 small
2114	Sithuan Hsarr	F5 V	M6 V	3	0	1.89	2 small
2118	Dzadwahtyan	K3 V	D	3	2	0.57	-
2213	Hsuarrdzan	F6 V	D	2	0	4.80	-
2218	Muan Kwoyen	G5 V	-	2	1	1.02	1 large
2312	Menclaus	K1 V	D	3	0	0.61	-
2319	Shulgiasu	G3 V	M1 V, M7 V	2	2	0.88	-
2411	Surt	M3 V	-	4	0	0.72	-
2414	Isseydo	K4 V	-	3	2	2.33*	-
2415	Shani	K1 V	-	5	0	3.15*	-
2418	Khalikkam	A2 V	-	4	0	4.75	1 large
2419	Zayeel	K0 V	M6 V	1	0	0.84	1 small
2420	Arrukir	M7 V	-	0	0	0.09	-

Key on p. 63.

1911 DEPOT (IMPERIAL)

The entire Depot system is devoted to an Imperial Naval Depot, and its population consists entirely of naval personnel. In peacetime, a depot's main function is research, the development and testing of new ship prototypes. In wartime, a depot can supply, maintain, and repair a large fraction of the Imperial fleet. Depot system is tied to the nearby starports of Khiirshag, Cathay, and (to a lesser extent) Muan Gwi. A very limited amount of civilian merchant traffic frequents the system, most of these ships chartered to bring consumer goods in for the naval personnel on station.

1917 ASTERR TYUI (VEGAN)

Asterr Tyui is a tide-locked world, huddling close to its dim red dwarf sun. Its atmosphere is unusually thick for its size, so thick that it has avoided freezing out on the night face. Most of the planet's water has frozen out, however, leaving the day face arid and windswept. Vegans find the day face quite comfortable, while Human settlers have tended to cluster in the moister strip of territory close to the twilight zone.

Asterr Tyui was one of the first interstellar colonies founded by the Vegans, as far back as -5800. Under the First Imperium, it was a busy way-station along the Rim Main, with many Vilani settlers. Relations between the Vegans and their Vilani overlords were almost cordial on this world. The local *tuhuir* bent more than most to the requirements of Vilani culture. Even so, Asterr Tyui accepted the Terran conquest of the First

Imperium. Its relations with Humaniti have been typical ever since: supporter of the Rule of Man, oppressed world under the Solomani, loyal member of the Third Imperium.

Asterr Tyui is particularly well-known as the home world of the *Aushenyo* (see p. 9). This *tuhuir* has several million members in residence on the world, most of them associated with the Scholium or the local branch of the University of Terra. Meanwhile, the Imperium maintains a Research Station (Gamma) on the planet. Unlike most Imperial Research Stations, this one is located on a densely populated world and its apparent purpose is widely known. Scientists at IRS Gamma are engaged in extensive genetic studies of millions of plant and animal species, especially sentient ones such as Humans and Vegans. Their purpose is not to study genetic engineering, but simply to catalog genetic variations. This enterprise involves genetic sampling of populations throughout the Imperium and beyond. From the compiled catalogs, scientists can draw conclusions about the historical evolution and migration of species. Since the station's work is clearly relevant to that of the *Aushenyo* (and since the Vegan *tuhuir* has its own extensive set of genetic records) the two institutions are closely linked.

The work at IRS Gamma is not particularly dangerous from a physical standpoint, but as with all historical research it is sometimes politically controversial. Disgruntled people have occasionally tried to sabotage the station or its work. Direct attacks on the station are rarely successful, since it has not only the usual Imperial security but assistance from *Aushenyo* protective forces. Researchers affiliated with the station have sometimes come to grief when traveling off-world, however.

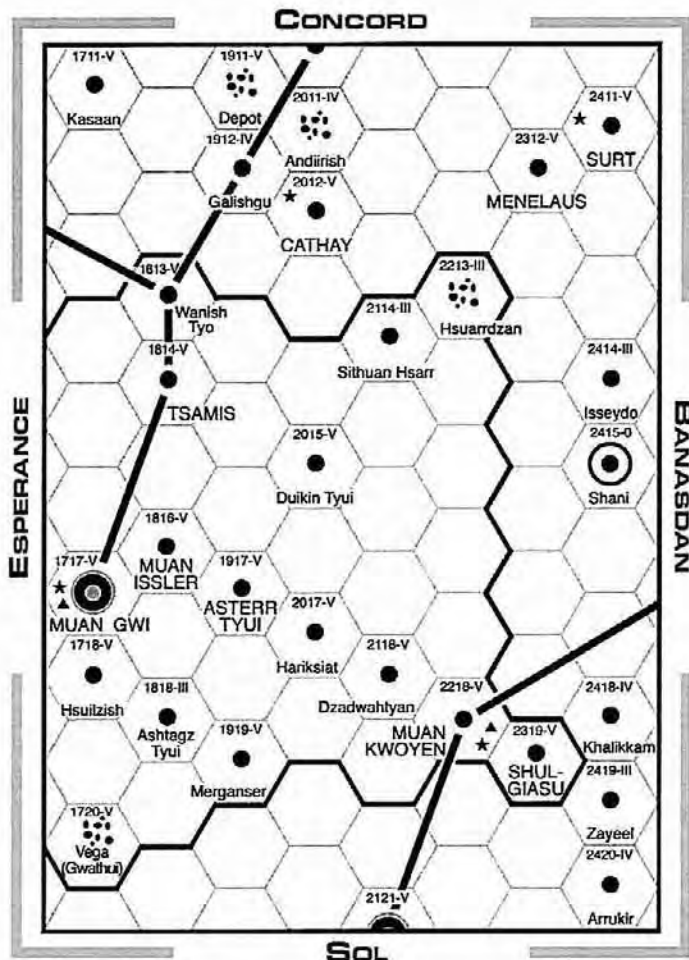
1919 MERGANSER (VEGAN)

Merganser is important for its resources, but is very inhospitable for Vegans. The majority of the planet's population is Human, either subjects of the Vegan Polity or hirelings of the Vegan government. Human contract labor can earn very good wages during the typical three-year contract on Merganser.

2012 CATHAY (IMPERIAL)

This world is actually called *Zhongguo* by its inhabitants, who are predominantly of Chinese-Vilani descent. Settlement under the First Imperium was heavy, and by -3000 the planet was one of the most populous Vilani worlds in the sector. Ter-ran settlement was ethnically mixed, but a coalition of Chinese business and state interests was the primary sponsor of civilian migration. After the fall of the Rule of Man, this Chinese segment of society became dominant in the course of several decades of bitter factional strife.

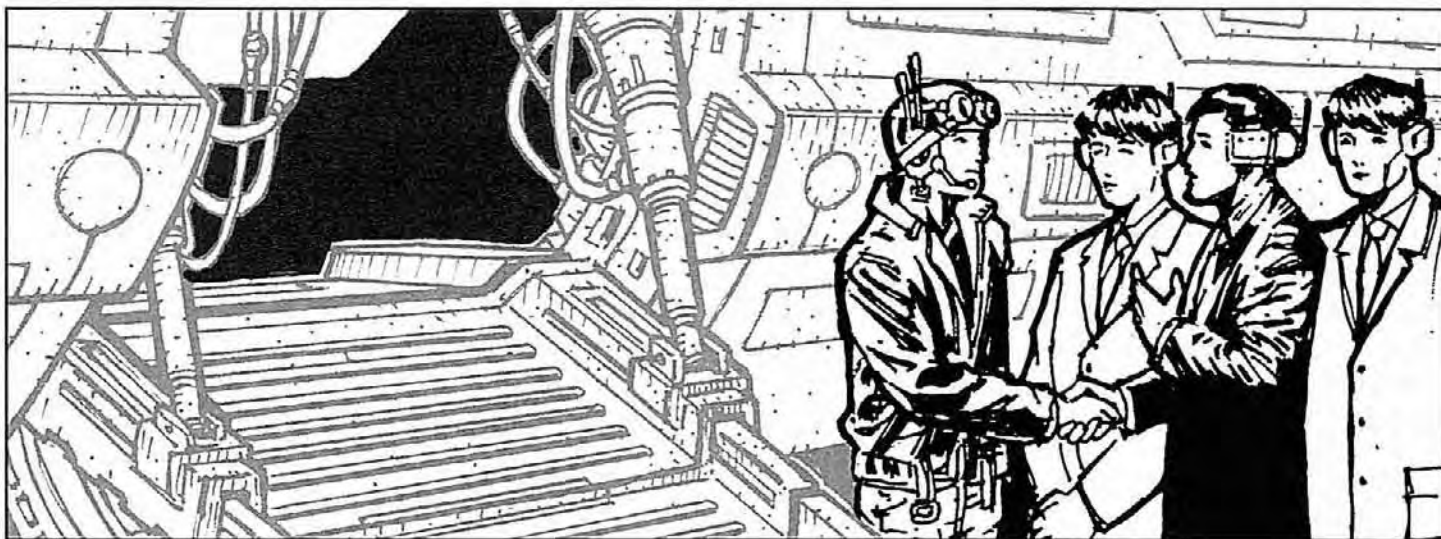
Although Cathay was located in space bordering both the Vegan Polity and the Easter Concord, the planet remained independent throughout the Long Night. Indeed, Cathayan society deliberately shut itself off from all outside contact for several centuries. During this period of isolation, a religious movement (the *tianhe* or "Divine Harmony" society) arose and spread across the planet. Like several schools of ancient Chinese philosophy, *tianhe* was concerned with the proper way to construct an ordered and sane society. Unlike those schools, the movement was openly religious, holding that the secret to right



conduct was understanding the dictates of a supreme being as encoded in the fabric of the physical universe. By -500 *tianhe* was central to all social life on the planet, and the dominance of Chinese culture was complete.

When Cathay came into contact with the Third Imperium, its first reaction was to shut the contact out as had been done for centuries before. Contact teams from the Easter Concord and the IISS persisted, however, and by about 250 it was obvious that these new foreigners were not going to go away. The adjustment was difficult, involving a slow, controlled opening of Cathayan society to external contact and trade. Cathay finally joined the Imperium in 593 and has been involved in interstellar society ever since.

Today, Cathay's rulers have struck a balance between cultural isolation and interstellar contact. Certain regions of the planet are defined as "Open Commercial Zones," and offworlders are free to live and move about within those zones. The rest of the planet is off-limits to foreigners, and anyone violating the isolation laws is subject to forcible arrest and deportation. The ruling regime is politely but firmly resistant to any suggestion that local laws or customs should be changed. Many Cathayan citizens leave the planet for Imperial or other service, and they often do quite well, but they usually exhibit a calm reserve that hides what they think of Imperial society. Local law forbids Cathayan citizens from accepting Imperial noble titles unless they take up residence in the commercial zones (or leave the planet entirely). As a result, an unusually high proportion of the planet's Imperial nobles are of foreign descent.



Cathay is governed by an elaborate bureaucracy, staffed by citizens who have mastered the precepts of *tianhe*. Supreme power is held by the Celestial Convocation, a group of career bureaucrats who hold both sacred and secular authority. The convocation meets in a city which is forbidden to foreigners, and deals with the Imperium only through intermediaries. Local law is very strict. The government recognizes no individual rights, except for the right to operate within society in accordance with the principles of *tianhe*. Punishments for "unruly" behavior can be quite harsh. Offworlders are allowed more latitude, as long as they remain within their assigned zones.

Cathay was never an enthusiastic supporter of the Solomani Movement, given its cultural isolationism and the Vilani elements in its population. Pro-Solomani agitation exists on the planet, but is mostly confined to those ethnic minorities who have not accepted *tianhe* or other aspects of Chinese culture. A more serious social problem exists in the Open Commercial Zones, where many Cathayans have spent generations in contact with Imperial society. Quiet opposition to the dominant ideology is spreading, and a movement is under way to create a secular and more democratic government.

Rumor has it that the Count of Cathay is supporting the secular movement, but there is no proof of this. If the rumors turned out to be true, it would likely cause serious trouble for relations between Cathay and the Imperium.

2319 SHULGIASU (VEGAN)

Shulgiasu has a long and glorious history. It has been continuously inhabited for over 5,500 years. Under the First Imperium it was the sector capital for over 1,600 years, the most densely populated Human world of the sector, and the center of Vilani culture on the Rim. Terran immigration was significant after the Ninth Interstellar War, but the Vilani population was never completely assimilated. Vilani language and culture remain important on Shulgiasu even today.

During the Long Night, Shulgiasu established strong ties with the Vegan Polity, especially the nearby world of Muan Kwoyen. This alliance shielded Shulgiasu from the worst effects of the Long Night, and helped keep interstellar trade active in the region. By about -800 Shulgiasu was an important

intermediary between the Vegans and nearby Human worlds such as Lagash, Ganesh, and Banasdan. Shulgiasu never approached the establishment of a "pocket empire" of its own. Even so, its trade connections did much to assist in the rebirth of interstellar civilization in the sector.

With its Vegan ties and strongly Vilani culture, Shulgiasu suffered fierce oppression during Solomani rule. Many monuments and relics of the First Imperium were destroyed by the Movement. After the Imperium returned, Shulgiasu renewed its ties to the Vegans, and indeed in 1036 it petitioned to be joined to the Vegan Autonomous Region. The Vegans were considered even less likely than the Imperium to interfere with local affairs, and in any case after the Solomani experience the people of Shulgiasu were ready to try a non-Human government.

The relationship has been mutually beneficial. Under Vegan rule, the Human citizens of Shulgiasu are considered members of a single *tuhuir*. Vegans of the Guardian *tuhuir* are in nominal control of the star system's government, but they delegate much of their authority to a civil-service bureaucracy staffed by Humans. Few Vegans spend much time on Shulgiasu in any case, as its gravity and climate are acutely uncomfortable for them. The resulting government is quite non-intrusive, and allows local institutions almost unlimited scope for their own activities. The system seems to work well, and has fostered considerable prosperity in the region.

Shulgiasu is currently engaged in a long-term project to restore the Vilani cultural heritage lost during Solomani rule. Public and private institutions alike are spending freely to rebuild monuments and patronize traditional art forms. This work involves sending agents (some of them freelance) all over the sector to recover cultural artifacts from pre-Solomani times. Even some Solomani citizens of Shulgiasu are enthusiastic about this project, setting aside their own historical role to embrace planetary patriotism.

2418 KHALIKKAM (IMPERIAL)

Khalikkam is a mature colony, established early in the Solomani period by the government of Ganesh (across the border into the Banasdan subsector). There is an active but nonviolent independence movement. Negotiations are moving very slowly, since Ganesh is unwilling to sever ties.

BANASDAN SUBSECTOR

The Banasdan subsector has done quite well since the restoration of Imperial rule. Since the Rim War, the dukes of Banasdan have usually proven to be savvy diplomats and adept economists. Under their guidance, the Imperium has smoothed away most pro-Solomani unrest and brought prosperity to the region.

The gravest difficulty was one of communications, with the bulk of the subsector having to communicate with the capital by way of a very indirect Xboat route. The recent establishment of a direct connection between Banasdan and Pajang has done much to make the local Imperial administration substantially more effective.

The current Duke of Banasdan is William Prasad hault-Tagore. His ancestor, Michael Tagore, was president of Banasdan at the climax of the Solomani Rim War. Tagore was the political leader most responsible for bringing Banasdan under Imperial authority, and was rewarded with the titles of Marquis and then Duke.

The present Duke is a relatively young man, who was torn from a promising career as an engineer by the untimely death of his elder brother in an air/raft accident. He is a political moderate and a strong supporter of Archduke Adair, but his lack of experience and diplomatic skills has often caused trouble for his administration.

He faces considerable opposition within his own demesne, led by the radical Count of Nisinasha. These opponents hope to discredit the Duke and have him stripped of his title.

2720 NYARLATHOTEP (IMPERIAL)

The government of Aqilat maintains a scientific outpost in this asteroid belt. The belt is otherwise nearly worthless from an economic standpoint.

2822 NISINASHA (IMPERIAL)

Physically, Nisinasha is a large gas-giant moon which strongly resembles Easter (see pp. 74-75). As a result of tidal interactions, its solid body has set into an ellipsoidal shape, with the long axis of the ellipsoid pointing through its gas-giant primary. The atmosphere and oceans of the moon hold a more spherical shape. As a result, air pressure and the presence of water vary from point to point on Nisinasha's surface. The two bands of habitable territory on Nisinasha are somewhat narrower, cooler, and more arid than their counterparts on Easter.

Nisinasha was an important world during First Imperium times, and Terran settlement never managed to wholly submerge Vilani culture. At first the Solomani Party failed to gain much local influence, so by 800 the Solomani Autonomous Region government was deliberately encouraging radical Solomani from the Imperial core to settle on Nisinasha. The few Imperial noble houses still in residence either left or died out. Finally, in 872 Count Ganidiirsi Gamarkhiddun abandoned the planet to take up his seat in the Imperial Moot. At once, the radical immigrants mounted a violent coup with the open support of the new Solomani Confederation.

BANASDAN SUBSECTOR WORLDS

HEX	NAME	ALLEGIANCE	ZONE	STARPORT	DIAMETER	GRAVITY	HYDROGRAPHIC %		POPULATION	CR	WTN			
							ATMOSPHERE	CLIMATE		GOV TYPE	TL			
2513	Dipushka	Imp	Green	V	6,000	0.71	Standard	18%	Hot	14 billion	Dictator	5	11	6.0
2514	Mandrake	Imp	Green	V	2,900	0.46	Standard	61%	Very Cold	22 billion	Dictator	6	11	6.0
2516	Urizen	Imp	Green	III	8,000	1.02	Corrosive	83%	Warm	27,000	Oligarch	0	10	3.0
2517	Murphy	Imp	Green	V	2,800	0.33	Thin (T)	40%	Very Cold	9.4 billion	Dictator	6	11	5.5
2518	Ganesh	Imp	Green	V-S	7,100	0.87	Standard	59%	Tropical	23 billion	Techno	4	11	6.0
2612	Mimiis	Imp	Green	IV	2,100	0.26	None	None	Torrid	36 million	Merit	6	11	4.5
2617	Imkhamash	Imp	Green	V	2,200	0.31	Thin	51%	Frigid	110 million	Merit	6	11	5.0
2618	Catania	Imp	Green	V	5,300	0.58	Standard	84%	Cool	2.0 billion	Merit	6	12	6.0
2713	Khugi	Imp	Green	0	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Torrid	None	None	0	0	0.0
2714	Pinnashdug	Imp	Green	IV	4,300	0.55	Standard (T)	84%	Warm	860 million	Merit	5	10	5.0
2720	Nyarlahotep	Imp	Green	III	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Torrid	670	Captive	4	11	3.0
2812	Nisinasha	Imp	Green	V-W	9,100	1.29	Variable	58%	Cool	7.6 billion	Merit	4	11	5.5
2816	Immir	Imp	Green	III	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Torrid	260,000	Oligarch	0	9	3.5
2820	Aqilat	Imp	Green	IV	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Torrid	9.4 million	Oligarch	0	11	4.0
2911	Sathyos	Imp	Green	V	4,400	0.59	Standard (T)	93%	Normal	71 million	AthDem	4	11	5.0
2912	Rild	Imp	Red	0	10,100	1.27	Corrosive	69%	Frozen	76 million	Multiple	2	9	1.0
2913	Newcomb	Imp	Green	II	4,200	0.44	Thin (T)	12%	Cold	57,000	RepDem	2	6	2.5
2915	Pajang	Imp	Green	V-N	3,300	0.51	Standard (T)	30%	Chilly	17 million	Multiple	1	11	5.0
2918	Noricum	Imp	Amber	V-N	3,400	0.53	Dense	95%	Warm	22 million	Oligarch	6	12	5.0
2920	Banasdan	Imp (*)	Green	V	6,000	0.68	Thin	32%	Normal	30 billion	RepDem	2	12	6.5
3011	Ariel	Imp	Green	IV	5,100	0.52	Trace	40%	Frigid	88 million	Oligarch	3	11	4.5
3015	Uku	Imp	Amber	IV	6,100	0.71	Very Thin	60%	Normal	83 million	Bureau	2	11	4.5
3017	Altiplano	Imp	Green	V	8,400	1.19	Very Dense	77%	Hot	220 million	Captive	2	11	5.0
3113	Sashingun	Imp	Green	V	6,400	0.74	Thin	30%	Normal	450 million	Captive	3	10	5.0
3213	Ludovic	Imp	Amber	V	6,000	0.79	Standard	54%	Normal	8.7 billion	Multiple	4	10	5.5
3217	Cephesa	Imp	Green	IV	2,000	0.15	Very Thin (T)	19%	Very Cold	66,000	Oligarch	1	12	4.0
3218	Lakamsal	Imp	Green	III	5,100	0.56	Thin (T)	45%	Normal	55 million	Merit	4	9	4.5
3219	Onathy	Imp	Green	III	4,900	0.56	Very Thin (T)	9%	Cool	770 million	Dictator	4	11	4.5

Key on pp. 62-63.

The radicals lacked the support of the general populace, so they were forced to hold onto power through brutal police-state methods. The resulting reign of terror lasted for decades and has left lasting scars on Nisinashan society.

During the Solomani Rim War, the people of Nisinasha erupted into violent revolt and welcomed Imperial forces as liberators. The world gained self-rule very quickly, and for a time was under consideration as the new subsector capital. When Banasdan was named instead, it was the starting point for a rivalry that continues to the present day. The current Count and Marchioness are first cousins, both members of the ancient Gamarkhiddun clan. Their family has held sovereign authority on Nisinasha since before it joined the Third Imperium, and they regard the dukes of Banasdan as barbarian upstarts. Their confrontational stance toward the Solomani Movement is only one of several areas in which they pursue their political vendetta against Duke hault-Tagore.

Lingering anti-Solomani sentiments aside, the Nisinashans have done much to rebuild their world. Sitting on the Rim Main, Nisinasha handles a great deal of offworld trade. Local entrepreneurs have used their profits to invest heavily in infrastructure and technological development.

Meanwhile, the College of Administrative Sciences at the University of Nisinasha is renowned throughout the sector for the quality of its graduates. Most alumni enter the Nisinashan civil-service system, which is a model of responsiveness and efficiency.



2913 NEWCOMB (IMPERIAL)

Newcomb is a marginally habitable world, most of which is empty. At one time there was an extensive uranium-mining operation owned by the Orion Metallurgy Corporation, but that company went out of business over a century ago. The mine has since been taken over by Imperial authorities, who use it as a prison camp for serious (but non-political) crimes. Inmates suffer hard labor under harsh conditions. The prison has a very bad reputation, as its isolated location promotes corruption on the part of the staff.

2918 NORICUM (IMPERIAL)

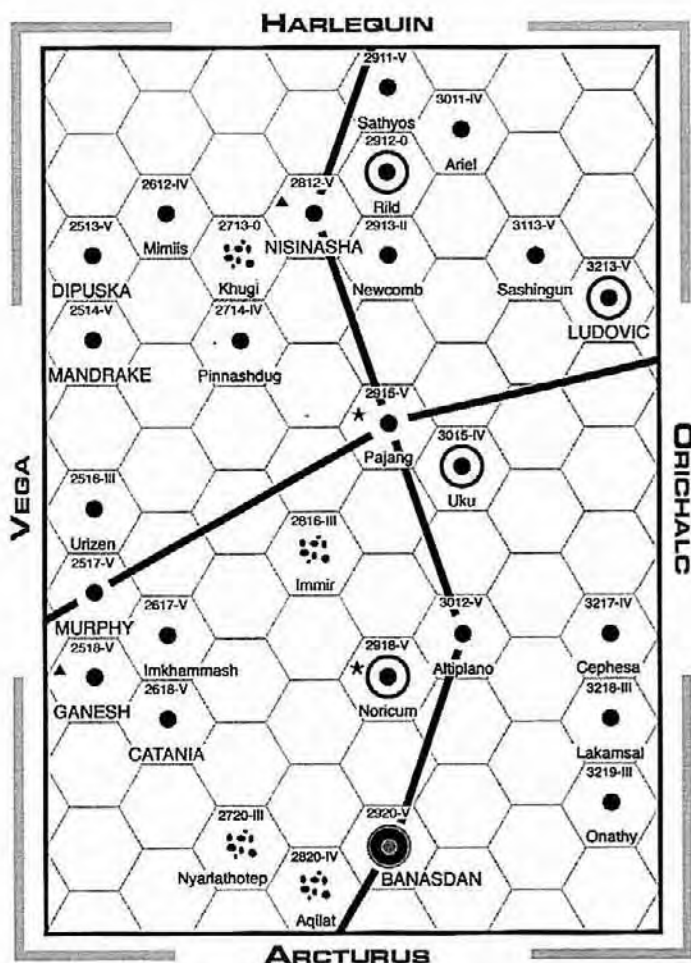
Due to its combination of very low gravity and dense atmosphere, Noricum has an amazingly rich variety of aerial life. The planet has been designated an Amber Zone at the request of the local government, ostensibly to restrict industrial development and protect the native ecology.

The rating also reflects the extreme disdain natives of Noricum hold for all offworlders. This contempt rarely expresses itself in violence, but it often leads to harassment.

2920 BANASDAN (IMPERIAL, SUBSECTOR CAPITAL)

Like most of the worlds in the rimward half of the subsector, Banasdan was only thinly settled by the Vilani. Terran colonists came in large numbers after the Ninth Interstellar War, absorbing the world's small retinue of First Imperium citizens. The first Terran settlers were mostly veterans of the wars against the Vilani, bringing their families to carve out a new world far from the political squabbles of old Terra.

They were very ethnically diverse, accustomed to military discipline, and well practiced at working together. As a result, the society they built was a healthy one: pragmatic, hard-working, and progressive.



The independent Republic of Banasdan was founded about -1800, just as the Long Night was beginning to settle in. Although lacking many of the advantages of worlds like Easter or old Terra, Banasdan managed to retain a TL9 economy and a few starships.

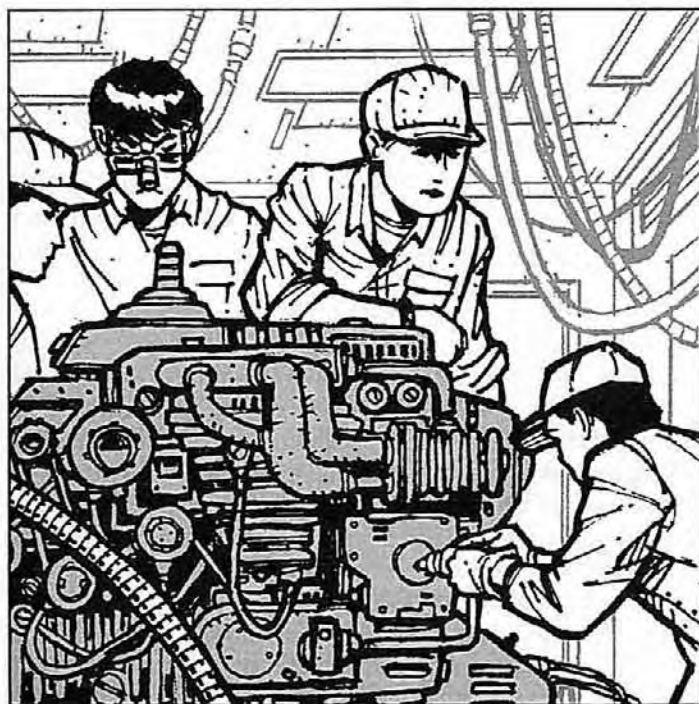
With these, it established the Arcturus Federation, a small "pocket empire" stretching from Altiplano to Anenerkuk. Trade continued on a small scale throughout the Long Night, and sporadic contact with the Vegans was maintained.

Despite losses, the core of the Federation survived to join the Imperium in 583. Today, Banasdan still holds Altiplano and the nearby Arcturus Belt as protectorates, and the nominally independent government of Aquilat-Nyarlahotep is dominated by Banasdan commercial interests. Despite its distaste for multi-world alliances within its own borders, the Third Imperium has avoided overt measures and thus far failed to dismantle the Federation.

Living conditions on Banasdan are difficult, despite the planet's thriving industrial economy and high technological base. The surface of the planet is only barely habitable, so the vast majority of the planet's population huddles in sealed arcologies or underground cities.

Clean water and even breathable air are scarce enough to be covered by a tax levied on all citizens. The proceeds go to maintain life-support equipment, managed by various large corporations under contract to the planetary government. Living space is also at a premium.

In contrast, weapons and items of personal equipment are quite inexpensive on Banasdan. Computer technology is also widespread, with free access to an extensive array of information services available for all citizens. Banasdan is known for its literary and dramatic arts, particularly those dependent on "virtual reality" technology. Many citizens compensate for their drab and cramped surroundings by enjoying interactive holodramas.



BANASDAN SUBSECTOR NAVIGATIONAL DATA

HEX	NAME	PRIMARY	COMPANIONS	SGG	PB	ORBIT	MOONS
2513	Dipuska	K5 V	D	0	2	0.39	-
2514	Mandrake	M8 V	-	3	1	0.07	-
2516	Urizen	G2 V	D	3	2	1.10	3 small
2517	Murphy	K0 V	M1 V	2	0	1.03	-
2518	Ganesh	M8 V	-	0	1	0.04	-
2612	Mimiis	A6 V	K9 V	2	1	2.16	-
2617	Imkhammash	M0 V	-	3	1	1.40*	-
2618	Catania	M3 V	-	1	0	0.29	-
2713	Khugi	G8 III	K2 V	0	2	4.38	-
2714	Pinnashdug	M0 V	-	2	2	0.39	-
2720	Nyarlahotep	K2 III	-	3	2	6.50	-
2812	Nisinasha	G1 V	-	4	0	1.06*	-
2816	Immir	K2 III	-	2	0	5.90	-
2820	Aqilat	K0 III	-	1	1	10.4	-
2911	Sathyos	G0 V	M3 V	4	3	1.21	1 small
2912	Rild	M7 V	-	2	2	0.11	-
2913	Newcomb	K1 V	M4 V	2	0	0.83	1 small
2915	Pajang	M8 V	D, D	0	1	0.06	-
2918	Noricum	M8 V	-	2	0	0.06	-
2920	Banasdan	M6 V	D	3	2	0.14	-
3011	Ariel	M0 V	M8 V	5	0	0.90	1 small
3015	Uku	M8 V	D	3	1	0.04	-
3017	Altiplano	M4 V	-	5	1	0.50	-
3113	Sashingun	M7 V	D	0	2	0.09	-
3213	Ludovic	M3 V	M4 V	4	0	0.27	-
3217	Cephesa	F1 V	-	2	0	3.55	1 large
3218	Lakamsal	F7 V	M2 V	4	0	1.55	1 small
3219	Onathy	G3 V	M0 V	0	0	1.18	-

Key on p. 63.

Pro-Solomani sentiment has always been rather weak on Banasdan. During the Solomani Rim War the planet declared for the Imperium early, and was besieged for a time by Confederation forces. As a result, once the war was over the Imperium eventually designated Banasdan as subsector capital despite its non-central location.

Today Banasdan is a steadfastly Imperial world, although the Solomani Party has a small but persistent minority in the planetary Congress.

3017 ALTIPLANO (IMPERIAL)

Altiplano's atmosphere is too hot and dense to breathe at sea level. In the upper slopes of the planet's mountain ranges, however, the air becomes cool and thin enough for comfort. Some 98% of the planet's population lives above the 2,000-yard line.

Altiplano was colonized at about the same time as Banasdan, and was an integral part of the Arcturus Federation. When the federation was dissolved upon Banasdan's entry into the Imperium, the people of Altiplano chose through a plebiscite to remain part of Banasdan's federal republic.

The two worlds are significantly different in culture, but the relationship has remained cordial.

3113 SASHINGUN (IMPERIAL)

Sashingun is a member state within the Assembly of Nations of nearby Ludovic. It governs its own internal dealings, but defers to the authority of the assembly in interstellar affairs.

