

SPACE OPERA

VAULT OF THE NI'ER QUEYON



A SECTOR SPANNING QUEST

Stefan Jones

Scanned By:



Vault of the Ni'er Queyon



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ADVICE ON RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

As mentioned before, this adventure is really an extended 'Quest.' The PCs will have to go about their normal activities of trading, exploring or fighting during the adventure. A rumor of treasure and deep dark unknowns heard at a bar, or one of the starting points included, should serve to introduce the adventure. The SM should do his or her best to mislead, tease, and above all entertain the PCs as they travel between the 'islands of detail' given above. The ravings of a spacehappy bum in an alley (or some similar cliché) can be used to help the PCs if they are stuck in a rut, or trip them up if they are breezing through the 'quest.' Properly handled, the adventure, itself, can be as rewarding as the treasure (both the physical booty and the incredibly ancient history of the Ni'er Queyon) at the end of the PCs' travels.

Have fun, use your imagination till it groans of exhaustion, be fair, and above all, entertain: SF role-playing can be more exciting than a box full of novels if you do it right!

I. INTRODUCTION

This adventure is designed to be placed in any StarMaster's (hereafter referred to as the 'SM') campaign. The locations of the StarSystems detailed within are left out so that each SM can place them where he or she sees fit.

The Vault of the title is the quest-object of the adventure; it is a source of incredible wealth and knowledge that any PC worth his salt will be honor bound to seek out. The quest for the vault should be a long and difficult one. Between the planned and detailed encounters and situations within, the SM should include adventures and sub-quests of his own making. This will allow him to include the background of his campaign in the search for the vault, and will give the players a chance to gain further funds for their PCs. Some recommended adventures along the way are pirate encounters, minor wars and false leads to dangerous planets.

The details on the NPCs in the adventure are kept vague to allow the SM to tailor their strength to match and challenge the player's characters.

II. BACKGROUND HISTORY

Below is a short history of the events that lead up to the present situation. This is secret information, unknown to any in the time that the adventure takes place. The information may be learned by the PCs should they make it to the vault.

A long, long, long time ago, this part of the galaxy was under the sovereignty of the Ni'er Queyon empire. This was one of the smaller Forerunner empires, but still impressively large by today's standards. The Queyon race resembled large, bipedal boars, strong but not very aggressive. The Queyon were never very expansionistic, but they were ruthless in defending their established territory. They ruled their many subject races indifferently, considering interspecies diplomacy and understanding a futile and boring enterprise.

The average Queyon stayed on his or her homeworld for life, leaving off-planet business to a merchant/warrior class. Society on Queyon worlds was engineered to be pastoral and contemplative, with art and leisure playing important roles. The one thing that the subject worlds were considered good for was the manufacture of new and interesting art forms. These were collected and shipped to Queyon colonies for the inhabitants to critique and study.

Like all empires, especially those which fail to use the unique talents of their subjects wisely, the Ni'er Queyon empire fell. The fall was not violent, despite the fact that the major cause of the fall was the invasion fleets of a dozen neighboring empires. When a fleet reached a Queyon world, the inhabitants packed up their bags and private collections and fled for the next colony. The only resistance the invaders encountered was from the homeworlds of the subject races, who feared that their next rulers from-the-stars might not be as undemanding as the Queyon.

The retreat continued for nearly a century, when the refugee ships had nowhere to go but to the ancestral homeworld of the Queyon race. The thousands of freighters of doo-dads and objects d'art also needed a place to go; in typical Queyon fashion, these were given first priority. One of the few unconquered subject worlds, now called Phatzis, was chosen as the 'Gallery World.' Giant buildings of material mined from dead stars were erected and the collections of a billion Queyon were placed inside.

Soon after completing the galleries, disaster struck; the homeworld of the Queyon was blown to smithereens by the invading fleets. The last Queyon ships said goodbye to the primitives who worshipped them, and headed for Phatzis with their horde of art works, buildings and all. A priest managed to stow away on the treasure fleet, but was returned to tell a tale that has been told and passed down through generations on Phatzis. His experience has led thousands of explorers to search for the lost Queyon horde - explorers whose species are now myths themselves.

Now, as a new set of starfaring races expand, word of a fabulous treasure is reaching the ears of human adventurers: A technological civilization on Phatzis, now fallen, had records of the days of the Queyon, a hundred thousand years ago. The PCs' adventure begins as these records are being uncovered.

III. STARTING THE ADVENTURE

There are many possible ways to introduce the player characters to the adventure. Two possibilities are given below. If the SM wishes to start the quest in his own fashion, all or some of the clues listed below should be available to them.

A. Encounter in an alley: The PCs, having had an enjoyable night on the town, are returning to their ship when a figure comes hurtling out of the darkness at them. As the figure pushes past them, a burst of needler fire whizzes by. Three more dark shapes rush past shouting for the first to stop. The PCs can see that the first figure is an elderly man, clutching a large book to his chest. The PCs may now take actions as they see fit.

1. The old man is Wertohm Gazana, a retired linguistics teacher. He is unarmed and has only some loose change in his possession. The people who have hired the thugs chasing him wanted him to decipher the book's contents, but when he saw what the book was about, he decided to report it to the authorities. He is a below average NPC human with good linguistic and comparative cultures skills.

2. The pursuers are local roughnecks hired by a wealthy criminal to retrieve the book, the notes on its contents, and Gazana. They are average human NPCs, with skills in streetwise, dagger, brawling and needler. They have daggers and saps, and two have needler pistols. Each has a wad of 200 credits and a holo of Gazana in his pocket.

3. The book Wertohm Gazana is attempting to make off with is a 60 x 40 x 5 cm thick hardcover. The cover and pages are of some very tough plastic material. It is illustrated, but the writing is like nothing the PCs have ever seen.

If the PCs decide to take the book for themselves, they will run into the same problems the gangster did: trained help is needed to decipher the writing. If the party has a linguistic scientist among them, they can attempt this on their own. The research will take about 20 days. If the party can enlist Gazana's aid, through force, payment of friendship, this initial research time is cut to 5 days: the linguist's notes will be missing from his study, which will set him back a step.

After the initial research period, translation can be begun in earnest. Each 1 - 6 days, one of the following sections will be revealed to the PCs, IN ORDER. After a section is read, a die is rolled to determine the time until the next section is translated. The criminal who originally owned the book will try to get it back during this time.

a. The book is the first of two volumes. The work is entitled: **TIMES PAST:** Archeological evidence of a pre-hak-kundian civilization and extra-terrestrial visitors. It might be considered a hokey pseudo-science book, but it will become apparent that it is a scholarly and serious study.

b. A routine test finds that the book is slightly radioactive. Tests will indicate that the book was subjected to radiation comparable to that generated by a cobalt bomb at least 500 years ago. A quick trip to the local research library at this time will confirm that the book's origin is a world called Phatzis, occupied by roving bands of nomads. Research teams are digging in the ruins of a tech/6 culture that fried itself about 600 years ago.

c. The book was published by an outfit called 'The Thyn-dom University of the Past, Righteous Republic of Arremioc.'

d. The table of contents shows that this volume of the book contains information on the long lost native civilizations of Phatzis, while the second volume concentrates on the stories and speculations of the alien visitors. The dates given for these visits are over a hundred thousand years old!

e. 'A set of irridium plates found in the Zarvscho province picture the seven star races. The plate shown in figure six is believed to be the race that used Phatzis as a treasure house.' The picture referred to shows a creature resembling an upright walking boar, complete with tusks and bristles.

f. 'The Plain of Redstones in Pagoly was said to be cracked and scarred with glass-lined pits that glowed in the dark. Alas, the Enemy now occupies these lands and is reported to have flooded the plains for irrigation purposes.'

g. 'The most telling evidence of an extra-terrestrial visit is not artifact, but biology. Witness the silver coral and the Basnok fish of the Gryns sea. They have no evolutionary antecedents and can only live off of each other's chemistry.'

h. 'The astrological computer pictured below names all of the planets in our star system, even those not visible to the naked eye. Note that the planetoid belt has a body referred to as a 'Sentry.' Perhaps the ruins of an alien base can be found here.' (This is a very important clue. The picture of the 'Computer' is detailed enough to be used in locating the treasure location once further clues have been gathered. The computer is not electrical by the way - it is similar to the star wheels used in astronomy today).

i. 'After the star-gods left, the priest class was prosecuted by the commoners, who believed that the priests had insulted the deities. The priests fled with their books to a safe refuge.'

j. 'The sage, Thuvosh, whose journey to the stars is chronicled in volume two, was said to have been able to read the minds of the enemy star-beings who came to Phatzis after the treasure had been taken away to its final resting place.'

k. 'The enemy star beings who routed the treasure-keepers from Phatzis are said to even now hunt for the final resting place of the treasure. The 'sky-pebble' theme that crops up constantly in Thuvosh's story, along with an astronomer's speculation on the location itself, is discussed in volume two.'

There are other passages in the book, of course, but only those listed above are really necessary for the PCs' quest. If the players insist on going over the book again to find something they missed, give them misleading information.

Once the book is translated, the logical course would be to go to Phatzis to find Volume Two of **TIMES PAST**: See Section IV.

B. The PCs, owners of their own StarShip, are contacted by a large merchant vessel as they orbit a major port world. The hailing ship is the flagship of the Fuarol Enterprises merchant line, a successful firm owned by a rich canine family. Yarr Faurol himself is on board, and invites the PCs to dinner. It would be polite and possibly profitable to accept: the SM should stress the power of the merchant.

Yarr, a middle-aged canine with a flamboyant, though businesslike, air about him, serves the party an excellent meal and appropriate entertainment before breaking the subject of possible employment. It seems that the merchant's spoiled young daughter, Rachun Faurol, has disappeared along with a large sum of money. Faurol, himself, is too busy to go chasing around known space for his wayward offspring. So, he wonders, would the PCs be interested in helping him?

Payment will be 800,000 CR, plus 100,000 in advance for expenses. The money will be turned over to the characters upon delivery of the missing Rachun. If the players accept the job, they will be asked to sign documents stating that they will use the merchant's advance to find his daughter and nothing else, and to keep the proceedings absolutely secret. He will also give a file of information to the PCs.



1. The file has receipts and ID prints tracing Rachun's movements to a world about 100 LY away. The PCs will have to pick up her scent there.

2. A search of Rachun's office aboard the flagship will turn up the following message:

TO: Lt. Grutel, Star Scamp, Fuarol Ent.

FROM: RACHUN FAUROL

Dear Grutel of the (Indelicate comment deleted):

Translation of catalogue completed. Book one available on - - - - - . Have forged papers on pappy's codepaper to take over command. Will await Scamp's arrival on - - - - - . XXX000=++

(The - - - - - refers to a world in the SM sector about 150 LY from the PCs' present location. Rachun is going to attend an archeology convention here and steal a copy of the book **TIMES PAST**, Volume One. She will then take command of the Fuarol Ent. trading sloop, Star Scamp, and go in search of the world, Phatzis. Of course, the PCs will arrive there too late to stop the theft, but they will be able to find out about the book's contents from the former owner, and can head for Phatzis themselves).

3. Questioning the flagship's crew and searching Rachun's offices will reveal that the merchant's daughter is arrogant, moderately bright, and has a million hobbies and interests. She goes on many carefully guided 'adventures,' but has come to crave independence and is now trying to strike out on her own.

Once the PCs have been introduced to the adventure, they will find that the first logical step is to find the world where the Ni'er Queyon galleries were built, Phatzis. Plugging the word into a memory bank will produce the following:

PHATZIS: No record of word in files. Possible mistake in spelling; other synonyms of Phatzis on file.

Typing in Fatzis will produce two items:

FATZIS: World in (a sector name) sector, (Coordinates). Type 7 jungle world. Avian species native to world, tech index 4.I. World under Mercantile League authority. Forerunner sites in evidence: not investigated to date. More information available in archive class memory files.

FATZIS: See Ni'er Queyon

STAR SCAMP

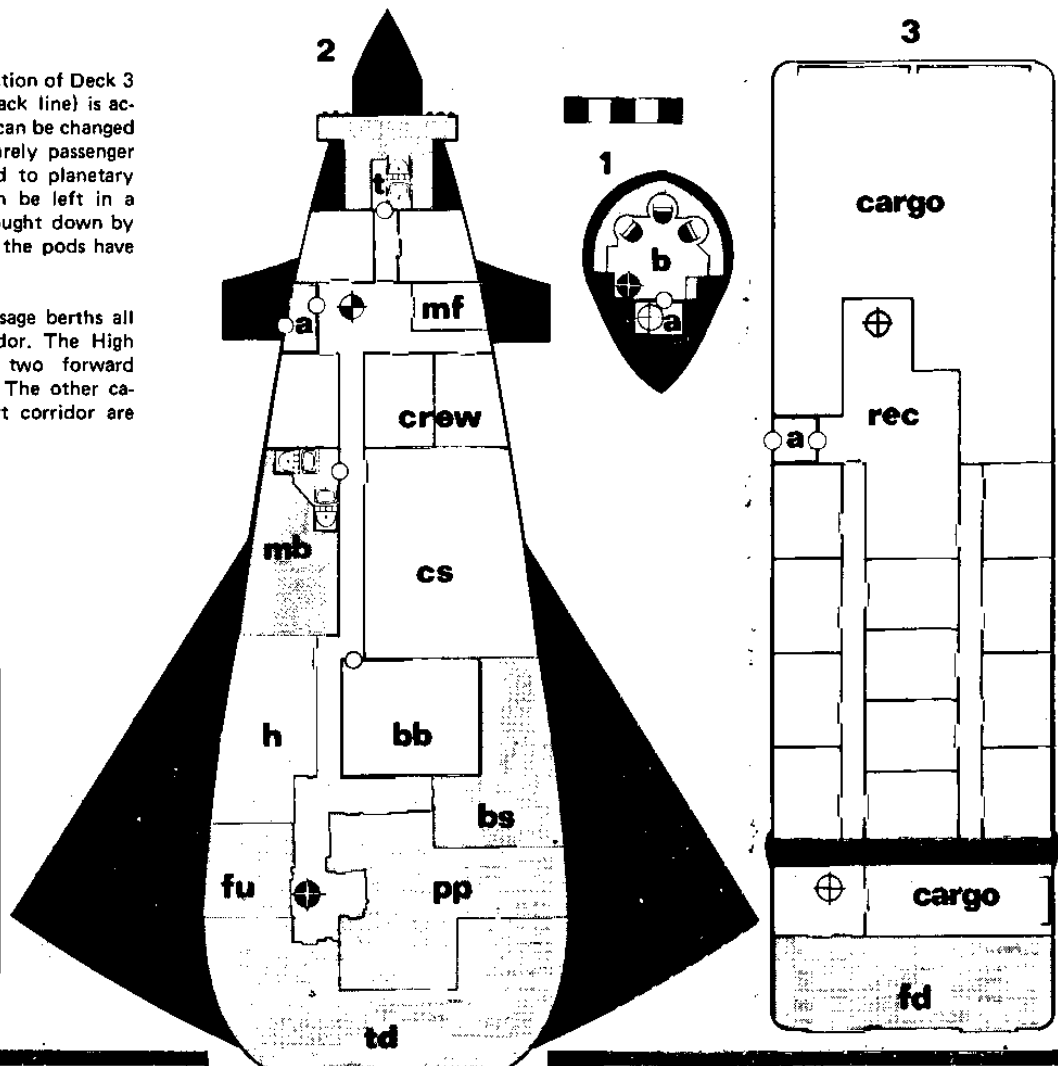
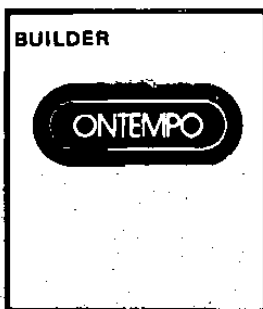
The Venice Class is typical of small Tech/9 merchant craft. It is larger than the Zephyr Class and can add High Passage accommodations to its list of features. This class is versatile enough to be profitable in both the cargo trade and in all classes of passenger traffic. The small size of the Venice Class permits the ship to land at small StarPorts and provide service to colonial worlds.

