

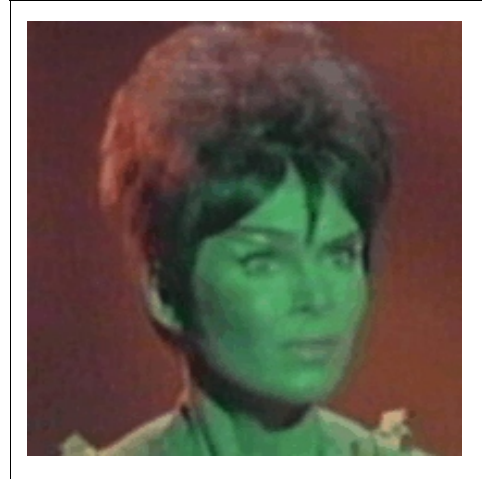
## Orions

The Orions from planet in the

1. Rigel system, for the most part, are Human-like beings. The dominant species of Orions have skin color ranging from ruggy, golden orange to the skin tones of Terran Caucasians.

Some very Human-like females, however, are born with green skin. Said to be less intelligent of the dominant Orions (tough this may be more lack of educational opportunity than from genetics they behave in a semi-animalistic fashion. They usually have long, sharp claws and a greater physical dexterity than the dominant Orions. Green-skinned Orion females are held in semi-slavery by

Orion males. They are extremely seductive, with legend holding that human males cannot resist them. Transport of Slave women beyond the neutral Orion planets is prohibited and, of course, slavery is outlawed at all levels on the Federation. Few Federation Star Fleet personnel have really ever seen an Orion slave female. Orion pirates and freebooters are sometimes encountered by Federation vassels



## GOVERNMENT

The Orion Colonies are allegdy neutral toward the Federation in external matters. They tend to encourage privateers (pirates), however, on an informal and unofficial basis, and Orion pirates and smugglers are sometimes encountered.

1.

Planet Orion is in the Rigel system :

Name of the system: Rigel

Position in the system: 8

Number of satellites: 2

Class: M

Percentage lands emerged: 80%

Population: 20 billion (all the system)

1.

Rigel is a system of four stars with thirteen planets, six of which I am populated. Rigel II and Rigel IV come identified often with the name of Rigelians Colonies. Rigel V is inhabited from a humanoid population very similar to Vulcans. Rigel VI and VII Rigel are two planets in troian orbit that represent a point of reference for the commercial exchanges of the Federation. Rigel VIII, called often also Orion, is inhabited by the aggressive humanoid native population from the yellow skin of about 5.4 billion of individuals. After have acquired the ability from terrestrial explorers of implement interstellar journeys, they have colonized planets and they have built the empire based on the piracy, as wrote above.

1.

Rigel is a quadruple star system that includes two stars of interest, a blue-white super giant and a somewhat smaller blue-white giant. They support a total of thirteen planets, six of which are

inhabited. This remarkable number of Class M worlds can be attributed to the system's extensive habitable orbital zone and to the Haelk radiation belt that surrounds the system's primary and shields the planets from the lethal doses of radiation emitted by the super giant. Rigel II and Rigel IV, sometimes referred to as the Rigel Colonies, were settled by Terran humans less than two hundred years ago. They are now major Federation worlds with a combined population of more than eight billion. Rigel V is inhabited by a peaceful humanoid population of approximately 1.3 billion. This culture is thought to be an off-shoot of the Vulcan race, due to the great physical similarities between them. Rigel V has been a member of the Federation since 2184, when the Rigel Accords were signed into law. Rigel VI and VII are a double planet system in a trojan orbit. Rigel VI is a major trade center that coordinates much of the cargo transportation that takes place between Rigel and its sister UFP members. Rigel VII, a large Class M world, is widely inhabited by a belligerent race of Neanderthaloid creatures called the **Kalar**. Technologically quite primitive, the Kalar rate a D-plus on the Richter Scale of Culture has become general practice to avoid Rigel VII also Early attempts at contact only resulted in armed conflict, as the native Rigellian Kalar prefer solitude. Rigel VIII, also referred to as

~~1. Orion~~, supports a humanoid population of aggressive, yellow-skinned warriors that number approximately 54 billion. After they were given the capacity for interstellar travel by early Earth explorers Orions colonized the two planets of Rigel's blue giant secondary star and went on to form a pirate empire. Trading primarily in Orion females, they built a sizable slave trade as demand for the green-skinned, sensual and aggressive female dancers increased. the slave trade was finally abolished by Federation intervention.

## Species Template: Orion

By

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Humanoids infamous throughout the Federation because of the Orion Syndicate. Some breeds are green-skinned, especially the valuable Orion slave women.

### Attributes

Fitness 2 [6]

Strength +1

Coordination 2 [5]

Intellect 2 [5]

Perception +1

Presence 2 [5]

Psi 0 [6]

### Skills

Bargain (choose Specialization) 2 (3)

Culture (Orion) 2 (3)

History (Orion) 1 (2)

Language, Federation Standard 1

Orion 2

Streetwise (choose Specialization) 2 (3)

World Knowledge (Rigel VII or other homeworld) 1 (2)

### Typical Advantages/Disadvantages

Greedy -1, Sexy +2 (females)

## ORION

Species Adjustments: +1 perception, +1 presence

Adaptable: Orions have spread throughout the galaxy since the fall of their great empires forcing them to adapt to changing circumstances. +2 Savvy, Quickness, or Willpower reactions.

Seductive: A combination of specialized pheromones and training from youth to allure men either for their masters or to ensure a good marriage for her, Orion women gain +4 species bonus to

Influence (Seduce) tests; males gain a +2 bonus.

Devious: Orion society forces men to scheme for power over their foes within and without. As such Orions get a +2 species bonus to influence tests.

Infamy: Orions as a whole are looked upon with mistrust by the galaxy. As a result all Orions begin with the infamy flaw in either criminal aspect for males or imorality for women.

1.

Orions for CODA

Language: Orion

Common Names: Orions place their house/clan name after their given name. Only those females who are adopted by a clan or house may have a family name.

Family Names: Kutch, Smug, Ovar

Given Names (Male): Mulio, Relandren

Given Names (Female): Mila, Harba

Favoured Profession: Rogue. The Orion's eat or be eaten world and their focus on cleverness is an excelent breeding ground for rogues, no matter how many may claim to be merchants.

Species Adjustments: +1 perception, +1 presence

Adaptable: Orions have spread throughout the galaxy since the fall of their great empires forcing them to adapt to changing circumstances. +2 Savvy, Quickness, or Willpower reactions.

(Females only) Seductive: A combination of specialized pheromones and training from youth to allure men either for their masters or to ensure a good marriage for her, Orion women gain +4 species bonus to Influence (Seduce) tests.

(Males only) Devious: Orion society forces men to scheme for power over their foes within and without. As such male Orions get a +2 species bonus to influence tests.

Infamy: Orions as a whole are looked upon with mistrust by the galaxy. As a result all Orions begin with the infamy flaw in either criminal aspect for males or imorality for women.

## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

1. As a humanoid species, Orions greatly resemble *Homo sapiens*. Males average 1.7 meters in height, and weigh around 70 kilograms, while females average 1.5 meters in height and with approximately 60 kilograms. They live approximately 150 standard years.

The Orions' distinctive difference is their colors. Constituting about three-fifths of the Orion population, Ruddy Orions have skin tones ranging from ruddy orange and yellow to Terran caucasian or red-brown. Their skin is sensitive to strong sunlight (such as that from Rigel), which can deepen their color or cause an unsightly purple burn. Ruddy eye colors range from yellow to sea-blue, violet, or occasionally black. Ruddy Orions are also naturally hairless, but wigs and various hairpieces are often worn by Ruddies as status symbols. The more highly-placed the Ruddy Orion, the more ornate the wig, including encrusted jewels. Ruddy wig fashions are constantly changing, and new colors and trends often turn up on Orion worlds-some rather startling. Ruddy Orions tend to be slender, and some can be quite delicate. The fat Ruddy is a rarity. By Human standards, their proportions and features are pleasing, even beautiful. Judging by physical standards, it is perhaps easy to see how Ruddies claim their racial (and socio-economic) superiority.

Green Orions often seem coarse compared to Ruddy Orions. Green Orions skin tones range from grass-green to deep pine, and their coloration deepens nicely in strong sunlight. Their eye colors are not as varied as Ruddies, with black being most common, and lighter shades of green making up the remaining variety. Some Greens (referred to as 'erratics') have very different eye colors: blue, brown, gold, yellow, silver, and even pink. Physically, Green Orions tend to have powerful and fleshy builds. Most are as tall as Ruddies, but they are generally more muscular as a result of manual labor, and are also apt to be more obese than slender. Greens differ from Ruddies in two very important ways; first Green Orions tend to be very hairy, though baldness may occur in older adulthood. Green Orions generally have thick black hair with metallic green highlights. Body hair is also common among both males and females, and is considered a mark of distinction among Green Orions. Green Orions for the most part, hold the 'smoothness' of Ruddies in contempt. Ruddies for their part, consider body hair disgusting, and no subject for polite company. Secondly, Green Orions tend to smell. Although uninformed Ruddies and other non-Orions believe this is the result of insufficient hygiene, the scent of Green Orion is a natural function. Green Orion skin is noticeably oilier and shinier than that of Ruddies. The scent is not unpleasant to humanoid races, but can prove irritable to canine or feline races, or other races with strong olfactory abilities. The scent is unnoticeable to humanoids after about five minutes. Pleasant or not, the scent is definitely not innocuous. It is heavily laden with pheromones, or chemical agents that affect the subconscious of most humanoid races. The effect is comforting, even soothing. Ten minutes among any sizable group of Greens drains tension, and even proves tranquilizing upon the recipient. This applies with equal effect should the group of Greens be feeling fear, anger, or desire, which alters the scent. While this pheromonal scent does not compel bystanders to share a particular mood, it does make them susceptible to it.

## **GREY ORIONS**

Grey Orions are a special case when discussing the various Orion races. Grey Orions are a small third subrace, constituting no more than 1-3% of the population of any given Orion world or colony. Only in the past 25 years, since Orion culture opened to the possibility of joining the Federation has the existence of Grey Orions come into common knowledge.

For nearly a thousand years, after the Orion Reverse unto present times the Grey Orions were relegated into slavery by both the Ruddies and Greens. Once Orion society began to decay, and collapse into what

is historically referred to as the Reverse, Grey Orions, as masters of the Orion military, government, and technology were unable to produce any solutions, and were cast from their halls of power by the Ruddies, with whom they shared power, and Green Orions who were predominantly the soldiers and workers, and willing to blame societal collapse upon those who failed to lead the Orion peoples-the Grey Orions. For their part, Ruddies and Greens understood Grey Orions could not be completely disposed of because of the technological knowledge they possessed. Ruddies, as new masters of Orion society, realized that Grey Orions had to be made dependent on their new masters, in order to ensure their subjugation. To this end, a virulent mutating virus was introduced to the remaining Greys that survived the pogrom against them. This virus, still not fully understood by Federation medical science, produced random mutations from generation to generation, causing a wide variety of ailments, creating a medical dependency by the Greys upon their masters and owners. Grey Orions are completely hairless, as Ruddies are. Skin tones range from light charcoal, to ebony. Eye colors tend toward some shade of blue, violet, pink, or an occasional silver. Due to extended exposure to the mutating virus (whose name has since been forgotten by Orions) all Greys have some medical ailment. These ailments range from the serious; one or multiple missing or deformed limbs and blindness, cystic fibrosis, neurofibromatosis, to the relatively benign; various psychological problems such as manic depression, anxiety, narcolepsy, and paranoia, nearsightedness, and farsightedness. This naturally affects the physical appearance of Grey Orions. Assuming an individual has all limbs and stands relatively erect, average height is 1 meter for both males and females.

After the Orion government freed Grey Orions from slavery, ten years before joining the Federation, both Orion and Federation scientists have been searching for those precious few Grey Orions who were fortunate enough to escape the genetic lottery created by their mutating virus, to escape *any* genetic abnormalities, in the hope of having a nearly uncorrupted case study in order to determine a baseline for Grey Orion anatomy and biochemistry. Once this is done, it is believed proper study of the mutating virus may begin and a treatment found. Curiously enough, the response from Grey Orions to such overtures range from polite refusal of anything but the most necessary care provided by Federation medical teams, to cold silence to such overtures from the existing Orion government and their colonies.

Grey Orions have also migrated from the interior of Orion space, to its exterior or well inside Federation space. If Grey Orions remain in Orion space, they tend to inhabit various failed colony worlds, and associate only with non-Orions or other Greys. The relative seclusion Grey Orions have chosen has led to speculation on the part of Federation and Orion scientists that perhaps the Greys are either anticipating their demise, or on the verge of curing future generations, if not the existing generations. Either way, time will bear out such assertions.

## THE ORION MIND

1. As Vulcans are known for logic, Klingons for aggression, Romulans for stoicism, and Ferengi for avarice and rapaciousness, Orions have made a name for themselves in treachery. While Orions do not particularly work or train at it, treachery is often a side effect of their peculiar and self-centered way of looking at things.

The Orion mind is complicated because Orions think in complicated ways. There are five basic facets to their way of thinking: opportunism, egocentricity, materialism, hedonism, and barbarity. Added together, these traits make Orions maddeningly difficult to get along with, let alone understand. The wise reader should also remember there are those Orions who do not necessarily follow these traits; whether for their own reasons, or just to be additionally difficult none may say.

Orion opportunism is legendary. If there is a profit to be made, an Orion will find it no matter how unorthodox or strange the means. This is the primary difference between Ferengi rapacity and Orion

opportunism, but since this issue becomes a matter of custom, the differences can be various shades of gray. Figuring chances, finding advantages, and measuring and comparing risks come naturally to Orions. In any given situation, an Orion will find out how either to clean up, or else to get out with his skin intact.

Because of their faculty for gauging odds and their drive to win, Orions make formidable negotiators and able diplomats. From interstellar conferences to family confrontations, their politics are always multifarious and riddled with several flavors of intrigue. They are the black belts of the bluff, the concealed motive, and the ringer. An Orion enjoys matching wits in bargaining, and will play a complicated deal like a chess match. In fact Orions will often prolong dickerings in a business deal for its own sake.

If left unchecked, opportunism would make the Orions very dangerous. Fortunately, other traits balance their bargaining skill. For example Orion egocentricity leads to overconfidence, which can be used against them. Most Orions are confident that they can get away with what they want, and are not shy about letting other people know. Proud of their brains, muscles, wealth, powerful friends, and ancient culture, they may show off just enough to trip themselves up.

Orion egocentricity is not limited to individuals. An Orion is loyal to his family, company, and any other group to which he belongs. Every Orion crewman knows his ship is his best in known space, and every Orion archexecutive believes his corporation is destined for glory. Greens pride themselves on being the backbone of Orion might and the muscles of Orion civilization while Ruddies are proud to be the nobility, brains, and rulers. Furthermore, because they are members of such a proud, ancient, and puissant race, every Orion feels just a bit superior to the other peoples in space. Although it makes Orions hard to deal with, it also makes them vulnerable.

Orions and their materialism are an old cliché. If the Orions could rent the sunset, they would have three per day, and schedule them before five so that they would not have to pay overtime. Only the Ferengi cares so passionately about material things, or puts monetary value on things other races take for granted. Orion mothers really *do* sell cookies to their own children. The reason for this is that Orions are excellent at estimating value. Material value is a universal language among Orions-the one thing upon which everyone can agree. To have a price for everything is not crass; it is a necessity, and the very foundation of polite discourse and business. Orions themselves joke about the value of a particular sunset, the cost of clouds, and the dearness of dust. To an Orion, it is a comfort to rely on some standards. They are a measure of sincerity.

Of course, Orions know there is also more to life than credits or gold-pressed latinum. A mother may sell cookies to her family, but she dispenses them with a kiss. True friends are never bought-loyalty is bound to blood, and blood alone. Although money can never replace love and devotion, Orions are like Ferengi in that both believe money more reliable.

Orion taste for luxury is so unfettered that it embarrasses less self-conscious races, and seems to be the only thing so closely similar to Ferengi belief. Living as well as their means will let them, Orions spend all they make on rich clothing and jewelry, ornate furnishings and hangings, and lavish mansions and vehicles. They enjoy displays of wealth and comfort as much as they enjoy being rich and comfortable (though of course, not all Orions are). Orions see no virtue in poverty, or acting impoverished. Life is to be *enjoyed* right down to the bottom of the pocket.

Orions enjoy large-scale entertainment: from street circuses to concerts, holomovies, to festivals. It gives them a chance to dress up and to see and be seen in all their finery. Upper-class Orions are proud of their large and sumptuous banquets, which feature musicians, dancers, entertainment, and food from many worlds. Even the most pragmatic and hard-driven business meeting is not properly concluded until the final feast, with all participants trying to out-spectacle each other-an Orion corporation without a major Entertainment Division is unheard of. In such business gatherings, of course, the goal is more often to impress than to relax.

Even Klingons, who are not known for their gentility, remark on Orion barbarism. Of all Orion characteristics, this one differentiates them most from any other spacefaring peoples. Occasionally, a Ruddy Orion will comment that Orions are merely decadent, and not barbaric at all. After all, how could a race that plied the stars when Humans, Vulcans and Klingons could not cross their own oceans be barbaric?

The crux may lie in the way Orions perceive themselves. Far from disagreeing with any unflattering descriptions of themselves, they enjoy their reputation. Being secretive and treacherous has made them a great deal of money over the millenia, and to conquer a lot of planets, which is all they really ever wanted.

Let the Klingons vie for mastery, the Federation seek peaceful settlement of the galaxy, and the Romulans pursue whatever it is Romulans pursue. The Orions have no such racial purpose because they live for self-indulgence, and devil take the hindmost. The average Orion thinks it is silly to argue about racial destiny when he has a business to run. Although they may seem stagnant and purposeless, at least they thoroughly enjoy themselves.

## ORION BELIEFS

### 1. CLUROS

Orions have no concept of honor. What is the use of being honest, incorruptible, and true to ideals when survival in business depends on doing the exact opposite? Still, the Orions do have *cluros*; a code of self-control and restraint that attempts to limit brutal excesses while not really altering behavior. Translated as 'coolness' or 'cold', *cluros* means keeping one's head even in the most devastating or infuriating circumstances and, if possible, causing one's enemies to lose theirs. In fact, most starfaring races use a cold analogy as a metaphor for keeping one's personal calm: Andorians advise to "Let the heat drop", Tellarites direct the angry to "Chill!", and even Vulcans must "Zero".

