Hello, it is Zathras here. Zathas has great gift for everyone. He has found a great many starships. Before you see gift, Zathras must tell you how he found it. So you can remember Zathras, and thank Zathras for all of the starships you have, and maybe after win battle you give praise to Zathras for fun he gave you.

Other day, Draal tell Zathras to find Fwiffo. Draal thinks he can send Fwiffo home. So Zathras go to find Fwiffo, to tell him great news, but Fwiffo runs away from Zathras. Zathras cannot understand why, but Zathras thinks it is because Zathras like to poke Fwiffo with stick for fun. So Zathras corner Fwiffo, he does, in dark corner of Great Machine. Fwiffo has no escape from Zathras, but then he realise that all boxes between him and Fwiffo have great old information in them. Soon Zathras is reading records about people like Aravaln, Barada, and Thrakallan and data for many new ships for Earth and League. Zathras thinks that Draal wanted him to not find these boxes, but Zathras smarter than Draal. But while Zathras look at boxes, Fwiffo run past him out door. Now Zathras, he must go look for Fwiffo again before Draal find out what Zathras not do.

ZATHRAS, 
CARETAKER
Relics of the Past

Excavating the Ruins of Babylon 5 Wars

In this month’s issue we are taking a fond look back at some of the ships and concept that have passed before our eyes in the seven years since Babylon 5 Wars was first published. In the early days of First Edition, when only the core ships were released and units like the Thunderbolt and the Nova were not yet available, players worked feverishly to fill in the gaps and create new ships to use.

The original homebrews were born out of the need for variety, as players quickly found themselves all too familiar with the existing units. But as more ships came into being, this drive towards expanding the universe did not relent. New ships, new civilisations, new stories – all of these found their home in the Babylon 5 Wars system.

Many of the first designs of yesteryear are fondly remembered by those players who have been around long enough to have seen them. The designers and in some cases the web pages upon which their work was hosted, may now be gone, but their work and their creativeness lives on. In some cases, the works of fans has directly influenced the substance of the game, such as the early Earth and Dilgar designs by Richard Bax which aided in the development of the Dilgar War product. Or the development of the concept of gunboats, an idea which in turn led to the introduction of the Light Combat Vessel. While others have helped to influence future players with their own creations, such as Robert ‘Wraith’ Hahn’s early Drakh designs. But in many more cases, their achievements have been almost forgotten either on some faded memory of a web page or in the dusty archives of someone’s computer.

This issue of The Great Machine will attempt to dispel the cobwebs of time, and reintroduce the community to several works of various authors whose content has been out of the limelight for far too long. In some cases, the staff at The Great Machine have worked to revitalise old material by updating it to newer file formats and current rules for the system. In other cases, we present material which has until now existed only in scribbles upon paper and in the dark recesses of some designer’s mind. Only now have these ideas and these ships been given form and shared with the rest of the community. It is our sincere hope, that even though you may not enjoy all of the designs here, that they are beneficial or even inspirational to the community. And that in consequence, more ideas and work is accomplished to enrich the game we all love.

You may notice that for some of these articles, the full extent of the information pertaining to these ideas may not be presented. It is our intention to make Relics of the Past a regular addition to the Great Machine, and that in future more information about the races presented herein and those ideas which have yet to be revisited, will become available for one and all to enjoy. Thus allowing us to reminisce about days gone by, while working to forward the game system in each player’s own unique way.

* * *

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Origins of a New Race

Sometime in the last quarter of 1999 Rob Seldon, a fairly prominent member of the B5Wars community, approached me via email to create some SCSes for a new race he was developing. I agreed, and he began sending me data as to specifications of his ships and also directed me towards pictures which I would use for the silhouettes of the vessels. Over a year or so, I produced a total of ten SCSes for him. He asked me to keep them secret, as he eventually planned to submit them to AoG for publication. But as everyone knows, it came to be that AoG would not be publishing anymore, and Rob Seldon eventually drifted away from the community for reasons unknown. Here, on my hard drive, have these SCSes sat for some three or four years. With this issue of the Great Machine geared towards relics of the past, I thought I would dust off these ships and give them a proper PDF treatment for your enjoyment. Recent attempts to contact him have failed miserably, so I hope that Rob will not mind if I share his creations with the community at large.

I present to you a brief look at the history and society of the Modrani, along with four of their most common designs. I should note that none of what I have written below has anything in common with Rob’s original vision. Simply put, I only saw the SCSes of the Modrani and as such only know the SCSes. The history and the characteristics of this new race were never revealed to me, only the game mechanics. What little I know is that the Modrani were approaching Minbari tech level and were originally inspired by the Eldar of BFG and W40K. So what I have done is tried to create a proxy history for the Modrani, which may be very well be overruled should Rob ever return to the community and release the true history himself. The SCSes as they are seen here are true to their originals, I have made no changes save for some names of the weapons and new icons to replace the original proxies.

The Modrani of Muran II

The Modrani are a fairly advanced race whose domain lies anti-spinward of the Hyach Gerontocracy and Ipsha Baronies. Their government is essentially a democracy ruled by a small elected body, with an Empress as head of state. While the Empress or Emperor holds absolute power over the government, this power is seldom used. The position is largely outdated and has only remained for the sake of tradition. As their title suggests, the Modrani hold tradition and ancestry very dearly. The Modrani are very aware of their roots, history and the past accomplishments of people within both their society and lineage. In a fashion more akin to oral cultures, a prominent Modrani is addressed in reference to their parentage rather than their family name. To be the son or daughter of a distinguished parent can often grant the child special privileges such as preference to military academy or opportunities into whichever trade the parent(s) may have.

A Look Back at Rob Seldon’s Lost Project

By Paul Brown

The Modrani presented herein, I have five more ships and one more fighter to update to PDF. Along with that I have an email listing various units Rob had hoped to one day have me make as well. While they have no data associated with them, I will try my best to fill in the blanks. Most or all of these units should be released in a later Great Machine. I hope everyone will look over these designs and possibly try them out, as they seem to have a nice flavour to them which should not be overlooked.
have been distinguished in. While this offers an individual the chance to prove one’s self, it does not provide them with a ‘free ride’; each person must still prove their worth and ability. The son of an Admiral for instance may be given preference for officer school, but should they prove a poor tactician they will not earn a commission. To a degree this prevents the induction of individuals into positions for which they are ill suited based solely upon their family name, such as the trend found within the Centauri Republic Royal Navy. But what it does allow for is the exploitation of hereditary or environmental trends which may pass down the ability to exceed in a given profession.

The Modrani were kept to the confines of their own system at the time of the previous Shadow War, having only developed limited space flight. The means to travel into hyperspace were not readily available within Muran as it was in other systems. For a time the Modrani advanced their technology through the colonisation of Muran’s other planets and internal conflict. In 1423 the Hyach Gerontocracy stumbled into their space and began a dialogue with the Modrani. Among the exchange of both ideas and technology was the means for the Modrani to build their own jump drives. The trade agreement and relationship between the two peoples did not last long as the Hyach soon began their retreat into isolation. This left the Modrani free to expand into their adjacent systems, where they were eventually met by other powers.

Though most of their neighbours were relatively peaceful, a rival power to the Modrani quickly drew them into armed conflict. After a brief period of intense warfare, the heated conflict degraded into a cold war. Relations between the two have never improved, and periodic raids and skirmishes have taken place ever since. While the Modrani were strengthening their border, their attention turned to other neighbours. The Hyach who had originally helped them now became the focus of new aggression. As a people, the Modrani are forever celebrating the former glory of their ancestors and trying to better their accomplishments. The Hyach then, who had become more isolationistic, appeared as an affront to these values. Through their abandonment of previous systems they had thrown away that which their ancestors had strove to gain. The Modrani began a series of raids into Hyach space, out of both principle or to prove their worth in battle, and more importantly in an effort to gain new technologies. Though initial attacks were met with high casualty rates, they eventually were partially successful. The Modrani were after a time able to reverse engineered some of the technologies for their own use.