Specification	Mass	Volume (m ²)	Deck Area	Comments
Hull	550t	1650	837.5	3 decks
Controls	15t	45	22.5	Computer Mk. V
Crew Quarters	45t	115	57.5	9: 2 Astro; 3 Tech; 4 Pursers
Powerplant	20t	60	30	Fusion reactor; 5 fuel units/20 days
TISA Drive	30t	90	45	150 LS max.; Acc. = +20 LS
FTL Warp Drive	40t	120	60	20 LY max.; Cruise = 14 LY
Fuel Capacity	10t	30	15	1000 fuel units; at Cruise Warp = 5 units/100 LY
High Passage	20t	60	30	2 passengers
Middle Passage	40t	120	60	8 passengers
Low Passage	60t	180	90	24 passengers
ColdSleep	40t	120	60	40 cryogenic berths
Sick Bay	5t	15	7.5	1 patient; Dispensary
Recreational	35t	105	52.5	34 passengers awake
Cargo Hold	123t	369	184.5	Would be cargo manifest
Boat Bay	20t	60	30	x1 Launch
Damage Capacity				SSC/500 = 500 Damage Points
BattleScreens	20t	60	30	+10 = 500 Screen Damage Points
Armor				+3/+13 screened
Main Battery	15t	45	22.5	2 x 2 NovaGun N*50
StarTorpedoes	12t	36	18	1 x 6 StarTorp ST*157
EW/ECM				Factor = 9 (increase at MCR 0.25 per factor)
Sensors				3000 LS Range
Communications				SpaceCraft Com SSC/4 = 10,000 LS Range
Atmospheric Streamlining				15,000 kmh; maneuver to 7500 kmh
Total Cost = MCR 81.30. Standard discount brings cost down to MCR 73 where available.				

COMMENTS

Note that the forward section of Deck 3 (forward of the heavy black line) is actually a pod. This section can be changed for a purely cargo or purely passenger pod. Ships carry the pod to planetary surfaces or the pods can be left in a planetary orbit to be brought down by a pod shuttle. Note that the pods have only minimal life support.

On Deck 3 the Low Passage berths all face the starboard corridor. The High Passage berths are the two forward cabins on the port side. The other cabins opening on the port corridor are Middle Passage.



DENOBA CLASS

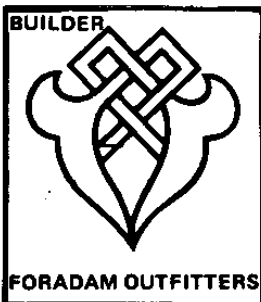
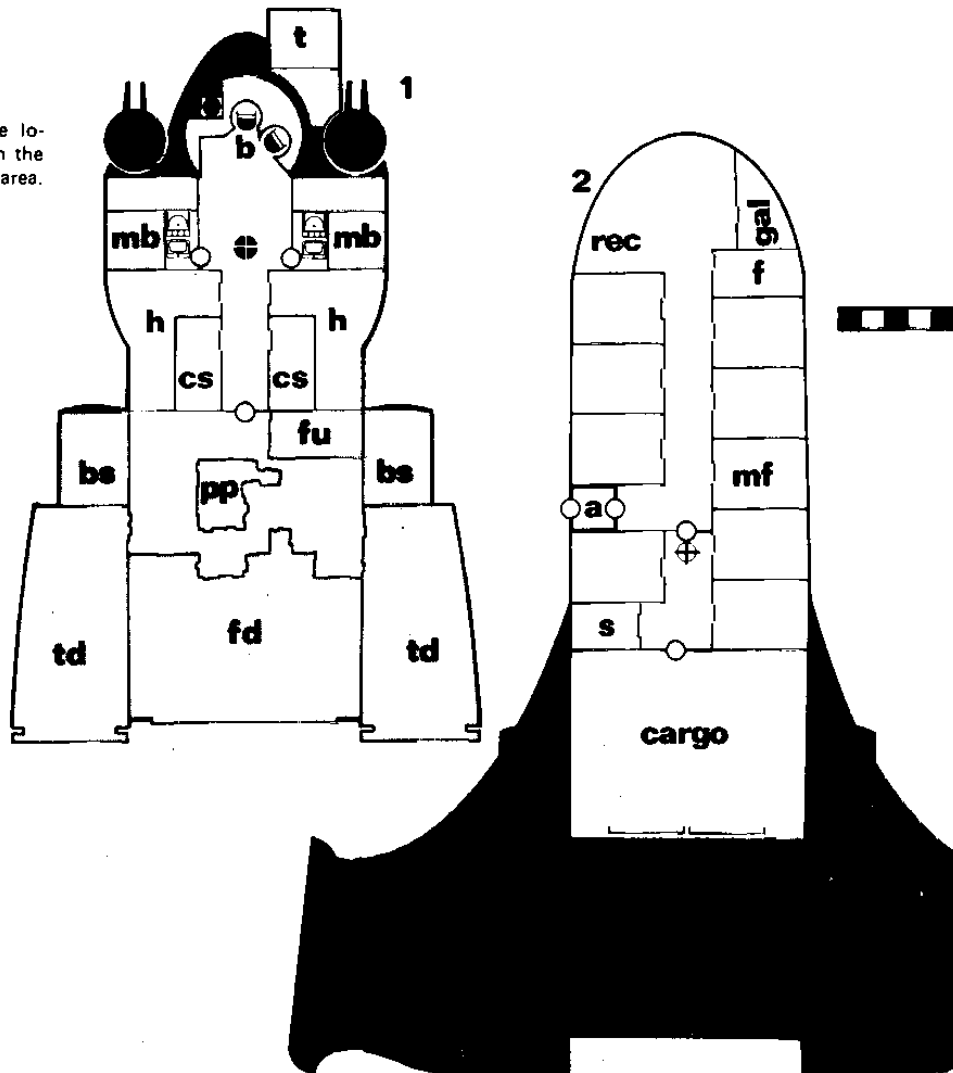
The Denoba Class is a small merchant used as a Spice Runner in trade between systems. It is not used for passenger routes as dependence is placed upon speed and the extra heavy guns (three times normal cost to put N*75s on a ship this size) to carry valuable cargos. Not all activities undertaken in such a vessel would be legal or approved.

Specification	Mass	Volume (m ³)	Deck Area	Comments
Hull	250t	975	2	
Controls	10t	30	15	Computer Mk. VII
Crew Quarters	20t	60	30	6: 2 Astro; 4 Tech
Powerplant	5t	15	75	AMC Reactor; 3 fuel units per 20 days
TISA Drive	62.5t	187.5	93.75	260 LS max.; Acc. = +25 LS/+75 LS Overboost
FTL Warp Drive	45t	135	67.5	45 LY max.; Cruise = 34 LY
Fuel Capacity	5t	15	7.5	500 units; At cruise warp = 3 fuel units/100 LY
Low Passage	50t	150	75	20 passengers
ColdSleep	10t	30	15	10 cryogenic berths
Sick Bay	5t	15	7.5	1 patient; Dispensary
Cargo Hold	52.5t	157.5	78.75	Would be cargo manifest
Damage Capacity				325
BattleScreens	18t	54	27	+9; 290 Screen damage points
BattleArmor				+3/+13 screened
Main Battery	30t	90	45	2 x 2 NovaGun N*75
StarTorpedoes	12t	18	9	1 x 6 StarTorp ST*157
EW/ECM				EW/ECM Factor = 10
Sensors				5000 LS Range
Communications				SpaceCraft Com SSC/7; 3 LY
Atmospheric Streamlining				Atmospheric Speed = 15,000 kmh
Dogfight Factor				8

Total Cost = MCR 125,10. A standard discount of 20% is available on this model in systems where StarShips are commonly sold.

Comments:

Note that torpedo controls are located on the bridge, rather than the usual separate gunnery couch area.



NI'ER QUEYON: Forerunner empire extant circa 150,000 years I.E. Ruins of Queyon style in evidence on Phatzis. Further information in contact service files, UFP, semi-restricted.

Note that the Phatzis referred to in the last item was not spelled Fatzis: this reference is to the *real* treasure world. The difference will only be noted if the PCs request a hard copy of the readout. Don't write the readout down if they don't ask!

An archive class memory file will produce the information on the world, Fatzis, on the survey evaluation and contact service report in this booklet: this is open information. Aerial photos of the ruins will also be included.

The crew of the Star Scamp made the mistake of following the directions to Fatzis. Checking the log books at starports along the way to Fatzis will show the Star Scamp passed by a week or two before. Very careful checking will also show that the Scamp *returned* by the same route under a different name: the serial numbers were not altered. Rachun Faurol and her gang found their mistake and are heading for Phatzis, keeping a low profile to avoid pursuit. The chance of picking up the trail of the Scamp as it heads home is equal to the highest intuition in the party. If the roll is missed, the PCs will have to go to Fatzis: a false lead that will take some time to resolve!

The route to Fatzis should be long and dangerous: the world is in the territory of the Mercantile League, who hate competition and love to impound cargoes and crew of traders who threaten their markets. Pirates and further false information will also serve to liven things up and allow the SM to give the quest some atmosphere of his own. It is recommended that Fatzis be placed several sectors away from the PCs' starting position (six hundred LY is a nice distance). It will take about a month to traverse this distance in the Denoba class vessel the PCs are using. Mercantile League corvettes and armed sloops will be encountered with increasing frequency as the adventurers near Fatzis.

IV. FATZIS

Fatzis is the fourth of seven planets in the Drilidru star system. The sun is a K7 dwarf of no great interest. Fatzis orbits the sun at 250 LY, giv-

ing it a rather hot climate. Combined with a high hydrographic percentage, the heat makes Fatzis a virtual swampworld, covered with algae-filled seas and heavily forested lowlands. There are two large moons, Gunder and Duhg, which create large and frequent tides in Fatzis' seas and oceans.

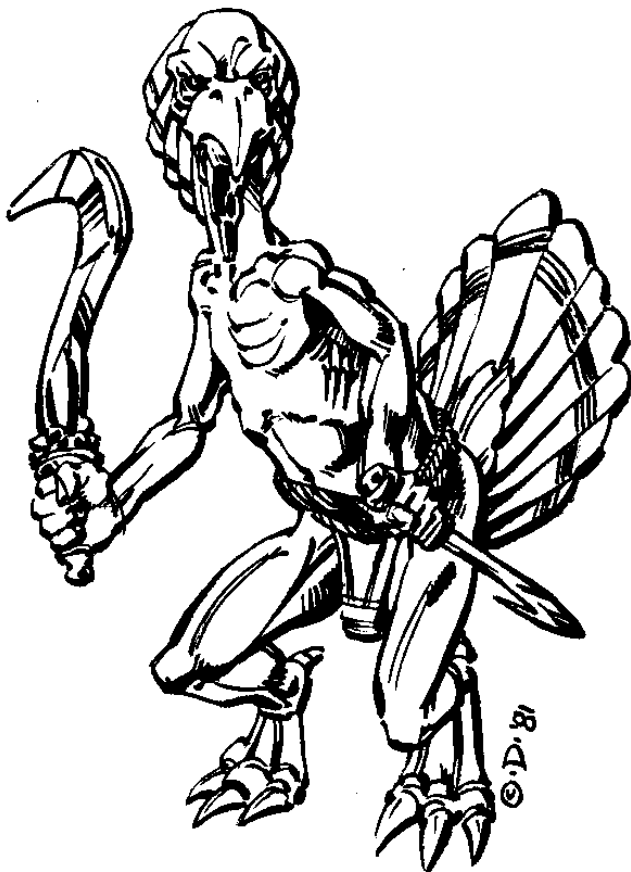
Fatzis has a native race: aquatic avians who call themselves the Gwahn. Gwahn are typical avians, but they are well adapted to watery environs and are excellent swimmers. Current Gwahn culture is strength-oriented with military leaders and rulers typically in control of government. There are hundreds of small nations scattered about the globe, but the nation of Warrth dominates the planet and its contacts to the outside.

The Mercantile League runs a starport in Warrth's capitol city of Bas Chouk. The Mercantiles keep a 30% SADAR network in operation in the Drilidru system, and two Mercantile corvettes patrol the entrance lanes. A platoon of M.L. marines is based on the planet to protect the League's interests there.

The PCs will be greeted with a shot across the bow screens as they approach the planet. The corvettes will order them to heave to alongside and prepare for inspection. They will fire if refused. The inspection will be cursory and hidden items will not be found. However, the inspectors will find a 'small deficiency' that will cost the PCs 10,500 credits to 'correct.' Bribery will work 15% + 1% for every 10 credits in bribe; failure doubles the amount of the fine.

Bas-Chouk is a picturesque dump on the shore of one of the oceans. It is built on piles and floating platforms; the buildings resemble soggy canvas teepees. Rough natives, overzealous police, and League officials will hinder the PCs' efforts to find the location of the ruins. To most of the people, natives and off-worlders alike, the ruins will be little more than a vague rumor. The authorities will be outright hostile to anyone asking about the ruins; they are located in the territory of one of Warrth's few enemies. Off-worlders traveling there may sell weapons or information that will endanger Warrth's upper hand.