By the rules of *cluros*, one must always speak formally, and levelly to one's opponents, whether they carry briefcase or blasters. As they are harmless, the disarmed and powerless are always treated with respect and courtesy. One must not forget any details or allow distractions of any sort to interfere with one's smooth, unruffled demeanor. To lose one's temper, to shout, scream, or cry, or to use more force than necessary signals a lack of *cluros*, but the Ruddy Orion who spurns *cluros* risks losing the respect of his friends, enemies, neutrals, and dependents. Worse, he elevates his opponents.

There can be great nobility in *cluros*. The shipowner shrugs after a billion credits worth of cargo vanishes without trace. The pirate grins at the enemy guns as his ship lies helpless. The *tahedri* who calmly buries a son and silently plans the vaporization of his killers. Frequently, *cluros* masks a battle of wits going on beneath a surface of politeness, and the victor is he who keeps the most hidden while making his opponents reveal more. Orion diplomacy uses much *cluros*.

The highest goal of *cluros* is to cause one's enemies to lose their cool. Being maddeningly polite and restrained in the face of provocation may infuriate a tormentor into losing control, which demonstrates his baseness to all. Lapses of this kind are rare, but attempts to cause it never stop. *Cluros* is not just a code of conduct; in the hands of the Orions, it is a very effective weapon for winning bloodless battles. It may well be the highest expression of Orion civilization.

## REVENGE

Lacking a sense of honor, and revering the keeping of one's faculties in times of crisis (*cluros*), Orions do not seem to have much need for revenge. In practice, Orion business creates bedlam, wounds feelings, and destroys reputations. Like other victims, Orions too wish to answer insults, whether intentional or not.

What distinguishes Orion revenge, is the concept of *cluros*; the coolness of Orion display while pursuing revenge. They will never reveal injury, or its source because that would alert the intended victim(s) of their impending fate. Orions go to enormous lengths to hide the depth of their loss, grief, or rage, even to the extent of befriending the hated organization or individual. *Cluros* is an invaluable aid to concealing bitterness and postponing retribution to the final, sweetest possible moment.

An example of this is an old Orion tale. It is said the story is quite authentic, and the principals real, set during the Orion Dawn, some three thousand years ago. It is entitled "The Tale of Benara":

*Lady Katam married the youngest of the three sons of Lord Benara. When Lord Benara parceled out his lands to his sons before retiring, Lady Katam persuaded her husband that he was being slighted while his brothers were plotting against him and laughing behind his back. Outraged, the youngest brother began a bitter war for the succession. The youngest brother was killed when the older sons besieged his estate, and the middle brother then took the youngest's possessions: estates, palaces, lands, and Lady Katam as his consort. Although he intended to share his late brother's estates equally with the eldest brother, Lady Katam told her newest husband that the possessions of her late husband were his by right of conquest, and that the eldest brother would take them if he demonstrated any weakness.*

*At the same time, Lady Katam was secretly visiting the eldest brother, and informing him of the middle brother's intrigues to keep their late brother's lands. In grim despair, the eldest brother built up his armies and gathered his own allies to forestall any overt move.*

*For five years, the brothers armed and held guarded talks, but did not come to any agreement. The disputed lands were neglected, and their productivity dropped. Other powerful families gathered to one side or the other, or sometimes both, hoping to improve their own fortunes, regardless of the outcome of the looming conflict. Finally, at their Father's abandoned palace, the brothers agreed to meet and decide an equitable agreement between them. Both, unknown to the other, brought their own troops and those of their closest allies. Then, lured out of the palace by a ruse, the middle brother rode into a trap set by his eldest brother's allies, and was slain. His retainers raised the alarm, and all the armies rose up and fought. Many families seized land belonging to House Benara. Soon the palace was in flames, and the battle filled the land from horizon to horizon. The eldest brother and his retinue, clad in body armor, and with lasers drawn, confronted Lady Katam in her chambers where she was kneeling, unarmed.*

*She told them that it had been 20 years since her father had been murdered by old Lord Benara of late memory, and that her father's lands and family-her lands and family, had been scattered to Benara's retainers. She had sworn she would not die until she had brought House Benara to its end. "It doesn't matter what you do to me.", she said, and simply continued to kneel.*

*The Eldest Son of House Benara holstered his laser, and grasped an ancient sword hanging decoratively on a wall, and beheaded Lady Katam in one blow. Then, he and his retainers departed the burning palace to rejoin the battle. The remaining son of House Benara would fall in combat before the day was through, and that was the end of House Benara.*

## **SPITE**

Even the rigidly logical Vulcans are no more efficient and practical than Orions. Everything gained must be for a purpose: enrichment, the sake of a *tahedrin* or *rhadamanen*, or revenge. The idea that someone

may work and sacrifice to produce nothing at all goes directly against Orion thinking. It is an almost incomprehensible concept-but not an unknown one.

"Spite" has no one-word equivalent in the Orion language. Orions can readily conceive, however, of a type of revenge that would require someone to work toward a reward they did not really want in order to deceive an enemy into doing something they did not want to do. Such a payoff is clear.

Of course, it is easy for an Orion to rationalize doing something to drive his rivals and competitors crazy trying to figure out what he is up to. It might even deprive *them* of a profit, a very sweet possibility. It is this possibility that allows many Orions to do such a contrary thing. Spite has a kind of giddy attraction to itself for that reason, being the absolutely last possible reason any Orion could have for doing anything. Also, it is possible for an Orion to lead another to believe that he is doing something for nothing, but all the while misleading the other in order to rob him blind, to serve his masters, to wreak vengeance on him, or simply to unnerve him and drive him crazy.

Sometimes, for the Orions, explaining spite, is spite.

## ORION SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

1. The Orions have the most stratified spacefaring society in the known galaxy. Besides discriminating between people on the basis of color, sex, income, family, and profession, they care greatly about social class and status, titles, rank, and whether or not one's past is honorable. Between nobility and the slaves are myriad distinctions. It is better to be male instead of female, Ruddy instead of Green, rich instead of poor, a member of a large and prosperous family instead of a small, poor, or disreputable one, and it *always* helps to have connections.

The Ruddy race is dominant; they are the nobility, the executives, the captains of ships, the owners of plantations and factories. The Greens are the workers, the field hands, the soldiers and former slaves. Although the lines between the two are firm, they are not absolute. Many ships, particularly if considered elite, have all-Ruddy crews, and a Green with intelligence and persistence can rise to be a foreman or give orders to Ruddies. Ruddy Orions regard Green social climbing with disdain, but reserve their contempt for Ruddies who become so wretched that they forfeit their social standing. Though it is not necessarily degrading to work for a Green, it is rather sordid to spend all of one's time with them.

Orion society is unselfconsciously male-dominated. Men command every level of Orion life, and the line between the sexes is drawn very surely. The only place where women have any say is in their home life, and even there it is a matter of compromise and negotiation. Though there are very few exceptions, Orion females who rise to positions of authority tend to be very good at what they do. All Orions are adept at wielding power behind the scenes, and there is no reason to believe that Orion women are any less effective than the men.

Respecting wealth and power, Orions particularly admire those whose vocations let them wield both: archexecutives, the eldest son of distinguished families, bankers, shipowners, and merchants. They also greatly respect the rare individual who breaks out of poverty and obscurity to gain authority and riches. Everyone dreams of doing the same thing, if he (or she) can only make that lucky break.

Space grips the Orion imagination like nothing else. For centuries, the key to wealth and power was voyaging into the unknown beyond the rim of Orion Space to find new worlds with which to trade-or to loot. Even though Orion Space has contracted and in spite of (or because of) Starfleet persecution, Orion pirates have a mystique that everyone craves. An industrialist employing millions of beings is still flattered to be acquainted with the captain of a single small ship. There are plenty of opportunities for young men in space-even if they wind up sweeping a dock, loading crates, or dead. Orions look up to a spacer,

whatever his stripe.

To a great extent, Orions depend on personal leadership. They revere anyone who stands for an ideal and makes other people work toward it with him. Such leaders are rare among the Orions, who can usually find a way to undermine the strongest opponent. The man who cannot be swayed, bought, or shamed wins over even his enemies with his demonstrated virtue. Such an Orion can be trusted, and Orions work wonders for such as him. Unfortunately, such leadership is fleeting; a slip, a mistake of judgment, or a lapse of virtue crumbles the power to dust. Relying on charismatic people, the Orions have no faith in organizations or impersonal authority. When the leader goes, the Orions revert to plotting and selfish behavior until another finds the strength to lead them again.

Attempts to perpetuate power structures have been unsuccessful. Only three types of Orion organizations have any longevity, and they can only be described in gradually more precise terms: family, corporations, government, and the revenge society.

## **THE ORION FAMILY**

The family is the basis and model for all of Orion life and certainly the oldest and most indestructible form of organization. Orion families find work for the sons, husbands and dowry for the daughters, and help for the sick. It is the last place and Orion expects to be betrayed.

The family *Tahedri*, or patriarch, has a good deal to say about how the members conduct themselves. Possessing absolute authority, he decides who marries, when, to whom, and how much the dowry should be. He runs the family business, if any. Technically, the senior female, the *Tabadi*, has only minimal influence, but in reality, she can wield great power. No Orion who can still speak is powerless.

A *Tahedri* takes pride in the number of people he can keep happy, healthy, prosperous, and together. Those who are good at this attract alliances with other families who seek to improve their fortunes. A few carefully arranged marriages can construct networks of families with thousands or tens of thousands of members, all interdependent and self-supporting. The strength and influence of such extended families are great; many Orion worlds are governed by a handful of ruling families whose word and name means law.

Age mostly determines hierarchy in Orion families. If a *tahedri* feels his health will not let him continue, he may appoint a new *tahedri*-typically the next oldest, most closely related male-and retire. In some divided families however, sons rebel against father or grandfather, and violence may be required to settle matters. Things rarely get this bad in the better families, where less-senior males may plot to get around the *tahedri*'s dictates but respect his age and position. The Orion family's soundness rests on this natural order.

## **ORION CORPORATIONS**

Business firms of all types and sizes are a very durable form of organization among Orions. Corporations exist to make money, which all Orions enjoy, and their structure mimics and improves upon the Orion family. One man, the chief executive officer, is at the top, and a handful of proven, capable leaders in a limited hierarchy are below him. Whether they are a handful of men and one ship, or a multi-planet operation with millions of employees and shareholders, Orion corporations never have more than five levels of command and control.

Orion corporations work because of the *Rhadamanen*-the archexecutives. More than people at desks or names on a chart, they are exceedingly gifted leaders who can inspire confidence among perhaps thousands of Orions who work for them directly. Such people are rare; Orion corporations actively look for them, usually among their own ranks. Archexecutives are a kind of Orion cultural hero; the men who get things done. Even a starship captain is a kind of specialized *rhadaman*; they wield power earned through

work and respect. Like *tahedrin*, they usually succeed each other by age and seniority. Intracorporate wars are not as common as struggles between competing firms (nor as bloody), but they involve more people and use up a lot more resources-ships, planets, installations, and the like. *Rhadamanen* who can keep their firms in line and keep intracorporate struggle low-key and inexpensive, command great authority and respect.

Orion corporations are known for their accelerated methods. Because only one man makes the important decisions, he can instantly mobilize his company to seize any opportunity. Orion shipping firms are quite profitable concerns-paradoxically, the smaller they are, the more efficient they become. However, they are more than money-making machines. For many Orions, the company is like a second family. Orion corporations take good care of their employees, offering comfortable pay and liberal vacations and valuing their employee's input. Preventing disaffection has made Orion businesses like feudal fiefs, and a large portion of their power comes from the loyalty of their employees. They often have more support, more overt signs of patriotism (flags, songs, bands, and paid festivals) than most planets. Frequently, they act as if they were sovereign, answering to no one but their archexecutives and stockholders.

## **ORION GOVERNMENT**

Governments are the weakest, least stable power structure of the Orions. Families take care of most social needs, corporations do the rest. Only the most unwanted and unglamorous tasks fall to governments, including maintaining roads and infrastructure, and keeping records. Although they were once more powerful, today even the Orion homeworld's government has to rent ships in order to pursue its own business. System patrol now falls to Starfleet Command since Rigel joined the Federation.

Most Orion worlds and the vestigial nations of their home planet have elections for public posts. However, the heart of Orion government is the bureaucracy. Hidden behind the scenes, it issues permits, stamps licenses, conducts inspections, accepts bribes, and generally does whatever work is necessary to keep them in business. As even the best-run Orion planet requires professional administrators, there is bureaucracy on every Orion world.

Diplomacy used to be a sideline of Orion governments. Envoys and ambassadors were exchanged to keep in touch and to provide work for needy civil servants and impoverished nobility. Then came the Federation who sought a central voice in civil authority in order to respond to their own. Out of the shadows came Orion diplomats, promising a solution if only they conducted proper meetings. At first the Federation did not realize that the officials and ambassadors had only their reputations and word to back them up. It was inconceivable that the bulk of Orion power rested with a few well-connected dynasties and corporations. By the time the UFP learned the true nature of Orion power and its distribution, it was too late-the pattern was already established. However, by believing in Orion diplomacy, the aliens from the Federation actually made it a ponderable force.

Diplomacy waxed especially powerful at Botchok (Rigel VIII), the Orion home world, where high-ranking Federation representatives would bring matters before the ruling council of all Orions. Centrally located in Orion Space, Botchok already had a nostalgic claim on most Orions. The arrival of the Federation diplomats brought diplomats of every stripe, lobbyists, and spies.

Diplomats power remains purely persuasive. Nevertheless, they can often persuade some powerful miscreant to accept a settlement in credits, gold-pressed latinum, dilithium, or other currency-from the complainant to stop the hurtful activity. Although undignified and mercenary, such tactics have proven effective enough to guarantee a useful role for Orion government for years to come.

## **ORION REVENGE SOCIETY**

Of all the factions, cliques, clubs, and other minor organizations, perhaps the most interesting is the *ganzu*, or revenge society. Even in Orion society, incidents sometimes occur for which there is no

effective reprisal; a business deal falls through, a girlfriend is stolen, a perpetrator is known but there is no proof, or the law prohibits a wrongdoer's just reward. A wronged individual who lacks the means to make his displeasure felt contacts the local *ganzu* and pays for a suitable act of retribution. It could be as simple as a sabotaged grav car or as involved as the looting of a warehouse. Although the cost tends to be high, the results are usually worth the price. Some particularly obnoxious individual Orions may pay off the local *ganzu* to prevent them from visiting; a *ganzu* with good notoriety can make a decent living from these alone.

Technically, the *ganzu* are illegal in the Federation, but there is no way to eradicate them. Wherever Orions live, *ganzu* appear spontaneously. For the most part, their members are not professional criminals, but rather ordinary citizens who are inclined toward their own style of justice. Plus, it can be dangerous fun, and it makes a little money on the side-always a good thing. It is not possible to state the intentions of all *ganzu* at all times-among the Orions, even organized crime is disorganized.

## ORION LANGUAGES

1. There is only one Orion language, but it has two forms: High Orion, used by the upper classes for business and formal occasions, and Low Orion, spoken by the Greens but used informally at every level of society. Every Orion speaker has at least a passing knowledge of both forms.

The language of diplomacy and high-level negotiations, High Orion is flowery and difficult, with precise rules of grammar and careful shades of meaning. Low Orion is the dockside vernacular, simpler, cruder, and more flexible. Although both use the same words, pronunciations are different. High can be musical and delicate, but Low has broader vowels and a honking, nasal sound. Those who learn the Orion tongue begin with the High form, acquiring the Low in passing. Both tend to be trickier than they appear.

Orion is loaded with double meanings, ambiguities, and intentionally vague words, and the interpretations reside in the context of usage. For example, there is no single word for 'yes', or 'no'; any affirmation or denial is always qualified: "Yes, if", or "No, but". Though a marvelous debating language, delivering a direct answer is virtually impossible in Orion.

Orion is a terrific cursing language. Although Low Orion has more vile epithets and simple bad words, High Orion has a sophisticated cursing case used to deliver delicate and elaborate insults in ambiguous terms, sometimes in verse. Such exchanges are works of art, expressions of an extremely limited linguistic style, and rarely heard by non-Orions.

Orions prefer not to use their own language around offworlders. Because Orion is a language ideally suited for those who wish to conceal their meaning and intention, the language is hazardous for talks with aliens not used to such subtleties. Orions speak the language of whatever race they are dealing with to put them at ease, to lull their suspicions, and to get inside their thinking. The Orions appear courteous, but their intentions are to gain as much information as they can without disclosing any of their own.

Uninformed beings sometimes mistake the Orion language for a different language called Rigellian. Rigellians are a furred and tailed bipedal race who happen to live in the same star system, Rigel IV to be precise, and who are far older than the Orion race. The Rigellians control a great deal of the in-system trade, and Rigel IV is the busiest freeport this side of Ferenginar. A simplified form of their language, called Rigellian Trade Lingo, is the lingua franca of all the merchants who deal on Rigel IV or in the Rigel system. As simple as Orion is complex, Rigellian Trade Lingo has a large number of adjectives and adverbs tailor-made for describing cargoes, and its words each have an unmistakable, single meaning-perfect for brief dickering (time is money to a merchant). It is easy to pick up, easy to use, and hard to misunderstand.

Each language has a particular province. High Orion for the ambassador's reception or a trade

negotiation between two or multiple Orion houses. Low Orion in the spaceport bar and dockyards, and Rigellian Trade Lingo on the dockyards, the trade broker's office, or the commodity or stock exchanges. Of course, if non-Orions are present, their language is always spoken instead. Orions are rarely at a lack for anyone else's words.

## ORION NAMES

1. Orion names generally come in three parts: a first or given name, a family name, and an honorific or nickname. Nicknames are generally not used among non-Orions. First names tend to be short, but members of older and prouder families are sometimes given longer names. Orions prefer names that are memorable and easy to pronounce so that they stand out from the crowd. Unless very well-known or respected, Orion family names are rarely mentioned in public. Family names identify an individual's relations, allegiances, and enemies-too much information for an Orion to reveal to another Orion. In business, an Orion nearly always identifies him or herself by both first and family name to any non-Orion, since most races expect such it in discourse of business activity. Less reputable Orion families are extremely reluctant to let any Orion know their surname.

