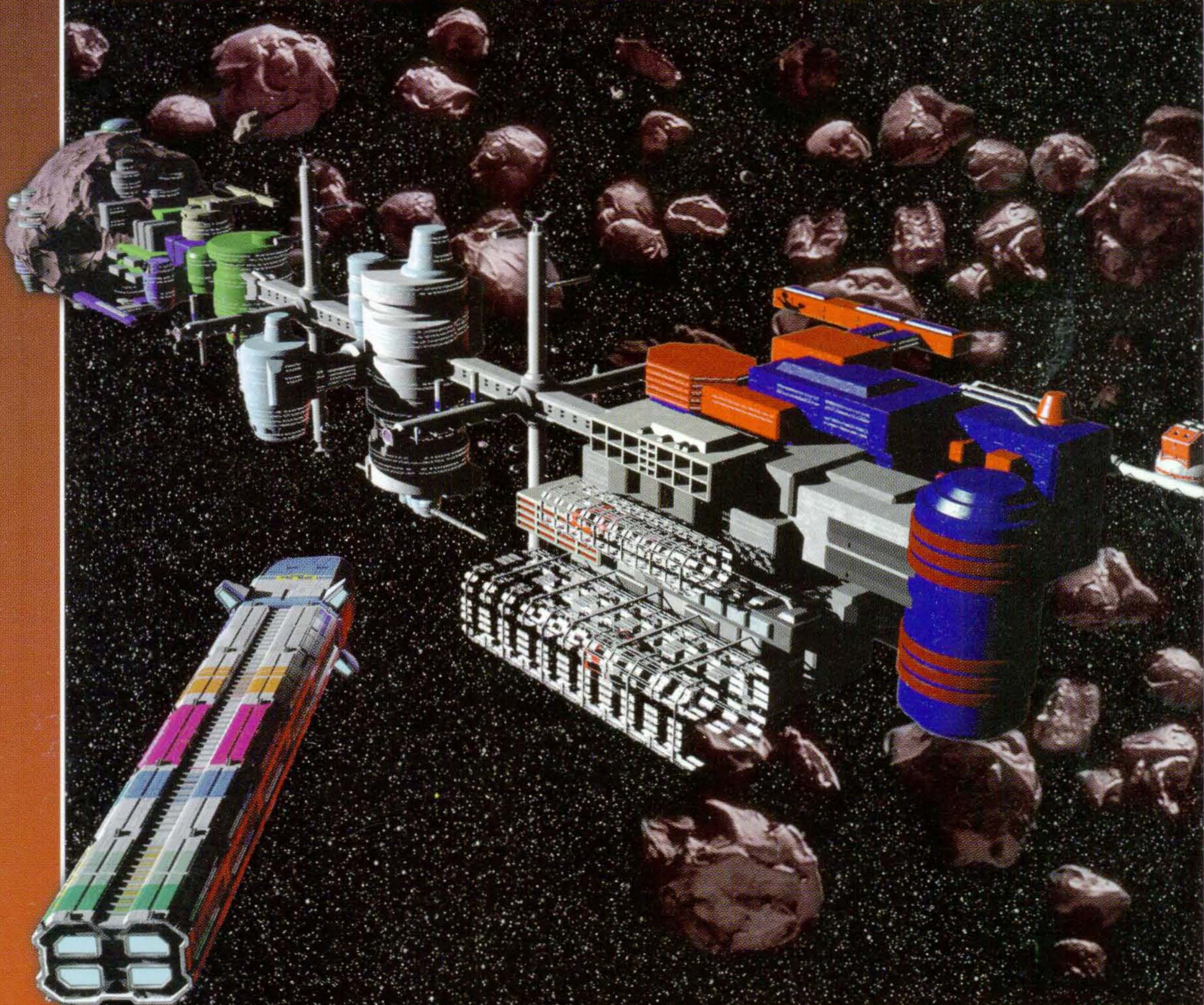


GURPS[®] *Traveller*[®] Planetary Survey 4

GLISTEN

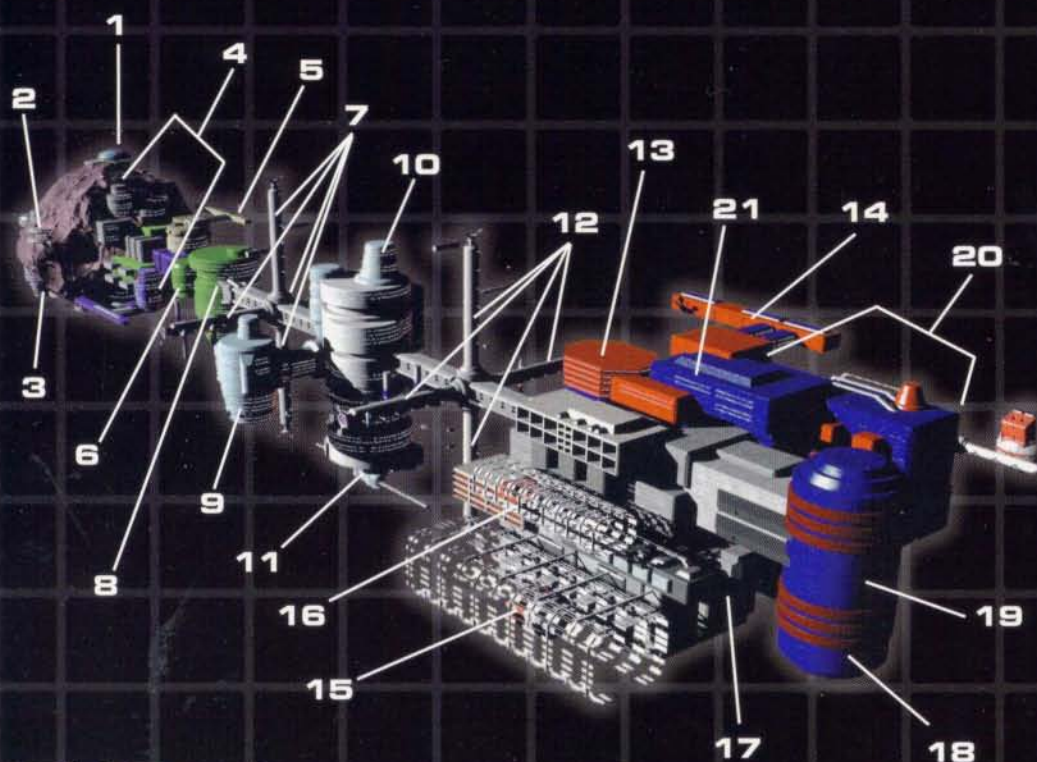
JEWEL OF THE MARCHES



By JAMES MALISZEWSKI

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

BANF STARPORT - KEY



Old Section

- 1 Park Dome
- 2 VIP Habitat
- 3 Old Hydroponic Gardens
- 4 Old Habitat
- 5 Resident Docking Pylon

Center Section

- 6 VIP Berthing
- 7 Forward Docking Pylons
- 8 Resident Berthing
- 9 Long-Term Berthing
- 10 Transient Berthing
- 11 Defensive Turrets
(various locations)
- 12 Aft Docking Pylons

New Section

- 13 SPA Offices
- 14 HAZMAT Warehouses
- 15 Large Construction Array
- 16 Small Construction Array
- 17 Shipyard Materials and Warehousing
- 18 Reactors
- 19 Environmental Services
(including new hydroponic gardens)
- 20 Warehouses
- 21 "Startown"



GURPS[®] Traveller[®]

Planetary Survey 4

GLISTEN

JEWEL OF THE MARCHES

By James Maliszewski

*Based on the award-winning
Traveller science fiction universe
by Marc Miller*

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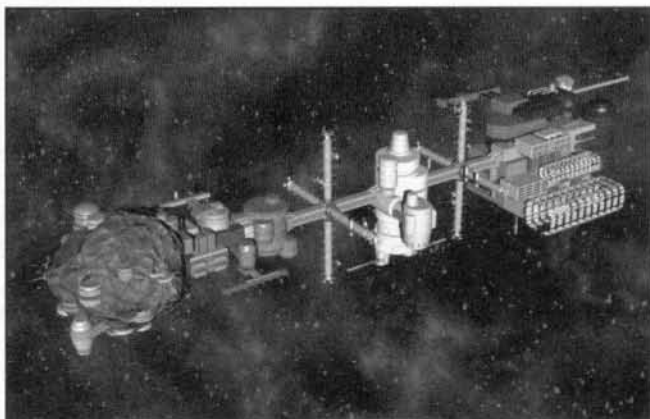
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CONTENTS

Banf Starport Map	IFC
Introduction	2
IISS Data – Glisten / Spinward Marches	3
Chapter 1: History	4
Chapter 2: Glisten Today	9
Chapter 3: Extrastellar Relations ..	23
Chapter 4: Characters	25
Chapter 5: Adventures on Glisten ..	27
Index	31
Worlds Within Jump-6	32
Jump-6 Map	IBC



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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Introduction

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the **GURPS** system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources include:

Pyramid (www.sjgames.com/pyramid/). Our online magazine includes new **GURPS** rules and articles. It also covers *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and many more top games – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *INWO*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures*, and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online!

New supplements and adventures. **GURPS** continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. A current catalog is available for an SASE. Or check out our Web site (below).

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all **GURPS** releases, including this book, are available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE. Or download them from the Web – see below.

Gamer input. We value your comments, for new products as well as updated printings of existing titles!

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.sjgames.com for an online catalog, errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. **GURPS** has its own Usenet group, too: rec.games.frp.gurps.

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

The **GURPS Traveller Planetary Survey 4: Glisten** Web page is at www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/ps4/.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition**. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the **GURPS Basic Set** – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the **GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition**. Page references that begin with CI indicate **GURPS Compendium I**; those that begin with GT are for **GURPS Traveller**. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated Web list at www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

The Glisten system's main “world” is a planetoid belt in which each “worldlet” has developed its own slight variation on the basic culture. The system is a major industrial center, and is home to major shipyards and heavy manufacturers of every sort. Site of both Imperial Interstellar Scout Service and Imperial Navy bases, and seat of the Duchess of Glisten, the Glisten system is truly “The Jewel of the Marches.” Millions of visitors pass through the system every year, some to visit, others on their way to someplace else. There could hardly be a better backdrop for science fiction roleplaying.

How to Use This Book

The Planetary Survey books are not rules; they're background, nearly system-free. They are designed as a series of adventure settings . . . not just worlds the PCs can visit, but also “offstage” places with their own history that can be used to drive adventures elsewhere (Glisten's industries and personalities are widespread). You can use this book:

● As is. Glisten is an official part of the **GURPS Traveller** continuity, tied in with previous work in the **Traveller** background. It builds upon material outlined in GDW's supplement *The Spinward Marches* (and other products) and in **GURPS Traveller: Behind the Claw**. Even if your campaign is not set in the Spinward Marches, you can rename the system and transfer it to a locale of your choosing.

● In pieces. Feel free to rename the world and the aliens, and transfer it to a location better suited to your individual campaign. See *Variations on the Theme* on p. 30 for suggestions on tailoring the world to your own game system or campaign.

About the Author

James Maliszewski can quite rightly be called a traveler himself. He was born in the Netherlands, grew up outside of Baltimore, and attended university in Annapolis, Washington, D.C., and Toronto. He originally believed his calling was to teach the world about the wonders of medieval and early modern philosophy, but soon realized he could be just as readily ignored by becoming a freelance writer – and have more fun in the process. Since 1999, he has contributed to many gaming products, most notably for **GURPS Traveller**, *Blue Planet*, *Deadlands: Hell on Earth*, *Fading Suns*, *Gear Krieg the Roleplaying Game*, and *Vampire: The Dark Ages*. He lives in Scarborough, Ontario, with his wife, daughter, and a Captain Kirk action figure.

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 designer, developer, and editor. After GDW closed, Loren freelanced, then came to SJ Games, where he is **GURPS Traveller** line editor and expert in residence.

IISS DATA – GLISTEN/SPINWARD MARCHES

Glisten is the collective name for a large number of settlements in the inner planetoid belt orbiting a solitary star (Gliss), located at 2036. Glisten is one of the major high-tech industrial centers of the Marches and consists of a number of separate planetoid cities, most of which specialize in a particular industry or social role.

Glisten Belt occupies the life zone. The system contains no appreciable bodies outside of the two planetoid belts and Glisten III (a gas giant which the locals call Nasmi). Glisten is the subsector capital for Glisten Subsector, and the Duchess of Glisten maintains her principal residence here. Certain approach vectors require clearance from Glisten Imperial Naval Base or Glisten IISS Station (consult the latest ephemeris for details).

Glisten comprises a vast federation of individual asteroid colonies, each of which has accepted the Glisten Coordinating Authority as its central government. The various colonies govern themselves internally, but allow the GCA to administer the system's vast traffic control network, as well as legislate and enforce standards for trade and commerce. As a consequence, there's a remarkable degree of cohesion in the system. The various colonies coordinate their actions, ensuring that important services such as defense and public works are divided among them.

In spite of the uniformity of administration, the colonies exhibit remarkable diversity in their local cultures. Each asteroid is host to a unique society, with its own customs, traditions, and way of life. This makes Glisten an incredibly diverse locale, and a popular spot for tourists in the Domain of Deneb.

Glisten is also a financial and industrial powerhouse of the Spinward Marches. It is home to several important shipyards. Merchants and traders from subsectors away are drawn to Glisten's markets. The system is sometimes called the "Gateway to District 268" because of its significant ties to that frontier region.

Glisten was the target of an *ihatei* incursion in 1113, but the Imperium has almost entirely driven

away the Aslan invaders since then.

Pluvis Belt: The outermost planetoid belt, Pluvis contains numerous mining stations, small ports, other industrial facilities (chief among these are the Bilstein Yards), and the Glisten Imperial Naval Base. The Pluvis Belt has nearly 40% of the system's population.

Starport: Given the dispersed nature of the system's population, Glisten possesses a multitude of deep-space ports, but only Banfi Starport is a true starport. Banfi Starport is rated Class V, and is held and administered by the Imperium, through the local Starport Authority port director.

Size: Not applicable.

Atmosphere: None.

Hydrographic Percentage: None.

Population: 8.38 billion permanent residents, augmented by transient miners, corporate employees, military personnel, and tourists. Depending on the time of year and the circumstances, the population of the system can swell to 9 billion. This population figure represents the inhabitants of both the Glisten and Pluvis Belts, rather than just that of the Glisten Belt proper.

Control Rating: CR 4 (Controlled). Glisten has numerous laws restricting the ownership of weapons of all sorts. This is done both as a form of social control and as a defense against damage to the system's many self-contained arcologies. The precariousness of life on an asteroid world (even a high-tech one) is never far from the minds of Glistenites, making advanced weaponry anathema.

In addition, local traffic control is extensive, limiting both the movement of vessels and the use of certain communications channels. Violation of either of these regulations is a grave offense and the violator may be subject to harsh penalties, possibly with the concurrence of the Imperial Starport Authority.

Tech Level: TL12. Local industry is exceptionally diverse, making the Glisten system extremely self-sufficient. Glisten is on the cutting edge in the areas of shipbuilding, zero-G manufacturing, and environmental controls, with some technologies on the verge of TL13 breakthroughs.

System Data

PRIMARY: GLISS (K9 V)

Name (orbit)	Gravity		Hydrographic %		Population		Notes
	Diameter	Atmosphere	Climate				
Glisten Belt (0.710 AU)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	5 billion	
Pluvis Belt (1.503 AU)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3 billion	
Nasmi (2.812 AU)	85,119	2.3	NA	NA	Uninhabitable	—	Gas Giant

History

As an inhabited system of the Spinward Marches – and an inhospitable one at that – Glisten does not have a long history. Prior to the arrival of the first settlers in 298, there is little evidence of anyone taking much notice of the Gliss system. In their interstellar exploration phase, the Darrians expanded outward in a sphere 20 parsecs in diameter by 1270. This sphere included Glisten, yet the Darrians didn't see any use in setting up a permanent colony here. The Maghiz brought an end to the Darrian presence in the area. Thus, it was not until the coming of the Third Imperium that this system came to any prominence.

THE EARLY YEARS

As the young Third Imperium expanded outward into the Spinward Marches, many marginal systems were bypassed in favor of those with pleasant environments, obvious resources, or both. Consequently, the Gliss system, which lacks any habitable planets larger than asteroids, wasn't given much consideration. Other worlds commanded more attention, leaving Glisten devoid of sophont life until approximately 298.

