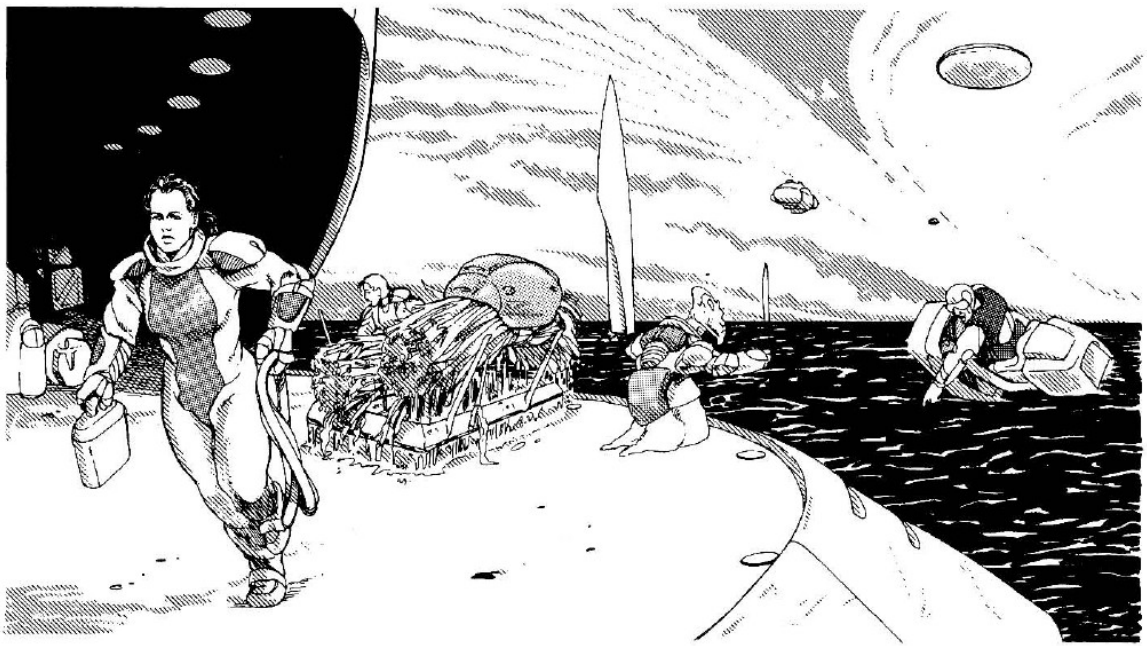
Vincennes System



INTODUCTION

Vincennes is one of the few Tech-Level 16 worlds in the Imperium, one of only two in the Domain of Deneb. It is the capital of Vincennes subsector and is a major economic, political and communications hub of Deneb Sector. Vincennes exports high-tech products throughout the Domain. The majority of Vincennes' population live in undersea settlements along a continent-sized shallow region known simply as "The Great Shoal". These communities are primarily concerned with mining and industrial production. The largest of these communities is Kehmed Magalopolis, home to nearly half of the planet's population. A smaller percentage of the population, generally the higher social classes, lives in massive gravitically-suspended cities that hover far above the planet's surface.

Vincennes has unusually high levels of technology in robotics and communications, and is generally acknowledged to have attained early TL-17 in these fields. Virtually all the actual labor in the underseas mines is performed by robots, with sophonts performing the administrative and decision-making tasks. In the gravitic cities, robots act as stewards, janitors, concierges, and in many other positions. The equally advanced communications technology allows these robots to be directed from the comfort of one's own quarters, leading to an extremely domestic lifestyle. Many Vincennes citizens may not leave home for weeks or months at a time, served by robotic stewards and making decisions implemented by robotic laborers.

Vincennes is part of a double star system (with a third, far companion). Its primary, Ember, is a red dwarf star which would ordinarily be incapable of maintaining life-supporting planets. However, Ember orbits in the habitable zone of its near companion star Undraczech (K1V). Vincennes' mean surface temperature is a comfortable 24.7 C. However, Vincennes' orbit round Ember constantly varies its distance from Unraczech (its main source of energy). At maximum distance from Undraczech, the local "winter" sets in, with temperature dropping as low as -200C. Conversely, at Vincennes' closest approach, local temperature may soar for a short period to almost 660 C. This extreme "summer" warming produces a cycle of dramatic climatic effects.

PLANETARY INFORMATION

NOTE: outsiders, and standard Library Data files, pronounce the world's name in standard Anglic fashion, as "vinSENZ". Locals, however, insist on pronouncing the name in the archaic French style, as "VANsonn". Using either pronunciation in the wrong company can occasionally have embarrassing consequences...

Vincennes/Vincennes/Deneb (1122) A899AA6-G Hi In Cp 113 Im M7V K1V G1V
Primary: Ember, Spectral Class M7V, Mass: 0.3, Diameter: 0.3, Luminosity: 0.2
Planetary System (Ember Sub-System Only): Two major bodies. One inhabited (Vincennes: Ember II)
Starport: A – Excellent, fully equipped
Size: 8 – 12,755.2 km
Atmosphere: 9 – Dense 1.5 and tainted
Hydrosphere: 9 – 94% water
Population: A – 10,077,000,000
Government: A – Charismatic Dictator
Law Level: 6 – Moderate, only sidearms permitted
Tech Level: G – High Stellar (anigrav cities, anti ageing, global terraforming)
Trade Classes: Hi (High population) In (Industrial) Cp (Sub-sector capital)
G=1.50, Day=33:32:15, Year = 199d 06:28:48
Atmo=1.50, Weather Control
Temp= +24.7 (7/lat +21 to -49) (season +66.0 to -20.0, 5.32 deg lat)
Daily temp range: Special
Ores, Radioactives, Parts, Durables, Weapons, Recordings, Software
Progressive/Enterprising, Competitive/Neutral, Harmonious/Aloof
Legal: 6-6A665 Tech GG-GHHGH-FGGG-GE-G
Capital of Vincennes subsector in Deneb Sector, Domain of Deneb.