Orion family names tend to have open vowels, and a high frequency of 'k', 's', and 'v' sounds. For example, consider "Na'aa", "Stavioloschok" (pronounced stov-ih-roll-ose-choke), or "Koltek" (pronounced coal-tek). If the name hisses, snaps, and sounds a trifle nasal, it is likely Orion.

By the time he reaches adulthood, a *male* Orion has probably acquired at least one nickname that marks some prominent characteristic or accomplishment of his. Most of these are flattering: Tenacious, Strong, Fortunate, Unsparing, Bloody-Handed, or even Dirty. The proper Orion honorific *always* follows his given name, as in "Hubin the Burned", or "Aram the Unconquered". When the honorific is intended to be uncomplimentary, the honorific *precedes* the given name, as in "Deacon Repeto", or "Crazy Drelk".

An Orion is usually called by his first name and honorific, plus any title he may have while among Orions. Fond of titles and distinctions, particularly if earned, Orions enjoy springing them as surprises on unsuspecting enemies. Imagine the emotion of the trader Delk the Brash when he discovers that his caller is not simply his old pirate buddy Donat the Unlucky, but Assistant Planetary Trade Consultant Donat-with a few thugs to settle some tax liability.

## Orion Slavery

1.

### The Slave Life

As the Orions began their civilization in slavery, it should hardly be surprising that they continued the practice into modern times. Orion slavery is a subtle and complex thing, filled with rights and duties incumbent on both master and slave, and not as absolute as some Federation writers have made it seem. For example, the term for "slave" in Orion (*dubi*), is only a diminutive form of the word for "contractor" (*dubya*). To the Orions, slaves are only a kind of contracted labor-not wholesale ownership of one living being by another. In practice however, the difference is not appreciable.

Only *Green Orions* are slaves among Orions. By custom stronger than law, Ruddy Orions never lapse into slavery, either voluntarily or enforced. Men as well as women may be enslaved-or may enslave

themselves. Most Greens experience slavery at least once. Slavery may last a lifetime, a slave may be given his freedom, or he may actually buy himself-and turn around, and re-enslave himself again! Of all Orion institutions, slavery is the most complex, mystifying, and important. The Federation has in the past tried to eradicate the practice with only limited success. It took the Orions to eradicate it themselves.

Orion slaves comprised a large portion of the total Orion labor pool. They worked the fields, operated the basic industrial machines, handled domestic chores, and performed an astonishing amount of hand-done work, whether in fine machinery or tending animals. In exchange for their labor, they received food, shelter, a modicum of clothing, and some of them even collect an allowance. Except for the very lowest and unskilled of laborers, discipline was light-there were no whips, chains, or any other signs of their low status. To the Orions, slavery was not oppressive, but a rational and even honorable way of life.

Although there was no such thing as a typical Orion slave, an average unskilled and uneducated Green Orion might enter slavery as early as age ten or twelve. His parents made the arrangements for the sale, which is, surprisingly enough, completely voluntary on their part. In fact, shopping for the right master was considered very important to the future slave's parents, as their child's education and eventual livelihood depend on that critical first owner. The larger and finer estates were swamped by a continuous stream of petitions begging the family to take a child into their service. In any year, only a few could be accepted, and the rest were turned away to accept lesser houses and names. The entire process greatly resembled that of a school entrance.

Once accepted into service, a slave was given a place in the household and a simple job (often more than one), and was tested and questioned to find any aptitude. He then entered training to develop this aptitude and to become valuable and disciplined. The range of slave education was quite wide, running from simple bookkeeping to sophisticated technical training and even, for a few, the skills needed to become a starship crewman. Once a slave was trained and demonstrated some degree of competency at his intended job, he was often resold at a substantial markup to an owner with a need for his skills. Most large Ruddy Orion households made a tiny amount by taking, training, and reselling bright and promising Green youngsters. Some seemed to be veritable slave factories, with a yearly output in the thousands of people.

Once trained, a slave was pretty much set for life in his or her job. Depending on his specialty, he might have worked for one master or many, a handful of years or a lifetime. An individual would have gained his freedom in one of three ways: preselected contractual date, self-purchase, or manumission.

By predetermined contract with his master, a Green Orion slave might have been set free after a number of years in service. Such agreements were usually specific to a particular master. If the slave was sold before the term expired, the slave could have appealed to a tribunal for his freedom. In most instances, it seemed that the slave-holder had to compel his charge into accepting freedom on the given date.

Self-purchase was the usual and respected means of ending slavery. Over the course of his career, a slave could have accumulated a respectable sum of money from allowances, favors, and transactions on the side. Eventually, a slave acquired enough to purchase himself from the master. A startling proportion of slaves, well over a third, sold themselves into slavery again-typically to get into a better line of work and receive the free training. Some resold themselves as many as five or six times over a normal lifetime.

Manumission had two faces. A slave could be legally released at any time, but it was often a mark of disgrace. Unsatisfactory performance, overt criminality, or any other disreputable charge, usually prompted the slaveowner to discharge the wrongdoer. On the other hand, meritorious service or some extraordinary feat could free a slave, who retained all his money and bore away this prestigious honor. There was no middle ground; Orion slaves were given their freedom gratis only for having been exceptionally good or exceptionally bad.

An Orion slave, for their own part, often considered their life comfortable and *secure*. Training, housing, and food were all free. There is the company of fellow slaves, male and female, a lack of worry about the

future (but not always), constant employment, and a small if irregular and untaxed bankroll for the prudent and the careful. Forged over the millennia, Orion slave law granted slaves rights and avenues of legal redress against unjust or harsh masters and permitted them to hold certain kinds of property (excluding land), to marry, to have children (who were always born free; parents could keep the proceeds from selling the child), and to inherit and pass down their goods. All in all, it sounded ideal, and for thousands of years, was considered so by Green Orions.

Nevertheless, it was still slavery. Bound Orions were not property, but were definitely not free men or women. Their work had to conform to particular standards, during set hours, at certain locations, and even when they were not working, they could expect to be under someone's eye-actual or remote. They were not the social equals of free Orions, or even other Greens. On top of that, Orions slaves could be denied the security of lifelong work; blackballed as an unsatisfactory worker, or simply kicked out on their own. They could grow old enough to draw a termination date in their contract without enough money to retire on or years left to take up a new and more desirable skill. Orion slavery was not an admirable condition.

Fortunately, only Orions were enslaved by other Orions, all scandal-vids and rumors to the contrary, and they were never exported to other races, again by ancient custom.

## **Green Orion Women**

### **1.**

### **Introduction**

If non-Orions know anything about Orion slavery, it is that the Orions keep stunningly beautiful and alluring Green women for their distraction and amusement. They are often called "animal" slave women for their reputed violence and notorious effect on humanoid males of almost any species-their charms, it is said, cannot be resisted.

In short, it is all romantic spacers claptrap. Animal slave women are only a class of female Green Orion slaves who have been trained extensively as courtesans, like the Terran-Japanese Geishas. They are no more animals than are any other Green Orions. As dancers, musicians, artists, conversationalists, they provide entertainment of a very high order.

Orion standards of beauty and grace are not as refined as those of most Federation races. To the discerning, critical Federation eye, the Green slave women are coarse and almost brutally sensual. This is not a handicap for them-on the contrary, it is the better part of their charm. In their scanty costumes, typically laden with jewelry, barefoot, with their hair loose and wild, they cut a very barbaric figure even among their own people. Everything about them-the way they move and dance, the distance they maintain between themselves and their audience, their air of smoldering, barely restrained passion, even their very scent-it is all fraught with mesmerizing power. They are indeed very compelling creatures.

Their function in Orion society is strictly utilitarian, and very deliberately ambiguous. Non-Orions who see them during Orion functions are simultaneously being paid a high complement and presented with an extraordinarily powerful distraction. Their appearance signals the Orion host's belief that his guest are equal to not only resisting but enjoying the spectacle. At the same time, those guests are being tested for their own strength of will and self-possession. An all-out Orion banquet lavishly uses strong drink, exotic food, and even more exotic smokes; by the time the Orion slave women appear, even the strongest beings may be suffering a touch of neuro-intoxication, a systemic disorder brought on by multiple chemical exposures in a confined area and in a limited amount of time. Although the symptoms may vary,

the result is a general lessening of mental and emotional stability-occasionally called "zombification". Under chemical overloads, the higher brain functions cease, and the sufferer enters a vaguely trance-like state. A neuro-intoxicated being, fighting for possession of his faculties might be put over the edge by the Green Orion courtesans. Even females of humanoid races are prone to such overloading, though not to the degree that males are.

By general report, neuro-intoxicated persons are more suggestible to outside influences and do not always recall events after the fact. Many commercial deals have doubtless been 'readjusted' while a businessman was incapacitated by Orion hospitality. After all, the Orions are renown for being both sharp dealers *and* hard partiers.

In spite of their prominence in Orion life, little has ever been known by non-Orions about the lives of Green Orion Courtesans. How are they selected; are they sequestered during training? Who trains them?

## **The Details**

*Lodubyaln*, as Green Orion courtesans are called in the Orion language are, as stated, simply a caste of Green Orion females, highly trained as dancers, singers, musicians, storytellers, and professional listeners that are a delight to look upon, paradise to hear, and a comfort to talk to. Theirs is the only loyalty that Orions contract for and sell with perfect trust, and it is the only pillar of Orion civilization not to be radically altered since Orions have aligned with and joined the Federation.

Some *lodubyaln* spend their relatively short working career (few work as courtesans past the age of 40), looking forward to a time when some dashing Green male catches her eye. Some save up their tips, side earnings, and their income from their lucrative contracts, and return to a more normal life. Some take what they have learned from their various contractors, and put it to use to make themselves quite wealthy. Orion standards on *lodubyaln* conduct vary. Most of the older houses consider them scarcely above Grey Orions in social status; but most Orions feel that if she wishes to take a chance, and has the determination and thirst for hard work, a *lodubyaln* could rise to become a businesswoman or a merchant captain.

Prior to receiving Federation membership, this was a point Orions steadfastly refused to negotiate on save for the fact that all current and future *lodubyaln* could contract for their services. Prior to this, they were simply considered by Orions to be among the higher classes of Green Orion slaves, if not the highest class. The Federation balked slightly at the Orion demand, but agreed when they felt it likely the Orions would not negotiate further on what seemed to more than an issue of slavery, but rather a cultural matter. The Orions for their part understood prior to the start of the application process that this was likely the only major facet of Orion civilization that would not be obliterated by virtue of Federation membership; slavery and piracy could no longer exist, and had long been sore points in Orion-Federation relations. *Lodubyaln* throughout Orion Space has subsequently found Federation membership lucrative since they now possesses full contractual rights and legal redress of grievances. A *lodubyaln* with *good* references can command several thousand credits or strips of gold pressed latinum per contract. *Lodubyaln* of the highest quality can command substantially more.

## **The Orion Slave Trade**

## **History of the Slave Trade**

From the beginning of the Federation until the end of the Four Years War with the Klingon Empire, Orion slavery was an omnipresent and ancient institution, and wars and conquest had never altered it. The Orion Neutrality Zone, established shortly after the conclusion of the Four Years War did limit the scope (and ostensibly halted the spread) of Orion Green slavery.

By Stardate 7922, Federation trading firms had firmly entrenched themselves around the Orion Neutrality Zone. No longer as dependent on Orion trade, Federation members boycotted Orion ports to show their displeasure of Orion Green slavery. The First Amendment to the Articles of Federation banned slave trade outside Orion space, and pressured by the boycott, the Botchok Planetary Council, the 'official' Orion government (since relegated to planetary-level jurisdiction) officially outlawed the practice.

This was well and good, however, it took a lot more than legislation to force the Orions to surrender one of their most treasured customs. If a piece of paper would regain Federation trade, the Orion thought, then by all means sign it and get on with business. Naturally, resuming business included the continued, if less conspicuous use of Green slaves.

From the time of the Four Years War until official and blanket condemnation of slavery was issued by all Orion worlds and corporations on Stardate 28094, Starfleet had its hands full trying to enforce the Federation and the Orions own law. Orion slave-carrying vessels are neither foul, crowded, nor were they easily identified; usually, they were perfectly respectable transports with all the right papers, a smiling and cooperative crew, and the proper licensing to permit the transplantation of perhaps hundreds of 'perfectly free' Green Orions. Under the Orion Registry Act of Stardate 8200, no Starfleet captain had the authority to detain any such properly documented vessel, and most did not try.

During this period, the situation on Orion-occupied Federation worlds (that is, most Federation worlds in proximity to the Orion Neutrality Zone) was far worse for inquiring minds in Starfleet Intelligence and Starfleet Marines. Any non-Orion can find Greens working for room, board, and perhaps a banked sum to be credited back to relatives in Orion Space-but no slaves. Computer records, foremen, and the workers themselves all agreed; no slavery here.

## **Recent History**

Federation and Starfleet officials are left to contemplate the sincerity of the Orion Colonial Council when they say that Green Slavery is a thing of the past. Since the Treaty of Rhinate was signed, Starfleet has not seized *any* individuals or vessels suspected of conducting the Green Slave trade. For their part, Federation officials remain somewhat mystified, if relieved, that the slave trade does indeed appear to have been relegated to Orion history. More astute observers point out however, that Klingon law does not forbid slavery per se, nor do the unaligned Orion colonies in the Triangle. The Orion Colonial Council can logically and legally argue that these worlds are beyond their jurisdiction, therefore, Orion Colonial Council statutes that outlaw slavery among Orions has no jurisdiction in the Orion colonies in Klingon territories or those worlds that chose to remain unaligned. Since this seems an impasse among Federation Orion-analysts and all remains conjecture, only time will bear out formal Orion and Federation assertions that the Green Slave trade is dead.

## **History of Orion Piracy**

## **Historical Background**

Piracy was an old and established way of life to the Orions. Pirates were the first Orions in space, and the savior of Botchok (the Orion homeworld) during the Orion War. Though their depredations slowed colonial growth, it was not enough to dull their luster. During Rigel's New Days, Orion pirates lived beyond the sphere of the Colonies, plundering the ships of unknown races beyond, and selling the booty to worlds in the Orion interior. Though a little hazardous, it was a comfortable way of life and perfectly respectable-if you were Orion, and not on the receiving end of a pirate raid.

The Reverse ended all that. When the Colonies fell into anarchy, the pirates were deprived of their support, and their forward camps became isolated. Most moved into Orion Space and took legitimate jobs, but those remaining banded together to form large pirate fleets. The huge planetary raids that marked the end of the Reverse capped off their descent from respectability-what little was left to them.

The pirates of those days were mostly a sorry lot. Likely as not, they were men without prospects, family, or future and with precious little to lose. Orion civilization had long-since begun its collapse, hundreds of millions of Orions were dead; dozens of Colonial planetary populations ceased to exist, and there didn't seem any way to stop the decay. The pirates stole for survival more than they stole for profit, as the goods they sold on miserable tradeworlds brought only a fraction of their value-usually they sought food, clothing, tools, and spare parts. Modern Orion historians often remark that given the conditions, the average Orion in those days could have been considered a pirate, ship-owner or not. So called 'pirate kings' who gathered covens of captains and ships were many and usually short-lived, their riches always coveted by someone a little smarter, a little crueller, and a little faster on the draw.

Nevertheless, when most Orions were reduced to mean subsistence, pirates seemed like kings; free to go where they wanted, and answering to no man but their own inscrutable law. Though their work was low and dangerous, it was no worse than what most people had to endure throughout their working lives, and it held the promise of a lucky haul just around the corner. Orion pirates never went out of business. Ships, captains, and recruits were always available (though never very plentiful-maybe one in 20 lasted 10 ten years), and there were always those merchants and fanciers willing to loan seed money to collect a handsome percentage of the take. Although piracy might have been a chancy business, it paid.

The Romulans were not tempting to the later pirates-quite the opposite. Poor and not very technologically advanced, the Romulans shipped mostly raw materials or half-finished basic goods, valuable to the Orions, but not to any market the Orions could hope to reach. Worse, the Romulans were also pirates. Soon after capturing a rich haul near the Star Empire, the plunder-laden Orion ship would disappear. Furthermore, the Romulans were utterly intolerant of aliens and destroyed them without compunction or mercy. An Orion pirate vessel was the first to discover that the Orion colony on Farx had been obliterated, resulting in over 22 million Orion deaths. Only the great skill of the captain and crew saved them from death at the hands of the Romulan task force that lurked in the space around Farx. Orions retreated from the Romulans wholesale, and the Orion pirates followed suit.

When the Klingons began to impinge on Orion Space, it was the pirates who first met them. Invariably coming off second-best to the larger, better armed Klingon ships, the pirates soon learned to keep clear of the warships in favor of Klingon merchant vessels visiting already conquered worlds. The Imperial Navy labored mightily to keep their trade ships inviolate and spared no effort to seek and smash all pirate bases, but it was a losing effort. The Klingon Empire was rich, and its shipping too tempting to be pillaged.

When the Federation races began to expand near to Orion pirate enclaves, they came with a great wealth of goods and hardly any armament at all. Rich and innocent, they openly traded with Colonies near to them and distributed maps to their principal worlds. In particular, Humans and Andorians were fond of

planting new settlements, far from their homeworlds, lengthening their trade routes and increasing their vulnerability. The Orion pirates had a field day on the supply ships and traders that blundered their way. Of course, as their identity as Orions was inviolate, the pirates took pains to ensure no one ever lived to betray their identity.

The creation of Starfleet Command put a definite crimp in the Orion pirate operations of the era. With its centralized command and support structures, Starfleet was very effective in patrolling areas at risk. Because many of the early crews included Andorians, encounters with pirates tended to be short, sharp, and fatal. Starfleet's standing orders were to engage all pirates, seek out their bases, and destroy them.

Because the total Federation merchant tonnage increased every year, piracy remained profitable. In addition as long as the Orion Colonies existed and the take increased, the pirates hung on-sometimes going so far as to base themselves on Colonies under some legitimate pretext. This practice didn't die out (so far as is known), until Rigel and the Orion Colonies in Federation Space applied for, and was granted Federation membership. Prior to membership, unwary traders in lonely stretches of space would still find Orion pirates quite some distance from Rigel. Starfleet discovered around the time of the Four Years War with the Klingons, when fleets, task forces, and squadrons were milling around Orion space, that some pirate bands even had mobile base facilities, and could appear anywhere without warning.