At that time, the Ammeed Mining Corporation of Tirem (Spinward Marches 2233) launched a small expedition toward the Gliss system. Ammeed was a middling corporation on Tirem, which had been shut out of major strikes on its homeworld by rivals. Consequently, it was looking for new sources of minerals and ores with which to expand its operations. Using contacts in the IISS, Ammeed's chief executive officer, Marquesa Banfi, learned that there was evidence of lanthanum in the Gliss system. She gambles, and sent a prospecting team. If she succeeded, Ammeed would be rich beyond the dreams of avarice. If not, it would be quickly bankrupt.

Fortunately for Banfi, her gamble paid off. The Gliss system – especially the Glisten Belt itself – had large lanthanum deposits. It also possessed sizable quantities of other rare earth metals, making it a find unlike any other in the Marches at that time. Banfi quickly ordered the construction

of several mining operations on various asteroids throughout the system. She also did her best to conceal Ammeed's newfound source of wealth.

Of course, Banfi couldn't keep her secret for long. Within three years, the Scout Service had officially documented Glisten's mineral wealth. Even before that, disgruntled Ammeed employees had revealed the location of Banfi's new mining facilities to competitors. These competitors quickly pooled their own resources to mount expeditions of their own. The government of Tirem followed suit as well. By 306, the Gliss system had been surveyed extensively, forming the basis for all later surveys. By the end of that decade, there were numerous mining colonies in the system.

THE CORPORATE WARS

Marquesa Banfi's gamble may have paid off in the short term, but it had disastrous results in the long term. By 310, many corporations – from Tirem and elsewhere – made it their avowed goal of gaining total control over the Gliss system. Although the Ammeed Mining Corporation had a head start (controlling 10 large asteroids in the Glisten Belt), its rivals had size and determination on their side. In addition, some employed mercenaries to threaten and harass their rivals. In these early days of the Marches, mercenaries could be used with much greater impunity. The Imperial Rules of War were still in effect, as were trade-war traditions, but there was very little way to enforce them. Thus, open warfare broke out among the asteroids of Glisten.

By 400, the warfare had settled down into a four-way confrontation between Ammeed (which was slowly losing its hold over the system), Mignukaa Mining, Liisharara Dii, and Suliena Industries. The use of mercs had become commonplace, drawing the attention of the Imperium. The Duke of Mora, Amini Murikshaa, was unhappy with the state of affairs in Gliss. However, his staff advised him that it would be unwise to become too personally involved in affairs. They recommended that he seek an indirect way to defuse the open warfare.

Duke Murikhsa settled on an elegant resolution to the Corporate Wars. He dispatched several agents to the system, including Alexei Gro'un. These agents gathered intelligence behind the scenes and quickly discovered that the employees of the four corporations had grown weary of almost a century of conflict. Only the high pay provided by their employers kept them in the Gliss system at all. Even then, many preferred to return to Tirem or elsewhere, leaving Glisten behind.

Duke Murikhsa dispatched more agents to the Gliss system and encouraged union leaders and rabble-rousers to fight against their corporate masters. By 403, there were numerous revolts in the system, as workers demanded an end to the incessant conflict. They argued that there was space enough in the system to allow for many corporations; military action was simply unnecessary. The Duke continued his canny approach to the situation by inviting both Ling Standard Products and Sternmetal to take a look at Glisten. The other corporations took note and decided to modify their approach. After all, there was no chance they could defeat these megacorporations in a straight fight. By 415, the Corporate Wars subsided to a more sedate level. By 420, Liisharara Dii was the only small corporation left; the rest had been either driven from Glisten or bought out by their megacorporate rivals.

A NEW BEGINNING

By 450, the situation in the Gliss system had settled down considerably. The three remaining corporations dealt with one another peacefully, if not always equitably. Labor unions and trade guilds had gained great power on many asteroids, forcing even megacorps like Sternmetal to negotiate with them in good faith. Many more asteroids were colonized – this time by groups not under corporate control. Indeed, the groups who had rebelled against corporate rule founded several such colonies.

As time went on, noncorporate colonies became increasingly common. These new colonies were devoted to pursuits other than resource extraction and processing. The growing population of the Gliss system had become more sophisticated and needed services beyond what the corporations could provide. More importantly, the disdain in which many Glistenites held the corporations all but required an alternate source of services. The nature of life in the system became

more diversified, which, in turn, attracted others to the region. From his palace on Mora, Duke Murikhsa must have been very pleased.

GLISTEN ONLINE

Although the Corporate Wars of the fourth century had subsided, they hadn't completely ended. Both Sternmetal and LSP fought one another for greater control in the system, all the while contending with the power of the unions and guilds. In the crossfire, Liisharara Dii began to suffer badly. Their market share had shrunk to extremely low levels and productivity was down. The board of directors, back in Deneb sector, was resigned to withdrawing from the Gliss system, believing there was no way for the corporation to compete against the might of not one but two megacorporations.

The regional manager for Liisharara Dii had other ideas. A talented man by the name of Zev Davydov, he wasn't ready to concede defeat to his larger and more powerful rivals. Instead, he proposed that Liisharara Dii follow the lead of the noncorporate colonies of the system by providing a service needed as the population grew. Davydov conceived of the idea of converting Liisharara Dii's resources away from mining and toward traffic control and coordination. He reasoned – quite rightly – that the Gliss system would desperately need a traffic control network in order to avoid mishaps. Moreover, this network could also be used to track asteroids and cometary bodies within the system, making it a valuable scientific tool as well.

Davydov received permission to follow through with his plan. By 499, the system's first comprehensive traffic control network went online. Liisharara Dii charged both Sternmetal and LSP for the privilege of using it, thereby staving off his company's extermination in the region. The Scout Service also took an interest in the network, as did researchers from as far away as Vland.

Ironically, Davydov's foresight saved Liisharara Dii's presence in the Gliss system, but it didn't save the company. In 503, Makhidkarun bought out its main office. Fortunately for Davydov, the Gliss branch hadn't been included in the deal. He then used his personal wealth and connections to create a consortium that would purchase and administer the traffic control network. This consortium became known as the "Gliss Ten Coordinating Corporation," after the asteroid on which it was headquartered. By 600 or so, it was common practice to refer to the asteroid as Glisten, a name that has stuck to the present day.

ARBELLATRA DAY

In addition to the other forms of public tribute to the memory of the first Alkhalikoi to occupy the Iridium Throne, Glistenites have dedicated a holiday to the empress. Called simply "Arbellatra Day," the holiday is celebrated on Day 240 of every year (the date of her confirmation by the Moot as empress). Arbellatra Day is a patriotic holiday that honors the accomplishments of Arbellatra and the dynasty she founded. Thus, the holiday also focuses attention on the current monarch and his accomplishments as well.

Each asteroid celebrates Arbellatra Day in a different fashion, according to their own local traditions and customs. Glisten City sponsors huge street parties in its crowded avenues, while Ensu holds a variety of public artistic exhibitions, such as poetry readings and historical plays. Arbellatra Day is a popular time of year for tourists to visit the system, as it's one of the most elaborate festivals of its kind in the Spinward Marches. Many neighboring systems have adopted the holiday as their own, spreading it throughout the subsector.



THE FRONTIER WARS AND THE CIVIL WAR

Just as the Gliss Ten Coordinating Corporation became more prominent, the Outworld Coalition began its struggle against the Imperium. The First Frontier War did not touch the system directly. Aside from a few Sword World commerce raids, there was little real fighting in Glisten. However, the mineral resources of the system proved invaluable to the Imperial war effort. Both LSP and Sternmetal reaped huge profits as they supplied the Imperial Navy with lanthanum and other needed resources. This in turn spurred immigration to the system, as more workers were needed to keep the mines operational.

Support for the Imperium ran high among the system's population. Most viewed Admiral Olav hault-Plankwell as a hero. That he was a native of the Spinward Marches only made their pride more acute. However, his assassination of Empress Jaqueline I in 606 was greeted with displeasure when news reached the Marches almost two years later. Their displeasure only increased as they learned that Plankwell's action had initiated a civil war in the Core of the Imperium.

When the Outworld Coalition reformed and sought to reverse its losses in 615, Glisten once again came to the aid of the Marches. They provided as much assistance as they could, working hard to keep the Navy and other armed forces supplied with ores, minerals, and manufactured goods. The new Grand Admiral of the Marches, Arbellatra Alkhalikoi, recognized the efforts of the Gliss system by sending an Imperial Naval fleet to protect it against raiders. Despite the Imperium's losses elsewhere, privateers never harassed Glisten during the Second Frontier War.



Arbellatra's actions earned her an important place in the hearts of Glistenites. When she ended the Civil War by defeating Gustus in 629, the people of the Imperium were impressed by her unwillingness to seize the throne – none more so than those in the Gliss system. They greeted her eventual accession to the Iridium Throne with satisfaction. To this day, Arbellatra is a common name among Glistenites and the empress is commemorated by several public monuments throughout the system.

THE FOUNDING OF MODERN GLISTEN

As the Gliss Ten Coordinating Corporation became more important to everyday life in the system, it took on greater roles. By 600, it had become the central processor for a variety of services, from traffic control (which remained its primary focus), to food distribution, to adjudicating legal disputes. The corporation had become more of a *de facto* government than a money-making business (although it still turned a profit every year from user fees).

Thus, in 602, a group of unionists and civilians on Gliss Ten proposed the formal creation of a government for the system. These constitutional talks were a model of openness and careful deliberation. In the end, they decided to vest governmental authority in the Gliss Ten Coordinating Corporation, which became known as the Glisten Coordinating Authority. The Authority could continue to charge fees for its traffic control and other services (which proved more popular than traditional taxes), in exchange for a promise to include even distant – and unprofitable – colonies in its jurisdiction. The board of the corporation readily agreed to this, as its acquisition of legitimate authority would confer upon it recognition by the Imperium and all that goes with it.

Initially, only a small number of asteroids (mostly in the Glisten Belt) accepted the Authority as its central government. Sternmetal and LSP both rejected the GCA's claims, appealing to Mora for assistance. However, the Duke was unwilling to back the corporations over the will of the people of Glisten, and thus recommended Glisten be admitted into the Imperium as a full member. This happened in 609, and recognition attracted tens of thousands more colonists to the system, many of whom established their own colonies, which in turn recognized the GCA as the legitimate government. In 630, a group of scientists from Mora founded the famed Glisten Institute of Planetological Studies (GLIPS). This was done both for scientific reasons and as a political statement. The Institute's founders wished to lend legitimacy to the GCA, a move some say was covertly supported by the Duke of Mora.

THE SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Between 602 and 750, many more asteroid colonies joined the growing Glisten Coordination Authority. This growth proceeded in spite of corporate attempts to stymie its development. In fact, in 742, LSP ended its feud with the new government and took a shipbuilding contract with the GCA. This contract was signed out of necessity; Sternmetal had taken control of most of Glisten's lucrative mining sites, leaving LSP in danger of collapsing in the system. By accepting a shipbuilding contract, the regional manager had injected new life into the megacorp's moribund holdings.

Despite these successes, there were signs of tension in the Glisten system. The worldlets of the Pluvius Belt had rejected membership in the new government because they believed the GCA held too much power. In particular, they feared that its profit-driven control of the traffic control network worked to the disadvantage of poorer colonies. However, they also saw the benefit of joining the GCA – and thus the Imperium as well. In order to reach a compromise, representatives from the Pluvius Belt colonies petitioned the GCA to hold another constitutional convention, one in which their concerns might be answered.

It took years for the convention to become fully organized, but it finally occurred in 785. Meeting in the Pluvius Group (a concession to the petitioners), the convention allowed the delegates to examine every aspect of their predecessors' decisions. In the end, only a few points of contention threatened its success. The most significant concerned the GCA's user fee scheme, which the Pluvians still opposed. The GCA agreed to adopt a more traditional taxation scheme (which angered the corporations) in exchange for permission to raise a system defense fleet and army. It took 13 years before the new constitution was adopted by all the colonies of the Glisten system (which became the formal name of the system), but in 798, all the asteroids accepted the authority of the GCA. This authority extended even to new colonies; as a result, the GCA has complete control over expansion in the system.



GROWTH AND RECOGNITION

Between 800 and 1000, Glisten enjoyed a veritable Golden Age of expansion. The new constitution encouraged additional settlements in the system, each one drawn by the promise of equal treatment. In addition, the presence of GLIPS, the shipyards, and rich mineral deposits proved a strong incentive. During this 200-year period, Glisten attracted literally millions of new settlers, some from as far away as Vland. During this period of phenomenal growth, the Imperial Navy requested and was granted permission to establish a base in the Glisten system. The Scouts soon followed suit at the invitation of GLIPS, which hoped to enter into an information-sharing agreement with the IISS.

As these new bases were established, Glisten became increasingly important to the development of the Marches. As a resource-rich, high-population system, it was a frequent stopover point for traders and explorers heading into District 268 and the Five Sisters subsector. By the beginning of the Third Frontier War in 979, Glisten was at the hub of a powerful trade route – which attracted even more immigrants to this system.

The events of the Third Frontier War did not hit Glisten very hard. Most of the major fighting was coreward of the subsector. Nevertheless, the system continued its important role as “supplier to His Majesty’s Navy.” As it had in the past, Glisten acquitted itself admirably, providing much-needed resources during an unfortunate time in the Imperium’s military history. In recognition for these efforts, the Duchess of Mora recommended that Glisten be designated the subsector capital, an honor previously held by Tirem. Not only did Glisten have a greater population than its predecessor, but it possessed better starport facilities and a greater role in the local economy. Emperor Gavin confirmed this transfer in 991, as the Solomani Rim War raged.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

Glisten has continued to play an important role in spinward affairs since the millennial celebrations in 1000. The mines of the Gliss system seem almost inexhaustible, even after hundreds of years of exploitation. Of course, Glisten now derives more than half of its gross domestic product from industrial manufacturing and shipbuilding.

That number is expected to increase even more within the next decade.

Scientific research continues to grow as well. GLIPS draws the attention of the academic community every 10 years with its famed research forum.

Glisten’s telescopic advances have made an impact on Imperial science, aiding astronomers and astrophysicists.

GLIPS and the IISS have jointly petitioned the Imperium for increased funding in this field, believing it will aid colonization and cataloging efforts everywhere.

The only significant challenge of late was the Aslan *ihatei* incursion of 1113. These landless “second sons” attempted to establish a foothold in Glisten by force during that year. The combined efforts of the Glisten Defense Forces and the Imperial Navy repelled the invaders, sending them back into the Trojan Reach. Nevertheless, the Aslan remain interested in the “unclaimed rockballs” of Glisten and have entered into negotiations to take possession of them. These negotiations have resulted in no permanent solution, but the diplomatic work continues.

Even so, there is every reason to suspect that Glisten’s future is a bright one. The system has risen from humble beginnings to become one of the powerhouses of the Domain of Deneb. The drive and ingenuity of its people all but ensure that it will continue to have a prominent place in the Domain for many years to come.



Glisten Today

Glisten is a jewel of the Spinward Marches. While its physical appearance is not one that inspires awe (although many Glistenites would disagree), its high population and high technology ensure its place in the travelogues of the Domain of Deneb. Its industrial might is rivaled by few other worlds – in the Marches or beyond.

BANFI STARPORT

Glisten's Banfi Starport is an entirely free-floating structure. Located at a stable point within the Glisten Belt itself, equidistant from several major settlements, Banfi is completely run by the SPA. The "extrality line" is a misnomer here, as the starport is a self-contained structure that is not located on any asteroid or planetoid in the system. Consequently, Glisten has fewer of the conflicts between the Starport Authority (SPA) and local government that are common on many other worlds of the Imperium.

A class V starport, Banfi is huge, dwarfed only by a few other starports in the Domain of Deneb. The port possesses numerous berths and docking bays, warehouses, businesses, and an extensive habitat section. If Banfi were located on an asteroid, it would be one of the system's most heavily populated. At any given time, the starport sees between 400,000 and 500,000 individuals pass through its corridors per week. In addition, countless merchants and traders ply their wares in its open bazaars and promenades, making Banfi a constant hub of activity.

Authority over Banfi Starport rests with Port Director Helena Mintsopolis. A stern, older Glistenite with a lifetime of experience in administration, she ensures that Banfi runs smoothly. To that end, she maintains excellent relations with the Glisten Coordination Authority, the Duchess of Glisten, the Navy, and the Scouts. Likewise, Mintsopolis employs only the best SPA officials she can arrange to transfer to Banfi.