In the years since, the Modrani have focused on bettering their society and their technology. After having gained a technological edge on their main rivals, they were better able to fend off their attacks. In the interim they have also developed new technologies, with particular focus on tachyon weaponry and defensive systems. The Modrani have also continued their sporadic intrusions into neighbouring territory. Attacks against convoys, or unwarranted entries into Hyach space are relatively frequent. While not typically a part of a long-term military plan, Modrani captains seek to prove their worth in battle against either the Hyach or some of their other neighbours. The military brass allows and authorises these attacks to continually better their military strategy. Oddly enough such attacks have not led to any escalation in hostilities. The Hyach for their part simply did not respond to these attacks initially because of their move towards isolation. In the years since, the military has come to see the value of these intrusions. On several occasions the Gerontocracy was moving to drastically scale back the naval fleet, only to have another Modrani incursion raise fears and dispel those plans. The conflict is now kept relatively secret outside of military circles, and the Hyach have no plans to respond with greater force. This may in part be due to the shift in the nature of Modrani tactics. Initially these intrusions were instituted with the basis of affirming their own societal beliefs. Since then, they have evolved into something bordering on tradition. A strike against the Hyach or another neighbour is almost seen as a right of passage. And more oddly than that, a mutual understanding and
code of conduct has been born between both the Hyach and Modrani captains. And while not all follow it, many of the veterans who patrol the border between their peoples engage in battles whose nature borders on war games. While casualties are certainly taken on both sides, it is seldom that ships are destroyed in battle. Instead a ship will bow out, or ‘surrender’ and each side will return to their territories. Several of the opposing captains have become quite familiar with one another. They view each other as old friends and take joy in out-manoeuvring the other in games of cat and mouse.

Despite the Modrani desire to exceed, both throughout society and within the military, this same ideology has stopped them from entering major conflict. They learned early that war not only invigorates a people, but it destroys as well. And the Modrani are more concerned with not loosing record or evidence of past accomplishments, than surpassing these records themselves. Thus conflict, while certainly frequent, has only once led to open warfare. But through the end of the 2250s it became apparent that times were changing. Neighbours were being turned against one another, and the Modrani may very likely move once again into full warfare. More than likely it will be a war fought with one of their anti-spinward neighbours and a war which will not be won quickly or easily.

Modrani Weaponry

The Modrani employ a variety of Tachyon weapons which they have developed independently. These include such examples as Tachyon Streamers, Pulsers and Torpedoes. Tachyon weapons follow all normal rules, they are only distinguished for the sake of clarity and for such devices as adaptive armour. The Modrani also employ some weaponry gleaned from the Hyach such as the Medium Blast Laser which is a derivative of the more powerful version.

Tachyon Shielding

The Modrani’s greatest accomplishment has come in the form of their defensive shielding. The technology was born out of the needs of Modrani fleet doctrine. The Modrani prefer highly manoeuvrable ships with fast firing weaponry. But in order to gain this agility they’ve made sacrifices in other areas such as armour and structure. In order to alleviate this problem with the minimal amount of weight increase, the Modrani have developed a new type of defence called Tachyon Shielding. Tachyon shielding is a very effective form of defensive shield in comparison to EM and Gravitic Shielding, however due to unstable nature of the technology and its tremendous power requirements it is impossible to provide constant coverage, even in times of battle. Thus while the shield is more effective against individual fire, its unstable nature also allows holes and windows in the shielding, permitting enemy fire to bypass it completely. This detriment has prompted other powers to not pursue the technology, though the Modrani have for the most part embraced it.

Tachyon Shielding differs in several ways from Electro-Magnetic and Gravitic Shielding. The first major difference is the lack of need for projectors on the exterior of the ship. Tachyon shielding requires only a generator, typically mounted in the primary, which provides a 360’ arc of coverage unless otherwise noted. The second difference is that the defensive rating of the shield applies not just against the one volley of a weapon, but to all sub-volleys. Thus each individual rake, pulse, or whatever is affected by the shielding. And finally, while extremely effective the shield may be bypassed by enemy fire. For each shot against a shielded target, roll 1d10. Should the result be less than 4, the shield will not be effective against the shot. Which means that the shot neither uses the modified defensive profile, nor suffers a reduction in damage.

Ships and Fighters

Trakkis Corvette

The Trakkis is the main light attack ship used by the Modrani. Utilising a Medium Blast Laser and a pair of Tachyon Pulsers, the Trakkis is able to provide a sustained amount of deadly fire. Though a single barrage from a Trakkis is not overwhelming, over a period of time the damage it dishes out will cause even the largest warships to succumb to destruction. Its excellent manoeuvrability enables it to place
these attacks where the enemy is most vulnerable. The weaponry of the Trakkis, combined with defensive Gatling Arrays are effective against both ships and fighters enabling it to double as a screening escort. Decent armour along with a level 2 tachyon shield enables it to endure some punishment before forced to retire from the battle.

**Rassik Attack Cruiser**

The Rassik Attack Cruiser is similar to the Ka'Toc Battlecruiser in that it is designed to operate in times of conflict. With a short operating range, the Cruiser is ill suited to patrolling or border defence of any kind. The arc and placement of its weaponry makes it a poor choice for even planetary defence. Instead the Rassik is best suited for one thing, attacking. High manoeuvrability combined with concentrated arcs of fire are best utilised when the Rassik has the initiative. Used either in strikes against enemy fleets or static installations, the Rassik is effective in an aggressive fleet. In larger fleet engagements, the Rassik is often held in reserve, until the fleet co-ordinator can best utilise them. With its high speed the ship can become an effective flanking weapon or used to penetrate holes in the enemy’s screening defences, allowing for a decisive strike against the rearward command or support elements.

Many Rassiks are kept in mothballs during times of peace, though a fair number still remain in active service in defensive response fleets or as peacetime raiders.

**Vorissi Patrol Cruiser**

The Vorissi Patrol Cruiser forms the core of the Modrani defence fleets. Designed as a jack-of-all trade ship, the Vorissi is well equipped to deal with most situations. Primary weapon mounts include a mix of laser and tachyon weaponry, all of which use relatively short recharge times, allowing for a high volume of fire. The ship is also equipped with a squadron of fighters to be used as the captain sees fit. A fair amount of structure combined with a Strength 3 Tachyon shield, make the ship especially resilient to enemy attacks. Internal stores allow for a long operating range for deep space and border patrols. Its one possible failing, is the use of ballistic weaponry in the form of two Tachyon torpedo launchers. The weapon’s relatively small ammunition load is partially offset by the inclusion of a reload rack, yet in a prolonged firefight the ammunition stores will run dry relatively quickly.

Vorissis are commonly paired with Trakkis or Shannik escorts during their patrols of the Modrani border. Though such combinations tend to reduce operating time as the Vorissi is required to supplement the stores onboard the escorts. These patrols are then in turn rotated with in-system fleets.

**Zarkad Medium Fighter**

The Zarkad is the standard interceptor of the Modrani navy. Fast and manoeuvrable, the Zarkad packs a serious punch in the form of a Tachyon Gatling Gun. The gun is highly effective with advanced targeting systems found onboard the fighter, which are the equal of nearly any fighter in the quadrant. Part of this accuracy is attained through a precise, manoeuvring computer which aids the pilot in acquiring and maintaining the target. This manoeuvrability does not come without cost. The Zarkad, like the rest of the Modrani navy, has minimal armour which is easily pierced by even the weakest of weaponry. A partial Tachyon Field increases its resistance to damage, but because the field may only cover one quadrant at a time it makes the fighter susceptible to attacks from multiple directions.

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**Sustained and Piercing Weapons**

Some of the questions asked most frequently by players are in regards to those weapons that fire only in sustained or piercing modes. These types of weapons lack any other firing mode and have many special properties, but properties that often confuse players.

**Sustained Only Weapons**

Weapons noted in the weapon data card as firing only in sustained mode do not require any extra application of power in order to fire in sustained mode. Any extra power needed for firing in sustained mode is included in the normal power requirement of the weapon. However, the sustained fire only weapons must still take a one turn cooldown after firing.