As settlement increased near traditional Orion holdings however, pirates fled the more densely populated regions. Too many people and ships meant secrecy was harder to maintain, mobile facilities or not. As a matter of course, the pirates gradually retreated from the core of Federation space, and away from the major trade lanes between Rigel and the Federation's nearest major member worlds.

During the Four Years War, pirates profited handsomely by turning smuggler or mercenary, but the greatest boon they received was the creation of the Neutral Zone between the Federation and the Klingon Empire. In the space between the two expansionist powers, the Orion pirates found a paradoxically safe haven and ventured forth on both sides to plunder merchants, freighters, and the occasional small outpost. Even Starfleet and Klingon warships were not entirely safe from attack. In most pirate attacks on warships, it was often impossible to tell whether the attackers were the enemy-or pirates.

As Federation settlement along the border increased after the Four Years War, the Klingons struck a diabolical agreement with the Orion pirates. In exchange for Federation ships and cargoes, pirates received immunity from Klingon reprisal and even safe havens and bases inside Klingon territory. The Federation protested strongly, and naturally, the Klingons professed no knowledge of such arrangements-and continue to do so to modern times. As neutrals, the Orions could trade with anyone-without saying how or from where the merchandise came.

## **Piracy Today**

Officially, piracy is outlawed within Orion space, and the Orion Colonial Council and most planetary governments assist Starfleet in tracking down pirate bands that seeming appear overnight and from out of the ether. Piracy is still a profitable business, but has become extremely dangerous with the advent of newer starship technologies in Starfleet and Klingon Defence Force inventories that can make a relatively small and seemingly innocuous Starfleet or Klingon vessel quite the deadly adversary in a one-on-one or multiple pirate vessel engagement. Pirates, the few that are known to exist and elude capture (there are always a few), are more selective about their targets since the result (if they are lucky) is imprisonment and reeducation in a Federation penal facility, or the infamous Rura Penthe Penal Colony if they are unlucky enough to be captured inside Klingon space.

Orion observers (and there are many), remain somewhat suprised at the precipitous decline of Orion piracy since admission into the Federation. The formal Federation recognition of the Orion Space Navy, even though a token force compared to Starfleet, the Klingon Defence Forces, or the Romulan Space

Navy, lures a great many Orions into military and exploration service, particularly those who possess the hope of one day applying for admission into Starfleet Academy or Starfleet enlisted service. In this sense, the Orion Naval Academy on Rhinate acts rather like a preparatory school, and its most promising applicants often move into Starfleet service after 5 years service in the Orion Space Navy. At any rate, the Orion Space Navy is regarded as a viable deterrent to those youngsters so anxious to get into space that they would join a pirate band, or those hard bitten spacers looking for their next line of work, and with enough experience to know piracy is a losing proposition, regardless of how well it may pay.

Still, the astute non-Orion observing Orion culture would realize Orions do nothing without sufficient motive. Prior to Federation membership, consideration on how Orions perceive their place among the major starfaring governments and races has increased, and curiously enough, has produced no real single answer from external observers except the notion that the Borg and Dominion must have frightened the Orions as a race into a frantic, practical response. Piracy may well have declined to nearly nothing as the Orions reorganize their priorities, but it is hard for many students of Orion culture to believe that the vessels and crews simply disappeared or 'went home', and many feel it quite conceivable that the pirates are still there, plying a respectable profession, until the day they are needed to defend Orion Space, whether from Romulan, Borg, or Dominion assault.

Of course, given the normalcy of relations between the Orions and the Federation and Klingons, perhaps this is a tacit acknowledgement from Orions to their two largest neighbors that they, the Orions, know who their friends are-and who they are not.

## **Pirate Economics**

1.

### **Pirate Econ 101**

The Orions are the *last* people to claim that robbing space vessels is a profitable operation. In fact, it is one of the *most* uncertain and unprofitable of all occupations. Misjudging a ship's defenses can kill a crew and getting caught by an armed warship is almost certain death. Occasional pirates are not as skilled as those who dedicate all their time to the work, but traders and military forces soon come to recognize professionals on sight. Piracy is a peculiar kind of marginal work. Profit is only half the draw; the other half is the fun and notoriety.

### **Booty as Profit**

About a sixth of all cargoes taken by pirates are not resold. Such goods are usually either rare luxuries or bare necessities. Explorers who hit strange freighters are interested primarily in odd and choice delights either for themselves, their basemates, or their patron. Such items, whether foodstuffs, wine, art objects, or jewelry, are either too pretty to sell or too unique to be safely fenced.

By far, most taken-but-not-resold loot consists of anonymous spare parts, food, water, fuel, dilithium crystals, and the like. Pirates are fond of 'foraging' aliens in lieu of returning to base for supplies, but all pirates keep their eyes open for usable equipment. The more desperate kinds of pirates do little more than raid for necessities, but their numbers are small.

## **Booty as Trade Goods**

The higher proportion of cargoes lost to pirates are ultimately resold in Orion or neutral markets for credits, gold-pressed latinum, dilithium, radioactives, or other small valuable commodities that may be transported from planet to planet without leaving a telltale trail or taking up a lot of cargo space. Pirates rarely take cargoes at random, and organized bands out of a single base have 'shopping lists' of particular ships and cargoes for plundering. Such cargoes may have been ordered from a particular buyer who does not wish to pay full price or deal through normal, legitimate channels. A speculating pirate may be anticipating a demand or stockpiling against an expected dry spell. The pirates are expected to get the requested swag and bring it back to base, where they are paid according to prearranged percentage.

Pirates do not get the full value of the cargoes they take. The people who resell them have to take a percentage, and the buyers would not handle stolen goods unless it was substantially cheaper than market price. The ultimate market value of a stolen cargo is about 50 percent of the price that a similar, unstolen cargo would fetch on the open market, and of that amount, the pirates would get about a third.

Small wonder that quite a few pirates work on their own, in spite of the uncertainty of repair and shifts in the market (not to mention the chance of encountering a warship). Freelancers might get to keep up to 35 percent of the cost of the goods taken. Of course, the drawback is that this amount must pay for crew replacements, repairs, the other normal costs of starship operation, and operating reserve to get them through the lean and bad times.

## **Risks and Costs**

Every act of piracy puts crew, ship, and captain on the line. Rarely does everything work out right, but the vessel that cannot rise above minor equipment failures and occasional disputes with the crew (not to mention unplanned surprises on board their victim) is just not going to make it in piracy. Every one who tries to rob another vessel in space had better expect the unexpected and prepare for the unanticipated.

Managing a criminal enterprise that depends on high technology and violence is tricky. There can be no room for those who forget their orders when weapons come out and they start blasting. Operating costs are high and unpredictable, and they may exceed the value of any cargo. Every operation is a potential total loss-which is why the single most important factor to success is the ability of the captain.

The captain has the arduous task of simultaneously guiding a raid and calculating its costs in men and equipment. Where the cargo is known and the value calculable, this is easy, but for many pirates, the nature of the cargo may be known only generally. Based on expenses a strike can or needs to be completed. Experience is often the captain's only guide. If his guess is wrong, he must retreat, knowing (as the crew knows) that a cost has been paid that will not be recovered.

Independents worry about failed attacks more than contractors do. This sometimes makes them cautious, sometimes makes them reckless, but always interferes with judgement and threatens the success of an operation. Small wonder that successful independents are a much sought after commodity-or that unsuccessful ones have a high mortality rate.

## **Pirate Tactics**

## **Ships in Space**

There are only two times to attack a vessel; when it is in open space (far from help), or when it is at sublight velocity (approaching or departing a system or planet). A ship at warp speed is hard to overhail and may be hard to intercept, but if found and caught and is weaker than a pirate vessel, it generally surrenders rather than risk destruction. However a pirate approaches a vessel, it had better be prepared to fight a stern action, as nearly every vessel will try to run away before it fights.

Ships at sublight velocity within a star system are more vulnerable but may be much nearer help. Ships slowing down for orbit are ideal targets. With landfall looming before them, a crew will not necessarily be watching behind them, and a pirate may close to boarding range before it is detected. With drives already shut down and without maneuvering room, a ship becomes easy plucking.

A pirate never *wishes* to exchange fire, which tends to eat hull sheathing and damages valuable cargo. The best tactic is to appear suddenly, close and bristling with guns, to intimidate the victim. Out in space, this means either to sneak up from the stern or to make an oblique and rapid approach with weapons charged and shields up in front of an intended victim-much scarier, but also much harder to do.

Near a planet, an armed approach or the sudden display of a ship's weapons may be counterproductive, especially if there are planetside, orbital, or warship defenses close at hand. Then, the best approach is unnoticed and unannounced, or a deception to allow the pirate within beaming range of the victim. As soon as possible, a team must transport aboard the targeted ship to cut off the shields, permitting a much larger force to board swiftly and overpower the crew.

Tactics at close range are highly inventive and unpredictable. If a victim puts up shields before a boarding party is away, then a pirate must decide whether to break off, announce his intention and open fire, or just open fire without further ado. At low speeds, ramming might not only upset and unnerve the victim, but also may damage the shield mechanisms, permitting beam-in.

However, once the ship is approached and boarded, disengagement poses an often overlooked problem. A cowed crew need not stay cowed once the pirates are gone, and pirates are as vulnerable as anyone else to fire up the stern. First and foremost, communications should be smashed as completely as possible to prevent the crew from alerting the authorities. Weapons should be disabled by destroying the fire control computer, but remember that many ships mount weapons that have independent fire control. A common mistake many pirates make is to shatter the defensive shield mechanism and let the fear of a reprisal shot forestall their firing weapons. Such tactics are just not effective. Trashing the shields or any other large and complicated mechanism takes too long and produces too many technical problems. Smashing bridge navigational displays, however, takes little time or effort, yet paralyzes a vessel and hinders their reporting the pirates true position.

Pirates escape in open space by leaving in a random direction to prevent giving away a critical bearing. Evasive actions are not necessary, unless pursuit is already within sensor range. Near a planet, the options are not as open. There is always the possibility of putting the planet between the pirate and the victim. They skim the atmosphere to mislead the victim and any pursuit into thinking that the pirates are going to land on the planet. Going to warp speed while in atmosphere can be hair-raising but very effective in throwing off a search. Remember however, that entering warp in a thick planetary atmosphere could well overload a pirates shield generators, incinerating the pirate and his ship. This tactic is recommended for planetary bodies with relatively thin or nonexistent atmospheres.

Once away from the victim, space should be clear of all hostile communications and sensor scans before a vessel assumes a heading for home. It is a good idea to travel by a circular route with an ever-changing bearing to confuse sensors trying to track the ship.

Unless there is a pressing strategic reason, like a direct order from an acknowledged higher authority, a pirate vessel should never engage any vessel of higher speed or greater armament, or a warship of any

size. Even the least such vessel will get away if they cannot cripple their attacker and will report the incident in full detail. Even if destroyed, they can still send word to *their* higher authorities. Friends and relatives of the victims often mark such pirate ships for *special attention*.

## **Outposts in Space**

Some space stations, provisioning points, and other outposts in space or on small asteroids offer certain advantages to a pirate. First, they cannot run away. Second, they often contain more suitable booty to carry away. For example, a great many asteroid mining installations fall into this category, as do merchant waystations and deep-space manufacturing installations.

However, most stations carry adequate weaponry to deal with brigands, reliable communications gear to call for help, and usually a known and listed position with whatever power controls the space they are located in. A pirate raid that does not produce swift and complete capitulation is guaranteed to be bloody or impossible. Pirates do not often attack outposts, because of the difficulties of direct assault and the lack of information regarding their cargo.

Without the option of flight, outpost personnel can be counted on to fight with any weapons they possess and to send out a distress signal calling for help. Their sensors reach farther than those belonging to most ships, and any approach will bring a challenge, whether the ship is armed or not. Even with maximum-speed approach and deceleration, a pirate cannot overwhelm the defenses before a call for help goes out.

The only way to attack such an outpost is by making a perfectly normal, unarmed approach and to dock there. When docked, a pirate vessel is invulnerable to any station-mounted weapons (usually, depending on station design), and has successfully boarded without firing a shot.

Seizure of the outpost can then proceed as with any vessel. Defenders may put up concerted resistance, particularly if the complement of the outpost exceeds the attacker's force. Knowledge of the outpost's layout is invaluable to enable the pirates to cut communications and seize any center of security and/or command and control.

Instead of taking over the entire station, a pirate may take over only a loading dock and warehouse area for as long as it takes to load the booty. This option is especially valid if layout information is incomplete or lacking. If properly done, a limited raid may achieve complete surprise and prevent the outpost from knowing it has been robbed until after the pirate flees. It depends on the proximity of cargo to the dock, the number of guards and their alertness, and whether or not the pirates can disguise their purpose long enough to make good their escape. Otherwise, they may have to make a fighting withdrawal, with the chance for losses running exceptionally high.

## **Ruses and False Flags**

Pirates often find it convenient to give out false names and identification signals when making raids, particularly when approaching an installation. These efforts may be no more sophisticated than disabling the automatic transponder and changing the paint job. A sophisticated approach would be to alter the transponder signal, which would give out the identity of a known ship, perhaps a ship whose loss is not yet known.

Many pirates experienced in attacking outposts prefer to use captured ships for the initial approach. A ship with a known name and recognizable profile can be discarded after the raid, and sent in a random direction by autopilot to confuse pursuit. The major disadvantage to using captured merchant ships is their vulnerability. If pirates must flee under fire, merchant shields may not (and probably would not)

protect them. This is why captured ships are rarely used in ship-to-ship actions.

More elaborate ruses, including ships with simulated damage, have a better chance against ships than against suspicious outposts. One of the Orions' favored ruses is to simulate a ship stricken by pirates and helpless against a second assault. Variations on this theme include hitting one ship and then hanging around to hit the next one that comes down the spacelane (risky if the area is patrolled at all), planting a fake disabled ship with explosives, tractor beams, or other hazards to entrap any investigating vessel, and playing dead next to a real or false victim in hopes of making another ship think that both ships have exhausted each other in combat.

The reputed faked distress signal is a creation of romantic fiction writers. Merchants on tight schedules frequently ignore distress signals and simply relay the message more often than not to attract further investigation by patrol vessels. Besides, distress signals are most likely to attract inquisitive patrol vessels, or (ironically) other pirates seeking to make an easy score against a damaged ship.

Much more common are disguised 'official' transmissions of various types-faked buoys, bogus navigational markers, ersatz storm warnings, as well as plain old-fashioned open voice communications, sometimes with synthesized voices and background sounds. They need not be fancy to produce results. The numbers of vessels that will stop when told to is a pleasantly large one. Sometimes, it is all in the tone of voice.

In deep space, where the space lanes are wide and the chance of finding a particular vessel very small, pirates using fake merchant identification can chat with a merchant vessel and thus get the vessel's precise bearing, speed, and distance. With this information, a future intercept course can be plotted with great accuracy. Instead of using one ship and circling back to make intercept, some pirates employ a small scout vessel that obtains the needed information and relays it to a lurking corsair for immediate action.

## **Fleet Actions**

When pirates act in concert, the effect can be quite devastating. Only well-organized bands of pirates under a central coordinator may contemplate staging such an operation. In practice among Orions, the size of the 'fleet' is really no greater than a squadron-6-15 ships.

Pirate fleet actions are most commonly used against a warship, listening posts, and other military targets. Complications dealing with how the booty is split are thus avoided, and it is a great deal easier to unite pirates around a *common* threat. Obnoxious starship captains with dangerous anti-piracy inclinations are the usual recipients of a fleet action, but resupply stations for anti-piracy task forces may be struck to deprive the adversary of momentum, most likely in order to protect a nearby pirate base. Of course, the danger is in gauging the will of the major power so assaulted. If the operation smashes the base or ship, but causes the owner to rebuild, fortify, and send in more ships, troops, and materiel, then the pirate effort will be for naught.

Orion pirate fleets attacked entire planets during the Reverse, but they were more accidents of circumstance and opportunity than any attempt at concerted organization. The fleets of the infamous Half-A-Man Sooris swelled as he went from planet to planet, looting and pillaging, until the largest pirate fleet in history fell on Troyius and all but wiped civilization from its surface. After that, there were no more targets of comparable size anywhere, and the fleets melted away to seek other, easier opportunities elsewhere.

## **Prisoners and Ransom**

Orion pirates prefer not to take captives; somebody has to guard, feed, and take care of them from the time they are taken until they are either killed, freed, or ransomed to somebody who wants them back. As a purely commercial venture, taking prisoners is a losing proposition, and not widely practiced.

There are some exceptions. If pirates take a known personage alive, they can make money by ransoming him or her back to their family or corporation. Businessmen-*rhadamanen* in particular-and their families are ideal targets. Unless under strange circumstances, Orion will not take a captive of another race or enslave them, wild holovids and news reports to the contrary.

When pirates inform their prisoners relatives or corporation of the ransom demand, they set a price on the captive and a time limit. If the ransom is not paid on time, either the price increases between a quarter and half, or the pirates execute the prisoner. Executions are rare, as Orions hate to destroy profits, but they must show that they mean business. Ransoms are never less than the cost of boarding the captive-around 20 credits a day for a mininum holding time of 90 days. For high-ranking archexecutives, the ransom asked is often much higher.

An even nastier trick is to set a ransom and a time limit, and when the time limit passes, *decrease* the amount of ransom asked. Eventually, the amount goes so low that it will be very easy for a corporation or family to pay it. However, paying too little is a mortal insult to the captive. Sometimes, pirates use this technique to increase the take per captive, be forcing the payers to hurry and pay up to avoid looking as if they valued the pirates prisoner so little. However if too high a value is initially stated, the would-be payers may simply ignore it. Too large a decrease and the effect can be lost. Successful use of this tactic as a moneymaker requires knowing the exact value of the captive, and the limits to the embarrassment of the people paying.

Orion pirates are careful with their captives and will not mistreat them. If for any reason a captive cannot be ransomed off, Orion pirates are likely to strand the captive on a strange world. Killing innocent people for a financial error fills Orions with horror, and other pirates might set a bounty on the offending pirates just to make sure such people are hunted down for the barbarians they are.

Occasionally, a pirate may take captives for other, more personal reasons. If the cargo happens to include Green Courtesans, they may be taken and sold like normal cargo-their contracts pass by right of conquest. For political reasons, Orions may even take prisoners of other races. This is extremely delicate matter, and is often dictated by *much* higher authorities than a ship captain; the expenses for such a captive can be quite high, and is usually paid by the contracting party.