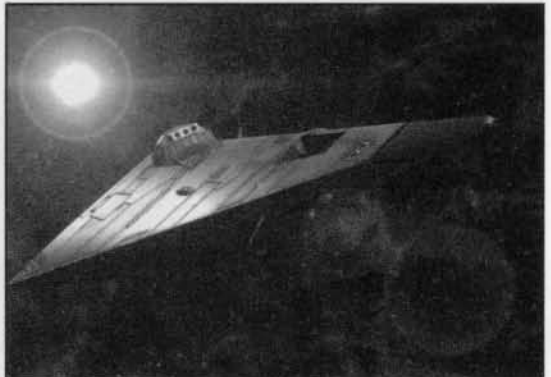
Despite Director Mintsopolis' best efforts, Banfi Starport isn't as perfect a locale as she'd like. In the past few years, the port has seen more

than its fair share of would-be terrorists and protesters, many of them angered by insensitive statements of Duchess Muktheswara. Although none of these incidents has resulted in any deaths or permanent damage, Mintsopolis isn't certain how long that will continue. She's stepped up security at the starport and pulled strings with the Naval Commander to get more Imperial Marines stationed to the port.

THE BELTS

Gliss has two distinct asteroid belts. The first belt, known as the Glisten Belt, is the larger and richer of the two. It contains the bulk of the system's inhabitants, as well as more industries and resource extraction stations. It is this belt that most non-Glistenites think of when they hear the name "Glisten."

The second belt, located farther away from the star Gliss, is the Pluvius Belt. This lesser belt possesses neither the population nor the mineral richness of the Glisten Belt, which is why outsiders rarely consider it. However, the Pluvius Belt plays an important role in the system, as it's home to the Imperial Navy Base, as well as Bilstein Yards. Likewise, GLIPS (see p. 14) shows great interest in the Pluvius Belt, if only because its composition is so different than that of the Glisten Belt. This has led to many theories, including several refinements of existing models of planetary formation. Thus, the Pluvius Belt is far from the uninteresting locale some might consider it to be.



GLISTEN

This is home to the main governmental and business district of the system. Glisten is actually five asteroids, which were moved into a stable tetrahedron shape, with four at the vertices and the largest at the center, shortly after the first wave of immigrants entered the system in the fourth century. Each of these asteroids has its own settlements, but they are all part of the larger municipality known as Glisten City (see p. 11). Glisten has the largest population of any asteroid in the system, with almost 2 million permanent residents. This number is augmented by many visitors and transients of other sorts (such as military personnel and corporate employees).

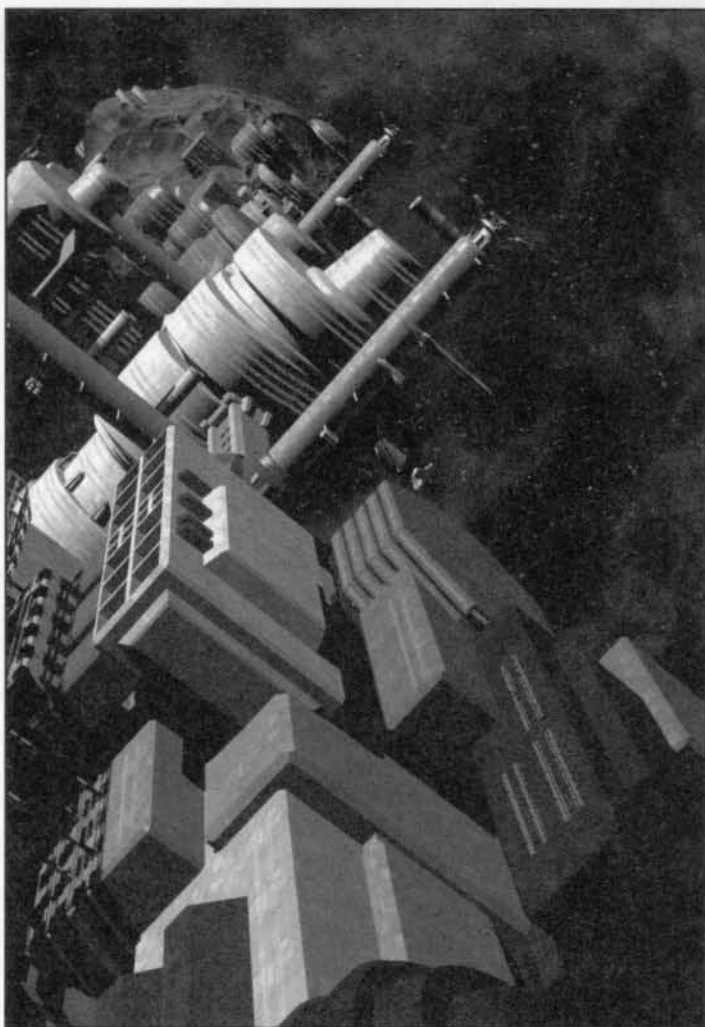
The GCA has its headquarters in Glisten City, and the duchess maintains a sizable residence here as well. The megacorporations active in the system, such as Ling Standard Products and Sternmetal Horizons, also maintain offices on Glisten. The asteroid likewise serves as the central hub of the traffic control network for which Glisten is so famous.

Glisten depends heavily on supplies and technical care from other asteroids. Moreover, it does not possess its own municipal government, being ruled by a ministry of the GCA. This makes Glisten somewhat akin to a special district or territory. Its inhabitants are not entirely pleased with this situation and have begun to agitate for a more direct form of local government. This agitation has been going on for several years now, without much success. The GCA has grown too accustomed to its governance of the asteroid to give it up, and there is no clear alternative plan. Nevertheless, it's unlikely that these political reformers will give up their plans, even if it takes years to realize them.

THE TRAFFIC CONTROL SYSTEM

Much is made of Glisten's traffic control system – and with good reason. The network has been in place for several hundred years and is continually being upgraded. It consists of numerous sensor drones placed both on asteroids and in open space. These sensors track the movements of asteroids, debris, cometary bodies, and vessels within their range. The information they collect is then relayed back to a central process on Glisten, which collates it and produces an accurate map of every moving object within the system. The sensors of vessels traveling through Glisten augment those placed by the GCA, as required by local law. Telescopes and communications devices add further data to the already impressive network.

Outsiders might believe the GCA is paranoid about traffic within the system. After all, keeping track of every moving object with triply redundant devices is certainly unusual in the Imperium. Nevertheless, the GCA does so. Why? The answer is simple: the GCA does not wish to repeat the errors of the past, when vessels frequently crashed into small undetected bodies or when rogue planetoids came dangerously close to heavily populated arcologies. The network is designed to ensure that the GCA knows well in advance of any potential trouble – before it's too late to deal with it.



THE BARACCAI TECHNUM

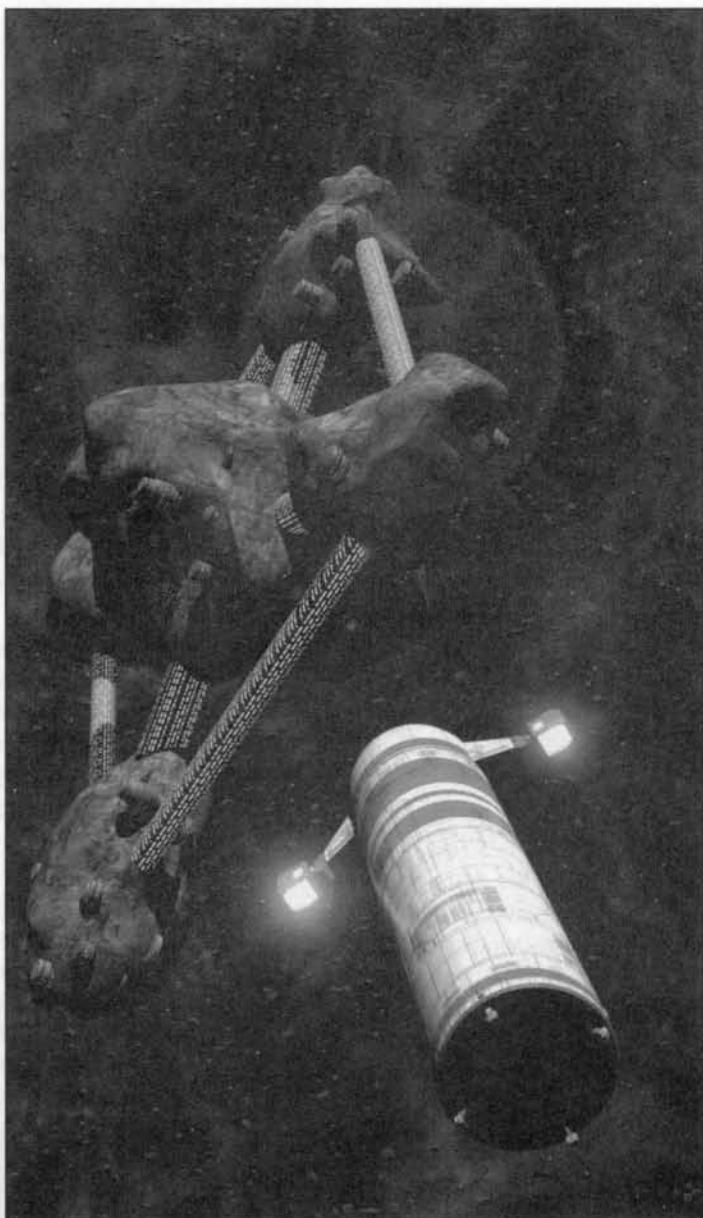
Although not a megacorporation, the Baraccai Technum (BT) is nevertheless an important part of the economy of Glisten. This Marches corporation is based at Trin in the nearby Trin's Veil subsector. Specializing in manufacturing, transport, and brokerage interests, BT is at the forefront of developing new markets, such as those in District 268 and beyond. Glisten is the headquarters of its Extra-Imperial Activity (EIA) division. The EIA devotes most of its resources to cultivating the worlds of the so-called Outrim Void, a portion of Trojan Reach uncontrolled by the Imperium.

The Baraccai Technum's EIA is a major employer in Glisten. It has a constant need for starship crews, as well as ex-military personnel interested in exploratory trade beyond the borders of the subsector. In this way, the EIA is responsible for the presence of many non-Glistenites in the system. It's also among the most vigorous seekers of business opportunities in the regions adjacent to Glisten subsector.

GLISTEN CITY

Without a doubt, Glisten City is the most significant settlement in the system. The city is home to almost a billion people, living in several connected arcologies that sprawl over all five asteroids of Glisten itself. These arcologies are not physically connected, of course, but there are regular free shuttles that transport workers, business people, and bureaucrats among them. Visitors to Glisten City are thus simultaneously impressed by its crowded nature and its orderliness. The city's local government (a ministry of the GCA) has made the maintenance of order a high priority – and it shows. The city is run with remarkable efficiency.

Nevertheless, there's no overlooking the fact that Glisten City is crowded. Its streets are choked with pedestrians at most hours of the "day" (the city has an artificial day/night cycle built into its environmental controls). Likewise, its underground tubecar system is well used. Visitors to the



city are advised not to wander too far afield without proper guidance, either in the form of a tour guide, an interactive holomap, or simple preparation. The arcology has multiple levels, both above and below the surfaces of all five asteroids. Moving between levels and navigating the various routes needed to get from one to the other (never mind *between* asteroids) is often tricky even for long-time residents of the city.

THE ZONES

Glisten City is divided into five distinct zones, each one largely restricted to a single asteroid (although there is some overlap). In addition, each zone is further subdivided into "Above" and "Below" levels, which sometimes have a very different character from one another.



Financial District

Sometimes called FinDist or Gliss Five, this portion of the city is devoted to Glisten's massive financial industry. It's home to the First Bank of Glisten and the Glisten Stock Exchange (GSX), both of which are vitally important not only to the system but to the entire subsector. GSX is one of the premier stock exchanges in the Domain of Deneb and is considered a key indicator of the region's economic health.



Government District

This district, called Gliss One by some, is home to the Glisten Coordinating Authority's offices and board. It's a vast, sprawling complex that includes the headquarters for almost every significant ministry in the GCA. It's also home to the Special Services Branch and the hub of the system's traffic control network. The district is relatively uninteresting to visitors, as it has little in the way of tourist attractions. Most monuments and other historical sites are found in the residential or commercial districts.



Residential District

This district covers one asteroid completely and partially "spills over" onto another one. This part of Glisten City houses the multitudes that call the asteroids home. It's probably the most crowded and congested place in the city. However, the GCA has gone to great pains to ensure that public transport runs smoothly and efficiently here. They've also improved the waste removal and security systems to the point where they operate almost flawlessly – much to the pleasure of the district's inhabitants. The Residential District can be a lively place during holidays and other festivities, when huge street parties blanket the area in confetti, holographic displays, and throngs of people.



Commercial District

ComDist houses Glisten's many thriving small businesses, as well as several larger ones (most large corporations have their offices in the Financial District). ComDist is also the location of Glisten's own spaceport, which guarantees that it sees a lot of travelers and merchants. It's a popular locale for tourists, who come to purchase the many locally manufactured goods as souvenirs of their visit to Glisten. There are a variety of historical monuments in this district, most of them dedicated to the memory of the founders of the original colonies.



Manufacturing District

This district is the smallest of the five in Glisten City and is the center for the city's light industries. Despite its small size, the plants and factories in this area employ a significant portion of Glistenites who do not work for either the bureaucracy or the financial sector. These plants produce a variety of goods, ranging from sturdy machine parts to unique textiles. These industries are fascinating to many tourists, because some of the plants operate under zero- or low-G conditions. They counteract the city's artificial gravity system in order to gain the benefits inherent in producing items under lesser gravities.

TRANSPORTATION

As noted elsewhere (see p. 10), Glisten City covers the surfaces and interiors of five different asteroids, all locked in a stable tetrahedron shape. Because the city isn't limited to a single asteroid, the local government has established a remarkable public transit system that connects all the asteroids on which the city rests. This system is an absolute necessity, since there is almost no private ownership of vehicles in Glisten City. This isn't because it's illegal, simply impractical. Attempting to use a ground car or air/raft in the city's crowded streets would be nearly impossible without accident – and Glistenites are always wary of accidents.

The transit system has two parts. The first is the tubecar system that exists beneath the surface of the asteroids. These cars are similar to lower-TL subway systems, except that they propel their cars by means of magnetic levitation at extremely high speeds. The use of artificial gravity and inertial compensators prevents the riders from being harmed by these high velocities. There are tubecar stations throughout the city; it typically takes less than a minute to transport someone to any locale on the same asteroid.

The tubecar system isn't practical for transport between the asteroids. A shuttle system fills that gap. These shuttles are very similar to the 100-ton interplanetary shuttles described on p. GT141, except that they are TL12 in construction and larger in size. Flights between asteroids are scheduled every five minutes. Glisten City possesses hundreds of these shuttles. From a distance, their travels back and forth envelop the asteroids of the city like a swarm of gnats. A common sight in Glisten City is a harried businessman consulting the shuttle schedule, waiting impatiently for the next flight.

OTHER NOTABLE ASTEROIDS

Although the inhabitants of the Glisten system are concentrated on the eponymous asteroid itself, there are many other inhabited asteroids within the system. Indeed, the system is unique in the Domain of Deneb – perhaps the Imperium – for its large number of distinct asteroid settlements. This is partially a function of Glisten's history, but also of the extreme stability and regular orbits of the system's asteroids. Many proved extremely rich in metals, ores and minerals, making them attractive spots for new settlements over the centuries.

The following sections describe only the most significant and populous asteroids; many asteroids in the system have very small mining or scientific stations – or are “unofficially” inhabited. It's possible to hide within the Glisten system without drawing too much attention to oneself, though the Imperial naval base would take a keen interest in reports of a wanted fugitive or pirate band in the system.