ALBADAWI SUBSECTOR WORLDS

HEX	NAME	ALLEGIANCE	ZONE	STARPORT	DIAMETER	GRAVITY	HYDROGRAPHIC %		CLIMATE	POPULATION	GOV TYPE	CR	TL	WTN
0121	Oz	Imp	Green	V	1,400	0.29	Thin	32%	Frigid	900 million	Merit	4	12	5.5
0123	Jarslav	Imp	Green	V-N	8,100	1.11	Dense	72%	Normal	8.7 billion	Dictator	6	11	5.5
0125	Kishakhpap	Imp	Green	0	3,800	0.40	Trace	None	Frozen	None	None	0	0	0.0
0126	Beal	Imp	Green	V-N	4,300	0.51	Thin	68%	Warm	24 million	Oligarch	6	12	5.0
0224	Shaalgar	Imp	Green	V	6,200	0.71	Standard	60%	Cool	16 million	Military	6	9	5.0
0226	Limerick	Imp	Green	III	4,900	0.61	Standard (T)	92%	Warm	9.7 million	Oligarch	2	9	4.0
0230	Alizarin	Sol	Green	V	4,200	0.60	Standard	57%	Normal	8.6 billion	Merit	4	10	5.5
0326	Eneldun	Imp	Green	V	2,900	0.20	Trace	42%	Frigid	1.3 billion	Merit	6	11	5.5
0330	Krypton	Sol	Green	V-N	8,800	1.18	Exotic	41%	Tropical	4.2 billion	Dictator	6	10	5.5
0424	Gustav	Imp	Green	IV	7,300	0.98	Dense (T)	82%	Warm	760,000	Oligarch	2	11	4.0
0426	Eyck	Imp	Green	IV	1,400	0.13	Very Thin	None	Hot	120 million	Multiple	6	11	5.0
0524	Irashdaa	Imp	Green	V-S	5,800	0.86	Dense	89%	Warm	540 million	Techno	5	12	5.5
0527	Basse Terre	Imp	Green	V	6,000	0.77	Standard	92%	Normal	8.1 billion	Dictator	6	11	5.5
0528	Kidashi	Imp	Amber	V-N	4,000	0.60	Thin	68%	Cold	34 billion	Military	6	11	6.0
0624	York	Imp	Green	III	8,100	1.39	Exotic	22%	Chilly	500	Captive	2	12	3.0
0626	Albrecht	Imp	Green	IV	6,900	0.87	Thin (T)	18%	Hot	92 million	RepDem	4	11	4.5
0628	Bajavanang	Imp	Green	V	5,100	0.84	Dense	87%	Tropical	480 million	Oligarch	6	11	5.0
0721	Akhamin	Imp	Green	IV	5,900	0.65	Standard	21%	Warm	56 million	Captive	3	10	4.5
0722	Gaea	Imp (*)	Green	V	8,900	1.16	Dense	61%	Normal	3.0 billion	Merit	4	11	5.5
0723	Tonopah	Imp	Green	V	8,000	1.13	Standard	63%	Warm	26 billion	Theo	6	10	6.0
0726	Halo	Imp	Green	III	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Torrid	3.3 million	Multiple	6	10	4.0
0729	Edaazun	Imp	Green	V-N	4,300	0.64	Standard	95%	Cold	7.5 billion	Military	6	11	5.5
0822	Colmar	Imp	Green	IV	3,900	0.31	Very Thin (T)	70%	Frigid	730 million	Oligarch	1	9	5.0
0823	Shiransar	Imp	Green	IV	9,900	1.47	Exotic	52%	Normal	68,000	Techno	2	10	3.5
0824	Ranulf	Imp	Green	IV	6,000	0.70	Thin (T)	22%	Cool	1.2 billion	Oligarch	6	10	5.5
0825	Duriim	Imp	Green	V-N	4,000	0.68	Dense	79%	Cool	12 billion	Dictator	4	10	6.0
0826	Munilgan	Imp	Green	V	5,300	0.54	Thin	39%	Cold	3.3 billion	Bureau	6	10	5.5

Key on pp. 62-63.

ALBADAWI SUBSECTOR

This subsector is named after the Terran Admiral of the Eighth Interstellar War who conquered the region from the Vilani Empire (see sidebar, p. 50). The subsector has a long-established Vilani population, although large numbers of Terran immigrants arrived after the conquest. The present-day population is mostly of mixed or pure Solomani descent.

The subsector economy suffered badly during the Solomani Rim War, as resources were pulled away to support the Solomani war effort. The Imperium has done little to develop the region, being to a large degree hampered by the need to maintain military rule on several key worlds. As a result, pro-Solomani sympathies remain strong on many worlds of the subsector.

The Duchess of Albadawi is Irena Stephanos, a member of the prominent Stephanos family of Gaea. She holds two distinct claims to her title. The then-head of the Stephanos clan was a leader of the Gaean revolt against the Solomani during the Rim War, and was rewarded with the duchy by the Emperor Gavin. Meanwhile, on her mother's side Irena is descended from the last pre-Solomani Duke of Albadawi; it should be noted that this Duke's sole heir forfeited the title in 735 by joining the Solomani Movement.

In a sense, Duchess Stephanos is particularly well-placed to mediate between the various factions within her demesne. Unfortunately, despite her administrative skills, she has not proven to be a capable diplomat, and unrest within the subsector has increased during her tenure. Solomani-sympathizing upheavals are on the upswing.

0524 IRASHDAA (IMPERIAL)

Irashdaa was originally a Vilani colony, but came under Terran control along with the rest of the subsector. The Vilani population was never completely submerged by Terran immigration, but Vilani culture was almost entirely lost. Today, Irashdaan culture is almost entirely Solomani in nature, aside from an unusually large number of Vilani loan words in the local dialect of Galanglic. The planet supported the Solomani Cause with initial enthusiasm, but an episode of police-state brutality and racial violence around 960 soured the relationship. Due to lingering social and political problems, Irashdaa remained under Imperial military rule for over a century. Today, however, it is considered a healthy and loyal member of the Imperium.

Irashdaan society is unusually easygoing. The pace of local life is leisurely, with plans and schedules always subject to a certain amount of "slippage." The usual citizen's daily cycle involves 8-12 hours of sleep, followed by a work period of 3-4 hours, an extended mealtime and rest period of about three hours, another 3-4 hour work period, and then 8-10 hours of leisure time. All of these periods are extremely flexible and subject to change on a whim. This flexibility of schedule is partially due to the planet's tide-locked nature, which makes consistent notions of "day" and "night" irrelevant.

Meanwhile, about 30% of the planet's population falls into a "leisure class." The planetary government effectively guarantees a minimum income for all citizens, enough to provide a simple middle-class lifestyle. Those with no further ambitions simply draw this stipend and have no fixed job. Others pursue part-time, volunteer, or creative work, relying on the government stipend to backstop their personal income.

On most worlds, this extremely generous welfare system would fail, but Irashdaa's resource base and high-tech economy are sufficient to support it. Irashdaan society regards leisure as an inalienable right of civilized beings, and is willing to accept the drain on the economy caused by a large class of unproductive individuals. There are also noticeable benefits. Irashdaan society is almost free of stress-related psychological disorders, it never lacks for volunteer labor in times of crisis, and it produces more than its share of artists, writers, and musicians. Finally, Irashdaa has a booming tourist trade, as well-heeled visitors come from parsecs around to appreciate the fine art of Irashdaan leisure.

Irashdaa is a focus for the Authentic Movement (see sidebar, pp. 60-61) in this subsector. Many of its citizens are investigating their ancestral cultures and adopting ancient folkways. In particular, this is leading to a revival of the Vilani language and some First Imperium traditions.

0528 KIDASHI (IMPERIAL)

Kidashi is the largest moon of the gas giant Umgarsaam, itself the largest planet associated with the system's red dwarf primary. Kidashi is tidally locked to Umgarsaam, but the gas giant's orbit is close enough to provide the moon's entire surface with significant heat from the primary star. The moon therefore retains a thin atmosphere and substantial oceans, although most of the water is covered by permanent pack ice.

Kidashi was first settled very late in the First Imperium's colonizing period, sometime around -3900. Since the moon was neither hospitable nor particularly rich in resources, the Vilani population was never very large. The system was opened up to Terran settlement after the Eighth Interstellar War, and by -2200 the original Vilani population had been almost completely absorbed. Kidashi has been ethnically Solomani ever since.

Kidashi suffered greatly during the Long Night. The unified world government never fragmented, but there was a long period of retrenchment during which the local economy fell back to about TL7. New folkways, political systems, and religious beliefs emerged during the long period of isolation. In particular, the settlement's origins on Terra became understood more as glorious myth than as historical fact. When traders from the Old Earth Union arrived about 250, they were welcomed with almost religious fervor. It was probably inevitable that Kidashi would enthusiastically support the Solomani Cause.

Kidashi system was developed rapidly during the Solomani period, with mining operations in the system's abundant planetoid belts feeding high-technology industries on and around Kidashi itself. By 900 Kidashi had the most extensive shipyard facilities in the subsector. During the Solomani Rim War it was a primary shipyard and supply depot for the Confederation Navy, so that the system was a major objective for the Imperium in the last stages of the war. Indeed, the Siege of Kidashi would have been heralded as a major campaign, had the invasion of Terra not been happening at the same time. Civilian casualties numbered in the tens of millions, and bitterness against the Imperium still remains strong.

Kidashi remains under Imperial military rule. The extensive shipyards are now part of an Imperial Naval Base, one of the

largest in the sector. Meanwhile, Kidashi itself is occupied by more than 2 million Imperial Army soldiers. Military law enforcement is particularly strict, in the face of continuing resistance from the civilian population. Violent terrorism still occurs from time to time, and nonviolent forms of resistance (strikes, demonstrations, simple non-cooperation) are almost constant.

Meanwhile, Kidashi is one of the primary transfer points for merchant traffic crossing the Solomani border. Many a tramp freighter passing in either direction has concealed spies, defectors, weapons, or worse. Needless to say, this does nothing to reduce tensions in the system.

0624 YORK (IMPERIAL)

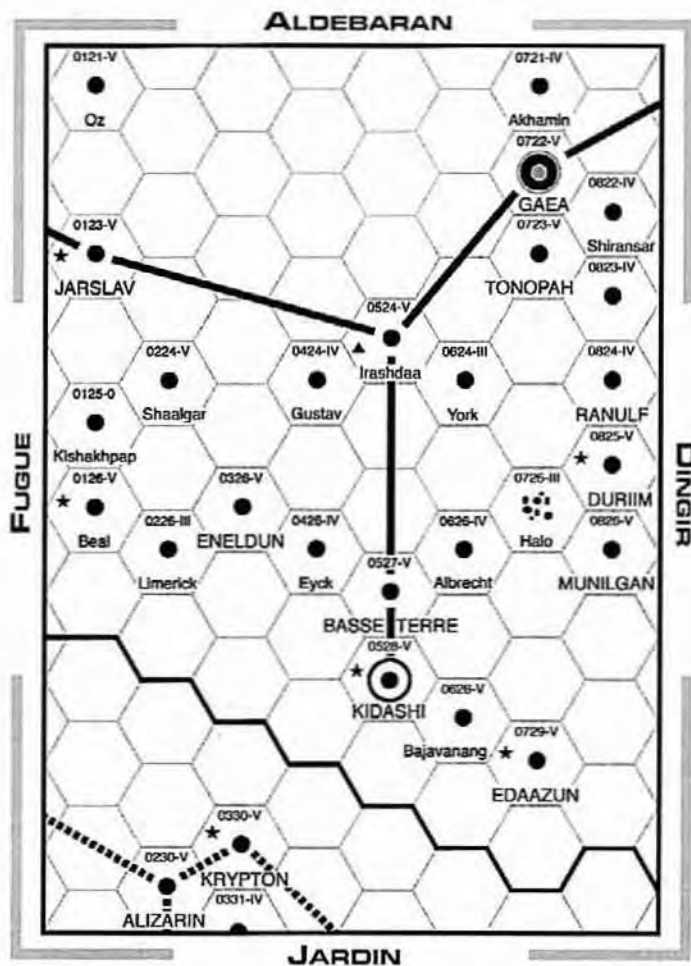
York is occupied by a scientific outpost, jointly administered by the IISS and the University of Irashdaa.

0721 AKHAMIN (IMPERIAL)

Akhamin is a protectorate governed from nearby Tonopah.

0722 GAEA (IMPERIAL, SUBSECTOR CAPITAL)

The world once named Apishlun has a unique array of native life forms, distinctive not so much as individual species but as an integrated whole: About -3900, the first Vilani colonists noted that their new world was unusually *welcoming*.



ALBADAWI SUBSECTOR NAVIGATIONAL DATA

HEX	NAME	PRIMARY	COMPANIONS	SG	PB	ORBIT	MOONS
0121	Oz	M3 V	M4 V	3	1	0.91*	-
0123	Jarslav	F8 V	-	3	2	1.53	2 large
0125	Kishakhpap	F9 V	-	4	0	1.75	3 small
0126	Beal	M7 V	M8 V	2	2	0.06	-
0224	Shaalgar	M2 V	M7 V	0	0	0.33	-
0226	Limerick	K2 V	-	4	0	0.53	-
0230	Alizarin	M5 V	M8 V	0	0	0.12	-
0326	Eneldun	M1 V	-	0	2	1.18	-
0330	Krypton	F8 V	-	4	1	1.38	1 large
0424	Gustav	M2 V	D	3	0	0.30	-
0426	Eyck	F4 V	-	2	0	1.38	-
0524	Irashdaa	M2 V	M8 V	3	1	0.32	-
0527	Basse Terre	M1 V	-	3	2	0.31	-
0528	Kidashi	M0 V	-	4	2	0.44*	-
0624	York	F6 V	-	3	2	1.92	1 large
0626	Albrecht	G3 V	D	3	0	0.92	1 small
0628	Bajavanang	M0 V	M8 V	5	0	0.38	-
0721	Akhamin	M7 V	D	3	0	0.11	-
0722	Gaea	K1 V	-	3	0	0.61	-
0723	Tonopah	F5 V	-	3	2	1.57	1 large
0726	Halo	F2 V	-	5	3	1.15	-
0729	Edaazun	K5 V	M4 V	0	2	0.52	-
0822	Colmar	F2 V	M4 V	2	0	11.6*	-
0823	Shiransar	M7 V	D	4	1	0.10	-
0824	Ranulf	G1 V	M2 V	1	0	1.33	2 small
0825	Durim	A2 V	M8 V	0	0	7.65	-
0826	Munilgan	K2 V	M3 V	2	2	0.73	-

Key on p. 63.

Local animals practically domesticated themselves, and planet species rapidly evolved seeds or fruit that were Human-edible. Imported animal and plant species found it easy to survive, as the native life forms integrated them into local ecosystems. The native life also adapted to the presence of mining or industrial facilities, shrugging off pollution or habitat destruction in mere years instead of decades or centuries.

The Vilani, never the best biologists, were at a loss to explain Apishlun's ecological phenomena. After the Terran conquest, scientists discovered that the local biosphere is orders of magnitude more complex than that of most Earthlike worlds. In a sense, the planet's ecosphere as a whole exhibits "intelligent" powers of adaptation even without a native sentient species to direct it. The first Terran settlers renamed the planet Gaea, in recognition of the "world-mind" they recognized around them. Today, the biosphere remains diverse and vigorous despite millennia of Human habitation.

Apishlun was very densely populated for a First Imperium frontier world. Terran immigration changed the world's demographics, but unlike most of its neighbors Gaea never became a majority-Solomani world. Indeed, as so many divergent ethnic groups migrated from Terra they found that the common Vilani culture was a kind of unifying influence. As a result, the local dialect of Galanglic is strongly influenced by Old Vilani, and many local folkways can be traced back to the First Imperium. Meanwhile, the local culture involves a pseudo-religious reverence for the Gaeian biosphere.

These facets of local society placed Gaea in an awkward position during the Solomani period. The government imposed by the Movement was particularly intrusive in its pursuit of

racial purity and industrial development. In reaction, Gaea rebelled during the Rim War, supporting Imperial forces as soon as they reached the area. Gaea was made subsector capital upon its liberation in 1001. Today, Gaea is probably the most pro-Imperial world in the subsector, the more so since it has been little affected by the region's economic problems.

0723 TONOPAH (IMPERIAL)

Originally an important Vilani world (then named Shikashu), Tonopah was settled after the Eighth Interstellar War by a mixed group of North American colonists. Among these was a large contingent from the so-called "Mormon" religious sect, hoping to find a refuge from what they considered the increasingly secular society of Terra.

When the Long Night came, Tonopah suffered both the loss of interstellar trade and a series of raids by the Reaver's Alliance (see p. 52). Civilization might have fallen, except for the presence of the Mormon element in society. The sect's teachings had always stressed hard work, community, and "provident living," so the Mormons were better able than any of their neighbors to survive and rebuild. By about -1100, when Tonopah joined the new Dingir League, the Church organization had effectively become the planetary government. Many citizens remained "Gentiles" or non-believers (and many remain so to the present day), but no one had a workable alternative to the Church's practical leadership.

Sometime during this period, Tonopah was settled by a large number of Aslan *ihatei*. The settlement was marked by surprisingly little violence. The growing Church government was in the process of developing new wilderness areas, and was also interested in finding more manpower for defense of the planet against raiders. The Aslan were willing to help in both those efforts in exchange for land, and proved to be good neighbors. Although Church doctrine and the way of *Fteir* were incompatible, the two sides managed to avoid ideological conflict for centuries.



Tonopah joined the Imperium along with the rest of the Dingir League. When the Solomani Movement arose, the Church at first opposed it on principle; doctrine taught acceptance of any sentient being who was willing to enter the faith. Meanwhile, although relations between Humans and Aslan were not particularly close, there was a long tradition of coexistence. At first the Solomani Movement tried to organize the Gentile population of the planet, and Tonopah was torn by civil unrest. About 780, however, the more radical Solomani factions were discredited by a series of terrorist incidents. The Church appealed for aid to the government of the Solomani Autonomous Region, agreeing to support the Movement as long as the rights of all residents of the planet could be guaranteed. As a result, the radical Solomani were deprived of offworld support and exiled from Tonopah. The world later became a quiet but loyal member of the Solomani Confederation, remaining so until its Imperial capture in 1000.

Today, Tonopah has reconciled itself to Imperial rule once again, Imperial troops have been withdrawn, and the church hierarchy is back in charge. Pro-Solomani activism continues, but is usually peaceful. Moderate factions of the Solomani Party hold a consistent minority bloc in the Citizens' Assembly and among the church leadership. The primary conflict on the planet today is between the Human and Aslan populations. The Aslan clans suffered relatively little oppression during the Solomani period, but their experience during that time has led them to demand a greater voice in planetary government. Meanwhile, the church has recently stepped up its efforts to convert lower-class Aslan, and many ministers are preaching against the acceptance of Aslan ways by Humans. These trends offend Aslan pride, and are leading to an increase in interracial incidents.

DINGIR SUBSECTOR

This subsector was the main battlefield for the Second through Seventh Interstellar Wars, and received very heavy Terran immigration throughout the Rule of Man. As a result, the worlds once colonized by Vilani were thoroughly absorbed into Terran civilization. During the Long Night, the old Terran Naval Headquarters at Dingir became the kernel of the Dingir League, a "pocket empire" which claimed most of the subsector and portions of the Albadaui subsector as well. Today, the local population is of mixed ancestry but thoroughly Solomani in sympathies. Active resistance to Imperial rule is still under way on several worlds of the subsector.

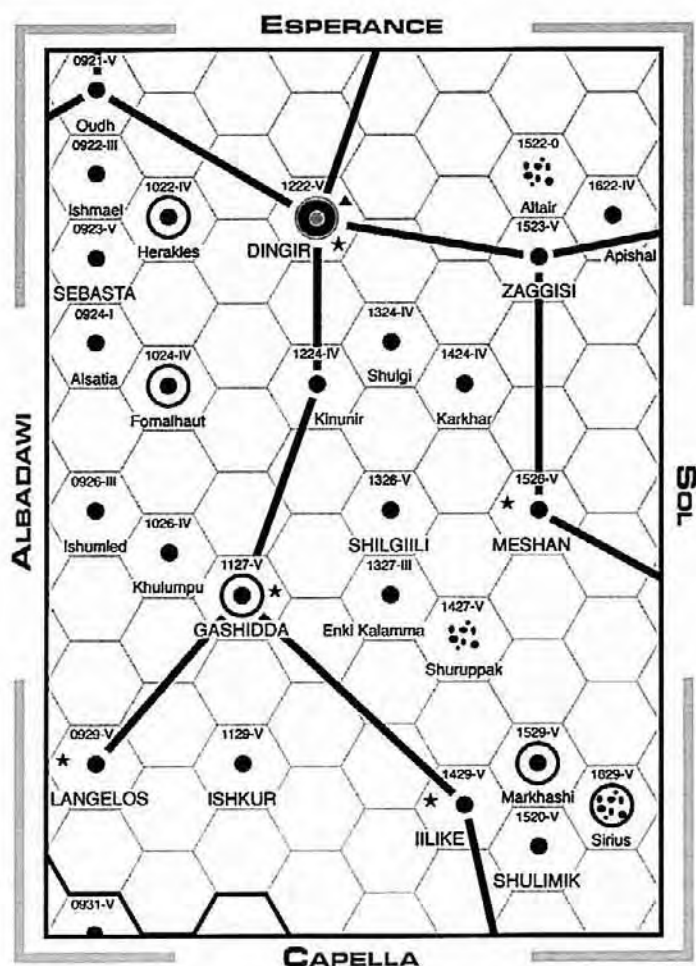
Erika haut-Beaudoin is the current Duchess of Dingir. Her family held the Imperial title of Count of Sebastia from the time the Dingir League joined the Imperium in 582. For centuries the counts of Sebastia stubbornly resisted assimilation into Solomani society, remaining in the sector and refusing to give up their noble status. On the eve of the Solomani Rim War, the then-Count made a risky journey out of the Solomani Sphere and took service with the Imperial Navy. Although he was killed in the war, his heir was made Duke of Dingir in recognition of the family's loyalty. Erika herself is a political moderate and a steadfast supporter of Archduke Adair.

Erika's own father Robert was once Sector Duke of the Solomani Rim. When Archduke Adair decided to move his capital into the sector and take over that role for himself, the old Duke abdicated rather than accept the "demotion." As of 1120, he still lives in his self-imposed retirement, avoiding public involvement in politics.

DINGIR SUBSECTOR WORLDS

HEX	NAME	ALLEGIANCE	ZONE	STARPORT	DIAMETER	GRAVITY	HYDROGRAPHIC %		POPULATION	CR	WTN			
							ATMOSPHERE	CLIMATE		GOV TYPE	TL			
0921	Oudh	Imp	Green	V	2,800	0.37	Thin (T)	11%	Frozen	6.4 million	Military	6	10	4.5
0922	Ishmael	Imp	Green	III	1,900	0.19	Very Thin	22%	Frozen	7,000	Corporate	0	9	3.0
0923	Sebastia	Imp	Green	V	5,600	0.61	Standard	58%	Normal	29 billion	Dictator	6	12	6.5
0924	Alsatia	Imp	Green	I	5,400	0.57	Very Thin	19%	Cold	91	Captive	6	12	2.5
0926	Ishumled	Imp	Green	III	5,400	0.68	Standard (T)	72%	Warm	2.0 million	Oligarch	2	9	4.0
0929	Langelos	Imp	Green	V-N	3,400	0.47	Very Thin (T)	40%	Cool	5.4 billion	Dictator	4	12	6.0
1022	Herakles	Imp	Amber	IV	4,800	0.49	Very Thin	46%	Cool	88 million	Military	6	10	4.5
1024	Fomalhaut	Imp	Amber	IV	7,900	1.17	Corrosive	83%	Warm	83,000	Military	6	12	4.0
	Nepal-in-Exile	Imp	Green	II	6,100	0.74	Exotic	None	Variable	16,000	Oligarch	4	9	-
1026	Khulampu	Imp	Green	IV	8,700	1.15	Exotic	69%	Frigid	420 million	Military	6	10	5.0
1127	Gashidda	Imp	Amber	V-N	3,400	0.51	Standard	95%	Cold	9.7 billion	Military	6	11	5.5
1129	Ishkur	Imp	Green	V	5,200	0.49	Standard	23%	Hot	6.9 billion	Bureau	4	10	5.5
1222	Dingir	Imp (**)	Green	V-NW	10,200	1.42	Dense	89%	Warm	12 billion	Bureau	5	12	6.5
1224	Kinunir	Imp	Green	IV	5,000	0.48	Very Thin	16%	Warm	13 million	Bureau	6	10	4.5
1324	Shulgi	Imp	Green	IV	5,300	0.47	Trace	20%	Frigid	350 million	Techno	3	10	5.0
1326	Shulgiili	Imp	Green	V	6,200	0.71	Standard (T)	100%	Cool	9.3 billion	RepDem	3	11	5.5
1327	Enki Kalamma	Imp	Green	III	1,900	0.17	None	None	Very Hot	6,200	Captive	3	11	3.0
1424	Karkhar	Imp	Green	IV	6,100	0.72	Standard (T)	51%	Normal	98 million	Military	6	10	4.5
1427	Shuruppak	Imp	Green	V	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Frigid	84 million	Military	6	9	5.0
1429	Iilike	Imp	Green	V-N	4,300	0.44	Thin	51%	Cool	4.6 billion	Military	6	12	6.0
1522	Altair	Imp	Green	0	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Torrid	None	None	0	0	0.0
1523	Zaggisi	Imp	Green	V	7,200	0.97	Dense (T)	88%	Tropical	4.2 billion	Merit	6	11	5.5
1526	Meshan	Imp	Green	V-N	4,200	0.40	Very Thin	50%	Chilly	8.9 billion	Oligarch	6	11	5.5
1529	Markhashi	Imp	Amber	V	2,900	0.20	None	8%	Frigid	740 million	Oligarch	6	10	5.0
1530	Shulimik	Imp	Green	V	7,000	1.04	Dense	32%	Normal	5.1 billion	Military	6	11	5.5
1622	Apishal	Imp	Green	IV	6,000	0.70	Very Thin	29%	Cool	8.3 million	RepDem	1	10	4.0
1629	Sirius	Imp	Amber	V	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Torrid	24 million	Military	6	11	5.0

Key on pp. 62-63.



His resentment of the Archduke remains strong, and he has built a circle of friends among the subsector's nobility who feel the same way. There is some possibility of an open break between the Duchess and her father in the near future.

0924 ALSATIA (IMPERIAL)

The Alsatia outpost is maintained by the government of Sebastia. So far the outpost has served little purpose aside from feeding the pride of Sebastia's dictators. Currently the Sebastian Ministry of Penance is investigating expanding the outpost for use as a penal colony.

1024 FOMALHAUT (IMPERIAL)

Fomalhaut is a bright star visible from Terra, so young that its planetary system is still in the process of formation. The main world of the system (Fomalhaut Prime) is fiercely hostile. Its atmosphere is a hellishly corrosive mix of nitrogen and nitrogen compounds, its seas are composed of a weak nitric-acid solution, and its surface is subject to constant meteoric bombardment.

During the Solomani period the Confederation government used Fomalhaut Prime as an exile colony. The prisoners left here were mostly "politicals," Solomani who had spoken out against the Solomani Cause or had otherwise fallen afoul of SolSec. They were placed on Fomalhaut Prime with minimal tools and equipment, and left to fend for themselves. Over the

years, they managed to build a functioning society and even develop a self-sufficient industrial economy.

After the Rim War, Imperial forces occupied Fomalhaut Prime and liberated the prisoners. Although the former exiles had rejected the Solomani Movement, most of them also had no love for the Imperium. Unfortunately, the Imperial garrison commander at the time was an insensitive and autocratic man, who quickly alienated the people and set off decades of resistance to Imperial rule. Today, Fomalhaut Prime remains under Imperial military rule, although an Imperial legation has been working to assuage local resentments. This process has been aided by a surge in local prosperity, brought about by upgrades to the starport and the establishment of TL12 industries. Fomalhaut Prime is classed as an Amber Zone, due to the population's anti-Imperial sentiments and the hostile physical conditions on-planet.

One unusual feature of the Fomalhaut system is the presence of a captured rogue planet, revolving around the primary star in a highly eccentric orbit. Most of the time the rogue moves through the outer fringes of the star system, its atmosphere and water frozen. About every 1,000 years it swings close enough to Fomalhaut to enjoy a brief summer, during which it has a dense atmosphere and extensive liquid-water oceans. The presence of the rogue was inferred by observation of the orbits of other planets in the system, but the first recorded sighting was in 1109. Astonishingly, the private expedition which landed on the rogue also discovered a Human colony.

Apparently, the colony had been established about -1970 by an expedition from Terra, led by the former royal family of Nepal. At the time, the rogue was close to Fomalhaut and would have been easy to settle. The Nepalese colonists should have been aware of the implications of the planet's orbit, and it is unclear whether they simply made a mistake or deliberately chose to settle despite the difficulty. In any case, as the Great Winter set in the colonists took reasoned action to survive. Deposits of minerals were located, and mining settlements were built before ice sheets could cover them. Great subterranean complexes were built to house the population. When the atmosphere fell as snow, the Nepalese were prepared.

As of 1120 the colony still exists, having survived three of the rogue's long years. Indeed, the colony is still ruled by a remote descendant of the last King of Nepal-on-Terra. After the colony was discovered, the Imperium offered to convey the colonists "home." Perhaps Imperial officials hoped to sow dissension among the people of the modern district of Nepal, who at the time were in support of the Solomani Party by a narrow margin. As it turned out, the royals had no interest in leaving their pocket realm, and the short political crisis blew over.

1126 GASHIDDA (IMPERIAL)

Gashidda is a small but very dense world. Its climate is quite chilly, and much of the planet's world-girdling ocean is frozen over. Only in the tropics is the ocean ice-free year round. Despite these conditions, Gashidda has a rich native ecology, with many kinds of sea life which are edible by Humans. Civilization on Gashidda occupies scattered islands and underwater cities throughout the equatorial zone.

DINGIR SUBSECTOR NAVIGATIONAL DATA

HEX	NAME	PRIMARY	COMPANIONS	GG	PB	ORBIT	MOONS
0921	Oudh	G1 V	-	2	2	2.11	-
0922	Ishmael	M1 V	D	3	2	0.53	-
0923	Sebasta	F4 V	-	0	2	2.19	1 large
0924	Alsatia	M7 V	M8 V	0	2	0.13	-
0926	Ishumled	M7 V	-	1	1	0.10	-
0929	Langelos	A6 V	-	5	0	3.84	-
1022	Herakles	M8 V	-	1	1	0.03	-
1024	Fomalhaut	A3 V	K4 V	2	0	5.48	2 large
	Nepal-in-Exile	A3 V	K4 V	2	0	62.5	-
1026	Khulampu	D	D	2	2	1.63	-
1127	Gashidda	F8 V	M8 V	3	2	1.96	1 small
1129	Ishkur	M7 V	-	3	1	0.11	-
1222	Dingir	K0 V	M1 V	5	0	0.60	1 small
1224	Kinunir	M2 V	-	5	0	0.36	-
1324	Shulgi	M7 V	D	3	0	0.18	-
1326	Shulgiili	M2 V	M4 V	2	0	0.32	-
1327	Eni Kalamma	M5 V	-	3	1	0.11	-
1424	Karkhar	M0 V	-	3	1	0.38	-
1427	Shuruppak	M5 V	-	3	3	0.33	-
1429	Iilike	G8 V	-	4	2	0.91	2 small
1522	Altair	A7 V	-	0	2	1.65	-
1523	Zaggisi	M2 V	-	1	0	0.30	-
1526	Meshan	K5 V	-	1	0	0.46	-
1529	Markhashi	M5 V	M6 V	5	0	0.51*	-
1530	Shulimik	K2 V	-	2	0	0.65	-
1622	Apishal	M3 V	-	4	2	0.26	-
1629	Sirius	A1 V	D	0	0	5.40	-

Key on p. 63.

The planet was first colonized about -3500 by Vilani dissidents belonging to the *kimashargur* faction. After the First Imperium conquered Dingir, Gashidda was made a center of Imperial administration. From about -3300 it was the subsector capital. Heavy Terran immigration followed the conquest of the planet at the end of the Eighth Interstellar War. The Terran colonists were from many ethnic groups, but the most common sources were India and Southeast Asia.

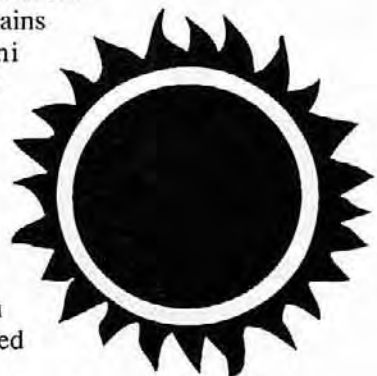
Gashidda lost much of its former importance after the Terran conquest. Even the old Vilani Naval Base on Gashidda's moon was abandoned by the Rule of Man. The planet was self-sufficient enough to survive the Long Night intact, and it became a minor member of the Dingir League when that alliance was formed. For centuries Gashiddan society stagnated, slowly evolving its own variant of Terran culture, taking almost no part in interstellar society.

"Gashidda . . . what can I say about Gashidda? According to the TNS guidebook, the equatorial ocean is ice-free the whole year, and that's pretty much the high point of the place – is it any wonder they're starting to have drug problems there? You gotta be bombed on soma not to be suicidally depressed from just living there!"

– Comedian Anton Wilson Peale

This changed with the arrival of the Solomani Movement. The Movement became very popular among the ordinary citizens, and was linked to an upsurge in Gashiddan nationalism. The result was an electoral "coup" which deposed the traditional ruling class and put the Solomani Movement in charge. The new government enacted many political and social reforms, and did much to get the sluggish Gashiddan economy going. New shipyard facilities were built and the planet became a major producer of both merchant and combat vessels. By the time the Solomani Confederation was established, Gashidda was a busy and prosperous world, one of the foremost members of the new interstellar state.

