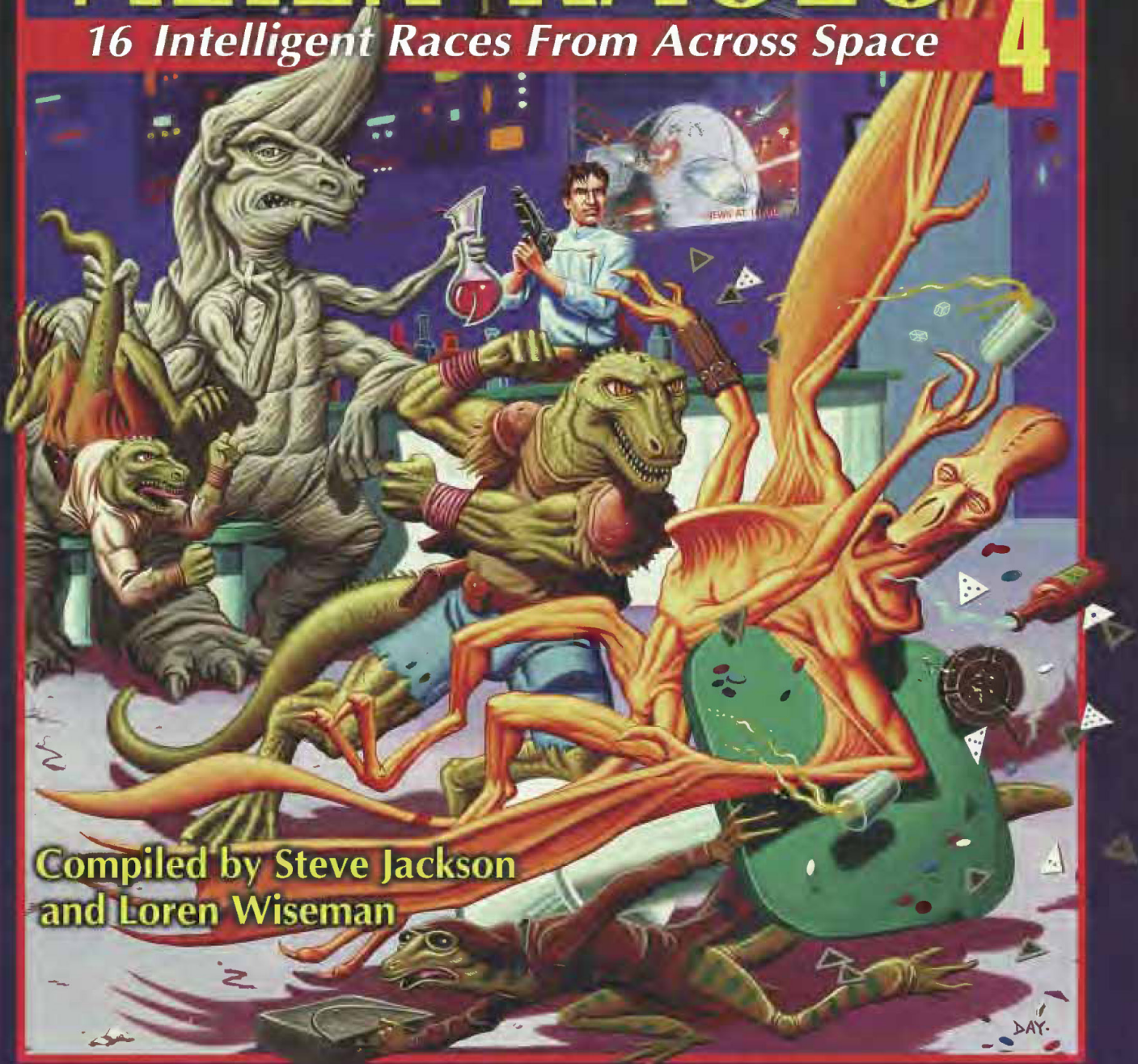


GURPS® *Traveller*

ALIEN RACES

16 Intelligent Races From Across Space

4



Compiled by Steve Jackson
and Loren Wiseman

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Aliens Everywhere!