WAS-HIN

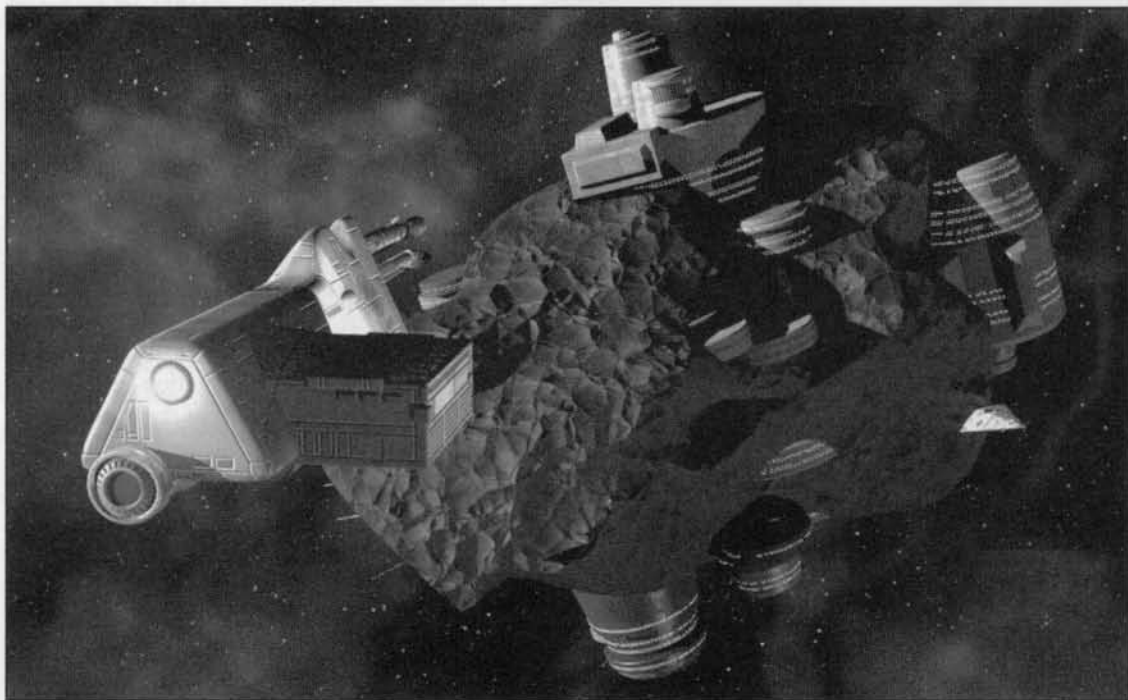
The asteroid of Was-hin is home to the system's Scout Service base. Located in the Glisten Belt, Was-hin is also home to the Glisten Institute of Planetological Studies (GLIPS). The presence of both these bodies has given Was-hin the reputation of being at the forefront of scientific affairs within the Glisten system. This reputation is well

deserved, as many of Was-hin's inhabitants are employed by either the IISS or GLIPS. Those that are not are probably involved in one of several businesses or industries that support them.

The IISS Base

The Scout base on Was-hin is small by comparison to others throughout the Spinward Marches and is primarily concerned with pure research. It makes a perfect compliment to GLIPS, where several retired and detached-duty Scouts serve as faculty members. The base, which is home to approximately 200 Scouts at any given time, possesses several laboratories and similar facilities. In addition, the Scouts maintain several meson telescopes, with which they scan the system for interesting phenomena.

In fact, the IISS base spends a good portion of its time scanning the Glisten system, cataloguing comets, asteroids, and other astronomical bodies. The Scouts have launched an unmanned observatory in an orbit steeply inclined to the plane of the ecliptic, to get a better view of the system in its entirety. This orbit is designed to pass near Was-hin twice a local year, so that the Scouts can refuel, repair, and upgrade the observatory, which has small maneuvering thrusters to make any necessary course corrections. The Scouts' interest is largely theoretical: developing a clearer picture of how asteroid systems develop. Naturally, the Scouts share any new information they find with both GLIPS and the GCA, each of which has different reasons for finding it valuable.



THE DECENNIAL IMPERIAL PLANETOLOGICAL FORUM

Every 10 years, GLIPS sponsors a gathering of the Imperium's finest minds in the field of planetology. These individuals – researchers, theorists, Scouts, and dilettantes – flock to Glisten for the affair. For several weeks, a series of lectures and symposia are offered; they highlight the current state of planetology throughout the Imperium, as well as bring prominent new theories to the forefront. The last Forum (held in 1110) was noteworthy for the uproar caused by Professor Gwilliam Werbylo of the Imperial University of Alpha Scorpii. Werbylo presented evidence of planets without molten cores in the Vargr Extents.

This academic bombshell caused a great stir at the time and has been challenged by numerous researchers, including Glisten's own Lucinda Hosko, an instructor at GLIPS. The upcoming forum in 1120 is likely to be a rematch of sorts between scientific sparring partners, as Werbylo's theories are both attacked and defended. While many of the forum's deliberations hold no interest to the general public, the presence of so many travelers is a great boon to Glisten's economy. In addition, it reinforces the system's reputation as a center of learning in the Domain of Deneb – something much appreciated by its inhabitants.



The base commander, Marius Justinussen, is an unusual individual, more scientist than explorer. He lacks the military bearing of many, more traditional Scouts, opting for a more laid-back demeanor. This makes him very approachable, as well as a regular guest at dinner parties and social gatherings throughout the system. Justinussen is proud of the work the IISS base is doing in Glisten, even if many of his superiors believe it to be a waste of resources better spent elsewhere. Interestingly, megacorporations like Sternmetal Horizons have been staunch supporters of the base's continued presence in the system. These corporations have used their influence to prevent its closure. Critics suspect Sternmetal and others have an ulterior motive for this unusual benevolence.

Glisten Institute of Planetological Studies

GLIPS is one of the leading educational institutions in the Domain of Deneb. Founded in 630, it trains its students in the broad discipline of planetology, which includes the study of biology, chemistry, farming, geology, and meteorology. In addition, GLIPS conducts studies on terraforming and the introduction of new or geneered lifeforms into new environments. The Institute also maintains close ties with the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service base in the system. The faculty is full of instructors with ties to the IISS and the Service regularly sends its junior officers to train at GLIPS. The Institute's student body is close to 1 million, with almost 50,000 faculty and researchers. This makes it one of the largest concentrations of people in the entire system outside of Glisten City itself.

The GLIPS facility includes more than 100 sample ecologies for study, each housed on its own artificial satellite orbiting Was-hin. GLIPS goes to great lengths to ensure the integrity of each ecology, using the latest technology to safeguard them. In some cases, they employ guards (both living and robotic) to prevent outside interference in their research. This has led to some speculation in the local media about the true nature of the experiments being conducted here. Dean Chouan Nath regularly dismisses such speculation as "reckless rumormongering." Nevertheless, these stories continue, as tall-tale tellers make the case for everything from micro-black hole research to genetically engineered soldiers. Of course, no evidence for anything untoward has ever been found.

PLUVIS GROUP

Naturally, the Pluvius Group is located in the Pluvius Belt. With its numerous shipyards, it forms the main shipbuilding center for the system. The Group consists of a half-dozen asteroids of varying sizes, all orbiting around one another. Unlike Glisten, whose tetrahedral shape is the result of a massive engineering project, the Pluvius Group is wholly natural in origin. Its inhabitants number approximately 500,000, almost all of them employed by one or another of the region's shipyards.

Shipbuilding is an ancient and honorable way of life among these Glistenites. In the Marches, the Pluvian engineer is almost a stereotypical figure: tall and spindly, with a wan complexion and perpetually stained jumpsuit. The character of Tadeusz Eszterhaus from the popular *Tales of the Beowulf* is a perfect example. For their part, the Pluvians take pride in their renown throughout the Domain of Deneb and beyond. Only the most dour of Pluvians, a rare fellow indeed, would take offense at this popular stereotype from holovideo.

Bilstein Yards

With only one facility in the entire Domain of Deneb, Bilstein Yards is a rarity: a small family-run business. Headed by the redoubtable Martin Bilstein, "the Yards" (as they are colloquially known) are renowned throughout the Marches as makers of high-quality custom designs. Although they specialize in starships, they also produce other large technological items, such as space stations and antigrav buildings. Bilstein Yards constructed the palace of the Thearch of Pavabid, perhaps one of its more famous (or infamous) contracts.

The Yards cannot compete with the likes of Ling Standard Products or any other megacorporation when it comes to speed, quantity, or price. However, the Bilstein family learned long ago that quality remains something for which some people are willing to pay great amounts of money. Bilstein Yards produces starships of the greatest quality. Moreover, each one is unique, built exactly to the specifications of the individual who ordered it. If the term "handcrafted" could be used to describe an object massing thousands of tons and possessing millions of individual parts, the starships of Bilstein Yards would be such objects. Connoisseurs and noblemen from throughout the Domain of Deneb turn to the Yards when they need a custom-built yacht or safari ship. Archduke Norris and Duke Alesksandr Lagaashiga of Deneb are among the Yards' more notable clients.

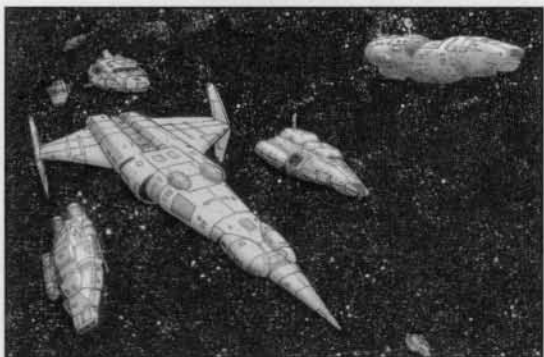
Ling Standard Products

At the other end of the spectrum from Bilstein Yards is the Ling Standard Products shipyard. In almost every way, the LSP Yards are the opposite of Bilstein. Where Bilstein concentrates on special orders, LSP deals primarily in standard designs. Rarely do LSP's engineers diverge from the standard data packages for starships. Whereas Bilstein produces but a small number of vessels per year, LSP produces thousands. Mass production is the watchword of the LSP Yards. The two shipyards are not really rivals, as they serve very different parts of the market.

THERAK AND EROM

The bulk of the system's mining and mineral processing are carried out on these two asteroids. Therak is so rich in resources that work goes on around the clock. Erom is also devoted to heavy industry. Together, these two asteroids possess a population of perhaps 400 million. Most of their inhabitants work in the vast processing plants that dot the asteroids' surfaces. Others work in related industries, such as smelting and transportation. In addition, these asteroids have a transient population of belters. These belters are independent contractors who sell their services to whichever firm can afford to hire them. Right now, most are employed by Sternmental Horizons.

Therak and Erom are among the more lawless asteroids in the system. The presence of so many belters attracts criminal elements that prey on the miners' vices. Thus, organized crime syndicates of various stripes have gotten a foothold on Therak and Erom. Beyond that, the rivalry between Sternmetal and Ling Standard Products occasionally boils over, sending competing groups of belters at each others' throats. Sternmetal maintains the upper hand in the field of mining and ore processing; LSP sticks largely to shipbuilding and related industries. Nevertheless, the richness of the Glisten system is such that LSP cannot entirely keep away from mining – leading to clashes between the two mighty megacorporations.



The Mining School of Glisten

The Mining School of Glisten (MSoG) is located on a small asteroid orbiting Therak. MSoG trains students in all aspects of mining, on planets and in space – from prospecting to legal issues to management of large operations. The faculty receives generous donations from various mining concerns and is a major recruiting center for the same corporations. Indeed, both Sternmetal and Ling Standard Products have endowed the MSoG over the years and continue to do so.

Unlike the more famous GLIPS, the Mining School doesn't attract nearly as many students and faculty from outside the subsector. Nevertheless, MSoG is recognized as one of the region's premier academies for mining and engineering. Corporations both large and small regularly hire its graduates and demand continues to increase. The opening of District 268 and the resource exploitation that inevitably followed has sparked a great demand for skilled miners. The Mining School provides them in ever-growing quantities, guaranteeing that its reputation will spread farther than it has in centuries.

MISTAR AND NAMDET

These two asteroids are devoted solely to heavy industry. Together, they possess a population of close to 500 million people. The asteroids' industries are mostly related to the production of items in zero-G or micro-gravity. This includes industrial crystals of various sorts, as well as unique alloys. These products have many applications in the shipbuilding business, creating a natural relationship between Mistar, Namdet, and the Pluvius Group. Likewise, both Bilstein Yards and LSP have an obvious stake in what goes on here. Over the years, LSP has developed a strong connection to several industrial plants on these asteroids, ensuring that it receives a regular supply of materials for its massive construction projects.

ALEA, WAREM, AND THACEN

These three asteroids are devoted to light industry. Alea and Thacen also contribute to the agricultural development of the system. Alea, Waren, and Thacen have a combined population of approximately 50 million. Their inhabitants are responsible for many small, but nevertheless vital, industries, such as the manufacture of computers and life support technology. In addition, these

asteroids set trends when it comes to fashion, as they produce the clothes and outerwear worn by most Glistenites. Recently, for example, vacc suits became much more colorful than they had been in the past, thanks to the efforts of Waremian designers. That fad has faded of late, although it's still possible to see "out of style" vacc suits with an unusual dash of color.

More interesting to an outsider is the fact that Alea and Thacen possess vast, domed farms all over their surfaces. These farms, developed with the help of GLIPS, are self-contained ecologies that require a minimum of intelligent oversight. Robotic and automated tenders maintain precise temperatures and other conditions. They also harvest the crops for shipment and distribution to the other settlements of Glisten. A few eccentric (and wealthy) individuals maintain their own private farms, growing unusual and valuable produce of various sorts.

Outsiders might expect that a megacorporation like Naasirka would have its fingers in the agricultural business here, but that's plainly not the case. The Glistenites are a self-reliant people, who take pride in providing for their own needs. While they have nothing against large corporations in themselves, the idea of depending on non-Glistenites for their sustenance fills them with dread. Thus, agriculture remains firmly in Glistenite hands, despite the best efforts of many interstellar corporations to gain a toehold here.

ENSU AND VEDFOR

Ensu and Vedfor are both agricultural asteroids, but Ensui is far more famous throughout the Marches for its "artists' colony." These asteroids are much like Alea, Waren, and Thacen, described above. Their total population is small, no more than 2 million most of the time. However, Ensui draws many visitors every year, because of the artists, sculptors, and writers who've taken up residence amid its many agricultural domes.

This famous artists' colony, better known as Rashid's Folly even by its supporters, is the legacy of Armand Rashid, an Imperial philanthropist who died over 400 years ago. Rashid, a native of Mora, made a fortune as a speculative trader. He used his newfound wealth to fund museums, hospitals, and schools throughout the Spinward Marches. At Ensui, he funded the creation of a place where artists of all sorts could work freely, unhampered by the need to "earn a living" or "conform to societal expectations."

Rashid set up a trust fund that would provide "salaries" for artists who settled in Glisten. He also set up a board to determine whether or not an individual qualified as a genuine artist interested only in producing artwork, unfettered by mundane concerns like gainful employment. Over time, this board became self-perpetuating and drew salaries of their own, using the same trust fund intended for the artists. The board also limited the number of artists allowed in the colony at any given time, setting a cap at 75. Appointment to the board is by invitation from the current board and happens only in the event of vacancy — usually the result of a death.

Despite its questionable origins and administration, the colony has produced some genuinely talented artists. Both the sculptor Rakhel ar-Mendeali and the musician Mustafa Mihovecic were one-time inhabitants of Rashid's Folly and are now recognized as treasures of the Domain of Deneb. Visitors to the colony can engage in discussions with the artists there, as well as see performances of the latest plays, music, and other diversions. Likewise, exhibits of art are another attraction that draws the curious from parsecs away.

GRO'UN

Gro'un is the location of the system's diplomatic complex. This sprawling arcology can hold over 20,000 sophonts — and frequently does. Given the importance of Glisten to trade and commerce in the rimward portion of the Spinward Marches, it attracts a sizable number of trade delegates from other worlds and states. Thus, Gro'un is the temporary home for representatives from places as far away as the Darrian Confederation, the Sword Worlds, and independent settlements in District 268.

Gro'un is one of the smaller asteroids in the Glisten Belt, but it is also extremely important. Within the asteroid's arcology, negotiations and deliberations of all sorts go on constantly: trading contracts, peace treaties, and many more. Representatives of the Imperium and other groups work here throughout the year. During times of unrest or war, negotiations can become intense. During the Fifth Frontier War, for example, delegates from the Imperium and the Zhodani attempted to hammer out numerous ceasefires and armistices before the end of the conflict. Gro'un takes great pride in its role in these negotiations. Indeed, Archduke Norris sponsored the creation of a diplomatic school here in recognition of their efforts.

THE DIPLOMATIC DELEGATIONS

Gro'un has several significant foreign delegations among its residents. The most interesting to an interstellar traveler are:

The Darrians: This group is led by Dame Ros Mabiladh and is well-disposed toward its hosts. The Darrians' primary interest is in Imperial expansion into District 268, which it worries could cause unrest if not managed properly.