**Piercing Only Weapons**

Normally, weapons with a piercing mode available incur a -4 OEW penalty in order to fire in piercing mode. This is not the case with weapons that fire only in piercing mode. Those weapons that can fire only in piercing mode ignore this penalty completely! This precedent was set with the Abbai Combat Laser and continued through into other piercing-only weapons, such as the Yolu Destabilizer beam.
In the years leading up to the Great War, the Orieni Military, known as the Hand of the Blessed, had a branch in charge of certain diplomatic efforts. One of these secret projects, ultimately the one that led to the beginning of full-scale war, was the attempt to sway the Drazi Freehold into an alliance against the Centauri. Unfortunately for the Orieni, the Freehold in this era was even far more fractured and factional than the Drazi of the modern day. That didn’t stop the Orieni from trying, and like other non-combat branches of the Hand, the “Diplomatic” branch would continue its efforts throughout the war.

The Orieni attempt to bribe the Drazi began with only subtle technological assistance, but the Drazi could not be bought so cheap and eventually the Orieni “traders” were forced to provide more obvious assistance, including Orieni-built and designed components and systems. This, in fact was what lead to the outbreak of war, as a Drazi raider ship was captured with an Orieni technician aboard. The Centauri were quick to act, and the Universe has not been the same since.

The Drazi faction that had received the greatest amount of assistance from the Orieni was quickly singled out and crushed by the Centauri before the Drazi could be united. The Drazi would continue the raiding that had been their standard since they first encountered other races, but they would not become the Second Front that the Orieni had hoped for.

This setback did not stop the Diplomatic Branch of the Hand from continuing their efforts. In the opening phases of the war, they would come upon a technological windfall that they hoped could bribe another Drazi faction to their side, without costing them anything. This windfall was the spoils gained from conquering the Usuuth. Stockpiles of Usuuth weapons, useless to the Orieni military, were given to the Diplomatic Branch to use as they saw fit. The Diplomatic Branch saw a use for the Usuuth weaponry in their efforts to initiate a second front in the war. The weapons, while years behind Orieni technology, were a step above Drazi capabilities. They were given wholesale to any Drazi faction that could provide the transport to take the weapons home, as an incentive for the Drazi to go to war.

The deal seemed too good to be true and for the most part it was. While the Drazi were given the weapons, the Orieni withheld the technological support needed by the Drazi to maintain the weapons. Drazi scientists were only partially able to decipher the new tech, but they did find the weapons to be worthwhile. The Drazi had earlier stumbled upon the key that allowed them to be one of the first races to field the Standard Particle Beam. This weapon was actually years ahead of both the Centauri and Orieni advances in that field, along with the impressive Particle Cannon. But the Usuuth weaponry had a certain flavor which appealed to the Drazi. They inflicted large, concentrated blasts doing substantial damage to enemy ships. The Drazi found little fault in those qualities. Though the slower rate of fire and lower fire controls were later seen as problematic, in the beginning the largest hurdle was the lack of comprehensive...
understanding and the subsequent inability to maintain the weapons as they were used or became damaged. However, the Orieni plan had one major flaw. By giving the Drazi factions as many of the Usuuth weapons as they could transport home, the Orieni allowed the Drazi to simply stockpile replacements. The Drazi once again failed to materialize as an ally against the Centauri.

The Drazi, for their part, were more than happy to take the Orieni handouts and watch the war from the sidelines. The victorious Centauri would be a nuisance following the war, but they would eventually recede through internal conflict and economic collapse. The Drazi would take their spoils from the war and run with them.

Of the Usuuth weapons received by the Drazi, the Particle Projector and its light variant were quickly discarded or put in the ‘parts and components’ pile. The Drazi had little use for these weapons, as their homegrown Standard Particle Beam was more advanced and more effective. On the other hand, the Heavy Particle Projector and Particle Hammer were of particular interest to the Drazi, primarily due to their large standard damage blasts.

The Heavy Particle Projector would be the first of these two to see deployment in the Drazi arsenal, if for no other reason than that the Particle Hammer was actually too big to be mounted on the small Drazi vessels. Due to various factors such as a lack of Orieni technical support, Drazi understanding, and somewhat limited replacements, the weapon would initially see service on only a few hull variants.

The Sunshrike would be the first ship to field the Heavy Particle Projector. An uncommon Shrike variant, the Sunshrike replaces the base hull’s Particle Cannons with Heavy Particle Projectors. When first introduced in 2017, the Sunshrike would be victim to the occasional weapons misfiring, but Drazi captains appreciated the HPPs ability to quickly degrade enemy structural integrity. The uncommon Shrieking Peregrine followed in 2025, likewise replacing the Particle Cannons of the base hull, though it also suffered from the same problems inherent in the Sunshrike.

In 2045 Drazi scientists would finally make the breakthroughs that would allow them to not only maintain the HPP, eliminating dangerous weapons misfires, but to also reverse engineer the weapon and both upgrade and improve upon the original. This progress would eventually lead to the introduction of the Drazi Particle Blaster, a weapon that trades damage for an increased rate of fire and better fire control.

The Sunshrike and Shrieking Peregrine would become common variants in 2045, though the Shrike and Peregrine themselves would not be fully replaced until the deployment of the Sunhawk and Stormfalcon ship series.

As for the Particle Hammer, the Drazi immediately recognized a use for these weapons in upgrading their defensive installations. Replacing both Particle Cannons of the Dudroma OSAT with a single Particle Hammer was seen as a wonderful idea. Though the volume of fire from the OSAT was significantly reduced, the increased range and concentrated damage could not be ignored. This was especially significant as the Centauri had often demonstrated their superior range to fixed Drazi defences, as they had shown their inability to weather the defensive fire. The Drazi also examined the possibility of upgrading their Kromala Defense Base. When the Particle Hammer proved to be far too large a weapon for a simple weapon swap, Drazi engineers introduced an idea still prevalent in modern-day Drazi bases. Rather than, removing all of the weapons from a section to make space for a Particle Hammer, the Drazi instead added subsections. Wedged between the four standard sections of the Kromala, these subsections would simply be huge turrets, each housing a single Particle Hammer and a reactor powerful enough to supply the huge weapon. The Drazi would also take this opportunity to replace the aging Heavy Plasma Cannons of the Kromala with the Heavy Particle Projectors. The resulting Kromala(upgrade) would very much resemble the modern day Brostilli.

The Dudroma-C and Kromala(upgraded) fielding the Particle Hammer would eventually be replaced by the Shodroma and Brostilli, as Drazi inroads with the Hammer technology would in part lead to the Heavy Particle Cannon.

* * *
by Mike Walloch

Editor’s Note: Another of Mike Walloch’s creations during his tenure in the Babylon 5 Wars community, the Aravaln are a look at a former-Centauri colony world that broke away from the Republic and sustained itself through weapon and ship contracts with the Narn Regime.

All of the text and ship control sheets included for the Aravaln come from Mike Walloch’s Babylon 5 Wars Page: http://users.aristotle.net/~aron/b5w.htm.

Geography

The Aravaln Protectorate is a small nation occupying a single star system. Its one habitable planet, Araval, is not the model of fertility. It is an arid world and much of the surface is quite barren. There are some comfortable regions which have thriving self-sufficient cities. There are also a number of underground or domed communities which import much of their food and water. But the true wealth of the world and its system is in minerals. Almost all of its industry is based on mining.

History

In the glory days of the Centauri Republic Araval was a Centauri colony on the outer edges of their territory. In addition to the Centauri population large numbers of slaves were imported from neighboring subject races to work the mines. A sizeable military garrison was also assigned to the colony to control the slaves and protect the mineral-rich system.

As the Centauri’s slave races began breaking away from the Republic, the Araval system became increasingly less cost-effective for them. In the early 2200’s the Emperor reassigned the local military garrison closer to Centauri Prime, leaving Araval with only a handful of armed freighters and a few squadrons of light fighters for defense.