Enough aliens to fill a cantina! **GURPS Traveller Alien Races 4** brings 16 strange species to life. Compiled and edited by Loren Wiseman and Steve Jackson, this book features the creations of several favorite **Traveller** authors, including Phil Masters, David Pulver, and David Thomas.

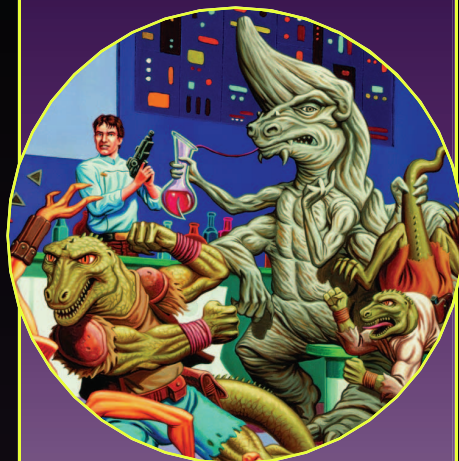
Here you'll meet:

- The winged Ael Yael, nearly destroyed by greedy Humaniti, now finding their place in the galaxy.
- The bureaucratic Bwaps, faithful administrators through three Imperiums . . . but they have their own agenda, and few suspect how decisively they can act on their own.
- The huge Virushi, calm and nonviolent . . . until they're pushed too far.
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And a dozen others!



STEVE JACKSON GAMES
www.sjgames.com



The **GURPS Basic Set** and **GURPS Traveller** 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 XENOBIOLGISTS:

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STEVE JACKSON AND LOREN WISEMAN

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ROBERT GILSON, SHAWN HAVRANEK,
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science-fiction universe by

MARC MILLER

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16 Intelligent Races From Across Space

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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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 & 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. We also have Compuserve and AOL conferences. *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, mail majordomo@io.com with “subscribe GURPSnet-L” in the message body, or point your Web browser to gurpsnet.sjgames.com.

The *GURPS Traveller Alien Races 4* Web page is at www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/alienraces4/.

Page References

Any page reference that begins with a B refers to *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition Revised*; e.g., p. B144 refers to page 144 of *Basic Set*. CI refers to *Compendium I*, GT to *GURPS Traveller, Second Edition*; T:FI to *Traveller: First In*; and T:FT to *Traveller: Far Trader*.

For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

Introduction

This is (we think) the last of the four *Alien Races* books for *GURPS Traveller*. Where the first three books focused mainly on major races, this is a collection of minor races. Minor, but not trivial!

Some of these races, most notably the Bwaps and the Virushi, have been part of the *Traveller* story for years. Others, like the Hlanssai and the Githiaskio, have been described in various *Traveller* releases, but have not gotten the attention that they deserve. And four – the Tezcat, J'sia, Valkyrie, and Evantha – are completely new.

For most of these races and cultures, we have tried to provide as much detail as possible, to show the way in which the species and its world fits into the *Traveller* background. The exception is the last race in the book – one of the new ones – the Valkyrie. This parasitic species is not tied to any particular place in Charted Space . . . the referee can introduce a Valkyrie outbreak wherever he needs it, or locate their predatory Dominion wherever it will make the campaign most interesting.

Although this is the last book planned in this particular series, we'll certainly continue to describe new alien races. The *Planetary Survey* series will focus on a new world every month . . . and many of those worlds have their own intelligent species.

And there is one further book coming in the current format. It doesn't describe aliens, though; it's about our cousins among the stars, scattered by the Ancients and now growing into their own destinies. That book, of course, will be *Humaniti*.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Steve Jackson had already been playing *Traveller* for years when he founded SJ Games in 1980. He was thrilled to get Marc Miller's permission to do *GURPS Traveller*.