Trexalon: This non-aligned world has sent a small delegation headed by Matthias Vendermeer. The Trexalonians resent the Imperium's growing influence in District 268 and seek assurances that it has no designs on Trexalon's sphere of influence. For the most part, Vendermeer is a tool of the Trexalon Technical Consortium, a local corporation given to exploiting its neighbors.

The Sword Worlds: Headed by Arnulf Hviti, this delegation is one of the largest on Gro'un. Hviti's interest is in the status of the Border Worlds Confederation carved out of the Sword Worlds after the conclusion of the Fifth Frontier War.

The Zhodani: This delegation is surprisingly small, but its voice is a loud one. Like the Darrians, the Zhodani are concerned over the expansion of the Imperium into new territories. Their ambassador, Qiarandlastas, is a soft-spoken man who understands the Imperium well. He speaks impeccable Anglic and does his best to appear reasonable, even when issuing veiled threats from the Consulate.



The presence of so many diplomats and negotiators makes Gro'un a haven for spies and other unsavory elements. The Imperial Navy commander has worked hard to ensure that the arcology has tight security, but this hasn't prevented various groups from trying to pry into others' secrets. Thus far, there have been relatively few significant incidences of espionage. This result is achieved only with constant vigilance; there is no guarantee this situation will prevail forever.

CHUN

Although small in size, Chun is one of the more well-known locales in the Glisten system, as it is the headquarters of the Glisten Tourism Board (GTB). GTB is the primary employer on Chun, meaning that close to three-quarters of this asteroid's 100,000 inhabitants work to promote tourism in the system. The GTB has established a vast visitors' center on Chun, with regular shuttle flights from Banfi Starport and other points of entry into the system. Their goal is to ensure that as many visitors to Glisten as possible pass through their center before moving on to their ultimate destination.

The GTB receives support both from the Glisten Coordination Authority and from the various asteroid colonies of the system. The visitor's center contains literature (in a wide variety of formats and languages) and exhibits designed to highlight what each asteroid has to offer. In addition, the GTB arranges tours and "expeditions" to the more interesting sites of the system. While somewhat antiseptic to the seasoned traveler, these tours do provide a valuable service: directing newcomers to all that Glisten has to offer.

QUORD

The large asteroid Quord is home to the system's Imperial Navy Base. The facility is known locally as "Kumarigiis Base" after its original commander, Admiral Makurik Kumarigiis, who served here prior to the Third Frontier War. The base sprawls across the entirety of Quord – and deep inside of it as well. Since the establishment of the 100th Imperial Fleet, the base has grown rapidly to accommodate the upswing in both traffic and personnel. It is now one of the most important naval bases in the subsector.

The current commander of the base is Admiral Sir Lucien Shiishuginsa, a distant relation to the founders of the megacorporation Zirunkariish. Unlike most of his family, Admiral Shiishuginsa has little interest in business affairs, preferring the more straightforward world of the Imperial military. This choice has earned him the disdain of his

relatives and the reputation for being a simple-minded believer in black-and-white morality. In point of fact, Sir Lucien possesses an acute mind and holds an advanced degree from the Imperial University of Alpha Cygni on Deneb. The charges of simple-mindedness stem from a misunderstanding of his devotion to *Guraari Immi*, an ancient Vilani philosophy resembling Terran Quietism or Zhodani *Chiepla* in its emphasis on the annihilation of the will.

Whatever his philosophical proclivities, Admiral Shiishuginsa is an effective commander who enjoys the loyalty of his underlings. It was his fine grasp of strategy and tactics that drove off the *ihatei* incursions in 1113. As a result, he is well regarded by most Glistenites. Sir Lucien holds a somewhat less than favorable opinion of the Aslan. His dislike for them is not founded in racism (his personal philosophy and honorable nature wouldn't allow it), but he has recommended the Archduke take a firmer stance against these landless warriors.

"SECRET" ASTEROIDS AND OTHER ODDITIES

Is it possible that there are forgotten or hidden colonies among Glisten's asteroids? That all depends on the interests of the GM and the kind of *Traveller* game he wants to run. In the standard version of Glisten, there are no secret colonies of psionic adepts or crazed cultists, but that's not to say there couldn't be in the GM's version of the system. However, the GM needs to explain how such groups could evade detection. After all, the GCA exists primarily to maintain a huge and sophisticated traffic control system – one that keeps track of asteroids as well as ships.

Any campaign that allows secret asteroids must either introduce a technological explanation for their secrecy, or collusion on the part of the GCA and other authorities. Again, this would be a very different version of Glisten than the one presented here, but there's nothing wrong with that. *Traveller* allows for many styles of play and, as long as everyone is having fun, there's no reason not to introduce a little paranoid conspiracy...



OTHER ASTEROIDS

Both the Glisten and Pluvius Belts contain far more asteroids than could ever be described without a lengthy survey. It's nearly impossible to give a full accounting of the diversity that exists within this system. However, a few guidelines and further examples should bridge the gap somewhat.

Nearly every asteroid colony is fully integrated into the overall society of Glisten. Each exists to serve a particular purpose in the great scheme of things. Thus, most colonies either produce something of value or provide a service. The latter category is especially broad, since it can include anything from artists to tour guides. The important point is that few colonies are isolated or detached from the overarching society of the system.

There are exceptions, such as contemplative religious communities like the Mahab Fellowship on Pholion. In general, though, even religious groups have found a way to integrate themselves into Glisten's society. For example, a branch of the Denebian To Will One Thing faith has set up on Sayegha and provides both counseling and technical services to their fellow Glistenites. This is the ideal that most inhabitants strive for — diversity within a cooperative unity. Consequently, few of the system's minor asteroids are home to reclusive or independent groups; most are just another facet of Glisten's unique culture.

OTHER ARCOLOGIES

Glisten City is in many ways typical of the cities found throughout the Glisten system. Most asteroids possess one or more enclosed arcologies that form the primary habitations of their citizens. These arcologies exist on and beneath the surface of the asteroids. Surface settlements tend to cover a great deal of the surface area, except in the case of mining colonies, where habitation is mostly beneath the surface. Some of the newest arcologies possess impressive domes made of transparisteel and similar materials. These allow the inhabitants to view the sky and the ships that pass by their colony.

All arcologies possess environmental conditions like that of optimal human-habitable worlds. Temperature, humidity, and other factors are designed to mimic life on a typical world of the Imperium. Artificial night/day cycles have also been instituted in keeping with the natural circadian rhythms of human beings. Of course, this isn't a universal feature. Some arcologies, like those on Therak, support around-the-clock industries.

These usually have purely arbitrary divisions between "day" and "night," based on the time of day, and one worker's "day" might be another's "night." Most arcologies, however, use more sophisticated methods, such as dimming the interior lighting, to delineate work and sleep periods.

All arcologies likewise use recirculated air. While perfectly suitable for breathing by humans and other sophonts, it has the unintended side effect of making Glistenites susceptible to a variety of diseases when offworld. In particular, they more easily fall prey to viruses that cause colds and flu, unless precautions are taken beforehand. Native Glistenites are simply unused to the "less than perfect" air that most humans breathe on a regular basis. Consequently, many take inoculations before traveling to other worlds, especially those with tainted atmospheres.

Finally, all arcologies employ artificial gravity. In some cases, the gravity is variable, changing according to the wishes of those in charge of it. For example, factories sometimes change the gravity in order to aid in their manufacturing processes. Likewise, many Glistenites enjoy low-G sports and dancing, which is made much easier through the use of variable gravity halls and arenas. The high-speed Denebian sport of Boloball is especially popular among Glistenites; most asteroid colonies have their own teams that compete in the Glisten Boloball League every year.

GOVERNMENT

Governance of the Glisten system is vested in the Glisten Coordinating Authority (GCA), a bureaucracy whose primary responsibility is the maintenance of the system's vast traffic control system. With so many ships operating in-system, the Authority's seemingly limited power is far greater than it might appear. Indeed, the GCA has complete control over legislation and law enforcement in the system.

The GCA is headquartered in Glisten City, but has several regional offices on other asteroids in both belts. The GCA headquarters, also known as the Davydov Complex, houses the bulk of the Authority's members and bureaucracy. Legislative powers are vested in the Coordinating Board, a 21-member council of civil servants. These members are not elected by Glistenites directly; the Board itself chooses them from among the civil service. Whenever a vacancy opens on the Board, the remaining members select a replacement by a simple vote. Board members serve for 10-year terms, although the Board may elect to extend a member's term with a two-thirds vote of the other members.

GLISTENITE MEDIA

Glisten regularly defies outside expectations by not living up to the reputations of many asteroid systems. Instead of being a lawless frontier, the system is urbane, sophisticated, and open-minded. Nevertheless, the Glistenite media scene often shocks the unwary, as it vacillates between the sublime and the lurid. The GCA does not regulate the media in any way except to establish acceptable channels and frequencies that do not interfere with the traffic control network and other essential communications. Consequently, the Glistenite media is regulated only in the realm of its physical transmission, not its actual content.

Glistenite journalists commonly use a variety of unorthodox tactics to get their stories. Because Glistenite law offers only limited protections against slander and libel, these journalists often have little compunction against printing nearly any accusations they can even vaguely support. Thus,

there is a thriving “yellow journalism” market in Glisten, fed by a populace that is deeply interested in the latest gossip. Of course, these same tactics have also protected crusading reporters from the machinations of corporations who’d rather their dirty laundry not be aired in public. Glisten is thus either a journalist’s dream or a reader’s nightmare, depending on one’s point of view.

Glistenite popular culture is suffused with an equally broad range of media outlets. Without government censorship, holovideo programs and other art forms can – and do – include all manner of lurid, lewd, and outlandish entertainments. Criticism of the government and corporations is commonplace. Indeed, Glistenite satire is a high art, freed from the concern that some humorless censor will take umbrage to what is being said. Visitors to Glisten are warned to be prepared for popular culture that is extremely open-minded.

Beneath the Coordinating Board is a vast bureaucracy that oversees a wide range of activities. Everything from the all-important traffic control network to building regulations to environmental oversight comes under the jurisdiction of the GCA. There are ministries that direct each of these areas, providing both legal parameters and personnel for their administration. However, the GCA does not interfere in all aspects of Glistenite existence. It allows total freedom of the media, of religion, and other areas of personal behavior. Consequently, Glisten is something of a free-for-all when it comes to some elements of its culture, while it is seemingly quite curtailed in others.

ECONOMICS

Glisten’s economy is extremely complex, based on a combination of natural-resource extraction, indigenous industries (most of which take advantage of zero-G and micro-gravity techniques), shipbuilding, and tourism. The stock market also plays an important role. Indeed, Glisten is an important center of trade and commerce in the Spinward Marches. Merchant vessels – mostly corporate in nature – regularly leave Banfi Starport for the worlds of District 268 and Trojan Reach sectors. Their activities not only enrich Glisten, but also spread the system’s political influence beyond its borders. In many ways, Glisten’s economic might is what sets it apart from the other systems of its home sector.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Glisten’s control rating is 4, meaning that the system is highly regulated. The GCA spends most of its time and effort drafting legislation that establishes uniform standards and rules for all the asteroid colonies. However, as noted above, the GCA limits its spheres of influence to a few areas: communications, traffic control, environment, building specification, weapons possession, and so forth. Outside these areas – and even within some of them – the GCA allows a great deal of freedom.

Simply looking at the control rating might give a traveler a false sense of the GCA’s control over the system. The area in which the GCA comes closest to being repressive is its focus on uniformity. The GCA demands that all asteroid colonies abide by the same building codes and environmental regulations, to ensure that all citizens are equally protected. Although the GCA allows almost total freedom in the running of colonies, it does not bend on the question of how these colonies maintain their arcologies and environmental controls. The same holds true for communications standards, which are intended to ensure no interference with the system-wide traffic control network.

Some travelers find the restrictions on weapons ownership onerous. The GCA claims to do this

for no ideological reason other than a concern for the integrity of the asteroid colonies. Weapons fire of various sorts has the potential to destroy environmental controls and breach protective walls. Any such damage could have catastrophic repercussions, something the GCA wishes to avoid at all costs.

Law Enforcement

The GCA is primarily a regulatory agency, but the sheer number of regulations it promulgates guarantees that it has an enforcement arm. That arm is the Special Services Branch (SSB). The SSB is small, with fewer than 10,000 employees, and its mandate is limited. However, within its purview – enforcing and investigating regulatory breaches – it has broad powers. The SSB generally acts only after complaints have been filed, relying on Glistenites to point out alleged wrongdoing. The SSB takes a proactive stance only in the suppression of pirates and other undesirables.

Because of the SSB's small numbers and limited scope, private security forces are common in Glisten. Both corporations and asteroid colonies employ their own agents to deal with specific problems that do not call for the intervention of the SSB. Likewise, Glistenites regularly rely on *zetetes*, a local slang term for private investigators, to look into matters that don't call for the involvement of SSB. These *zetetes* are a respected part of many communities, becoming local heroes and inspiring popular entertainment about them and their exploits.

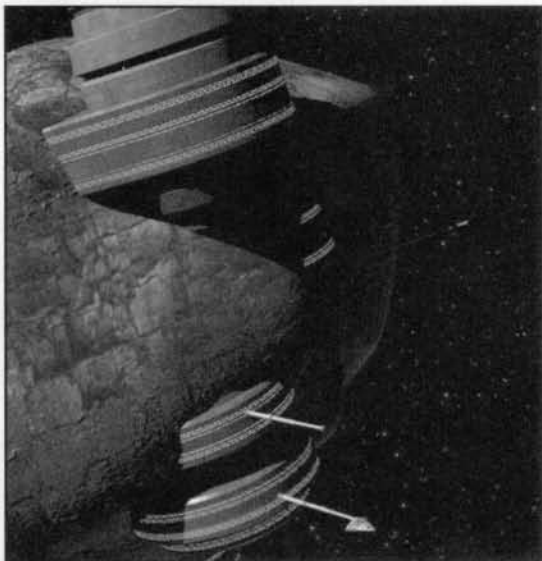
THE DUCHESS OF GLISTEN

In addition to the GCA, Glisten is also home of the Duchess of Glisten, Avaraja Muktheswara. Although the duchess has little to do with the governance of the system, Glistenites frequently seek her opinion. By tradition, she possesses an *ex officio* seat on the GCA Board. Nevertheless, she rarely attends its meetings, preferring to devote herself more fully to the administration of the subsector as a whole. Duchess Muktheswara is far more interested in external affairs than she is in the day-to-day events of the Glisten system.

In particular, the duchess is concerned with events in nearby District 268. She believes – quite rightly, many would argue – that the District needs better oversight, if it is ever to be fully integrated into the Imperium. As things stand now, the District is a jumble of competing interests, each one acting without any central organization or

structure. Clashes between colonists, corporations, and even criminal groups are commonplace.

Duchess Muktheswara believes this situation need not be the inevitable outcome of the opening of the region to Imperial exploitation. She believes District 268 represents a remarkable opportunity for the Imperium. Thus, she frequently petitions Archduke Norris to send more Imperial representatives – ambassadors, delegates, and military personnel – into the subsector as a way of fending off the chaos. To date, the Archduke has proven reluctant to do so, citing greater concerns elsewhere, as well as the traditional *laissez-faire* attitude the Imperium has always held.



Undeterred, Duchess Muktheswara has used her influence to draw attention to District 268's current situation. She has highlighted "opportunities" for inhabitants of Glisten subsector in the District. Of course, her intention is to encourage the emigration of "respectable people" to the District, in hopes that they'll bring order to its worlds. Nowhere has this encouragement been as strong as in the Glisten system itself, which conducts a great deal of trade with District 268. Glistenites seem to be listening to the duchess, because the rate of emigration is increasing.

Duchess Muktheswara's stance has made her somewhat unpopular with the inhabitants of District 268, both Imperial and independent. They resent her interference in their affairs almost as much as the "slurs" she's made against their reputations. This resentment hasn't boiled over into violence or other hostilities, but that could well change in the future. The duchess is a formidable woman and is unlikely to temper her views – possibly with disastrous results.

THE SUBSECTOR GOVERNMENT

Glisten is the capital of the subsector that bears its name. Consequently, the system contains much of the bureaucracy that administers the subsector in the name of the emperor. This bureaucracy is scattered throughout the Glisten system. The bulk of it is divided between Banfi Starport (because of its extraterritorial status) and on Glisten itself in the arcology of Ishee, which shares an asteroid with Government District. However, other asteroids also possess elements of the bureaucracy, as previous dukes have seen value in “spreading the wealth,” as it were. The presence of a subsector administrative office on an asteroid is a sign of Imperial favor greatly desired by most colonies.