At the time the local Centauri Governor was an outspoken liberal from a powerful family. His views however, did not win him many friends among his family or the Centaurum however. He was assigned to govern the Araval system mainly to get him far away from Centauri Prime. When the Emperor “left Araval to the wolves” by pulling the garrison away the Governor was outraged. He declared the colony independent and formed a provisional government. The Emperor barely noticed. The slaves attempted to take advantage of the Centauri’s weakness by revolting, thought they were unsuccessful. But the governor knew that the next revolt, or the one after that, would not fail. He realized that his police force lacked the numbers to keep so many slaves in check, slaves which he needed to continue working.

As a solution he proposed, what was for a Centauri at the time, a radical idea. He offered all of the slaves their freedom and transport away from Araval, or citizenship in exchange for their loyalty to the provisional government. His proposition was helped by the fact that he was a fair and even-handed governor. He had stopped many abuses of the slaves and improved their working conditions dramatically since his appointment. Also, as many of the slaves had been born on Araval and really had no where else to go. In the end most accepted citizenship while the remainder left within a few years.

Government

Over time the government of Araval has evolved into the Aravaln Protectorate. It is a Republic, of a kind. The highest position is the Protector, who holds most of the power. He creates, changes, or revokes laws by decree. All of these decrees, however, must be first ratified by an Assembly before they become law. The citizens elect 100 representatives to the Assembly. Each citizen gets one vote and can vote for any citizen of the Protectorate for an Assembly seat. The 100 citizens who get the most votes gain a seat in the Assembly for
five years. The Protector chooses his or her own successor, but that successor must also be ratified by the Assembly. The Protector serves for ten years and then must step down, although he can, and often does, take a seat in the Assembly. Also the Assembly can vote an out-of-control or unpopular Protector out of office early. One problem with this system is that when someone in the Assembly dies the 101st most popular person from the last election takes his seat. Subsequently assassinations are not an unheard of method of advancement. One Protector was assassinated when his opponents lacked sufficient votes to remove him legally.

Society
Culturally, the Protectorate is a unique patchwork of separate subcultures. The different races all tend to keep to themselves, living in segregated districts or cities. The Aravaln Centauri do not have any great love for the Centauri Republic which taxed them nearly to death and then only to abandon them. They do not dress like other Centauri, nor wear their hair in Centauri styles, and very few worship Centauri gods. Their clothing is generally more subdued and practical than what is popular in the Republic. Loose-fitting garments which breathe well are best suited for Araval’s climate. They accentuate their clothing with jewelry made from local gems and metals, but they tend not to match their cousin’s excess. Men normally wear their hair very short. Women tend towards long hair, but avoid the top-knots common with women of the Republic.

Military
Almost immediately after succession the Protectorate began attempting to acquire real military ships to defend themselves. They did not have facilities for building their own non-atmospheric ships or many of the luxuries a more populous and advanced society can offer. But they did have something the fledgling Narn Regime needed, raw materials. The Narn, also recently liberated from the Centauri Republic, were cranking out ships for their own fleets. So the Protectorate struck a deal with them to trade materials for ship hulls, technological aid, and other goods. As a result, most of their fleet is comprised of refitted Narn hulls. This trade arrangement probably also saved them from being conquered by the Narn Regime, as the Narn were already benefiting from the Aravaln mineral wealth without having to put up the time and resources to conquer, hold, administer, and mine it themselves.

The ships of the Protectorate tend to be built with a single task orientation. The idea is to build a ship which serves one function and does it very well. This philosophy came about from a realization that they didn’t have the technological or industrial power to produce good well-rounded ships. Here are a few weapon factories on Araval which produce pulse cannons, particle beams, and missile racks. These weapons are used almost exclusively in their fleet. They do not operate any of the Narn’s special weapons such as energy mines and burst beams, as the Narn are not willing to sell them that technology. They have also avoided the use of the Twin Array as it is a more expensive weapon to build and operate than Light Pulse Cannons or Standard Particle Beams. For long range firepower they have acquired Class-L missile racks from arms dealers out of Earth. They can build all of the missile types that Class-L racks can be loaded with, but they have no access to the more advanced racks of the EA.

Protectorate ships do not have a standardized paint scheme. Instead each captain determines the color scheme of his ship. Some are somber and subdued while others are painted in garishly bright patterns. Captains who are assigned to a new ship sometimes keep the old paint job and sometimes they have it repainted at their own personal expense. However, all military ships in the fleet have the emblem of the Protectorate, a seven-pointed star, prominently displayed.

The young and adventurous of the Protectorate sometimes hire out as mercenaries to other powers and corporations. In some cases, they turn to piracy. There is no
restriction to the ownership of military grade equipment by private citizens, thus the mercenaries often have identical ships to those found within the Protectorate’s fleet.

Ships of the Protectorate

Sovereign Dreadnought

The Sovereign class is the most expensive design the Protectorate has ever commissioned. These ships serve as fleet command vessels and are often the only jump capable ship in small fleets. For that reason the Protectorate chose to spare no expense in their construction, as losing a Sovereign can mean a decisive defeat. They are more heavily armed and armored than either the Narn G’Quonth Attack Cruiser or the G’Lan Command Cruiser, but they sacrifice some measure of maneuverability for it. They are still somewhat more maneuverable than the Narn Bin’Tak Dreadnought, but not much. They carry no fighters, like the G’Quonth, but with their massive array of pulse weapons enemy fighters should only approach after careful consideration. The Protectorate also decided to increase the ship’s Sensor ability to increase its survivability and lethality. With their budget and design constraints they still could not quite afford to boost them to levels equal of the G’Lan or Bin’Tak, but they did manage to match the Var’Nic’s sensors.

Instigator Jump Carrier

These highly modified T’Loths serve almost always as fleet support ships. They are one of the few jump capable ship classes the Protectorate operates. Their task is to open jump gates and carry fighters to and from a battle. They are not designed to engage the enemy directly, but rather are intended hang back and let the fighters and non-jump capable ships do the work. They carry no large anti-ship weapons but have a large array of Standard Particle Beams for anti-fighter and defensive purposes. Instigators are somewhat lacking compared to the carriers of other races as they can only carry light fighters and can only launch a quarter of their capacity at a time.

Subversive Support Cruiser

This dual-purpose ship fills the two roles of electronic support and Assault, being the only design operated by the Protectorate for either purpose. It mounts only light defensive weapons to dissuade its captains from taking it into direct combat. Only a few of them were purchased from the Narn and the Protectorate does not wish to risk them lightly. The designers hoped that the Subversive’s non-threatening armament would cause enemies to overlook it in preference to more dangerous ships.

The only modifications to the Narn Sho’Kar are the replacement of it’s Twin Arrays and Burst Beams with Light Pulse Cannons and the refitting of it’s hanger bay to carry assault shuttles instead of fighters. The shuttles were utilized so that the Protectorate did not need to operate a second class of expensive support ship which would only be...
Relics of the Past

used for the extremely rare ground assault mission. In the majority of situations the Subversive performs strictly in it’s ELINT or Jumpship capacity, when this is the case it often carries Guardian Escort Shuttles instead of assault shuttles. The Guardians stay close to the Subversive shielding it from fighters and intercepting ship based fire.

**Protector Light Cruiser**

This is the Protectorate’s Ship-of-the-Line. Lighter than the cruisers of other races, it is intended to be both effective in its roll and economical. Its combination of moderate anti-fighter defenses, good anti-ship punch, and full fighter squadron make it capable of patrolling alone or operating on the front lines in a fleet action. It is based on the Ka’Toc hull, and like most Aravaln ships, has no jump drive.