PHYSICAL PLANETARY DATA
Mean Orbital Radius: 59.8 million km (0.4 AU)
Orbital Period: 199.27 standard days
Orbital Eccentricity: 0.015
Diameter: 12,755.2 km
Density: 1.5
Mass: 1.5
Surface Gravity: 1.5
Rotational Period: 33 hours, 32 minutes, 15 seconds
Axial Inclination: 005’32”
Energy Absorption: 0.620
No Natural Satellites
Hydrographic Percentage: 94%
Atmosphere Pressure: 1.5 atm
Composition: Oxygen-Nitrogen Mix
Mean Surface Temperature: 24.70 C
Native Life

Total Population: 10,077,000,000
Primary Cities: Kehmed (4.7 million), Willis (1.4 billion), Nylemsi (1.2 billion).
Government is charismatic dictatorship
Tech Level: High Common 16, Low Common 16
Primary Resources: Ores, Radioactives, Parts, Durables, Weapons, Recordings, Software

Vincennes is one of the few systems in the Imperium to attain tech-level 16 and only one of two such worlds in the Domain of Deneb. As a result, this water world is a major hub of political and economic activity in the region. Any travellers in the Domain of Deneb with an intellectual, professional, or economic interest in high-technology equipment will almost certainly wish to visit Vincennes. Currently it is the only industrial world in the Domain of Deneb to have reached a level of technology higher than Imperial standard. The population lives either in underwater metroplexes around the world's sole continent, or in 71 gravitic cities which can vary their altitude to suit the prevailing weather conditions.

The system layout is somewhat unusual. Vincennes is in the life zone of the K7V star Undraczech, but it actually orbits that star's dim red companion, the M7V star Ember. Depending on whether Vincennes is between the two stars or on the far side of Ember from Undraczech, its mean temperature varies by approximately 85 K. This wide thermal range leads to tremendous storms sweeping the planet on a regular basis.

The third star in the system, Guazhirniim, orbits at a great distance. Its own planetary sub-system includes the agricultural world of Paven, which produces most of Vincennes' food supply.

Cutting edge. That's the proud slogan of the world of Vincennes. Whether it comes to technology or fashion, Vincennes leads the way. Its people are self-confident, proud of their achievements and firm believers in progress. Vincennes is the (self-proclaimed) most technologically advanced world in the Domain of Deneb. Its economy is the powerhouse of an entire sector. Almost four million sophonts pass through its starports every month – on business, as tourists, or as immigrants eager to grab their share of Vincennes' rapidly-expanding prosperity.

And yet, the slogan carries another meaning. Vincennes is potentially the blade that could tear the Domain's peace apart. Any high-population industrial world has the economic power to overbalance and dominate its neighbors: but when a planet can arm its local defense troops to a higher standard than Imperial Marines, the danger increases immeasurably. Add to this the fact that Vincennes is ruled by a dynasty of absolute monarchs older than the Third Imperium. Unchecked by any domestic restraints, they have in the past shown themselves perfectly willing to defy the Imperium and engage in military adventurism. The people of Vincennes believe it is only right and proper that

they bear the honor of playing host to the subsector capital: in truth, the Deneb government hardly dares to turn its back on this world for a moment...

Vincennes is the technological jewel of the Domain of Deneb. The planet is the single most advanced producer of commercial technology, known for its unique environmental characteristics and reclusive society. Many detractors of Vincenzi successes cite the system's inability to achieve universal TL-17 technology as indicative of the system's slowing pace of development. The growing interference of bureaucracies and the aristocracy in Vincenzi entrepreneurial interests threatens to derail all that the Vincenzi have built. The specter of crime and corruption has begun to taint the planet's prospects as well. The upcoming age will not be easy for the Vincenzi, but if their hallowed entrepreneurial spirit prevails, Vincennes will continue to shine as a nexus of technological and societal wonder.

Physical Description

Vincennes is roughly the same size as Terra, but it is substantially denser due to its internal combustion. This results in a higher planetary mass, local gravity, and atmospheric pressure than unadapted humans find comfortable. All of these are within tolerable limits, and can easily be adapted to in a short period of time.

Over nine-tenths of Vincennes' total surface is covered by ocean, at depths up to nine kilometers. Most of the planet's mining and habitation is concentrated in an underwater region known simply as "The Shoal".

The Shoal is a continent-sized area straddling the equator. Depths in this region are seldom greater than half a kilometer, and in many areas can be measured in the tens-of-meters. Planetological research indicates that substantial portions of the Shoal were once above sea level, forming a low-lying continent subject to frequent flooding. It is likely that the native life of Vincennes evolved in tidal basins along the shoal, developing into purely aquatic forms when this primeval continent was engulfed by the sea

Most of the land surface is concentrated along island chains that border the Shoal. The planet's only continent, Kehmed, is probably the remnants of the original continent's "highlands". Terrain on Vincennes is rocky; the torrential summer rains (see below) was all loose surface material into the ocean, leaving bare bedrock exposed. The sea-floor, especially on the Shoal, is generally covered with layers of sediment washed from the land. Away from the Shoal, ocean depths increase sharply. Typical depths of off-Shoal areas are four to six kilometers, with some trenches as deep as eleven.

BIOLOGY

The life forms of Vincennes have evolved to a level of complexity similar to that during the Cambrian Era on Terra, and are mostly aquatic colonial organisms. Because of frequent flooding and erosion (see below), no land-based life forms have evolved on or been introduced to Vincennes. Large algal mats are common on the ocean surface; in some areas these cover the water's surface for tens of kilometer, particularly over the Shoal. The most advanced forms resemble terrestrial coelenterates, and usually live along the fringes of the Shoal where temperatures are moderate.