The bureaucracy is immense and employs literally millions of Glistenites. These bureaucrats oversee innumerable aspects of subsector governance. Of late, the most important has been the Ministry of Colonization, which has been at the forefront of developing District 268. The Ministry of State has likewise experienced growth, as contact with the District and the worlds of the Outrim Void increases. Glisten continues to grow in importance with each passing year – a situation that is unlikely to change in the near future.

POPULATION

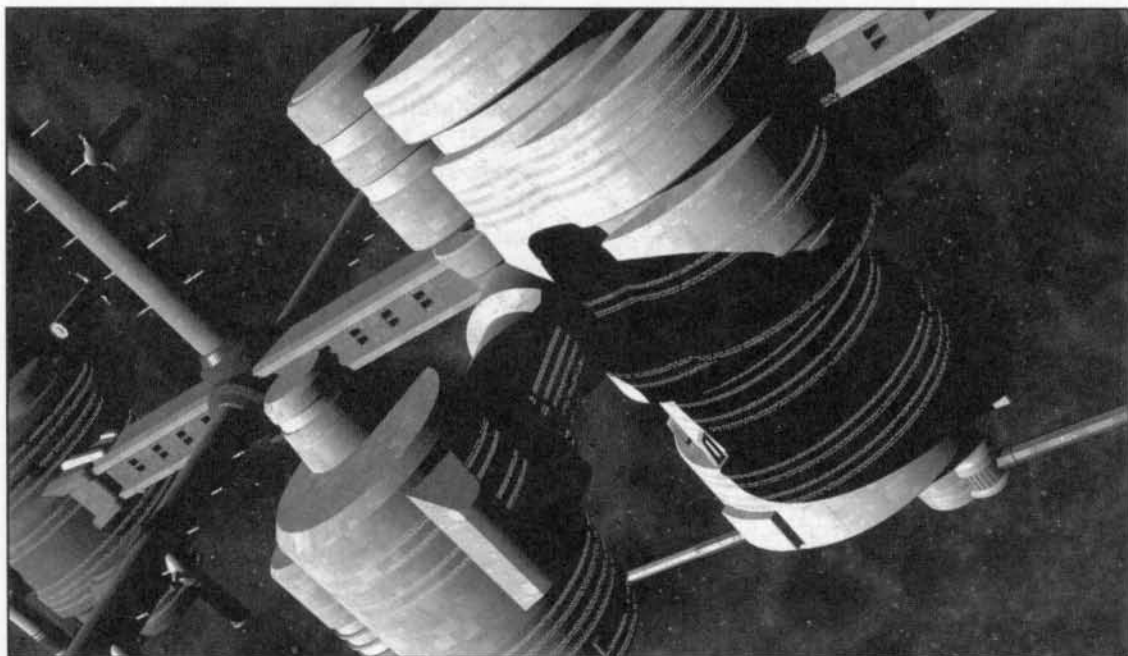
The Glisten system has a huge population, numbering over 8 billion; the system is one of the most populous in the Domain of Deneb. When one adds to this the visitors, travelers, military personnel, and

other transients, the number increases even further. It's not hard to see why Glisten is an economic and political powerhouse. What's truly surprising is that it doesn't have even more clout! However, Glistenites are largely content with their place in the Imperium, happy to continue doing what they've been doing for centuries.

FAMILY LIFE

There's no such thing as a “typical” Glistenite family. The inhabitants of this system are very open-minded, allowing all manner of social groupings. Among the various asteroid colonies, visitors are likely to encounter a wide variety of family units, some of them quite different from the Imperial norm. Some of these units are holdovers from the days when the population was small, contained, and of limited genetic variability. Others are the results of freewheeling social experiments. Yet others are the result of centuries of mixing and matching differing cultures.

By far, the most prevalent – and unusual – element of Glistenite family life is the “term marriage.” These marital unions are entered into, like a legal contract, for a set number of years, during which time they enjoy full status under GCA law. However, they end after a set term (typically five to 10 years), after which they may be renewed or terminated without penalty. This odd practice arose in the early days of corporate control and has retained a place in the system since then. Traditional marriage (as well as odder couplings) can still be found in Glisten, but the term marriage is one of the few familial practices considered “typically Glistenite.”



Extrastellar Relations

Glisten enjoys remarkable power both within its subsector and in the Spinward Marches as a whole. Knowledge of the system's relations with outsiders is vital to understanding its place in the Imperium. At the same time, it's important to bear in mind that most Glistenites do not consider their system to be significant . . . or at least that's what they say to outsiders. Many might even believe this line, a throwback to the days when Glisten was a corporate fief whose primary value was in its natural resources. Thus, visitors will be struck by a paradox: Glistenites seem both worldly and isolationist, cosmopolitan and insular at the same time. Coming to grips with that paradox is one of the keys to understanding this system's relations with the rest of the Imperium.

TRADE

Glisten is the hub of a network of trade routes to other worlds of its subsector and beyond. Many trade links exist between Glisten and Trin's Veil subsectors, and the volume of trade with nearby District 268 is growing with each year. The opening of District 268 for exploitation in 964 was as much a boon to Glisten's economy as the discovery of lanthanum deposits centuries before.

Indeed, District 268 is very likely to become an important trading partner with Glisten in the centuries to come. Already, many worlds in that subsector have established commercial ties with the Glisten system. These ties transcend political considerations; Imperial and independent worlds are equally interested in Glisten's goods and services. A noteworthy example of this is the religious dictatorship of Pavabid (Spinward Marches 1238), whose Thearch hired Bilstein Yards to build an antigrav palace in 874.

GLISTEN'S POLITICS

Glisten is a staunchly Imperial system, proud of its membership in what most of its inhabitants believe to be the greatest empire in the history of Charted Space. Consequently, Glisten's politics

seem simplistic to outsiders, who expect a more "sophisticated" approach to worldly matters. Yet, most Glistenites are deeply aware of the debt they owe the Imperium, specifically the nobility and the Imperial Navy. Without the efforts of these groups, Glisten would not be the system it is today. The entire system is an enduring testament to the pioneering spirit the Imperium has fostered in the Spinward Marches, as evidenced by the continued popularity of holidays like Arbellatra Day.

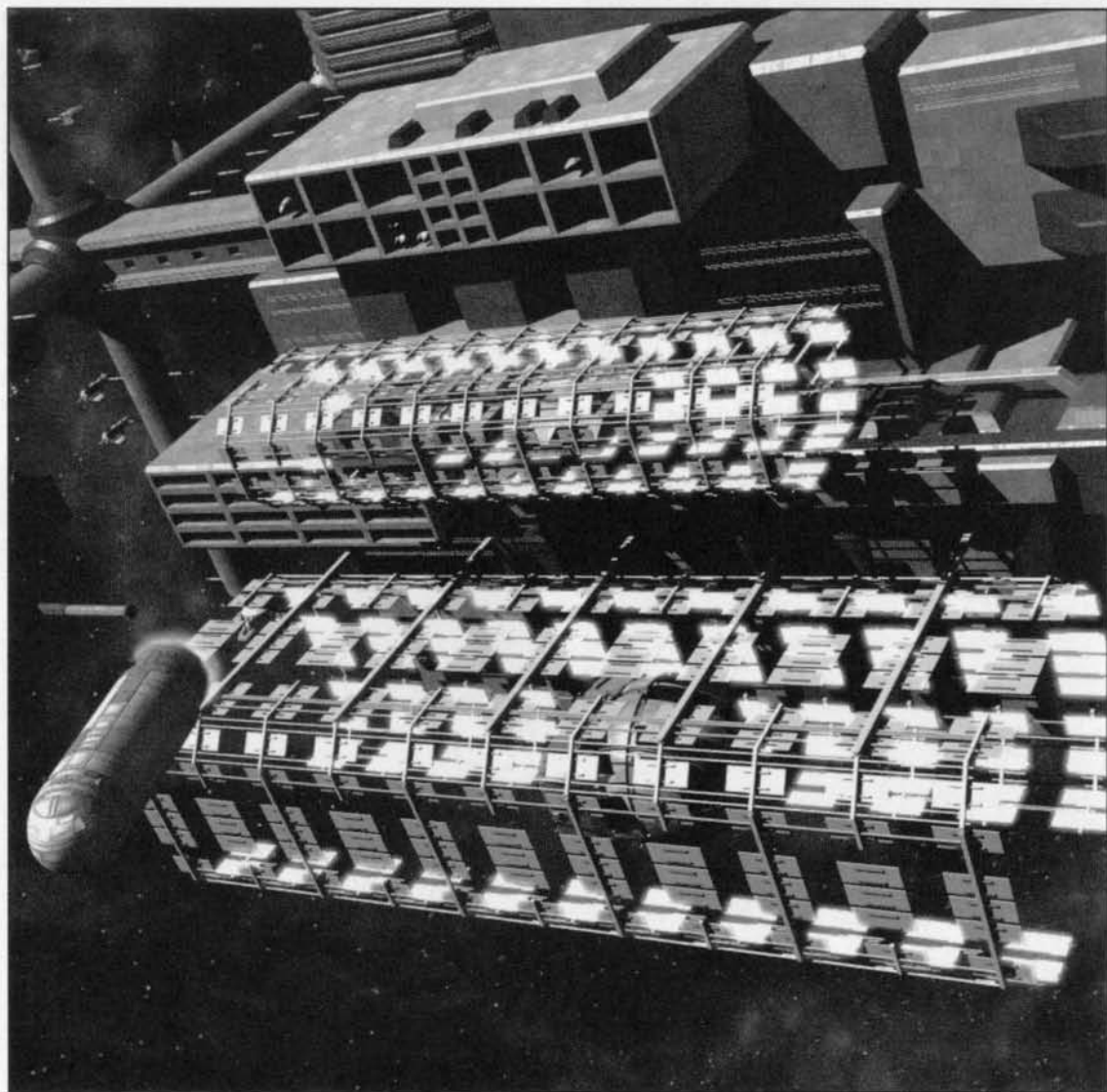


In a similar vein, Glisten is a strong supporter of Archduke Norris. This support goes back to the days of the Fifth Frontier War, when Glisten's role as a producer of military vessels became ever more important. Although Glistenites gladly did everything they could to keep pace with the Imperial Navy's demand for starships to fight the Zhodani, mismanagement in the early part of the war made the situation quite desperate at times. Once then-Duke Norris took over the reins of command, the pressure on Glisten lessened, allowing its yards the time to produce the high-quality vessels for which they are renowned. Norris' intervention saved not only the Marches, but also Glisten's reputation. Glistenites have never forgotten that, which is why they are especially pleased that Norris has been elevated to the position of Archduke of the Domain of Deneb.

In return, the Imperium has shown continued recognition of Glisten's strategic importance. The Imperial 100th Fleet, which defends the entire

subsector, is based at Glisten. The fleet was established in 1108, during the Fifth Frontier War, and contains a mix of new and reactivated vessels. To date, the fleet has not been tested in battle, and there is some concern that the presence of so many refurbished vessels may hamper its effectiveness should it ever see combat.

Locally, there is little interest in the traditional politics that dominate many star systems. Most Glistenites care more for affairs on the asteroids on which they live than for any system-wide matters. This isn't to say they're apathetic about the ultimate disposition of Glisten. Rather, they're content to leave such matters to the GCA. Because the Coordinating Board is an efficient bureaucracy that gives so much latitude to individual asteroid colonies, there's little reason to take up an interest in broader political machinations. Even so, there is a small movement dissatisfied with the GCA's undemocratic structure, but it remains a fringe element that draws little support overall.



Characters

Glisten is an unusual star system in that it cannot support life without extensive technological assistance. Moreover, life remains extremely precarious. Even with the technological wonders Imperial colonists have introduced, a mistake could result in thousands of deaths. Consequently, Glistenite characters grow up with different skills and attitudes than their counterparts on other worlds of the Imperium.

TEMPLATES

No new templates are required for Glistenite characters. Characters from Glisten generally are normal Humans, generated using the templates found in *GURPS Traveller*, pp. GT82-98. The Belter, Bureaucrat, Engineer, and Journalist/Reporter careers are especially common, while Bounty Hunters and Corsairs are nonexistent. The Law Enforcer template can be used for members of the Special Services Branch of the GCA. *Zetetes* possess no typical profile, having a wide variety of skills and backgrounds. Many of these private investigators are similar to Rogues and Undercover Agents.

I'M FROM GLISTEN

A PC or NPC may have Glisten as his place of birth. Whether he is embracing his background or rebelling against it, the planetary culture will have left its marks on his skills and personality. He will be stronger in some areas, weaker in others, but these traits will be present in most people raised on Glisten:

● He'll be extremely precise in his use of any type of technology – a reminder that Glisten's native environment does not reward mistakes.

● He will be extremely comfortable with computers and will consider any person who does not have a similar affinity to be backward.

● Likewise, he will know his way around a vacc suit. Most Glistenites learn how to wear and operate one of these suits from a very young age.

● He will be very resource-conscious, not wasting water or food. Interestingly, this personality quirk is just that; most asteroid cities are long beyond the need for such paranoia about resources. Nevertheless, old habits die hard, and these were handed down from the earliest generations of Glistenites.

● He's been raised in an atmosphere of respect for both the Imperium and Archduke Norris, both of which he considers to be the epitome of honor and responsibility.

● He'll believe in the absolute necessity for governmental intervention in certain matters; he has no patience for anarchists or libertarians, considering them both naive and dangerous. He also recognizes the need for laissez-faire policies in some areas, but is shocked by the suggestion that central coordination is somehow evil or prone to corruption.

● He will have a remarkably nuanced opinion of megacorporations, seeing them as necessary evils given the size and scope of the Imperium. However, he will readily point out numerous flaws and misdeeds in the actions of megacorporations, as a result of witnessing their strong-arm tactics in his home system.



● He probably finds breathing air on nonasteroid worlds to be a bizarre experience, both invigorating and disappointing at the same time. He may comment upon how “real” air smells and tastes different (possibly better, possibly worse) than the recirculated air he’s used to on one of Glisten’s many asteroid cities.

● A Glistenite is more susceptible to airborne viruses and bacteria. Having grown up in a more sterile environment than most other Imperial citizens, his immune system is unaccustomed to “less than perfect” atmospheric conditions.

● He will be uncomfortable around high-powered weaponry, especially slug-throwers of any sort. He probably doesn’t know how to operate such weapons, and almost certainly fears the possibility that they’ll damage any artificial environment in which they’re used.