**Heretic Destroyer**

The Heretic Destroyer serves as the fleet’s dedicated warships. Two of the Rongoth’s aft light weapons have been removed to make room for a single Heavy Pulse Cannon mounted to the aft structure. This modification was performed to ensure that the ship retained some heavy anti-ship firepower in the event it’s forward section was lost in combat. However the Aravaln engineers were unable to give it better armor than the light weapons it replaced. The four Twin Arrays found on the Narn Rongoth were replaced by LPC’s, as the Protectorate does not use the weapon. These changes reduce the ships overall anti-fighter weaponry from 6 weapons to 4 weapons which is partially offset by the LPC’s greater utility against fighters. It does, however, drastically reduce the Heretic’s intercept capabilities, as the LPCs are no match for Twin Arrays in that role. The advantage of the extra HPC is improved anti-ship punch, which is the ship’s primary role. Therefore the trade off was considered well worth it.

Heretics are built for combat and serve no other function. They are intended to be tough, yet economical and expendable. Crew comforts are minimal and Spartan, with the crews often rotated to other vessels ensure no serious degradation of morale.

**Reaver Destroyer Escort**

There are only a few of these old ships in the Aravaln fleet. When the Centauri Republic pulled the majority of the garrison away from the colony the Governor managed to acquire a few Vorchan hulls. Most of the ships previously had their jump drives removed, with any remaining drives stripped thereafter. The Plasma Accelerators and Twin Arrays, when present in the first place, were all eventually replaced with locally manufactured Pulse Cannons. To cover the Vorchan’s blind spot and fill the hole left by the jump drive an aft firing MPC was added. This new configuration was renamed and has been serving the fleet for many years. When Reavers are lost they are not replaced, as additional Vorchan hulls are not available to the Protectorate and newer ships fill the same role just as well, if not better.

**Zealot Light Fighter**

This is the standard fighter of the Protectorate. Designed and built on Araval, it is essentially a Particle Cannon with a large engine and a cockpit. Long and thin, it presents a small target to those directly ahead or behind it. It mounts a single Particle Cannon in lieu of the dual light guns used by most light fighter craft. This is to ensure it can punch through heavily armored targets, be they ships or heavy fighters. A fragile craft, Zealots rely on swarm tactics and making themselves difficult targets. They are atmosphere capable and large numbers of them are stationed at bases on Araval as part of the Aravaln Planetary Defense Forces.

* * *
Barada Imperium

By Alex Fulton

Editor’s Note: In revising and distributing the Barada fluff and ships I would have liked to recognize the individual or individuals that created this early Babylon 5 Wars fan race. Unfortunately, the author of the works did not sign their name to it. The Barada, like the Markon and Klaatu, were hosted off of Alex “Xander” Fulton’s website, and that is where I found them. Does anyone know who they belong to?

Background

The Barada have really been in space for a fantastically short time. Only in the past one or two decades did they actually achieve space travel. Hyperspace is so new to them, that they have not yet equipped any of their production ships with jump drives.

The Barada have had several long “cold wars” on their homeworld. The result is that by the time they got to space they had substantially advanced their own technology. However, they did not have the exposure to other technologies to develop or copy that most other races did. They also were quite confident that they were the only race in the universe and so were not too terribly intent on creating a space navy. What they had, initially, was only for use in fighting other Barada ships in a potential war.

Their first contact with another species was, unfortunately, from a rather biased point of view. In 2229 the Barada were contacted by the Markon. The Markon portrayed themselves as the foremost race in the galaxy, a symptom of Markon racial pride in action. They told the Barada about a race called the Nep’ta’le. They claimed Nep’ta’le were foul aggressors who had conquered a Markon world and enslaved its population, a statement which was not exactly true but close enough from their point of view.

The Barada agreed to form an alliance with the Markon against the Nep’ta’le. In return the Markon gave them jump engine technology, which was severely restricted because of their lack of Q40, and constructed a jump gate in their system. The Markon told the Barada that the Nep’ta’le were horribly aggressive and that it was in their best interests to prepare for war. The Barada expected this conflict to be akin to the cold wars on their own planet, consisting of a lot of diplomatic maneuvering, minor skirmishes, shows of force, and so forth.

The Markon, however, having secured outside assistance, immediately declared war on the Nep’ta’le, dragging the Barada along for the ride. The Barada did not fair well in the subsequent war, due mainly to their inferior technology. After a disastrous opening battle, the Barada showed a remarkable lack of enthusiasm in the war. To be sure, they supported it with their troops. However, the navy rarely left port and, when it did, it refused to decisively engage the enemy.

After a string of defeats, the Barada navy was finally taken out of the war for good when a Nep’ta’le fleet performed a two-pronged attack on the Barada homeworld. The plan was for two Nep’ta’le fleets to arrive via the two Barada jump gates, they would then destroy each gate, and head toward a point between the two. Once the two fleets had assembled, they would be able to jump out through a combat carrier’s jump point. In the subsequent battle, the jump gate in the outer system was destroyed, and the gate in orbit of Barada was damaged beyond repair.

While focusing their efforts on removing the Barada from the war, the Nep’ta’le were weakened long enough for the Markon to “take back” Noububar. It was a short-lived victory, however, as the Dilgar Invasion forced the Markon to retreat from the world to defend their homeworld. Luckily for the Barada they were ignored by the Dilgar because there was little of value within their system and they did not...
even possess a jump gate. Thus the Nep’ta’le did the Barada a favor in a certain sense. Eventually a Centauri delegation arrived and helped to repair the damaged jump gate in return for “trinkets” in a similar vein to what they did when they first visited Earth.

**Appearance**

The Barada resemble overgrown hamsters with a significant grizzly-bear influence. Almost all Barada are dark brown or black. They are not violent by nature, but when they choose to be, they can become quite aggressive. They are, as a whole, a very intelligent species.

**History**

The Barada, despite embarking on numerous “cold wars” are typically quite peaceful. The wars they did fight were almost always over ideological issues. They never started a war to acquire resources or territory. Their first major war that did not fit this description was the Nep’ta’le-Markon War of 2229. After this, the Barada realized that the galaxy did not fight the way they did and they were forced to change their construction plans for ships and fighters.

They were spared the Centauri occupation that many of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds suffered because they were so backward. They had enough technology, albeit primitive, to effect a resistance to any such attempt. The Centauri saw a world that had little resources to speak of, especially the much sought-after Quantum 40, and would also require a significant amount of effort, time, and troops to occupy. In addition, the Barada had no distinguishing features that would make them good slave workers. Since they posed no threat to the Republic, the Centauri essentially ignored them.

**Star System**

The Barada star system is very large. It consists of some 15 planets, with the Barada homeworld being the fourth from the sun. There are two asteroid belts in the system, between the 5th and 6th planet and another between the 13th and 14th planets. The 15th planet (where the Klaatu built a jump gate) is about two weeks travel from the Barada homeworld at standard intra-system speeds.

The Barada homeworld is very fertile and green. Those that have seen it describe it as a “lush garden.” The temperature is rather cool, about 50-60 degree Fahrenheit year round, and there is a perpetual cool mist in the air. If not for the constant Barada curiosity, they would have likely never have left their homeworld.

**Political Alliances**

The Barada have not been in space long enough to form alliances with other powers. The Minbari seemed to have been watching them as they grew and may be interested in offering them an alliance. The Klaatu, one of their other neighbors, will probably oppose any such relationship. Should the Barada become involved in closer ties with another power, a war instigated by the Klaatu is almost certain to occur. The Barada had also aligned themselves with the Markon for a time, although after the intent of the Markon became clear, the Barada sought to dissolve this alliance, which they succeeded in doing after war’s end.

**Technology**

The Barada possess fairly standard technologies, although they tend to be older and more antiquated than those of other powers. They have recently acquired jump technology from the Markon, although it is too difficult for them to duplicate in any large quantities at this time.

**Weapons**

**Heavy Particle Beam**

One of the biggest problems the Barada realized they would have
is the lack of a real heavy weapon. The heavy particle beam is thus far the best their engineers could come up with and is therefore a standard mount for their navy. Its ability to fire every turn is an advantage and it is fairly accurate, giving it an unusually high fire control typical of particle beams.

**Std. Particle Beam**

This weapon is a technology so common that almost all known races field a version of it. The Barada utilize standard particle beams as a medium gun on their ships, using it to counter both enemy ships and fighters equally.