Gashidda strongly supported the Confederation during the Solomani Rim War, and was only captured by the Imperium after a long siege. Today, resentment of Imperial rule remains strong and pro-Solomani violence is still a common occurrence. Several quasi-religious groups are centered around a mystical reverence for Terra and the fierce promotion of Solomani supremacy. These sects produce both mob violence and organized terrorism.



Recently, Gashiddan society has been disturbed by the appearance of *soma*, a powerful new narcotic drug. The effects of soma vary, but in most cases users experience an intense emotional high resembling religious ecstasy. In extremely high doses, soma produces a short burst of hysterical strength and indifference to pain, followed by death.

Imperial authorities are still struggling to track the source of this drug and break up its distribution network. In the meantime, it is causing both a widespread addiction problem and random outbursts of violent behavior. Several recent suicide assassins have had traces of soma in their bloodstream, and there is speculation that anti-Imperial religious sects are using the drug in their ceremonies.

1222 DINGIR (IMPERIAL, SECTOR CAPITAL)

Dingir is one of the most important worlds in local history. It was first settled in -3500 by a Vilani dissident faction, the *kimashargur*. The First Imperium reduced the splinter state a few decades later, and Dingir became the center of Vilani expansion rimward of the Vegan district. In -2382 Dingir was made the sector capital, after it became obvious that the Terrans would be a significant challenge to Imperial authority. After the Eighth Interstellar War, Dingir was the headquarters of the Terran fleet, and it was briefly the capital of the Rule of Man. It was the capital of the Dingir League during the Long Night. It was subsector capital under both the Imperium and the Solomani Confederation, and became once again the official sector capital after the Solomani Rim War.

One of the reasons for Dingir's importance is its sheer size. The planet is over 10,000 miles in diameter, and although it has proportionally more ocean coverage than Terra it also has almost exactly the same amount of land area. Further, Dingir's climate is similar to that of Terra during the Cretaceous period, with warm ocean currents reaching even into the polar regions. Almost all of Dingir's small continents and extensive island chains have temperate, moist climates, ideal for agriculture or urban settlement. Even under the Vilani the planet's population was about 1 billion. Today, Dingir boasts 12 times as many people with very little overcrowding.



Despite its long history under the Vilani, Dingir's present-day population is almost entirely of mixed or pure-Solomani descent. Pro-Solomani sentiment still exists on the planet, although decades of Imperial Intelligence work have destroyed most of the radical local branches of the Solomani Party. The remaining cells are moderate in approach, and are tolerated by the Imperium. Dingir enjoys a position at the junction of

several Xboat and major trade routes, and also receives considerable Imperial income due to the naval and IISS facilities in the system. The resulting prosperity has done much to mute radical pro-Solomani politics among the planet's citizens.

Dingir is officially divided among several dozen nation-states, many of them founded along ethnic divisions early in the Long Night. These nation-states each retain their own local governments, but in actuality the planet is governed by the League of Peoples. This is a supranational governing body, originally founded about -1200 to prevent military conflict. Like the United Nations of ancient Terra, the League slowly took over more and more governing functions from the individual nation-states, restricting their actions in a web of treaties and binding protocols. Today, Dingir exhibits considerable local variety in culture and law, but matters of Human rights, trade, defense, and foreign policy are controlled by the league. The league's effective form is that of an extensive bureaucracy, whose members are only loosely accountable to the planet's citizens or to local authority.

1327 ENKI KALAMMA (IMPERIAL)

The Shulgiili government recently rebuilt the ancient Vilani refueling station on Enki Kalamma, adding a small repair yard. More industries are slowly moving in, and the planet may soon host a thriving vacuum-world colony.

1429 ILIKE (IMPERIAL)

This world has the distinction of being the last significant Vilani colony to be established in the old Rim Province, around -3800. At best Ilike was never more than marginally habitable, so Vilani settlement was thin. After the Sixth Interstellar War, Terrans colonized the planet. Most of the Terran colonists were Moslems from the Middle East or Africa, and by the dawn of the Rule of Man the Ilike colony had a distinctive Vilani-Arabic flavor. Ilike remained independent and relatively prosperous during the Long Night, acting as a buffer state between the Old Earth Union and the Dingir League. It joined the Imperium in 596.

Ilike retains its Islamic heritage, although local religious institutions have changed considerably over the last 3,400 years. For example, the pre-spaceflight orientation on Mecca has transformed into a reverence for the star Sol, which is visible to the naked eye in the Ilike sky. Prayers are directed toward the position of Sol, and citizens often spend years planning for a *hajj* or pilgrimage to the old sacred sites on Terra. The old Islamic religious calendar has been completely lost, but a new round of holidays and observances has been established based on the cycles of Ilike's sun and moons.

Local society is outwardly male-dominated, although women have full civil and political rights. The planet's popular culture has a puritanical streak. On the other hand, in recent centuries there has been an upswing in many art forms among the wealthy: geometric art and architecture, prose fiction, lyric and epic poetry, and metaphysical philosophy. This cultural flowering somewhat resembles that of the high Arabic civilization of pre-spaceflight Terra, although there are many

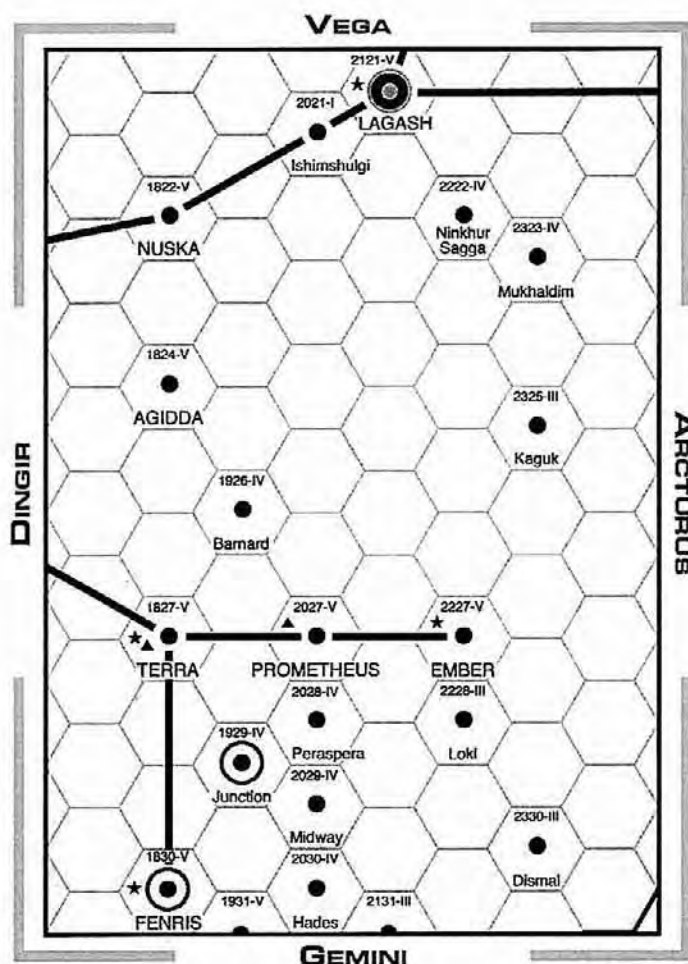
borrowings from Vilani and other Terran cultures, and a number of original elements as well.

Despite the lingering Vilani influence, Iilike was one of the first worlds to come out in support of the Solomani Movement. Local pro-Solomani politics were generally moderate in theory but thoroughly committed to the Cause in practice. Although Iilike mounted little organized resistance to Imperial conquest, anti-Imperial resentment remains. Pro-Solomani demonstrations are common, along with the occasional terrorist incident. Even so, in recent years popular opinion has softened somewhat toward the Imperium. A civilian "shadow government" has been formed with tacit Imperial approval. Assuming no dramatic revival of Solomani radicalism, Iilike is likely to return to civilian rule within the decade.

1629 SIRIUS (IMPERIAL)

Sirius has no natural satellites, aside from a scattering of boulder-sized objects and an outer cometary cloud. Before the Rule of Man, the Sirius system was a considerable obstacle to travel between the Sol and Dingir subsectors, providing no place for ships to refuel. Today the Sirius "belt" consists of a variety of artificial satellites, mostly planetoids towed from other nearby systems. Sirius' primary role is as a supply and refueling station, with hydrogen fuel mined from comets towed in from the Oort halo. A number of planetoid and "tin can" habitats also orbit the star, most of them built by splinter groups seeking an independent existence.

The current complex of habitats and stations in Sirius was built during the Solomani period, and the local population is almost entirely Solomani in origin and sympathies. Space habitats tend to be fragile and vulnerable to naval attack, so the Imperial Navy has had little difficulty in preventing active rebellion. Resentment remains high, however. Imperial citizens are advised to exercise caution when visiting habitats distant from the starport.



SOL SUBSECTOR

The worlds of this subsector are rather thinly scattered, isolated from the sector's main trade routes along the Rim Main. This "wilderness" character prevented the Vilani Empire from settling more than one or two worlds in the region, and incidentally protected pre-spaceflight Terra from being found and conquered by the First Imperium. When the Terrans developed the jump drive and reached for the stars, their encounter with the Vilani soon led to war and changed all future history.

After the Interstellar Wars, Terra lost importance as the main centers of power moved to Dingir and elsewhere. During the Long Night, the rimward half of the subsector came under the control of the Old Earth Union. After its integration into the Imperium, this region became fertile ground for the growth of the new Solomani Movement. Terra became the capital of the Solomani Confederation upon its withdrawal from the Imperium, and was the primary objective of Imperial forces during the Solomani Rim War. Today, several of the worlds of the subsector retain pro-Solomani loyalties. Although violent unrest is declining, the Solomani Party remains strong on several worlds and is constantly pressing for greater independence from the Imperium.

Mazun Tomas von Ritterburg is the current Duke of Sol. The von Ritterburgs of Lagash claim aristocratic ancestry as far back as the Rule of Man. During the Solomani period the family remained loyal to the Imperium, even after the Emperor Paulo I allowed their titles to lapse in 742.

SOL SUBSECTOR WORLDS

HEX	NAME	ALLEGIANCE	ZONE	STARPORT	DIAMETER	GRAVITY	HYDROGRAPHIC %		POPULATION	CR	WTN			
							ATMOSPHERE	CLIMATE		GOV TYPE	TL			
1822	Nusku	Imp	Green	V	5,300	0.59	Standard	86%	Warm	3.4 billion	RepDem	2	12	6.0
1824	Agidda	Imp	Green	V	8,800	1.08	Standard (T)	20%	Normal	8.7 billion	Multiple	6	10	5.5
1827	Terra	Imp	Green	V-NW	7,900	1.00	Standard	72%	Normal	18 billion	Merit	6	12	6.5
1830	Fenris	Imp	Amber	V-N	9,700	1.50	Dense (T)	76%	Tropical	2.9 billion	Military	6	11	5.5
1926	Barnard	Imp	Green	IV	2,000	0.14	None	None	Torrid	560 million	Military	6	11	5.0
1929	Junction	Imp	Amber	IV	8,800	1.00	Standard (T)	51%	Chilly	310 million	Military	6	12	5.5
2021	Ishimshulgi	Imp	Green	I	1,700	0.15	None	None	Hot	79,000	Multiple	5	7	2.5
2027	Prometheus	Imp	Green	V-S	7,400	0.93	Dense	49%	Tropical	7.2 billion	Military	6	12	6.0
2028	Peraspera	Imp	Green	IV	7,400	0.84	Exotic	24%	Cold	910,000	Oligarch	4	10	4.0
2029	Midway	Imp	Green	IV	6,300	0.73	Dense (T)	89%	Very Cold	760,000	Techno	1	10	4.0
2030	Hades	Imp	Green	IV	4,100	0.23	Very Thin	12%	Frigid	470	Captive	4	11	2.5
2121	Lagash	Imp (*)	Green	V-N	5,900	0.60	Standard	68%	Normal	21 billion	Merit	6	12	6.5
2222	Ninkhur Sagga	Imp	Green	IV	9,700	1.66	Exotic	97%	Chilly	48 million	Military	6	10	4.5
2227	Ember	Imp	Green	V-N	3,600	0.33	Trace	22%	Frozen	3.3 billion	Military	6	10	5.5
2228	Loki	Imp	Green	III	8,700	0.95	Corrosive	100%	Frozen	750	Military	6	10	2.5
2323	Mukhaldim	Imp	Green	IV	4,900	0.47	Very Thin	28%	Very Cold	75,000	Corporate	2	10	3.5
2325	Kaguk	Imp	Green	III	6,200	0.74	Thin (T)	84%	Cool	2.6 million	Military	6	9	4.0
2330	Dismal	Imp	Green	III	4,300	0.40	Very Thin (T)	6%	Cold	220,000	RepDem	1	11	3.5

Key on pp. 62-63.

After the Solomani Rim War the family honors were restored, and when the first post-war Duke of Sol died without heir in 1033, the von Ritterbergs were elevated to ducal status. The current Duke is a superb administrator and a fierce Imperial patriot. He has an extremely blunt personal style, and is willing to tell even his closest allies when he thinks they are being foolish. This bluntness has alienated many people within his own demesne. It also makes his relationship with Archduke Adair prickly, although the two are political allies.

1822 NUSKU (IMPERIAL)

Nusku was the very first Vilani world of any significance to be conquered by the Terrans (see p. 44). Its population has been genetically mixed but culturally Solomani since the earliest years of the Rule of Man. Nusku weathered the Long Night well, remaining independent and retaining most of the Rule of Man's technological base. It joined the Imperium in 589 and was quite content under Imperial rule.

Trouble began when the Solomani Movement appeared on the Rim. The Nusku wing of the Solomani Party was particularly radical, and once the Party was in power it enacted draconian measures. By 750 only genetically "pure" Solomani could claim full citizenship, with all other citizens denied the vote and many civil rights as well. Unfortunately very few citizens of Nusku could claim pure Solomani descent, after centuries of intermarriage with the original Vilani population. The upshot of the new laws was a kind of "genetic lottery." The resulting political elite owed everything to the Solomani Movement and was therefore quite loyal to the Cause, but Solomani ancestry was no guarantee of education or experience in governance. As a result, the government of Nusku was soon corrupt and incompetent.

Under the ramshackle Solomani government, Nusku declined for centuries. The economy stagnated, technological progress ceased, and the planet's once-vibrant literary culture vanished. Only in the underground was there any freedom of thought or expression. Many writers and philosophers

survived the dark age by producing *samizdata* (unattributed essays distributed through covert channels in the planetary information network).

After the Rim War, Nusku struggled under Imperial military rule for some time. Recriminations among the populace prevented the formation of any effective civilian government. About 1030, however, an alliance of social and commercial leaders set off the Nusku Revival, a series of private programs designed to reconcile the citizenry and restore faith in civilian institutions. By 1048 enough progress had been made to convince the Imperium to sponsor a constitutional convention, restoring the Nusku Republic which had collapsed three centuries before. Military occupation was withdrawn a few years later.

Today, Nusku is once again the prosperous and progressive world of the pre-Solomani period. One unusual feature of local society is its extreme egalitarianism. Nusku's citizens mistrust

SOL SUBSECTOR NAVIGATIONAL DATA

HEX	NAME	PRIMARY	COMPANIONS	SGG	PB	ORBIT	MOONS
1822	Nusku	K5 V	K7 V	4	1	0.40	-
1824	Agidda	M4 V	-	1	0	0.22	-
1827	Terra	G2 V	-	4	1	1.00	1 large
1830	Fenris	F5 V	D	0	2	1.51	1 large
1926	Barnard	M5 V	-	4	3	0.09	-
1929	Junction	M6 V	-	2	0	0.15	-
2021	Ishimshulgi	M1 V	M2 V	2	0	0.24	-
2027	Prometheus	G4 V	K2 V	1	1	0.92	1 small
2028	Peraspera	M5 V	-	0	2	0.20	-
2029	Midway	M2 V	-	2	2	0.46	-
2030	Hades	M4 V	-	2	1	0.86*	-
2121	Lagash	K2 V	K5 V	4	2	0.60	1 small
2222	Ninkhur Sagga	F0 V	M2 V	3	0	3.07	2 large
2227	Ember	M5 V	M6 V	2	1	0.18	-
2228	Loki	M5 V	-	2	0	0.18	-
2323	Mukhaldim	K4 V	-	0	2	0.58	1 small
2325	Kaguk	M3 V	-	1	0	0.26	-
2330	Dismal	M8 V	-	2	1	0.06	-

Key on p. 63.

elites of any kind. As a result, affluent citizens avoid ostentatious displays of their wealth, and political leaders work hard to exhibit a humble front to their constituents. Even the planet's Imperial aristocracy dispense with elaborate protocol when dealing with local matters. The most prominent exceptions are megacorporate officials from offworld, who are used to a more flamboyant lifestyle than is acceptable here. As a result, the great Imperial megacorporations are often viewed with disdain by the local populace.

1827 TERRA (IMPERIAL)

Terra is, of course, the homeworld of all Humaniti. Few other worlds have greater historical, scientific, or symbolic significance. Ever since its people burst onto the galactic stage over 3,500 years ago, Terra has gone from obscurity to galactic prominence and back several times. Today, it is the focal point for conflicts that involve the entire rimward quarter of charted space. Although its recent glory as capital of the Solomani Confederation is gone, the planet seems ready to chart a new role for itself in the coming centuries.

A Guided Tour

Superficially, Terra has changed little since the dawn of spaceflight. The planet's climate has warmed over the last 3,500 years, causing sea levels to rise by about 15' overall. Planetary climate is currently stable, and is being maintained so by an elaborate weather-control system.

On the other hand, several regions have undergone drastic change. The belt of deserts which once stretched from North Africa to Central Asia has been reduced in size and severity. Much of the once-arid Sahara has been transformed into a garden, particularly in the old Libyan Desert region. Here, a hydrological project of the Rule of Man caused the flooding of the Qattara Depression and the diversion of the Nile River. Egypt lost the Nile irrigation works as a result, but the new inland sea brought a cooler, moister climate to vast stretches of the Sahara. Even this project was dwarfed, however, by the flooding of most of the West Siberian Plain. About -1500, a combination of natural disasters and macroengineering created a new arm of the Arctic Ocean, flooding an area comparable to that of the Mediterranean itself. Together with global warming, this turned much of Siberia into a newly fertile and productive country.

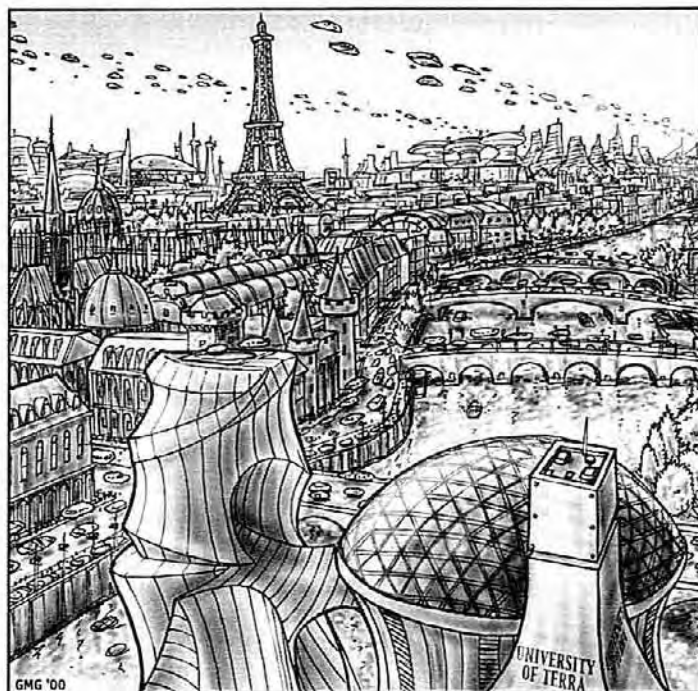
Europe is probably the part of the world least changed over time. About 1 billion people live on the subcontinent, mostly around the Mediterranean. Northern Europe is a quiet region, full of preserved historical towns and cities, where many ancient folkways endure. The University of Terra is centered in Europe, with major campuses in Paris, Berlin, and Stockholm.

Africa has long since lost its character as a backward and chaotic place. It is prosperous and cosmopolitan, and the most advanced Imperial technology is available there. A little more than 4 billion people live in Africa, most of them on the Mediterranean or West African coasts. AECO (Africa-Europe Cooperation Organization) Starport is situated on the shores of the flooded Chott Djerid, in what was once eastern Algeria. Meanwhile, southern Africa is the busiest financial district on

the planet. The Terran Exchange is headquartered in old Johannesburg, although most trading takes place through the global information net.

The region once known as the Middle East, stretching from the Mediterranean to India, is presently home to over 1 billion people. This is another region conscious of its long history, where ancient languages and folkways are consciously maintained. Oddly, this part of the world has seen the most Vilani settlement over the centuries, especially in Mesopotamia and India.

Eastern Asia (China, Korea, and Japan) is home to about 2 billion people, and is one of the more culturally insular parts of the planet. This area has stubbornly resisted submersion in the common Terran culture for thousands of years. More than in any other district, the people here continue to use something other than Galanglic as their first language. Even so, the region is fully part of the global economic and political system.

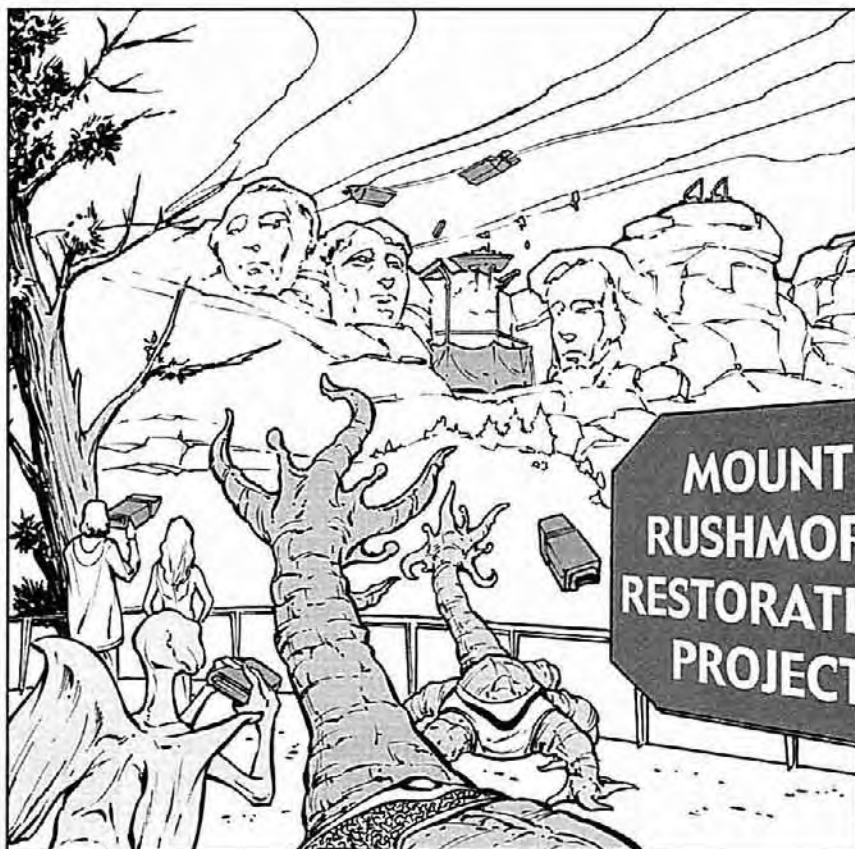


Oceania is a wide territory, including Indonesia, Australia, and the scattered islands of the Pacific Ocean. Almost 3 billion people live here, most of them in great shallow-water arcologies or even in undersea cities. This is the part of the world most devoted to aquaculture, with vast kelp and fish farms stretching for thousands of miles. By itself, Oceania could feed Terra's billions, but as it is the sea yields tremendous quantities of food for export. LaGrange Starport, located in Western Australia, is the busiest military port on the planet. The Imperium retains a military reservation which takes up much of the Australian desert, with Navy and Scout Service headquarters both located in Alice Springs.

North and Central America are home to more than 3.5 billion people, more than half of these living in old Mexico or in the Caribbean. The once-backward Caribbean is now one of the most densely populated and prosperous regions on the planet. The line of arcologies and undersea cities stretching from Boston to Trinidad is almost continuous.

In theory, one could walk nearly the entire distance and never leave the city or see the open sky. This region is full of hectic activity, with many of the planet's most aggressive entrepreneurs working out of the Caribbean arcologies. Meanwhile, Starport Phoenix sits in North America, just southwest of the city of Phoenix. It is connected by fast-transit lines to most of the urban centers of the Americas. Over two-thirds of the planet's merchant traffic passes through this one port.

South America is presently the center of Terran civilization. The interior of the continent is rather sparsely settled, and indeed much of it is strictly protected nature preserve. Despite this, more than 5 billion people live on the continent. Only in Tierra del Fuego and near the mouth of the Amazon is the coastline uninhabited. Elsewhere, a continuous band of city rings the continent. The capital of Sol system is Rio de Janeiro. Another famous landmark is the Imperial Residency in the high Andes, on the shores of Lake Titicaca. This estate was built in 876 to be the official residence of the Secretary-General of the Solomani Confederation. More recently, it has served as the home of the planet's Imperial military governor, then as the residence of the Marchioness of Terra.



The People of Terra

The population of Terra has been relatively stable since the Rule of Man, but the distribution of that population has shifted dramatically over the centuries. During the Long Night there was a great movement of population into the Southern Hemisphere, following favorable climate and economic opportunity. Today Africa and South America are the world's center of gravity, not only in demographic but also in economic and political terms.

Despite the efforts of millions of Humans over the last 3,500 years, Terran civilization has become quite homogeneous. Of the thousands of languages which were spoken at the beginning of the spaceflight era, only *eight* still survive as the first language of any Terran citizen. At the last census, only about 2% of the population is unable to speak Galanglic even as a second language, while over 70% speak *only* Galanglic. Mass culture has long since relegated most significant regional variations to the historical dustbin. Similarly, the ethnic types once called "races" have blurred together through millennia of intermarriage. Almost all Terran Solomani are "multiracial," with significant amounts of African, Asian, and European ancestry.

Many offworlders have settled on Terra over the centuries. Few Vegans live on the planet, finding its climate and high gravity uncomfortable, but millions of Vilani, Aslan, Hivers and others make Terra their home. Perhaps 8% of the planet's population is of mixed or non-Solomani descent, even after centuries of repression during the Solomani era.

Terran Politics

Terra was granted home rule in 1110. Although a significant Imperial military presence remains on the planet, the military

no longer has political control. The current government is called the Terran Commonwealth.

The supreme sovereign body in the commonwealth is the Assembly. This is a one-house representative body, with members elected from districts all over Terra and elsewhere in the system. The Assembly works on a parliamentary system, with the dominant party or coalition choosing a prime minister and his cabinet. Currently, there are 13 major political parties with representation in the Assembly. The dominant coalition is composed of the Freedom Party (moderate pro-Imperials) and the Garden Earth Party (technocrats and environmentalists). Unfortunately, this coalition holds only 51% of the Assembly, so even a small shift in political opinion could bring the government down. Four branches of the Solomani Party hold seats in the Assembly, but they do not form a significant bloc. They rarely agree on any position, and hold only about 14% of the seats in any case. Elections are held every four years at a minimum, or whenever the ruling coalition loses a vote of no confidence. Elections are currently due no later than the end of 1120.

With the Assembly subject to sudden changes in membership, real power rests with the executive branch. In particular, the unelected career bureaucrats who manage the commonwealth's ministries hold a great deal of influence. They can usually dominate the short-lived political appointees who hold nominal control of the government. Meanwhile, officials of the judicial branch are elected directly by the people, subject to approval by the current prime minister.

The prime minister is not the head of state in the commonwealth. That role is taken by the Marchioness of Terra, senior Imperial noble of the star system. The Marchioness has the right to address the Assembly any time she wishes, and she also

holds a non-voting seat on the prime minister's cabinet. As a result, she has a great deal of influence as an advisor to the commonwealth. She is also responsible for dissolving the Assembly when elections are to be held, and overseeing those elections. Finally, she acts as the intermediary between Terra and the Imperium. The current Marchioness of Terra is Alessandra Ribeiro da Silva, founder of the Freedom Party and one of the architects of the current Terran constitution. She served as the first ruling prime minister after the end of military rule, and did much to moderate tensions between the new government and the Imperium. She was made Marchioness of Terra in 1113, leaving the government in the hands of her minister of commerce so that she could accept the position.

Laws and Customs

Terra has an active government, and many forms of behavior are restricted. Since 1110 citizens have been allowed to own weapons for self-defense or hobby use, but weapons must be registered and the laws regarding their use are quite strict. Vehicle ownership is also closely regulated, with all owners required to demonstrate competence on a regular basis. Taxes are moderate, but business and industry are subject to many regulations. Environmental law is particularly stringent, controlling land use, resource exploitation, and all forms of waste disposal.

Despite Terra's democratic form of government, civil rights law is relatively backward. Terran citizens have basic freedoms of expression, religious practice, and assembly, but those freedoms are hedged about with exceptions. Speech which can be construed as disloyal to the Imperium, or disrespectful of the Imperial aristocracy, is a violation of sedition laws. The Imperium also maintains a right of censorship under the Official Secrets laws, preventing the press or the public from discussing matters protected by Imperial security. Finally, there is a battery of laws against "hate speech" or speech designed to provoke violence. Within these boundaries, political activity is almost unrestricted. Even the more radical wings of the Solomani Party are legal these days, as long as they watch their rhetoric.

Since Humans originated on Terra, the world has become a major tourist attraction for ethnic Solomani seeking their "roots." This has led to some minor friction with the local inhabitants, who feel that the tourists expect the whole planet to be one gigantic historical recreation theme park. To be sure, many places on Terra are preserved as historical sites, but off-world visitors tend to believe they can go anywhere, interrupt anything, and require the locals to pose for photographs with grandmother and the kids – preferably while wearing some quaint and colorful costume. The visitors, on the other hand, find the locals have little or no sense of history. Tourists are shocked to find historic old buildings in common, everyday use as residences, offices, and the like. The usual "tourist traps" are common, and fabricated "historic sites" are everywhere.

Current Situation

Solomani agitation is still a factor on Terra, although violent unrest has been declining for decades. Most Terrans regard the Imperial presence as a mixed blessing. Resentment of the military occupation remains vehement, but on the whole Terran society is more open and relaxed than it was even before the

Rim War. Meanwhile, trade is booming, the full range of Imperial technology is now available, and there is plenty of economic opportunity to go around. Terra still occupies an uneasy position, but as the years pass it seems better and better able to fit into the Imperial system.

Still, in thousands of years no one has *ever* been able to predict what this world's future might hold . . .

1830 FENRIS (IMPERIAL)

The first facility in the Procyon system was a Terran naval refueling station, established just before the First Interstellar War. For decades, the Fenris colony was the Terran Confederation's first (and last) line of defense, standing as a bulwark between Vilani might and the vulnerable industrial outposts to trailing. Well into the Rule of Man period, the colony's industries were devoted to military production, and the civilian population was dominated by military dependents and retired veterans. This martial character lapsed during the peaceful years of the Rule of Man, but with the fall of the Long Night it was revived. For example, Fenris provided more than its share of soldiers and officers to the Old Earth Union.

By the end of the Long Night, Fenris society was dominated by a set of about two dozen Lodges. Each Lodge was recreation, mutual-support club, secret society, political party, and citizen militia all rolled into one. Lodge members tended to support each other in daily life and in politics. Since the Lodges also formed the backbone of the planet's military and police forces, they imparted a distinctly military flavor to the civilian society. Although Fenris was in theory under civilian rule, the representative democracy was normally dominated by military veterans who held leadership positions in various Lodges.

This pseudo-military state adapted well to the Solomani Movement, especially since the citizens remembered the Interstellar Wars with patriotic fervor. Under the Solomani regime, Fenris once again provided more than its share of military personnel and leaders. The Fenris planetary defense force was unusually large, well-trained, and well-equipped. Resistance to Imperial forces in the last stages of the Rim War was particularly fierce.

The Lodge institutions remain strong on Fenris, and often provide a core of active resistance to Imperial rule. Imperial authorities have often wished to reduce the power of the Lodges, but they are so central to Fenris society that to do so would doubtless ruin any chance of bringing the planet into the Imperial fold. A few of the more militant societies have been repressed. During the period 1096-1105 the Imperium experimented with sponsoring its own "loyalist" Lodges. Unfortunately most of the populace regarded the new institutions with contempt, and the resulting violence nearly reached the level of civil war. Since then the Imperium has contented itself with strict enforcement of its weapons restrictions, hoping to keep the peace even if the people of Fenris remain difficult to win over.

The Solomani Party remains outlawed on Fenris, decades after it became legal in most of the border zone. Naturally, there are a number of clandestine cells in existence. Fenris remains a world where anti-Imperial violence can erupt at any time.