## Ancient Spacefarers

1. The archives at Memory Alpha record the names of 2,558 spacefaring races known throughout history. Solid evidence for interstellar travel-identical artifacts on different planets-goes back as far as 500,000 years. Traces of habitations on worlds incapable of supporting carbon-based life suggests that races with stardrives existed over one-million years ago. The largest single source for information on these lost races is Rigel, where tiny fragments of nearly all these lost cultures have been found. Starfaring races with advanced civilizations now less than atoms once traded inside the Rigel system.

The earliest known interstellar civilization for which coherent records exist is that of the world of Arret. Although civil war destroyed their world half a million standard years ago, Federation scientists found and interviewed three survivors shortly before their deaths. They spoke broadly of far-flung settlements and their original humanoid natures, and suggested that the Federation's races may be descendants of theirs (unlikely, based upon the archaeological record).

From 500,000 to 100,000 years ago, the historical record contains only ambiguous references to starfaring civilizations. Ancient Vulcan research on these lost civilizations is impossible now, for their records refer to sites and structures that have long been plundered, lost, or simply destroyed. This is the so-called Forerunner Era, characterized chiefly by nearly complete ignorance of who these races were, what they did, or even what they looked like. In this era, archaeology slides into paleoanthropology and geology. Remains are most likely to be found on dead planets, and lifeforms are likely to be only fossils.

Of all the species known to have existed during this time, the two most common are the Fett, or Forerunner A, and the Bursen, Forerunner B (both named after the scientists who established them as spacefaring peoples). A chitinous race, perhaps like lobsters, the Fett lived perhaps 200,000 years before the Bursen, whose skin imprints suggest a reptilian origin. The last Bursen may have died only 150,000 years ago, and their decline-like that of their origin and their homeworld-remain a mystery.

From 100,000 to 40,000 years ago was the more complete Emergent Era. Romantic novelists to the contrary, these ancient cultures contributed nothing to modern Federation civilization until long after they were dead. Though there are many gaps in the record, the Emergent Era seems to have consisted of three periods of large expansionistic races separated by three intervals of retrogression of primitivism when major races or at least starflight were not present at all.

The Ena lived between 100,000 and 90,000 years ago. Although they left no physical remains, a scattering of images and the dimensions of the ruins suggest a blocky, even clumsy kind of body structure. The heart of their space nation lay on the rimward side of the Orion Arm, in what is now Klingon space, but there are reports of at least two minor sites in the Triangle area, and possibly two other minor sites somewhere in Orion space. After the 15,000 year First Interregnum, they were succeeded by the djKen, a race of slender near-humanoids who left numerous works of art in the tumbled ruins of their spired cities. Most djKen sites lie in Gorn space near the Romulan Neutral Zone, with a few minor sites on either side of the Neutral Zone in Romulan and Federation space respectively. Because of their fragility, few djKen artifacts have survived intact, though the race itself seemed to have a relatively long run on the galactic stage-fully 20,000 standard years. The Second Interregnum that followed lasted less than 10,000 years when the Querat, already a multi-world society far to coreward, began expanding. Eventually, they would come very near to the Federation hearthworlds, but they left few artifacts, and never visited Rigel themselves, and exist in ancient Rigellian records entirely from secondhand reports from ancient merchants. Most archaeological evidence for the Querat also tends to come second hand, and to date only 2 ruin sites are known, both near the center of Federation space. Save for the Preservers, the Querat remain the least known ancient interstellar race.

With the decline of the Querat, the Third Interregnum began, but precisely when it began or ended is unknown. Sometime between 40,000 and 20,000 years ago, the shadowy Preservers lived. The near-complete absence of reliable data on the existence of the Preservers infers that the Preservers deliberately obliterated all traces of themselves in galactic history. This puppet-master race, or group of races, are alleged to be responsible for the preponderance of humanoid races on both sides of the Orion Arm. The historical record clearly shows that at no prior time were humanoids of any species so numerous; perhaps the Preservers were paving the way for humanoid mastery of the Orion Arm. As no records exist, whether the Preservers themselves were humanoid or chose the form for other reasons cannot be determined.

During the Preserver Era, the galaxy was in a quiet period with only a handful of races in space, many of them planet-bound even though technologically capable of space travel. If the Preservers had a sizable empire then, it met no opposition coreward or rimward of the Arm. Their influence seems to have been most pronounced around the Arm itself; they surely must have been active near Rigel, though they left no trace. What precious few of their works that have survived are still functional-and there is every indication that the Preservers intended things to be that way.

It is an interesting coincidence that, just as the Preservers vanished, the Orions first appeared.

# Rise of the Orions

1. Exactly when trade began on the Rigel planets is not clear. RTA (Rigellian Trade Authority) records show cyclical profit trends going back for tens of thousands of years, but *never* a time when Rigel was not a well-known and well-trafficked. At least 100,000 years ago, Rigel IV was in operation much as it is now, though who came there, what they traded, and from where they came are all mysteries. It is possible that the Rigel planets were in use long before their sun was kindled-though how *that* might be possible is a subject for only the most fantastic of scientific speculation.

Enough data from Rigel and other sources exists, however, to paint a very complete picture of galactic history following the time of the Preservers. For many tens of thousands of years, including the Preserver Era, Rigel had no defense against the constant warfare of dozens of spacefaring races. Only alliances and short-lived combines claimed the system. The names changed, ruling races came and went, and blockades and battles continued with only occasional and brief pause. The Rigel system passed from hand to hand, usually a planet at a time, becoming a crazy-quilt like mosaic of settlements that were established, destroyed, re-established, and eventually abandoned.

Like all the rest, Botchok (Rigel VIII) had been picked over when it was only a cold-temperate wilderness. Alien narrations give no hint of any sentient life there, nor any sign that the Preservers were present. When primitive sentients first attacked a Yugai colony on Botchok, it was an astonishing discovery. Perhaps the primitives had been planted there, or perhaps they had always been there but were never noticed. After exterminating the attackers and their village, the Yugai commander paid them no more heed. Nevertheless, from that encounter forward, the Orions would always be a factor in alien settlement plans. Dating their first appearance is difficult, but it can be no more than 30,000 years ago.

The first Orions were club- and stone-wielding savages, scarcely into their Neolithic Age-hardly more than a nuisance to warp-driven, laser-armed races used to combat on strange worlds. The aliens captured them, enslaved them, and taught them to tend fields, clear land, hew wood, and draw water. The surviving journals of one P'tak of the Sugg describe the labor and difficulty of capturing alive any useful numbers of future slaves and the satisfactory work they performed once broken to the routine. Although aboriginal Orions were ingenious and hardy warriors, they seemed to grasp the value of learning agriculture. There were always some escapes, but there were also instances of Orions offering themselves for service, and now and again a tribe would trade slaves they themselves had captured for alien goods.

As they made such amenable slaves, they were soon taken offworld to work on other planets. One of the most poignant of all remaining primitive Orion cave-drawings shows a stick-figure spaceship, landing on the plains, with bulky suited stick-figure aliens capturing and carrying away stick figure natives. Such scenes were no doubt frequent, for as soon as the Orions became a valuable commodity, other races besides the Sugg raided Botchok to bear away a few for their own colonies. Because trained slaves were more valuable than Orion 'on the hoof', most raids were against settlements and their slave quarters-slavers stealing from other slavers.

P'tak himself claims to have been one of the first rules to arm his slaves against the raiders. As radical as the notion of arming slaves sounds, it became a nearly universal practice. Low-tech weapons, combined with the fear of being borne away from family, friends, and tribe, made the first Orion slaves their own best protectors-particularly because the raiders could not afford to shoot valuable property in self-defense. Orions were enthusiastic fighters, particularly against slavers.

Soon, Orions everywhere were trained to defend themselves. Not all the training was for self-defense, and not every weapon given them was low-tech. Eventually, the aliens used Orions as slavers, on Botchok

and elsewhere, for who should know more about catching Orions, than Orions? Orion janissaries sprang up on other worlds, even in starships, and with much more destructive weapons than slug-throwers. The bloodthirsty Orions enjoyed their sport even if they did not understand its purposes or the arms they used.

## Treaty of Kammzdast

1. The abuses of arming Orions went on until it became clear to the dullest of races that unless limits were put on the practice, well-armed Orion barbarians would overrun every culture within reach of Rigel. Delegates from every Orion-using race gathered at a great conference on Kammzdast from which came the Treaty of Kammzdast. It is the oldest known treaty in galactic history, and its signature, on Stardate - 28945.1, began what is now referred to as the Orion Era.

Kammzdast exceeded its need admirably. Tehnological transfer to the Orions was now regulated, every signatory watching the others for violations. Orions were not to be armed outside the Rigel system, though slaves could still be lifted out for other purposes. Combat was allowed only on the unsettled worlds, Botchok included. As a peasce treaty, it stands far above the majority, for it channelled the urge to combat into less-destructive courses without harming any complying power and allowed the cultural and material enrichment of the signatory worlds. However, it did so at the expense of the Orions, whose homeworld and homesystem now became the only legal place to settle disputes, their people the proxy soldiery for other people's battles. Kammzdast and its modifications at the succeeding Rigel Conferences would keep a general peace for more than *10,000 years*. It would also, indirectly, give the Orions the very tools they needed to end it.

It is impossible for non-Orions to determine exactly when the Orions began to envision a time when they would not be the playthings of technologically advanced aliens-modern Orions refuse commentary on the issue unanimously. It may not have become a recognized hope until alien schools brought new ideas and different perspectives to the primitives. Regardless, the Orions would never relax their grip on that hope, though 15,000 years of occupation and repression would pass before it's fulfillment. As the late Dr. Thelanius Richter, Drummond Professor of Xenoarchaeology at the University of the Ocean of Storms on Luna said in his seminal work Archaeology of the Orions, "Orion history is a prime example of why the Federation has a Prime Directive-to protect *everybody*".

When the Orions were rounded up and disarmed, revolts became common, and not just on Botchok. The Orions resented their demotion to simple servitude. Only rigorous policing kept order, and most slave-holding races did not have the manpower to spare. Educating and preparing the Orion slaves for more responsible tasks proved to be a less-expensive and more enduring alternative. Orions were forced to learn the language and culture of each of their owning patrons, and slowly, the number of revolts decreased.

As the Orions learned more about their masters, they became more familiar with their weaknesses, racial tendencies, and blind spots. Now and again, a cabal of educated Orions would rise up against their masters, but the might of the aliens or their allies always prevailed. As yet, the Orions had no opportunity to learn the art of government or diplomacy and were at the mercy of alien invaders who did. Orions learned the hard way that their civilization, hardly out of savagery, was no match for the starfaring aliens. Weapons were not as important as they seemed-certainly not once the fighting was over. Until the Orions mastered themselves and the arcane ways of civilization, they could never hope to dislodge the alien master races. Therefore, the revolts again faded away-another dire signal the aliens did not correctly interpret.

While the Orions collectively swallowed their pride and ceased to resist captivity, the Rigel system was

finally enjoying the fruits of peace. With a more 'civilized' means of settling territorial disputes, the races now planned and built cities on the more fruitful Rigel worlds. The vast majority of holdings were on Botchok itself, for it was the source of not only Orion slaves, but also of industries to serve the needs of educating Orions to be good slaves and warriors. The invaders divided the entire planet into arbitrary states-much as Terra's Europeans, would subdivide the African continent tens of millennia later. They built cities not just to live in, but to place the natives in more civilized urban surroundings where they could be controlled. Botchok became a greenhouse, or slave academy, where Orions were taught from the cradle to respect and obey their generous and powerful masters. If anything, this only fed the Orion longing for freedom and enlightened the Orions to the peculiar politics of being one thing while seeming to be another. For a people who had only recently been cavemen, it was a heady education.

Using the Orions and Botchok for proxy warfare turned out to be more difficult than the framers of Kammzdist had imagined. For one thing, disputants might not have adjacent Botchoki holdings; intervening lands might belong to races unconcerned with the dispute, who might have to be placated or bribed to allow the treaty-mandated struggle to take place. In addition, when negotiating and fighting, the diplomats and generals brought along their Orion translators and servants, who knew, learned, and shared more than they told their bosses.

## The Atom War and the Long Winter

1. By being trustworthy executors of their masters' will, Orions had learned that they could obtain more alien technological wisdom, fewer restraints on the education of slaves, and other little freedoms deemed vital to their cause. After 4,000 years, the minor Orion bureaucrats and functionaries gained a good measure of what they requested and the Orions grew more prosperous and civilized.

One of the Orion bureaucrats' successes was the gain of nuclear technology. Thousands of years of listening to alien diplomatic dickerings over nuclear deterrence taught the Orions that deterrents could slow down or even stop the warfare on Botchok-a worthwhile and admirable goal. As soon as they constructed their own nuclear weapons, the Orions triumphantly delivered to their owners an ultimatum: depart the Rigel system or face annihilation.

The Orion officials should not be blamed for grossly miscalculating their masters' reaction. After holding secret meetings off Botchok, the alien property-holders exploded their own nuclear weapons on Botchok. Despite Botchok's importance as an involuntary keeper of the peace, a generation without it did not much overtrouble the aliens. Kammzdist was modified to keep Orions away from nuclear technology, and other harmful knowledge-not that there were many Orions left on Botchok. Approximately 85% of Botchok's native population would be dead before the Atom War and the Long Winter ended. The aliens had Orions off Botchok that they could breed for slaves; sooner or later Botchok would become habitable again and they could rebuild. There was no great interest in saving the lives of slaves bred to fight and die anyway. While all modern interstellar races have detonated atomic weaponry on their respective homeworlds, only the Orions own homeworld would ever experience large-scale nuclear warfare, and the resulting nuclear winter. While no hard numbers are available, it is estimated that approximately 6 billion Orions perished within a century on Botchok.

Eventually, the aliens began rebuilding Botchok with Orions 'imported' from elsewhere, who were not radiation-damaged or starving. If anything, these 'imported' Orions were even more outraged than the surviving Homeworlders and more determined to wrest free of careless coldblooded invaders. Compiled soon after the planet was repopulated, the **Book of Tears** describes the awful waste and destruction newcomers and natives were forced to clean up. Here and there are vows that Orions will never again allow themselves to be so callously manipulated. Orions would never again allow themselves to be so callously manipulated. Denied advanced technical knowledge, the Orions plotted to develop their own,

steal, or do without. The Book of Tears is also, tragically enough, the first major work of literature produced in Orion culture, and exists today in original manuscript form at the Kammzdast Museum of Orion Civilization on Kammzdast, in a vacuum-sealed, neutronium-cast rodinum case, and has (perhaps predictably enough) *never* been displayed.

By and large, the Orions stole most of the information they subsequently acquired. To win free of the aliens, however, the Orions needed to convince every alien race that they were too much trouble to govern. This was a monumental task. The limits in the Treaty of Kammzdast were firm, and had outlasted most of the original signatory races as well as the Long Winter. To undo all that would take time, excruciating patience, and equally excruciating feats of planning and restraint.

The adjustments of Kammzdast at the Rigel Conferences were always tiny and grudging, and those who ratified the Treaty never relinquished a whit of actual power. Even as the old races faded from the galactic scene and new ones rose to maturity, Kammzdast remained in force. To be free of it, the Orions used an odd weapon: reliability. If they obeyed enough orders, served with enough humility, and were sufficiently selfless, then they would become trusted.

Over a very long time, the Orions did succeed. They buried their reputation as barbarians under thousands of years of loyal service to whatever race wanted to use them. Patiently, they acquired a reputation as faithful, reliable servants whose loyalty could not be stolen. Their long presence on the galactic scene made them valuable advisors and confidants; it was said that if an Orion had not seen it, it did not exist. Although their homeworld was still a battlefield, the Orions gradually instituted rules for battlefield conduct that reduced costs and casualties while preserving patron control and the thrill of actual combat.

## The Orion Dawn

1. Eventually, the Orions even gained the privilege of starflight. There is evidence that Orions served as loaders and watch-standers as early as 12,000 years ago—quietly, of course, and usually on large ships on out-of-the-way routes short on a few crewmembers. Kammzdast had never anticipated a Stone Age race acquiring starships and did not prohibit them, but every Orion-owning race was firmly opposed to a slave race possessing the ultimate in transportation. Orions could serve as secondary crew, even as spaceport officials, but no starship crew would ever be wholly Orion.

The Orion Dawn legend, describing how the Orions finally acquired ships of their own, is full of romance but short on historical validity. There really were Orions named Ombrey and Maark, and they did serve as senior officers aboard freighters belonging to the Buban, but they did not learn their trade while slaves in the hold or lead a shipload of manual laborers to take over an armed trading vessel. By all accounts, the theft of the *Revenge* and the *Fate* was a well-planned operation aided by Orions at Botchok and in the Colonies not far from Rigel. Ombrey and Maark established hidden bases, contacted friendly Colonies, and began to capture other ships in space to build an Orion fleet. Although these ships or their crews could never return to Botchok, the Colonies sustained them in their hideouts on Avali and Ugoan, and provided more crewmen, equipment, and supplies for raids. All that was important was that Orions not be dependent on alien invaders for star travel—and that the aliens believe the pirates, and not the Orions they had come to trust were behind it all.

Believe it they might have, but the restrictions against Orion starships increased, and the 42nd Rigel Conference debated about amending Kammzdast to prohibit Orion use of the warp drive. With hopes of more commerce with the Orions, certain farsighted races vetoed the move and the restraint it would put on future trade. Orion starships were soon being built and crewed for legitimate trade, though they were always open to inspection by anyone who cared to stop them. The result was greater prosperity for those

owning a share of Orion shipping, especially because Orion starships were less often the victim of Orion pirates.

Orions with spacing experience were soon applying for work at the Trade Halls on Rigel IV. In just a few decades, they were in every Hall, and, in less than two centuries, they came to form the greater part of the clerical workforce-always following orders, efficiently processing the paperwork, and always in contact with the pulse of commerce into and out of the Rigel system. More than a few races were uneasy about the arrangement, but only a fool would have wished to disturb the flow of riches through Rigel.