His other work includes the basic *GURPS* system, *Ogre*, *Illuminati*, *Hacker*, *Evil Stevie's Pirate Game*, and, with Chad Irby, *Car Wars*. He likes just about every type of game he's ever played, but is especially into miniatures right now (and is enjoying the process of setting up the SJ Games miniatures division).

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

JOURNAL OF THE TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY

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

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

Marhaban Down: A Heaven for Bureaucracy

The starport on Marhaban is a modern, full-featured Class V facility. Serving the home of an important Imperial species, the starport is always busy. It is also one of the least popular starports in the Imperium.

Due to the Bwap love of laws and bureaucracy, and the presence of the Great Council of Crèches and the Council of Seemly Order, a merchant will face an amazing array of duties, requirements, rules, and regulations to do business on the world. There are also significant environmental concerns based on the Wapawab philosophy, and many Bwaps will carefully investigate the reputation and Wapawab-friendliness of the manufacturers of goods carried by a visiting merchant. There have been several instances of a cargo languishing in a warehouse at Marhaban Down for months, just because the company that made those goods was found to have violated environmental laws on a world three subsectors away.

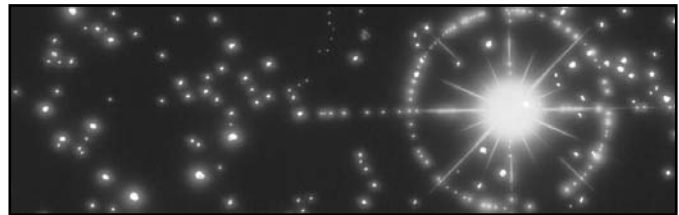
Merchants associated with the larger megacorporations and trade lines tend to have an easier time on Marhaban, simply because their parent company's bureaucratic structure is more suited towards dealing with the Bwaps. In addition, many of these companies employ a significant number of Bwap bureaucrats, and may have Bwap staff on ships that trade extensively with Bwap worlds.

A free trader usually has a narrow profit margin, and cannot afford a staff of bureaucrats. While some Bwaps will work for smaller traders, most prefer large companies with an existing formal structure and bureaucracy. However, there are some ways that the smaller traders can prosper in this environment. Marhaban Down and its orbital counterpart are largely staffed with Human technicians; the Bwaps serve as the managers and bureaucrats. The Human staff will sometimes take pity on a red tape-bound trader and help him avoid some of the regulations. Another possibility is a product of the Bwap bureaucracy that generates all of the problems. The Bwaps handle incoming traffic based on three things: the ship's arrival hour, its size, and its name. Since there are plenty of 200- and 400-ton ships arriving at a given time, many independent operators that do business on Marhaban choose ship names like *Aardvark*, *Adam's Rib*, and the infamous free trader *Aaaaaabuu*, to get berthing priority.

Some less than ethical traders will fabricate reports of problems with a competing ship or its cargo. A rumor that a ship is leaking coolant, or that the manufacturer of its cargo has been dumping polluted water into a reservoir on some nearby world, will generate an investigation by the authorities, and the investigation will usually tie the competitor up long enough to let the trader sell his cargo and get away. However, this tactic has been known to backfire. If the Bwaps *ever* find out that their system has been perverted into harassment of an innocent party, the trickster will find out just how viciously humorous an aggrieved bureaucracy can be.

Adventure Seed: Crime and Punishment

The PCs are a group of Tap-a-wewaka-atapas (Guardians of Order), with one being a Satha-a-wewaka-atapas (Elder Guardian) with a Guardian Runabout. This group has been tasked with an investigation of activities by a Bwap crèche on a major Imperial world. The crèche, whose members are largely employed by the subsector government, has been reported to have accepted bribes to ignore regulatory violations by megacorporations. The Council of Order wishes to investigate and correct the situation before it is discovered and made public by the subsector government. The investigators quickly find that the charges are true, but not as simple as originally stated. The local baron has blackmailed several crèche leaders into accepting the bribes, threatening to blacken the reputation of the local crèche. The party will need to decide how to proceed; the crèche leaders are guilty, but they are also victims. The baron controls the local police, and cannot be gotten through legal means. Does the party try to act against the baron? Is he also subject to blackmail? And has the profit of the bribes made some of the local crèche leaders untrustworthy?