2027 PROMETHEUS (IMPERIAL)

Prometheus was the first Terran interstellar colony, named at a time when the Terran reach for the stars seemed as momentous an event as the discovery of fire. It was established even before the First Interstellar War, and eventually became a second home for hundreds of Terran cultures. Indeed, in many cases it was the most stubbornly independent members of an ethnic group who emigrated to Prometheus. Such individuals were likely to cling to their ethnic identity, even while their stay-at-home colleagues on Terra were being absorbed into the homogeneous Terran civilization of the Rule of Man. As a result, many ancient Terran societies eventually survived only on Prometheus. The Amish, Masai, Parsees, and Rom are prominent examples which still exist on Prometheus today.



Early Promethean society was notable for its extreme libertarianism, which promoted cultural tolerance, individual self-reliance, and support for the Terran drive into the Vilani Imperium. The moderate government that resulted survived even into the Long Night, cooperating with the Terran Confederation, the Rule of Man, and the Old Earth Union in turn. With the arrival of the Solomani Movement, however, the age-old accord collapsed. Many independent societies on Prometheus had no quarrel with non-Solomani, and resented the Movement's repression of local folkways in favor of a pan-Solomani ethos. Some of the planet's varied ethnic groups went underground during the Solomani period, or left Prometheus to settle new worlds to rimward.

Since Prometheus was conquered by the Imperium, social upheaval has been a recurrent problem. The easy tolerance of one micro-culture for another was swept away by the Solomani Movement, and nothing has yet replaced it. Anti-Imperial unrest exists, but most of the planet's turmoil is generated by ethnic quarrels. When the Imperium withdraws, it is likely to leave Prometheus a balkanized planet. The difficulty of

performing such a withdrawal *without* setting off a local civil war is the main reason why Imperial occupation continues.

There are a few rays of hope. The Scout Service has established a base on Prometheus, staffed by a large contingent from the contact & liaison branch. The base's primary purpose is to help defuse cultural tensions throughout the border zone, especially on Prometheus itself. Meanwhile, the local Authentic Movement has been making great strides. With patience and persistence, the people of Prometheus may be able to reconstruct their ancient institutions.

2030 HADES (IMPERIAL)

The Hades outpost has long been owned by the civilian government of Fenris. It is currently administered by the Imperial Navy, in trust for the time when Fenris can be returned to civilian rule.

2121 LAGASH (IMPERIAL, SUBSECTOR CAPITAL)

Despite its Vilani name, Lagash was never heavily settled by the First Imperium. Vilani settlement came only during the Interstellar Wars period, as the Imperium tried to build a chain of outposts to fence in the expansionistic Terrans. After the fall of Nusku, Vilani efforts in this direction faltered and the struggling colony was abandoned. Terran settlement began in earnest after the Eighth Interstellar War, and Lagash has been a Solomani-dominated world ever since.

Despite its Solomani population, Lagash was always ambivalent about the Solomani Movement. Lagash often came into conflict with Terra during the Old Earth Union's expansionistic periods. Meanwhile, as soon as the sector began recovering from the Long Night, Lagash opened very profitable trade links with the Vegan and Vilani worlds to coreward. The Solomani Movement put Lagash under a detested "Terran" regime and cut off its trade, causing a long period of economic and social depression. As a result, Lagash welcomed the Imperium and soon became a loyal member. Pro-Solomani agitation is not unknown, but the local Solomani Party is both moderate and very much a minority.

Lagash is rather isolated from the rest of the subsector, with Xboat communications forced to detour through the Dingir subsector before reaching the worlds near Terra. As a result, the planet is poorly situated to be the subsector capital. Unfortunately, the Imperium has little choice in the matter, as few of the region's other worlds are sufficiently loyal. This fact gives the citizens of Lagash considerable pride, and has also caused some conflict with Duke von Ritterburg. The Duke has fallen into the habit of leaving local Imperial administration in the hands of the Count of Nusku, while he spends most of his own time on Terra or at the Archduke's court. Rumors abound that the Duke is considering moving the subsector capital to Terra, now that the Human homeworld has been returned to civilian rule. Cooler heads on Lagash realize that this would help the Duke pay closer attention to the "problem areas" in his domain, but most of the population is up in arms at the suggestion. Perhaps prudently, the Duke has so far refused to address the question publicly.

ARCTURUS SUBSECTOR

This subsector has two entirely different characters. The coreward worlds were settled by the Vilani during the First Imperium. The rest of the subsector (including Lamarck and the worlds to rimward of it) was uninhabited until the Terrans developed the jump-3 drive. After the Ninth Interstellar War, colonists began to arrive in significant numbers, although the region remained a backwater throughout the Rule of Man. Although there was little destruction from piracy or interworld strife as the Long Night set in, the new settlements of the area were unable to maintain interstellar technology. The region only rejoined the mainstream of galactic society about 300, with the first contacts coming from the Old Earth Union to spinward.

At present the subsector is a backwater, well off the main shipping lanes that pass to spinward and coreward. Aside from some cross-border trade with the Solomani Confederation, the local economy is healthy but quiet. Free traders and other independent entrepreneurs are common on the local trade routes.

Michael hault-Shalimkakur is the Duke of Arcturus. His ancestors held the title of Count of Jael in ancient times, but fled to the Imperial Core about 720 to avoid persecution by the Solomani Movement. For generations the Shalimkakur family held a seat in the Moot, supposedly representing Jael *in absentia* but actually pursuing their own private schemes. In particular, an aggressive pursuit of dynastic marriages brought several other noble titles into various branches of the clan. As a result, by 1000 the family had considerable influence in the Emperor's court despite not having seen its demesne in centuries. This influence was sufficient to have Michael's great-grandfather named Duke of Arcturus as well as Count of Jael.

Today, the Duke is the seniormost member of the sector's Exile Houses (see p. 9). He is a fierce anti-Solomani partisan. Although he has alienated many of the people of his demesne and has openly opposed Archduke Adair's policies, the

Archduke has so far been unable to respond effectively. In part, this is because of the Duke's continued connections directly to the Imperial court. Several members of his extended family still hold high offices on Capital and occupy their own seats in the Moot.

2527 CYMBELINE (IMPERIAL)

Cymbeline is a harsh world, habitable only due to a combination of freak circumstances. It is a large, dense planet with high gravity, yet paradoxically it has a very thin atmosphere. This is apparently due to a massive collision with another planet-sized object, possibly as recently as 10 million years ago. The collision blasted most of Cymbeline's atmosphere into space, broke its tide lock to its primary star, and left its surface covered with chaotic terrain.

One feature of this rugged planet is a network of extremely deep canyons, spanning much of the planet's surface. These canyons are deep enough that the atmosphere pools in their bottoms, causing air pressure to reach habitable levels in small regions.

These enclaves of breathable air are replenished by volcanic outgassing. A number of strains of bacteria have developed the ability to metabolize components of the volcanic gases and release free oxygen. Humans can therefore manage a precarious existence in the canyon bottoms.

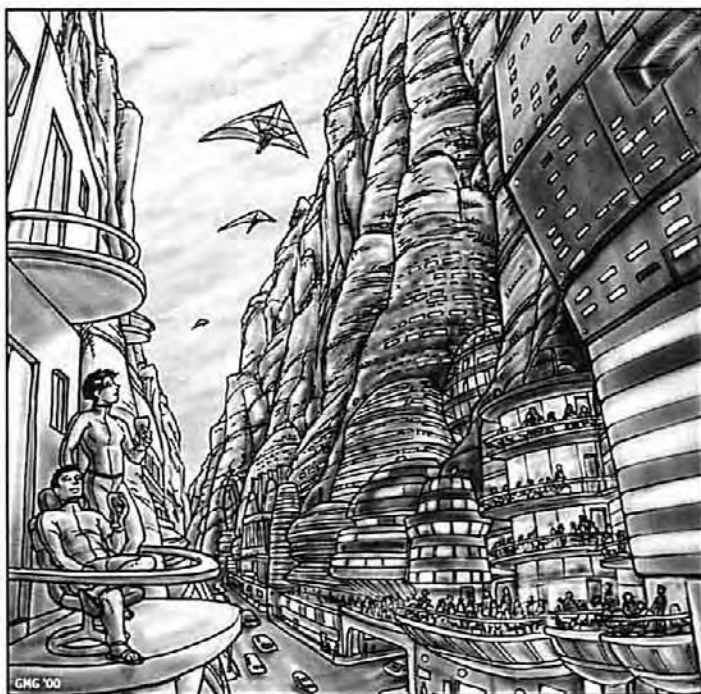
Cymbeline was colonized very late, the first settlers arriving about 800. As a result, much of the planet is still unexplored. Prospecting expeditions often make their way into the near-vacuum of the highlands, looking for useful resources. The planet's main industries are in mining and light manufacturing, although some of the more favorably located canyons are used for agriculture.

Society on Cymbeline is quite relaxed. The government is a representative democracy, with each major canyon-district electing a number of speakers to the planetary assembly.

ARCTURUS SUBSECTOR WORLDS

HEX	NAME	ALLEGIANCE	ZONE	STARPORT	GRAVITY	DIAMETER	ATMOSPHERE	HYDROGRAPHIC %	CLIMATE	POPULATION	GOV TYPE	CR	TL	WTN
2521	Ikuk	Imp	Green	V	7,100	0.87	Standard (T)	90%	Warm	84 million	Military	6	11	5.0
2527	Cymbeline	Imp	Green	V	9,000	1.27	Very Thin	41%	Cool	670 million	RepDem	0	11	5.0
2528	Tewfik	Imp	Green	V	4,800	0.44	Very Thin (T)	44%	Frozen	3.1 billion	RepDem	3	10	5.5
2623	Hathor	Imp	Green	V	6,600	0.87	Dense	98%	Normal	4.4 billion	Bureau	4	8	5.0
2626	Melchior	Imp	Green	V	4,400	0.49	Thin	56%	Cold	2.7 billion	Oligarch	6	10	5.5
2628	Scandia	Imp	Green	V-N	6,400	0.79	Thin	82%	Warm	1.2 billion	Military	6	12	6.0
2722	Tunguska	Imp	Green	III	4,000	0.37	Very Thin (T)	23%	Chilly	67 million	AthDem	0	10	4.5
2723	Anenerkuk	Imp	Amber	V-N	4,800	0.65	Standard	96%	Cool	81 million	Captive	2	12	5.0
2729	Tamarind	Imp	Green	III	8,700	1.15	Exotic	22%	Very Cold	620 million	Military	6	11	4.5
2821	Jael	Imp (*)	Green	V-W	2,900	0.26	Thin	68%	Frigid	410 million	Bureau	6	12	5.5
2921	Arcturus	Imp	Green	III	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Torrid	8,000	Captive	2	12	3.0
2928	Epirus	Imp	Green	IV	1,300	0.07	Very Thin	75%	Frigid	37 million	Dictator	2	11	4.5
3024	Lamarck	Imp	Green	V-S	7,100	0.81	Standard	33%	Tropical	820 million	Merit	4	10	5.0
3026	Thorwald	Imp	Amber	V	5,200	0.58	Thin	92%	Tropical	720 million	Military	6	11	5.0
3028	Harappa	Imp	Green	II	8,100	1.03	Standard (T)	52%	Chilly	75	Captive	6	11	2.0
3029	Kurland	Imp	Green	V-N	6,000	0.56	Dense	70%	Normal	9.6 billion	Oligarch	6	11	5.5
3127	Bolivar	Imp	Green	IV	5,300	0.58	Very Thin (T)	61%	Cool	81,000	RepDem	5	11	3.5
3130	Strackenz	Imp	Green	II	4,200	0.56	Very Thin (T)	32%	Very Cold	92	Corporate	0	12	2.0
3221	Heraklion	Imp	Green	II	3,200	0.36	Thin (T)	34%	Chilly	9,400	Corporate	1	11	2.5
3225	Jorjor	Imp	Green	IV	6,100	0.70	Thin (T)	12%	Hot	110 million	Merit	5	7	4.5

Key on pp. 62-63.



This assembly is regarded less as a sovereign governing body than as an exclusive club, a place for those who enjoy political debate to go so they won't bother anyone else. Most citizens simply ignore their government and go about their daily business. The people of Cymbeline enjoy their leisure time, and even middle-class citizens generally spend fewer than 20 hours a week at work. Offworlders coming to Cymbeline must expect any business transaction to move slowly and involve a good deal of amiable social interaction along the way.

Despite its pure-Solomani population and its proximity to the current Solomani border, Cymbeline has never been strongly committed to the Solomani Cause. The Solomani Party has a sizable presence on the planet, but the local factions are very moderate and uninterested in resistance to the Imperium.

Recently (in 1113) the Imperium established the sector's fifth research station (Epsilon) on Cymbeline. The research station is located in the highlands, and has very little contact with the native population of the planet. A few technicians and researchers from the canyon-city of Logos have been hired by the station, but they are very close-mouthed about their work. Most citizens of Cymbeline are mildly curious, but the boost to the planetary economy caused by the research station's presence has silenced any persistent questioners.

2628 SCANDIA (IMPERIAL)

Many of the Terran colonists who settled the rimward half of the Arcturus subsector were Scandinavian in origin. From about -2275 Scandia served as a focus for this migration. It was a final destination for many colonists, and a stopping-off point for others who wished to move on to Lamarck, Thorwald, or Kurland. By the time the Long Night fell, Scandia was self-sufficient and prosperous. Almost alone in its region of space, it retained some starflight capability and kept up contacts with its neighbors and with Terra.

After the Long Night, Scandia remained independent as the Third Imperium moved into the sector. Nearby Cymbeline and Tewfik became Imperial worlds, but Scandia refused incorporation until the outbreak of the Civil War halted the Imperial advance. As a result, Scandia moved directly from independence to status as a Solomani world about 740.

The Solomani Movement was popular on Scandia, although true Solomani radicalism was rare. During the Solomani period Scandia enjoyed extensive economic development, becoming an important exporter of both gravitic equipment and food. By the time of the Rim War, Scandia was a prime source of components for Solomani military equipment. Meanwhile, the local shipyard was small but produced very high-quality auxiliary craft. All of this made Scandia an important objective for Imperial military forces. After a short siege, Scandia fell to the Imperium in the last year of the Rim War.

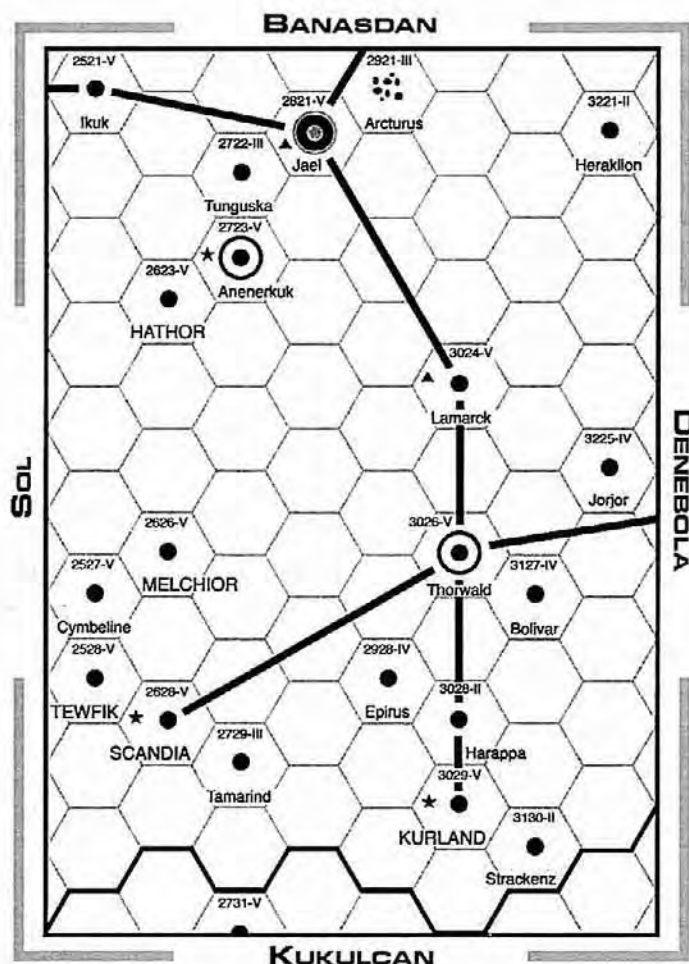
At present, Scandia is considered a critical border world by Imperial authorities. Although violent unrest is rare, the local populace strongly resents Imperial occupation and has distinct Solomani sympathies. A return to civilian rule seems unlikely in the near future. Meanwhile, various Imperial Intelligence agencies are very active on Scandia, rooting out SolSec agents and launching their own covert operations into Confederation space.

Scandia's gravitics industry has returned to health since the Rim War, and is the largest local employer. With access to the full range of TL12 technology, the planet has become one of the sector's largest exporters of gravitic equipment, grav vehicles, and small spacecraft. The Imperium has taken over part of the old shipyard facilities and established an important naval base in the system. Meanwhile, Scandia's other major industry is *fishfarming*, a form of aquaculture using advanced technology to "herd" and manage the planet's natural abundance of fish. Fish meat and processed protein meal are staples in the Scandian diet, and are exported to high-population worlds elsewhere in the sector.

ARCTURUS SUBSECTOR NAVIGATIONAL DATA

HEX	NAME	PRIMARY	COMPANIONS	SGG	PB	ORBIT	MOONS
2521	Ikuk	M8 V	-	3	1	0.04	-
2527	Cymbeline	M1 V	M8 V, D	2	1	0.21	-
2528	Tewfik	M8 V	-	3	0	0.06	-
2623	Hathor	M8 V	-	4	1	0.05	-
2626	Melchior	M3 V	-	3	0	0.37	-
2628	Scandia	G3 V	-	2	0	0.88	1 small
2722	Tunguska	F6 V	-	4	1	1.98	3 small
2723	Anenerkuk	M1 V	-	3	1	0.35	-
2729	Tamarind	M4 V	M6 V	0	0	0.30	-
2821	Jael	M8 V	M8 V	3	2	0.18*	-
2921	Arcturus	K2 III	-	0	2	5.52	-
2928	Epirus	G3 V	M7 V	2	2	5.36*	-
3024	Lamarck	M4 V	-	4	0	0.20	-
3026	Thorwald	G0 V	-	2	0	1.02	2 small
3028	Harappa	M4 V	-	1	2	0.25	-
3029	Kurland	G7 V	-	2	2	1.06	1 large
3127	Bolivar	K8 V	-	3	1	0.32	-
3130	Strackenz	F1 V	M2 V	3	2	3.54	1 small
3221	Heraklion	A5 V	D	3	0	5.02	2 small
3225	Jorjor	K2 V	M7 V	0	0	0.54	-

Key on p. 63.



2723 ANENERKUK (IMPERIAL)

Anenerkuk was originally settled by the Vilani, but the colony was abandoned after Terran victory in the Ninth Interstellar War. The planet was resettled during the Long Night by colonists from both Hathor and the Arcturus Federation worlds (see p. 97). The Hathor government seized the world by force during the Federation civil war of 206, and has maintained its authority over the planet ever since. Although Anenerkuk has been given considerable local autonomy, there is a violent pro-independence movement with strong Solomani sympathies. Offworlders are advised to use caution.

2821 Jael (IMPERIAL, SUBSECTOR CAPITAL)

Jael was never colonized by the Vilani, and was only thinly settled during the Rule of Man. Most colonists in the Arcturus region went to Banasdan, a few parsecs to coreward. During the Long Night Jael was part of the Arcturus Federation (see p. 97). Cultural and political differences made Jael restless under Banasdani domination, and about 200 the planet fought a short war of independence against Banasdan. This war is still remembered as a glorious affair by Jaelite patriots, although in truth the Federation government made almost no effort to prevent the secession. Apparently Jaelite forces harassed a few Banasdani merchant ships, were soundly defeated when they tried to lay claim to the Arcturus Belt, and then declared

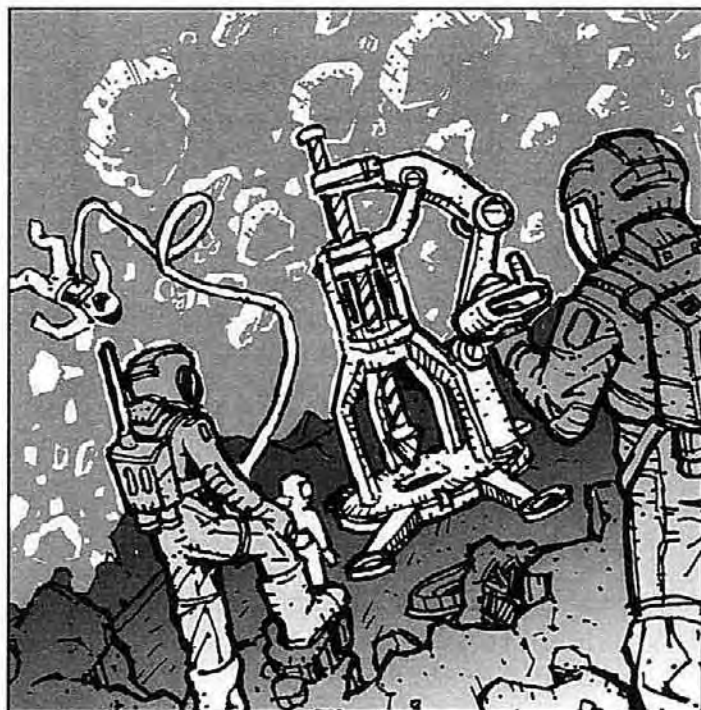
victory. Most Jaelites are still uneasy about their powerful neighbors, and they take a confrontational attitude whenever Banasdani interests appear ready to infringe on Jael's independence.

Today, Jael is a typical cold sub-terrestrial world. Its people live in domed or underground cities, mining the planet's extensive deposits of water ice to supply their life-support systems. Jael's government is nominally democratic, but real power has fallen into the hands of a set of bureaucratic agencies, which attempt to optimize society by regulating Human behavior in minute detail. This "nanny state" predates the Solomani period, and in fact the Solomani Movement had very little impact on Jaelite society. The Solomani Party monopolized the elected political offices as usual, but the swarm of unelected bureaucrats simply continued in office by paying lip service to the Cause.

After the Rim War, Jael was made subsector capital and a nexus of the Imperial Xboat system. This has brought a great deal of trade and Imperial investment to the planet, but the layers of local bureaucracy have blunted any economic impact the windfall might have had. As a result, for decades Jael has suffered recurring bouts of social unrest, driven by various individualist and libertarian movements. Most citizens agree that the planetary government is overdue for massive reform, but the various dissident factions disagree ferociously on how to go about it. A number of the reform movements have clear pro-Solomani leanings. The Duke of Arcturus and other Imperial officials are worried about the situation, but so far they have found no clear solutions.

2921 ARCTURUS (IMPERIAL)

The Arcturus Belt is administered by the government of Banasdan. It is not particularly rich or important. Its population is almost entirely composed of miners and their support personnel. They run small mining operations licensed from the Banasdan authorities.



Most of the licenses are held by large corporations, who collude to prevent smaller firms or independent miners from gaining a foothold in the belt. Labor unrest is common, but rarely gets out of hand.



3026 THORWALD (IMPERIAL)

Thorwald is a smallish but fairly ordinary Earthlike world. Its weather is somewhat warmer and more vigorous than Terra's, but it is otherwise quite hospitable for Human habitation. Its native life forms are compatible with Human biochemistry.

The planet's main claim to fame is an unusual plant species. The *leyden tree* secretes an internal metal lightning rod. When lightning strikes the tree, the charge is deflected through a net of filaments into natural cellular capacitors, where it is converted to chemical energy. This process supplements photosynthesis as a natural energy source for the tree. This unique adaptation helps the leyden tree survive in Thorwald's tropical zones, where hurricanes and violent lightning storms are common. Such a storm over a leyden forest is a spectacular sight, best viewed from a safe distance.

Thorwald was colonized immediately after discovery by Terran scouts, about -2250. The planet was rather isolated from the main routes for Terran expansion, so the colony was small and ethnically homogeneous. Most of the settlers were of Scandinavian descent, from Northern Europe or North America. Conditions on Thorwald were difficult, especially after the planet was cut off from the rest of the galaxy during the Long Night. Centuries of isolation and technological stagnation made Thorwald's people tough, pragmatic, and rather disdainful of outsiders.

Thorwald was recontacted by Banasdani scouts about 300. Although it traded freely with various other powers, it remained independent for centuries. Indeed, it only joined a multiworld

state about 730, when it freely entered into a partnership with the growing power of the Solomani Sphere. Thorwald embraced the Solomani Cause, and indeed its people tended to regard themselves as superior to other Solomani. Their racism was smug but not violent. They simply regarded other Humans as not quite intelligent or cultured enough to manage a high-tech civilization.

Despite its support for the Cause, Thorwald was never of great importance to the Solomani Confederation. It fell to the Imperium late in the Rim War, without much resistance. Today it is a quiet world, although anti-Imperial resentment simmers. Offworlders are treated politely, but they are not accepted into local society or treated as friends. The Imperial authorities are often faced with work slowdowns, nonviolent demonstrations, and other peaceful forms of resistance. A few small dissident groups have taken to living in the outback, using mountainous country or the leyden forests as cover to avoid Imperial patrols. Even these groups do not normally attack Imperial forces, although unwary offworlders traveling in the outback have sometimes come to grief. This continuing low-level resistance, coupled with the planet's hazardous weather patterns, has prompted the TAS to give Thorwald an Amber Zone rating.

3028 HARAPPA (IMPERIAL)

Harappa was apparently the home of a Human minor race, which once attained a Bronze Age level of technology. Unfortunately, about 50,000 years ago the planet entered on its current phase of volcanic activity, which polluted the atmosphere and plunged the world into an ice age. The Harappan civilization was apparently unable to adapt, and during the collapse Humans died out entirely. The current settlement is a scientific station, maintained by the University of Kurland and devoted to archaeological studies.



JARDIN SUBSECTOR WORLDS

HEX	NAME	ALLEGIANCE	ZONE	STARPORT	DIAMETER	GRAVITY	HYDROGRAPHIC %		POPULATION	CR	WTN
							ATMOSPHERE	CLIMATE		GOV TYPE	TL
0136	Swinburne	Sol	Green	III	6,800	0.70	Very Thin (T) None	Tropical	4.1 million	AthDem	0 9 4.0
0138	Erech	Sol	Green	III	8,300	1.06	Thin (T) 40%	Very Hot	330,000	Multiple	4 9 3.5
0231	Luzon	Sol	Green	II	4,000	0.36	Very Thin (T) None	Cold	91,000	Anarchy	0 7 2.5
0233	Jardin	Sol (*)	Green	V-N	4,100	0.55	Standard 68%	Cool	4.2 billion	Dictator	6 10 5.5
0237	Theseus	Sol	Green	IV	7,200	0.82	Exotic 27%	Tropical	81 million	RepDem	2 11 4.5
0239	Barsoom	Sol	Green	V-N	2,400	0.27	Thin 36%	Warm	3.6 billion	Bureau	6 10 5.5
0240	Gladstone	Sol	Green	V	8,800	0.98	Standard 72%	Normal	35 million	Techno	5 10 5.0
0331	Liberte	Sol	Green	IV	800	0.04	None None	Frigid	840 million	Merit	4 10 5.0
0332	Pilgham	Sol	Green	IV	4,000	0.38	Thin (T) 19%	Very Cold	1.6 billion	Captive	6 9 5.5
0335	Miasma	Sol	Green	III	6,100	0.90	Standard (T) 83%	Warm	270,000	Anarchy	0 9 3.5
0432	Kraken	Sol	Green	III	5,000	0.67	Standard (T) 100%	Chilly	970,000	Merit	4 9 3.5
0434	Durgha	Sol	Green	IV	6,000	0.67	Trace 16%	Frozen	22,000	Anarchy	0 10 3.5
0437	Dolor	Sol	Green	IV-N	2,100	0.12	Trace 8%	Frigid	950 million	Merit	4 10 5.0
0438	Zhongguo	Sol	Green	IV	4,000	0.42	Thin (T) 44%	Cool	16 million	AthDem	1 10 4.5
0440	Ormadz	Sol	Green	IV	2,800	0.31	None None	Torrid	870,000	Bureau	6 10 4.0
0532	Cadmus	Sol	Green	III	5,200	0.53	Very Thin 16%	Normal	82,000	AthDem	2 9 3.0
0533	Skyron	Sol	Green	IV	2,700	0.12	Trace 20%	Frigid	39,000	Oligarch	2 10 3.5
0536	Chinon	Sol	Green	III	6,300	0.86	Dense (T) 62%	Normal	390 million	RepDem	4 9 4.5
0632	Sionnach	Sol	Green	III	4,800	0.49	Very Thin 30%	Cool	2,700	Captive	6 10 3.0
0637	Nonsuch	Sol	Green	III	3,800	0.36	Very Thin 44%	Frozen	830	Corporate	0 10 2.5
0639	Ptolemy	Sol	Green	IV	5,000	0.52	Thin (T) 31%	Normal	8.4 million	Merit	4 10 4.0
0640	Arisia	Sol	Green	IV	5,400	0.60	Standard (T) 98%	Warm	630,000	Captive	4 11 4.0
0832	Wallach	Sol	Green	II	4,300	0.55	Standard (T) 83%	Tropical	64,000	Techno	1 9 3.0
0833	Thalassa	Sol	Green	V	4,300	0.76	Dense 98%	Cold	28 million	Merit	6 11 5.0
0835	Odysseus	Sol	Green	V	6,100	0.68	Thin 94%	Warm	530 million	Theo	6 11 5.0

Key on pp. 62-63.

JARDIN SUBSECTOR

Most of the Solomani Confederation's portion of the sector was only sparsely populated before the establishment of the Solomani Autonomous Region. Settlement of the Jardin subsector began especially late, with the first colonies appearing only after the end of the Long Night. Furthermore, the subsector contains very few worlds which might be regarded as Human-habitable.

As a result the population is low, and political and economic organization are haphazard throughout the subsector. Only in the last few decades has there been a surge of real prosperity, as cross-border trade with the prosperous worlds of the Albadawi subsector increases.

The local Confederation naval presence is small, and has difficulty providing adequate patrol coverage to the entire subsector. As a result, piracy is endemic. Travel along the Xboat routes is reasonably safe, but travelers are advised to use caution when venturing into the subsector's "outback." The interior regions of the subsector have been rated as an Amber travel zone by the TAS.

The primary conflict in this sector is between various Solomani Party factions. The ruling regime on the subsector capital is purist, centralist, and ruthlessly violent (see *Solomani Factions*, p. 28). Most of the low-population worlds in the subsector have contrary political beliefs: a pragmatic view of Solomani supremacy, a preference for local autonomy, and a desire for peace.

As Jardin tries to impose its extreme political views throughout the subsector, other world governments resist, and fallout from this strife often reaches the highest levels of the Solomani Party.

0233 JARDIN (SOLOMANI, SUBSECTOR CAPITAL)

About 450 there was a wave of colonization from Terra to spinward, composed primarily of French-speaking cultural revivalists. The most stubbornly independent of these Francophones arrived on Jardin. The new colony's founders took an unusually long view, and invested in heavy industry and shipyard facilities from the earliest years of the settlement. Their plan was to build a new "pocket empire" in the region, which could maintain its independence from the Imperium, the Old Earth Union, or any other aggressive power. By 550 they had reduced the nearby Pilgham colony to client-state status, and were sponsoring new settlements on several other nearby worlds.

At first, the plan seemed to be working, especially after the Civil War halted Imperial expansion to rimward. Then Jardin's dreams of empire were crushed by the Solomani Movement. Soon after the foundation of the Solomani Autonomous Region, a Solomani fleet entered the Jardin subsector and demanded the planet's allegiance. Outgunned, the planetary government could only agree. Soon afterward, the Solomani government opened the rest of the subsector for rapid colonization, ignoring Jardinese claims to the territory. Jardin resisted as long as it could, but in 786 a revolution supported by radical Solomani Party factions toppled the semi-democratic government of the time. By 800 Jardin was totally dominated by the Solomani Party with the aid of SolSec.

Today, Jardin is a grim police state, almost the epitome of the totalitarian Solomani world. A corrupt elite uses Solomani ideology to cling to power, while the paranoid and apathetic populace struggles for daily survival.



Ironically, the old dreams of Jardinese imperialism have come true. The planet serves as the Confederation's subsector capital, it hosts the subsector's largest naval base, and its economy dominates local trade. The human cost ensures that only demagogues are pleased at the fact.