Some three thousand years after the Atom War, the Orions took a big step toward self-rule. The 58 cultures that ruled Botchok had been quarreling more than usual, causing more than the usual amount of damage to the planet. Although aware of the cost to the planet, the powers were not willing to put aside their differences to make repairs. At a minor parley during a truce, Orion representatives from the twelve largest Botchok nations deferentially proposed an electrifying thesis: Botchok's ecosphere was critically damaged, having never fully recovered from the Long Winter, and in a thousand years it would fail completely. No longer would there be a Botchok to fight over or any Orions to do the fighting. Repairs would both be costly and require long-range maintenance, but the middle of a war was not the time to discuss such matters-unless the Orions themselves did something about it.

The delegates placed before their masters a detailed plan for the re-terraforming of Botchok, all done by Orion labor, at Orion cost, and with existing Orion technology. All they needed was the go-ahead. The aliens agreed and went back to their own negotiations. Although a minor event to Botchok's masters, the Accord of Namazz was a vital first step for the Orions. With permission to use their technology on their own world, Orion bureaucrats began to exercise authority over their own people and help preserve their world as well. They would not do a good job-even today it requires constant tinkering-but the terraforming of Botchok was an indispensable political victory.

Eight hundred years after the Orion Dawn, nine of the most powerful civilizations near Rigel formed a mighty alliance called the Nine Worlds Confederation. Jealous of the exercise of any power within their domains, the Nine Worlds believed that the Orions had far too many prerogatives for a slave race. By regulation and appeals to law and treaty, the Nine Worlds clamped down. By subterfuge, double dealing, and their already ponderous commercial holdings, the Orions resisted, but their best efforts could not touch the legal restraints of Kammzdast. The Nine Worlds could insist on letter-perfect adherence to Treaty, and the Orions, squirm as they might, had to relinquish their quasi-legal gains.

As their ancient ancestors had, the Nine Worlds wanted absolute control over Rigel, right down to the least cargo-loader and transfer clerk. Merchant vessels entering Rigel were required to stop at least twice at Nine Worlds ports to have their cargoes and crews checked, despite the protests of the Rigellians and Orions begging for efficiency. When its enforcement of half-forgotten codes met only faint opposition, the alliance boldly moved for the killing stroke. On stardate -5592.6, the Nine Worlds Confederation held the 187th-and last-Rigel Conference, and issued a sweeping list of prohibitions removing Orions from commercial activities both in and outside Rigel.

## The Orion War

1. According to Orion propaganda, the Nine Worlds acted in reckless haste and without the careful planning that would have meant success. In fact, however, it was the Orions who panicked and precipitated their own climatic crisis. The delegates made no real secret of their deliberations on Rigel IV; they had guards aplenty and their ships were in orbit. As per protocol, they first informed the Rigellians, whose guests they were, of their agreement. No one knows who acted first-a captain of the guard hastily ordering the meeting chambers sealed, an overzealous Trade Hall scion attempting a coup, even a

technician shutting down the communication system-and it did not matter. As soon as the Nine Worlds delegates announced their resolution, their links to the outside world were broken. Within minutes, Orion troops had seized the orbiting ships and prevented them from sending any warning. Orion legend has made the opening of the rebellion the fruition of centuries of plotting, but in reality it was all quite spontaneous. Every Orion on Rigel IV who was close to the Conference understood that the time had come to act-and they acted as if they had rehearsed every move.

Eventually, an Orion delegation, under the leadership of the then-unknown Nallin Oplate presented the Nine Worlds diplomats with a bold counter-ultimatum; restore Orion rights and allow the peaceful independence of all Orions, or face carnage and destruction on every Nine Worlds planet until the Orions had their way. As the Conference was technically still in session, the delegates pleaded for time to make a reply, which Nallin granted.

Nallin anticipated that the delegates would try to inform the Nine Worlds of the rebellion. With a large contingent of Trade Hall *rhadamanen*, he journeyed to Botchok and informed the Orion governments there of the revolt. Within a month, every Orion government seized power from their alien overseers and imprisoned them. Warfare on Botchok finally ended, and for the first time, Orion troops prepared for battle in defense of the Orion homeworld. Nallin's diplomatic ability provided the impetus for the creation of the Botchok Planetary Congress. Contrary to legend, he was not the only one to send out the Recall of the Pirates. Rigel had no other space forces, and many Orions realized that a war for survival was imminent.

There may have been a leak in communications or suspicion at the silence from the Rigel Conference. Regardless, a Nine Worlds battlefleet arrived at Rigel before half the Orion pirate fleet arrived, and the deceit was over. although the Rigellians promptly ordered the fleet to leave or face permanent revocation of trading rights, the fleet ignored them and closed on Botchok. In the opening battle of what would become the Orion War, Nallin Oplate himself commanded a ship-not a true warship, but an armed freighter, and he was *not* in command of the entire fleet. Outnumbered and outgunned, the Orions were shot to pieces. Though they continued to close ranks, they were forced to retreat, still firing, all the way back to the atmosphere of Botchok, in full view of half the people on the planet. To retreat further was impossible, and the Orion fleet would have been destroyed save for the miraculous appearance of Captains Caruch the Blessed and Lhai the Victorious. Possessing 20 ships each, Captains Caruch and Lhai arrived behind the Nine Worlds' fleet undetected, and opened fire on the unscreened sterns of the largest warships, including the Nine Worlds' flagship, destroying most and pinning the remainder between the divided Orion forces. Only a handful of Nine Worlds' ships escaped to tell the tale.

The Orions had no closer call than this, though everywhere they faced desperate odds. The Recall took two years to complete, and the Orion War was fought initially with one-seventh the ships the Nine Worlds could muster. However, Nallin had spoken truly; Orions everywhere risked and lost their lives sabotaging the enemy's war effort. Rebellion swept the alliance's planets, occupying the greater part of the Nine Worlds ground forces-which did not help the space situation. Never able to force battle on their own terms, the Nine Worlds had to be content with innumerable raids and the attrition exacted by their fleets.

The signatory-successors to the Treaty of Kammzdast refused to surrender their claims and privileges easily, even with Orion pressure against them. What was a little war against the loss of Orion labor? At least war might bring the Orions to heel. Therefore, the war dragged on for 50 long years. Then, after the Battle of Rhinate devastated the largest remaining Nine Worlds' warfleet, the alliance sued for terms.

Simultaneously with the ceasefire, Nallin the Unconquerable, who had never lost a fight (though he had been in only one) issued the famous Declaration of Nallin, which proclaimed Botchok a free world, unbound by Kammzdast and beholden to any other peoples, and Orions everywhere free citizens, wards of the Botchok Planetary Congress and entitled to its protections wherever they may go. Enemies to no one, they wished only to resume, on a fair-trading basis, those relations that existed before the war. However, there remained much rebuilding before the Orions were as well off as they once were.

Nallin remained President of the BPC for only a few years before retiring to a world at the edge of the

Outer Dark (those regions from which no ship had ever come to Rigel, at the edge of settled Orion space). He did not die in space or combat, but lived out his days establishing a new Orion Colony-an ambition of his postponed by 50 years of circumstance. No other Orion is so revered as teh Unconquerable, and he is rightly called the Father of the Orions.

## The New Days

1. Two hundred years after the Declaration of Nallin, the historian Letan summarized the perfection of Orion civilization:

*On a thousand worlds, Orion cities and Orion marketplaces rise, holden to none. Out of Orion ports fly Orion ships laden with the commerce of a Galaxy. Orion Captains probe the Outer Dark, Orion rhadamanen fill Orion coffers, and Orion poets sing their praises to the start. On all sides, Inward and Outward, Horsh to Ku'Kresh, Uign to Payn, Syrenya to Rhinate, Spinward and Coreward, there is blessed peace. Prosperity lives and breaths like a Presence between the worlds.*

50 years of warfare had exhausted the Orion Arm of everything but animosity toward the Orions. For most cultures, the Nine Worlds included, the very idea of treating the Orions as equals was loathsome. Many civilizations began taking steps to cut the Orions off completely.

The BPC decided that the best way to defuse the embargo of Orion trade was to conduct trade as inconspicuously as possible. Orion ships and crews visited only their own settlements, but many corporations and families hired alien ships and crews to haul for them, quietly, preserving the illusion of no Orion involvement. Not that the Orions had any goods to spare; they were as exhausted as any other race. Nevertheless, they understood that economic interdependence built strength, and thus trade had to be re-established at almost any cost. Freedom did not end the Orions' underhanded dealings with its neighbors.

As for their former masters, this peasce was fraught with suspicion and mortification. To admit how much their societies rested on the Orions galled everyone. Even when the Orions were accepted as part of the natural order, they were relegated to the lower, or at least the less-visible reaches of society. Only the nastiest, dirtiest, most drudgery-laden jobs that no one else would do were open to the Orions.

To everyone's surprise-including the Orions-rigel was rebuilt quickly and the transition from slavery to freedom was almost painless. Fes civilized worlds did not harbor an Orion settlement somewhere on it, busily restoring its economy. No one wanted to look worse off than the Orions, and so almost everyone found dodges and schemes to make use of Orion goods and services. Once the flood started, there fwas no stopping it, particularly as there was no real detriment to doing so. Business went on as it did before the war, right down to the use of Orion slaves-though the Orion *rhadamanen* renting them out were quick to use the term "contract laborer". In 20 years, no visible trace of the war remained; in a half a century, only bittersweet memories were left in a galaxy grown much, much richer.

The sheer magnitude of the richness and energy of the newly freed Orion Colonies (worlds populated by Orions outside the Rigel system) can scarcely be imagined today. Orion artisans and craftsmen tried to outdo each other to build larger, grander, and more ornate cities, towns, and markets-the more and the faster, the better for everyone. Now that Orions could build ships, they opened dozens of shipyards and rapidly constructed a massive, highly advanced merchant fleet. Overnight, entire schools of design theory sprang into existence, and music, literature, and dance enjoyed a veritable explosion of talent no less great than the 'harder' disciplines. What had been folk art, gypsy culture now bloomed into hundreds of forms; from song to ballets to holovision and beyond. The Orion culture of today harkens back to the proudest themes and traditions of this golden age-the strength, the grace, the majesty of a puissant race come into its own. Having spent ages creating an enduring, resilient civilization, the Orions were

determined to enjoy the fruits of it to the fullest.

Under the loose authority of the Botchok Planetary Congress, the Orions and their trading partners enjoyed a thousand years of unparalleled luxury. Excess wealth actually became a major social problem for many races, including the Orions (though to a lesser extent). Over time, self-indulgence took its toll on the Nine Worlds and most of the other races of the Orion Arm so that they became not merely dependent on the Orion economy, but were utterly absorbed into their way of life. Losing their culture and heritage, a few races withered away completely. Even after the contraction of Orion space, many of these peoples would never regain their own civilization, but lived as if they were Orions and always had been. A few of these 'swallowed' races are the non-Ruddy/non-Green element seen among Orion populations today. Gradually, the populations of the worlds nearest Botchok became almost wholly Orion.

Thus was the pattern set for all Orion Colonies. Spaceports sprang up in Orion neighborhoods, where pure Orion was spoken when there was no one else to hear. The bazaars, cantinas, markets, and clubs greatly resembled those of Botchok, with fluted and spiraled towers, bulged onion-domes, and knurled blocks of apartments rich with balconies and riotous in colored stone and cloth hangings.

For all their fondness for space and exploration, the Orions were never a great settling people. Space was to be exploited and used. Unlike the Federation races, they had no drive to plant a seedling settlement on an uninhabited world. Unlike the Klingons or Romulans, they had no desire to force the natives to their will or to wipe them out. Orions wanted an inhabited world so that they could worm their way into the local economy and ingratiate themselves with their 'new business partners'.

Nevertheless, that was slow in coming. For more than a century after the Orion War, the Orion Colonies had their hands full re-establishing themselves and building a laster prosperity. Pirates and traders worked the Outer Dark, but they were adventurers and scarcely civilized about business; a sensible Orion stayed close to home and made his pile there. Only when population pressure began to build did Orions begin to carve the new Colonies outside frequented space.

Not every venture was successful; not every world wanted a permanent Orion Colony in its midst. Knowing this to be the case, the original Orion Colonies carefully studied their intended new Colonies to ensure maximum survivability and sent *rhadamanen* and the necessary funds to make a successful go at a new world. Colonial expansion was slow; an existing Colony might mount a colonizing effort every two or three generations. The interval could well be longer, especially if the last venture had failed.

Ahead of the slow wave of expansion rode the pirates, making things more difficult for those who followed. Behind the wave were worlds whose living standards had been markedly improved, linked by a dense web of Orion merchant shipping carrying the riches of literally hundreds of Orion Colonies. By the grace and with the permission of their hosts, clusters of Orions lived among alien populations often many hundreds of times their size.

At its greatest extent, Orion Space was a full 150 parsecs in radius, covering more than half the distance from Rigel to Terra. The patterns of colonization and exploration varied widely; close to Rigel, the proportion of Orions to natives was much higher than it was toward the Outer Dark. Before the Reverse, some planets had populations fully 50 percent Orion and growing. The more typical percentage was closer to 10 percent, and on the Coreward and Spinward frontiers it was often less than a few percent. Regulus and Alphose enjoyed large Orion Colonies, where beautiful cities still mirror that lost classical age of Orion architecture.

Exactly how many planets there were and what wonders they held are now lost in history. Records are scanty, and the ruins are not very helpful. However, it has been confirmed that at least one Orion explorer ventured as far as Terra and Tellar without, alas, leaving any trace but his ships log.

# The Reverse

1. Millions of words have been written on why the Reverse took place. Wealth and luxury may finally have poisoned even the Orions, making them discontented and covetous. The Colonies continued to expand, but much more slowly as their sponsors on Rigel grew reluctant to fund such extravagant gestures. Minor differences in tariffs and trade-policy agreements escalated to full-scale corporate warfare, even near and on Rigel. Paying taxes to Rigel and getting little in return, the Colonies formally broke all relations with Botchok and declared independence, drastically cutting Botchok's revenue. Tax rebellions had little practical effect as the links between Orion worlds depended primarily on trade, which continued in spite of political disturbances. Only a small corps of nostalgic idealists minded the change, but they were prominent in Botchok's most powerful circles, and they begrudged the loss of authority sorely.

The peak of the Reverse was the Time of the Three Emperors. The Botchok Planetary Congress had not been able to restore order or political supremacy using harsh laws and threat of military force-in fact, the ineffectiveness of such measures weakened the BPC's authority even further. Then, several powerful families on Botchok revolted, seeking more power and advocating the use of extreme force to end the Colonies' petty squabbles. The revolt was successful, and the families chose a monarch to save Orion space from its own successes. Under Boyor I, Botchok dispatched elements of the Orion Space Navy to bring disobedient worlds back within Rigel's fold. Doomed to failure, the effort just wasted lives and resources at the very heart of Orion space and disrupted trade at Rigel.

So turbulent was this time that the usually detailed Orion records all but disappeared, and only spotty, secondhand accounts of the era survive. Lasting approximately 400 years, the Reverse destroyed Orion wealth and made Orion expansion too costly and failure-ridden to pursue with prior vigour. Beset by pirates and shunned by peaceable alien races, the far-flung Orion Colonies could not maintain the volume of pre-Reverse trade. Colonies began to be abandoned more often than they were replaced or re-established. Some simply ceased to trade, and were left behind in the Outer Dark to manage as best they could.

By Stardate -7/2155, the pride and the arrogance of the Three Emperors' time had long disappeared, and a chastened BPC quietly shifted its emphasis from governing to accounting. Published semi-regularly at 10 year intervals, the Orion Registry was the BPC's successful attempt to restore economic order by listing all the remaining Orion Colonies and their population, trade preferences, and other useful business data. Although compiling the First Registry was a major task and costly in terms of researchers lives, it proved useful and met universal acceptance. Order had been restored and Orion decline slowed. The Orion Registry is still produced by tradition. The 599th Orion Registry was released Stardate 50021.4.

This near-revival of the Orion economy ended bloodily and unnecessarily. As Orion space contracted, the pirates had grown in number beyond all counting as desperate Orions sought some way *any way* to better their lot in a dangerous time, and piracy, ever attractive to Orions, simply gained some additional allure. The loss of civil order made the pirates bold while the loss of profitable trade made them just as desperate as any dirt-side Orion. The Orion Registry was a godsend to them, showing them where to strike and where to avoid. They formed larger bands, regular pirate fleets, and they began to raid entire worlds instead of ships. The pitiful defence forces the Orion Colonies were able to raise could not guard every Orion world-there were too many pirates and too many hiding places, and far too few ships and men to be an effective deterrent.

Among the Orion Colonies, there was simply no stopping the massive raid of the Tellun system, though it lasted weeks and sacked one of the most productive worlds left to the Orions. The pirate ships outnumbered the defenders, and many Colony crews mutinied to return home, as if they could defend their own communities more effectively that way. When the pirates withdrew, the fear remained and the decline resumed in earnest.

It should be noted that approximate to the sack of the Tellun system, contact was made with the inhabitants of a far flung world the Orion pirate leader christened *Rasa'ul*, 'Furnace' in High Orion. *Rasa'ul* is better known as 40 Eridani to Terran astronomers-*Vulcan* to the layman. As is now known, the Orion pirates were the first alien contact for the Vulcans, and it began quite bloodily when the pirates invited the leaders of the many nations that still existed in that age to a meeting. The resulting bombardment of the meeting site killed all of the major Vulcan leaders, save for Surak, who had only recently been making his concept of C'thia (tr: Old High Vulcan, 'reality-truth') known. In time, after the pirates were defeated at extreme cost, Surak's philosophy would unite Vulcan. But, the prolonged hostility with the Orion pirates provided the impetus for that unification.

About a thousand years before the present, Orion space had shrunk to less than its size during the New Days. Although many worlds had high Orion populations, only those core worlds closest to Rigel remained even loosely federated and cognizant of the BPC. The others had been lost (occasionally depopulated), forgotten, and left to fend for themselves. Traffic at Rigel ebbed; the Outer Dark came nearer each year.

## Interstellar Encounters

1. On Stardate 3802.2, a new threat made a terrifying appearance to Coreward. Contact with the large and long-established Farx Colony had been completely and inexplicably severed; merchantmen reported distinctive bird-like vessels with occupants who blistered or butchered entire worlds. Abandoning their colonies, streams of Orions carried the stories homeward carrying a scare through every Orion world. This new race, the Romulans would rampage through the Orion Arm for several years before discovering how resource poor it was, convincing them their efforts were best spent elsewhere. The BPC would learn some six months after the fact, about the complete and utter destruction of the Farx Colony, resulting in the slaughter of 22 million Orions.