Also common is a kelp-like form known as "Beam". When dried and treated, Beam can be used as a flexible building material similar to bamboo on Terra. Genetically enhanced forms of beam are grown during winter and spring on "plantations" in shallow areas, and are commonly used as a temporary building material, or for disposable containers.

The largest organism on Vincennes is known as "Rockmat". These organisms are similar to terrestrial stromatolites; they form when large algal mats become anchored in shallow, rocky areas. The mats become covered with silt but continue to grow, forming a cemented mass resembling a porous rock. The older the colony, the stronger and larger it becomes. This process can produce colonies several meters across, resembling small islands. Centuries-old extinct colonies have been used as the foundation for landing pads at some of Vincennes' subordinate spaceports, and when hollowed out they can serve as fairly secure habitats.

As an extension of Vincennes's atmospheric taint (see below), the oceans of Vincennes are more acidic than most terrestrial organisms can tolerate, and transplants onto Vincennes have not been very successful. Native life is not palatable to humans without special treatment and preparation, and even after such treatment tends to have a bitter caustic taste.

Attempts to genetically engineer edible life forms have been unsuccessful; apparently the foul taste derives from adaptations necessary to an acidic environment. As a result, most food on Vincennes is grown in enclosed hydroponics facilities, chemically synthesized, or imported. Synthesized food does depend on local flora as a source of raw material, and several algae-harvesting companies are active over the Shoal.

ORIGINS OF VINCENZI HIGH-TECH

The origins of Vincennes' amazingly innovative and enterprising society are the result of the unique properties of the world and its trinary star system. To understand Vincenzi technological innovation, one must understand the hostile environment Vincennes presents to its inhabitants. Vincennes orbits Ember, the close companion of system primary, Undraczech. Because of the proximity of the two stars to one another, Vincennes' orbit takes it almost directly between Ember and Undraczech. The weak stellar emanations of red dwarf Ember are insufficient to support life on their own. When Vincennes is in close proximity to Undraczech, however, intense stellar radiation produces extremely high temperatures and inclement meteorological activity on the planet. The result is that Vincenzi temperature and weather patterns vary greatly over its 199.27 day orbit around Ember.

During Vincenzi summers, when the planet is directly between the two suns, temperatures climb to an unbearable 66 degrees C. Massive convection storms sweep the planet and the intense heat releases sulfur compounds from the planet's ocean depths, shrouding the entire globe in blustery cloud formations. Autumn is the rainy season on Vincennes, with the highly acidic taint of the planet's atmosphere producing acid rain storms that force Vincenzi to don protective clothing and breathing masks when going outdoors. During winter, when Vincennes is at its most distant point from Undraczech, the temperatures drop as low as -20 degrees C. Icebergs dot the ocean surface around the globe, with polar ice caps forming in the southern and northern extremes. Spring is the most pleasant season, during which the temperature is at a comfortable level and the atmospheric taint is reduced to the point that the normally reclusive Vincenzi can actually come outdoors and breathe in the open air.

The extremely hostile environment of Vincennes begs the question, "Why colonize such a planet?" The answer is that Vincennes is rich in natural resources. Underneath Vincennes' deep, nearly worldwide ocean (Vincennes features a 94 percent hydrosphere), rich deposits of ores and radioactives await industrial development. While several sprawling undersea metroplexes have been erected over the centuries to exploit Vincennes' resources, many geological surveyors believe Vincenzi industrial interests still have only scratched the surface. The difficult prospect of doing business on Vincennes spawned an active research and development community. Vincenzi innovation in communications, robotics and environmental technology have made it possible to operate in an otherwise unsuitable climate.

Vincenzi life is generally compared to that of Cambrian-era Terra. Notable among Vincenzi lifeforms are beam, a bamboo-like plant structure that grows in Vincenzi oceans, and ‘rockmat’, a porous rockhard substance that grows around the rocky formations of The Shoal, much like Terran coral.

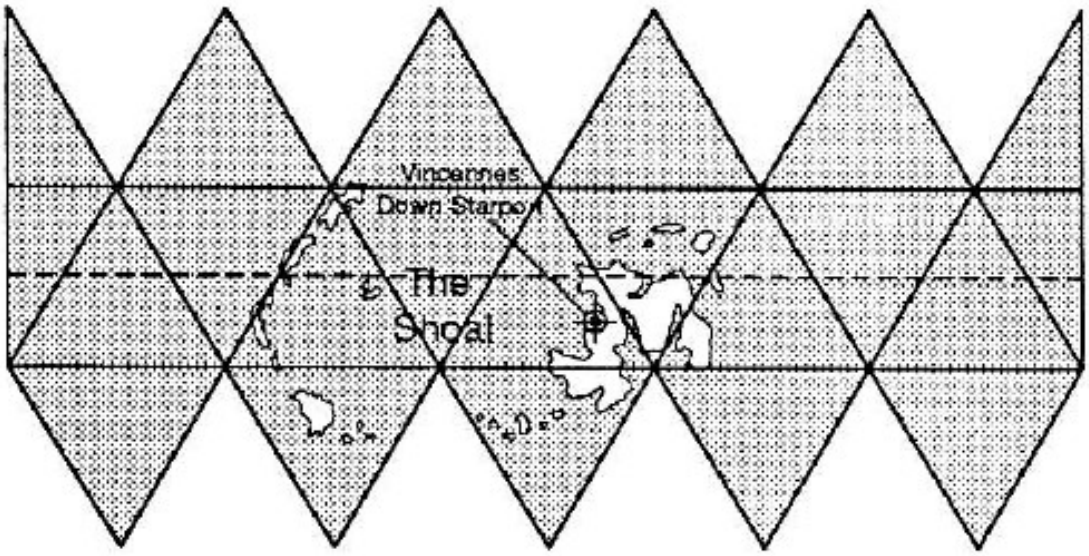
TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

To many travellers, Vincennes' high technology means simply new technological toys; to a mercenary, Tech Level 16 means advanced energy weapons. To a merchant, that tech level means high-tech goods that can be sold for a profit on virtually any world, even those with high-stellar technology. TL-16 does bring with it a great number of material advancements, as listed above, but there is far more to a TL-16 society than seven-watts-per-liter fusion plants.