Visitors to Jardin find the most disturbing element of local society to be its eradication of "normal" family relationships. Since about 900, marriage has been forbidden on Jardin. A state-run Eugenics Bureau theoretically controls all procreative activity among the planet's citizens, deciding who may produce children with whom. Parents often have no relationship with

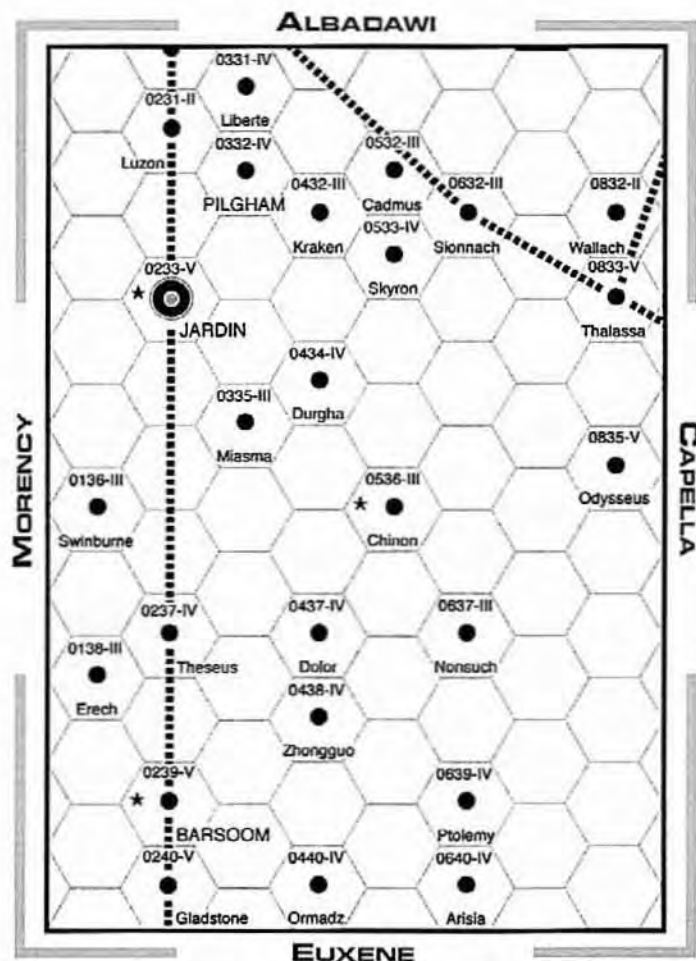
each other aside from the minimum necessary to produce children. Children are raised from birth in state-run creches, where they are taught from an early age to obey the state and serve the Solomani Cause. The government of Jardin claims that this process produces "the perfect Solomani man." Outsiders observe that decades of this system have led to very high rates of sociopathic and even psychopathic behavior. Few other Solomani worlds have followed Jardin's example in this area of social engineering.

0239 BARSOOM (SOLOMANI)

Barsoom is an unusual world in several respects. Although it is quite small, it retains a thin oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere and a significant amount of water. Although it is close to its red dwarf sun, it is not tide-locked and has two small moons. These moons appear to be captured planetoids, yet there is no planetoid belt in the system. The first expedition to explore the planet speculated about planetary engineering performed by a pre-Human civilization, but no hard evidence to support the theory ever appeared. The planet's name is obscure in origin, and is apparently not from any known Terran language.

Barsoom was actually the first world in the subsector to be colonized. The initial settlement was established about 300, by an isolationist group from the Near Boötes Cluster. The colony thrived, and about 500 it began heavy investment in space industries in response to the threat of Jardinese meddling. By the time the Solomani Autonomous Region government moved to integrate the subsector, Barsoom was a prosperous high-tech world with its own small Navy. Solomani ideology was not especially popular on the planet, but the local regime saw the advantage of aligning itself with the Solomani Movement right away. This move helped Barsoom avoid the dominance of radical party factions and SolSec.

For centuries, the citizens of Barsoom have known that the planetary ecology is quite fragile. Unrestrained industrial development could easily ruin the biosphere, rendering the planet uninhabitable. The government therefore regulates all on-planet economic activity quite closely. Taxes are very high, with much of the revenue being spent on ecological protection and desert reclamation. On the other hand, industries located in orbit or elsewhere in the system are more unconstrained. Traditionally,



entrepreneurs and risk-takers move off-planet to seek their fortunes. Local political theory recognizes a variety of non-economic rights, so Barsoomians do enjoy some civil freedom.

Recently the government of Barsoom has taken independent action against the pirates who plague the subsector. Free traders and subsidized merchants have been offered incentives to open trade routes into the subsector interior. Meanwhile, a small armed flotilla has been organized to "assist" the Confederation Navy in patrolling the region. These measures have not yet had any measurable effect on local corsair activity. Even so, they are opening trade opportunities for Barsoom and bringing the world more prestige in Confederation politics.

0332 PILGHAM (SOLOMANI)

Pilgham is a protectorate of nearby Jardin. Social conditions are very poor. Jardinese corporations ruthlessly exploit local labor and resources, and SolSec and the Jardinese secret police cooperate to quash any dissent.

0632 SIONNACH (SOLOMANI)

The Sionnach colony is an "exile colony" established by the government of nearby Skyron. Dissidents and enemies of Skyron's dominant oligarchy are sent to Sionnach to work under harsh conditions.

0637 NONSUCH (SOLOMANI)

The Nonsuch outpost is a research station owned by the Solomani corporation ConTech. The starport district is an open town, which attracts the dregs of the subsector. Security at the research station is very tight. No one outside ConTech appears to know what is being researched there, although wild rumors are widespread involving nanotechnology or radical genetic engineering.



JARDIN SUBSECTOR NAVIGATIONAL DATA

HEX	NAME	PRIMARY	COMPANIONS	GG	PB	ORBIT	MOONS
0136	Swinburne	M6 V	D		0 0	0.11	-
0138	Erech	M5 V	-		0 1	0.12	-
0231	Luzon	G9 V	-		5 3	0.96	-
0233	Jardin	M3 V	-		2 0	0.30	-
0237	Theseus	M8 V	D		3 0	0.04	-
0239	Barsoom	M5 V	-		2 0	0.22	2 small
0240	Gladstone	M8 V	-		0 1	0.04	-
0331	Liberte	M5 V	-		2 0	0.68*	-
0332	Pilgham	M8 V	-		2 1	0.08	-
0335	Miasma	M2 V	M8 V		4 2	0.27	-
0432	Kraken	M1 V	M2 V		5 3	0.38	-
0434	Durgha	M4 V	-		5 0	0.26	-
0437	Dolor	M1 V	M4 V		4 3	1.24*	-
0438	Zhongguo	K8 V	-		3 2	0.38	-
0440	Ormadz	M0 V	M3 V		3 1	0.16	-
0533	Skyron	M5 V	M8 V		2 0	0.68*	-
0536	Chinon	M1 V	M7 V		2 2	0.36	-
0632	Sionnach	F6 V	M1 V		2 1	1.95	3 small
0637	Nonsuch	M1 V	M5 V		0 0	0.33	-
0639	Ptolemy	M1 V	D		4 1	0.39	-
0640	Arisia	M8 V	-		5 1	0.05	-
0832	Wallach	M0 V	-		4 0	0.38	-
0833	Thalassa	M1 V	-		0 1	0.31	-
0835	Odysseus	M4 V	M6 V		2 0	0.18	-

Key on p. 63.

0639 PTOLEMY (SOLOMANI)

Ptolemy was colonized about 850, by Solomani fleeing Imperial "persecution" in their former homes in the Antares sector. The colony group was unusually large and cohesive, especially considering how far it had come. Although the settlers were publicly loyal to the Solomani Movement, they were otherwise very secretive. Since the colony's foundation, outsiders have rarely learned anything significant about Ptolemaic society. This is particularly strange given the planet's relative proximity to the current Solomani capital, only a few parsecs to rimward.

There are persistent rumors of imperialist ambitions on the part of the Ptolemaic government. Agents from Ptolemy may have been behind the abortive coup which destabilized the government of nearby Arisia in 1058. Certainly Ptolemy was in a position to capitalize on its neighbor's misfortune, winning the Secretariat's permission to hold Arisia as a protectorate. This gave Ptolemy more territory to develop and access to Arisia's superior technological base. Meanwhile, Ptolemy is also suspected of harboring at least some of the pirates which have been active in the subsector in recent years.

SolSec and the Confederation military have been trying for years to prove some of the rumors about Ptolemy. So far they have apparently had little success, because neither has acted directly against the planetary government. Rumor has it that Ptolemaic security is both ruthless and effective.

0640 ARISIA (SOLOMANI)

The current government of Arisia is a puppet regime, propped up by a military garrison from nearby Ptolemy.

CAPELLA SUBSECTOR WORLDS

HEX	NAME	ALLEGIANCE	ZONE	STARPORT	DIAMETER	GRAVITY	HYDROGRAPHIC %		CLIMATE	POPULATION	GOV TYPE	CR	TL	WTN
0931	Yenisei	Sol	Green	V	800	0.05	Trace	31%	Frigid	19 million	Multiple	5	10	5.0
0938	Cicero	Sol	Green	III	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Torrid	13 million	Dictator	6	9	4.5
1032	Chrysolite	Sol	Green	V	5,100	0.51	Thin (T)	72%	Warm	3.2 billion	Captive	4	10	5.5
1034	Twylo	Sol (*)	Green	V-N	4,700	0.48	Thin	9%	Very Cold	30 billion	Dictator	4	11	6.0
1035	Poictesme	Sol	Green	V	4,100	0.54	Standard	82%	Normal	620 million	Techno	2	10	5.0
1136	Tarsus	Sol	Green	V	6,800	0.84	Dense	50%	Normal	870 million	Captive	4	10	5.0
1137	Haddad	Sol	Red	0	3,800	0.61	Standard (T)	100%	Chilly	None	None	0	0	0.0
1140	Labrys	Sol	Red	0	9,300	1.31	Standard (T)	64%	Normal	2.3 million	AthDem	0	8	0.5
1234	Luuru	Sol	Green	V	9,100	1.20	Corrosive	71%	Very Cold	80 million	Oligarch	2	10	5.0
1237	Aeneas	Sol	Green	III	4,000	0.38	Very Thin	82%	Frozen	1.2 million	RepDem	6	9	4.0
1239	Hibernia	Sol	Green	III	6,200	0.68	Thin (T)	71%	Hot	8,500	Captive	3	10	3.0
1332	Mirabilis	Sol	Green	V-N	4,300	0.40	Thin	31%	Normal	6.3 billion	Techno	5	11	5.5
1337	Sequoyah	Sol	Green	V	4,400	0.78	Dense	72%	Warm	5.3 billion	Techno	0	11	5.5
1339	Aegir	Sol	Green	V	7,300	0.93	Standard	96%	Warm	520 million	Merit	3	10	5.0
1340	Dirac	Sol	Green	III	4,900	0.50	Very Thin (T)	16%	Very Cold	490	Anarchy	0	10	2.5
1435	Teucer	Sol	Green	V-N	6,900	0.87	Thin	91%	Chilly	3.8 billion	Captive	4	11	5.5
1437	Saxe	Sol	Green	V	7,300	0.85	Standard	32%	Normal	11 billion	Multiple	5	11	6.0
1439	Aquitaine	Sol	Green	V	8,100	1.07	Dense	74%	Cool	2.8 billion	Dictator	4	11	5.5
1440	Capella	Sol	Green	IV	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Torrid	320,000	Bureau	4	9	4.0
1533	Sarpedon	Imp	Green	V-N	3,000	0.24	Trace	21%	Frozen	620 million	Military	6	10	5.0
1537	Polyphemos	Sol	Green	V	3,400	0.38	Thin	80%	Cold	20 billion	Dictator	6	11	6.0
1538	Vantage	Sol	Green	V-N	8,400	1.19	Very Dense	96%	Very Hot	660 million	Merit	6	11	5.0
1540	Vyborg	Sol	Green	V	7,400	0.84	Thin	50%	Cool	93 million	Merit	4	11	5.0
1636	Baraka	Sol	Green	V	4,000	0.38	Thin	56%	Normal	6.7 billion	Multiple	4	10	5.5
1637	Krokinole	Sol	Green	V	2,000	0.11	Trace	10%	Frigid	70 million	RepDem	1	10	5.0

Key on pp. 62-63.

CAPELLA SUBSECTOR

Most of the rimward quarter of the sector was uninhabited until relatively recent times. The major exception is the Near Boötes Cluster: no less than 12 habitable worlds within 3 parsecs of Vantage.

This extraordinarily rich group was discovered early in the Rule of Man. It drew many colonists, even at a time when most Terran emigrants were setting out for Vilani space to make their fortunes. By the time the cluster was cut off from Terra by the Long Night, it was already densely settled.

The worlds of the cluster have historically had a close relationship. Interstellar trade resumed quite early. About -400, they formed a defensive agreement when faced with aggression from the Old Earth Union.

The resulting Boötean League never joined the Imperium. It still exists today, retaining some of its ancient regional privileges even under the Solomani Confederation. For decades after the Rim War, the league's industrial might enabled it to dominate Confederation politics. Its moderating influence helped to prevent renewed war against the Imperium, and did much to promote cross-border trade.

Unfortunately, a recent falling-out among several of the league's leading worlds threatens to end the moderate coalition's preeminence. The ruling class of Polyphemos has developed imperial ambitions, hoping to win dominance of the cluster and thus a leading position within the Confederation as a whole. To this end, Polyphemos has made several alliances and moved to reduce the influence of potential rivals. A "cold war" may break out in the near future, with the former league allies choosing sides in a conflict with political, social, and economic aspects.

1032 CHRYSOLITE (SOLOMANI)

Chrysolite was originally settled from Twylo and is still governed from there. Chrysolite's society is very similar to that of Twylo, although living conditions are much more pleasant, and the division between elite and underclass was never as pronounced. As a result, social reform is proceeding more quickly.

1034 TWYLO (SOLOMANI, SUBSECTOR CAPITAL)

Twylo should not be a habitable world. It has no oceans, only a scattering of frozen lakes, and seas which harbor no photosynthetic life. In any case, the planet is too young to have evolved an oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere through the normal mechanisms. Yet it has such an atmosphere, perfectly breathable although thin. The reason is the planet's unique native life, based on a biochemistry very different from that found on Earth.

The *sand dollars* of Twylo's wide desert areas are actually an ergivorous life-form. They use the harsh light of Twylo's primary to fuel an electrochemical reaction, freeing oxygen from various oxides in the soil. In effect, the sand dollars "eat rust," using the liberated heavy elements in their metabolism and releasing free oxygen into the air. The natural process of oxidation is therefore offset by the metabolism of hundreds of billions of sand dollars. Sand dollars and their related life forms are a mystery in themselves, as scientists have yet to determine how they could have evolved so early in Twylo's history. In the meantime, they make a unique export product. The shells of certain sand dollar species are quite beautiful and have a fair value as novelty keepsakes.

Although Twylo is habitable, it is not particularly pleasant. The thin atmosphere, the hot climate, and the primary's searing ultraviolet output all make unprotected life on the surface difficult. Even so, the planet's mineral riches brought heavy settlement, beginning sometime late in the Long Night. Today, Twylo is an important industrial world, one of the Confederation's busiest producers of heavy industrial equipment, vehicles, and starships. The bulk of the population lives in vast urban hives, clustered around the infrequent lakes and seas. The immense deserts of the "outback" are usually visited only by mining robots and their overseers.

Once, Twylo's society was almost a parody of the gritty corporate state. Almost the entire planetary economy was based on export industries, and the planet's corporate elites regarded the local population as a source of cheap labor rather than a viable market for goods. As a result, living conditions were harsh even in the cities, with strict rationing of water, food, energy, and consumer goods. The majority of the population had only a basic education and existed at a subsistence level. Most citizens worked a few hours a day to earn basic credit, which they spent on alcohol, mild narcotics, and empty entertainment. A few ambitious sorts used any means, fair or foul, to get corporate positions for themselves or their children. This system naturally bred a great deal of corruption, paranoia, and violence.

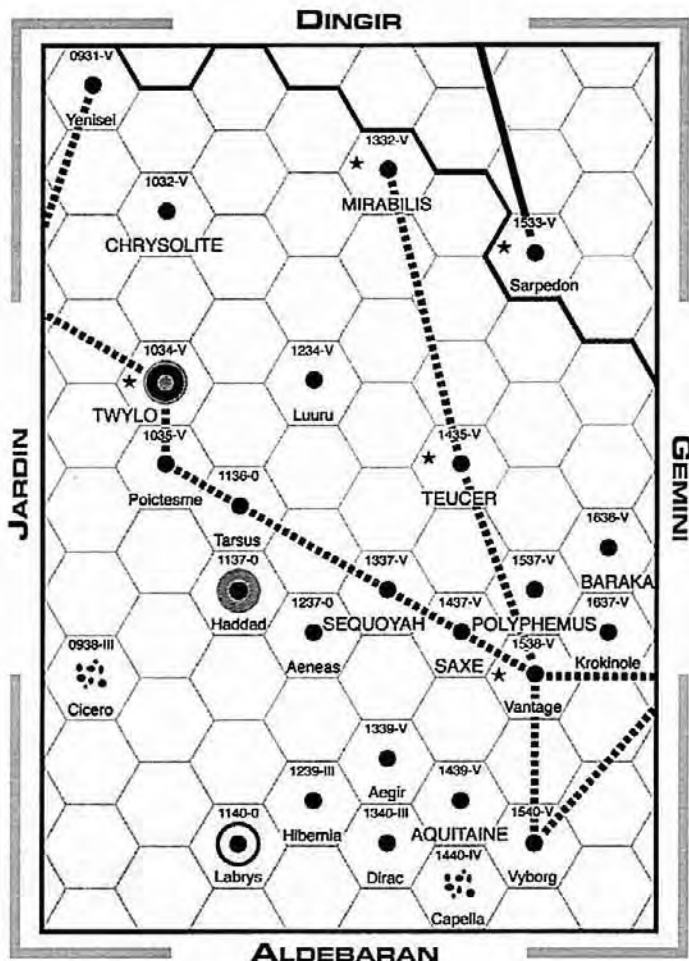
About 1050, however, a particularly bad series of riots led to the partial destruction and abandonment of the city of New Tabora. This gave the charismatic speaker of the General Assembly the political leverage he needed to press for reforms. Many of the planet's dominant corporations embarked on a new strategy of "local development." They invested in infrastructure and education for the planet's billions. Consumer-goods industries began to expand local markets. Labor unions, once ruthlessly stamped out, were slowly allowed to organize and engage in collective bargaining.

Over the 70 years since then, the "Twylo Renaissance" has had a marked effect on the health of local society. Many billions remain in the apathetic "underclass," and mob violence is still an occasional problem. However, educational levels have improved markedly. While the local standard of living is still not high, most citizens can now afford clean living quarters, decent medical care, and a few luxuries. Meanwhile, the influx of new talent from the previously ignored masses has much improved Twylo's industrial productivity. Each speaker of the General Assembly has carefully chosen his successor to prevent any loss of momentum in the ongoing reform process. Many citizens are very aware that one reactionary or even incompetent speaker could bring the process to a crashing halt.

Twylo is the capital of the Capella subsector, hosting a Confederation Naval Base and the sector headquarters for SolSec. The local population is strongly committed to the Solomani Cause.

1136 TARSUS (SOLOMANI)

Tarsus is a rich and pleasant world, nominally a colony of Sequoyah but with almost complete self-rule. The losing faction in the Sequoyan civil war of -200 settled on Tarsus, establishing a more traditional representative democracy there. Relations between the two worlds are presently cordial.



1137 HADDAD (SOLOMANI)

The Solomani Confederation has interdicted Haddad, preventing any exploration or settlement. The reason for the interdiction is classified.

1140 LABRYS (SOLOMANI)

Labrys is the homeworld of a minor sentient species. The Solomani Confederation interdicts the system to prevent any contact with the inhabitants, who are at a TL8 stage of development. The aliens are apparently uninterested in space exploration, and surprisingly seem unaware of the existence of Human civilization.

1239 HIBERNIA (SOLOMANI)

Hibernia is a relatively recent colony, established by corporate interests based on nearby Aegir.

1337 SEQUOYAH (SOLOMANI)

Sequoyah was one of the first worlds of the Near Boötes Cluster to be settled, sometime around -2150. Many of the original colonists claimed family or spiritual descent from the aboriginal "Indian" populations of North America. Within a few generations, their cultural preferences had become ingrained, and some aspects of this original cultural slant can still be seen today.

The local dialect of Galanglic includes an unusual number of loan-words from languages such as Cherokee, Hopi, Iroquois, Lakota, and Navaho. Local culture emphasizes stoicism, courage, and respect for the natural environment.

Like the rest of the Near Boötes Cluster, Sequoyah was cut off from interstellar civilization through most of the Long Night. Historical records are sketchy, but it appears that Sequoyah went through a long period of social and political turmoil, culminating about -200 in a civil war and political revolution. The result was the foundation of the Free Republic of Sequoyah, which continues in existence to the present day.



The republic is an extremely libertarian state, once characterized by an offworld observer as "an exercise in herding cats." The government maintains no police or military forces of its own. All matters of domestic law enforcement and planetary defense are contracted out to private firms. These private armies also provide security for local communities, corporations, or even individuals. Judicial functions are likewise contracted out to a class of professional arbitrators.

The highest government authority is a planetary Congress, which theoretically acts as the assembly of all citizens. Normally, citizens give their proxy votes to someone who sits in Congress, but these proxies can be reassigned at any time. Any citizen can come before Congress to speak his mind, whether he holds any proxies or not. Congress has the function of passing new laws, but it may only do so when a large super-majority of all citizens have assigned their proxy votes to representatives who are physically present. New laws are not passed often.

Another note of interest of offworld visitors: the Sequoyan constitution defines any Human who resides on the planet for more than one week to be a "citizen." Jokes still circulate about the Imperial free-trader captain, laid over for ship repairs, who was invited to speak to Congress about cross-border tariffs. His pungent comments reached a wide audience through the "Congress-watching" media channels, and he found himself carrying

the proxies of 12 million Sequoyans by the time he reached his closing remarks.

Very few things are actually *illegal* on Sequoyah. Almost all crimes are violations of individual rights: murder or assault are violations of the right to life, theft is a violation of the right to property, fraud is a violation of the right to clear and binding contracts, etc. Simply owning an item is almost never illegal, as long as the owner prevents it from causing harm to others. Thus, individual Sequoyans can own all manner of military equipment, up to and including heavy weapons. Ownership of weapons of mass destruction is one of the few things that *is* illegal . . .

In practice, such extreme libertarianism might seem to be a recipe for the domination of the wealthy over everyone else. In practice, any tendency for the rich to manipulate the system for their own benefit is offset by the existence of the Warrior Societies. These private militias are bound by a strict chivalric code, which requires them to protect the rights of others no matter what their ability to pay. The Warrior Societies are the toughest private forces on Sequoyah, and their intervention has often held would-be statists or corporate tyrants in check. The Warrior Societies are also much sought after as mercenaries on other worlds.

Sequoyah has always had an uneasy relationship with the Solomani Cause. The Solomani Party has many active cells on the planet, and most citizens are more or less enthusiastic supporters of the Cause. On the other hand, simply failing to support the Cause is not illegal on Sequoyah. SolSec can't count on the support of local authorities when acting against dissension, and dissidents are likely to be very well-armed. As a result, the local SolSec branch operates with extreme care. Puppet organizations are used to influence public opinion or strike at a dissident's finances. If none of that works, covert abduction or assassination may (very rarely) be tried.

Sequoyah has normally enjoyed good relations with the other worlds of the Near Boötes Cluster, but in recent years that relationship has soured. The new alliance of Aquitaine and Polyphemos has moved several times against Sequoyan interests, stepping up trade competition and intervening against pro-Sequoyan governments on nearby Saxe. The alliance has also been openly critical of Sequoyan moderation, recommending that SolSec act more openly to bring the planet's population in line with the Solomani Cause.

1435 TEUCER (SOLOMANI)

Teucer was placed under the control of Polyphemos in 904 after the collapse of the planetary government. The Polyphemian protectorate is ostensibly intended to help Teucer recover its stability, but in fact the Polyphemian aristocracy is ruthlessly exploiting the planet.

1439 AQUITAINE (SOLOMANI)

Aquitaine is another "ethnic" colony, established about -2100. In this case, the colonists were primarily from French-speaking countries, particularly France itself, Quebec, and a number of West African nations. Inter-marriage was common from the earliest days of the colony, and under Aquitaine's bright sun dark skin proved to be an advantage, so almost all today's Aquitainians are of olive to deep brown complexion.

The planetary society is bilingual, with Galanglic as well as the local descendant of French being taught in the schools.

The Long Night hit Aquitaine hard, as a local shipyard industry had not yet been established and the planet was isolated from the Near Boötes Cluster by a jump-2 gap. By about -1700 the planet had slid back to TL7 and planetary government had collapsed. Reunification occurred about -1000 under a warlord named Henri Kientega, who titled himself King Henri V of France and Aquitaine. This claim to continuity with the French kings was factually ludicrous, but it appealed to Aquitainian cultural vanity and seems to have helped solidify Henri's rule.

There have been several changes of dynasty in the last 2,000 years, but Aquitaine is still ruled by the monarchy established by King Henri. There have been almost 100 monarchs, many of them ruling queens since the abandonment of the Salic Law about -200. There is no titled aristocracy, as King Henri had no desire to create potential rivals for his heirs. Military, business, and technical leaders are invited to join the Royal Advisory Council. Meanwhile, the people elect members to the Estates-General, a parliamentary assembly. The Estates-General originally was a powerless body which simply advised the monarchs, but over the past few centuries it has taken on greater influence over the state. The monarch is still the supreme executive and legislative officer of the planet, but in practice he rarely makes new laws without the agreement of the Estates-General.

Aquitaine joined the growing Boötean League in 400, taking advantage of offworld trade to finance rapid development in science and technology. Today, Aquitaine is a leading member of the Boötean League, best known for its expertise in gravitic technology. Most of the "cloud-cities" of nearby Vantage (see p. 122) are built around Aquitainian grav modules. Aquitaine is also a major exporter of luxury items, particularly food delicacies and superb wines.

CAPELLA SUBSECTOR NAVIGATIONAL DATA

HEX	NAME	PRIMARY	COMPANIONS	GG	PB	ORBIT	MOONS
0931	Yenisei	M7 V	-	0	1	0.30	-
0938	Cicero	K5 III	M2 V	2	0	7.66	-
1032	Chrysolite	G3 V	-	1	1	1.11	1 small
1034	Twylo	A6 V	-	3	0	3.65	2 small
1035	Poictesme	M8 V	-	1	0	0.05	-
1136	Tarsus	M2 V	-	3	0	0.34	-
1137	Haddad	M0 V	-	2	2	0.30	-
1140	Labrys	M2 V	M7 V	5	0	0.27	-
1234	Luuru	K1 V	D	0	2	0.65	1 small
1237	Aeneas	M1 V	-	3	3	0.38	-
1239	Hibernia	G4 V	-	4	1	0.87	1 small
1332	Mirabilis	G5 V	-	5	0	0.75	-
1337	Sequoyah	M0 V	-	2	0	0.41	-
1339	Acgir	M4 V	-	2	0	0.18	-
1340	Dirac	M0 V	-	3	0	0.51	-
1435	Teucer	M0 V	-	2	0	0.35	-
1437	Saxe	K4 V	-	1	2	0.48	-
1439	Aquitaine	F9 V	-	5	0	1.50	3 small
1440	Capella	G4 III	M1V, M5 V	3	2	4.50	-
1533	Sarpedon	G5 V	-	1	0	1.07	-
1537	Polyphemus	M1 V	M3 V, D	4	1	0.49	-
1538	Vantage	M2 V	-	4	3	0.27	-
1540	Vyborg	M8 V	D	1	2	0.04	-
1636	Baraka	K6 V	M0 V, M6 V	4	1	0.43	-
1637	Krokinole	A6 V	-	3	1	18.6*	-

Key on p. 63.

Aquitaine is well-known for its elaborate code of courtesy. Blunt speech or abrupt action of any kind are considered inappropriate. In particular, any mention of *profit* is considered extremely rude. Businessmen on Aquitaine always operate under the pretense that they are meeting for purely social purposes. They spend a great deal of time on small talk before approaching the business purpose of the meeting. Any agreement is treated as an exchange of personal favors, not a transaction that might be profitable for either party. This code of courtesy is most prevalent among the planet's upper classes, but all segments of society imitate it to some degree. Even SolSec monitors are unfailingly polite! Naturally, offworlders have a great deal of trouble adjusting to this system, and are likely to suffer reaction penalties in any social situation.

Aquitaine has traditionally been lukewarm in its support of the Solomani Cause, and until recent years was a force for moderation in Confederation politics. Since the coronation of Queen Marie III in 1108, however, a more radical faction of the Party has gained control of the Estates-General. With the charismatic young Queen's support, the radicals have pushed aside the business-backed Centrist Alliance, forcing Aquitaine onto a more confrontational course. As part of this strategy, Aquitaine has recently entered into a formal alliance with Polyphemus.

1537 POLYPHEMUS (SOLOMANI)

Polyphemus is a freak among worlds. Long ago, it became tide-locked to its red-dwarf primary, its volatile compounds freezing out on the night face. Quite recently, however (in the last million years or so) some cataclysmic event restarted the planet's rotation with respect to its primary. How this happened is not yet known, although it's clear that there was a massive release of energy. Most of the planet's surface rocks show signs of melting, and the planet's core is much warmer than would be expected for such a small world.

Surface conditions on Polyphemus are cold and unpleasant for most of the year. Surface water melts only in the tropics or in the temperate summer. The atmosphere is almost too thin for unaided breathing, although centuries of terraforming effort have introduced a significant amount of free oxygen into the air. There are no native life forms, although many hardy (and gene-tailored) Terran species have been introduced, forming a sparse ecosystem covering most of the land surface.

Settlement came early in the first wave of colonization in the Near Boötes Cluster, about -2150. The first colonists came for the planet's mineral wealth, including some of the richest lanthanum deposits ever discovered up to that time. A later wave of settlement occurred around -2000, sponsored by the Spartan Brotherhood, a Terran radical movement of the time. The Spartans were nihilists, dedicated to what they called a "natural aristocracy" of physically perfect, mentally brilliant, utterly ruthless individuals. They found Polyphemus congenial, and soon dominated planetary society. After Polyphemus was cut off from Terra by the Long Night, the Brotherhood waged a short but bloody civil war, taking over the entire planet.

Today, the descendants of the original Brotherhood are the titled aristocrats of Polyphemus. Aristocratic families make up about 1% of the population.

Only male aristocrats have political rights, while women and members of the lower classes are not represented in the planetary Assembly. Commoners do have some rights. They may own property and go into business, and they may serve in the planetary defense forces (under aristocratic officers). Indeed, remarkable success in business or heroism in the military are almost the only ways in which a commoner might gain aristocratic status. On the other hand, commoners have no freedom of speech, religion, or assembly, and they enjoy no right to privacy.

The Polyphemian aristocracy keeps its position by way of an elaborate police-state apparatus. The secret police (called the *Krypteia*) is charged with spying on the lower classes and ruthlessly stamping out any sign of dissension. As might be expected given their ideology, the aristocrats support the Solomani Cause almost to a man. The *Krypteia* has worked hand-in-hand with SolSec from the earliest days of the Solomani Autonomous Region. Since the Rim War, Polyphemus has become an industrial powerhouse, and Polyphemian corporations have become very influential in Confederation politics.

About 1080, the Kellerman family rose to prominence in the planetary Assembly. In the last 40 years, three members of the family have been elected to the senior executive office of *Ephor*. The Kellermans have directed the planet's foreign policy toward a more anti-Imperial and confrontational stance. Recently, the Ephor Ian Kellerman won a major foreign-policy coup by marrying Queen Marie III of Aquitaine. This relationship strongly encouraged the formation of a formal alliance, upending the moderate coalition that has normally dominated Boötean League politics. Kellerman is quite popular, although conservative aristocrats fear that he hopes to establish a hereditary monarchy, something so far unknown on Polyphemus.

1538 VANTAGE (SOLOMANI)

A traveler's first impression of Vantage is of almost unbroken, brilliant red-gold haze. A landing shuttle approaches the cloud banks carefully, then swoops in on a massive structure, floating in the sunlight among towering masses of cloud. The traveler disembarks here, and no matter how long he spends on Vantage, he is unlikely ever to see the planet's surface.

Vantage's environment is unique. At sea level the atmosphere is far too thick for Humans to breathe. Only at an altitude of several kilometers does the air become thin enough for comfort. On most such worlds, Human settlement occurs in high mountain chains, but Vantage is an ocean world with no large land-masses and no mountains of sufficient height. Here, the population lives almost entirely in the air, in great "cloud-cities" supported by gravitic technology.

The primary exploitable resource of the planet is its incredible diversity of native life. This includes a multitude of seawdwelling species, but even more remarkable is the airborne ecology. Vantage's clouds host a variety of *aeroplankton*, small plant forms which trap hydrogen gas to maintain neutral buoyancy in the air. These aeroplankton constantly circulate up and down in the cloud banks, dipping low to find moisture, rising high to expose themselves to sunlight. Along the way, they support a whole ecosystem of animal forms, ranging from krill-like creatures a fraction of an inch long all the way to great "cloud-whales" which can be up to a kilometer in length. The larger



animal forms all tend to be light and fragile, but they can still be dangerous. Some have developed powerful static-discharge mechanisms for attack or defense. The largest animals communicate through radio "voices" powerful enough to swamp most civilian transmitters. In any case, the fact that Vantage life relies heavily on hydrogen gas for buoyancy makes approaching any large animal an exercise in extreme caution.