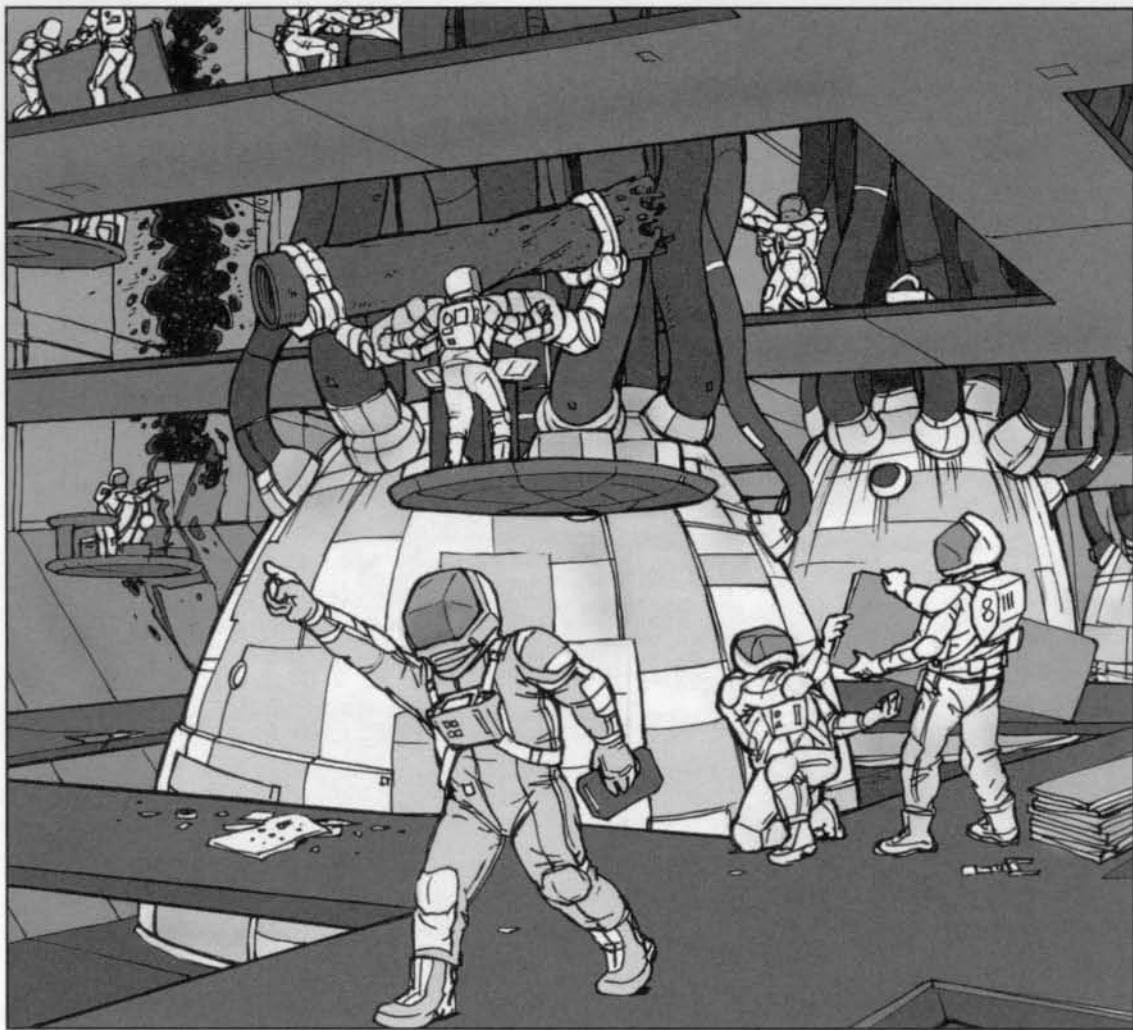
● He is certainly open-minded when it comes to popular entertainment, believing that it’s important to be exposed to new ideas and forms. He’ll also support a very liberal definition of freedom of the press, one that may seem libelous to outsiders unfamiliar with Glisten’s ways.

AND WHY DID YOU LEAVE?

Glisten has a huge population. It’s certainly not uncommon for Glistenites to leave their home system simply because they’d like to get away from its crowded arcologies. They may find the possibility of living on less heavily populated worlds a novelty they can’t pass up.

Glistenites also love new situations and experiences. Although Glisten encourages this trait in them, it’s still possible to want experiences that even Glisten can’t provide. Given that the system is at the hub of a huge trade route, many Glistenites leave to find out what the wider Imperium has to offer.

Another possibility is that a Glistenite might want to see if the tales told about the Imperium are true. After all, it’s one thing to revere the Imperium and hold to its traditions, but it’s another to actually experience it firsthand. Glistenites are naturally a bit skeptical. Leaving Glisten may be a way to confirm the respect for the Imperium they’ve grown up with all their lives.



Adventures on Glisten

Glisten offers many possibilities as a site for *Traveller* adventures. Because its nature is unique – even in the Imperium – the system provides players and GMs alike with a wide variety of unusual locales and situations. Any one of these, on its own or in combination with others, could easily form the basis for many exciting scenarios.

TOURISTS

Tourism is an important part of the economy of Glisten. The system attracts thousands of visitors every year; the player characters could easily be among them. The following adventure seed is designed with this fact in mind.

ARBELLATRA DAY

The characters have come to Glisten to experience Arbellatra Day at its point of origin. This is an opportunity for the GM to show both the diversity of Glisten's many colonies and the depth of its feeling for the Imperium. It's also a chance to stage trouble, either from anti-Imperial terrorists or rabblerousing Glistenites unhappy with the GCA government.

CORPORATE EMPLOYEES

Glisten is home to several major corporations, all of which employ a wide variety of individuals. The player characters could be among them, thereby providing another opportunity to experience Glisten.

SABOTAGE!

Someone has launched a series of attacks against Sternmetal Horizons mining facilities throughout the system. Sternmetal believes the sabotage is the work of anti-corporate Glistenites, but there's also evidence suggesting it might be an attack by corporate rivals. The characters are hired to investigate this sabotage and report back to their employers on their findings. In the process

of doing so, they uncover a web of strange relationships that exposes neither unionists nor corporate enemies but rifts within the Sternmetal management, as one faction attempts to damage the other's reputation for their own benefit. This seed could easily be expanded to become a full-fledged campaign.

SPECIAL DELIVERY

The characters are hired to deliver a special Bilstein-built yacht to a reclusive Imperial noble in a nearby star system. He hasn't been seen in public for years and has a reputation for extreme eccentricity. The trip to his private estate is uneventful in itself, but his interest in keeping the characters there is another matter entirely. Is he merely lonely or does he have more sinister motives in mind?

BODYGUARDS

Wealthy visitors to the Glisten system are likely to want a security team familiar with local conditions, but this does not mean they will not use outsiders. Local VIPs or magnates might want outsiders for various reasons, not the least of which is that outsiders are more likely to remain loyal, having no local interests or prejudices.

"I LOVE THE NIGHT LIFE . . ."

The group is hired by a noble or wealthy parent to look after his son while the young man entertains himself in the Glisten system. The patron's instructions are to allow the boy some room and see that he has a good time, but make sure that he doesn't get arrested or married, lose any body parts, end up with too many tattoos, or otherwise become permanently damaged. The patron's son, of course, is an indolent hedonist who spends his entire time trying to lose his "babysitters" so he can experience the "real" Glisten. There are two basic approaches a GM can take here: serious and slapstick.

Serious: Life in the seamy underbelly of the Glisten system presents many dangers for a well-off, naive youth, and the group probably has its hands full just keeping him alive and whole as he visits nightclubs, low dives, private estates, floating gambling dens, traveling house parties, dealers of assorted recreational substances, and various people who want to separate him from as much of his ample travel allowance as possible.

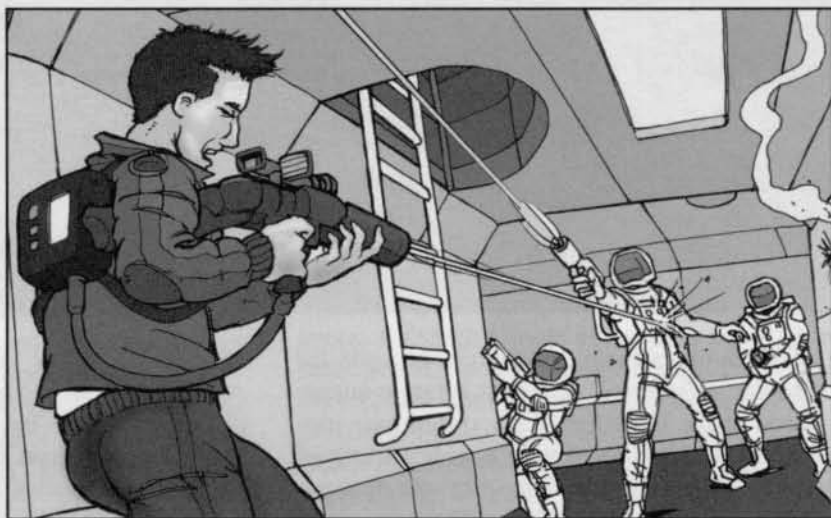
Slapstick: As comic relief in an otherwise serious campaign, the group loses their charge almost immediately, and the remainder of the adventure consists of desperately trying to catch up with him. Possible complications include the youth's running afoul of a criminal cartel, becoming infatuated with a local, accidentally offending a small but militantly violent religious group, and stumbling onto a massive anti-Imperial terrorist conspiracy.

COURIER

In this case, the group is hired not to guard a person, but a shipment of luxury foodstuffs headed for one of the more remote arcologies. A ton or so of rare wines, liqueurs, exotic fruits and vegetables, and seasonings and spices could be resold for a fortune in several places both in-system and outside. A party with their own spacecraft has a distinct advantage in this situation, but the GM should arrange things so that the group has to transfer the cargo at least twice, in order to complicate the situation and allow for possible diversions, hijackings, etc. Added complications can include a time element (the food spoils after a certain amount of time) or special handling (everything has to stay frozen/under pressure/alive until ready to cook/serve).

ADVENTURES IN BABYSITTING

This is a comic relief scenario, something of a combination of *The Bad Seed* and *The Ransom of Red Chief*. The group is hired to accompany a terminally cute child from one of the remote arcologies to Banfi Starport, and wait there for the arrival of the passenger liner that will take the child to boarding school, the other parent, or Aunt



Martha. The “kid” is mind-numbingly adorable, precocious, and totally without fear. The GM may opt to add slight sociopathic tendencies, or an attraction to certain chemistry experiments (like stink bombs and low-level explosive mixtures), simmer for several days in a crowded starport hotel complex, and decant the makings of a real nightmare that cannot be properly resolved with combat skills (although these may come in handy along the way). The patron will not pay if the party simply drugs the child into unconsciousness for 10 days – tempting though it may be!

ESPIONAGE AND DIPLOMACY

Glisten is a major system of the Spinward Marches, home not only to Bilstein Yards but also to a Scout and Naval base. In the past few years, it's also turned away an *ihatei* invasion, making it the focus of ongoing negotiations between the Imperium and the Aslan. The presence of embassies from several non-Imperial worlds also holds prospects for adventure. Consequently, it's a great locale for scenarios that use intrigue as their central conflict.

LAND, LOTS OF LAND

The Aslan don't take no for an answer – even when they hear it from the Imperial Navy. Some of the *ihatei* driven off in 1113 still have an interest in settling in Glisten. They point out that the system is full of asteroids; why can't they settle there?

The characters can become involved in this adventure from one of two angles. They could work as agents of the Aslan, seeking permission from the Glisten Coordinating Authority for a new settlement. Alternately, they could be agents

of the GCA who must help to smooth over differences between Glistenites opposed to allowing Aslan immigrants into the system and the Aslan themselves. This adventure seed could easily form the basis for a lengthy campaign that immerses the player characters in Aslan society and culture.

PRIVATE EYES

The characters set themselves up as *zetetes* or work as agents for one, which can lead to a number of interesting scenarios. Their success as *zetetes* will depend very strongly on how well-acquainted they are with the system.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

The PCs are hired by one of the parties in a squabble between two families of local beltlers, each of whom claims they have mining rights for a particular asteroid. Investigating the matter further reveals that neither family has title to the asteroid at all – instead, the deed belongs to an old Glistenite family that disappeared from the system centuries ago. Before the rights can be transferred, the investigators have to determine whether the family has any living descendants in the Glisten system. Following up on this line of inquiry, the group is sidetracked by agents of a powerful local corporation. The corporation illegally mined the asteroid years ago, and the directors are anxious that this not come to light. If they're exposed, the executives and their families could face prosecution, fines, prison and public humiliation. If the group perseveres, they are physically threatened, then subjected to a succession of increasingly violent attacks.

MISSING RELATIVE

The group is retained by a wealthy patron searching for a long-lost relative who is known (or strongly suspected) to be in the Glisten system. The investigators need a few details (physical description, DNA sequences, last known location, and so on) and a place to begin their inquiries.

There are many possible plot complications here: Was the disappearance voluntary? Was it for political, economic, or romantic reasons? Is the relative involved in a criminal operation? Is he working with a terrorist group (knowingly or unknowingly)? Does the missing person really want to be found, and will he return willingly or attempt to elude the group? If the person was lost as a young child, does he remember anything of his previous life? Will he insist that the group also bring along the spouse, child, or pet he has acquired?

KIDNAP

The group is hired to rescue a kidnap victim without involving the local authorities, because the family either doesn't trust the police or wants to keep the situation from becoming public knowledge. The group needs to deliver a ransom payment and make sure the victim is recovered unharmed – without attracting the attention of the authorities. Are the kidnappers terrorists trying to raise money to fund their actions? Is the "victim" not really a victim at all, but a confederate in a scheme to defraud his family of a fortune? What happens if the authorities discover the crime?

UNDERCOVER

The group is hired by a corporation to investigate charges of corruption in the security staff at a mining facility. Ordinary corporate security cannot be used, because the company doesn't know how high the corruption extends. The group needs to pose as Beltlers, and must have appropriate skills if they are not to arouse suspicion. They have to perform their jobs, investigate the security forces, avoid discovery by the malefactors, and report their findings to their patron. How high up does the corruption extend, and to what extremes will the perpetrators go to conceal it? Is their patron lying, using them as pawns in some complex scheme of his own? Can they trust anyone in the company at all?

SCIENCE!

Both the IISS and GLIPS are major sponsors of scientific investigation in the Glisten system. Although they have their own agents to undertake many of these endeavors, sometimes they have need for outsiders, making them perfect patrons for adventures.

THE FORUM

The Decennial Imperial Planetological Forum is a major event for Glisten, bringing scientists from all over the Imperium. The debate over Gwilliam Webylo's unusual theories has sparked a lot of interest. The characters might become involved in this debate by researching information, pro or con. For a conspiratorial twist, agents of Werbylo or his enemies might wish to eliminate evidence that runs counter to their own position – even if it means using violence to do so. In the heated world of academics, it's always possible for rivalries to veer out of control, making for a different type of *Traveller* adventure.

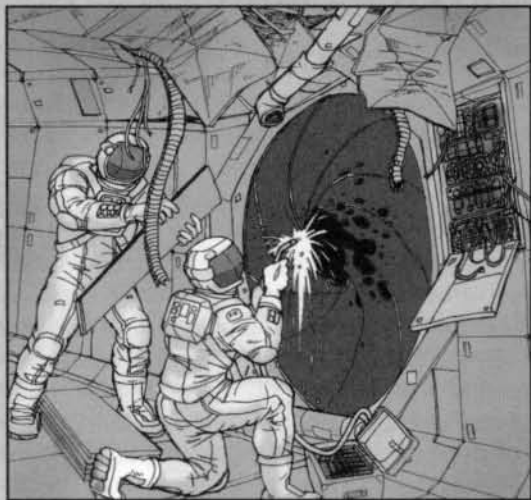
VARIATIONS ON THE THEME

The Glisten presented in this Planetary Survey is the “standard version” to which future *GURPS Traveller* products will refer. However, it is not the only possible interpretation of this high-population asteroid system. Described below are three such alternate interpretations, which a GM can use in whole or in part to suit his own wishes and the needs of the campaign.

CORPORATE GLISTEN

This version of Glisten diverged around 400. In the canon history, Duke Amini Murikshaa of Mora encouraged the unification of the system’s unions and employees in the face of corporate hegemony. In Corporate Glisten’s history, Duke Murikshaa’s motivations differed greatly. Coming from a Denebian noble family of great antiquity, he fondly remembered the days when the sector was a great corporate playground. In his opinion, the megacorporations helped Deneb to grow and become an integral part of the Third Imperium. He hoped that the Marches might follow the same path, but feared that the independent mindset of its colonists was an active impediment to such a dream. He saw Glisten’s Corporate Wars as the perfect opportunity to test his theory.

Duke Murikshaa brokered a peace between the corporations by threatening military intervention. Through his agent, Alexei Gro’un, the duke argued that Glisten was a large and unruly system, whose vast potential could never be tapped with the corporations constantly at one another’s throats. By working together and delineating spheres of influence, they could break the backs of the unions and reap the benefits of Glisten’s riches.



Not surprisingly, the corporations greeted this plan with approval. Instead of accommodating the unions, the four major corporations of the system – as well as others that entered the region later – sponsored alternate “labor associations” to look after the needs of their employees. Over time, these associations gained enough credibility to weaken the old unions and enable the corporations to call the tune in Glisten. By 600, the corporations were firmly in control; the GCA was a weak central agency designed to coordinate activities among the major corporations of the system.

The current day in Corporate Glisten is more rigid; the entire system is structured to the needs of corporations large and small. Even asteroid colonies like Ensu exist solely to create holovideo programs and other entertainment for corporate purposes. New unions, based on the distant memories of their forebears, struggle vainly in the hope of reclaiming the “lost flame” of previous generations. Corporate Glisten is a less diverse, more acquisitive system – the perfect base for merchants, and a home for rebels against company rule.

CONSPIRATORIAL GLISTEN

On the surface, this version of Glisten is identical to the system in the mainstream *Traveller* universe. What differs are the background details, hidden from everyday view – in particular, the nature of the asteroids in the system.