Approximate to the discovery of the massacre at Farx, reports began being received by the BPC of Rimward activities by another new race, whom the Orion pirates had encountered. This other race was also technologically advanced, and ruthlessly suppressed any resistance in seizing old Orion worlds. Methodical and cautious in approaching the Orions, the Klingons were careful to let no warning slip from the worlds they had conquered. Only pirates escaped their net to tell the tales-but who would believe a pirate? By the time truly reliable reports reached Botchok, more than a dozen Orion Colonies had fallen to the Klingons.

As the Klingon Empire expanded toward Rigel, the Orions realized their collective navy could not withstand the Klingon fleet. Therefore, instead of battling the Klingons, they welcomed them, and the opportunity for trade with a new race. The tactic worked, and the Orion proposal thoroughly confused the Klingons. The Orions readily agreed to allow a Klingon governor on Botchok and to pay tribute to the Empire, but to the Klingons, these were hollow victories. Something was wrong-the victory was too easily won. Often, the Imperial Governor on Botchok would ask his superiors on Qo'noS if the Klingons were still in charge (apparently, sobriety was a problem). Anxious for more control, he increased the Klingon fleet strength in Orion space. However, the move was useless as the Orions never rebelled against their Klingon 'overlords' and always paid their tribute promptly. As the Klingons' desire for Orion trade increased, the Orions' tribute decreased until it vanished altogether.

Around Stardate 3285.1, the Romulans began to get the upper hand in border disputes with the Klingons. To bolster his forces, the Klingon Chancellor, Meveq, withdrew all warships and tradeships from Orion space over the feeble demands of the Imperial Governor on Botchok. Soon, the Imperial Governor was recalled also, though no one took his place. As the Orions had foreseen, the Klingons realized that the value of the Orions lay in their trade and that a military presence there was totally inefficient. Besides,

the Orions posed a limited military threat.

Three years later, the Orions began to learn of a developing alliance to Spinward. An Orion Colony vessel patrolling the Outer Dark stumbled across a lost, dilapidated trading ship owned by Garggash Dlumppheg. Dlumppheg's refusal to identify himself and to trade infuriated the Orion commander, who escorted Dlumppheg to Botchok and let the BPC deal with the stubborn alien. Garggash Dlumppheg was Tellarite. Five months after his arrival, Dlumppheg departed Botchok with a trade agreement with the BPC, which though exclusive, was worthless. Other independent traders from the Federation following Dlumppheg discovered that governmental trade was almost nonexistent, and that the powerful Orion corporations and families were the ones with which to trade.

When, on Stardate 3551.37, the alliance formally banded together as the United Federation of Planets, Orions stood with the Rigellian delegation as interested parties but non-signatories. Always looking to make a credit, the BPC had offered to join if the Federation paid the sum of ten trillion credits 'for administrative costs, in Federation', but this infuriated the five alien worlds. It was then that the Orions had their first doubt as to Federation interests. The UFP did improve trade and cripple the pirates, but also sent a sizeable delegation to Botchok to work out treaties, agreements, and protocols for the smooth operation of the Rigel-Federation spacelanes.

As time went by, the Orions and the Federation both realized that they had wildly different assumptions about power and its allocation. To the Orions, the Federation seemed unnaturally stiff and inelastic; specific tasks were arbitrarily handled by a minister or other functionary. To the Federation officials on Botchok, the Orions were the epitome of anarchy. Not only were there no set officials for important governmental tasks, the Orions frequently squabbled over who would accept the responsibility or take the credit for doing a job. Furthermore, most of the delegates to the Botchok Planetary Congress were not above using their own connections beyond the BPC to force events to go their way.

The Federation embassy was forced to demand that the BPC impose some sort of order. There should be certain officers holding specific titles doing at least loosely defined work. The suggestion took the BPC by storm, and for more than a yera, they happily nominated ministers for ever-detailed tasks-the Minister for Rigellian Communications, the Minister for Insurance Claims (not to be confused with the Minister for Insurance Regulation or Insurance Writing), and even a Minister for Simplifying Government. When the exasperated Federation Ambassador, James Donnell, asked the BPC if they planned to name a Grand Poo-bah, the BPC promptly formed a Commision for the Nomination of the Grand Poo-bah, resulting in some desultory research. Their report has been deleted from the official record, and from that date the number of ersatz ministers declined.

Advised of the difficulties at Rigel, the Federation began to understand how little authority the BPC actually possessed. The Federation Council advised the embassy to continue to press for the necessary treaties and to increase, if possible, the legitimacy of the Orion government. As requested, the embassy performed the task by referring all Orions who came to them to the BPC first for adjudication. Although the BPC began to learn the ways of Federation-style government, the Federation gained little but duly signed and stamped pieces of paper that went virtually unenforced.

## **INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS**

### **1. UNITED FEDERATION OF PLANETS**

Originally, the Federation was five races with tenuous trade with Rigel and useful controls on Orion pirates. Orion observers attended the First Babel Conference as members of a friendly, but sovereign power. Asked to join the new alliance, the Orions came up with a 'fair and equitable' sum for their participation-ten trillion credits. Considering this request tantamount to a bribe, the five races refused to pay.

Since then, the Federation expanded into Orion space like a cancer, and Starfleet has curtailed the slave trade. Orion is now little more than a Federation protectorate, its neutrality regarded as a joke and a shield for undesirable activities, and Orions resent this deeply. Aggression is one thing, but the Federation arrogantly annexed more than one-third of all Orion worlds. To Orions, the Federation is not just an eagerly expanding association, it is an overbearing bunch of self-righteous, self-proclaimed do-gooders without history, or respect. Orions consider pious posturings of the Federation absurd. It does not make deals-it simply proclaims laws and sends its ships to enforce them. Although it refuses to play or even to acknowledge the Orion game, the UFP claims it respects the individual cultures it has swallowed whole.

However, ten years ago, with the possibility of hostilities between the Federation and Romulan Star Empire, and some 125 years after the Federation established the Orion Neutral Zone demarcating Orion space and annexing all but 13 Orion worlds, Orion leaders began considering the possibility that Romulan rule might well be less-desirable than Federation rule. Then first contact occurred with the Borg, and this served to stun Orion leaders into serious contemplation of their plight, for here was an enemy with whom *no* understand could be negotiated, and no deal struck. Shortly after the destruction of the Starfleet squadrons at the Battle of Wolf359, leaders from throughout Orion space, including Federation-ruled worlds, gathered on the world of Rhinate, inside Federation space, for the purpose of discussing how to respond to the possibility of a Borg threat. The decision was simple: Federation membership. No Orion force could stop a Borg Cube, but the Federation had just succeeded in destroying one-after sustaining considerable losses in starships and personnel. It was not a proposition any Orion leader at the Rhinate Conference relished trying to sell to the people back home, but all were practical enough to realize that occasionally necessity is the mother of invention.

The proposition to seek Federation membership was not without its own perils however; Grey Orions would have to be freed from abject slavery, the Green Slave Trade would have to cease altogether, as would the tacit approval given to pirate bands to operate freely. A great number of legal 'industries' would also have to cease operation due to the fact they were illegal in Federation space. However, the leaders of Orions made it quite clear to their constituencies that if they wanted safety, then this was its cost. Those who objected, cited how such demands flew in the face of nearly 15,000 years of recorded Orion history, but they also objected to naught. Public fear outweighed any consideration of maintaining the status quo in the face of a Borg threat. Orion dynastic lines, corporations, and smaller Orion-owned businesses moved quickly to divest themselves of Grey Orions, Green Slaves, and their multifarious business transactions, and to form something they had never had before: a central government.

While Orions were busily "...straightening out their own houses", as Ggrav Trev, Federation Councilor from Tellar said, the Federation observed the activity in Orion space with nothing short of astonishment. The Federation had encountered all manner of resistance to get the Orions to do just that for nearly two centuries, and a great many Federation officials began congratulating themselves for their hardline stance in dealing with the Orions, bringing the headstrong inhabitants of Rigel to bay. This was until Ambassador Sarek of Vulcan politely reminded his esteemed colleagues that it had probably, and most likely been the recent Borg invasion that effected such maniacal change within Orion space, and not "...Federation obsequience." Sarek recommended that the Orion situation be monitored, and that if the Orions did in fact request Federation membership, serious consideration should be given the application.

Two years later, on Stardate 48190, The Orion Colonial Council, its chambers located on Rigel VIII, tendered an Application for Federation Membership to the Federation High Council, by Colonial President Vray Netess, a Ruddy Orion. Membership would be granted five years later on Stardate 53921, in the form of the Treaty of Rhinate, effectively stating that the Orion Neutral Zone and all worlds contained within, in addition to all previously annexed Orion colonies would be granted Federation membership. With one fell swoop of a light pen, the Federation gained thirty new member worlds, with the prospect of 10 new Orion member worlds joining every 5 years for the next fifteen years.

Both the Orions and the Federation seem somewhat bewildered by the speediness of Orion membership in the Federation. While there have been isolated minor incidents regarding Green Slavery, there have been *no* major violations of the Treaty of Rhinate, much to everyone's surprise. With the advent of hostilities with the Cardassians and the Dominion, and yet another attempted Borg invasion of Terra, Orions tend to believe that Federation membership could not have happened at a better time. Now, they can contribute their part in defending themselves, and paradoxically enough, the same Federation they railed against not too many years before.

## **THE KLINGON EMPIRE**

Orions do not *seem* to get along with Klingons. Although Orion-Klingon relations are were a well-kept secret, typically blunt Klingon expressions of opinion reveal a deep-seated distrust and loathing of Orions. By Klingon standards, the Orions are clearly a dying race, good for nothing but producing servitors, and unworthy of a challenging conquest. They tend to be smarter than their captors, and wherever they go, their noxious culture follows-and thrives. From this we may extract the provenance of the revealing Klingon saying: "Never take an Orion prisoner-they are far too devious to leave alive."

Upon encountering the Orions Stardate 1194, the Klingons assigned a military governor to rule their newest conquest. Although supplanting local Orion government worked on a few Orion worlds, the Klingons came out second best on Botchok, and most other Orion-inhabited locales. They may have won political control from the Orions, only to fall victim to Orion trade and economics. An Orion sentiment refers to this dilemma as *Uktas bo umdo*, or literally, "Blasters or bookkeepers". One must fall before the other-but in usual Orion fashion, the saying does not specify which.

Starfleet Intelligence has only recently discovered the extent to which the Orions conducted trade both within the Klingon Empire, and between the Federation and the Empire, when the Federation and the Klingons were the deadliest of adversaries. Some suprising products of the Empire find their way into Orion space, and somehow get transported into the Federation. Though no longer illegal, it does leave Federation-and Klingon intelligence agencies mystified. Piracy never occurs along the Klingon border currently due primarily to the fact Orions are Federation citizens. However, before the Orions joined the Federation piracy was still a rather uncommon event because the Klingons often ruthlessly hunted and obliterated any Orion pirates who were unfortunate enough to be captured by the Klingon Defence Forces.

Regardless of past Orion-Klingon relations, the Orions have long-successfully tapped a Klingon fondness for luxury items, which the Klingons may officially deplore. Now that trade between the Federation and the Klingons is relatively unrestricted compared to past decades, Orions serve as popular conduits for transport of goods between the two governments, and Orions have gotten wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice because of this. Nevertheless, occasionally traditional Klingon customs do get in the way of business, and these tales of woe do reach Orion Space. Traditionally, Orions refer to them as *Klong*, a deliberate corruption of the Klingon name with a revealing meaning: "the wall".

## **ROMULAN STAR EMPIRE**

Relations between the Orions and the Romulans were never well understood until Federation membership was achieved. Prior to the Romulan War of Stardate 1093, the Orion colony world of Farx was obliterated in an attack. Recovered sensor scans, matched against archived Starfleet sensor scans proved later that the attackers were indeed three full squadrons of Romulan starships. Approximately 22 million Orions were killed in the attack, and affected Orion relations with the Romulans permanently. Farx remains uninhabited to this day, the Orion government consistently refuses to allow resettlement. It is well known that the Romulans are relatively resource poor, and the Orions are relatively wealthy. Both races have a long tradition of piracy, and are also secretive. An Orion diplomatic mission some fifty years ago reported the Romulans as being "Stuffy". The Romulans place high value on personal honor, something for which Orions have precious little use. While trade does occur still, unofficially and unsanctioned by the Federation, "stuffy" is probably the mildest word Orions use to describe the Romulans.

## **CARDASSIAN UNION**

The Orions were among the few races with whom the Cardassians did not initiate a war upon first contact. The Cardassians are another race which happens to inhabit a relatively resource-poor section of space, and were more than happy to purchase raw materials from the Orions prior to the Federation-Cardassian War of Stardate 35149. Once the war began and a Zone of Transport Escort was initiated by the Federation in its territory bordering Cardassian claims, it began to become too difficult to transport raw materials to the Cardassians since all merchant vessels had to be escorted (and could be searched) by Starfleet escort vessels. Vessels traveling outside convoys could be attacked by Starfleet vessels. Since that time, the Cardassians do not regard the Orions very well, considering them weak, particularly since they joined the do-gooding Federation. Cardassian merchants will do business with Orions, but grudgingly.

## **THOLIAN ASSEMBLY**

Few races have ever been welcomed by the Tholians, who like their Cardassian neighbors, tend to shoot first and ask questions later. Orions tried a unique approach to contacting the Tholians; Orion vessels would remain inside Federation space, then transmit signals into Tholian space communicating intent to trade, and that any interested military or civilian vessels were welcome to approach under peace signals to conduct business.

Naturally, the first few ship-to-ship contacts did not go well, but the Tholians seemed to understand from the seized Orion vessels and crews, that the Orions did indeed appear to be 'legitimate' traders, but that their activities should bear monitoring. The Tholians also decided that the Orions were not to be trusted- all business transactions would be done on the Tholian-Federation border, and that no other ships from any other nationality would be allowed to trade, nor would their goods be accepted. Along with these demands, a list of nearly *three hundred* other related demands were presented to the sole remaining surviving merchant crew, who were released along with a cargo of extremely rare Tholian Silk, as a way of demonstrating Tholian sincerity.

The Orion merchant crew proceeded directly to the nearest Federation port, primarily to gain medical assistance for its injuries sustained after six months of Tholian mistreatment. Once sufficiently recovered, Captain Muark Vri't'al and his crew unloaded its entire cargo of Tholian Silk, and all became instant millionaires. Since then and to date, the Orions have formally negotiated trade agreements with the Tholians, separate and prior to its Federation membership, and has expanded the scope of its merchandise to include Federation products, which the Tholians accept. Federation diplomats, and senior Starfleet officers scratch their heads in wonderment at the trading arrangements the Orions have with the Tholians, but are content that at least that amount of contact has been established between the reclusive Tholians and *some* member of the Federation. Orions for their part agree to keep the Federation informed on Tholian actions. In fact, it was the Orions who informed the Federation of the Tholian non-aggression pact they signed with the Dominion and Cardassian Union.

## **GORN ALLIANCE**

The arrangements the Orions have with the Gorn are somewhat similar to the arrangements Orions have with the Tholians, but much less rigorous. The politics of the Gorn has become much less isolationist since the Gorn Civil War of Stardate 29589 ended in favor of the Liberal Party, which has since become the de facto rulers of the Alliance and the Gorn military.

Orions are allowed to enter Gorn space, but are not allowed near 'sensitive areas', at penalty of attack should they ignore stargates given them by the Gorn. Rumors say that judgments are final, and the Gorn attack intruders in sensitive areas without warning, and hunt the intruder until destroyed, even if Gorn cruisers have to cross the Federation border to do so. This is a rare occurrence however, and applies with equal force to all freetraders, Orion, Federation, Klingon, or other.

## **THE DOMINION**

In short, the Orions do not have any contact, nor do they wish any contact with the Dominion. The Dominion are rather like the Borg in Orion eyes; soulless conquerors who desire nothing but the conquest and enslavement of others. They do not care for those whom they rule-they are simply absorbed. Orions view any Dominion conquest of Orion territory as the death knell of Orion culture. While Orion freetraders did enter the Gamma Quadrant via the Bajoran wormhole prior to the outbreak of the Dominion War, trade contacts were relatively limited, and ceased altogether when the war started, and Starfleet established a minefield this side of the Bajoran Wormhole to prevent Dominion reinforcements reaching the Alpha Quadrant. Orions are perfectly aware that Dominion fleets in the Alpha and Beta Quadrants must be destroyed before the Bajoran minefield is circumvented by the implacable Dominion juggernaut.

Starfleet Intelligence believes that the Orions have done the previously unthinkable-approach the ancient Rigellians for information concerning what lies on the other side of the Bajoran Wormhole. Starfleet Intelligence has been unable to determine what the response to any Orion request was.

## **THE RIGELLIANS**

The Rigellians are the most ancient, currently extant inhabitants of the Rigel system, and are native to Rigel IV. They are a bipedal race with rat-like features, including fur and tail. However, it is very well known that they are the most ancient race with whom the Federation (or Orions) have anything approaching frequent contact. While their total population on Rigel IV is estimated to be no more than one million individuals, their relatively long run in interstellar history, 250,000 years as determined by Muuly-Erickson Projection, establishes the Rigellians as the 'Grand Statesmen' of the Orion and Sagittarian Arms of the Milky Way Galaxy.

If the Orions revere any culture other than their own, that reverence would be reserved solely for the Rigellians. For many thousands of years, Orion slaves believed that the Rigellians were the creators of the Orion race-a notion the Rigellians dispelled some 5,000 years ago. Such consideration given the Orions by the Rigellians, only magnifies the consideration the Orions return in kind, primarily because of many thousand of years of Orion slavery at the hands of races alien to Rigel. In all difficult times, the only race that cared to stand by the Orions were the Rigellians.

Suffice to say, contact between Orions and Rigellians have never been anything but warm. The Rigellians have turned Rigel IV into the single most important tradeworld in the Federation, and second only to Ferenghinar in wealth. Even so, the Rigellians motives leave more to the imagination, than actually providing hard information. It is difficult even for Orions to understand Rigellian motives, but understand that whatever the rat-like race does, it is undoubtedly for a good reason, and questioning of Rigellian motives is as absurd as trying to stop the galaxy from turning.

## **THE FERENGI ALLIANCE**

Orions often regard Humans to be brothers under the skin. Ferengi could best be described as cousins under the skin. Both Orions and Ferengi believe in spending one's fortune in the enjoyment of living, and both believe that life is meant to be enjoyed-down to the bottom of one's pockets. Both races also believe that it is better to be rich than poor.