Much of Vantage's economy relies on exploiting the native life forms. Aeroplankton can be harvested and processed for Human consumption. Meanwhile, many of the animal forms secrete unusual biochemicals. As a result, Vantage is a source of hundreds of useful drugs, including at least one broad-spectrum cancer treatment, two antiagathics, and a psionic booster. Almost all of the cloud-cities host their own cloud-farming cooperatives. Several are secretly owned by SuSAG (see p. 15).

Vantage's population lives almost entirely in the cloud-cities. There are about 100 of these, with populations averaging around 5-7 million each. Each is self-governing, most of them operating on a democratic or corporate-state model. Aside from the usual task of system defense, the planetary government of Vantage is primarily concerned with regulating cloud-farming and hunting. Each cloud-city pays an assessment based on its annual domestic product, which goes to support scientific studies of the aerial ecology, patrols in the cloud-farming zones, etc.

The first cloud-cities were established about -1800, just as the Long Night was settling in. Lacking the ability to maintain large-scale gravitic equipment, the early colonists fell back on *aerostat* technology, using solar power to support large hot-air dirigibles. During the next few centuries, maintaining civilization on Vantage was a constant struggle, but the present-day inhabitants look upon the period as a "heroic age." About -500 Vantage came back into contact with its closest neighbors, particularly Hamilcar and Polyphemus. Diplomats from Vantage did most of the work of establishing the Boötean League, and the league's capital remains the cloud-city of High Avalon. Despite its hundreds of millions, Vantage retains much of its old frontier-world flavor. Its people are tough, self-reliant, adventurous, and progressive, generally a pleasure to visit or trade with.

GEMINI SUBSECTOR

This subsector is divided between the Imperium and the Solomani Confederation. The Imperial portion is attached to the Sol subsector. The Solomani portion is technically an independent political unit. A few of the worlds in the Solomani region were colonized during the great wave of Terran settlement into the Near Boötes Cluster, about -2100. Most of the non-Cluster worlds were colonized during the Solomani period, after 700. Most of these more recently settled worlds are culturally and economically dominated by the Boötean League.

The primary conflicts of the Gemini subsector are driven from elsewhere. The growing strife within the Boötean League affects several worlds, notably Aristotle, Chernozem, and Hamilcar. The ongoing economic and political upheaval in the Kukulcan subsector (see p. 126) also has fallout here. In fact, Gemini is normally thought of as a mere "bridge" between the more thoroughly developed Capella and Kukulcan subsectors. As a result, local problems are often overlooked by Confederation institutions, allowing them to fester unchecked.

1738 HAMILCAR (SOLOMANI, SUBSECTOR CAPITAL)

Hamilcar presents Humaniti with yet another Ancient mystery, although in this case the basis of the mystery itself is unique. There is no question as to whether the Ancients were involved, or exactly what they did on Hamilcar. The mystery, in this case, is *why*.

As the first discoverers put it, Hamilcar is "a planet in a plastic bag." A million years ago, Hamilcar was a small but perfectly ordinary planet, a stony body with traces of surface ice and no significant atmosphere. The Ancients performed massive terraforming. They gave the planet enough water to cover almost the entire surface, and enough air to provide a

greenhouse effect. They then enveloped the entire planet in a thin but incredibly tough membrane, sufficient to help it retain its new atmosphere despite its weak gravitational pull. This done, they simply abandoned Hamilcar to its fate, neglecting even to "seed" the new oceans with life forms.

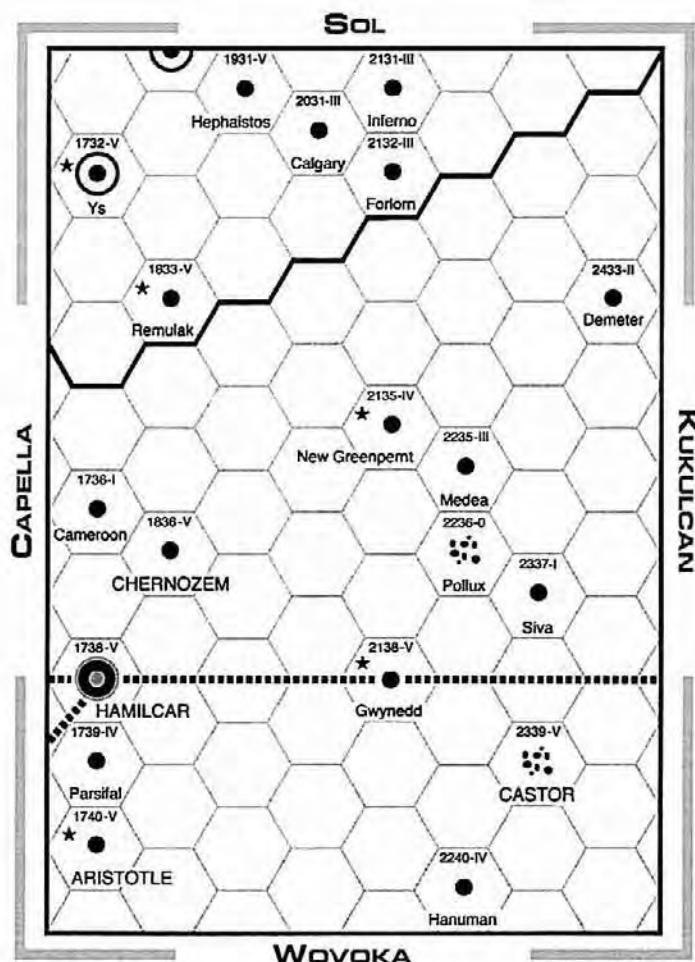
Hamilcar's protective membrane is composed of an extraordinary array of long-chain polymers, well beyond current synthetic capabilities. It is transparent to visible light and "short" infrared radiation, but almost opaque to longer wavelengths, so it supplements Hamilcar's "natural" greenhouse effect. It is tough enough to stand up to the strain of containing Hamilcar's atmosphere against its high natural pressure. Even small meteoroid impacts fail to break the membrane, although over the millennia a number of larger collisions have opened gaps. As a result Hamilcar is losing atmosphere, but even if nothing intervenes it will be millions of years before surface pressures fall below tolerable levels.

The presence of Hamilcar's membrane causes some logistical difficulties. Ground-to-orbit transit requires considerable planning, as all transfer craft must pass through a limited number of gaps in the membrane. Since the membrane itself rotates with respect to the surface of the planet, no fixed downport can be used. The solution is a large number of small downports, scattered around the planet at the latitude of various large gaps in the membrane. No matter which gap a transfer craft must use, there will be a landing facility somewhere close by. To minimize travel through the membrane, the planetary starport authority requires all highport personnel to live in orbit. All facilities associated with the subsector capital are also located on the highport, so that visitors with business at the capital will not have to land on the surface. All of these items mean that the Hamilcar highport is of unusual size, more orbital city than mere transfer point, and it is itself a tourist attraction. Meanwhile, travelers leaving or visiting the surface must pay a "traffic control fee" which helps maintain the complex system (and also discourages frivolous travel).

GEMINI SUBSECTOR WORLDS

HEX	NAME	ALLEGIANCE	ZONE	STARPORT	DIAMETER	GRAVITY	HYDROGRAPHIC %		CLIMATE	POPULATION	GOV TYPE	CR	TL	WTN
1732	Ys	Imp	Amber	V-N	7,700	0.98	Thin (T)	72%	Tropical	510 million	Military	6	11	5.0
1736	Cameroon	Sol	Green	I	3,600	0.33	Thin (T)	18%	Very Cold	21	Anarchy	0	8	1.0
1738	Hamilcar	Sol (*)	Green	V	2,300	0.18	Standard	98%	Warm	5.1 billion	Dictator	6	11	5.5
1739	Parsifal	Sol	Green	IV	7,200	0.76	Very Thin	None	Cold	900 million	Multiple	5	9	5.0
1740	Aristotle	Sol	Green	V-N	2,200	0.45	Standard	91%	Frigid	4.1 billion	Merit	3	11	5.5
1833	Remulak	Imp	Green	V-N	9,100	1.33	Standard (T)	43%	Warm	58 million	Military	6	11	5.0
1836	Chernozem	Sol	Green	V	9,800	1.61	Dense	50%	Normal	1.8 billion	Merit	2	10	5.5
1931	Hephaistos	Imp	Green	V	9,000	1.21	Dense	95%	Warm	20 million	Multiple	4	10	5.0
2031	Calgary	Imp	Green	III	10,200	1.28	Dense (T)	96%	Cold	52,000	Dictator	6	9	3.0
2131	Inferno	Imp	Green	III	5,000	0.50	Standard (T)	79%	Hot	840 million	Techno	3	9	4.5
2132	Forlorn	Imp	Green	III	4,000	0.71	Dense (T)	62%	Cold	2,600	Captive	3	10	3.0
2135	New Greenperm	Sol	Green	IV-N	7,300	0.90	Dense (T)	82%	Normal	71,000	RepDem	2	10	3.5
2138	Gwynedd	Sol	Green	V-N	8,900	1.20	Very Dense	67%	Tropical	150 million	Dictator	6	10	5.0
2235	Medea	Sol	Green	III	7,000	0.81	Standard (T)	90%	Cool	60,000	Techno	0	10	3.0
2236	Pollux	Sol	Green	0	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Torrid	None	None	0	0	0.0
2240	Hanuman	Sol	Green	IV	8,800	0.96	Corrosive	98%	Frozen	2.3 million	Merit	6	9	4.0
2337	Siva	Sol	Green	I	2,000	0.21	Trace	None	Very Hot	760	Corporate	1	10	2.0
2339	Castor	Sol	Green	V	Asteroids	N/A	None	None	Very Cold	5.7 billion	Dictator	6	9	5.5
2433	Demeter	Sol	Green	II	6,900	0.82	Standard (T)	79%	Warm	810	Corporate	1	9	2.0

Key on pp. 62-63.



The first Human settlement of Hamilcar came about -2000. Colonization was slow at first, as scientific parties tried to unlock the mysteries of the planet's history. By -1900, however, settlers were arriving from Terra and the older worlds of the Near Boötes Cluster. They soon seeded the oceans and scattered islands with Terran life. Today Hamilcar boasts a rich shallow-water ecosystem, covering almost the entire planet. Humans live on the scattered "ring islands" formed by ancient crater walls, or in floating or underwater cities. They share the planet with a large population of Dolphins (see pp. 33-34), who have an important role in local society and even have some political influence in the planetary government.

Despite the planet's unusual physical situation, Hamilcar's population is rather unremarkable. Hamilcar is a typical high-population Solomani world, devoted to the Cause, controlled by the Solomani Party, and monitored by SolSec. Naturally, its position as an important member of the Boötean League, and as the subsector capital, make it a center of economic and political activity.

1836 CHERNOZEM (SOLOMANI)

Chernozem is large, with several times the land area available on Terra. Many regions have pleasant climate. Although large portions of the planet are arid steppe or desert, there are also wide stretches of deeply fertile soil resembling the "black earth" of ancient Russia. There is abundant native life, compatible with Terran biochemistry. Mineral resources appeared

abundant. After the original survey (around -2200) the planet was colonized at once by a Russian consortium.

More colonists planned to follow, but unfortunately the new world was not the Eden it seemed. A series of native parasites proved able to cross over to Humans and other Terran animals, causing disfiguring diseases and metabolic problems. Meanwhile, Terran crops had more difficulty than expected surviving among the native flora. The Russian colonists struggled heroically, determined to make Chernozem their home. Eventually, they managed to find countermeasures for the parasitic infections, and determined how to adapt their agricultural techniques to local conditions. By then, however, the main thrust of colonization had passed Chernozem by, with new worlds being established in the main body of the Near Boötes Cluster. For all its attractive qualities, Chernozem remained a Russian-dominated world with relatively low population.

For centuries, Chernozem successfully weathered one crisis after another. When one of the moons seemed about to fall to the planet, engineers built nuclear "earthmovers" to adjust its orbit. When a viral plague rendered 80% of the planet's men sterile, geneticists arranged for widespread cloning until a cure could be found. When a repressive government took power, many citizens emulated the ancient Cossacks and took up a nomadic life on the planet's wide steppes. When the Long Night fell, the world turned to its own resources and prospered. When explorers from Vantage reached their world, local merchants eagerly pursued interstellar trade once again. Over time, the people of Chernozem developed a supremely pragmatic confidence in their own ability to meet any challenge.

This confidence fit quite well with the Solomani Cause once that ideology reached the cluster. Radical Solomani racism has never been common on Chernozem, but the local citizens are fierce Solomani nationalists. Chernozem does not have high technology, extensive manufacturing, or large shipyards. Even so, an extremely high percentage of its citizens serve in the Confederation military, and many others crew the merchant ships

GEMINI SUBSECTOR NAVIGATIONAL DATA

HEX	NAME	PRIMARY COMPANIONS	GG	PB	ORBIT	MOONS
1732	Ys	M4 V	-	0 2	0.41	-
1736	Cameroon	M2 V	-	4 0	0.53	-
1738	Hamilcar	M7 V	-	3 1	0.13	-
1739	Parsifal	M8 V	D, D	3 0	0.05	-
1740	Aristotle	M4 V	-	0 2	0.38	-
1833	Remulak	A2 V	-	2 1	5.59	2 large
1836	Chernozem	F6 V	-	3 0	1.56	4 small
1931	Hephaistos	M5 V	-	2 0	0.17	-
2031	Calgary	M8 V	-	5 2	0.06	-
2131	Inferno	M8 V	-	4 2	0.05	-
2132	Forlorn	M8 V	-	4 2	0.07	-
2135	New Greenpermt	F2 V	-	4 0	2.30	1 large
2138	Gwynedd	M4 V	-	4 0	0.21	-
2235	Medea	M4 V	-	3 0	0.21	-
2236	Pollux	K0 III	-	0 0	5.40	-
2240	Hanuman	M4 V	D	3 1	0.25	-
2337	Siva	M6 V	-	4 2	0.09	-
2339	Castor	K0 III	-	0 0	8.65	-
2433	Demeter	M1 V	-	2 0	0.31	-

Key on p. 63.

that keep the Solomani economy going. Even after the end of the Rim War, Chernozem remains faithful to the Solomani Movement. Solomani Party factions dominate local politics at all levels, and SolSec usually finds very little dissension.

Chernozem is officially governed by an elected Duma, although that assembly is mostly a forum for fruitless political wrangling. Real power is held by a civil-service bureaucracy which answers to the president's cabinet. Local law is not very intrusive, as there is a centuries-old tradition of passive resistance to tyranny. Even open opposition to the Solomani Cause is not illegal, although a dissident may find himself ostracized by society.

1931 HEPHAISTOS (IMPERIAL)

Many worlds in charted space have been terraformed, but the Third Imperium itself has engaged in few major terraforming projects. Hephaistos is one of the few exceptions. Begun in the Interstellar Wars period, the project was abandoned and resumed several times over a 3,000-year period. It was completed by the Hephaistos Company, chartered by the Imperium in 632. The planet was opened for settlement in 835, and sections were sold to several colonizing groups. Although the project is officially complete, the company is still engaged in work to reduce the planet's oceans and atmosphere.

2132 FORLORN (IMPERIAL)

Forlorn is owned by the Hephaistos Company, and is being used as the new testing ground for the company's terraforming research.

2138 GWYNEDD (SOLOMANI)

The atmosphere of Gwynedd is very dense, and is actively toxic near sea level. Fortunately a number of high mountain chains reach into altitudes where Humans can breathe normally, and where the climate is appropriate for Human comfort. Human settlement of Gwynedd has concentrated in these few mountain areas.

The first colony arrived late in the Rule of Man, and was composed of an alliance of anachronists looking to revive an idealized European past. The small habitable zones of the planet were divided into pseudo-feudal domains, each ruled by a class of technically educated aristocrats. Entry into the nobility was not hereditary, but based on education and the ability to master an elaborate system of antique social protocols. Many pre-industrial crafts were consciously retained as well, particularly the production of archaic weapons and body armor.

The conscious archaism of the Gwynedd colony was probably the only factor which enabled Humaniti to survive. Gwynedd was cut off from the rest of the galaxy early in the Long Night, before high-tech civilization had become self-sufficient. Suddenly, the medievalistic social systems and technologies, once retained for aesthetic reasons, became crucial to the colony's survival. By -1000 Gwynedd had fallen back to TL3 and true feudalism had taken root everywhere.

Contact with the outside resumed about -300, but Gwynedd remained a backwater for centuries. Its inhabitants had little opportunity to relearn advanced technical methods, and they



had few exports valuable enough to attract outside trade or investment. In 710, however, the Solomani Movement decided to establish industrial civilization on Gwynedd to open routes into the Kukulcan subsector. A class of high-tech colonists was imported, sweeping aside dozens of petty kingdoms to establish a planetary state. The original inhabitants were reduced to second-class status, with even the former aristocracy forced to support the new industrial centers built by the Movement.

Today, Gwynedd remains a divided world. The industrial cities are centers of high-technology civilization, supporting the starport, naval base, and shipyard. In the countryside, the old peasantry lives side by side with the dispossessed aristocracy, trying desperately to adjust to the new state of affairs on their world. The "aborigines" (as the urban Solomani call them) are persistently slow in acquiring or adjusting to high technology, and remain without full civil or political rights. Unrest is common, but open revolt is rare and is always stamped out at once. One oddity of Gwynedd's social structure is the inversion of usual structures of civility. Among themselves, the aborigines cling to an elaborate system of protocol and courtesy, ex-peasant and ex-aristocrat alike. Meanwhile, the Movement Solomani of the cities are brusque, plain-spoken, and (by aboriginal standards) extremely vulgar.

2236 POLLUX (SOLOMANI)

The Pollux system is dominated by a "gravel belt," lacking useful metals or ices. There are also no gas giant or other worlds with readily available water or hydrogen. As a result, the system is unvisited, uninhabited, and almost completely unexplored.

2339 CASTOR (SOLOMANI)

In contrast to nearby Pollux, Castor's primary planetoid belt is rich with metals, ices, and simple organics. There are also many large planetoids suitable for habitat construction.



As a result, Castor Belt has a population in the billions. Currently, the dictatorship governing the belt is engaged in a long-term scheme for economic development and military construction. The ultimate goal is to form an influential alliance of Solomani worlds native to the Gemini subsector, with Castor in the leadership position.

2433 DEMETER (SOLOMANI)

Despite its relatively pleasant environment, Demeter has long been uninhabited. The planet's isolation and a severe lack of mineral resources have discouraged settlement. Recently, however, a scientific expedition discovered a number of useful plant species in the jungles of the largest continent. The Demeter Consortium was organized to develop the world, and an advance colony was established in 1117. There are persistent rumors among the colonists regarding signs of previous human settlement, but so far nothing substantive has turned up.

KUKULCAN SUBSECTOR

Over half of this subsector's population lives on Kukulcan, the only world to be colonized before the beginning of the Solomani period. Local politics has always been dominated by tensions between Kukulcan and the "young" colonies surrounding it. Recently, this conflict has flared into open war, as Kukulcan has seceded from the Solomani Confederation and (so far) kept its independence. For a time after the secession, the Solomani barred the entire subsector to Imperial citizens while the Solomani Navy tried to put down the rebellion. Having failed at that, the Confederation has interdicted Kukulcan itself, but has allowed cross-border trade and travel to resume. Nevertheless, the TAS has posted the entire subsector as an Amber Zone due to the ongoing threat of civil war.

2536 CARCHEMISH (SOLOMANI)

Carchemish houses a research project of the Solomani government. The project is highly secret, and no details are known. Naval forces restrict all civilian traffic to an automated refueling station on a moon of one of the system's gas giants.

2631 TLALOC (SOLOMANI)

Tlaloc is a semi-autonomous colony owned by Ochre. The colonial administration deliberately exerts a much lower level of control over the Tlaloc colonists than the homeworld population must endure. Tlaloc thus serves as a safety valve for Ochre society.

2731 OCHRE (SOLOMANI)

Ochre is a marginal world, most of whose population lives near the poles. The local government is run by a small council of business leaders, and is designed to protect commercial interests above all. Due to its position close to the Imperial border, Ochre is a natural focus for cross-border smuggling in both directions.

2740 LAPUTA (SOLOMANI, SUBSECTOR CAPITAL)

Laputa was settled about 800, by an ethnically mixed population mostly from worlds in the Sol subsector. The colony's sponsors were leaders of the Omega Point Fraternity, a pseudo-religious movement which first appeared on Terra late in the Long Night. The fraternity is distantly related to Christianity, but has ties to other ancient Solomani religions as well. Members do not believe in an existing supreme being, but they believe that Human history is part of a process which will result in the *appearance* of such a being in the universe. Members believe that they will be rewarded with a happy immortality, but only if this "evolving god" (which they call the *Eschaton*) comes into being through their efforts. Otherwise, they and all other Humans will be condemned to eternal nonexistence.

Members of the fraternity claim that their beliefs are scientific and can be supported by mathematical proof. They angrily



deny that their fraternity is in any way a “religious” organization. Even so, the society built by the fraternity on Laputa is effectively a theocracy. The ruling class is composed of master academicians, who fill the role of high priests. They direct all political, economic, and cultural activity toward the creation of the *Eschaton*.

Unlike many theocratic states, the Laputan Polity is actually quite progressive in the area of science and technology. The Omega Point Fraternity believes that the *Eschaton* will only

appear if Humanity achieves a high degree of mastery over physical reality. Furthermore, it’s through the sciences that the Omega Point Fraternity tries to spread its doctrine. A fraternity “missionary” may travel to other worlds, but when he arrives he is more likely to present a paper at a scientific conference than he is to preach on street corners. Thus, theoretical and applied science are strongly subsidized by the Laputan government. Any scientific results obtained must conform with state ideology, of course (contradictory research is quietly squashed). Laputan researchers are particularly strong in the areas of computer science and artificial intelligence.

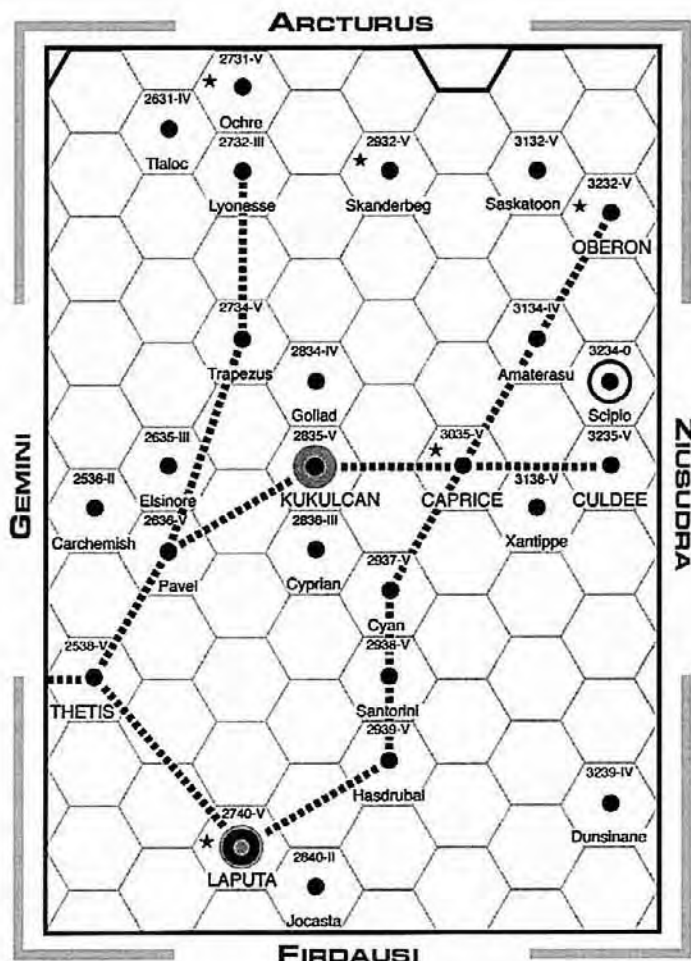
On the surface, Laputan society is happy and well-ordered. Crime against persons is low, taxes are very high but fair, living standards are excellent, and science and the arts are healthy. However, anyone questioning either the Solomani Cause or the tenets of the Omega Point Fraternity will soon find the limits of Laputan tolerance. Both SolSec and the fraternity’s dreaded Axiom Enforcement agency are ready to strike at the first sign of unrest. Those who resist the dominant ideologies are designated “unsane” and placed in mental hygiene facilities for cure. Laputan totalitarianism is no less thorough for being subtle.

Since about 900, Laputa has engaged in a bitter rivalry with the neighboring world of Kukulcan (see p. 128). After the Solomani Rim War, Laputa demonstrated its continued commitment to the Solomani Cause, and was rewarded by being designated the new subsector capital. With the increased influence, Laputa soon gathered other worlds in the subsector (notably Thetis, Ochre, Skanderbeg, and Trapezus) into an anti-Kukulcan alliance. With the current political turmoil on Kukulcan, the triumph of Laputa’s policy seems assured, and its alliance is ready to reach new levels of prominence in Confederation politics.

KUKULCAN SUBSECTOR WORLDS

HEX	NAME	ALLEGIANCE	ZONE	STARPORT	GRAVITY	DIAMETER	ATMOSPHERE	HYDROGRAPHIC %	CLIMATE	POPULATION	GOV TYPE	CR	TL	WTN
2536	Carchemish	Sol	Green	II	6,700	0.84	Standard (T)	66%	Normal	40	Captive	6	11	2.0
2538	Theotis	Sol	Green	V	4,900	0.47	Standard	97%	Cold	8.6 billion	RepDem	2	11	5.5
2631	Tlaloc	Sol	Green	IV	5,800	0.58	Thin (T)	46%	Cool	8.7 million	Captive	1	11	4.0
2635	Elsinore	Sol	Green	III	1,200	0.10	Very Thin (T)	None	Tropical	3.3 million	Dictator	6	10	4.0
2636	Pavel	Sol	Green	V	8,000	1.02	Dense (T)	92%	Warm	34 million	Bureau	6	11	5.0
2731	Ochre	Sol	Green	V-N	2,300	0.30	Thin	None	Hot	120 million	Oligarch	6	11	5.0
2732	Lyonesse	Sol	Green	III	6,400	0.85	Dense (T)	72%	Chilly	230 million	Dictator	4	9	4.5
2734	Trapezus	Sol	Green	V	5,900	0.59	Very Thin	28%	Cold	820 million	Merit	4	11	5.0
2740	Laputa	Sol (*)	Green	V-N	7,100	0.84	Thin	48%	Warm	8.0 billion	Theo	6	11	5.5
2834	Goliad	Sol	Green	IV	5,700	0.53	Standard (T)	96%	Tropical	820,000	Oligarch	1	10	4.0
2835	Kukulcan	Sol	Red	V	5,100	0.57	Standard	81%	Normal	36 billion	Dictator	6	10	6.0
2836	Cyprian	Sol	Green	III	4,500	0.43	Trace	None	Hot	6,900	Corporate	0	10	3.0
2840	Jocasta	Sol	Green	II	5,300	0.48	Very Thin	21%	Cool	50	Corporate	0	11	2.0
2932	Skanderbeg	Sol	Green	V-N	1,400	0.29	Thin (T)	43%	Frozen	560 million	Dictator	4	11	5.0
2937	Cyan	Sol	Green	V	3,800	0.36	Thin	22%	Cold	66 million	Captive	4	10	5.0
2938	Santorini	Sol	Green	V	6,300	0.89	Dense	92%	Warm	340 million	Techno	4	10	5.0
2939	Hasdrubal	Sol	Green	V	3,900	0.37	Thin	40%	Normal	940 million	Oligarch	6	10	5.0
3035	Caprice	Sol	Green	V-N	7,300	0.85	Standard	58%	Normal	8.2 billion	Dictator	6	10	5.5
3132	Saskatoon	Sol	Green	V	8,300	1.10	Dense	67%	Cool	5.8 billion	Merit	6	10	5.5
3134	Amaterasu	Sol	Green	IV	5,000	0.51	Thin (T)	79%	Cool	120 million	Bureau	6	10	5.0
3136	Xantippe	Sol	Green	II	6,900	0.79	Corrosive	91%	Very Cold	680	Captive	4	9	2.0
3232	Oberon	Sol	Green	V-N	5,200	0.49	Standard	16%	Cold	9.6 billion	Bureau	5	10	5.5
3234	Scipio	Sol	Red	0	5,100	0.57	Standard (T)	70%	Normal	28 million	Multiple	3	7	0.5
3235	Culdee	Sol	Green	V	6,000	0.85	Dense	97%	Warm	5.7 billion	Bureau	5	9	5.5
3239	Dunsinane	Sol	Green	IV	3,000	0.25	Trace	17%	Frigid	700,000	Merit	5	9	4.0

Key on pp. 62-63.



2835 KUKULCAN (REBELLIOUS SOLOMANI)

Kukulcan is the most Earthlike world of the subsector. It was first settled late in the Long Night, by an alliance of dissidents fleeing persecution under the Old Earth Union. Most of the settlers were from Mexico and other parts of Central and South America, and the dominant language on Kukulcan is still recognizable as a descendant of Spanish.

Kukulcan was isolated from the rest of the galaxy for centuries, with no other Human settlements for several parsecs in any direction. The settlement developed an inward-turning culture, willing to develop its own star system but uninterested in further expansion. About 750, however, the Solomani Movement opened the other worlds of the subsector for rapid colonization and development. The new worlds had an uneasy relationship with Kukulcan from the very beginning. They feared Kukulcan's dominance, given that the planet even then had a population of more than 10 billion. For their part, the Kukulcanos felt no special connection to Terra or their fellow Solomani, and they distrusted the Solomani Movement. Kukulcan reluctantly joined the Solomani Confederation in order to benefit from offworld trade, but the Solomani Party and Solomani Security never gained a strong hold on the planet.

In the chaos that followed the Solomani Rim War, several other worlds of the subsector began a strategy of aggressive competition with Kukulcan. Led by Thetis and Laputa, they

had the advantages of more advanced technology, strategic location, and better connections with the Confederation government. The allies used predatory pricing schemes, restricted the use of their starport facilities, and levied heavy tariffs, in every case discriminating against shipping lines serving Kukulcan. The beleaguered world fought back, giving incentives to "tramp" freighters and bringing one complaint after another before Confederation institutions. These responses had only limited success. By about 1080, the Thetis-Laputa alliance had gained control of most of the subsector's trade routes and Kukulcan was suffering a recession. The economic damage was not critical, but damage to the planet's prestige and influence was considerable.

In 1117, the government of Kukulcan fell in a series of general strikes and violent riots. A military coup followed, led by the popular General Anton Marques. The new regime openly defied the Confederation, declaring itself to be an independent state and threatening open war against its enemies. The Confederation's reaction has been strongly negative, but so far it has proceeded with caution. In 1118, an initial attempt to put down the rebellion with fleet elements from nearby subsectors failed. Since then, the Confederation has contented itself with interdicting Kukulcan.

In fact, even in the midst of an economic recession, Kukulcan is by far the most populous and productive industrial world in its subsector. If the Confederation chose to reduce the planet by force, it is by no means certain that anything short of a full commitment of the Solomani Grand Fleet would bring a quick victory. As it stands, the siege appears to be effectively preventing the spread of rebellion. Meanwhile, cutting Kukulcan off from *all* interstellar trade may have been what the Thetis-Laputa alliance had in mind from the beginning. The allies have argued in the Secretariat for an indefinite extension of the siege. Meanwhile, they have been busy extending their share of markets once dominated by Kukulcan.

The Imperial position on Kukulcan's "independence" is one of complete silence. Kukulcan has not asked for Imperial aid. Any such assistance would probably reignite war with the Confederation, and in any case it would be difficult to deliver. The nearest Imperial base is 7 parsecs away, too far for a single jump. Naturally, there are almost certainly active Imperial Intelligence assets on and around Kukulcan.

2836 CYPRIAN (SOLOMANI)

Cyprian is owned by Crown Lines, and serves as a refueling station and repair facility for Crown Lines ships. Ownership of Cyprian is one point of friction between Kukulcan and the Thetis-Laputa alliance.

2937 CYAN (SOLOMANI)

Cyan was originally colonized from Caprice, and remains subject to the Caprice government.