The traveler who expects Vincennes to be just another high-stellar world will soon learn that the difference between tech levels on Vincennes is far more than simply "gadgets and gizmos". On Vincennes, the role technology play in society, and the standard of living that technology has allowed the society to maintain is perhaps best reflected in the old adage, "Yesterday's luxury is tomorrow's necessity." Beyond tech 12 gravitic architecture is an accepted part of life. Making the gravitics an obvious part of the structure is viewed as a sign of backwardness and insecurity – a truly advanced culture accepts this technology without being ostentatious (to beings accustomed to high technology, even the vast hovering sphere of the Imperial palace is impressive in scale, but unsophisticated in concept).

Computer technology is another example. Personal computers generally become available at TL-7, but TL-7 society does no assume its citizens have access to computer technology. By TL-8, computers have become far more common. Society may not assume its members have access to computers, but it is no longer remarkable for an individual to possess one. Computers have become a convenience, a very useful tool, but not vital to daily existence.

At TL-9 and above, computers have become not only common, but fully integrated into everyday life. As a result, not having a personal computer become a handicap, because society assumes its members have access to computer technology. From TL-7 to TL-9, improvements to computer technology do occur. However, the chief difference is not in the machines themselves, but in the role these machines play in society; first a luxury, then a convenience, then a necessity to everyday life (hence the Computer default skill for characters from TL-9+ homeworlds).



Vincennes World Map

Notable among the Vincenzi metroplexes are Kehmed (the capital city with a population of 4.7 billion), Willis (1.4 billion), Nylemsi (1.2 billion) and Burke (the newest of the metroplexes), Markel (dominated by SuSAG industrial concerns) and Willis. All of the metroplexes include scores of arcologies, domed cities and satellite gravitic cities that hover above the Vincenzi ocean, serving the ore transportation and trade interface needs of their undersea cohorts. Kehmed, far and away the most populous metroplex, includes an astounding 77 gravitic cities within its dominion. The gravitic cities come in numerous shapes and sizes and generally serve specialized purposes. Melchen, for instance, primarily serves the tourist and entertainment sectors, while Malin Tekhar and Dumorov are more industrial in nature. Remote Foxhunter, an irregular-formation gravitic city, inhabits Vincennes' horse latitudes, avoiding the worst of the planet's weather by deftly increasing its altitude during the summers. Many of the gravitic cities are lowered to the surface of Vincennes during the more stable winter and spring seasons. During these periods, ores and manufactured products are easily shipped from the undersea metroplexes to the floating gravitic cities via submersible.

The solitary archipelago of the world, known as The Shoal, is sparsely inhabited. Due to seismic instability and heavy erosion during the summers, its rocky surface supports very few permanent habitations. Only Vincennes Down Starport and its surrounding community maintain a large permanent presence. During the stormy summers, landings at Vincennes Down would be nigh-impossible if it weren't for advanced Vincenzi manipulator technology that enables the starport to gravitically guide starships to safety.

The proliferation of high-tech among Vincenzi citizens has resulted in a unique society. Vincennes' advanced communications and computer technology enable most Vincenzi to perform business completely from their homes. An entire world of telecommuters

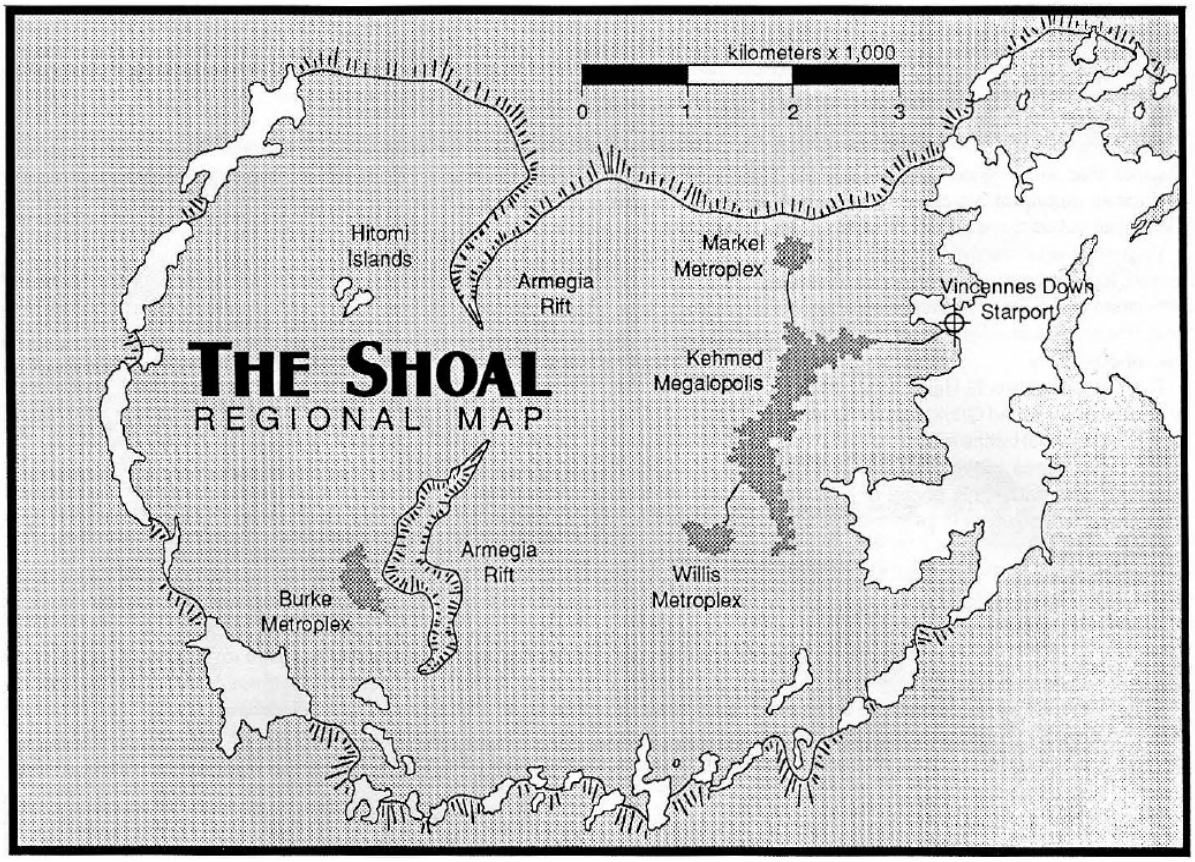
maintains contact with one another using holographic meson communications equipment. Entire board meetings of some Vincenzi corporations are held in virtual boardrooms that exist only in the conceptual sense. Holographic representations of one's business associates may be projected so that they appear to be in the same room, even though they may be on the other side of The Shoal, the planet or even the outer system.