The GCA’s traffic control system keeps careful track of all of the asteroids. Even though not every one is utilized or inhabited, the GCA knows about them all. It’s unlikely there are any hidden colonies or Ancient sites among the floating rocks – unless the GCA doesn’t want people to discover them.

Conspiratorial Glisten assumes the GCA’s traffic control system is a ruse designed to hide the presence of asteroids whose nature is somehow out of the ordinary. They could hold anything: secret military bases, psionic colonies, or working Ancient artifacts. The exact nature of the conspiracy is up to the GM, as are the reasons for the GCA’s involvement. The presence of a naval and a Scout base, not to mention GLIPS, should provide plenty of fodder for the GM looking to add a little paranoia to his *Traveller* game.

Adventures in this alternate Glisten involve the characters accidentally becoming involved in the conspiracy, as they stumble upon an incongruous detail that leads them in search of the truth, as the agents of the conspiracy attempt to prevent them from discovering more information – even if it means killing them. Conspiratorial Glisten requires a fair bit of thought and explanation by the GM, but it could be a nice change of pace for many campaigns.

ROUGH-AND-TUMBLE GLISTEN

This version of Glisten diverges right after the Corporate Wars. In it, Duke Murikshaa's plan backfired, resulting in the total ouster of all corporations from the system. The unions and rabble-rousers turned on one another in a longer, bloodier conflict . . . one that continues to the present day.

The GCA does not exist – or, if it does, it's an extremely weak advisory panel staffed by

representatives from the many factions that inhabit the Glisten system. Its deliberations are fractious and prone to impotence.

In this setting, individual asteroids take on a more significant role. Each one sets its own policies, laws, and regulations. Traveling from one to another might be hazardous, especially if the asteroids in question are members of competing factions.

Rough-and-Tumble Glisten provides lots of opportunities for mercenaries and spies. The GM can determine how many factions exist within the system, as well as their relationships to one another. For the most part, the system is a free-for-all, without either large corporations or strong unions to lead the vast populace. The Navy and Scout bases maintain an Imperial presence in the system and protect the residence of the Duchess, who is determined (against the wishes of her advisors) to bring order to this chaotic environment.

Index

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Alea, 16. | Glisten Coordinating Authority (GCA), 3, 7, 9-10, 12-13, 18-20, 22, 24-25, 27-31. | Population, 22. |
| Arbellatra Day, 6, 23, 27. | Glisten Institute of Planetological Studies (GLIPS), 7-9, 13-14, 16, 29-30. | Quord, 18. |
| Banfi Starport, 3, 9, 18, 20, 22, 28. | Glisten Tourism Board, 18. | Rashid's Folly, 16-17. |
| Baraccai Technum (BT), 11. | Gro'un, 17-18. | Rough-and-Tumble Glisten, 31. |
| Bilstein Yards, 3, 9, 15-16, 23, 28. | Gro'un, Alexei, 5, 30. | "Secret" asteroids, 18. |
| Chun, 18. | <i>Ihatei</i> , 3, 8, 18, 28. | Shuttles, 12. |
| Conspiratorial Glisten, 30-31. | IISS, 4, 8, 13-14, 29. | Special Services Branch, 12, 21, 25. |
| Control rating, 3, 20. | Kumarigiis Base, 18. | Sternmetal Horizons, 5-7, 10, 14-16, 27. |
| Corporate Glisten, 30. | Liisharara Dii, 4-5. | Templates, 25. |
| Corporate Wars, 4-5, 30-31. | Ling Standard Products (LSP), 5-7, 10, 15-16. | Thacen, 16. |
| Decennial Imperial Planetological Forum, 14, 29. | Media, 20. | Therak, 15-16. |
| Diplomacy, 17, 28. | Mining School of Glisten, 16. | Tourism, 27. |
| Diseases, 19, 26. | Mistar, 16. | Traffic control system, 10, 12, 18, 30. |
| District 268, 8, 17, 20-21, 23. | Muktheswara, Avaraja, <i>see</i> Duchess of Glisten. | Tubecars, 12. |
| Duchess of Glisten, 3, 9, 21, 31. | Murikshaa, Amini, <i>see</i> Duke of Mora. | Vedfor, 16. |
| Duke of Mora, 4-5, 30-31. | Namdets, 16. | Warems, 16. |
| Ensu, 16, 30. | Nasmi, 3. | Was-hin, 13-14. |
| Erom, 15. | Pluvius Group, 15-16. | Zetetes, 21, 25, 29. |
| Espionage, 28. | | |
| Family life, 22. | | |
| Gliss, 3. | | |
| Gliss Ten Coordinating Corporation, 5-7. | | |
| Glisten City, 10-12, 19. | | |



WORLDS WITHIN JUMP-6 OF GLISTEN

CORRIDOR SECTOR

HEX	NAME	STARPORT	GRAVITY		HYDROGRAPHIC %			POPULATION*	CR	WTN			NOTES
		DIAMETER	ATMOSPHERE		CLIMATE		GOV TYPE	TL					
GLISTEN SUBSECTOR													
1733	Lydia	I	963	0.6	Trace	None	Cold	9,300	Dictator	0	6	2.0	
1736	Melior	II	1,000	0.75	Thin (T)	None	Normal	62,000	Subj.	0	7	2.5	Amber Zone
1737	Egypt	IV	10,149	1.1	Corrosive	64%	V. Cold	92,000	Subj.	2	7	3.0	Naval Base
1739	Aster	III	8,017	0.9	Std.	100%	Cold	7,400	Corporate	0	9	3.0	
1836	Callia	I	1,175	0.75	Thin	None	Normal	900 Mill.	Techno	1	6	2.5	
1932	Mithras	III	8,328	1.15	Corrosive	52%	Normal	900,000	RepDem	4	6	3.0	
1934	Weiss	IV	5,780	0.69	Std	21%	Normal	9,000	Corporate	3	9	3.0	Amber Zone
1935	Windsor	III	7,396	1.2	Dense	31%	Hot	60	Corporate	6	9	2.0	
1937	Overnale	IV	4,139	0.8	Thin	39%	Trop.	4.05 Mill.	Multiple	6	9	4.0	
1938	New Rome	IV	7,995	0.6	V. Thin	70%	Cold	700 Mill.	Subj.	5	9	5.0	Naval Base
1939	Craw	III	5,140	0.8	Std. (T)	30%	Normal	9.1 Mill.	RepDem	2	5	3.0	
2035	Aki	IV	4,009	0.85	Thin (T)	34%	Chilly	2.27 Bill.	Bureau	5	9	5.5	Amber Zone
2038	Trane	III	5,996	0.72	V. Thin	90%	Normal	70,000	AthDem	1	10	3.0	
2132	Centry	I	1,989	0.78	V. Thin (T)	20%	Cool	20,000	RepDem	5	6	2.5	
2134	Caledonia	III	5,115	0.81	Thin (T)	8%	Normal	9 Mill.	Oligarch	2	6	3.5	
2137	Sorel	I	4,040	1.1	Dense	49%	Normal	9 Mill.	Bureau	5	5	2.5	
2138	Horosho	III	3,008	0.69	V. Thin	72%	Normal	900 Mill.	Dictator	2	9	4.5	Sc. & Nav. Bases
2140	Romar	IV	3,992	0.76	Thin	None	Chilly	12,000	Techno	4	8	3.0	Sc. & Nav. Bases
2231	Marastan	II	2,846	0.98	Dense	60%	Cold	92 Mill.	Multiple	1	6	3.5	
2232	Crout	I	4,071	0.6	V. Thin	46%	Warm	3.05 Bill.	Oligarchy	5	7	3.5	
2233	Tirem	III	7,334	0.85	Corrosive	54%	Cold	6.7 Mill.	Multiple	2	9	5.0	
2234	Inthe	III	802	0.54	None	None	Frozen	92,000	Bureau	5	9	3.0	
2236	Tsarina	I	999	0.36	V. Thin (T)	None	Cool	3.5 Mill.	Oligarchy	4	6	3.0	
2237	Wurzburg	III	6,830	0.72	V. Thin (T)	50%	Tropical	5,000	Anarchy	0	8	2.5	Am. Zone, Sc.Base
2234	Ffudn	V	4,001	0.84	Trace	43%	Normal	950 Mill.	Bureau	5	8	5.0	
2336	Bendor	V	7,582	0.86	Thin	58%	Normal	8 Mill.	Techno	3	6	4.0	Sc. & Nav. Bases

TRIN'S VEIL SUBSECTOR

2534	Burtson	III	4,102 0.98	Std	23	Normal	5 Mill. Subj.	0 9 3.5	
2536	Squanine	V	3,040 0.76	None	None	Frozen	800,000 Techno	0 9 4.0	
2537	Dobham	V	3,872 0.78	Thin	None	Normal	9,000 Techno	4 9 3.5	Scout Base
2538	Pyramus	I	5,457 0.85	Std	59%	Normal	8,000 Oligarchy	2 5 1.5	
2539	Tisbe	I	3,915 0.72	V. Thin	1%	Cold	900,000 Dictator	6 6 2.5	
2540	Aramis	IV	5,991 0.83	Thin	92%	Hot	10 Mill. Multiple	6 10 4.5	

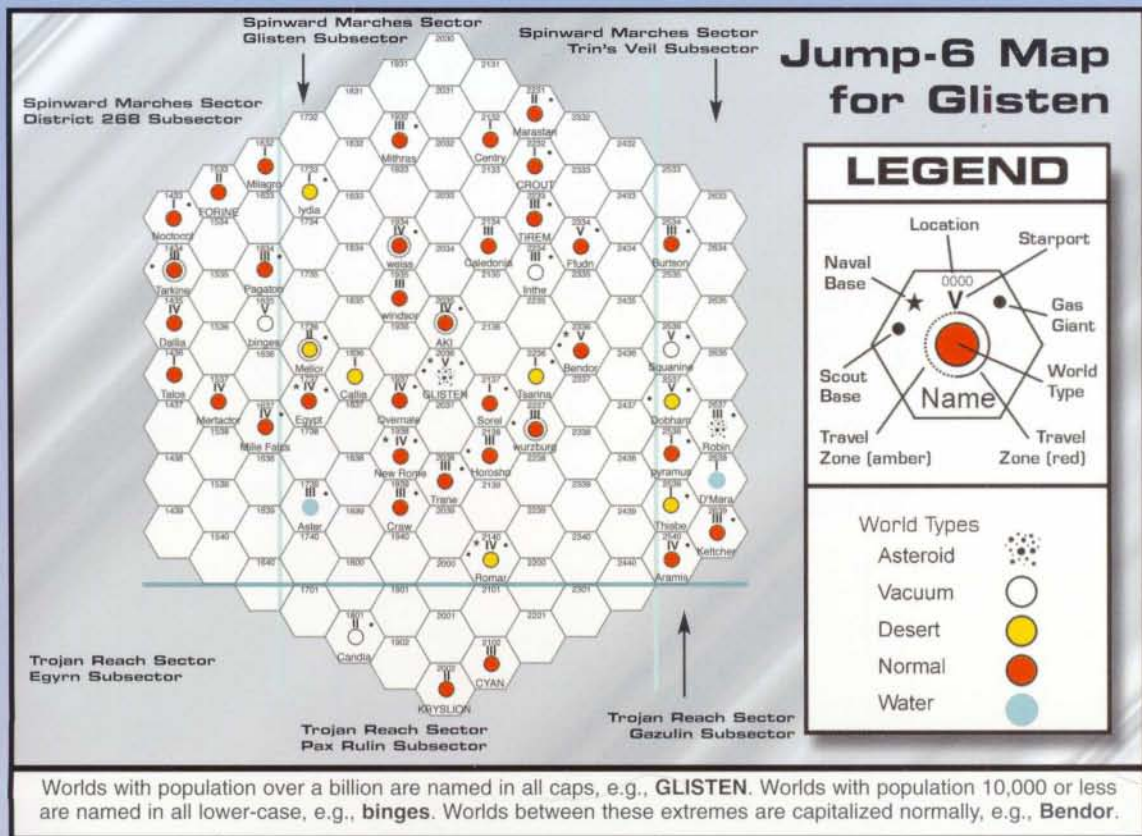
DISTRICT 268 SUBSECTOR

1433	Noctocol	I	690 0.92	V. Dense	52%	Hot	61 mill. AthDem	3 6 3.0	
1434	Tarkine	III	3,853 0.57	Std	60%	Normal	3 mill. Bureau	2 7 3.5	Am. Zone, Sc. Base
1435	Dallia	IV	7,462 0.79	Corrosive	49%	Normal	620 mill. Bureau	1 9 5.0	
1436	Talos	I	2,890 0.63	V. Thin	32%	V. Cold	800,000 Oligarchy	2 9 3.0	
1533	Forine	II	2,635 0.26	Trace	22%	V. Cold	1.6 bill. Dictator	5 9 4.5	
1537	Mertactor	IV	1,927 0.94	Std	19%	Warm	60 Mill. Oligarchy	1 9 4.5	
1632	Milagro	I	1,927 0.24	Trace	6%	V. Cold	90 mill. Bureau	6 7 3.0	
1634	Pagaton	III	7,396 0.97	Std	93%	Normal	938 bill. Multiple	1 5 3.0	
1635	Binges	V	7,955 0.81	None	None	V. Cold	700 Oligarchy	1 9 3.0	
1637	Mille Falcs	IV	8,577 0.83	Exotic	21%	Normal	30,000 Military	6 10 3.5	

TROJAN REACH SECTOR

HEX	STARPORT	GRAVITY	HYDROGRAPHIC %	POPULATION*	CR	WTN	NOTES				
NAME	DIAMETER	ATMOSPHERE	CLIMATE	GOV TYPE	TL						
PAX RULIN SUBSECTOR											
1801	Candia	II	4,188 0.64	None	None	Frozen	7.47 Mill	Dictator	6	5	3.0
2002	Kryslion	II	4,645 1.21	Dense	34%	Normal	58.4 Bill.	Dictator	6	9	4.5
2102	Cyan	III	4,741 0.98	Std	82%	Normal	5.3 Bill.	Dictator	6	9	4.5

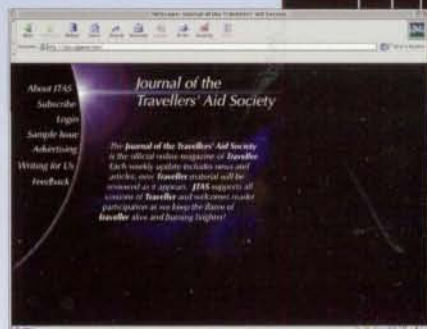
*Starport personnel not included.



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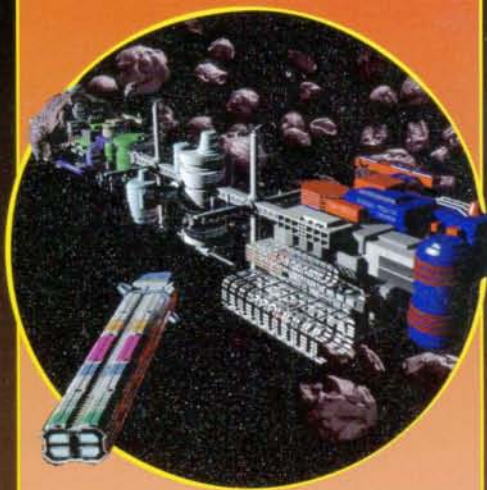


JEWEL OF THE MARCHES

The "Jewel of Deep Space," the Glisten system has no habitable world, yet it is the capital of the Glisten subsector, site of a Scout base and a major shipbuilding yard, and home of the Mining School of Glisten. Its rich asteroid belts combine an advanced technology with an almost inexhaustible supply of raw materials. Glisten is a major industrial and economic powerhouse in the Spinward Marches.

In addition, nearly every planetoid in the Glisten system has its own local culture and society. The diversity of the hundreds of worldlets makes Glisten a wonderfully rich backdrop for almost any type of adventure.

This book concentrates on the five asteroids which make up "Glisten City," the government and business center of the system. Trade, business, scientific investigations, and high-level politics rub shoulders with gritty asteroid miners, huge factory complexes, shipyards, and interstellar intrigue.



The *GURPS Basic Set*, *GURPS Traveller*, and *GURPS Space* are required for full use of this book in a *GURPS* campaign. The background presented here will be of great value to any *Traveller* campaign, and will also serve as a source of inspiration for other SF games.

THE SURVEYORS:

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JAMES MALISZEWSKI

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