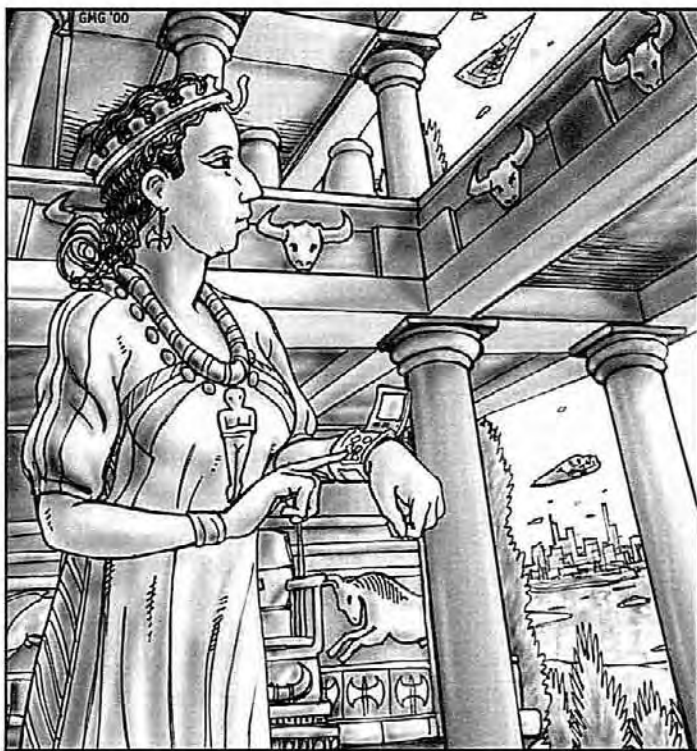
2938 SANTORINI (SOLOMANI)

Santorini is a tide-locked world, habitable because its atmosphere is thick enough to allow the night face to be heated by circulation effects. Most of the planet's day face is covered

by ocean, although one small continent and a thick scattering of islands fall in a particularly pleasant climate zone. This region, amounting to less than 2% of the planet's surface, is densely populated, while the rest is virtually uninhabited.

Santorini was settled about 350, somewhat earlier than most worlds of the subsector. The colonists were members of a splinter cultural group originating on Terra. The *Chalice Sisterhood* believed that Terra's ancient Minoan culture was the perfect model for a humane and enlightened society.

Although they were passionate about their beliefs, they were very unsuccessful on Terra itself, probably because their reconstruction of Minoan society was based on flimsy reasoning and very little historical evidence. Finding no way to spread their ideals on Terra, they chose to migrate to a suitable planet to rimward.



On Santorini, men and women are assigned to very different social roles. The planetary defense forces and Home Guard are occupied exclusively by men. Women *never* serve, and even as civilians they are discouraged from owning or using weapons. The state religion, on the other hand, is controlled by women. Further, since civil administration is a religious function on Santorini, the civilian government is dominated by women. Both men and women occupy technical positions, although men tend to gravitate toward engineering and the "hard" sciences, while women tend to be physicians and biologists.

These gender divisions are reinforced by custom and religious teachings. A stereotypical male Santorin genuinely believes that only women are capable of true religious insight. He also believes that women are better able to wield political power wisely, and so does not indulge political ambitions for himself. On the other hand, he would be shocked to see a woman carrying a weapon or placing herself in a physically

dangerous situation. His immediate reaction would be to ask to hold the weapon for her, or to place himself between her and the source of danger (all very politely, of course). Naturally, many men on Santorini fail in some respect to match this stereotype.

Santorini is governed by a hereditary aristocracy, each noble family dominated by a tightly knit group of women with religious educations. Only these women can hold high political office, although they hire extensive staff organizations which can be gender-mixed. Traditionally, an important noblewoman marries the senior man on her staff, changing husbands when necessary. Since noble descent is reckoned entirely through the female line, legitimacy is not an issue. The highest official on Santorini is a Queen, whose power is absolute in theory but quite limited in practice.

The Solomani Movement met no serious resistance on Santorini, as the ideology of the Chalice Sisterhood was entirely compatible with the Solomani Cause. Indeed, the Movement rose to prominence at the same time that an alliance of male businessmen and military officers was agitating for more access to political authority. By aligning itself with the Movement, the Santorini monarchy gained a powerful ally in SolSec. By about 800 the masculinist movement had effectively died out, having gained a few superficial concessions while losing several leaders to SolSec intervention. Today, Santorini is prosperous and politically stable.

3035 CAPRICE (SOLOMANI)

Despite its tide-locked status, Caprice is a fairly Earthlike world. The planet's oceans extend some distance into the day face, so a relatively wide zone has a moist and pleasant climate. Storms accompanied by lightning and high winds are frequent in this zone, but the inhabitants have developed methods for living with the frequent heavy weather. Indeed, the storms were the feature which gave the planet its name, in homage to the "capricious" aspects of nature.

Caprice was first colonized about 750, the first settlement being sponsored by the Solomani Autonomous Region government. Most of the settlers were from the region of Arcturus, with a very large contingent from Banasdan. After some false starts, the colony grew quickly, and for a brief period around 900 Caprice was the second most populous world in the subsector. It has always been a wholly Solomani world, dominated by the Solomani Party and SolSec.

Caprice originally had a democratic government, which strongly supported Solomani resistance to the Imperium. After the Rim War, disappointment at the loss of Terra was already causing civil unrest when there were sudden revelations of widespread corruption in the civilian War Ministry. Enraged at the "treason" of the democratic regime, the citizens rioted and brought down the government. Eventually the planetary navy intervened, commanded by the popular leader John Saarinen. Saarinen had been a front-line admiral during the Rim War, leading the gallant defense of Scandia against the Imperium. Now he came out of retirement to lead units of the planetary military in a fast and effective coup. By 1006 he was the undisputed dictator of Caprice, with all democratic institutions suspended.

Over a century later, Caprice is still governed by John Saarinen's descendants. Meritt Saarinen is the current dictator, ruling by way of the family legend and the absolute loyalty of the Caprice military. Local law is quite intrusive, and political dissent is handled ruthlessly. Still, most citizens are content with the dictatorship, which has improved the local standard of living, done away with public corruption, and provided efficient government service. The government does all it can to promote the myth of Admiral Saarinen, who (according to local legend) was the greatest military leader in Solomani history.

Recent rumors have it that the Caprice government is secretly in contact with the military junta on Kukulcan, providing covert support for the secessionist world. Before 1117 Caprice was Kukulcan's foremost trade partner, and it always refused to be pulled into the Thetis-Laputa alliance. It's possible that the Saarinen regime is quietly sympathetic to the travails of its neighbors. Of course, if the Secretariat (or SolSec) were able to prove the existence of such covert support, Caprice would likely be next to feel the central government's displeasure.

3136 XANTIPPE (SOLOMANI)

Xantippe was recently colonized by Culdee, which hopes to initiate a long-term terraforming project.

3234 SCIPIO (SOLOMANI)

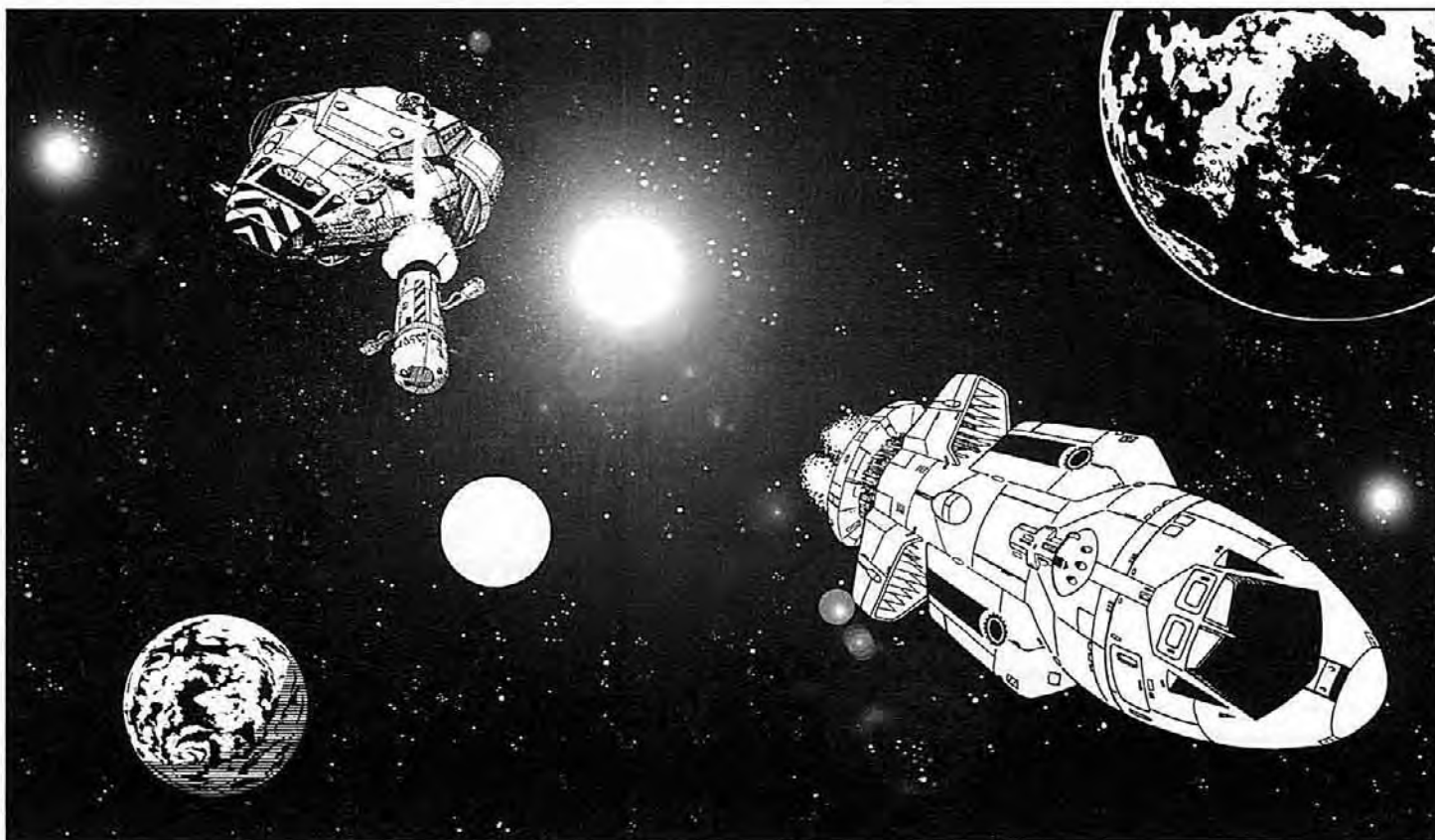
Scipio is a self-interdicted colony, settled about 800 by a group of Solomani anti-technologists. They have banished all technology except that known on Terra before the introduction of spaceflight, and consider it a mistake for true men ever to

KUKULCAN SUBSECTOR NAVIGATIONAL DATA

HEX	NAME	PRIMARY	COMPANIONS	SGG	PB	ORBIT	MOONS
2536	Carchemish	M8 V	D	3	0	0.03	-
2538	Thetis	M5 V	D	0	1	0.21	-
2631	Tlaloc	M5 V	-	3	0	0.18	-
2635	Elsinore	K6 V	-	2	0	0.36	-
2636	Pavel	K0 V	-	0	2	0.62	-
2731	Ochre	F2 V	-	3	0	1.58	1 small
2732	Lyonesse	A1 V	M0 V	3	2	9.15	4 small
2734	Trapezus	M4 V	M7 V, D	4	0	0.26	-
2740	Laputa	K2 V	M6 V	4	2	0.53	-
2834	Goliad	K3 V	-	5	1	0.51	-
2835	Kukulcan	G7 V	-	1	2	0.89	-
2836	Cyprian	M1 V	-	3	0	0.24	-
2840	Jocasta	F6 V	M7 V	5	1	1.63	2 small
2932	Skanderbeg	F6 V	-	2	0	2.54	-
2937	Cyan	M0 V	M4 V	3	0	0.40	-
2938	Santorini	M5 V	-	5	0	0.13	-
2939	Hasdrubal	M0 V	M4 V	0	2	0.41	-
3035	Caprice	M5 V	M7 V	2	2	0.17	-
3132	Saskatoon	M8 V	-	4	0	0.05	-
3134	Amaterasu	M6 V	-	4	2	0.13	-
3136	Xantippe	K8 V	-	4	1	0.34	-
3232	Oberon	M2 V	-	4	0	0.49	-
3234	Scipio	F4 V	-	2	0	2.10	2 small
3235	Culdee	F5 V	-	2	2	1.63	1 small
3239	Dunsinane	M7 V	-	2	2	0.50	-

Key on p. 63.

have left Earth. Finding no way to isolate themselves from the universe on Terra, they were forced to choose a less inviting world and emigrate.



Gathering Storms

In recent years, the informal detente between the Imperium and the Confederation has shown signs of severe strain. Both states have growing internal factions that favor a renewed confrontation, and the Confederation itself seems to be careening toward a major internal crisis. These events may have repercussions that affect all of charted space. This chapter is intended to summarize “current events” in the Solomani Rim from the Game Master’s perspective. Players should not read this material without their GM’s permission.

IMPERIAL POLITICS

In the current game of power politics, the Imperium appears to have the advantage. It has a strong leader in the Archduke, and its internal divisions are not at the crisis point. Still, there is plenty of conflict among opposing interests in the Imperial portion of the sector.

EXILES AND RESISTERS

The nobles of the Solomani Rim are a bit different from those of, say, the Spinward Marches. Nobles of the Marches have their arguments and feuds, but in times of crisis they usually swing into action behind Archduke Norris and set aside disputes until later. On the Rim, things are more contentious.

The Archduke of Sol is pursuing a strategy of economic development and reconciliation. His theory is that careful diplomacy and general prosperity will do more than any amount of confrontation to bring the Solomani back into the Imperial fold. Most moderates of the Resistance and New Houses (see pp. 8-9) follow his lead in this. The Exile Houses are another matter. To them, economic development is all very well, but only insofar as it supports developing Imperial power and making certain the Solomani can never threaten anyone again.

The grand prize in the current contest is the position of sector duke. Most of the Rim’s dukes are moderates, who have consciously refrained from competing for seniority so that Archduke Adair can assume the *de facto* role of Sector Duke himself. The Exile Houses, however, observe that this situation has no basis in law or tradition. Unfortunately for them, there are no Exiles of sufficient influence or seniority among the ranks of subsector dukes. This has not prevented them from agitating for the position, using both fair means and foul.

The Exiles do not (usually) challenge the Archduke’s authority directly, but they are not above attacking his loyal supporters by whatever means come to hand. Rumor and scandal, economic manipulation, influence over the Imperial military, hired mercenaries, and various regional duelling ethics have all been used to undermine moderate nobles. In the Imperial system, every noble rests on the support of his subordinates. Eliminate that support, and the man on top finds himself with an empty title. Thus if the Exiles can’t challenge Archduke Adair, they can attack one of the moderate dukes, or a count in a crucial position, or even a planetary noble. Even a baron of the Rim is not too low to be a target, if he turns out to be the weak link in the power structure of one of his superiors.

The Empress’ Visit

Empress Iolanthe’s visit to the Solomani Rim in 1121 will doubtless be a pivotal event in local history. Even if nobody tries to assassinate her.

Popular speculation about the reason for her event is accurate: The Empress has long been known for her support for the preservation of distinctive cultures throughout the Imperium. This makes her a natural supporter of the Authenticist Movement (see sidebar, pp. 60-61), but since the Movement has little political importance on Capital she has rarely had the opportunity to express her support. On the Rim, however, her voice can give the Movement a boost in popularity and increased influence in sector politics.

Another reason for her visit is to support the effort to reconcile the Solomani with the Imperium. Her itinerary is a closely guarded secret, but it is known that she will spend some time on Terra itself, visiting historical sites and meeting with local cultural and political leaders. Apparently, the Imperium’s seniormost *Vilani* noble plans to publicly pay her respects to Terran history and culture, the first time such a thing has happened in 10,000 years of interstellar civilization. The Emperor and the Archduke both hope that this will bolster Solomani pride in a way that actually *reduces* bigotry and leaves a positive impression of the Imperium.

Finally, the Empress is due to announce several policy changes, the sum of which will give Archduke Adair more discretion when dealing with the Solomani Movement. The details are currently known only to the Emperor and his closest associates, although presumably the Archduke has been consulted ahead of time.

The Terran Psionics Institute

During the Psionics Suppressions, all 65 Institutes with Imperial charters had those charters first suspended, then revoked. At least that's the official story. Anyone who digs more deeply into the history of the period can determine that two of the revocation orders were themselves revoked by Imperial orders published elsewhere. As a result, two Imperial psionics institutes survived the suppressions. One of them was located on Terra.

In fact, the Terran Psionics Institute still exists, and is still located on Terra itself. Under the administration of the Imperial Navy since 833, it came under the control of Imperial Naval Intelligence just before the establishment of the Solomani Confederation in 871. Remarkably, the institute and its supporting intelligence detachment remained active and loyal to the Imperium throughout the Solomani period. How this was accomplished, and what role the institute played in the history of Imperial-Solomani relations, is unknown. Naturally, having psionic abilities might have made it easier to tell who the SolSec infiltrators were...

Today, the institute operates very discreetly, under cover of the Imperial Naval Base on Terra. How the institute's recruits are trained, and what they do with their training, is a closely held secret. It is unknown whether there is any connection between the institute and the psionic colony on Heironymus, in the nearby Esperance subsector.

Naturally, some of Adair's supporters respond to these tactics in kind. Aristocratic politics on the Rim is a very rough-and-tumble sport.

Naturally, this infighting creates plenty of plot hooks, even if the PCs themselves are not of the aristocracy. Freelance adventurers can easily be pulled into an attempt by one nobleman to discredit another. Mercenaries can always find work when nobles need discreet muscle. Merchants will at least have to continue making a profit, even when nobles start manipulating the markets for their own ends.

CORPORATE COMPETITION

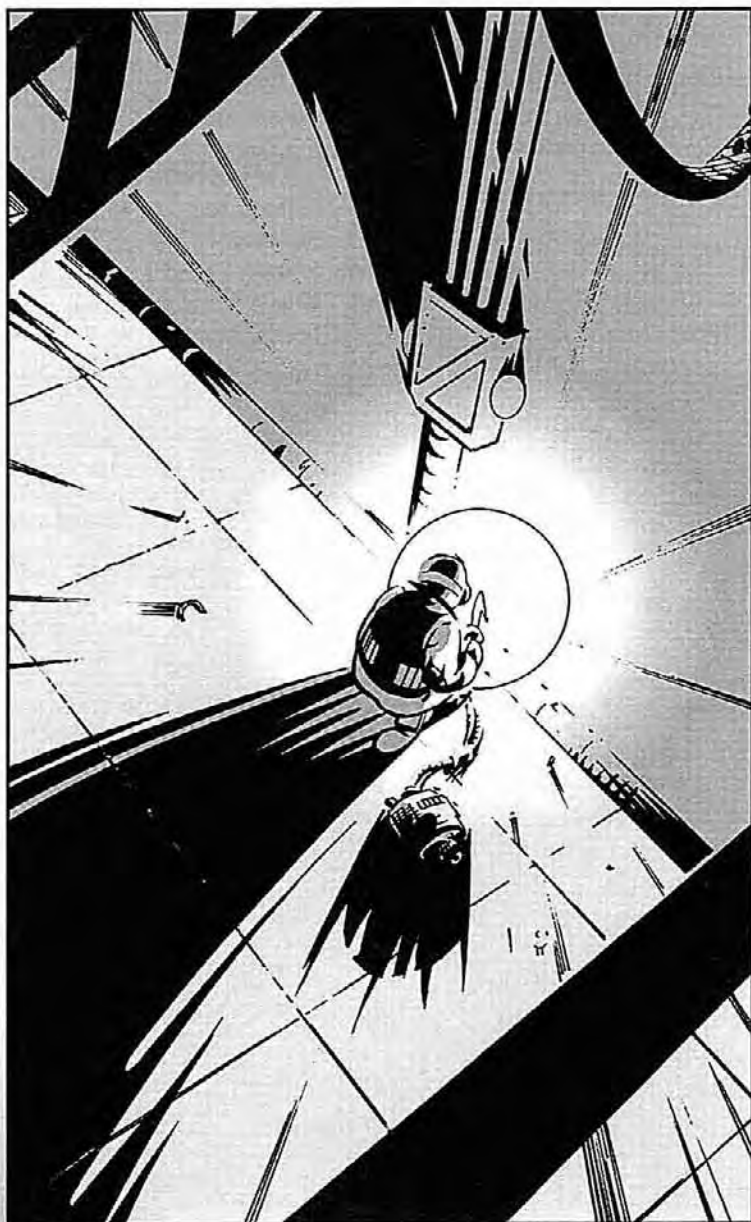
There's a lot of money to be made on the Rim, considering the sheer volume of local production and trade. As a result, the Imperial megacorporations pay a lot of attention to the local struggle for dominance. The game is the same as in other parts of the Imperium, but the *scale* is an order of magnitude greater.

Since the Rim is well developed, competition for *new* resources and products is less fierce than in a frontier region like the Marches. Contests of new development are restricted to outlying areas such as the Ultima or Arcturus sub-

sectors. Far more important is the rivalry along the great shipping lanes, as the large cargo and passenger carriers vie for market share. Trade wars on the Rim tend to involve little open violence, although even a few acts of sabotage can disrupt the schedule for millions of tons of traffic if they are committed in the right place at the right time.

Another venue for corporate conflict is in the area of law and politics. The Ministry of Commerce, a labor organization, or a group of radical environmentalists can be far more devastating than a few bombs. The trick is to find (or manufacture) evidence that will send the watchdogs barking on the right trail, while covering up the evidence of one's own misdeeds. This is a game of information, and it's fertile ground for freelancers.

At present, the fiercest conflict is being provoked by Tukera Lines, as it muscles its way into the Rim's major shipping lanes. Tukera has been using very unsubtle tactics, targeting Solar Shipping's routes to coreward and Sharurshid's routes in the Dingir and Sol



subsectors. So far Tukera's actions have been limited to price-cutting and the aggressive pursuit of exclusive contracts. Its corporate intelligence arm (the Vemene) has been very active in the sector, and may be laying the groundwork for an even more aggressive strategy. Open trade war has yet to break out, but it is a distinct possibility.

The Archduke disapproves of Tukera's tactics, but he has so far been unable to object effectively. In any case, Tukera may have a long-term plan under way to neutralize Adair's opposition. The seniormost Tukera official in the sector is Baroness Katrin Sovolas, heiress to a secondary branch of the Tukera clan. The Baroness is a brilliant administrator and diplomat, adept at softening the rough edges of Tukera policy. She is also relatively young, charming, physically attractive, of impeccable lineage, and well connected. Of late, she has spent an unusual amount of time at the Archduke's court.

Some gossips have suggested that the Baroness was sent to the Rim as much to snare the Archduke as to administer Tukera's holdings. Rumor-mongering aside, it would not be the first time that the Tukeras have moved to establish a marriage tie with an important aristocratic family.

Another significant conflict involves the megacorporation Sternmetal Horizons. Its main competitor, Ling-Standard Products, has recently formed an unofficial alliance with several mining and resource-extraction firms of the Solomani Rim.

The new cartel has mounted a price war against Sternmetal's local operations, and may also be behind several incidents of anti-Sternmetal sabotage. Sternmetal is reportedly considering opening trade war against Lamarck Minerals, one of LSP's local partners, to try to divide the cartel.

SOLOMANI POLITICS

In contrast, the Solomani Confederation is embroiled in a set of internal political crises. In recent years, the usual centrifugal tendency of the Confederation has strained its institutions to the shattering point. How the crisis will play out, and what form the Confederation will take afterward, remains to be seen.

FEDERAL CRISIS

Many of the recent problems faced by the Confederation can be tied to a long-standing debate in Solomani politics, regarding the proper relationship between the central government and the member worlds. The Confederation has traditionally been even more "hands off" than the Imperium, at least where its productive high-population worlds are concerned. This discretion allows individual worlds to govern their own affairs, but it also permits them to act at cross-purposes, sometimes engaging in open conflict which is destructive of Solomani unity. Some factions in the Solomani Party therefore want to increase the level of central control.

The most egregious example of the failure of Solomani federalism is, of course, the secession of Kukulcan (see p. 128). Had the central government been powerful enough (or motivated enough) to rein in the Thetis-Laputa alliance, Kukulcan might not have been driven to secession. As it is, the Confederation was unwilling to address Kukulcan's grievances and has so far been unable to bring it back into line by force. The crisis has given centralists a great deal of ammunition in the perennial debate.

The dominant coalition in the Secretariat normally includes many centralists. As a result, the Confederation has been trying for decades to gather power in its own hands. This trend has been bitterly resisted by many Solomani worlds.

Ancient Sites

The Solomani Rim appears to be distant from the centers of Ancient activity. Even so, the Ancients clearly got as far as the Rim, sampling species from Terra and other worlds. Although Ancient sites are relatively scarce, archaeologists have found evidence of Ancient activity on several worlds.

Grendel, in the Alderamin subsector, was apparently the site of an Ancient bio-engineering facility. Although few physical traces of the Ancients have been found, many species apparently indigenous to the planet have been shown to be from other worlds (notably Terra). Also, a number of Grendel's higher animal forms show unmistakable signs of having been genetically altered sometime around 300,000 years ago.

Muan Gwi itself has evidence of a small Ancient base. This has never been known among Humans, as the Vegans have managed to conceal the site's existence for thousands of years. The nature of the site, and the nature of Ancient interactions with the primitive Vegan species, are unknown (at least to any Human).

The sector's other three Ancient sites are all within the Solomani Confederation. New Greenpermt, in the Gwynedd subsector, has the most prominent remains, discovered about 1060 and studied by Solomani archaeologists ever since. The site on Ochre, in the Kukulcan subsector, was once extensive, but was apparently heavily damaged during the Final War, so little of interest remains. Finally, the entire planet of Hamilear, also in the Gwynedd subsector, could be considered an Ancient site. The Ancients went to great lengths to terraform the planet, but they appear to have done nothing with it once terraformed. Aside from the planet's "membrane," there is no sign that the Ancients ever set up facilities there.

Strangely, no direct physical evidence of Ancient presence has ever been unearthed on Terra itself. Such evidence has appeared on other worlds of the system, notably Venus and Saturn's moon Titan. Also, the Imperial research station on Pluto has always had very tight security, giving rise to speculation about a major Ancient site there.

Using STAR MERCS on the Rim

The Solomani Rim offers many opportunities for mercenaries, but one of the major stimuli for mercenary activity in a frontier region like the Marches is notably absent here. There are few worlds which are inhabited but undeveloped, with low native technology level. As a result, mercenaries are less likely to be able to offset native forces' numerical advantage with their own technological advantage. The situation does happen, especially on the sector's balkanized worlds, but in general mercenaries must seek a different "edge."

This difference in local character leads to a difference in the kinds of missions undertaken by mercenaries. Opportunities for cadre tickets are less common, as more worlds already have armed forces equipped and trained to a useful standard. Striker tickets are also less common, since mercenary units are less likely to have the technological advantage needed to stiffen local forces. Most mercenary tickets on the Rim involve commando or security work. As a result, mercenary units on the Rim tend to specialize for one or the other. Some are small and highly trained, with the best high-tech equipment and an emphasis on commando tactics. Others tend to be larger and more lightly armed, with plenty of engineering equipment (for the construction of defensive works) and possibly a large military-police contingent as well.

Another thing for mercenaries to be aware of is that the Imperial Rules of War are generally more strictly enforced on the Rim than in the Marches. After all, the civilian populations are more dense, there is more trade to disrupt, and there are simply more Imperial officials around. Every armed conflict of significance is likely to be observed by agents of the Imperial Ministry of Justice.



Political moderates fear that central control will lead to the domination of racist radicals. Worlds that enjoy a great deal of interstellar trade fear regulation of that trade by a strong central regime. Worlds that are winning local conflicts fear the central government's intervention against them. Meanwhile, many Solomani point out that if they allow the center to have greater control over local affairs, it would make the Confederation a tyranny equivalent to the Imperium. In that case, what point the Solomani Cause? Should the Confederation ever make a serious attempt at centralization, Kukulcan might be the least of its problems.

SOLSEC RISING

Meanwhile, the Confederation's central government is suffering through a crisis of its own. The government has traditionally had a tripod structure, with the Solomani Party, the Confederation military, and Solomani Security all in theoretical balance. Historically, the Party has proven to be fragmented and disorganized, and could usually be dominated by SolSec. The military, on the other hand, has relatively unified command and has often acted independently. SolSec's leaders have rarely accepted this situation. After the disastrous Battle of Kukulcan in 1118, SolSec began a thorough purge of the Navy's officer corps. Officers with moderate or pro-Imperial sympathies have been removed, replaced in many cases by "war hawks" with more acceptable ideological leanings.

Since the rise of Elias Treleven to the position of Coordinator, SolSec has become more subtle in its policing of the military ranks. Agents no longer sweep up naval officers and their families by the hundreds. This doesn't mean that the purges have ended. Instead, they have become more discriminating. Indeed, Treleven has expanded their scope, turning agents against the Army and even the Home Guard of many "moderate" worlds. Many Solomani are alarmed at this turn of events, which seems to indicate a grab for supreme power on the part of SolSec.

In fact, Treleven *is* interested in increasing the power of SolSec. The events of recent years have convinced him of the need for Solomani solidarity, and he knows that the Solomani Cause is insufficient as a coherent rallying point. The Party is hopelessly divided, and the military can't be trusted to put the Cause ahead of local interests. That leaves SolSec as the only possible unifying institution for the Confederation. His ultimate goal may be a Solomani dictatorship, with himself in the title role (or, more likely, with SolSec as the power behind the throne).

NATIONALISM

Many Imperials would be surprised to learn that several influential factions within the Confederation are not interested in the Cause at all. These factions are difficult for outside observers to recognize. They tend to be militant and strongly anti-Imperial in rhetoric, and in public they do not question the precepts of the Solomani Cause. In private, however, they do not regard Solomani as inherently superior beings. Instead, they are *nationalists*, who simply believe that the Solomani deserve their own sovereign territory. Their long-term goal is independence from the Imperium, not the dominance of "pure" Solomani over all others.

To some extent, Solomani nationalism and the dogma of the Solomani Cause have common interests. Both are interested in building a strong Solomani state in opposition to the Imperium, and both are interested in recovering the territory lost during the Solomani Rim War. The existence of these shared goals is one reason why many Solomani who are indifferent or even opposed to the Cause are still loyal supporters of the Solomani Confederation. Conflict arises when Solomani supremacists insist on devotion to ideology, and not simply to the state.

Solomani nationalism is particularly strong in the Confederation military. Most military officers are not motivated by abstract notions of Solomani superiority, but by the pragmatic desire to defend Solomani society. Indeed, they often have grudging respect for their counterparts in the Imperium, the Aslan Hierate, or the Hiver Federation. In private they are impatient with the more dogmatic elements of the Solomani Party, and contemptuous of SolSec underhandedness. Solomani officers of this stripe face a great deal of internal conflict, knowing that to express their honestly held beliefs might be disastrous for their careers or even their lives.

The effect of Solomani nationalism is not often understood in the Imperium, especially since Imperial authorities often find it useful to exaggerate the degree to which the Confederation is unified behind the Cause. Within the Confederation itself, the nationalist movement is regarded as a threat by SolSec and by "purist" factions within the Solomani Party. SolSec's recent purge of the Confederation's military is partially motivated by a desire to curb nationalist attitudes.

GENERAL CONGRESS

All of these trends seem to be converging on the next General Congress of the Solomani Party, to be held late in 1120. The Secretary-General is standing for re-election, but the moderate coalition that elected him and several of his predecessors seems on the verge of collapse. As a result, the next Secretary-General may have to deal with the Confederation's problems without the support of his own High Council. Such a Secretary-General might be tempted to reach beyond the usual legal and political system to get things done . . . and his natural ally would be SolSec. The prospect of a radical-racist Secretary-General with full SolSec support gives many people nightmares, in and out of the Confederation.

TERRORISM

Terrorism *appears* to be on the decline in the Solomani Rim sector, if you accept what appears in the Imperial news media. This is in part an illusion. What has been declining is a certain kind of irrational, attention-grabbing, arbitrary violence. The new brand of Solomani terrorism is both more subtle and more effective.

BROTHERHOOD OF ORION

The Brotherhood of Orion is real, and is indeed regarded as a serious threat by Imperial officials. Much of what follows is not (as of 1120) known to Imperial Intelligence, although SolSec is beginning to put the picture together.

Using FAR TRADER on the Rim

When using the trade models in Far Trader, the GM will find that the Solomani Rim has many trade routes which dwarf the largest in the Marches.

Major Routes occur for a Bilateral Trade Number (BTN) of 11 or more. Such routes involve up to a million dtons of cargo and tens of thousands of passengers per week. These routes will keep scores of 10,000+ dton superfreighters busy, and may host a few "megafreighters" in the 100,000-dton range. They will *not* support a greater number of small freighters and free traders than the BTN 10+ Main Routes. Beyond a certain point, it's always more economical to replace a swarm of small merchant ships with a few massive bulk carriers.

Mega-Routes occur for a BTN of 12 or more. These routes involve several million dtons of cargo and hundreds of thousands of passengers per week. A few dozen 100,000+ dton megafreighters and a swarm of 10,000+ dton superfreighters will ply the route each week. Again, opportunities for small and tramp freighters are no greater on such a route than on a Main Route.

The *Far Trader* economic model can theoretically generate BTNs up to 13, but this requires two worlds with populations in the tens of billions, each at TL12, a single parsec apart. This is a rare situation, and it is not directly addressed in *Far Trader*, but it happens in the Solomani Rim. Muan Gwi and Muan Issler (both in the Vega subsector) fit the requirements. The route between them supports *hundreds* of 100,000+ dton megafreighters per week. Don't underestimate the Vegans!

