Traveller®
The Best of JTAS

Volume 1

Accounts of the Imperium and Beyond

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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 and Dragons, Traveller, World of Darkness, Call of Cthulhu*, and many more top games – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine, INWO, Car Wars, Toon, Ogre Miniatures*, and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online!

New supplements and adventures. *GURPS* continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. For a current catalog, send us a legal-sized or 9"×12" SASE – please use two stamps! – or just visit **www.warehouse23.com**.

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 on our website – 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 errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. *GURPS* has its own Usenet group, too: rec.games.frp.gurps.

GURPSnet. This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of *GURPS*. To join, point your web browser to **www.sjgames.com/mailman/listinfo/gurpsnet-l/**.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Other page references are GT for *GURPS Traveller*, S for *GURPS Space*, VE for *GURPS Vehicles*, T:AI for *GURPS Traveller: Alien Races 1*, T:BC for *GURPS Traveller: Behind the Claw*, T:FI for *GURPS Traveller: First In*, T:FT for *GURPS Traveller: Far Trader*, and T:SM for *GURPS Traveller: Star Mercs*. The abbreviation for this book is T:Ji.
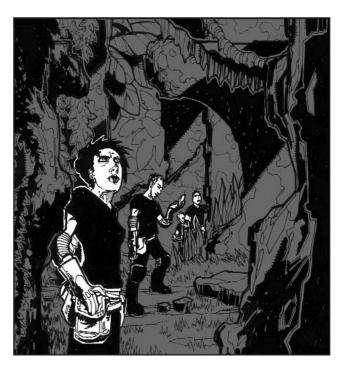
For a full list of *GURPS* abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at **www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html**.

This is the first of what we hope will be a continuing series of anthologies collecting the best articles from the new *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*. SJ Games began publication of the new *JTAS* in February of 2000, and it has achieved a reputation among the *Traveller* grognards as being well worth the subscription price.

To select the contents of this volume, I took a list of 2000's articles in order of their subscriber rankings and chose from the upper levels of that list those I felt were of enduring interest to *Traveller* fans. I decided not to include any of my own editorials – those are the sort of light extemporanea that will not stand the test of time very well. I think that articles like Allan E. Johnson's *Across the Galaxy*, however, will still be as interesting in 20 years as they are now. We could probably do a second anthology just choosing from the articles published in 2000.

About the Line Editor

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

Adventures and settings are the meat and potatoes of any game, and *JTAS* provides them in various forms for every taste. The original print *JTAS* published short adventures called "Amber Zones," and we have continued that custom, but added a greater variety of scenarios. Pregenerated settings save GMs time and let them get right to the adventure.

Six Enigmas

by James Maliszewski   *Published August 1, 2000*

The wide-ranging nature of **Traveller** campaigns means the GM often needs short adventures to use at a moment's notice. The following six scenarios each provide an easily adaptable circumstance in which the group encounters something unusual or mysterious. The details of each enigma are purposely sketchy, making their inclusion into an ongoing campaign easier. Likewise, each enigma has several variations, allowing plenty of flexibility.

THE CITY IN THE SANDS

While on a remote world with a small population, the adventurers hear stories about a mysterious "City in the Sands," located in the middle of the world's largest desert. The locals don't know much about the city, having never braved the harsh conditions of the desert to explore it. According to legend, the city is old, pre-dating Human settlement of the world. Legend says it is well-protected with traps and other devices to prevent outsiders from getting too close. Of course, the city also contains incredible riches (or ancient technology or cultural artifacts – the details change each time the story is retold). The adventurers aren't the first off-worlders to express an interest in the city; the locals express the hope that they won't be as foolish as the others, since no one has ever returned from such an expedition alive.

1. The city doesn't exist at all. It's just a tall tale told by the locals, some of whom may even believe the story.

2. As 1, but the locals (many of them, anyway) know the city doesn't exist. They use the story to con offworlders into buying lots of traveling gear and other equipment for the journey into the desert.

3. The "city" does exist, but it's not much of a city. Instead, it's the remains of a series of prefabricated survival structures built using Imperial technology from centuries ago. The structures contain a small number of old Imperial tools and other devices, which are of some value to historians and collectors, but pretty much useless otherwise.