Most Vincenzi have managed to acquire at least a moderate amount of personal wealth. While Vincenzi society is hardly utopian, it can accurately be said that advanced technology on Vincennes has paved the path for most of the planet's inhabitants to build at least a small personal fortune.

During the pre-Rebellion era, advanced robotics were employed to perform virtually all dangerous or undesirable tasks on Vincennes, including mining operations, zero-G ops in orbit of Vincennes and deep-sea construction. The antirobotic hysteria that swept the Regency after the appearance of Virus greatly injured the Vincenzi robotics industry. Native Vincenzi, however, were not willing to give up the advantages their robots gave them. Instead, they have willingly submitted to RQS regulations that limit offworld exportation of Vincenzi robotics technology. Since then, technology-sharing agreements with advanced robotics research groups on Rhylanor and HRD have spawned astonishing advances in Virus-proofing techniques. These developments, along with decreasing antirobotic sentiment and aggressive lobbying by `G' (Vincennes' largest and most powerful distributor and exporter of high-tech equipment) and several Vincenzi industrial consortiums has resulted in a gradual thawing of the RQS regulations. Within the last decade, Vincenzi robotics construction and exportation has reached about 25 percent of its pre-Rebellion level.

Because of the Vincenzi tendency to utilize high-tech communications for most of their interpersonal contact, offworlders will discover that most of the people they meet on Vincenzi streets are other offworlders. Just because Vincenzi tend to be reclusive doesn't mean they're entirely unfriendly, however. While actual person-to-person contact is not common, when Vincenzi do get together, they tend to hold gala events, parties and festivals that rival any in the Regency. In the spring, Vincennes' gravitic cities retract their rooves and millions of people gather in plazas, parks and the streets to engage in spring festivals and celebrations.

Crime has traditionally been a remarkably small problem on Vincennes. Due to the Vincenzi tendency to operate from their homes, reduced interaction between people and relative economic well-being have prevented the criminal turmoil that plagues most high-population Regency systems from developing on Vincennes. The moderate influx of refugee population and arrival of several discreet white-collar criminal organizations, however, has tainted Vincennes' crime-free reputation since the Collapse. Many offworlders attribute these problems to the resurgence of the notorious Humbolt family on Vincennes, whose criminal tendencies are legendary. Vincenzi natives, however, generally point their fingers at opportunistic offworlders, who are all too eager to reap the financial rewards of doing business on Vincennes and frequently resort to criminal pursuits to do so.



SHOAL GEOGRAPHY

The Shoal is divided into two regions by the Armegia Rift; the eastern two-thirds are on average somewhat deeper below the ocean surface. The eastern portion was also the first to be settled; it was nearer the large mass of Kehmed and was much richer in resources than the western third. With resources in the east being depleted, the western portion of the undersea continent has become the planet's new frontier, with newer settlements and a growing importance to the planetary economy.

MAP AREAS

Vincennes Down Starport: Extensive class A facility, open year-round, but with many services seasonal. Subterranean transgrav lines extend from the starport to offshore Kehmed city complex.

Kehmed Megalopolis: Kehmed is home to over half the planetary population and over 60% of the industry. Being a megalopolis, it is actually comprised of numerous large cities linked to a single complex. Thirty of Vincennes' forty-three permanent gravitic cities keep station above Kehmed, and are dependent on it for economic survival.

Markel Metroplex: In recent years, the resources surrounding Markel have begun to dry up. Many citizens have migrated to settlements in western Shoal, leaving a city much larger than its population requires. Housing is very inexpensive. Because of the price breaks, SuSAG moved its largest facilities in the sector from Kehmed to Markel and employs almost half of the metroplex's population.

Willis Metroplex: Largely a manufacturing city, producing high-quality consumer electronics, computers, robots, and software. The economic slump hitting the Domain has touched Willis less than Markel or Kehmed.

Armegia Rift: This rift valley divides the Shoal along a north-south axis. Always a focus of planetological research, it has been exploited over the last two centuries for its commercial potential. Its resources were initially too hidden to exploit profitably. However, advances in technology have opened up several rich deposits of ores and industrial-grade radioactive elements. The northern portion of the rift has not been exploited significantly, mostly because of hazardous currents.

Burke Metroplex: The smallest and newest of Vincennes' undersea arcologies, Burke grew out of the mining settlements along the southern branch of the rift. It has the largest growth rate of any city on the planet.

Hitomi Islands: One of the largest shallow areas of the Shoal, the Hitomi Bank, surrounds these islands to a radius of 1,200 kilometers. Prospecting here is intense. Although the Armegia Rift mines provide a more stable supply, there have been several instances of prospectors finding lodes of valuable ore on the Bank. However, these loads have tended to be small and are usually mined out by transients before and permanent settlement can be built around them.