**Light Particle Beam**

This is probably the worst example of Barada weaponry. The light particle beam was simply too inaccurate at any reasonable range. It also inflicted very little damage. The Barada could install many more light particle beams on their ships than other particle weapons, though, leading to a proliferation of the weapon throughout their fleet.

**Ships and Fighters**

*Author’s Note: Their warships look nearly exactly like the Human ships in “Space: Above and Beyond” for those who are wondering.*

**Gilaz Class Fleet Carrier**

The Barada were not very adept at building space-worthy warships. However, starfighters were easy to make. So, their tactics frequently revolved around fighters. Since, for the most part, they could not travel through hyperspace, the short range of the fighters was not a problem. Obviously, when they did acquire the ability to travel through hyperspace, carriers would be vital.

The Gilaz is actually capable of forming its own jump point (although just barely). Because of the rarity of the technology, very few of these carriers were built. Only three were in service at any one time. Most of them have not been involved in any battles, but one did serve during the Markon - Nep'ta'le War of 2229. In its most memorable action, it destroyed a Nep'ta'le combat carrier. This proved to be the only Nep'ta'le capital ship which the Barada destroyed and in the end convinced the Nep'ta'le to destroy the Baradian jump gate.

The Gilaz carries four gunboats attached to hard-links on the hull. They computer-link the flight controls so that the gunboats engines are used to help the Gilaz to maneuver, thus negating the effect their extra mass would add. When they are attached, all side “structure” damage is divided into two groups. One is allocated to the structure as usual, the other is allocated to a gunboat that is attached to that side, determined randomly. There is no other effect of the gunboats being attached.

**Gomtu Class Cruiser**

The Gomtu is a new design, although far outdated by all other power’s ships. The lack of a jump engine is a flaw of almost all Barada ships. However, recent technological advances allow this vessel to follow nav beacons, thus...
travel through hyperspace on its own. It is still limited to existing jump gates, however. The most popular is the jump gate the Markon built over the Barada homeworld. The next most favorite is the jump gate the Klaatu inadvertently built over the farthest planet in the Barada system.

Joriv Class Assault Cruiser
The Joriv is a simple variant of the Gomtu. Several Gomtu cruisers, upon returning to port heavily damaged, were modified to this design during their repair and reconstruction. No Joriv class cruisers were built in new construction until 2255.

Valia Class Cruiser
The Barada, ever the economists, built several small cruisers based on hull types used by the larger Gomtu. This was not the same hull, just similar in design to cut engineering costs. As a result, one cannot be converted into the other.

These ships saw extensive service just after the Nep’ta’le-Markon War of 2229. None were completed in time for a standard deployment, though if the homeworld was attacked, they would have been pushed into service. These ships had the same nav beacon tracking capability of the Gomtu and Joriv.

Truk Class Destroyer
The Truk class destroyer is a very small Barada ship. It is often found escorting a Gomtu. Indeed, anytime it is out of system it has to be escorting another vessel, as it cannot even track hyperspace nav beacons itself and so must rely on its charge to guide it to its destination. This has the effect of serving on these ships extremely stressful. If any Truk were to lose track of the lead ship, it would not be able to trace its way to a navigational beacon.

Fuzur Class Gunboat
The Fuzur Gunboat is the smallest military ship employed by the Barada. Most commonly deployed from Gilaz class Carriers, the Fuzur is considered to be a light combat vessel. It has poor sensors, paper-thin armor, and inadequate weaponry, all traits common in the Barada navy.

Barogh Class Medium Fighter
The Barogh is the standard fighter of the Barada. It is an outgrowth of an atmospheric fighter used by one of the major national powers. The fighter itself is atmospheric as well.

* * *
During their brutal war with the Minbari, Earth found itself up against a nearly-invincible enemy and, after months of fighting, EarthForce had lost much of its fleet as Minbari warcruisers encroached on Earth space, striking deeper and deeper into the heart of the Alliance. EarthForce’s fleet of Novas, Olympus’s and Hyperion Heavy Cruisers were proving to be all but ineffective against this advanced threat. The Novas were large and difficult to repair and maintain in the face of combat, while the Hyperions were struck down swiftly and the Olympuses had little chance at all. EarthForce required a ship that had better armor than the Hyperion, better maneuverability than the Nova and as much firepower of two Olympuses. The Arion was born of that need. Though using standard EF construction lines, the Arion became a unique ship because, instead of using fixed weapon emplacements, engineers placed its weapons in configurable pods along either side of the vessel, enabling it to be easily configurable to any role.

Three different design concepts were established at that time, with the primary version consisting of a vast number of Railgun turrets, which had been proven quite effective on the Artemis. These Railguns were mounted in such a way as to place a turret in every possible arc of fire. Though the Arion had significant defensive capabilities, with two interceptor batteries and a number of particle beams, it was still quite susceptible to fighter strikes. As a result, like its larger cousin the Nova, a launch bay capable of carrying a single flight of fighters was introduced into the design.

Other variants touched upon concepts such as a combined Medium Laser/Pulse destroyer which gave the Arion with the ability to either attack at short to medium ranges, whereas the Railguns were strictly short ranged, but this variant proved more difficult to adapt due to differences in the power distribution. A Missile version was also considered to convert the Arion into a long-range support vessel, which if drawn into a melee engagement would still have the firepower to fight.

Later when Earth completed a deal with the Narn Regime, purchasing key technologies such as the Pulse Cannon and the Energy
Mine, the Arion proved the perfect testbed on which to incorporate the new weaponry and so shortly after another variant was produced. But this variant proved less popular in combat due to long recharge times of the vessel’s weaponry though was still amply suited for both close-combat and long-ranged roles.

One of the problems within the EarthForce fleet was the lack of scout ships that could jump into a hostile sector and jump out again in one piece. The Oracle cruiser was aging and could do very little in fleet engagements on its own, and when under fire had very little armor and weaponry to protect itself. With the Arion easily configurable, EarthForce decided to adapt it to carry an enhanced sensor array and act as an ELINT ship. The difficulty in adapting the Arion scout model was greater than that of other Arion variants and greatly limited its deployment. The rarity of military engagements after the Earth/Minbari War did not help to engender the production of more of these vessels. The ELINT version of the Arion is subsequently a rare variant. One Arion scout was rumored to have been involved in the EarthForce attack on Mokdor, providing intelligence support for the ground operation in Sh’lassen space.

Gaining technology used by other races, whether on the black market or by official means, the Arion was the testbed for these new weapons, but inefficiencies or problems with the new technologies made the mass production of these variants untenable, and the existing weapons used by EarthForce proved more popular. Only two refits using foreign weapons were ever produced: a Narn and Centauri Tech Destroyer. Others were in the planning stage when the project was abandoned.

After the war, the Arion was superceded by both heavier designs and upgrades of existing classes, but the few vessels to survive the Battle of the Line became a testing platforms for the fruits of EarthForce R&D, testing several new technologies and upgrades. The Arion is rarely seen in actual combat duties at this time, with the Omega and upgraded Hyperions more suited for these roles.

* * *
Relics of the Past

Hecate Phi Testbed Cruiser

By Mark Dwinnells

When the Earth Alliance was on its rise as a superpower it was necessary to test new and existing technologies in multiple combinations to determine which mix of weapons technologies would be most efficient for newer warships. Oftentimes these tests were performed on a single hull, testing multiple system combinations on a tried and true hull type. One hull that was especially prone to customization and use as a weapon-testing platform was the Hecate Testbed Cruiser.

In one case this led to the integration of the well-known railgun and plasma cannon onto a hull with two side-mounted, forward firing medium lasers and two turreted light lasers. Even though this was only intended to show how effectively different weapon types could be when used in tandem with one another, the class had a rough time from the start. The initial deployment was as a Raider-hunter, using its multiple weapon arrays to strike the Raiders at all ranges while simultaneously test the effectiveness of the weapons configuration. When the ship shut down in the middle of an alpha-strike on its maiden voyage its officers and crew knew they’d be in for a long six-month tour.