Several hours of searching will turn up a map maker's shop on a creaky raft on Bas-Chouk's outskirts. The cartographer is an old and nasty native who will complain about the PCs' size, color, weight and sex as they disturb him: a very irascible person. Two hours of searching the cartographer's selection of maps will turn up two fairly accurate maps pinpointing the location of two ruin sites. The map maker will demand 100 credits apiece for the maps. He will not back down to threats, and will whip out a crossbow and dagger if attacked. He is a below-average avian NPC, with skills in map making, geology, dagger and crossbows.



Transportation to the ruins is available in the form of a beaten and often repaired sailboat. It has an off-world electric motor that (when working) propels the ship at 30 kph. The sails can be used if the engine fails (speed 20 kph, plus 2d6 kph: roll each day). The crew of the ship are poor but honest traders who will charge 50 credits a day for the PCs' passage. If the PCs insist that the traders skip their normal ports of call on the way to the ruins, the traders will raise their price to 75 credits a day.



**UNITED FEDERATION OF PLANETS
DEPARTMENT OF INTERSTELLAR SURVEY**

Form 217/DIS.8JE

SURVEY EVALUATION, PLANET FATZIS

STAR SYSTEM DESIGNATION Drilidru
 STELLAR PRIMARY TYPE K7
 PLANETS IN STAR SYSTEM 7

BEARING FROM MARKER STAR _____
 DISTANCE FROM MARKER STAR _____
 VERTICAL COORDINATE _____

PLANETARY TYPE Type 7 Jungle World

ORBITAL DISTANCE <u>250</u>	LS	PLANETARY DIAMETER <u>10,000</u>	km
LENGTH OF YEAR <u>280</u>	days	SURFACE GRAVITY FIELD <u>.76</u>	G
LENGTH OF DAY <u>25</u>	hours	HYDROSPHERIC RATING <u>81</u>	%
TEMPERATURE RANGE <u>-20°C to 70°C</u>			

ATMOSPHERIC TYPE Oxygen-Nitrogen

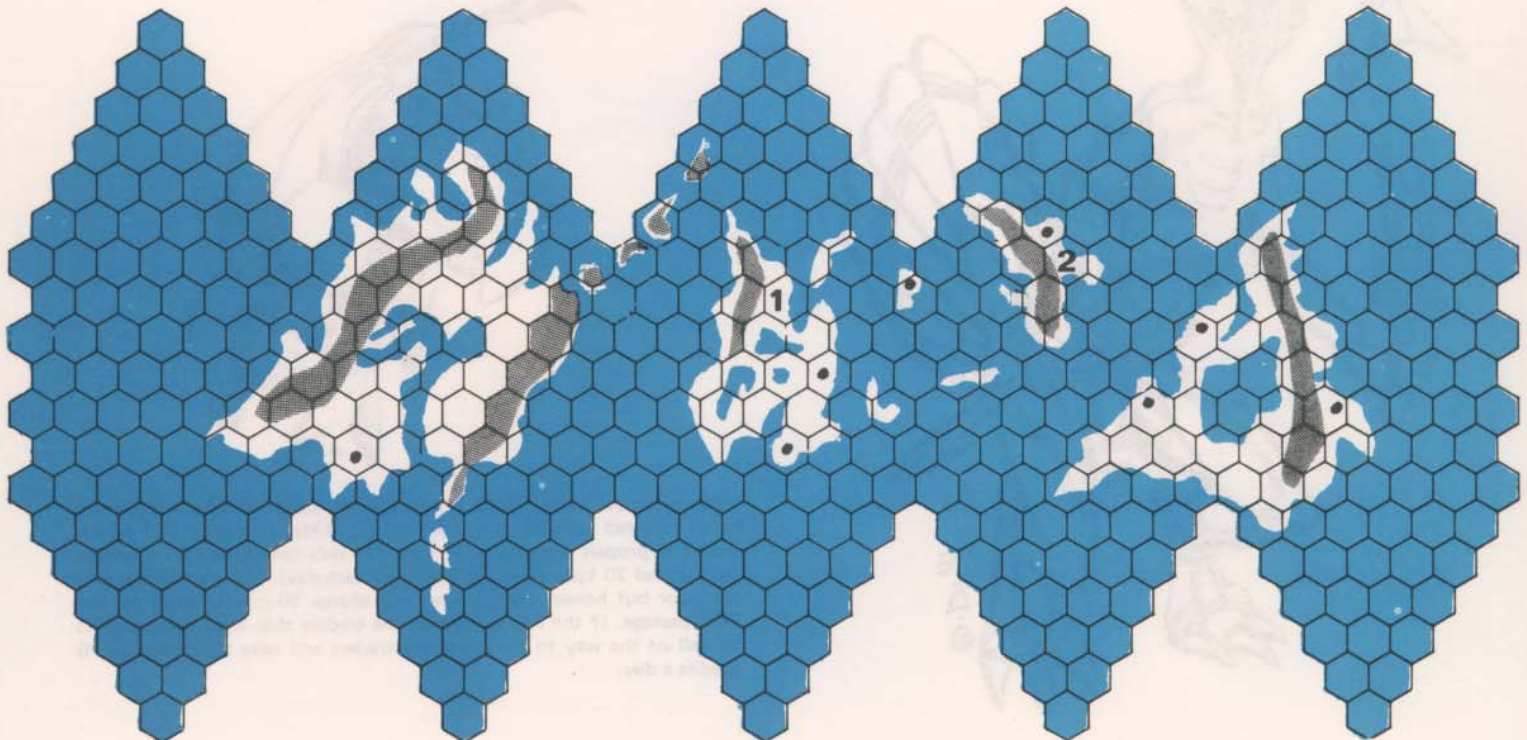
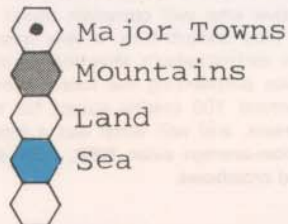
COMMENTS ON ATMOSPHERE: 83% N₂, 16.5% O₂, .3% Ar, .2% traces

789mm pressure with high humidity

COMMENTS: Some regions of the planetary surface are infested with dangerous concentrations of microbial/fungal life: filter mask advised.

2 Moons: Gunder; 1200 km diameter, orbital distance 110,000 km.

Duhg; 2300 km diameter, orbital distance 210,000 km.




**UNITED FEDERATION OF PLANETS
CONTACTS SERVICE**

Form 550/CS.6MV

SENTIENT RACE REPORT, PLANET FATZIS TECHNOLOGICAL LEVEL 4
 SENTIENT RACE TYPE Avian SOCIAL ORGANIZATION Aristocratic
 POPULATION LEVEL 21,000,000 SOCIETAL STRENGTH 7
 POPULATION DENSITY Low XENO ACCEPTANCE INDEX 3%

MAJOR CITIES	POPULATION	STARPORT FACILITIES	DOCKING CHARGES
1 <u>Bas-Chouk</u>	1 <u>110,000</u>	1 <u>C</u>	1 <u>100/75</u>
2 <u>Vreet</u>	2 <u>32,000</u>	2 _____	2 _____
3 _____	3 _____	3 _____	3 _____
4 _____	4 _____	4 _____	4 _____
5 _____	5 _____	5 _____	5 _____

GOVERNMENT:
 TYPE OF GOVERNMENT Oligarchy/Multi-Gov. BUREAUCRACY LEVEL Low
 SUPPORT INDEX 60% REPRESSION INDEX 30% LAW LEVEL 5
 LOYALTY INDEX 65% CORRUPTION INDEX 10% TAX RATE 35%
 TOTAL TAX MCR MCR 350

POLITICAL PARTIES & SIGNIFICANT POLICIES

1. Guze's Gang holds the reins; they keep power through the military.
2. The Mercantile League 'Commerce Director' keeps tabs on Guze and
3. his gang, supported by a platoon of M.L. Marines.
4. _____
5. _____

CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION:

PARTY IN GOVERNMENT Guze's Gang STABILITY 60% VOTE NA %
 PARTY/PARTIES OPPOSING Wilderness Resistance Groups VOTE NA %

CURRENT FOREIGN ALLIANCES:

TRADE ALLIANCES: Mercantile League Monopoly

MILITARY ALLIANCES: Mercantile League Protection

OTHER ALLIANCES:
PLANETARY TRADE & COMMERCE:

INDUSTRIALIZATION INDEX Average Agricultural AVERAGE INCOME CR 500
 TECHNOLOGY & ANOMALIES _____

MAJOR IMPORTS

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

MAJOR EXPORTS

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

IMPORT/EXPORT RESTRICTIONS & DUTIES 20% import/export fee on non-Mercantile League suppliers/customers.

TRADE ACCEPTANCE INDEX 50%

GENERAL COMMENTS: Fatzis is currently dominated by the nation of Warrth, which is, in turn, dominated by the Mercantile League. Private traders are discouraged by Mercantile League policy.

The merchant ship has a crew of 15, armed with swords and crossbows. It also has four cannon (treated as .50 HMG, using a ROF of 1:5) and armor class B. The ship takes 50 points of damage. There are four rowboats/punts on board for emergencies or inland travel in the swamps.

If the PCs decide to take their ship or launch to the sites, there is a 30% chance per day out that the Mercantile League corvettes in orbit will send down launches to investigate: each launch will have 12 blaster-armed Mercantile League marines on board. They will demand that the PCs surrender to face charges of 'trespassing into private lands.' Doing so would be a bad move - the PCs will lose their ship if they comply meekly! The exact number of troops that threaten the PCs, and their attributes should be determined by the SM to match the PCs strength and numbers.

THE RUINS ON FATZIS

As mentioned above, there are two sites where ancient buildings have been detected. The first is on the shores of the inland sea on the eastern, triangular continent; the second is on a high plateau in the mountain range on the same continent. Both can be reached by 1d4+2 of overland travel. The route to the seaside site is covered with deep and dangerous bayous and swamps dotted with Gwahh villages. The route to the mountain site starts out in swampy territory (the first two days of travel) then slopes up into a low mountain range. Encounter charts are provided below. Roll twice for day encounters, once during the night.

ENCOUNTERS

SWAMP-DAY (1d10)

- 1-3 No encounter.
- 4-5 Herbivore encounter.
- 6 Carnivore encounter.
- 7 Scavenger/omnivore encounter.
- 8 Gwahh hunters: 2d6 avians approach, pulling a raft behind them. They have bows and spears, plus 1d4 trained Guwwits.
- 9 Gwahh soldiers: 1d6+2 soldiers in a rowboat. They have bows and swords, and a 50% chance of being armed with muskets. The soldiers will surround the PCs before calling for them to drop their arms. They will want to question the PCs to see what they are up to. If the off-worlders offer the soldiers gifts - weapons preferred - they will be convinced that the PCs mean no harm.
- 10 Gwahh village: There will be 30 + 5d6 Gwahh here, at least 10% of whom will be armed with bows, 5% with muskets. Most villages will be friendly to visitors, especially if they offer trade goods and/or gifts. A native guide can be hired here that will cut the time to the ruins by one day. The guide costs 10 credits per day.

OPEN OCEAN (1d10) Roll once per day

- 1-3 No encounter/event.
- 4 Good weather: +25% to travel speed.
- 5 Storms: Travel at one half speed. On a second consecutive storm roll, the ship is damaged, no travel for 1 - 4 days.
- 6 Doldrums: No sail travel today.
- 7-8 Ship encounter: Peaceful, either a trader or friendly warship.
- 9 Pirates: One ship, plus a 20% of a second. The pirates have six cannon, 50 damage points, Armor C, and 12 sword and musket-armed armymen aboard.
- 10 Unusual encounter or event: A lifeboat, Mercantile League interference, an enemy warship, etc.

MOUNTAIN/DRY LAND (1d10)

- 1-4 No encounter.
- 5 Bad weather: Add a day to travel time. A second roll of 5 indicates a tropical storm that delays the party for three days.
- 6 Gwahh village: See swamp encounters. Villages in mountains have a 50% chance of being extremely suspicious of the PCs.
- 7 Herbivore encounter.
- 8 Carnivore encounter.
- 9-10 Omnivore/scavenger encounter.

ANIMALS

When an encounter with an animal type is indicated, consult the type categories below and select one that fits the type of terrain that the PCs are in, the time of day, size of party, etc.

HERBIVORES

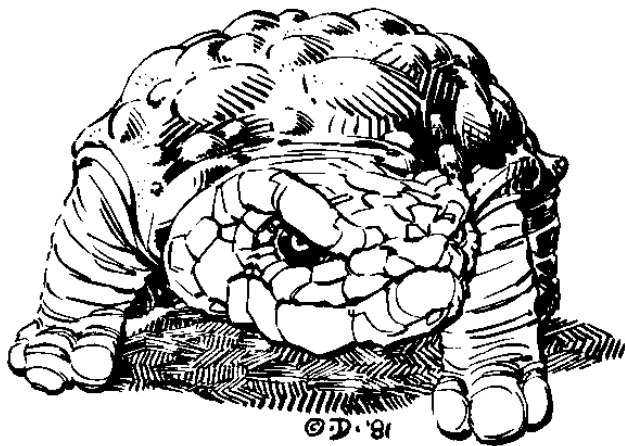
Grint: 40 kg, very fast. It lives in the mountains and on the few dry plains, feeding on fungus and leaves. Grint run in herds of 20-30 individuals. The small, sharp hooves are J weapons. Shy, swift animals that flee if bothered.



Latchou: 100 kg., fast. It has a long, whip-like tail with a barbed spike at the end. Latchou live in family groups of 4-6. Encountered on islands in the swamps.



Cupper: A 400 kg beastie resembling a leathery-shelled turtle. It lives off the vegetation in the swamps. The shell is Armor D. It is an intermittent grazer, spending most of the time hiding in its shell. The thing's teeth are an E class weapon.



Kajjet: An amphibious swamp dweller, 20 kg. It resembles a fat otter, lives off algae and underwater weeds. It is very nasty if disturbed, and will use its teeth, an F weapon. The thing's skin is highly prized by off-world furriers.



OMNIVORES

Gummer: A classic omnivore. This is a relative of the Limb Leech. The gummer lives on fruit and small animals that it can catch from its habitat in the trees of swamps. 15 kg, I weapon. Very fast reflexes, enabling it to move through the trees at fast speed.