BWAP LANGUAGE

Bwap words can be generated using two dice. Roll one die to determine how many syllables the word will have (or decide this for yourself). Then, for each syllable, roll on the Syllables table to determine how the syllable is formed. Syllables may have up to three letters; Initial Consonant, Vowel and Final Consonant. For each letter, roll a die to determine which table to roll on (Initial Consonant 1-6, Vowel 1-6, or Final Consonant 1-6), and then roll two differently colored dice to cross-reference on the appropriate table and obtain the correct letter.

Syllables

D1/D2	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	CV	CV	CV	CV	CV	CV
2	CV	CV	CV	CV	CV	CV
3	CV	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC
4	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC
5	CVC	VC	VC	VC	VC	VC
6	VC	VC	VC	VC	V	V

J'sia

Twenty-foot worms whose circular maws are surrounded by three manipulative tentacles, the far-traveling, philosophical J'sia are known throughout Imperial space as pilgrims, scientists, and traders without an ounce of xenophobia. A race of gentle pacifists, the J'sia often get into situations they can't handle, partly due to their tendency to meddle in other races' affairs. Fortunately, their great size intimidates many potential foes.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

The J'sia evolved from swamp-dwelling amphibious omnivores. Sometime in their prehistory, they changed from being primarily water- to being predominantly land-dwellers, possibly in response to some ecological catastrophe that afflicted their environment. This sudden shift of focus provided the stimulus for development of intelligence, agriculture, and finally a technological culture which reached the stars before the founding of the First Imperium.

Several J'sia worlds are long-standing members of the Imperium. The J'sia homeworld in Lishun sector was in the path of early Vilani expansion. The J'sia were first contacted by the Vilani civilization about -5460. At that point they had discovered interplanetary travel and were leisurely observing the universe with space telescopes. They were peacefully absorbed into what would become the First Imperium, and participated in early Vilani exploration and trading. During the Consolidation Wars they largely retreated to their home world, but following the establishment of the Ziru Sirka, they again became active in interstellar society.

A race of gentle pacifists, the J'sia often get into situations they can't handle, partly due to their tendency to meddle in other races' affairs.

**Sketch of a J'Sia made
by a Vilani explorer,
ca. -5460**



The J'sia briefly entertained a Terran governor during the Ramshackle Empire, and were grateful for the exposure to Earth's rich culture. The Long Night brought some hardship, but the J'sia planets retained most of their technology, and by -700 had begun building their own starships and sending out missions, many of them aimed at improving the lot of other worlds.

Some believe that it was at this point that the J'sia "God Makers" (p. 98) were formed, though there are rumors that they were a much earlier institution. J'sia historical records, normally excellent, are unusually vague on this point.

After the Long Night, the J'sia were recontacted by the expanding Sylean Federation, becoming first trade partners, then allies. They were among the first non-Human minor races to join the Third Imperium. J'sia were active supporters of First Survey and remained loyal Imperial citizens ever since, although their pacifism has occasionally led to friction in times of war.

Detecting Valkyrie

The Valkyrie parasite can be detected with a successful neural activity scan (p. GT113), but only if the user knows what he is looking for. The operator should succeed by 3 or more to be able to tell the difference between an ordinary person and a Valkyrie, although specially optimized software could be written to negate this penalty. The Telepathy power's Telereceive skill cannot detect a Valkyrie per se, but reading surface thoughts is often enough to sense something odd is going on, and a success by 6 or more will reveal the presence of characteristic multiple personalities. A successful Diagnosis roll performed using TL7+ medical imaging systems (such as a medscanner or diagnosis bed) or an autopsy at any TL will reveal the alien parasite.

SOCIETY

Valkyrie society is a single, all-encompassing order known as the Dominion, in which there are two orders of being: the Valkyrie-possessed individuals, and those beings who are not currently being used as hosts.