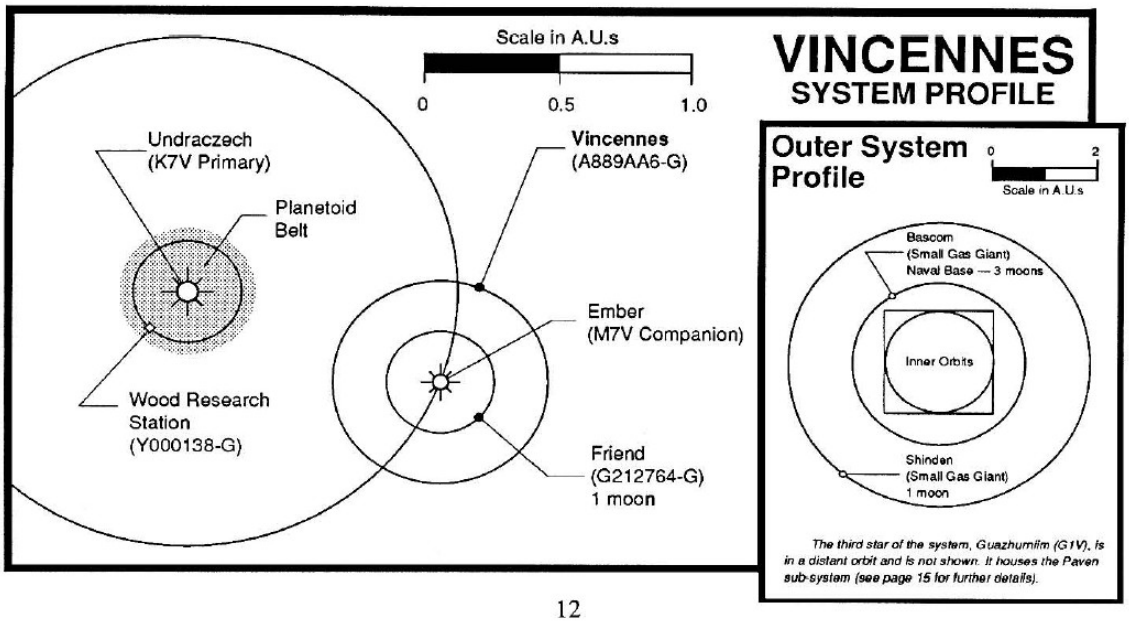
OBTAINING VINCENZI TECHNOLOGY

Traders and travellers coming to Vincennes for high-tech goods won't be disappointed in the selection but they may be a bit miffed by the amount of bureaucratic red tape they have to cut through to buy any of it. The planet's high-tech market sells TL-16 goods primarily at the planet's orbital starports and Vincennes Down Starport.

Most would-be tech purchasers are usually surprised by the level of interference from the Vincennes Trade and Commerce Commission (VTCC). The VTCC is one of the more intrusive trade management bureaucracies in the Regency and maintains strict guidelines by which sale of high-tech goods may be made. Regency citizenship is required for any purchase and all computer, communications and robotic equipment sold on Vincennes undergoes thorough examination by local RQS officials before export. The VTCC's primary concern is quality control and the level of technology proliferation. Most VTCC bureaucrats support a controlled-growth economic philosophy.

The VTCC's primary opponent is `G,' the main distributor and exporter of Vincennes' advanced technological goods. G has recently begun to build a spin-off company, `H,' whose primary concern is creating venture capital for Vincenzi companies working on TL-17 prototypes and marketing these products to offworld interests. Because of the bureaucratic warfare between the VTCC and the more laissez faire G, and the rigidity of trade regulations, small lot purchases of Vincenzi technology are often difficult to arrange. Alternatively, tech-hungry adventurers may want to make friends with the more established free traders of the Vincennes Cluster. Many of them make large-lot purchases of Vincenzi tech and given the right price, are often willing to sell small or individual quantities of high-tech goods. Small-lot or individual purchases of Vincenzi equipment are therefore made, for the most part, not on Vincennes but in nearby systems.

Vincenzi starships are renowned for their quality and ample use of TL-16 technology. Because of the planet's proximity to Depot Alpha and Depot Beta, Vincennes manufactures very few warships. A few escort and frigate variants are manufactured on Vincennes for the purpose of defending tech shipments or agricultural products from Paven, but for the most part, Vincennes concentrates on producing traders, liners and exploratory vessels. Perhaps the most well-known of Vincenzi starship designs is the 300-ton Gushiken-Class Free Trader. The Gushiken uses TL-16 technology to minimize the volume taken by drive and electronic component and maximizes cargo space. The ship was originally intended for microjump transportation of grain from Paven to Vincennes but has since been adopted for more universal use.


VINCENNES
SYSTEM PROFILE
Scale in A.U.s
0
0.5
1.0
Undraczech
(K7V Primary)
Planetoid
Belt
Wood Research
Station
(Y000138-G)
Vincennes
(A889AA6-G)
Ember
(M7V Companion)
Friend
(G212764-G)
1 moon
Outer System
Profile
0
2
Scale in A.U.s
Bascom
(Small Gas Giant)
Naval Base — 3 moons
Inner Orbits
Shinden
(Small Gas Giant)
1 moon
The third star of the system, Guazhumlim (G1V), is in a distant orbit and is not shown. It houses the Paven sub-system (see page 15 for further details).

SOCIETY ON VINCENNES

As noted, Vincennes has anomalously high tech levels in two areas; Computers/Robotics and Communications. These advanced tech levels suggest the typical life-style on Vincennes – one in which advancements in Robotics and Communications become an integral and vital part. Antecedents of this life-style first began to appear among the world's ruling professional classes in the 500s, and in the ensuing centuries it has become the predominant way of life on Vincennes.

It should be noted that not all high-tech societies evolve in the same manner, and not everyone on Vincennes follows the life-style outlined here. This life-style is common enough, however, to be considered the "typical" culture on Vincennes.