Parkeasol: Another egg-shaped, six-limbed beastie. This one masses 100 kg and burrows in the mud in swamps, living off vegetation. At night it roams the swamps looking for small prey. It will attack large creatures that bother it. Weapon class D claws, armor class of thick skin E.

Shuviccir: Another of the egg-shaped breed. This one has three strong legs and three much smaller 'arms' underneath that it uses to dig for food in the ground of islands in the swamps. Classed as an aggressor because it goes after small animals. 25 kg, its claw-tipped legs are G weapons. The shell/hide is Armor D.



CARNIVORES

Kinginop: An egg-shaped, brown-skinned beastie with six trilaterally symmetrical limbs. 25 kg, a lurker that lives in holes in the ground covered with foliage. They live in the mountains, though they sometimes turn up on dry islands in the swamps.

Limb Leech: 10 kg. It resembles a fat, furry snake with rudimentary limbs. The leech lives in the branches of swampland trees; when prey passes below, the leech drops down and attaches suckers to hang on to the prey while it constricts. It does not actually drink blood, preferring meat. Its teeth/sucker/constriction attack is counted as an H weapon.

Krangken: Another snakelike thing, with four long limbs and powerful jaws. 100 kg, C weapon, very fast. A mountain dweller that stalks prey.

Guwwits: A 25 kg aggressor. Quadrupedal avian/reptile stock that roams in packs gathering roots, fruit and small animals. Guwwits are trained and used by the Gwahn as 'dogs.' Its talons are class G weapons. Fast and aggressive. They are normally found in mountain regions.

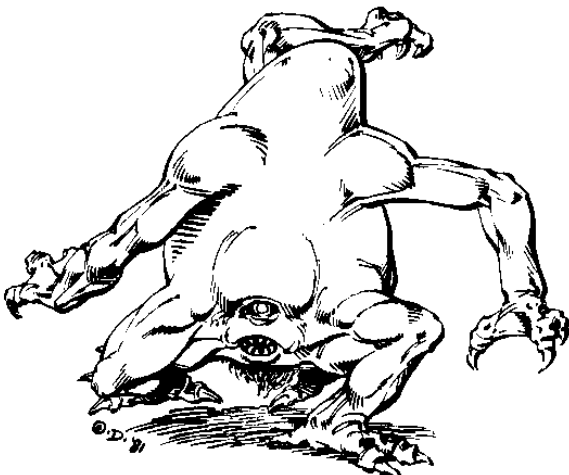


SCAVENGERS

Gwitch: Similar to the Krangen. It masses 25 kg, has tough spikey fur, and sharp teeth. Armor class F, weapon class F, fast. Gwitch run in family groups of 2-8. They live off of carrion in the mountain regions.



Saychin: A standard scavenger, 50 kg. Another of the egg-shaped species, with long, lower legs and razor-sharp claws on the rudimentary arms. Armor class F, weapon E. Average speed. They live in swamps and mountainous areas with equal success.



Kourigat: A tree-dwelling relative of the Krangken. It has two limbs and a powerful prehensile tail that enables it to bounce at fleet speeds if caught on the ground. The Kourigat lurks in the trees waiting for smaller carnivores to catch something, then leaps down and steals the prey from the catcher. 20 kg, weapon class F fangs and claws. Found in packs of 2-8 in the deep swamps. Most active at night.

THE RUINS

These ruins were indeed left by a forerunner species: unfortunately, the builders weren't the Ni'er Queyon. This planet was once the forward base for one of the empires that conquered the Queyon. Most of the installations have vanished under the swamp and seas, but a few sites still exist on the surface. Such ruins are common in this area of space, and are usually empty of anything of value. The Mercantile League personnel stationed on Fatzis have decided to not bother with the ruins until the region around it is taken over by the Warrth nation.

Below are maps of the two sites.

LAKESIDE RUINS: The site is located on a small, dry island near the inland sea. There are two buildings: an oblong structure with beveled edges, and a 30 meter high tower. The entrance to the tower is via a 2 x 5 meter high doorway, which is half-covered with dry mud and swamp vegetation. There are two staircases set in the ground by the side of the oblong building: the stairs descend 2 meters before they, too, are blocked with a plug of mud and vegetation. Obviously, some digging is in order. Using hand tools, it will take six man-minutes to remove the dirt from one meter of floor space shown on the plans. Areas marked 'X' are free of mud.

The structures are composed of a gray, smooth material. It is a sort of superceramic, cast in building shapes from a single mold. It takes 2000 hits of energy fire to blast away a meter-square-area of the stuff. It is proofed against hand-held sensors and similar instruments.

Map key: Oblong Building

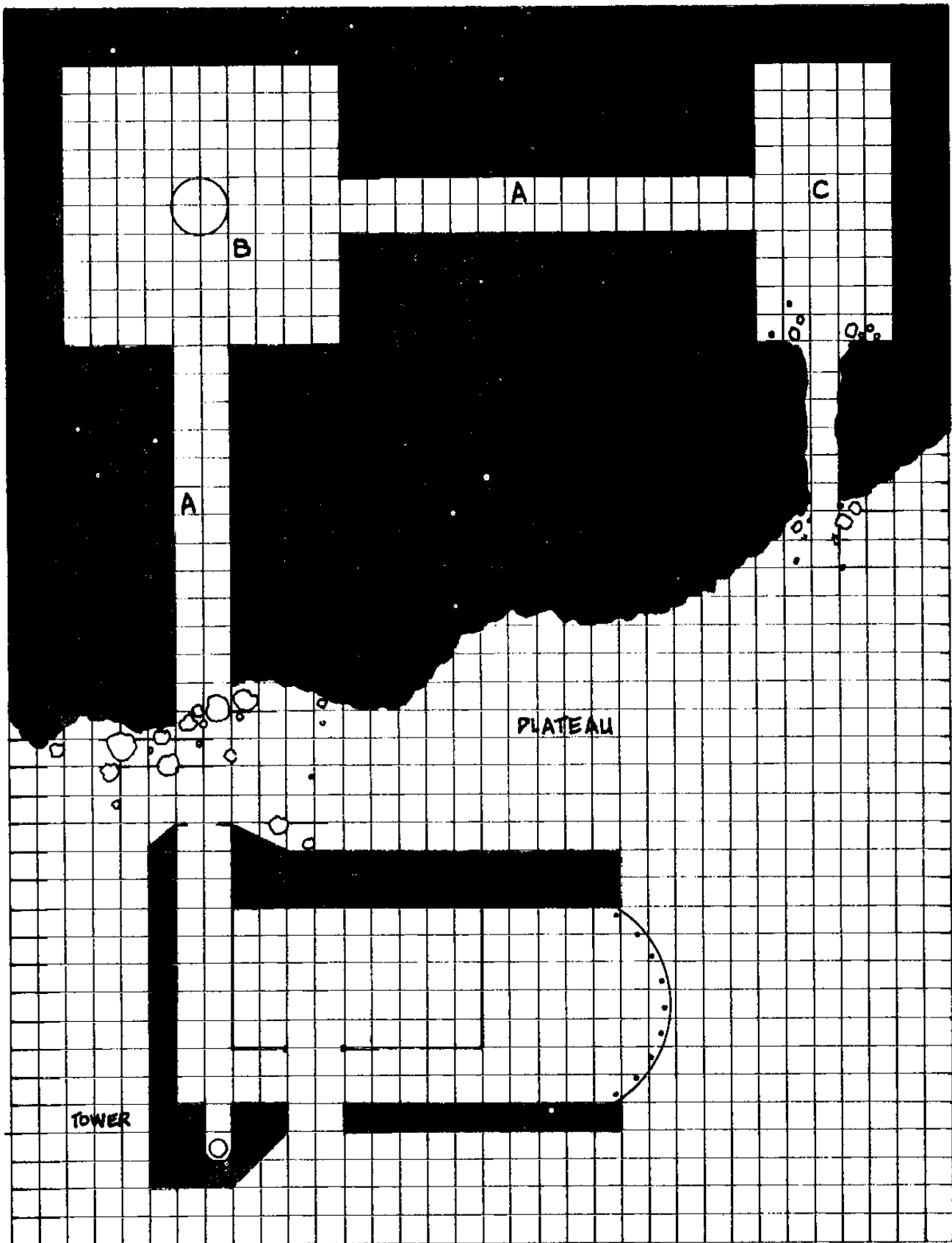
A. A pile of tools made out of rust-proof metals. These were left by another expedition some 150 years ago. Shovels, picks: nothing very valuable.

B. The walls of this room are engraved with pictographs: strange symbols and crude drawings of alien beings and objects. If anyone thinks of taking pictures, the PCs will be able to identify the symbols as 'forerunner runes,' not yet deciphered by modern man.

C. Radiation RAD/2 is present in this room. Careful sensing will determine that the radiation source is a pattern of small holes in the south wall. A meter into the wall is a pocket of highly radioactive material: it seems as though the wall material somehow turned into an unstable substance spontaneously.

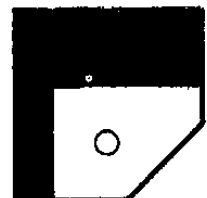
D. The walls of this room will glow suddenly when light is beamed on them. After a moment of glowing in a jumble of colors, the walls will settle down and project a holographic star map; the universe as seen from this solar system 110,000 years ago!

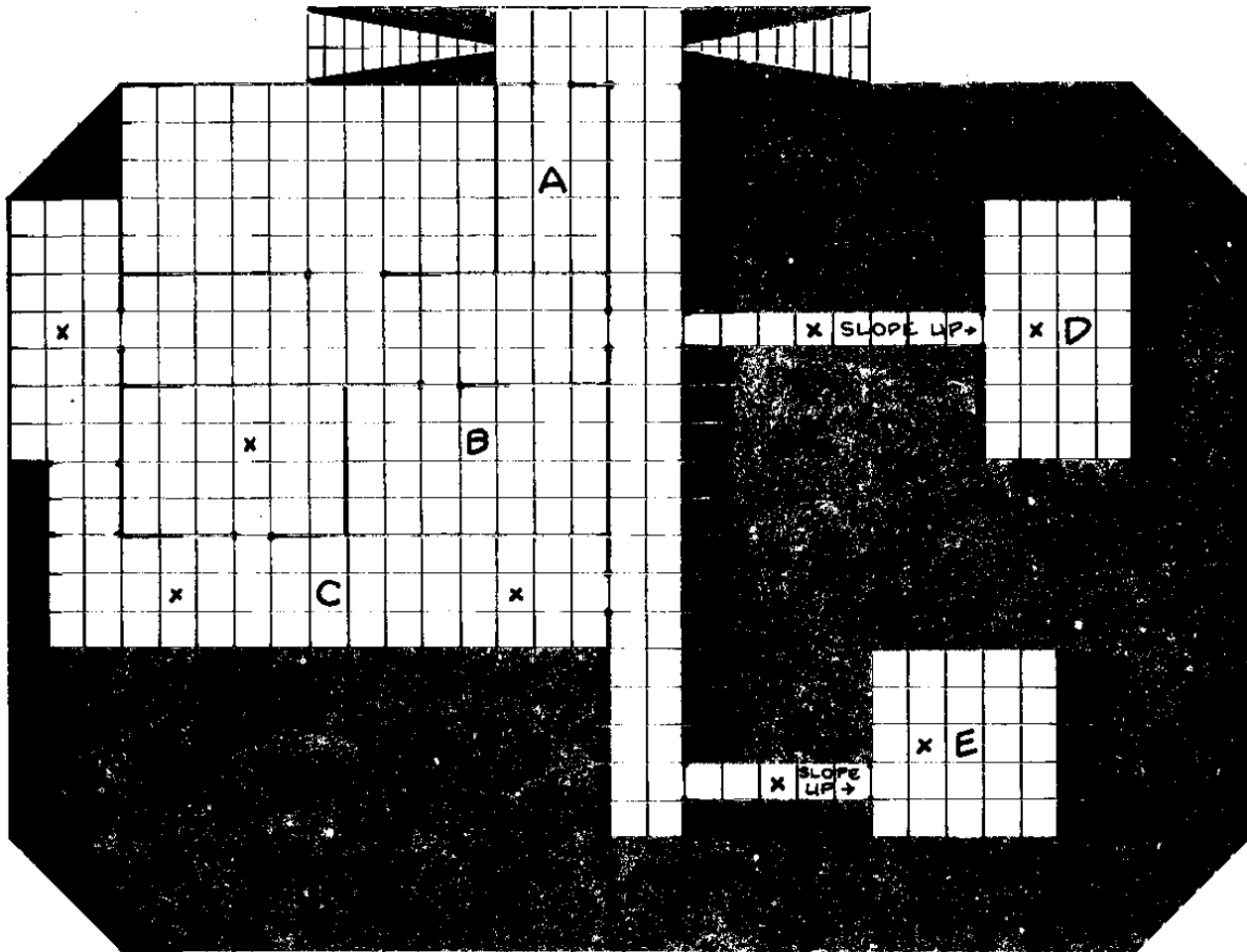
E. Another hologram room: when light sources are brought into this room, the walls will project a scene of icy desolation: an ice age of this planet. The tower building is visible, and lights can be seen inside. No living beings are in the scene.



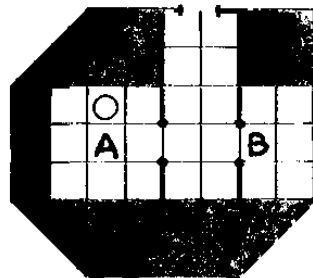
MOUNTAIN RUINS

TOWER
ROOM

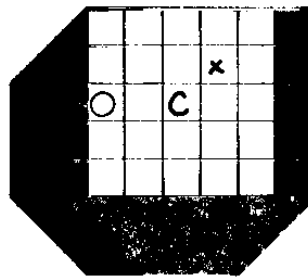




OBLONG



(1)



(2)

TOWER

The Tower

A. A circular shaft is set in the ceiling of this room. It leads to the second floor.

B. The walls of this room are covered with meter-wide circular depressions, 2 cm deep. If a light is pointed at a depression, a gray foggy image of an alien face will form. The species is unknown. This room was a communications center: the images are unerased messages. The images stay on as long as light falls on the depression projecting them.

C. This room is on the second floor of the tower. The air is very stale here. On the ceiling is another of those circular depressions. Light will activate a hologram projector, as usual. The image formed from this one is of a group of stone-age Gwahh spearing a huge egg-shaped animal. The scene is pretty desolate: the vegetation is stunted and the Gwahh are wearing leather clothing for warmth. Apparently, the folk who built this place took an interest in the primitive natives.