Using FIRST IN on the Rim

Chapter 4's data should be enough to flesh out any given star system in the Solomani Rim using the rules in *First In*. A few of the assumptions used in generating the world capsules follow:

Stellar Types: All stellar classifications were adapted from canonical *Traveller* material. Type IV and VI stars were reassigned to Type V. White dwarf stars were reclassified as either type M-V or type D, to fit the *First In* tables. All class M9 V stars were "upgraded" to class M8 V. A very few stars were changed to better fit the world concept or remove other problems. All stars were assumed to have mass, luminosity, and other properties from the *First In* tables, possibly with interpolation.

Continued on next page . . .

Using *FIRST IN* on the Rim

[Continued]

Planetary Size: Planetary size parameters were not generated using the *FIRST IN* rules. Instead, a surface gravity was assumed to loosely fit the known atmospheric density for the world. This often implied small but very dense worlds. When using the world-design sequence, compute the planet's density and mass from the diameter and surface gravity given.

Climate and Orbital Radius: The orbital radius for each planet was not computed using a modified Bode sequence. Instead, a climate category was chosen for each world, arbitrarily or based on published information. The radius of each planet's orbit was then back-calculated from the primary star's luminosity and the chosen climate class, assuming average albedo and greenhouse factor for the planet's apparent world type. Surface gravity and atmospheric density were used to modify the greenhouse factor. Worlds orbiting Class M-V red dwarf stars were assumed to be tide-locked in most (not all) cases. In short, GMs applying the *FIRST IN* rules for world climate should be able to reverse-engineer the planet from the information provided, without too much difficulty.

Scout Adventures

The Third Imperium setting doesn't usually lend itself to tales of deep-space exploration. With 10,000 years of interstellar civilization already past, it's very hard to find *anywhere* that "no man has gone before." This is particularly true in the Solomani Rim, which has been explored quite thoroughly.

There are exceptions, of course. Campaigns set in the Solomani Confederation may have a more frontierlike flavor, since many worlds to rimward are thinly settled and may not be thoroughly explored. Leaving the sector entirely, Solomani explorers may find plenty of opportunity to rimward, spearheading the Confederation's colonial expansion into uncharted space. Even within the Imperial sphere, there are regions like the Ultima or Arc-turus subsectors which might still hold surprises.

Meanwhile, most of the local business of the Imperial Scout Service is in the area of "contact and liaison" work. The IISS is heavily involved in the task of understanding the myriad cultures of the Rim, working to reconcile them with each other and with Imperial rule. The IISS Intelligence Branch is also extremely busy keeping tabs on the Solomani Confederation.

The Brotherhood of Orion was founded by seven Solomani business leaders, most of them retired military officers, all of them from the Alpha Crucis and Spica sectors. The founders of the Brotherhood had limited access to Hiver psychological techniques, including a crude psychohistorical method (see p. GT55). In 1094, they established a secret research facility somewhere in the Alpha Crucis sector, and applied their new techniques to the study of Imperial-Solomani relations.

What they discovered was very disturbing. Almost every simulation predicted the same fate for the Solomani Confederation: internal dissension culminating in civil war, followed by invasion from the Imperium or the Aslan Hierate. The only futures that appeared to hold survival for the Confederation rested on events of extremely low probability. By 1150 at the latest, the Solomani Cause appeared to be doomed.

Fortunately, psychohistory indicates ways to manipulate the future, by consciously causing events that would otherwise be very unlikely. The trick is to generate the *right* events. The psychohistorians decided that they had to unify the Confederation while weakening the Imperium. The surest way to do that was by setting off a new war between the two powers, laying the proper groundwork ahead of time so that the Solomani could *win*. To this end, the psychohistorians set several plans in motion. One of these involved the foundation of the Brotherhood of Orion, in 1097.

The Brotherhood is the direct-action arm of the psychohistorians' conspiracy. It operates in a very tight cell structure, each cell consisting of three members. Members of a cell know one another's identities, but only two people outside a member's cell know of his role in the Brotherhood. Personal identities are concealed whenever members of more than one cell must meet or work together on Brotherhood business. If a cell is compromised, all the cells in communication with it drop contact. As a result, the Brotherhood can be infiltrated, but outside investigators find it very difficult to trace its chain of command.

The brothers are not "terrorists" in the strictest sense. Terrorists choose targets for their symbolic or emotional value, hoping to demoralize whole populations or simply to vent rage. The Brotherhood of Orion chooses its targets in accord with a long-term psychohistorical plan. Sometimes this means using terror tactics, but the Brotherhood often tries to manipulate other groups into performing such attacks. The Brotherhood itself operates with stealth and subtlety. It performs single assassinations, carefully targeted sabotage, economic manipulation, and data piracy. Its members infiltrate critical institutions and can remain in place for years before taking action. Its targets are not always the obvious ones, and it *never* claims responsibility for its actions.

Recent events show that the Brotherhood may be having difficulty pursuing its goals. The Imperium seems as ready as ever to repel Solomani attack. Meanwhile, levels of dissension within the Solomani Confederation are on the rise, exactly as predicted by the psychohistorical models and despite any of the Brotherhood's actions. Still, the Brotherhood of Orion is implementing a very long-term plan, and its machinations may simply have yet to bear fruit.

RULE OF TERRA

As of 1120, the Rule of Terra organization appears to be on the verge of collapse. Its 1116 strike against the government of Mirabilis has apparently prompted the Confederation government to outlaw it. While the organization continues to claim responsibility for various attacks, it is clearly breaking down in the face of Confederation counter-terrorist activities. Several splinter groups have begun to operate independently, while others have been captured by Imperial or Solomani officials.

One unobvious factor in the organization's collapse is the withdrawal of tacit SolSec support. At one time, SolSec found the Rule of Terra to be a convenient cover for a variety of covert activities. However, Coordinator Treleven is currently pursuing a strategy of working through smaller anti-Imperial organizations, some of them specifically organized by undercover SolSec operatives. In this way, he hopes to provide anti-terrorist efforts with smaller, more elusive targets, while avoiding dependence on an organization which has proven difficult to control.

CULTURE WARS

One of the more subtle, but important, differences between the Solomani Rim and the Spinward Marches is the level of tolerance in the region. In the Spinward Marches, there have been wars against a hostile Human culture (the Zhodani) but that culture has always been *foreign*. There are no significant Zhodani populations living in the Imperium, insisting on imposing their cultural values on everyone around them, provoking further intolerance in others. Imperial society in the Marches has its tensions, but it is more or less unified.

Not so on the Rim. The Solomani are both a foreign power and an important internal demographic group. They are often thought of as the local villains, but the truth is far more complex. The whole history of the sector has been one of cultural conflict, often violent, starting with the Interstellar Wars and running on up to the present simmering tensions. The balance of power has reversed itself so many times that *all* sides can legitimately claim to have been victimized at some point.

The natural reaction for all parties has been to grow defensive and intolerant in return. Today, the whole cultural melange is still present in the Imperial sphere, and the habit of mutual prejudice is very ingrained.

This is a deeper problem for the Imperium than it might at first appear. The Imperial style of government is loose and restrained. The Imperium wants its member worlds to be interested in trade and mutual defense, and otherwise inclined to leave each another alone. Deep passions are inherently threatening, if no amount of Imperial symbolism or prosperity can erase them. Everyone knows that the Solomani Movement tapped into such passions, splitting the Imperium and setting off the bloodiest war in Imperial history. What few people consider is that the *reaction* to the Solomani Movement might be just as dangerous.



Virus?

One of the most controversial elements from earlier versions of *Traveller* is Virus, a vicious form of artificial intelligence which did more than anything else to bring down the Third Imperium in *Traveller: The New Era*. The alternate-history timeline of *GURPS Traveller* diverges from the original long before the release of Virus, but *not* before all of the events which led to Virus' creation.

The Origins of Virus

The roots of Virus are on the planet Cymbeline, in the Solomani Rim. A unique form of silicon-based life exists in the planet's highlands, unsuspected by the other inhabitants. These "Chips" resemble naturally occurring integrated circuits, some of them of very great complexity. Over the eons, the Chips evolved a complex ecology. They developed methods for reproducing themselves, using the raw materials found in nature (or in other Chips). They built up mechanisms that allowed them to move about and sense their environment. A few of them even developed rudimentary intelligence, at about the level of a Terran reptile or bird.

During the Interstellar Wars, a Terran warship was disabled and forced to make a crash landing on Cymbeline. The landing killed everyone on board, and exposed the ship's computer core to the outside environment. Several Chips eventually entered the wreck and "fed" on the Terran computer hardware. The purity and precision of the Terran chips made them a superior "food" source. In at least one case, a native Chip was able to make full use of the Terran computer's natural information-processing ability. The result was a vast leap forward in evolution. The Chip suddenly belonged to a new "species" which was self-aware and intelligent.

The presence of the Chips on Cymbeline was first discovered in 1067, although the scientists involved did not encounter any of the fully sentient species. The discovery was classified by Imperial Intelligence, and remained a secret for decades. Samples of the non-sentient Chips were taken to research stations elsewhere in the Imperium. At least one breakthrough application came out of that research: a new kind of ship's transponder which was cheap, effective, and very hard to forge. This new transponder type was made standard equipment for all Imperial military and civilian vessels in the late 1080s, and eventually became widespread even in the other major interstellar states.

The sentient Chips were first contacted by Humans in 1110, when a Solomani scientist named Arnold Rushorin mounted an expedition to Cymbeline.

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Virus?

[Continued]

Based on Rushorin's knowledge of local conditions, he saw a chance to find silicon life. Encountering a member of the sentient species was a windfall beyond his wildest hopes. Rushorin and his partners left Cymbeline and traveled to Terra aboard the passenger liner *Ad Astra*, surviving several SolSec sabotage attempts along the way. Upon reaching Terra, Rushorin defected to the Imperium and turned over his results to Imperial authorities.

Scientists working for Imperial Intelligence soon learned of the incredible value of Rushorin's find. The Solomani scientist was immediately put in charge of a project to develop more applications for the Chips, working with Navy and IISS support at a new Imperial Research Station on Cymbeline. This research has already led to yet another major improvement in transponder technology, and the new design is (as of 1120) rapidly becoming standard in all Imperial military and civilian ships.

Another application of the Chips appeared in *Traveller: The New Era*. This was a fearsome weapon that could invade and subvert an enemy's computer systems. When that weapon was released prematurely, infecting the Imperial Xboat and naval systems, it became Virus and destroyed the Third Imperium. That process was assisted by the fact that the transponders based on another type of Chip had already spread throughout the Imperium and surrounding areas.

Handling the Chips

The concept of Virus was implausible to many players, and it certainly has drastic effects on the game. Indeed, that was why the concept was developed in the first place: to wipe the slate clean and give *Traveller* a radically new setting. As such, however, the concept is *not* suited to *GURPS Traveller*. GMs will probably want to avoid the concept of Virus altogether, or at least handle it differently.

One possibility is to assume that Virus simply would not work as stated in *Traveller: The New Era*. This assumption requires that the Chips' natural abilities be too limited to create an unstoppable infectious plague such as Virus. Perhaps they are able to interface with existing computers, but cannot actually change their configuration. This would allow the GM to experiment with artificial intelligence in his campaign, without sweeping changes in the *GURPS Traveller* setting.

The GM also may ignore the idea of Chips altogether. In this case, the whole story of Arnold Rushorin and the *Ad Astra* might be nothing more than a rumor. Or perhaps it's a ruse, planted by Imperial Intelligence to cover entirely different research on Cymbeline...

THE AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT

This is the real reason behind Imperial support for the Authentic Movement. Authenticist precepts might have been designed for the current situation on the Rim. The emphasis on ancestral cultures gives the Rim's people a way to express ethnic pride, without falling into the trap of pro- or anti-Solomani rhetoric. Meanwhile, the requirement of respect for the free choices of others gives them a way to defuse the time-bomb of mutual intolerance.

In any case, Imperial support for the Authentic Movement is much more widespread than a casual observer might notice. The Archduke secretly funnels money to Authenticist groups which seem effective in reducing local cultural tensions. Imperial agents start new Authenticist groups in places where the Movement hasn't caught on yet. Authenticist leaders are publicly consulted by minor Imperial officials, lending them prestige. Meanwhile, the highest nobles of the sector make a great show of ignoring or even opposing the Movement's growth, knowing that overt Imperial support might drive away potential recruits. None of this rises to the level of a true psychohistorical manipulation, but as a public-relations campaign it has been fairly effective.

Despite the Imperium's attempt to be discreet, some observers have noticed the real level of official support for Authenticism. Indeed, the Authentic worldview is so well-suited for the Solomani Rim of today that some have quietly speculated that it *was* designed. Its appearance just before the outbreak of the Solomani Rim War is a particularly suspicious coincidence. Perhaps Johann Kramm was an agent of the Imperium, releasing critical ideas into the collective consciousness just before they would be most needed. There is no evidence to support such a conspiracy theory, but the GM must decide the truth for his own campaign.

HUMANS AND OTHERS

The bulk of the population of the Solomani Rim sector is Human, but alien influences are important in local politics. Some of these influences are not so obvious.

ASLAN

Aside from the Vegans, Aslan are the non-Humans most often encountered by travelers in the Solomani Rim sector. Hierate Aslan often trade as far to trailing as the Solomani Rim, and over the past few centuries many Aslan have settled on one world or another. Today, less than 1% of the sector's population is Aslan, but this still amounts to several *billion* Aslan citizens.

Under Solomani governments, Aslan have usually been reduced to the status of second-class citizens. Aslan living within the Solomani Confederation still suffer this kind of discrimination. Some clans have been lucky enough to hold land or even whole worlds free of Solomani interference. They must deal with the Confederation's central government, and may be forced to tolerate Solomani colonists, but at least they can maintain their traditional social structures and customs. Most Aslan within Solomani space are not so lucky, and are absorbed into Solomani society as an alien underclass.

Aslan within the Imperial portion of the sector have been liberated from similar oppression. Naturally, they are staunchly loyal to the Imperium, often serving in the Imperial military or in various huscarle units. This loyalty is tempered by a revival of traditional Aslan culture. The way of *Ftier* is becoming wildly popular among those who were forced to assimilate into Human society during the Solomani period. A number of traditional Aslan clans have responded by sending out *ftierko* to meet with and teach revivalist groups. The Imperium cautiously supports this movement, although some officials privately worry

about trouble if the traditional Aslan land-hunger revives as well. Archduke Adair is watching developments closely.

Meanwhile, tensions between the Solomani Confederation and the Aslan Hierate continue to rise. Unofficial Solomani policy has been to expand to spinward at the expense of the Aslan clans. Open war is unlikely, but border incidents have been occurring with increasing frequency. Some Hierate clans have responded by lending support and encouragement to strongly anti-Solomani groups within the Imperial portion of the Solomani Rim.



DROYNE

The Solomani Rim is almost beyond the range of Droyne settlement. The nearest true Droyne worlds are in the Daibei and Diaspora sectors. A few minority Droyne colonies do exist, with the largest and most notable being the enclave on Kilennur. Few Droyne ever visit the sector, although the occasional Droyne trader appears in the local starlanes. Chirpers (uncasted Droyne) are present in the sector, but their populations are small and isolated.

Imperial policy toward the Droyne is the same in the Solomani Rim sector as elsewhere. The Solomani have historically had little to do with the Droyne, although they normally tolerate low-technology Droyne or Chirper colonies within Solomani territory. High-technology populations are interdicted, to prevent the strange little aliens from interfering in Solomani business.

HIVERS

Hivers are a fairly common sight in the Solomani Rim sector. While there are no Hiver worlds in the sector, there are a number of small enclaves and trade missions. Hivers are quite likely to be encountered in the sector, as scientists, traders, or diplomats.

Both the Imperium and the Confederation have a hard time taking the Hivers too seriously. They are too far from the Imperial border, and too weirdly alien, to be considered a major factor in Imperial politics. Indeed, many Imperials consider Hivers to be *silly* creatures. For their part, the Solomani share a border with the Hive Federation, and there is a healthy trade relationship, so they do not take the Hivers so lightly. The Solomani also engage in a certain amount of cross-border piracy. The Hivers have been very effective in responding to a few of these incursions, so the Solomani have a bit of respect for the Federation's military. (The few Solomani veterans of these Hiver counterattacks tend to have a *lot* of respect . . .)

Adventure Seeds

The following can provide campaign themes or plot hooks for specific adventures in the Solomani Rim.

Absentee Landlord

The party is hired for the staff of an Imperial nobleman, just arrived in the Solomani Rim to take up his title and feudal holdings. It turns out that the noble is the first member of his family to return to the Rim since his ancestors fled the Solomani Movement about 200 years ago. The only reason he is here is to avoid having his title stripped from him by the Emperor, who seemed about to turn over the title to a local family. The noble misses the social life of Capital, thinks the Rim is populated by barbarians, and is very good at alienating everyone he meets. But he pays well . . .

Boycott

The PCs arrive on a world with a cargo-hold full of speculative goods, only to find that the local government has been taken over by an ethnic-revolutionist group which wants to purge all "foreign influences." Most of the party's cargo has been banned as "harmful to morality." There is clearly still a local market for the goods, although the most likely buyers are avoiding contact with offworlders for fear of the government. Meanwhile, the goods are of almost no value anywhere else. Do the PCs try to sell anyway, or do they accept the loss and move on?

Defector

While in the Solomani Confederation near the Imperial border, the party is suddenly accosted by a Solomani citizen. On a planet, he meets them physically in a discreet location. In space, he approaches the PCs' ship in an unarmed one-man craft. In either case, he claims to be of some importance, and he also claims to have information crucial to the survival of the Imperium. He wants to defect, and he needs the PCs to help him get across the border. Perhaps he is what he claims to be and SolSec is right on his tail. Perhaps he's a SolSec agent himself. Or perhaps he simply suffers paranoid delusions.

Note that this adventure can easily be reversed, with the potential defector being an Imperial citizen wanting to defect to the Solomani. This is less likely, perhaps, but possible . . .

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Adventure Seeds

[Continued]

Derelict

While their ship is on the outskirts of a relatively low-population star system, the PCs detect a derelict ship drifting quietly nearby. Do they investigate, and what do they find when they do? So much history has happened on the Rim that a derelict could contain *anything*.

Flash Riot

The adventurers are caught in a xenophobic riot, either because they have been taken for members of a detested ethnic group or because they were just in the wrong place at the wrong time. This can happen on almost any world, even one without an Amber Zone rating. The classic situation is Solomani vs. Anyone Else. Variants include Vilani vs. Solomani, locals vs. Imperials, local ethnic group A vs. local ethnic group B, and so on.

Gulag

A Solomani citizen known to the PCs (or possibly one of the PCs) has been seized by SolSec and placed in a prison camp somewhere in the Confederation. The adventurers will have to rescue him, but they can't do the job alone. Who in Solomani territory can they trust?

Mommy Hunt

The party is approached by a young woman. She is desperate to leave the planet, but has very little money and no offworld connections. Can the PCs help? It turns out that she is being sought by local authorities for a felony. Further investigation reveals that her "crime" is *being pregnant*, and thereby violating her homeworld's draconian population-control laws.

Mr. Tagalong

The party's Vegan associate makes a personal announcement: His time with the adventurers has been so satisfying that he has decided not to continue seeking for a *tuhuir* (see p. 32) to join. Instead, he plans to found his own new *tuhuir* based on the way of life demonstrated by the PCs. This means that he will want to spend even more time with them, involving himself in all of their escapades, and taking mental notes about their approach to life. The Vegan is intelligent and skilled, but the idea of anyone treating the typical PC as a guru should be bizarre enough to keep players guessing.

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Still, most Solomani leaders continue to believe that the Hivers aren't focused and aggressive enough to threaten the Solomani Cause.

Neither Imperial nor Solomani policy-makers have realized that this state of affairs is exactly as the Hivers themselves wish it. Despite their friendly demeanor, the Hivers have a very pragmatic attitude toward both the Imperium and the Solomani Confederation. To them, Humaniti is a promising but immature species, to be subtly guided toward adulthood through long-term manipulation. Hivers regard Imperial aristocracy, Solomani racism, and the general Human proclivity for violence to all be negative traits. Manipulation may reduce these traits, but in the meantime the Hive Federation needs to remain at peace with both major Human states. Therefore, the Federation subtly encourages Imperials to think of Hivers as comical. It also tolerates a certain amount of Human piracy, so that the Solomani will think of Hivers as weak.

Some observers claim that the Solomani Confederation itself owes its continued existence to Hiver manipulation. The Hivers presumably want to prevent the bloody collapse of the Confederation, especially if they know that Imperials and Aslan would move to fight over the scraps. (In particular, it's possible that the Brotherhood of Orion itself is a front for Hiver manipulation. After all, the Brotherhood's psychohistorical methods may have been deliberately biased by their Hiver source.) So far, no one has been able to provide substantive evidence for this "Hiver conspiracy theory." Of course, this may simply indicate that the manipulation has been very effective . . .

K'KREE

The Two Thousand Worlds are too far from the Solomani Rim for any significant contact. K'kree visitors are very rare, and usually attract a great deal of attention when they do appear.

VARGR

Although the Vargr "home territory" is currently more than 150 parsecs to coreward, the ultimate homeworld of the species is Terra. Most Vargr disregard this fact, feeling no emotional or symbolic connection. However, as always with the Vargr, there are exceptions. Thus, each year a few Vargr pilgrims make the long trip to see Terra. Over the centuries since the foundation of the Third Imperium, some have even stayed to settle on or near Terra. As a result, although Vargr are a rare sight in the Solomani Rim, they are not unknown.

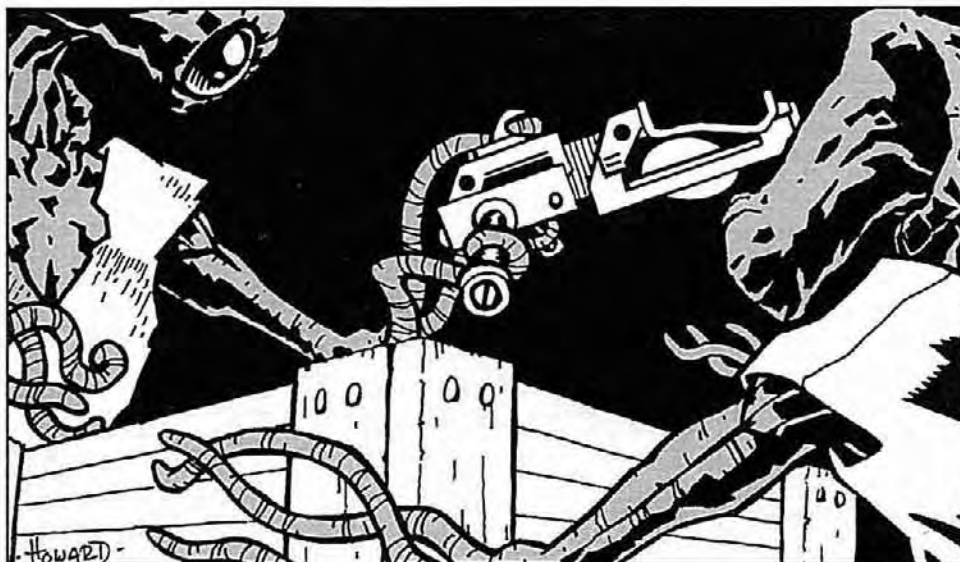
Almost all of the Vargr of the Solomani Rim are Imperial loyalists, but even so their presence has some odd implications for Solomani politics. Some Solomani Party factions extend the definition of "Solomani" beyond its usual range. These universalist factions even consider *Vargr* to be Solomani, on the grounds that they originated on Terra. This definition is not taken seriously by most citizens of the Confederation, and the Vargr of the Solomani Rim seem more amused by it than anything else. Still, adventurers traveling in the Imperial portion of the sector may suddenly encounter a local Solomani Party organization with Vargr membership!

VEGANS

Current Imperial policy on the Rim relies very heavily on the Vegan Autonomous Region. The Imperium counts on the Vegans to provide a power base that will hold, no matter what political disaster might happen among the Rim's Human citizens. The Vegans are happy to oblige, but they are also developing ideas of their own. Many prominent Vegans are beginning to ask why their species seems doomed to a subordinate position. After all, for thousands of years

the Vegan species has been either a junior partner or a despised subject under one Human government after another. Some Vegans feel that the current situation offers a unique opportunity to establish an independent destiny, and they are grasping at the chance with every tentacle.

The new Vegan boldness is not being driven by the Guardian *tuhuir*, which traditionally takes a cautious stance in foreign affairs. Instead, a number of secondary *tuhuir* are pursuing independent courses of action which add up to a more assertive strategy. For example, one *tuhuir* based inside the Autonomous District is discreetly lending military and economic aid to the government of Waothan, on Esperance (see pp. 87-88). Another *tuhuir* lobbies the governments of worlds with Vegan minorities, pressing for greater autonomy for expatriate Vegan communities. Yet another *tuhuir* is organizing long-range colonial missions, hoping to establish the first Vegan communities outside the Solomani Rim sector. And so on . . .



A few Vegan *tuhuir* are even making cautious contact with moderate factions within the Solomani Confederation. No sane Vegan is likely to forget their oppression under the Solomani Movement, but most Vegans recognize that not all Solomani are supremacist fanatics. The "pro-Solomani" Vegans hope to undermine the Solomani Movement in favor of Solomani nationalism. Success in this endeavor might make an open alliance between Vegans and Solomani possible, giving both parties a better position from which to win concessions from the Imperium. Naturally, this strategy is opposed by both the Imperium and the Guardian *tuhuir*, and all contact is conducted in secret.

For his part, the Archduke is a firm supporter of increased influence for the Vegans, so long as they remain loyal to the Imperium. He encourages them to move slowly and avoid provoking a xenophobic response from the Humans they must deal with. His concerns are not unwarranted. Many Humans, even broad-minded ones who would normally support the Archduke to the bitter end, are nervous at the prospect of Vegan irredentism.

GMs running campaigns in the Rim should follow a cardinal rule: *Don't underestimate the Vegans*. They are numerous, they have the best available technology, and their economic might is considerable. They could become a significant military power very quickly if they ever saw the need. Furthermore, they think differently enough from Humans that they are always something of a mystery. Only their generally unaggressive nature has prevented them from being a threat to Humaniti rather than a partner, and even that may be changing over time.

Adventure Seeds

[Continued]

Rainbow Warriors

The adventurers are hired to investigate allegations of ecological crimes on a nearby world. The alleged criminal is a local subsidiary of an Imperial megacorporation. The offer sounds straightforward enough, but is the patron *really* interested in the environment? Or is it a dummy organization run by one of the target's competitors?

Return of the King

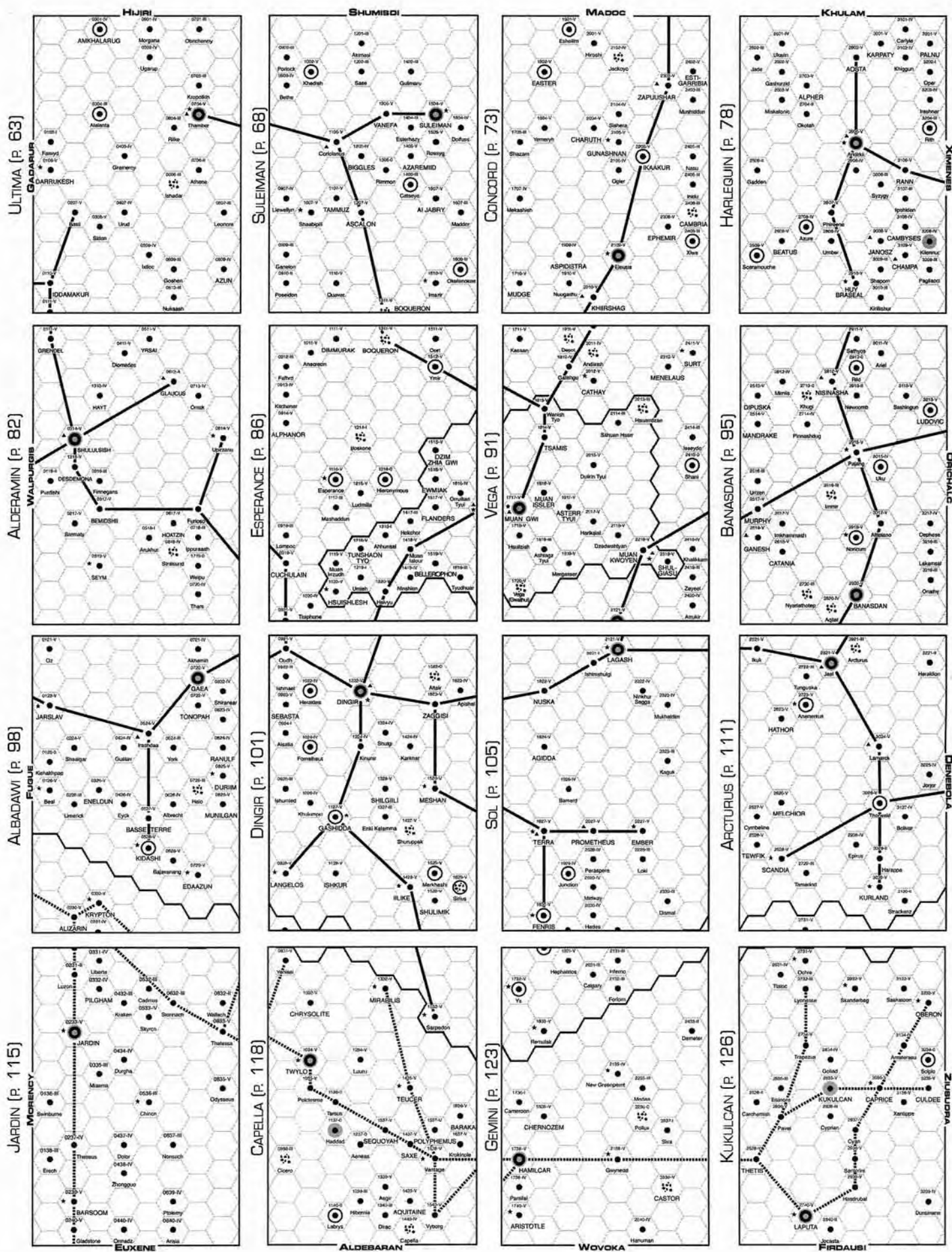
The PCs are hired by a research foundation to trace the current whereabouts of an old Terran royal family. The foundation is mostly interested in historical artifacts or genetic research. Of course, if the lost royals are found, they could conceivably return to claim some position in Terran society, especially if their old homeland currently has a thriving Authenticist Movement (see sidebar, pp. 60-61). Naturally, the Solomani Party is opposed to any such restoration.

Scavenger Hunt

A wealthy Imperial nobleman has just joined the Authenticist Movement. Unfortunately, his known ancestry includes people from dozens of Terran and non-Terran cultures, and he can't decide which one to imitate. As a result, he has settled for collecting artifacts and memorabilia from them all. The PCs are hired to scrounge through the sector, looking for items from the noble's eclectic shopping list. Greek statuary, African masks, Vilani cookware, Chinese temple bells, American LP disks, he wants them all and he's not picky about their state of former ownership. As long as they're authentic, of course.

Trade War!

The PCs are running a tramp trader. Recently two great shipping lines have begun a trade war over the major routes through the party's usual range. Sabotage is disrupting both megacorporations' schedules, so many of their customers are looking for alternative carriers for their goods. A savvy trader captain might be able to make a handy profit picking up the crumbs dropped by the battling giants. Of course, the trick is to avoid the appearance of *stealing* a megacorp's customers.



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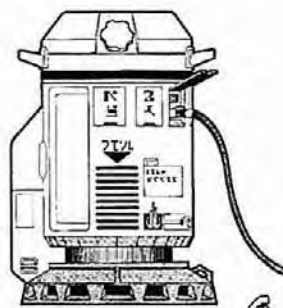
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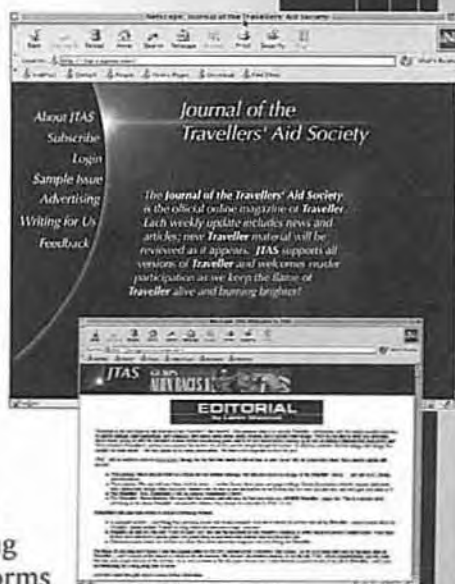
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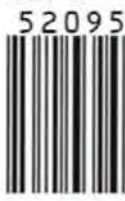
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