Visitors to Vincennes will notice almost immediately that most of the people they meet in public will also be visitors. In spite of the planet's high population, concentrated in artificial communities, the streets, shops, and other public places are remarkably vacant. Citizens of Vincennes live in lavish apartments which they rarely leave; because of their advanced communications and robotics equipment, they seldom have to.

Each apartment, hotel room, or other lodging on Vincennes is equipped with concealed holographic projector/recorder in the ceiling, floor and walls. When one person on Vincennes wishes to visit another, these projectors can convincingly give the illusion (to both parties) that the individual is actually present. Only when a strong light source is behind the projection, or if one attempts to touch it, does it become apparent that the individual is not actually present. Those unaccustomed to this method of communication may find the lack of tactile response unnerving, although they can still manipulate their environment using household robots linked to the communication system.

Vincennes' mining and industry, as might be expected, is entirely robotic. Robots multiply the capacity of the individual worker, since one robot operator has control over dozens of subordinate laborers. The robots can also be remotely directed with great exactness, so that even the most productive of Vincennes residents seldom leave home.

This life-style may seem to some secluded and antisocial; however, the average citizen of Vincennes engages in as much social intercourse as any other intelligent being. The fact that this interaction takes place without leaving home is a suggestion of the communication equipment's sophistication.

In addition, when Vincennes residents do leave home, it is usually for social functions whose lavishness is unprecedented throughout the Imperium. These events attract hundreds or even thousands of people, and are common during the summer, since most industry slows down or stops when the orbital transports stop flying. The most extravagant affairs occur at the gravitic cities, which offer spectacular views of the turbulent summer cloud formations. Those who find the local life-style secluded have obviously never attended a Vincennes summer party.

LAW AND GOVERNMENT

Vincennes is nominally under the rule of the planet's Imperial legate, the Marquis of Vincennes. Following the Humbolt incidents, the system's noble leadership has been subject to Imperial (or currently, Domain) review once every eight years. If Imperial investigators find popular and upstanding leadership, the Marquis is allowed to remain in power.

In practice, Vincennes is such an important system that the Imperial government has also been known to remove leaders it found disagreeable, in spite of their popularity. During the Solomani Rim War, popular sentiment heavily favored Solomani independence, and the Imperial government found it expedient to install a ruling noble who would keep such sentiment in check.

The current ruler is Marquis Audine Garhik of Vincennes, also Count of Perez and Eriris, a relation of the Archduke Norris. He assumed the position of Imperial Legate in 1108, when the previous legate died without heir, and ensured the local government's loyalty to the Domain. In actuality, the Marquis has very limited powers, and in spite of being technically a dictatorship, the government of Vincennes is not at all invasive. Its is primarily responsible for law enforcement, justice, and Imperial liaison, executing judicial and executive functions.

Vincennes law enforcement is fairly unremarkable. With most of the population voluntarily remaining in their homes, public safety is a relatively simple matter, and most disturbances can be handled by local city police. The only planet-wide constabulary are the "Information Police", although since that title sounds distinctly draconian they are known more simply as the "Special Branch". They are under the control of the Imperial Legate and thus are the most common manifestation of Imperial authority on Vincennes.

The Special Branch has three main duties. The first is to provide oversight of local police, the second to maintain armed-intervention ("SWAT") teams for special emergencies. The third and most important duty is maintaining the integrity of the communications networks on Vincennes.

With violent crime a rarity, telecommunications and computer fraud are regarded as the most serious threat to civil order. Both are heavily punished; a common sentence is to be confined to quarter without access to outside communications. This is truly isolation, for no-one on Vincennes is likely to take the trouble to visit in person.

Punishments for other crimes are similar to common Imperial practice, but violent crime is usually punished more severely. Because such offenses are so uncommon, Vincennes society is not accustomed to homicide, assault, and so forth, and views it with even more loathing than most.

The most important function of government is handled by the Vincennes Trade and Commerce Commission (VTCC), a body made up of Vincennes' leading industrialists

and trading organizations. While the VTCC has no direct on-world power, it is responsible for maintaining and promoting the off-world commerce vital to Vincennes' economy, and had considerable legal authority in matters of off-world trade. This makes it the most powerful body on the planet, although it is still subordinate to the Imperial Legate's authority.

Beneath the Commission itself is the VTCC Support Services Bureau. This bureau serves as a "civil Service", although it is not an official government body but rather a private agency established by the Commission. Decisions of the Commission are binding on members, and since every company involved in exporting is a member of the commission, internal corporate bureaucracy is the usual means by which Commission decisions are implemented. Support Services deals with Free Traders, small exporting business, and others who are not fully represented on the Commission itself.

Unfortunately the VTCC is more of a hindrance to the local economy than a help; like most such associations, it is rigidly bureaucratic and is organized with power running from the top-down. Any merchant dealing with Vincennes will have to deal with the Support Services Bureau at some point, and may become frustrated at the slow pace at which the extensive documentation required by law is processed. This can be all the more frustrating to those unaccustomed to Vincennes, since all arrangements are, of course made by telecommunication.

The VTCC is not a stable body. Economic coups d'etat occur frequently, since power derives from commercial preeminence. A corporate takeover, a single bad investment, or any other significant financial event can change the balance of power on the VTCC's ruling committee. While these changes in government are entirely peaceful, the frequent changes in leadership can make matters even more frustrating for merchants waiting for their paperwork to be processed; the form they filled out before a coup might become obsolete after it.

Members of the Traveller's Aid Society may wish to note that TAS and the VTCC are not, institutionally, on the best of terms. TAS's Merchant's Support Division has repeatedly sued the Commission on behalf of mistreated members, winning substantial settlements in several cases. TAS guides to the subsector carry frequent and vehement warnings about VTCC regulations, and the local TAS Merchant's Support Office publishes continually updated guidelines on how they may be legally circumvented. As a result, TAS offices have been exiled to the remotest building in the Down Starport complex (often inaccessible during the summer without full protective gear), and while the full range of services are available, it is advisable not to advertise one's membership to Starport Authorities unless absolutely necessary.