MOUNTAIN RUINS: This site is located on a high plateau in the mountains. It will be immediately apparent that someone has visited the site recently as the marks of a ship's boat landing skids are visible. A meter-wide hole has been blasted into a cliff wall nearby, and some garbage (sandwich wrappers, scrap paper, etc.) is lying about.

The building itself is a roughly oblong shape, with a 10 meter tall tower in one corner and a balcony-like structure on one end. The building material is identical to that of the buildings on the other site. Besides the open balcony, there are two doors, one on each of the long sides. The building is totally empty of ancient artifacts, though there are more scrap paper and garbage present.

To the rear of the building is a pile of boulders: a cursory investigation will reveal that the rocks are blocking the entrance to an artificially dug tunnel leading back into the cliff face. The blasted tunnel also leads into the cliff face.

Tunnel Complex

- A. A 2 x 4 meter high corridor, lined with the ubiquitous gray material. The floor is dusty, but otherwise unmarked by age.
- B. A large (10 x 10 x 10 meters) chamber with a circular depression in the floor. If a light is shined on the depression, a hologram will form in the room. Five figures, 2 meter tall alien beings in some sort of armor, will appear out of nowhere and pace back and forth around the center of the room. The images are harmless.
- C. The dust in this room has been volently disturbed by two things: the blasting out of a meter-wide tunnel in the south wall, and the movement of some heavy object to the tunnel.

WHAT GOES HERE?:

The crew of the Faurol Industries' Star Scamp made it to Fatzis several weeks ahead of the PCs. They managed to land undetected in their launch, found the mountain site, found something worthwhile and left for Phatzis, the real treasure world, after being delayed by a rock fall that blocked off the entrance to the tunnel complex.

The PCs will be able to determine the Star Scamp's destination by examining the garbage they left behind. Among the candy wrappers is a torn-up computer hard copy. Putting the scraps together will take about four hours. The printout reads:

PHATZIS: No record of that word in files.

NI'ER QUEYON: Forerunner empire extant - 150,000 I.E. Ruins of Queyon style in evidence on Phatzis The word 'Phatzis' is circled and underlined, and 'I've been a JERK' is scribbled on the scraps below it. A THOROUGH check of an archive class computer bank will turn up the fact that there is a Phatzis Located some thousand light years in the direction from which they have come!!

PHATZIS: The actual 'treasure planet,' Phatzis, is under the protection of the Contact Service of the UFP. The world's location is 'semi-restricted,' available only to traders (who ask for a license) or legitimate researchers. Any Contact Service office or ship can provide this information, but may be reluctant to give it out to the PCs . . . anyone who flies a spice runner is not highly respected by government officials. In any case, the general location of Phatzis will be known: the sector and quadrant location is given in the Phatzis information file. Further information must be obtained by piecing together rumors in the general area: traders and scouts may have visited the planet at sometime. If the players can get the information from the Contact Service, more power to them! When the PCs finally get to the Kaulu Armon system, proceed to the section on Phatzis.

NPC INFORMATION:

Below are details of some of the NPCs used in the adventure. They are suggestions only and the SM should tailor them to the abilities of his players and the strengths of their characters.

GWAAH CIVILIANS:

- Sailor:** 77 kg, 40 kg Carrying Cap., Damage 28, Stamina 54, Shock CR 11, HTH Combat Factor 18, Small Boat Handling 7, Swimming, Brawling 3, Dagger 2, Musket or Cross-bow 5, Merchant 3.
- Gwahn Thug:** 77 kg, 40 kg Carrying Cap., Damage 28, Stamina 60, Shock CR 13, HTH 21, Brawling 5, Swimming, Street-wise 5, Merchant 1, Dagger 10, Bribery 5, Gambling 5, Forgery 3.
- Hunter:** 85 kg, 50 kg Carrying Capacity, Damage 32, Stamina 63, Shock CR 12, HTH 23, Swimming, Small Boat Handling 10, Jungle and Marine Survival, Bow Weapons 7, Musket Weapons 4.
- Soldier:** 80 kg, 40 kg Carrying Capacity, Damage 28, Stamina 62, Shock CR 12, HTH 21, Swimming, Combat Training 5, Archaic Direct Fire Weapons II & III, Brawling, Dagger/ Stabbing Sword - all 7.

Gwahn soldiers roam the cities in patrols of five 'men,' and are armed with daggers, short swords, and either a cross-bow or a musket (10% for the latter). The leading sergeant of the patrol will have the physical stats of a hunter (see above). Gwahn soldiers wear a Cuirass/4 on patrol, and have heavier armor for combat. The Cuirass CAN be worn while swimming, but this reduces speed and agility in the water.

MERCANTILE LEAGUE TROOPERS:

The League troops on Fatzis are from the League planet of RhonKo. There are 65 troopers in Bas-Chouk, and another 72 are aboard the two corvettes in orbit. The ships have a total of 4 launches to send down troops in time of need. Each launch can carry two squads of five troopers, plus two pilots.

Merc. Wt. 77 kg, 40 kg Carrying Cap., Damage 30, Stamina 60,
League Shock CR 11, HTH 33, Combat Training 5, Blaster 5,
Trooper: Forceblade 4, Street Combat, Swimming, Jump Belt, First Aid, Unarmed Combat 7, Special Weapon 4.

Officers will add one or two to each of their skill levels, and may have an extraordinary skill, i.e. Blaster 10. Pilots or other specialists will have appropriate skills.

League troopers encountered on the ground, in Bas-Chouk, will have stun rifles or tangleguns (use special weapon skill) while the officers of these sections have blast pistols. Ground patrols are one squad (five men) in strength. All troopers will have LBA/4 with helmets, plus communicators and forcebladed daggers.

The troopers stationed on the corvettes will carry blast rifles, with one scrambler man (use a fusion pistol if you don't have the stats for the scramblers) per squad of five. These troops wear CBA/3c modified for spacesuit use. Some of these squads also have type B jump belts.

As mentioned before, the League is suspicious of intruders, and may send a launch full of their troops out at any time. At least one encounter with the League forces should be staged: even if the PCs only see a launch circling in the distance, they will keep on their toes for a while afterward. Landing a spaceship anywhere but at the starport at Bas-Chouk is a certain invitation to an unfriendly visit!

V. PHATZIS

The SM should place the world, Phatzis, a long and dangerous distance from the PCs normal stomping grounds. Putting it in the next sector is not too far; two sectors distant is even better. To make things even harder, Phatzis is an obscure world not listed on most maps and with no regular merchant service. A pirate agent may give the PCs false information which will lead them to a system where a pirate waits in ambush. The voyage to Phatzis should be an adventure in itself.

Along the way, rumors will be heard about a brash, young canine who has annoyed people in every port she has visited by demanding information and aid, of an unmarked merchant ship that refused to accept offers of very reasonably priced goods, and of a gang who shot their way out of a starport jail and fled in a ship that was reported stolen by Faurol Enterprises.

Eventually, the PCs' ship will make it to Phatzis. As the ship enters the system, a corvette will hail the vessel and send a stern warning to land at the Federation trading base only. If the players' ship is a merchant craft, the corvette's message will include a hint that the survey teams on-planet would appreciate their services once they have cleared customs.

The PCs' ship will be given permission to land once orbit is achieved. The Federation post is little more than a trade-regulation office, a defense bureau that runs the SADAR net and houses the miniscule marine contingent, and a cultural study center. The last can supply information on the whereabouts of the archeology teams on-planet, but suggests that the adventurers stay away . . . the last people to visit the teams in the outback stole a valuable book and fled, leaving the team without supplies.



**UNITED FEDERATION OF PLANETS
DEPARTMENT OF INTERSTELLAR SURVEY**

Form 217/DIS.8JE

SURVEY EVALUATION, PLANET PHATZIS

STAR SYSTEM DESIGNATION _____

BEARING FROM MARKER STAR _____

STELLAR PRIMARY TYPE G0

DISTANCE FROM MARKER STAR _____

PLANETS IN STAR SYSTEM 7

VERTICAL COORDINATE _____

PLANETARY TYPE Terran StandardORBITAL DISTANCE 600

LS

PLANETARY DIAMETER 9000

km

LENGTH OF YEAR 370

days

SURFACE GRAVITY FIELD .72

G

LENGTH OF DAY 32

hours

HYDROSPHERIC RATING 60

%

TEMPERATURE RANGE _____

ATMOSPHERIC TYPE Oxygen-Nitrogen

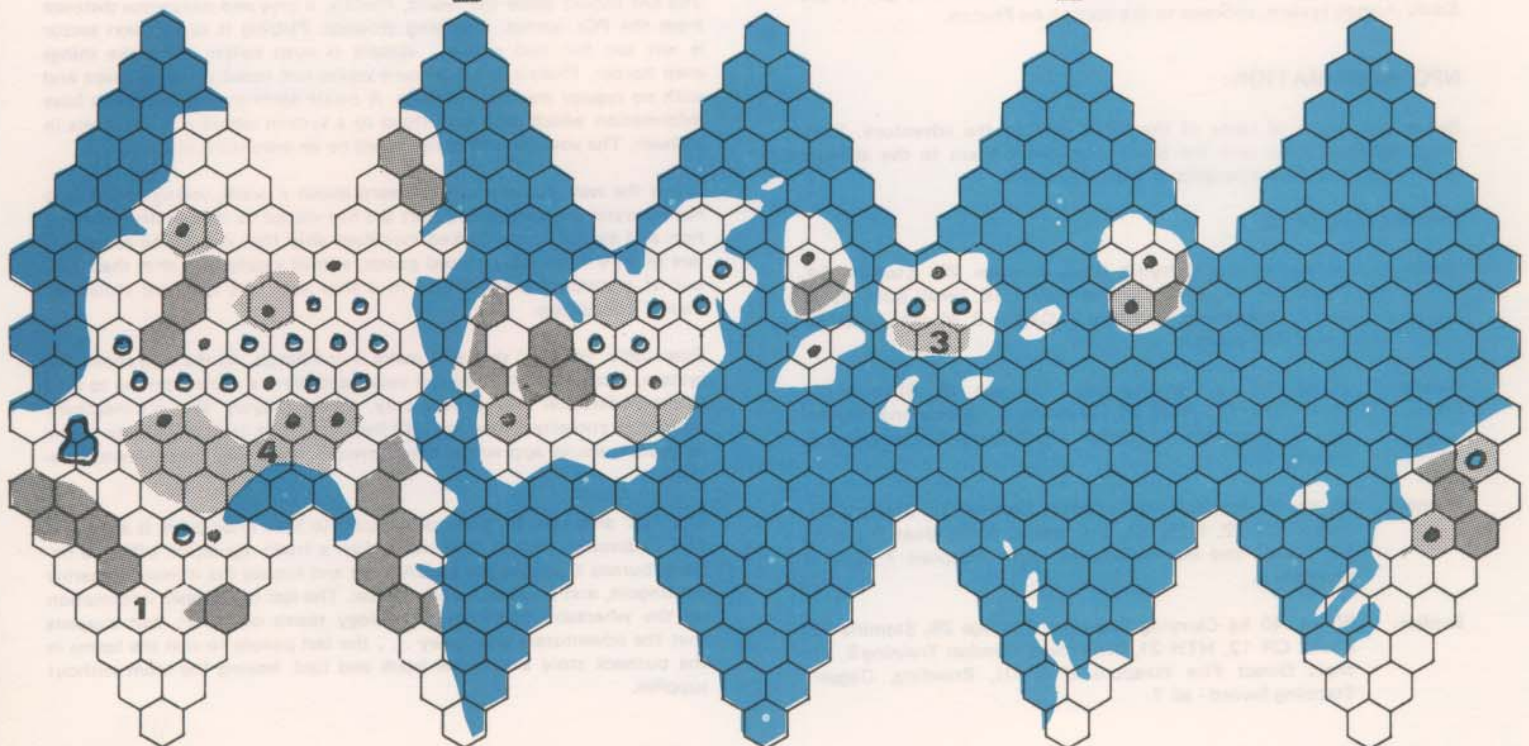
COMMENTS ON ATMOSPHERE: 25%/70%/5%traces. Pressure 710mm. Some traces of radioactive and biotoxic materials remain suspended in the atmosphere. No precautions necessary under normal conditions. Some areas may have toxins suspended in dust in atmosphere. See below.

COMMENTS: 2 moons. Ewergo: .06g, 1200km, vacuum. Ruined bases RAD/12. Variax: .12g, 2100km, CO2 atmosphere, 20mm. Dangerous life forms under surface dust.

A Tech/6 civilization which destroyed itself in a nuclear war @600 years ago left extensive contamination in some areas. Cobalt fusion and neutron warheads used on city sites, biotoxins used on agricultural areas. Engineering works are notable for their extensive nature in agricultural regions.

Ruined City (RAD/1)
 Mountains
 Radiation (RAD/2-6)

Circular Seas
 Sea (Toxic Chemicals)
 Land




**UNITED FEDERATION OF PLANETS
CONTACTS SERVICE**

Form 550/CS.6MV

SENTIENT RACE REPORT, PLANET PHATZIS TECHNOLOGICAL LEVEL 2
 SENTIENT RACE TYPE Humanoid SOCIAL ORGANIZATION Primitive
 POPULATION LEVEL 4,000,000 SOCIETAL STRENGTH 3
 POPULATION DENSITY very low XENO ACCEPTANCE INDEX 2%

MAJOR CITIES	POPULATION	STARPORT FACILITIES	DOCKING CHARGES
1 <u>Southpost Port</u>	1 <u>2,000</u>	1 <u>E</u>	1 <u>Cr 10/day</u>
2 <u>Thyindinob</u>	2 <u>Ruined</u>	2 <u></u>	2 <u></u>
3 <u>Azzizob</u>	3 <u>Ruined</u>	3 <u></u>	3 <u></u>
4 <u></u>	4 <u></u>	4 <u></u>	4 <u></u>
5 <u></u>	5 <u></u>	5 <u></u>	5 <u></u>

GOVERNMENT:

TYPE OF GOVERNMENT Tribal BUREAUCRACY LEVEL Virtually nonr
 SUPPORT INDEX NA REPRESSION INDEX 5% LAW LEVEL 19
 LOYALTY INDEX NA CORRUPTION INDEX 5% TAX RATE 1%
 TOTAL TAX MCR

POLITICAL PARTIES & SIGNIFICANT POLICIES

1 The wandering tribes have occasional councils to determine who will
 2 represent them in the Federation's developing cultures department.
 3 The Federation outpost is run by the Contact Service. It collects
 4 a small tax to support Phatzis' interests off planet.

5.

CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION:

PARTY IN GOVERNMENT Traditionalists STABILITY 71% VOTE 90% %
 PARTY/PARTIES OPPOSING Young Zealots: isolationists VOTE 10% %

CURRENT FOREIGN ALLIANCES:

TRADE ALLIANCES: Federation assistance plan/Contact Service regulation

MILITARY ALLIANCES: Federation Contact Service protection.

OTHER ALLIANCES:**PLANETARY TRADE & COMMERCE:**

INDUSTRIALIZATION INDEX Very primitive agricultural AVERAGE INCOME CR 200
 TECHNOLOGY & ANOMALIES Some Tech/6 artifacts remain from dead past

MAJOR IMPORTS

1 Tools
 2 Textiles
 3
 4
 5

MAJOR EXPORTS

1
 2
 3
 4
 5

IMPORT/EXPORT RESTRICTIONS & DUTIES Low Tech tools, foodstuffs, textiles
and trinkets are the only permitted trade imports.

TRADE ACCEPTANCE INDEX 20%

GENERAL COMMENTS: The general populace are survivors of the great nuclear
 and toxic holocaust. These nomadic tribes have a patriarchal society
 with a no-nonsense attitude that does not value folklore and legend.
 Wandering female 'bards' are the only source of cultural record. Feder-
 ation contact and archeology teams are currently investigating the
 culture and the ruins from the past civilization.

Phatzis, itself, is detailed on the planetary data sheets. There is a lot of lingering radioactivity around, especially near the vast tracts of blasted cities. Engineering projects to improve the agricultural production of the planet's desert regions are in evidence, but are heavily contaminated with biotoxins.

The larger continent is the former nation of Arremioc: the smaller island continent and the islands east of it are Arremioc's former rival, Gujinstoss.

The current inhabitants of Phatzis don't really care about their ancestors' arguments, and live a peaceful but harsh life of roaming around in search of good land on which to graze their herds. They would love to get their hands on modern weapons, but the Federation forbids this. If encountered while travelling overland, they will either stonily ignore the PCs or make ridiculous offers for their tools and weapons.

The camp which was 'raided' by the canines is the one the PCs are interested in. It is located some 1000 km northeast of the starport, near the city called Azzizob. The region is tainted with RAD/I, requiring precautions.

The campsite consists of 5 prefab tents, a radio shack and power station, a cargo trac and an inflatable dome. There will be 14 archeologists and two armsmen stationed here. They will welcome visitors, AFTER they give up their weapons, and show the PCs around the camp. The central dome contains stored artifacts. Besides the expected melted groundcars and bits of metal, the team has found a cache of marvelously preserved books, on archeology no less! If the PCs mention **TIMES PAST**, Volume Two, the team will become nervous and the armsmen will grip their guns. If queried, they will admit that the book was stolen just a few days ago. A merchant ship crewed by a rowdy bunch of canines came for a visit, got the team drunk, and left with the book while the team was engaged in a wild game of hide-and-seek. The team does have copies of the translated sections which they will give to the PCs in exchange for some luxuries - they have been living on ration cookies since the canines left with their supplies.

The other books at the site will not help the party on their quest, and may even lead them on false trails.

TIMES PAST: Volume Two contains the following. It will take one day to fully assimilate the data and get an accurate translation. The archeologists don't think the book is accurate and will not help, other than to point out the locations mentioned in the book on the current (modern) map.

1. The ancient civilization was a harsh theocracy. The priests spread the belief that the 'Queyon' were actually gods. After many centuries, the Queyon left, bringing with them their great treasure horde. The priests fled from the vengeful populace, hiding in a cave complex on the other side of the planet. (These caves are in a RAD/5 zone on the island continent. A week of perilous searching will reveal a series of furnished chambers, bone dry and preserved by an inflooding of natural gas. Among the rotting wood and bones are two pieces of a material that looks like green obsidian with whorls of gold in it. This is 'Stelt.' Dating the bones will give an age of about 94,000 years).
2. Another reference is found to a 'sentry asteroid.' A 'modern' Phatzis astronomer believes the asteroid in question is in the leading trojan point of a gas giant in this system. (There is, indeed, a base on an asteroid in this system. A week of scanning will detect a carefully concealed dome of an unknown collapsium alloy. The dome has been slagged by intense nova fire: it is little more than a blob of metal).
3. 'The ancient gods of 'Queyon' made a metal man to guard the great temples where the treasures were stored. When a sinner violated sacred ground, the silvery figure swooped upon him, whipped him to shreds and laid out the polished bones in an odd pattern said to drive off evil spirits.'
4. 'Only the highest of the native priests could enter the great gallery halls. Inside were wonders: the famous priest, Thuvosh, saw 'Spirals of gold that held a green blinking stone, pieces of metal that thought and sang, wire shapes that drove men mad, and statues of a million different demons.'

5. 'The weapons of the starfolk could blast an enemy half a solar system away. They could tell an enemy from a friend by the 'signs on their sails and hulls' The priests were given these signs as authority symbols. It is thought that the circle-in-triangle motif so prevalent in the decor of ancient temples was a representation of this sign.'

6. 'The high priest, Thuvosh, not only travelled with the 'Queyon' to their great homeland, he went with them, uninvited, to the last resting place of their treasure. The vast buildings were placed in holes in the ground of 'sky pebbles,' which orbited a bright star and a dead star. The constellations of Rythus and The Hungry Giant were visible to him, though they were changed somewhat: Rythus had a red eye, and the Giant's toes were covered with clouds. Astronomers from Gujinstoss claim to know where the treasure is. By extrapolating the position of the nebulae known to exist that could cover the Giant's toes, and finding which one of these positions would also give Rythus a red eye, the position could be calculated.' (The above method would work. Unfortunately, what the Phatzisians writing the book didn't realize is that the sky had changed drastically since the priest, Thuvosh, lived. There still are constellations like Rythus and The Hungry Giant, but they are composed of different stars now. The astronomical computer found in Volume One of **TIMES PAST** will be needed to find what passed for the Giant and Rythus back then. Only the diagram is needed - it is sufficiently accurate to allow computation of the treasure's approximate position. The computation will require an astronomy program, plus much additional astronomical data on stellar motion. The computation will take 1000 hours times computer time factor, plus one day to load the tremendous amount of data needed.

VI. RU SALAAK SYSTEM

The coordinates generated by the computer will be accurate to within 20 light years. The SM should set these coordinates some distance from Phatzis - the next sector is a fair distance. (If the SM sets the area too far away, the constellations of Phatzis would be too distorted to be recognizable). The area noted is a small, open cluster of seven systems, mostly O and A class. Only two have planets, and one of these is a single-star system with no 'dead star' nearby. The winner is a named, but unsurveyed system, Ru Salaak. Its primary is an O₂ violet-white star, incredibly brilliant and very dangerous. Located 200,000 light seconds out is a dark companion star, previously unknown. The players may name it. For simplicity's sake, it will hereafter be called 'hulkstar.'

VII. HULKSTAR

When a small star burns out, it leaves a dark, dense 'corpse' of elements up to iron behind. Space is full of these hulks, usually no larger than the earth in size. The surface gravity is horrendous due to the small radius, making landings dangerous and exploration impossible.

The hulkstar is a special case. It started out as a tiny red dwarf star, hardly worth the name. After a long, dull life it swelled up and died like most main sequence stars do when their hydrogen and helium have all been fused into heavier stuff. The star drifted through a dense dust cloud and collected a shell of hydrogen, helium, and low-density matter such as silicon, lithium, and carbon. This comparatively 'fluffy' layer covered the dense metallic core to such a depth that the surface gravity became a bearable 8 gees. Eventually, the dust cloud condensed into an open cluster of hot young stars, one of which captured the hulkstar in a distant orbit.

The surface of the hulkstar is a dark brown, dusty crust, with low, rolling hills and occasional volcanoes spurting strange compounds from the core of the dead star.

Orbiting the hulkstar are a large number of planetoids... roughly two thousand of them. As the PCs' ship enters orbit about the hulkstar system, they will detect three sources of radio/sub-space radio communication. All are badly scrambled by the radiation and magnetic fields of the hulkstar - 2d6 days, minus 1 day per level of sub-light comm. skill aboard will be required to separate and locate each source.

Source one is located on the hulkstar on the marked area of the map. A launch is located here - a battered and obviously abandoned launch with the ID symbol of the Star Scamp on its side. No one is aboard, and



UNKNOWN*****UNKNOWN*****UNKNOWN*****UNKNOWN*****UNKNOWN
UNITED FEDERATION OF PLANETS
DEPARTMENT OF INTERSTELLAR SURVEY

Form 217/DIS.8JE

SURVEY EVALUATION, PLANET (Hulkstar)

STAR SYSTEM DESIGNATION Ru Salaak BEARING FROM MARKER STAR _____
 STELLAR PRIMARY TYPE 0 DISTANCE FROM MARKER STAR _____
 PLANETS IN STAR SYSTEM 1 VERTICAL COORDINATE _____

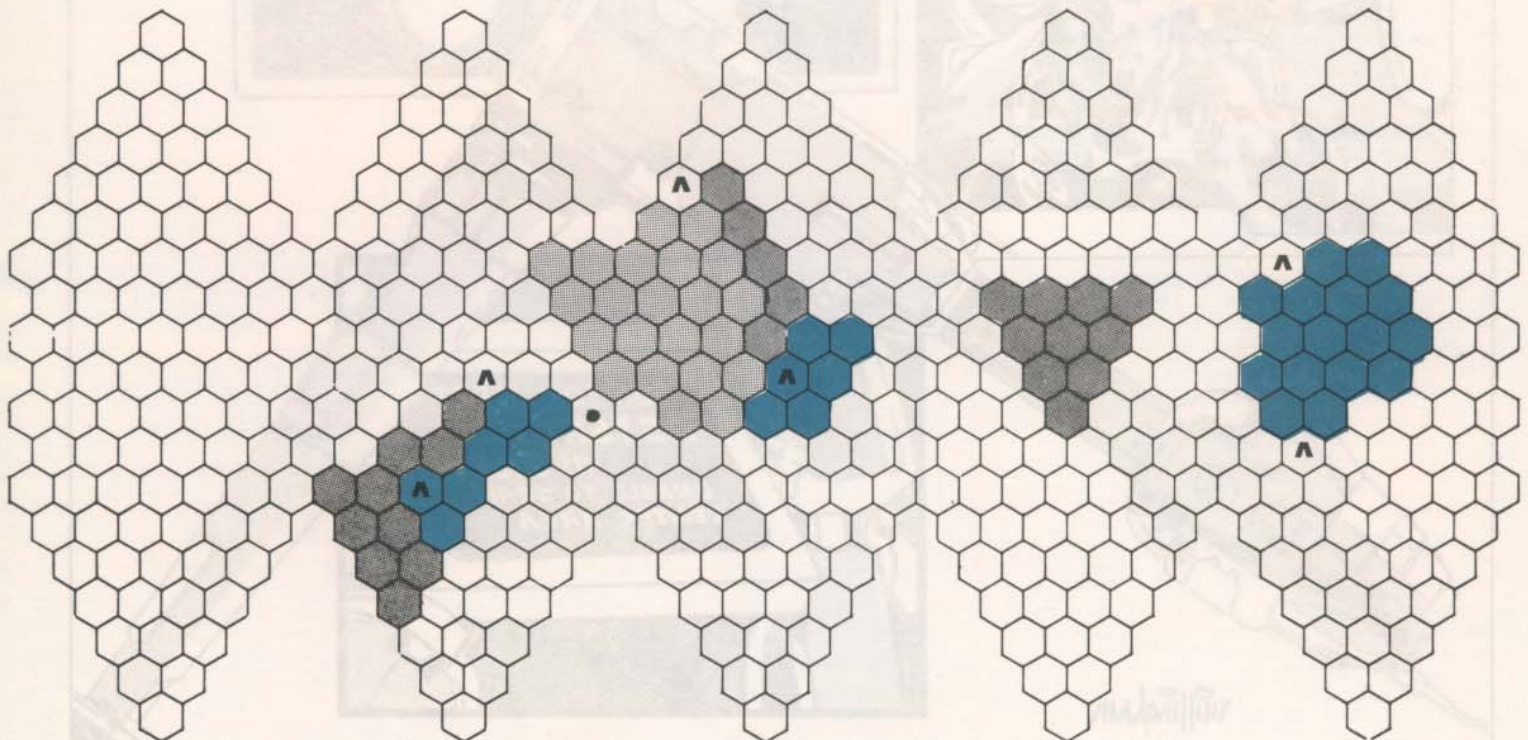
PLANETARY TYPE Black Dwarf w/accretion crust

ORBITAL DISTANCE 200,000 LS PLANETARY DIAMETER 120,000 km
 LENGTH OF YEAR _____ days SURFACE GRAVITY FIELD 8.5 G
 LENGTH OF DAY 120 hours HYDROSPHERIC RATING 0 %
 TEMPERATURE RANGE _____

ATMOSPHERIC TYPE Thin Helium-Hydrogen
 COMMENTS ON ATMOSPHERE: 34mm pressure.

COMMENTS: A crust of light elements (Hydrogen compounds, lithium, carbon and some silicon) covers the core of extremely dense matter. Eruptions of core material and the particle belt give RAD/5 conditions to the surface. Travel in grav-assisted armour possible.

- Hill Areas
- Volcanic Activity
- Dust Plains
- Grass Plain
- Radio Source



the cracked hull has erased the computer memory. Footprints - of a small group of canines - lead from the launch to an area of fissures where an outcropping of a wierd glass-like material has been picked away. A short distance away another gigantic outcropping is visible where large (10 x 30 x 1 meter thick) slabs of the substance have been excavated. The footprints lead to this 'quarry,' back to the launch, then over a hill to an area that appears to have been used as a landing field. The footprints end here (apparently a rescue craft removed the launch's crew).

The glass-like material is **Stelt**. As it is formed only in the heart of dying stars, it is quite rare. Occasional asteroids will have small deposits; the meteor miner who finds a chunk is considered lucky. The going price is 1500 CR per kilogram. Stelt looks somewhat like translucent orange or amber glass, studded with nodes of gold, silver, and copper. Occasionally, a specimen turns up that has radioactive materials in it, causing the material to glow softly.