However, there are subtle differences between Orions and Ferengi which gives Orions pause when dealing with their large-lobed associates in interstellar trade. Orions believe in wealth to the extent it provides a comfortable existence for an individual, an individuals family, and his company. While wealth is good, it is also more than a measure of *greed*, but more properly a measure of one's status among others, and a reference on how well one can take care of oneself and others around him. For Ferengi, the cause is greed, and by definition, it is entirely self-centered, the extent of which, even the greediest Orion would find somewhat repellent.

Nevertheless, Orions and Ferengi do have a grudging respect for each other's negotiation skills, and often do business with each other, if only to ensure their mutual negotiation skills remain sharp. Needless to say, both sides of the table know enough to make sure they have their respective wallets before they depart the negotiating table.

## **HUMANS**

'Humans' in this case, refer primarily to Terrans and other similar humanoids. Orion viewpoints of Humans deserves special attention.

For many decades, Orions tended to regard the Federation is an extremely negative light, but more in view of a supergovernment blythely asserting power in spaces where it had no right to. However, the Orions are pragmatic; blaming a Federation for such arrogance is one thing, blaming an individual who happened to be a Federation citizen is another matter entirely. Vulcans were entirely too logical, Andorians entirely too calculating, but Humans were most like Orions in temperament, and even philosophy, so Orions have always admired Humans; not because Humans are so Orion-like, but because Humans retained their identity regardless of the actions of the Federation to which they belong. Belief in a central ideal holds a strong attraction to Orions because they are so fleeting in Orion society. Humans were different in this aspect however, and it is something for which Orions possess a grudging admiration.

Terran cultural artifacts are enormously popular among Orions. They love Clint Eastwood 'Spaghetti Westerns', buccaneers pirating the Spanish Main, baseball, ice hockey, rock concerts, and old analog movies of the Three Stooges. Terran clothing, particularly historical fashions such as 'Western wear', have always sold well on Orion worlds. For their part, Orions have incorporated Terran slang, particularly Russian and American-English words into Orion and Rigellian Trade Lingo. The word "okay" can be heard on Orion worlds a thousand parsecs from Terra.

Admittedly, Terra of the 24<sup>th</sup> century is far different from the Terra of that Orions romanticize. It is a civilized world now, its violent ways safely sealed in books and tapes. There are only a precious few cowboys left, and they are certainly not murdering Indians any more. Although Humans tend to appreciate Orion friendliness, its basis often makes Terrans uncomfortable.

Terrans are in part responsible for their plight; it was the Terran merchantman *Marco Polo* that arrived at Rigel, opening direct trade with the Orions, providing them with their first taste of fast food, Levis, and Clint Eastwood. Commercially, the trade was a blockbuster of a success, but the great-grandchildren of those early merchants must put up with beings who think *Godfathers* and *Shoguns* run Terra.

To their credit, Orions seem to be correct in their appreciation of Terrans, and Humans in general as brothers under the skin. There are many thousands of Humans in Orion employment throughout the galaxy, alongside other Orions. Actual numbers are hard to come by, but Humans are by far the most numerous beings coexisting with Orions. Humans seem to adapt to the Orion tradition of self-indulgence with disturbing ease.

# **The Rigel System**

1. Astrographically, the Rigel star system resides just on the Coreward side of the Orion Arm of the Milky Way Galaxy, a belt of ionized hydrogen rich with large bright stars. With equal access to both sides of the Arm, the Rigel system resides almost exactly between the Federation and the Klingon Empire. Coreward lies the Triangle (a triangular slice of territory, unclaimed by all 3 major powers), and beyond that, the Romulan Star Empire.

Acutally, the Rigel system comprises three stars. Rigel A is the primary star, while Rigel B and C orbit each other more than four parsecs from Rigel A. In a region locally poor in planets, Rigel has an embarassment of riches: 14 planets, more than half of them habitable; 12 orbiting Rigel A, 2 orbiting Rigel B and C. Archaeological evidence shows that hundreds of spacefaring races have visited Rigel for tens of thousands of years, and a few have claimed it; it is prime real estate in a commanding location. The Orions originated in the Rigel system, and for more than 5,000 years it has been under their exclusive control. Although Rigel is not the sole reason for their power, it shaped them and helped them to achieve all they have.

## Rigel I/Tugn

1.

World Log: Tugn

System Name: Rigel A

Number of Class M Worlds: 3

Planetary Data

Position in System: I

Number of Satellites: 0

Planetary Class: J

Planetary Gravity: 0.2g

Planetary Size

Diameter: 2,600 km

Equatorial Circumference: 8,170 km

Total Surface Area: 21,237,160 sq km

Percent Land Mass: 100%

Planetary Conditions

Length of Day: 64 standard days

Atmospheric Density: N/A

General Climate: N/A

Cultural Data

Dominant Life Form: Orion

Notes

Rigel I is an airless Class J rock with only automated mining equipment. When the Hakiel Radiation Zone (which shields the rest of the system from Rigel's lethal ionizing radiation) occasionally knocks out the cybernetic controls, volunteer engineers clad in heavy radiation armor and heavily shielded ships arrive on Tugn to repair the equipment.

The severe magnetic disturbances in front of the Hakiel Zone can be deadly, and the environment within it is indescribably so. As the planet's mining equipment collects molten metals from the planet's surface, Rigel I is not recommended for emergency stops.

## Rigel II/Atugn

1.

World Log: Atugn

System Name: Rigel A

Number of Class M Worlds: 3

### Planetary Data

Position in System: II

Number of Satellites: 0

Planetary Class: J

Planetary Gravity: 0.3g

### Planetary Size

Diameter: 2,980 km

Equatorial Circumference: 9,368 kmBR>

Total Surface Area: 27,898,600 km

Percent Land Mass: 100%

Total Land Area: 27,898,600 km

### Planetary Conditions

Length of Day: 17 standard days

Atmospheric Density: N/A

General Climate: N/A>

#### Cultural Data

Dominant Life Form: Orion

#### Notes

A slightly cooler mining outpost, Rigel II is permanently inhabited and lies just outside a sparse and rocky asteroid belt between it and Rigel I. It is the haunt of asteroid miners and corporate drudges working the pits and shafts on the surface. Centuries of settlement have never removed the frontier atmosphere, the tumbledown, rough-and-ready towns, and the bawdy caberets and saloons full of down-and-out spacers, burned-out miners, and tanked cargo loaders. Rumors of a major belt strike galvanizes (and panics) the hopefuls who come and go.

Prior to Federation membership, Rigel II was the only planet in the Rigel system where Star Fleet vessels could monitor insystem activity without violating Orion neutrality. With the advent of Federation membership and creation of the Starfleet Rigel Shipyards, Rigel II is no longer used for this purpose.

## Rigel III/Volum

1.

World Log: Volum

System Name: Rigel A

Number of Class M Worlds: 3

#### Planetary Data

Position in System: III

Number of Satellites: 2

Planetary Class: M

Planetary Gravity: 1.0g

#### Planetary Size

Diameter: 13,410 km

Equatorial Circumference: 42,130 km

Total Surface Area: 564,946,610 sq km

Percent Land Mass: 34%

Total Land Area: 192,081,840 sq km

#### Planetary Conditions

Length of Day: 26 standard hours

Atmospheric Density: Terrestrial

General Climate: Warm Temperate

#### Cultural Data

Dominant Life Form: Orion

#### Notes

Rigel III is a heartbreakingly beautiful, carefully groomed paradise. While many Class M worlds have brown deserts, glaring white polar caps, and deep blue seas, Rigel III is a tidy mosaic of literally thousands of habitats, all nestling cozily together on four continents.

The planet is also entirely privately owned. All its land, seas, airspace, and parking orbits are in the hands of families, corporations, individuals, and governments of other planets. An involved kind of concordat governs who can own what, how it may be purchased or inherited, and what may or may not be done with the property. Enforcement is by mutual consent; discreet but effective.

Aside from its natural beauty, Rigel III has no visible assets; no industry, no mining, no large-scale farming, and no habitation of more than 5,000 people. There are three land-based, semi-public spaceports used by owners and their guests exclusively. As most owners have private landing and berthing facilities, these ports are more like yacht clubs, places for formal and informal gatherings. Local space control ensures that no unauthorized vessel approaches the planet.

Not every landowner on Rigel III is Orion, and not all are reclusive. Some have allowed scientific teams from the Federation to excavate for signs of the the planets past and its previous masters. Some time in the remote past, the entire planet was re-engineered into a perfect humanoid living environment-right down to the placement of seas and atmospheric circulation patterns. From pole to pole, the seasons are gentle, and there is no harsh weather. No obvious signs of terraforming are present-quite a change from Botchok (Rigel VIII). Although the Orions claim credit, evidence suggests that Rigel III was shaped many tens of thousands of years ago, before the Orions ever reached space. If more of the planet was open to scrutiny, scientists might discover why Rigel IV was planed flat and Rigel III carefully cultivated.

Owners of the Trade Halls on Rigel IV have estates here, as do a few other well-known groups and individuals. However, most of the residents and owners prefer to keep their holdings secret.

## **Rigel V/V'Geln**

1.

World Log: V'geln

System Name: Rigel A

Number of Class M Worlds: 3

#### Planetary Data

Position in System: V

Number of Satellites: 3

Planetary Class: G

Planetary Gravity: 1.2g

#### Planetary Size

Diameter: 15,600 km

Equatorial Circumference: 49,010 km

Total Surface Area: 764,537,960 sq km

Percent Land Mass: 98%

Total Land Area: 764,537,960 sq km

#### Planetary Conditions

Length of Day: 28 standard hours

Atmospheric Density: Thin

General Climate: Desert

#### Mineral Content

Normal Metals: 39%

Radioactives: 16%

Gemstones: 05%

Industrial Crystals: Trace

Special Minerals: 02%

#### Cultural Data

Dominant Life Form: V'gelinians

Notes

Called V'geln by the Orions, Rigel V is the classic Class G desert world with dunes, buttes, sand, heat, thin air, and precious little water. Like Rigel VI, it has no intrinsic value, though people may visit it with advanced water-reclamation gear. Water and plant life exist only at the poles, which suggests that the world was once more habitable than it is now. Nevertheless, the planet is inhabited by reclusive desert nomads, who live in laboriously constructed habitats in the occasional rock outcroppings and migrate to avoid the seasonal dust storms that sweep the planet twice a year.

How the nomads manage to survive on so little has fascinated scientists for centuries. For all this study, they remain uncontaminated and aloof, contemptuous of outsiders. They live as sparsely as the desert; they have no compunctions about abandoning their weak or unfit, or about disposing of the hapless, helpless traveller who makes the mistake of asking their aid. Those who cannot exist in the desert on their own are worse than a burden; they are unclean and unfit to survive.

In appearance, the nomads are very striking; tall, slender Vulcanoids, usually wearing dust-colored robes with hoods and masks. Their ears and eyebrows are elongated per the Vulcanoid somatype, though neither Vulcan nor Romulan is similar to their language. As they are a cold-bloodedly vicious, primitive, and unforgiving people, only experienced contact teams should attempt to approach them. Some scientists have theorized that the nomads are the descendants of 'weed-outs' from the Preservers, or that they could be a lost Vulcan or Romulan colony's survivors; a living relic of prehistoric times.

## Rigel VI/Sirk

1.

World Log: Sirk

System Name: Rigel A

Number of Class M Worlds: 3

Planetary Data

Position in System: VI

Number of Satellites: 2

Planetary Class: K

Planetary Gravity: 0.6g

Planetary Size

Diameter: 7,800 km

Equatorial Circumference: 24,500 km

Total Surface Area: 191,134,490 sq km

Percent Land Mass: 100%

Total Land Area: 191,134,490 sq km

#### Planetary Conditions

Length of Day: 28 standard hours

Atmospheric Density: Tenuous

General Climate: Desert

#### Cultural Data

Dominant Life Form: N/A

#### Notes

Rigel VI is an interesting nothing. A Class K world with no resources, it does have a brilliant ring system and two small moons. From a distance, its cratered pink surface and thick yellowish rings are very beautiful. However, the planet is useless, containing little air, no standing bodies of water, and no extractable minerals. In a system full of better planets, it has been left uninhabited, save for an archaeological team or two. At one time, anti-piracy forces were based on its surface, but now only holes in the remain from the pressure domes. The rings make orbital navigation hazardous.

## Native Orion Technology

1. Four characteristics usually mark an object or process as being native Orion: small size, high efficiency, a simple design, and extreme scarcity. Many non-Orions also would add 'remarkable uselessness' to that list.

Federation members consider much Orion technology to be wonderfully curious. Fountains that play music as its water falls, holographic tapestries with figures that move, and living carpets that grow and even smell like meadows. An object in a private Orion museum has the curious property of polishing *any* substance at which it is pointed. Soft polymers are easier and more quickly polished than granite, but supposedly, the object will do the same even to newly forged neutronium. It can be held in one hand and emits no detectable radiation; it has apparently never depleted its source of energy. In a ruin of one planet (jealously guarded by the present ruling family) is an antigravity platform like a table, which cannot be moved. The force needed to pull it free of whatever holds it in place would destroy it. The Orions tend to guard these treasures carefully as only a few examples of such luxuries exist.

Such objects are *all* museum pieces, valuable for research if nothing else. Not all old native Orion technology is like this; a great portion of it is still in use, but in only a narrow range of applications. For instance, Orion aircars use Federation antigravity units-but there exists Orion antigravity furniture that uses extraordinarily tiny lift units that cannot be examined without destroying the mechanism. Somewhere, somebody is still manufacturing these things and selling them only to Orions. Starships the Orions painstakingly copy from the Federation or Klingon examples slavishly duplicate the sick bays, but the galleys and all their equipment are unmistakably Orion. There are stoves that cook without heat or emitted radiation, knives that do not cut living flesh. In a unique variation of some unknown form of replicator technology, there are simple gadgets capable of taking raw ingredients and producing complete

meals with the touch of a button. All of it is nice, but *expensive* and almost never available to non-Orions. As a wit once said, *"If you want to see the past glory of Orion, go to the kitchen."*

It is not a joke. The best surviving examples of native Orion technology, and those still being produced, all have to do with personal comfort or self-indulgence. There are no ancient Orion weapons, but there are dustless floors; no metals better than Federation tritanium, but luminescent paste jewelry that never fades; no native heavy construction equipment, but exquisite holo-movies and ancient books that produce their own light for reading.

There is no doubt the Orions have lost much since The Reverse. One of the reasons funding for archaeological expeditions to Orion ruins has never slackened is the small but steady trickle of ancient arts that can be recovered. A lot of the Federation's android and communications technology derives from such planets. Unfortunately, weather, time, brigands, and art smugglers (who cut up ruins for some wealthy purchaser desiring a piece of history on his mantle) have destroyed all but a handful of fragments of what was.

One of the major reasons for so much present-day wastage is the persistent rumor that there are actual functioning Orion machines lying at the bottom of ruins. Hordes of eager fortune hunters have descended on the first Orion ruins they can find, blasting their way into every vault and hidden tunnel looking for a magic Feinberger. Blasting, cutting, and crumbling ancient structures have destroyed the records carved into walls. Even when there is no actual writing, the layouts of ancient Orion ruins or the way they were cut into stone tell much about the builders and their works. Their destruction is the destruction of future knowledge.

## Borrowed Technology

1. The Orions have a natural inclination for stealing the good ideas of others and putting them to good, practical, and profitable use. Learned from the beginning of their history, this irritable trait continues because it is a successful survival skill, necessary for the continuation of Orion civilization.

Just as the Orions copied ancient ship designs to produce their own, they also mimic virtually all kinds of other technologies they encounter. The terraforming skills they employed on Botchok were learned from others whose names are forgotten. They never developed the warp drive, but copied it from older spacefarers. The same for antigravs, antimatter manipulation-in short, everything.

In a practical, industrial sense, the Orions are technologically no better off than their neighbors. In the grand tradition of imitating their business associates, their products are annoyingly, depressingly similar to goods the Federation visitors could pick up closer to home. Of course, they tend to be cheaper, as the Orions cut a lot of corners and do not worry about durability or paying someone for their patents. The influx of cheap Orion goods into the Federation is a growing and aggravating problem, and Star Fleet has neither the time nor the ships to check every merchant vessel leaving an Orion world.

One of the unexpected benefits of this practice is the bleed-over of Klingon technology into Federation space. Every kind of manufactured item with any kind of profit possibility sooner or later gets counterfeited in an Orion factory, including a great deal of Klingon body armor and Klingon hand disruptors.

Naturally, Orions are also marketing unreliable copies of Federation goods on worlds in Klingon space and the Neutral Zone between them-perhaps even in Romulan space. Does this shoddy merchandise hurt the Orion or the Federation more? What are the Klingons and the Romulans learning from these goods? After all, a clumsily copied ODN relay is still an ODN relay.

# Technological Unreliability

1. When they are paid well, Orions are capable of producing excellent works. Some Orion counterfeit goods are virtual duplicates of the originals. The irony is that the vast majority of the Orions' customers want only cheap duplicates of expensive products so they can sell them for more and make a larger profit.

Thus, there is a genuine argument the Orions for their part, are only fulfilling demand.

It is a good deal cheaper and more profitable to 'knock-off' substandard copies of more prestigious goods, to substitute inferior parts on more complex merchandise, or to fake technically demanding pieces of work to look as if they were done right. It startles people to learn that the 'craftsmen' who perform such frauds are only slightly less expensive than honest specialists. There are far more bunko artists among Orions, and, illogical as it seems, their skills are more in demand. Except for a handful of products (most of which they hoard for themselves), the Orions are known as producers of shoddy and nearly worthless trade goods, whose major value is extremely low cost with a high-priced look.

Because the quality of Orion products is negotiable, the customer cannot expect long or useful service from anything Orion. If only shabby furniture and lighting fixtures were involved, this would be only an annoyance. However, the Orions manufacture counterfeit life-support systems, antigrav transportation systems, and spacecraft. When they fail, loss of lives may result.

Obviously, Orion products are renowned for their close resemblance to well-known Federation-makes-the-major difference being the nameplate. However, there is one other prominent distinguishing feature: Orion products are 'fussier'. They feature gewgaws, filligrees, intended to catch the buyer's eye or feed his love of gingerbread. On the whole, the effect is not unlike that of racing stripes on a food processor.