The reactor was slightly underpowered, the engine was weak, the armor was thinner than expected, and some of the hull spacing had to be sacrificed for the integration circuits and other tech for combined-fire between the several types of weapons aboard. Logistical problems plagued the Hecate Phi class, as its railguns not only required large-volume ammunition, but the forward gun’s difference in design from the rest led to problems when it came to performing makeshift repairs in the field, as the parts generally weren’t interchangeable due to scale differences. Also, the EA ship designers took stock of the early sorties against Raiders and noted that the three standard particle beams mounted in the center of the ship were still, despite all the other ship’s other problems, effective and reliable. On the other hand, during the few sorties in which the Phi-class testbed was engaged, she was able to prove the medium lasers were effective in their current mounts. The damage output of the medium lasers was the largest problem, and this recommendation echoed in the Hyperion Theta and Epsilon when the new heavy lasers were added to the sides of those craft. The light lasers weren’t very capable and suggestions were made for their replacement. No suitable weapon could be found to fill the turreted laser mounts, so plans were instead made to enlarge the medium/heavy laser pod to hold two larger laser mounts. Finally, the acquisition of pulsar technology put the nails in the coffin of the railgun and dual light railgun. A greater amount of firepower could be delivered with pulse weapons without the heavy ammunition dependency, although

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the scale problems with the weapons still prevented their cross-repair on many levels.
Relics of the Past

The Thrakallans

The Thrakallans developed in the upper atmosphere of a Gas Giant in the Beta Lyrae system, which is found anti-spinward of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds. Civilisation gradually evolved, and cities were built both within and upon large masses of floating nyan. Relatively primitive by most standards, they have avoided subjugation mainly by the uniqueness and hostility of their environment. Thrakallans are hardy creatures with exoskeletons to endure the increased pressure of their planet’s atmosphere and its high gravity. They communicate in a series of chirps and whistles and must have a methane atmosphere in order to breathe and survive.

It is unclear how the Thrakallans developed extra-planetary travel. Most people believe that the technology was given to Thrakallans at some point during the last century by an indeterminate faction. Whatever the reason, the Thrakallans have developed a small fleet of ships, which are used primarily for trading or other less legitimate reasons. Thrakallans have gained a reputation as both shrewd business and smugglers, which may be unfairly placed upon them through the relative poverty of their society. They trade mainly with their immediate neighbours, though some individuals have ventured farther into other territories or onto ports such as Babylon 5.

The Thrakallan criminal underground is fairly extensive, in many cases larger than people realise. The core of the Thrakallan criminal underground is located on one of the floating cities, known commonly in smuggling circles as Dillathliin. Its existence is adamantly denied by the Thrakallan government. However, anyone with the correct transponder code can find it. The cities of Beta Lyrae II continually float across the planet. Traffic to and from them are directed by orbiting stations. Dillathliin is a different story. Since it “doesn’t exist,” the orbital traffic control does not keep track of it’s location. “Visitors” must find the right city beacon frequency and navigate through the murky clouds of Beta Lyrae to find it. Its a pirate’s hideaway, smuggler’s haven, and home to one of the galaxy’s most unsavoury crime lords, thir’nakk. His smuggling operations alone bring in over fifty million credits a year.

Background information from Voltayre’s Encyclopedia Xenobiologica.

Blockade Runner

A fairly common ship among smuggling circles, the Blockade Runner is an easy to construct vessel which is capable of carrying a substantial amount of cargo. Its design is similar to that of the Grome, in that the individual components may be constructed on a planetary location before being assembled in orbit. Unlike its distant cousins, the Blockade Runner is more compact without the weaknesses of exposed struts and other problems present in the Grome navy. The Blockade Runner uses a mix of readily available plasma and particle weaponry. Its armament is actually quite significant, allowing it to engage many of the more common police vessels. Ironically, its greatest threat may in fact be fellow criminals such as raiders whose reliance on cheap fighters are able to circumvent the ship’s defences and attack from blind spots.

* * *

“You wish... protection?”
Background

The Dilgar War taught the Abbai the unpleasant lesson that sometimes violence is necessary to protect your people from harm. The Dilgar attacks on Abbai space were especially brutal and lasted throughout the war. Only the great starbases of Ssumssha protected the Abbai from outright annihilation during the war.

At the end of the Dilgar War the first aggressive Abbai cruiser came into service. The aptly named Mikatha Guardian Cruiser was a heavily modified Lakara hull optimized for conflict. The Mikatha was equipped with twice the number of combat lasers as the Lakara. In earlier battles, the Lakara had proven itself unable to take down enemy cruisers such as the Targath quickly enough. It was hoped that the extra two combat lasers would provide the edge needed to rectify the problem.

The Mikatha was not wholly about improving offensive capabilities, however. The new Abbai cruiser was given an extensive array of particle impeders. It was intended that the impeders would provide sufficient defense to prevent the Mikatha from taking damage, increasing its longevity in combat. The increased chance of surviving a battle also made the Mikatha a better fleet command ship, though it does not gain any in-game benefits from this enhanced command and control ability.

Very few Mikathas were built before the final defeat of the Dilgar, and production numbers were almost cut to nothing after the Battle of Omelos. The Abbai, more concerned with rebuilding their devastated worlds, put construction of Mikatha Guardian Cruisers at the bottom of their list of priorities. Construction of new Mikathas would always be limited, and most of those built were put into reserve fleets to be activated should the need arise.

The development of a new Lakara command cruiser variant that was cheaper and easier to build than the Mikatha signaled an end to the class. The majority of the Mikathas then in service were mothballed and, later, scavenged for parts as the Lakara class aged. One Mikatha Guardian Cruiser remained in service, seeing combat during the League Wars where it was destroyed by impetuous Drazi forces operating on the Abbai border.

Designer’s Notes

The Mikatha was designed in December of 2000, long before Variants 4 and the Nakarsa Command Cruiser was released. I still don’t agree with the proliferation of the special command bonuses amongst every command ship that rears its ugly little head, but that is a story for another time.

My original intention was to give the Abbai a warship that could actually fight another ship. With four combat lasers—the equivalent of two Lakaras or four Tiracas—the Mikatha could actually stand to hurt someone with its weapons. During the Dilgar War that would have been a very high priority for the Abbai.

I was never really happy with the Mikatha, but upon searching my records for other “Relics of the Past” I came across it and decided that it fit this particular theme. It is indeed a relic from my past.

* * *
Of the League races, the Brakiri were arguably the most militarily supportive of the Army of Light during the Shadow War and in the ensuing conflicts. This was especially true of the final battle at Coriana VI where the Brakiri committed nearly three-quarters of their fleet. In the aftermath of the epic battle, only an eighth of that fleet returned to Brakos. The process of rebuilding was expected to be a long one, as would be true for all of the League races that participated in the battle at Coriana VI. In the years that followed, the Brakiri steadily rebuilt their military. But after the short war with the Centauri, and the Drakh attack on Earth, it became apparent to the Krona that they could no longer afford the cost associated with rebuilding their older, cheaper designs. They decided to replace their aging ships with newer, more powerful ones that would hopefully help reduce any future casualty rates.

The first of these was the Rameshka Dreadnought. The Rameshka was a unique project as the design contract was offered as a joint contract between the three largest corporations: the Ak-Habil Conglomerate, Im-Rehsa Technologies and Ly-Nakir Industries. The move by the Krona was unprecedented. Never before in the history of the Syndicracy had such a thing been done! The corporations accepted the joint contract and set to work planning on their portions of the Rameshka’s design. Ak-Habil and Im-Rehsa began conceptual work on the primary space frame of the dreadnought, each implementing their own technologies, while Ly-Nakir worked on developing a new fighter type especially for use on the Rameshka.