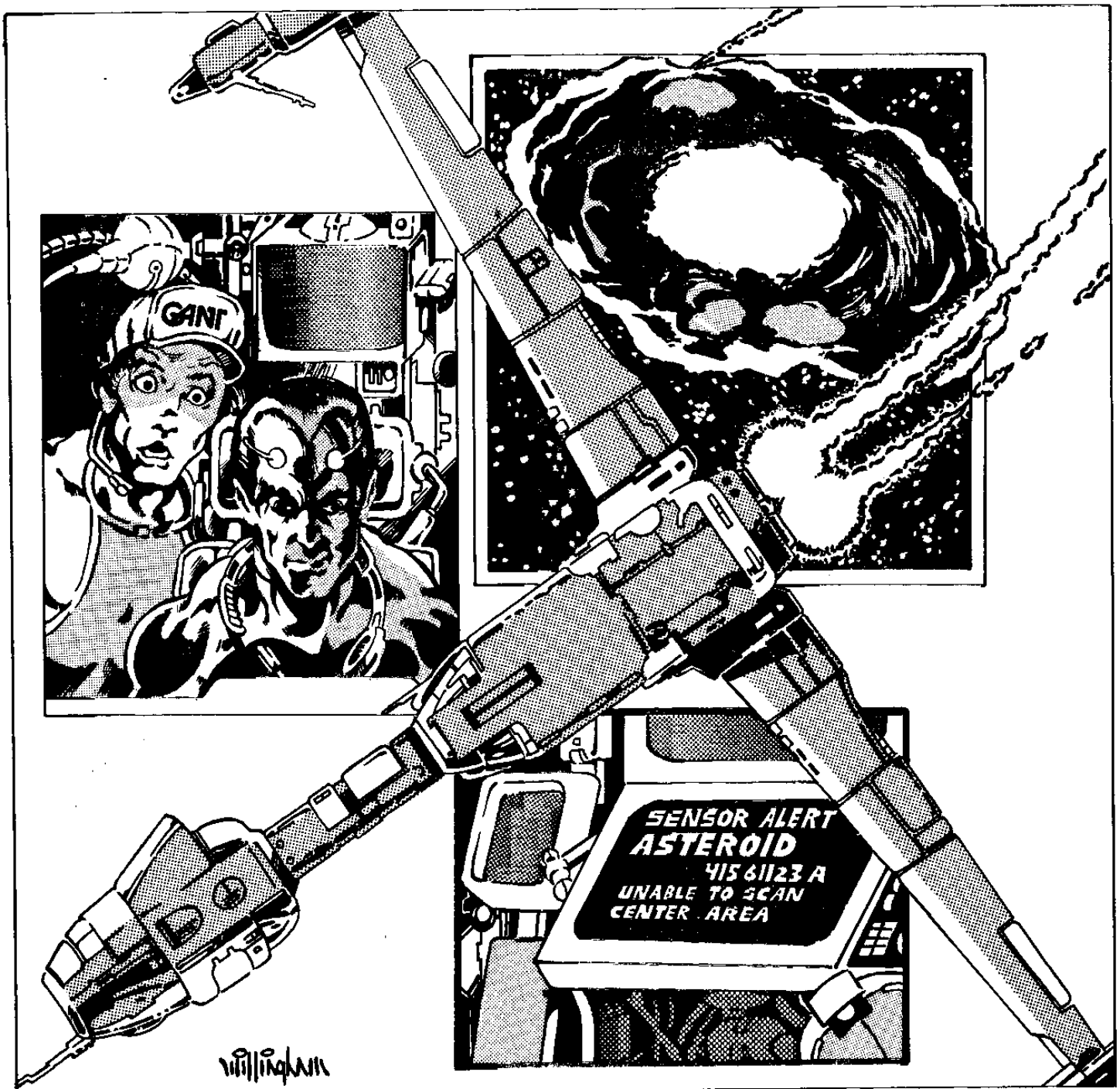
Specialized cutting equipment, included in a mining unit, is needed to properly harvest Stelt. Using physical force doesn't work - the stuff is

too hard - and energy weapons lower the value of specimens so removed.

The **second source** of radio signals is a small spaceship in a distant (200 LS) orbit about the hulkstar. It is a meteor miner, missing a launch and crew. The ship is around 40 years old, and has minor radiation and meteor damage.

Examination of the ship's log will reveal that the crew left in the launch to land on the 'Treasure Asteroid.' The captain warned anybody finding her ship to approach the asteroid with caution: the surface is covered with dead hulks of other fortune seekers. She also left a list of instructions on her and her crew's estates and business. She leaves the ship to whoever finds it, and wishes the readers 'good luck.'

The **third radio source** is the distress beacon of the *Star Scamp*. After a few hours of zeroing in on its location, the PCs will find **THE GALLERY ASTEROID**.



VIII. THE GALLERY ASTEROID

The asteroid is a typical iron-nickel asteroid, a lumpy potato shape, 60 km wide and 90 km long. A few minutes of visual examination will reveal an anomaly: a 20 km by 30 km spot of milky white. The area does not send back a sensor image; all attempts to probe it are futile. Sensors will pick up the presence of a large number of spacecraft on the asteroid's surface, all within 20 km of the 'blind spot' area. All but one - the Faurot Enterprises' Star Scamp - are dead hulks with no energy or radiation traces detectable.

The 'Blind Spot' is an energy manipulation field: it can throw energy as well as reflect it. Large targets (1000 tons or more) have a 50% chance of being attacked if they come within 10 light seconds of the asteroid. The attack will be equivalent to a NovaGun *250 turret with a RPG and gunner expertise of 10. The attacks will continue until the target leaves the weapon's range limit (600 LS).

Ships under 1000 tons can safely approach the asteroid. The blind spot field will exert a gentle push on any craft approaching it: the closest a ship can land is 20 km. Sensors will reveal a series of metallic objects surrounding the field. Further investigation will require landing and proceeding on foot.

The asteroid has a surface gravity of about .05 g: zero gee or EVA experience will be helpful. The terrain is mostly low hills, craters, rilles and dusty plains. The edge of the blind spot is a berm, a ridge with a gentle slope and rounded top. Tall metallic objects are visible from 5 km away.

The only other things of note on the asteroid are the hulks of about 100 ships. All are at least 20 km from the blind spot border, and are spaced evenly about the 100 km long perimeter.



About 90% of the hulks are old: between one hundred thousand and ten thousand years old. These are badly eroded by meteor and radiation effects through the millennia. The oldest are piles of scrap, the youngest still structurally sound but battered. The interiors are all

exposed to vacuum and radiation, reducing any organic or delicate materials to dust. The computer components are crumbly piles of silica, metal, and protein circuits, totally useless.

Considerably more interesting are ten very recent - only a few decades old - hulks. These are from a variety of local starcultures and alliances, but all are from private or commercial institutions. There is no crew aboard, but there is a 10% chance that any given ship will have a usable log tape. Playing these will reveal that the ship came here to find a lost treasure: the crew's final entry is always one of 'We've found a way in - will report on findings upon return.' The ships are all possible salvage, requiring moderate to extensive repairs. All are under 1000 tons, and are either merchant or small exploration craft.

In addition to all of the above, there is one ship that is probably the target of the PCs' quest, whether they have been hired to find it or not. The Star Scamp is broadcasting an automatic SOS signal, and is in powered mode.

The Scamp is in a crater with no apparent damage. Its hatches are locked tightly, apparently an oversight by the people who need help. If the PCs were hired by Faurot to find his daughter, they will have been given the key needed to get in. A tech with security systems tech skill will have a percentage chance equal to his skill times 5 of making a proper-sized entrance code/key.

All is in order inside, though careful scrutiny will reveal that the crew seems to have had some wild parties recently. A copy of the book, **TIMES PAST**, can be found in the crew lounge, and other artifacts from Phatzis are in evidence.

The ship is empty of living personnel but for two badly injured canines who are in coldsleep capsules. The ID monitors report that the two are, or were, near death when they entered stasis. They are Rachun Faurot, daughter of the merchant mogul who owns the Scamp, and Comm. Tech. Aurph Rourr.



The ship's log recorder tells the tale of the Scamp's journey from her acquisition by Rachun Faurot (without permission), across many light years in search of Phatzis and the clues therein, and finally to this system. The last formal entry describes the crew's preparations to enter the area under the blind spot through a tunnel under the surrounding berm. All but Aurph Rourr were to go on the trip.

After this first, calmly reported entry is a hastily recorded message by Rachun Faurot: 'Grutel, Hrirr, Krouph and Choarr are dead. The captain and Doctor Fi'rirr are missing, and probably dead as well.'

'We came out of the tunnel in a terraformed valley under the forcedome. There were concentric rings of lava, forest and lakes. In the center was a plain of burnt earth. In the middle of this was a circular area covered with polished bones. As we looked, a robot came up to us and warned us away; we fired, but it survived and began to attack. Captain Guarr and the doctor and I ran for the woods. Trees full of skulls . . . caught up and had to jump the lava. Made it within radio range and called Aurph. It caught up with us and slashed. Got back to Scamp into . . . going to go on ice. BRING ME HOME!!'

If they think to look, the PCs will find a set of ATV tracks leading toward the berm, and two sets of tracks leading from that direction. Halfway to the berm is the wreckage of the ATV. It appears that the metal was somehow slashed apart, torn to ribbons by some mon-

strous force. The body of another canine (Captain Guarr, if the PCs are keeping track) is lying about a hundred meters from the ATV. An autopsy will show that he was hit by a protein disruptor before re-donning his suit, getting here, then dying of a heart attack.

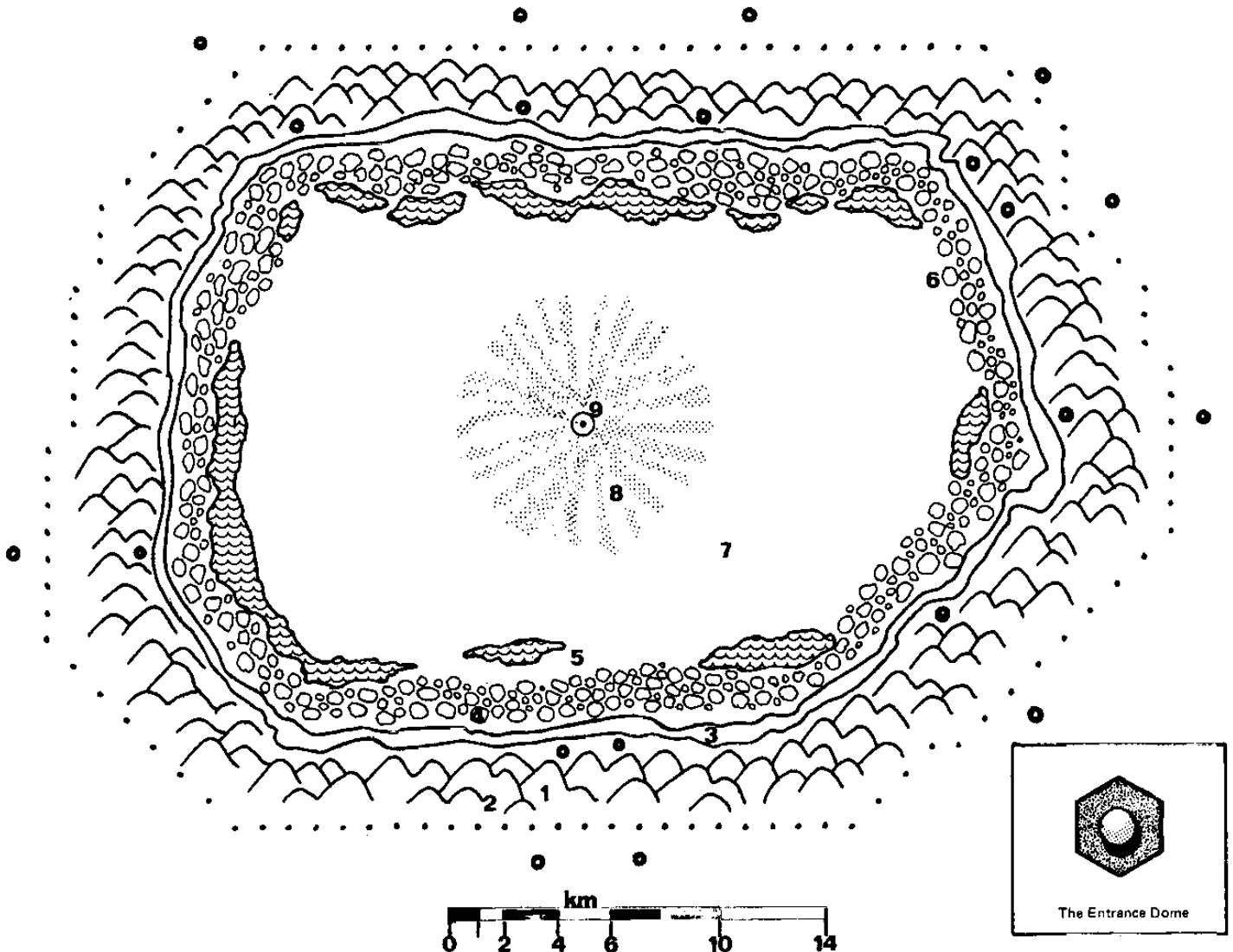
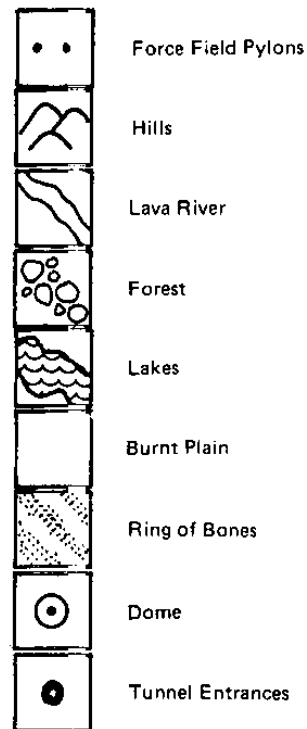
IX. ENTERING TREASURE VALLEY

There are ten tunnels under the berm that surrounds the blind spot. They can be found by following footprints from the many hulks or by simply looking for them.

If the PCs try to enter by climbing over the berm, they will find a series of 10 meter wide by 100 meter tall posts of an unknown alloy. The milky white blind spot field stretches between each post, which are spaced about one km apart. The field cannot be penetrated in any way. Destruction of a post - which requires 5000 points of damage - will result in the firing of a Novagun *250 bolt at the area where the fire is originating . . . this should be enough to finish off vandal-minded PCs.

The tunnels are all identical: 5 meter wide perfectly circular tubes. They bend and twist, making the journey through one about one hour long.

The tunnels emerge at the points indicated on the valley map. When they first emerge, the PCs will feel normal pressure outside their suits. All tests will show a breathable 75% N₂, 25% O₂ atmosphere with a pressure of 600 mm. The air is fresh and invigorating. The 'Sky' is a gold haze. Due to the energy distorting affects of the blind spot field, radio messages will not carry to or out of the valley.