4. The city exists but isn't what the locals think it is. It's a discarded set from a holovideo film made on this world more than 100 years ago. The set has suffered somewhat from exposure to the elements. Even so, an examination of the buildings makes it clear they weren't constructed to last or even to hold occupants; many are just elaborate facades.

5. The city exists. It's a small series of buildings and other structures, some of which hold artifacts and other remains that suggest this world was once inhabited by a non-Human race. The city is a major archaeological find that will take years to properly explore. Its discovery might not make the group rich, but they'll become minor celebrities and gain contacts in the scientific community for their efforts.

6. As 5, except the city is only the surface outpost of a vast underground complex that spans for kilometers beneath the world's surface. There's even evidence suggesting the underground portion of the city is still inhabited, a major – and potentially dangerous – find for the adventurers.

THE DERELICT

While in the far reaches of an inhabited system, the adventurers encounter what looks like a derelict vessel in orbit around a lifeless moon.

The ship doesn't respond to any attempts to communicate and seems to be completely without power or life support. According to salvage regulations, the adventurers have a claim to the hulk – if they can bring it back to a world where they can register that claim. To do that, they'll first have to venture on board.

1. The ship is an abandoned merchant freighter, attacked by pirates years ago and devoid of anything of intrinsic value other than itself. Claiming the vessel is a simple matter of either restarting its maneuver drives (currently without fuel) and piloting it back to an Imperial world, or towing it back. In either case, the group gets claim to the ship and may refurbish it or sell it, as they wish.

Articles expanding the history of the *Traveller* universe are also extremely popular, whether exploring the "canon" or presenting a variant to the official background. *Traveller* presents a very large canvas for GMs to paint their own universe upon, and part of the fascination of the game is how the characters interact with the myriad different societies and cultures.

The Rule of Man

by Kurt Brown and James Maliszewski   *Published July 11, 2000*

Part of the popularity of *Traveller* is its extensive history. Beginning 300,000 years ago and stretching into the far future, this history adds a level of detail to its background that few game settings can match. Consequently, players and Game Masters alike have a ready-made context in which to place their adventures among the stars. In addition, it's theoretically possible to set those adventures in different time periods, thereby taking further advantage of *Traveller*'s sweeping history. In two of its later incarnations, *Traveller* did just this, setting its action at the founding of the Third Imperium (Marc Miller's *Traveller, 4th Edition*) and in the rebirth after its demise (*Traveller: The New Era*).

A history as broad as *Traveller*'s will inevitably have gaps – even significant ones – that limit one's options for roleplaying in other eras. One of the largest concerns the Third Imperium's immediate predecessor, the Second Imperium, more popularly know as the Rule of Man. With its valiant-but-doomed ethos and emphasis on individual accomplishments, the Rule of Man has great potential as an alternate campaign setting for *Traveller*. Unfortunately, what little canonical material has been published on the period is scattered throughout numerous sources, many of them long out of print. The purpose of this article is thus twofold. First, it is intended to collect and collate previous information on the Rule of Man, so as to create a clearer picture of the period. Second, it will show how that material can be used to create an excellent backdrop for a historical *Traveller* campaign.

One of the ironies of the paucity of information on the Rule of Man is that it gives the GM a free hand in the development of his own campaign. For instance, we know the names of only the first two emperors of the Rule of Man. The rest of its history is no more detailed. Therefore, a GM can make the setting his own without fear of contradicting canon. Likewise, the players have no idea how events will unfold, giving the campaign an uncertainty it could never possess in the more detailed Third Imperium. This article provides a framework of "known facts" against which a GM can set his own game, as well as suggestions on how to do just that.

TIMELINE OF THE RULE OF MAN

All dates on the timeline (see p. 25) are listed first in Imperial years, followed by the Terran dating system (known either as A.D. or C.E.) used during the Second Imperium.

The 428-year history of the Rule of Man can be broken into three distinct phases. The first, lasting from -2204 (2317) to -2000 (2521), is a period of dynamism and growth, as the Solomani take over the reins of power in the Ziru Sirka. It will be called "The Rule of Man period." The second phase, lasting from -2000 (2351) to -1850 (2671), is a period of increasing instability and internal conflict. This article will refer to it as the "Second Imperium period." The third phase, lasting from -1850 (2671) to -1526 (2995), is a time of civil war and deterioration. This article will refer to it as the "Ramshackle Empire period." Each period offers opportunities for adventure unlike those found during the reign of the Third Imperium.