With the joint design now completed and launched, the Rameshka is the most powerful ship the Brakiri have ever fielded. The Rameshka is armed with Gravitic Lances and Graviton Beams, improved by scientists and engineers at Im-Rehsa, and a large complement of Graviton Pulsars. The addition of more Graviton Pulsars was done in large part to compensate for the failing of the Brakiri’s previous mainline ship, the Avioki Heavy Cruiser. The ship was also fitted with advanced Gravitic Shields, courtesy of Im-Rehsa Technologies.

The Rameshka is a ship not to be underestimated even by the more technologically advanced powers. It is capable of engaging enemy units at any range. The long range of its Graviton Lances and Beams provide heavy, far-reaching firepower. At short range, the Rameshka’s anti-fighter and interception capabilities are impressive, thanks to the ship’s vast arrays of Graviton Pulsars. The ship also operates a large complement of fighters onboard, making the vessel even deadlier. The only disadvantage identified by Krona actuaries is that it is a cumbersome vessel and so large that even if with its shields at full strength it is still an easy target for most enemy gunners. However, the Rameshka’s strengths far outweigh its weaknesses.

As of 2270 only the prototype vessel has been constructed and remains in close proximity to the Brakiri homeworld during its important shakedown period so that corporate contractors can complete their full range of tests. Considering their high standing within the Interstellar Alliance, the Krona expects the Rameshka to eventually be a common ship used by Alliance forces, with the Brakiri corporations profiting from Alliance-sponsored construction contracts. But with the dreadnought’s expensive maintenance costs and high price tag only a limited number of constructions are expected within the near future.

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By Phillip “Entillzha” Wright
A Look at the Original Circasian Warship

By Tyrel Lohr

Background

The Circasian victory over the ak-Tai Hegemony netted the fledgling power several new star systems. Their enlarged sphere of influence spread the surviving Circasian Star Forces thin within the contested region. The military needed a multi-purpose warship to reinforce their presence within the new areas.

The Tigris Patrol Cruiser was implemented to fill this need. A larger cruiser, the Tigris was well equipped for dealing with any potential enemy threat. The ship was armed with plasma weapons, including two dual plasma cannons, providing the firepower necessary to take on enemy cruisers. A cadre of particle dispersal cannons supplemented by the ship’s integral fighter support provided the ship’s anti-fighter defenses. The Tigris also carried two breaching pods as standard equipment. These breaching pods were used to board commercial ships for routine inspections as well as to capture raider ships the Tigris encountered during its system patrols.

Perhaps most importantly, the Tigris Patrol Cruiser was the first general construction Circasian starship to be equipped with a jump engine. The inclusion of a jump engine on the Tigris greatly extended its operational range, allowing it to move between systems without relying on fixed jump gates.

Always demanding of their ship designers, the Circasian War Council required the incorporation of several other features which would allow the Tigris to perform in multiple roles during times of war. To that end the Tigris is equipped with extensive troop quartering capabilities, allowing it to berth large numbers of ground troops (but not armor units). In some cases Tigris Patrol Cruisers were converted into assault ships, trading their fighters for assault shuttles. More commonly, though, the Circasians used the Tigris cruisers as home assignments for marines providing fleet security missions.

The versatility of the Tigris Patrol Cruiser was put to the test during the Escalation Wars. Tigris cruisers served as fleet support ships, providing heavy weapons support for fleet command ships. The dual plasma cannon proved its worth in this capacity, being one of the few weapons that could do serious damage to Courata dreadnoughts.
Particle Dispersal Cannon

Called simply a ‘Dispersal Cannon’ by most, the Particle Dispersal Cannon is a highly specialized defense weapon used on many Circasian ships. The Dispersal Cannon is capable of firing in both passive and active defense modes. In passive mode the cannon intercepts incoming shots in the same way as any other weapon would. In active defense mode, however, the Dispersal Cannon actively mitigates the incoming damage, producing a pseudo-shielding effect to protect the ship from incoming damage.

The choice to fire a Particle Dispersal Cannon in active defense mode is made at the same time that normal interception determinations are made. No interception bonus is applied against the weapon being actively “intercepted”, however. Instead, the Dispersal Cannon will reduce the damage scored by the incoming volley by 2d6. In the case of pulse weapons only the first pulse is affected by the damage reduction.

The Dispersal Cannon can only be used against weapons that would normally be interceptable by the weapon. This means that the Dispersal Cannon cannot affect laser weapons or any other weapon that is listed as being non-interceptable.

The size of the Dispersal Cannon limited the deployment of the system. The Gatling Particle Beam was still preferred for most anti-fighter applications, leaving the Dispersal Cannon as a dedicated heavy defense gun used on a select number of Circasian hulls.

Designer’s Notes

The Tigris was the first Circasian ship that I ever created. It was also one of the first 2E style ship control sheets I ever did. The original SCS was created in Microsoft Word 2.0 using the Microsoft Draw utility that came bundled with it. Needless to say, my SCS creation skills like the history of the Circasians have come a long way!

The Tigris was originally a heavy cruiser design and intended to be the mainline cruiser of the Circasian forces. This was of course correct for the time; in the campaign that the Tigris originated in the ship was indeed the primary cruiser operated by the Circasian Empire. Changes to the timeline and ship development since then have made that classification untenable. Several new technologies and ships have been added to the history that largely erases the importance of the ship. The vessel, though, remains an effective cruiser so I decided to make it into a Circasian patrol cruiser.

One thing that you will notice pretty quickly is that the Tigris looks like a Narn design. This was intentional at the time, as the Circasians really were “Dilgarfied Narns” – Dilgar-like felines flying Narn inspired starships. The original silhouette for the Tigris exaggerated this connection, but upon reviewing the old pen and paper sketch of the Tigris I realized that the ship really had a much different look to it. When I sat down and drew the vector line art for the Tigris Patrol Cruiser I decided to go with a look closer to that of the ship in the original drawing.

The armament of the ship has remained relatively the same, though some of the firing arcs have been changed. All in all it is interesting to see how the ship has changed and evolved from its infancy to maturity.

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Rules Guide
Version 2.5.2 Available!
News from the Front
JMS drops hints on new B5 project, Season 5 DVD box art revealed
January 31, 2004

The highly anticipated news on what the new Babylon 5 project is has not come to pass as expected, but JMS has at least waved a most interest carrot in front of our noses. Posted to the Babylon 5 moderated newsgroup on January 29, the following message from JMS provides a teaser as to what the name of the project is:

"It's taken longer than hoped for to be able to talk about this, because it's taken longer than hoped for to go through all the machinations of the deal. Depending on the nature of a given deal, it can take a few weeks to a couple, three months to actually cut the deal and finalize the language in terms everybody can agree with. We only literally finished the deal last week.

Writing on B5:TMoS is complete, and as soon as the powers that be sign off on everything, it can be turned in and we can start moving. At that point, I can say more about this.

Figure another couple of weeks.

jms

Following the release of this new information the attempts to break the secret of the script’s name began. JMS later commented that one of the many names posited by fans was, indeed, the correct name. It is believed that the name of the script may indeed be “The Movement of Shadows.” It is still unknown whether this will be a movie-of-the-week style production similar to the TNT movies or an actual full feature theatrical presentation.

* * *
Do you have an unfinished project? We sure do! The next issue of The Great Machine will focus on getting those unfinished projects completed. So get out your pen and paper, dust off your word processor and get to work finishing up all those UFO’s (Un-Finished Objects). Then send an article off to us to let us know what you are working on. Here are a few of the projects slated to be completed for next month’s issue:

- **Encounters-1**: The supplement to the *Empire Rising* Escalation Wars book. Includes additional ships and background from the Escalation Wars Universe.

- **Freespace Conversion**: Paul Brown finishes up his Freespace to Babylon 5 Wars conversions and unveils the full Terran, Vasuudan, and Shivan fleets.

- **Showdowns-11**: Finishing touches will be made to get this sequel to *The Great Crusade* ready to go. Look for more units for the Orieni and their allies, including modern Rogolon warships!

Send all submissions to submissions@firenebula.com. Include with your submission your name, an article or other text relating to your project, and any ship control sheets or notes that you would like run with the article. They might appear in the next issue!

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**Submission Deadline: February 27, 2003**