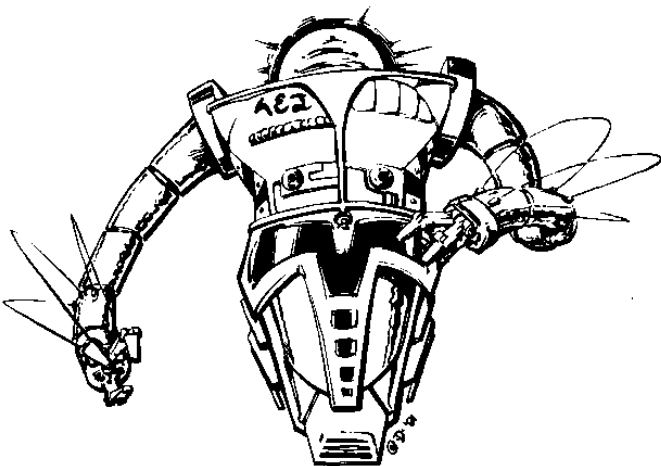
X. MAP KEY

1. The hills are the outermost ring in the valley. They are covered with short, bluish grass, and are not very interesting. The inner edge of the field that encloses the valley appears as a wall of hazy gold. It is impenetrable.
2. The location of a dead canine. This is Doctor Fi'rirr of the Star Scamp. He died of injuries sustained from protein-disruptor fire. He will have injected himself with Thankolomine, and will be revivable. His vacuum suit is rolled into a pack on his back.
3. The lava river is maintained by heat exchangers under the surface. The river is 50 meters wide. This doesn't seem to be too great an obstacle . . . BUT: halfway across the river the gravity of the valley increases to its normal value of 10.5 meters/second². (A bit more than one Gee.) This change will be noticed by a sensor or a successful intuition roll.
4. The forest consists of odd, fernlike trees with blue leaves. If the PCs take time to look, they will notice that each tree has a polished skull in it! Some of the skulls are human, but a vast majority are of beings the PCs have never seen or heard of. Any archeology or history scientist worth his salt will be interested in these skulls. When combined with what they will find further on, they will be able to reconstruct the skeletons of several extinct species.
5. This is a ring of boggy land and lakes of clear blue water.
6. This is the location of a vacuum suit left by a canine from the Scamp. The radio tracer is on. The suit belongs to Lieutenant Grutel. A drained blaster is in a holster, and a somewhat lewd holo of Rachun Faurol is in a pocket. There are no obvious signs of damage to the suit.
7. The plain of burnt earth. The soil here has small patches of grass, but for the most part it is barren and dreary. A patch of glaring white is visible in the middle of the plain.
8. This circular area (4 km wide) is covered with concentric rings of polished bones, carefully arranged in a baroque and grotesque pattern. All sorts of bones, except skulls, are available for study. As the PCs approach the center of the circle and the valley, a small dome becomes visible.
9. This is a 10 meter radius hemispherical dome, resting on a base of concrete. See the dome plan for further details.

XI. ENTRANCE DOME

The dome glows pale blue. It is composed of a material proofed against sensors.

Resting on a pedestal on the north side of the dome is a robot: a surrealistic human torso shape topped by a domed head. A thick tentacle of polished steel sprouts from either 'shoulder.' It is five meters tall and four meters wide, massing five tons. It is made of a patchwork of different colored metals. The skin is impervious to sensors, but a sensor will detect sub-space transmissions on a super-high wavelength.



The robot is actually the 'puppet' of a tremendous sentient computer deep in the asteroid's crust. It serves as a guard and historian for the Ni'er Queyon's horde. The robot can be replaced if destroyed, but this takes several hours.

The SM should play the robot as a cheerful, but threatening, artist. It delights in telling the stories of those who visit, but will only make vague hints about its creators and their horde.

The robot will be busily polishing the thighbone of a canine when the PCs approach. On either side of the robot is a pile of bodies - the crew of the Scamp. In front of it is a neatly arranged assortment of polished bones. As the PCs gape at this grisly scene, the robot will rise off of its pedestal and turn to the party. 'GREETINGS!' it will say, 'More petitioners, and so soon after others have failed! Since my creation ten hundred hundred of your years ago, I have guarded the horde of the Ni'er Queyon. My duty is to warn you away from this place, and to slay you and arrange your structural members in an artistically pleasing manner should you fail to obey. Do you wish to continue?' If the PCs answer yes, the robot will assure them that he has never failed, and will describe in loving detail the pattern that he will place their bones in. If they say no, it will approve and offer to tell them of the thousands of beings who have come this way before, projecting holograms on the dome to illustrate. This information alone is worth a great deal of money: the records of the robot stretch back a hundred thousand years! If asked how it came to learn human languages, it will describe its trips to the hulks outside, where it tapped the memory banks of the less fortunate treasure ships.

The robot will continue as long as the PCs want it to: it has a lot of time to pass, and while it doesn't get bored, it has a sense of curiosity and enough foresight to know that what it is giving away is valuable to its 'petitioners.'

Attacking the robot is a mistake. It has armor +3, a +1 battle screen, and a plethora of weaponry. There are two sonic protein-disruptor MG, a fusion MG, two tentacles that are equivalent to a Flail with a +3 wound effect. It ALWAYS gets the initiative. In the tips of its tentacles is another weapon, one it doesn't like to use on biological targets due to its drastic effects, two snarelike contraptions of monofilament wire. These will penetrate any unshielded target, can be extended and swung in a ten meter circle, and have a wound effect DM of +4. This is the weapon that shredded the ATV of the Scamp. The robot is immune to arpozdif: Its 'brain' is located underground.

If the PCs attack, the robot will give a final speech: 'Go away. Those who have attempted to best me have always failed. Go away. Those who have come to desecrate the galleries have always failed, and their remains are laid upon this plain as fair warning. GO AWAY. The treasures within are not for barbarians such as you. GO AWAY. Your skulls will be hung in the forest and your bones added to this sign of warning about me. GO AWAY!!!'

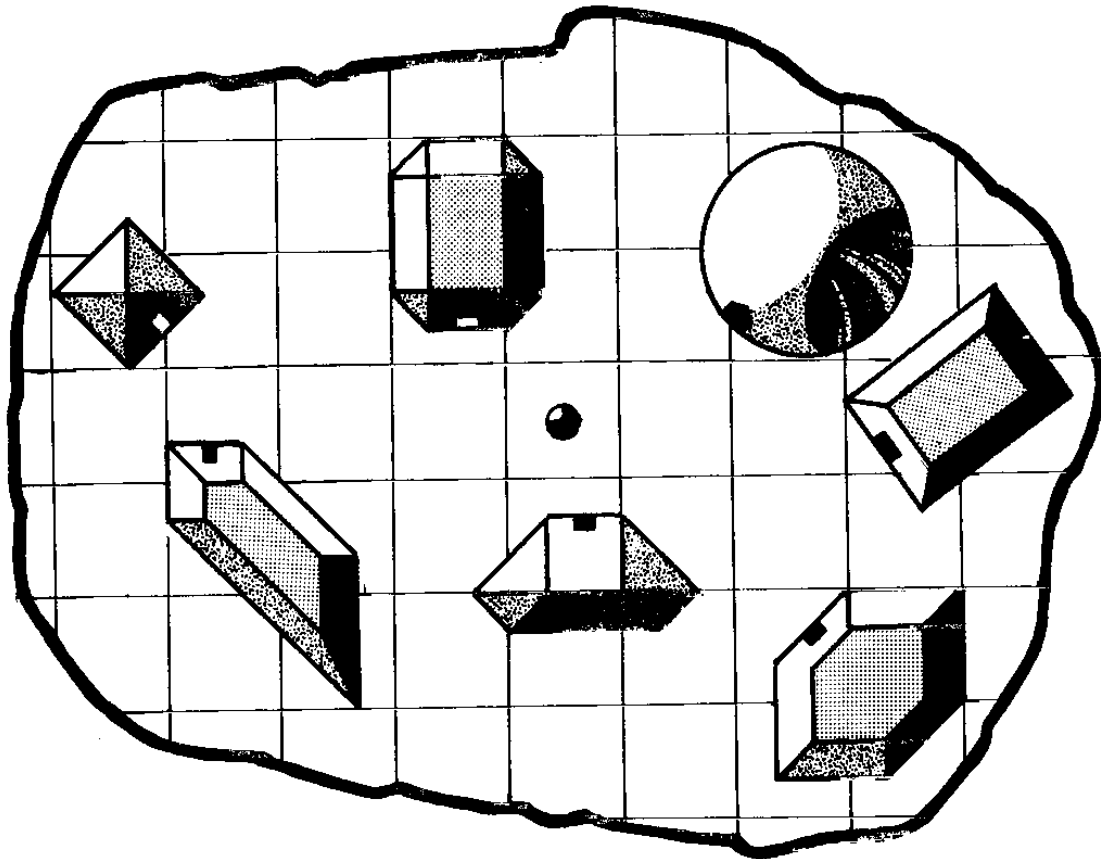
It will begin to fire on the PCs after completing this speech. It will pursue and kill the intruders, following up to 10 km from the outside of the tunnels, dragging any bodies it finds inside so it can use their bones. It is implacable once fired upon.

When the robot has taken 800 points of damage, it will drop like a stone. The dome will cease glowing, and a triangular opening will appear in the north side.

XII. WITHIN THE DOME

Inside are a flight of spiral stairs set in the wall of an 8 meter wide shaft that descends into the depths of the asteroid. The stairs are unlit and have no railing, a sure way to scare the PCs and any NPCs around. The shaft goes down for 8 km, finally emerging into a vast cavern, two km high and nine in diameter. The polished roof glows with a hologram of the galaxy; a large portion is marked off in light blue - the extent of the Ni'er Queyon empire at its height.

The floor of the cavern is mapped out in diagram 4. All of the buildings are single story-structures about 1 km high. They are constructed of beams of a strange alloy faced with slabs of stelt; purple, orange and amber stelt, all of the glowing variety. Interior lighting is provided by this eerie luminance. Entrances to the buildings are open and readily ac-



cessible. Inside of the buildings is the Ni'er horde, statues of a million different species in thousands of poses and a hundred globes of habitable planets which contain detail down to features 10 meters wide. The largest building contains the petrified bodies of a thousand soldiers in full battle dress, sculptures of objects that don't exist in this spacial plane - hypercubes, mobius tubes, and real kline bottles, and so on. The SM should use his or her imagination to invent bizarre, beautiful and grotesque works of art. Each of the buildings contains hundreds or thousands of pieces, each as strange as the next.

XIII. FABULOUS TREASURES

Most of the items will bring in anywhere from a hundred to ten thousand credits. Several, listed below, will bring in a lot more:

THE GRUTHILE ARKSTONE: This is a helical lattice of a gold colored metal set on a base of orange stelt. Imbedded in the lattice is a 10 cm wide tetrahedron of green stelt, which has a blindingly bright spark of gold light in the center. Staring into it causes a sense of euphoria: psionically skilled PCs will detect a strange stirring about the stone. The Arkstone will bring in ten million credits at the very least. It is 4 x 2 meters wide and masses two tons - the stelt base is very heavy.

STARFLAKES: These are glass spheres full of what look like cornflakes. The flakes glow a peach-orange color, and are composed of a super heavy metal. Each 5 cm sphere masses .5 kg and is worth 50,000 CR . . . (not for their esthetic value, for the metal in the flakes). If broken, the flakes in the sphere emit RAD/3.

MILKY WAY, UNDER GLASS: A meter diameter sphere of crystal. Inside is an accurate model of this galaxy. The stars move, blow up and are born as they do so in the real thing outside. A computer of immense power is attached to this artifact in hyperspace. Its value is priceless: by looking inside with a microscope or sensor, the whole galaxy can be observed.

RITHRIT OF BIZPOO: An inexplicable whatsis that has components in hyperspace. When viewed from different angles, it changes shape. While in a ship under FTL drive, it will become invisible. It is worth six million credits for its scientific value alone. Mass = one ton, 4 x 4 meters.

STORY CUBE: A cube of a hard metal, six meters on a side. As the PCs

watch, the history of the Ni'er Queyon, and all they knew about their rival empires, will be presented in holographic form: dramas, documentaries, comedies, etc. Value = priceless. It is also too big and too massive to remove from the vault it is in, not to mention the stairway, the tunnels and the lava river. Oh well!

HERO: A five meter high statue of gold of a Ni'er Queyon male in battle gear. The statue has a psionic device in it: telepaths in the area will hear the story of the statue's model. Value is four million credits.

If the SM can think of anymore fancy items, he or she should feel free to add them. All of these should be somewhat difficult to move. Some items are obviously priceless, worth an elephant's mass in col-lapsium, but are too big or dangerous to remove from the gallery.

XIV. RETURN OF THE ROBOT

As the PCs bring their fourth load of loot up to their ship, they will notice that the wreckage of the guardian robot is missing, and the entrance dome is again glowing blue. If the PCs go back for a fifth load, they will be faced with the robot again. It WILL back off if the PCs threaten to damage any of the artworks: better that the treasure be stolen than destroyed! But if it sees that the PCs are vandalizing the gallery anyway, it will risk an attack. If the PCs leave with four or less loads of booty, the robot will not have the time to repair/replace its physical body, and the party is free to leave. The bodies of the captain, Grutel, and Aurph have keys which can be used to start up the Scamp without a hitch. The cargo holds of the ship are empty, a great place to store overflowing booty. If Rachun and Aurph are revived, they will be extremely grateful, but a little jealous at the party's success. Rachun will make a pathetic attempt to ingratiate herself to one of the PCs to get a share of the treasure. If the party was sent out to find her, she will be annoying, but will not make more than one or two escape attempts.

The SM should adjudicate the PCs attempts to sell their horde: some items would be worthless to mere collectors or criminals, while others would only interest the same. Of course, the shady types of the galaxy will soon hear of the PCs success and attempt robbery and kidnapping.

VAULT OF THE NI'ER QUEYON

An adventure which leads to the vaults of the ForeRunner Ni'er Queyon. Players are lead on a quest for the vault or to rescue the daughter of a rich merchant who is on a similar quest for treasure. This adventure spans StarSectors and includes several planets, two StarShips, and everything needed for a full adventure quest.

VAULT OF THE NI'ER QUEYON is an adventure scenario for use with the SPACE OPERA game system. It is not a complete game as SPACE OPERA is required for use of this adventure pack.