THE SEEDS OF EMPIRE

The Interstellar Wars ended when the Vilani Grand Imperium of the Stars (Ziru Sirka) collapsed, partially from its own age and fragility, and partially from the Terran victories. The Terrans moved quickly to occupy Vilani territory. Many Vilani subject races, like the Vegans, welcomed the Terrans as liberators. Terran naval officers were dispatched throughout the Grand Imperium. Between 2299 and 2314, over 100,000 naval officers were sent to take up the reins of government, direct local bureaucracies, and maintain peace and order.

These officers occupied key posts in the Vilani bureaucracy, which otherwise remained intact. In some cases, Terran ensigns administered entire worlds and mere commanders whole subsectors. Vilani military forces were incorporated into the Terran forces.

Traveller is a game for those who love technology, and this passion is reflected in *JTAS*'s readership – and its pool of contributors. And starships are by far the most popular subject of the "technogeeks" among *Traveller* fans.

Cortez-Class Salvage Ship

by Brandon Cope   *Published March 28, 2000*

Wherever starships travel, there will be a need to recover those unable to return. There are many types of salvage ships, of which the *Cortez* class is one of the smallest and most common.

Designed originally for use by shipping corporations to recover stranded merchant vessels, the *Cortez* class has since found its way into government and private use. The Imperial Navy purchased an undisclosed number to recover some of its lighter non-combat ships, the Scout Service operates several as part of its repair fleet, and many others have been put to use at Class V and Class IV starports as recovery vessels (working in conjunction with the *Blakeway*-class rescue ships). Several older ships, retired from active service, have been purchased by individuals and small salvage companies (salvage doesn't pay well enough to cover the cost of buying the ship new for private owners or small corporations, whereas large corporations can simply write it off as an operating expense). While most private owners are legitimate (most of the time), many are no better than pirates (and some, in fact, *are* pirates) and some pirate bands use stolen *Cortez*-class ships to haul badly damaged prey back to base. The ship is popular with some larger Vargr corsair "fleets," which gives the ship a poor reputation in some systems. Note, however, that a *Cortez*-class ship, by itself, is undergunned and quite slow, making it an unlikely choice as a solo pirate ship.

The ships of the *Cortez* class have the capability to repair most disabled ships, and can carry any ship up to 800 tons in displacement and still maintain Jump-1. There is an absolute limit of 1,500 stons mass (enough to carry any starship in *GURPS Traveller* except the *Dragon*-class SDB, *Broadsword*-class mercenary cruiser, a lightly loaded *Stellar*-class subsidized liner, unloaded Oberlindes cargo liner, or Tukera long-liner from *Far Trader*).

In most cases, the captain will try to repair a damaged ship using his large complement of technicians and shop facilities, since carrying a ship with the external cradle seriously reduces the ship's already poor performance. This is especially true if he can't reach another star system with Jump-1.

The class was originally named after explorers with a reputation for plunder and exploitation, but the ships are now used by so many different groups that there is no longer a standard naming scheme.

GENERAL LAYOUT

The ship has three and a half decks, each roughly 190 ft. (57.8 m) long and 60 ft. (18.2 m) wide. The full decks are 10 ft. (3 m) high, the half deck 5 ft. (1.5 m) high.

The top deck carries the bridge and eight staterooms (six single occupancy, two double occupancy), as well as the sickbays, low berths, and a 0.5-dton ship's locker. Immediately aft is a 75-dton cargo bay and one of the 50-dton-capacity space docks (holding one 40-ton fuel skimmer and one 10-ton launch in most cases). One sandcaster turret is on either side of the bridge and an airlock is adjacent to the bridge.

The second deck houses 14 staterooms (all double occupancy), another 75-dton cargo bay and the other 50-dton-capacity space dock.

Next is the half deck, which holds all of the ship's fuel and the fuel processor.

The last deck holds the labs (one of which is almost always devoted to metallurgy), all logistics modules, two staterooms (for the engineers and lab techs), a 25-dton cargo hold (normally full of spare parts) and all the drives.

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