THE SLAVES

Only a fraction (usually about 5%) of the population on a typical Dominion planet are Valkyrie. The rest are slaves, used to breed new host bodies (to replace those who burned out) and maintain the world's industrial and agricultural base.

In the abstract, the Valkyrie care little for the lives of those who they have not chosen as hosts. As long as they breed to produce more bodies, and keep the factories running, that is enough.

Many slaves seethe with hatred and dream of overthrowing the Dominion. To live as a slave is bad enough, but it is far worse when the slavers wear the bodies of their friends, relatives and lovers, and even more terrible, possess a vestige of the personalities, sometimes twisted into grotesque parodies of their original selves. Life on a Dominion planet is hell. Oddly enough, the Valkyrie do little to stamp out this resentment. They seem content to suppress, rather than destroy, resistance. As a result, guerrilla groups and resistance organizations often thrive on Valkyrie worlds, and while few survive for more than a couple of years before being destroyed by police raids, a new group usually quickly rises to challenge the alien overlords.

Many observers have concluded that the Valkyrie inability to totally stamp out resistance on their subject worlds is the symptom of a fatal weakness in the Valkyrie psyche, an arrogant reluctance to concede that non-Valkyrie could be a serious threat, or even a belief that the population will voluntarily accept their "gift" given time. They believe that this could be exploited, that covert operations forces could be landed "behind the lines" to organize a slave revolt to overthrow the alien puppet masters.

They are totally wrong. The real reason for the "inefficiency" of Valkyrie counter-insurgency forces is very simple:

the Valkyrie live brief lives and need new bodies for their hosts. They prefer to implant their larvae in experienced individuals. What better recruiting ground for future infiltration specialists than the resourceful guerrilla leaders of an occupied planet? Resistance organizations and guerrilla groups are allowed to grow, even permitted small successes, while being carefully, covertly monitored. When they become too dangerous, police move in, and the supply of suitable hosts is again renewed.

THE RULERS

Every Valkyrie is totally devoted to the goal of achieving ultimate rule of the galaxy. Everyone knows his place, and follows orders with a devotion to duty and zealous initiative that any Human tyrant would envy. In fact, the Dominion is far closer to a cult than a tyranny, for individualism is submerging in a fanatical zeal to fulfill the Valkyrie supremacist vision. However, the Valkyrie retain enough vestiges of their former personalities to have interests and goals beyond the destiny of the race. Valkyrie recognize that the minds and bodies of most species, their own included, require time for rest and relaxation. When a Valkyrie relaxes, he often slips into duplicating the habits or interests of the original host's personality. This may be as innocent as taking care of an ornamental garden, playing tennis, or reading mystery stories for relaxation. But not always. Since Valkyrie hosts house multiple personalities whose ideas of recreation have been twisted by the shock of possession, Dominion worlds are far too often the site of activities which normal beings find repugnant or grotesque.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

The present locus of the Dominion is a couple of sectors directly rimward of the Solomani Rim, bordering a number of outlying Solomani and Aslan colonies. The exact extent of Valkyrie operations is unknown, especially to rimward. It is believed they have absorbed at least four and possibly over a dozen Solomani and Aslan colony worlds. They are also known to have exterminated one entire alien species, the chlorine-breathing Kai-Nal, who were immune to possession. At least a billion sentient beings are thought to be under the Valkyrie yoke. Valkyrie-possessed individuals are thought to number at least 100,000,000, plus an unknown number of Valkyrie who possess nonsentient or presentient beings. It is possible that not all Valkyrie are involved in the Dominion, and that the homeworld may house a more stable and far less aggressive (or insane) population. The exact relationship between homeworld Valkyrie and the leaders of the Dominion remains unclear.

The Dominion frontier worlds (at least) appear to be organized as a vast military machine, and all possessed individuals have military ranks, even if they work in fields such as industry or scientific research. The leadership of the Dominion is vested in the High Command, a central council overseeing all Valkyrie military and political activity.

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