Up until the formation of the Regency in 1132, Vincennes had been ruled by the Marquis of Vincennes for several centuries, a position appointed directly by the Archduke of Deneb after the controversial fall of the Humbolt family. The Humbolts had ruled Vincennes for almost four centuries when they were removed from power and exiled in 628 for several violations of Imperial law, the most heinous of which was the exploitation and torture of the native sophonts of nearby Perez System. Following the Collapse and subsequent decline of the Imperial nobility, the wealthy Humbolt family made its return to Vincennes and reestablished their political hegemony on the planet in 1147. The largely Solomani population of Vincennes was eager to overthrow the Garhik Dynasty, the last vestige of the invasive Imperial Nobility on Vincennes, and the return of the Humbolts presented them with the opportunity.

The Humbolt family had lived for dozens of generations on a frontier world of spinward Gushemege Sector, but never lost hope for their eventual return to the world of their ancestors. Fleeing Virus and the effects of the Collapse, the Humbolts made their return to the Domain of Deneb scant months before the borders were closed.

It has been revealed in the years since their return that a large contingent of the Humbolt family remained on Vincennes throughout their exile, operating under the banner of several shadow corporations. These corporations may be more accurately described as cartels or syndicates whose primary function was the consolidation of industrial power under the yoke of the Humbolts. Five centuries of gradual political and corporate power bids gave the Humbolts a staggering advantage upon their "public" return to Vincennes. The current patriarch of the family, Gerhard Lewis Tolemi Humbolt III, maintains an intimidating presence on Vincennes, frequently interfering in the activities of major corporations and dabbling in VTCC operations when he can.

Many Vincenzi complain about the intrusiveness of the Humbolt family in corporate affairs, but most are willing to tolerate them. The Humbolt family serves as a symbol of defiance to Imperial and Regency authority, which to most Vincenzi justifies their continued presence.

For the most part, actual political power resides with the District Councils of each metroplex. Day-to-day legislative and judicial activities are the realm of the councils, who owe fealty and give lip service to the Humbolt family.

ARMED FORCES AND SYSTEM DEFENSE

Ember's inner planet, Friend (see below) is the primary base for System Defense Forces patrolling the inner system. Vincennes has roughly 120,000 tons of shipping committed to system defense and traffic control, ranging from customs launches to corvettes in the thousands of tons. In addition, the Imperial 258th Fleet (assigned to the Vincennes subsector) has its primary repair and refurbishment base in the outer system. The Navy purchased an extensive but disused shipyard orbiting the gas giant Shinden, and retooled it to military specifications. Refueling traffic at Shinden is now restricted to narrow corridors that keep vessels far from the Navy base.

The local military employs roughly five million people, a relatively small portion of the population but still more than most local needs. With the onset of the rebellion, much of the armed forces have been commandeered by the Domain government and shipped to border regions.

MILITARY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Before the Collapse, Vincennes maintained their modest military and law enforcement requirements through The Special Branch, a relatively small police organization and considerable network of contractors. The ranks of The Special Branch have swelled to over 20 million permanent employees in recent years in order to combat the increasing presence of organized crime and the illegal activities of The Pack, the Vargr crime syndicate. The Special Branch continues to employ millions of contract employees in its law enforcement endeavors as well.

Traditionally, Vincennes maintained no standing army, but with the return of the Humbolts, a new emphasis on military strength has been established. Under the auspices of the Humbolts the Vincenzi 1192nd Air Cavalry Division was formed to act in the defense of Vincennes in the event of an attack. The 1192nd officially reports to the Vice Marshall of the Regency Army, but the unit maintains an obvious pro-Humbolt stance. Scores of mercenary groups are employed to supplement military operations on Vincennes as well.

Though no formal naval base exists in Vincennes System, the Regency Navy maintains a large presence at Defense, Paven and Stopover, three of the outer-system worlds. Defense operates a considerable System Defense Boat and small Destroyer fleet. Paven, the primary agricultural producer of the system is heavily guarded by a regiment of crack Regency Marines. Paven suffered a horrendous decline in production during a Rebellion-era famine thought to have been caused by planted biological agents. The marine garrison on Paven is intended to prevent another such occurrence. Stopover contains a refueling depot for Regency Naval ships.

SEASONS

Vincennes orbits a red-dwarf star, Ember, that emits insufficient energy for a life-supporting planet. The planet receives most of its energy from the K7V star Undraczech, of which Ember is a companion. As Vincennes orbits Ember, its distance from Undraczech varies from 0.6 to 1.4 AU. As a result of this variation, Vicennes has distinct “seasons”, even though it has a negligible axial tilt.

“Winter”: As Ember and Undraczech come into conjunction, Vincennes is at its farthest separation from its main source of energy. Mean daily temperatures can drop as low as -20 C, and humans cannot safely go outdoors without protective clothing. Areas of still water (around natural or artificial islands, for example) freeze early in the winter season;

as temperatures approach their extremes, shallow areas over the Shoal may become covered by large ice floes. The more mobile life forms of the Shoal retreat to deeper areas, where the volume of water moderates local temperatures.

"Spring": As Vincennes' orbit moves it closer to Undraczech, the climate begins warming. Weather control takes advantage of the increase in received energy immediately; early in spring, daily temperature increases dramatically to well above freezing. The temperature then increases at a slower, steadier rate throughout the spring. Ice floes break up and melt, and the ecosystem of the shoal becomes reinvigorated. This is the most hospitable season on Vincennes; not only are the temperatures consistently moderate, but the atmospheric taint is nearly nonexistent.

"Summer": Vincennes' summer truly begins when local weather control is no longer able to compensate for the increased received energy from Undraczech. As Vincennes approaches Undraczech, temperatures soar to an intolerable mean of 66 C. As a result of the heat, sever dramatic upheavals take place in the planet's environment.

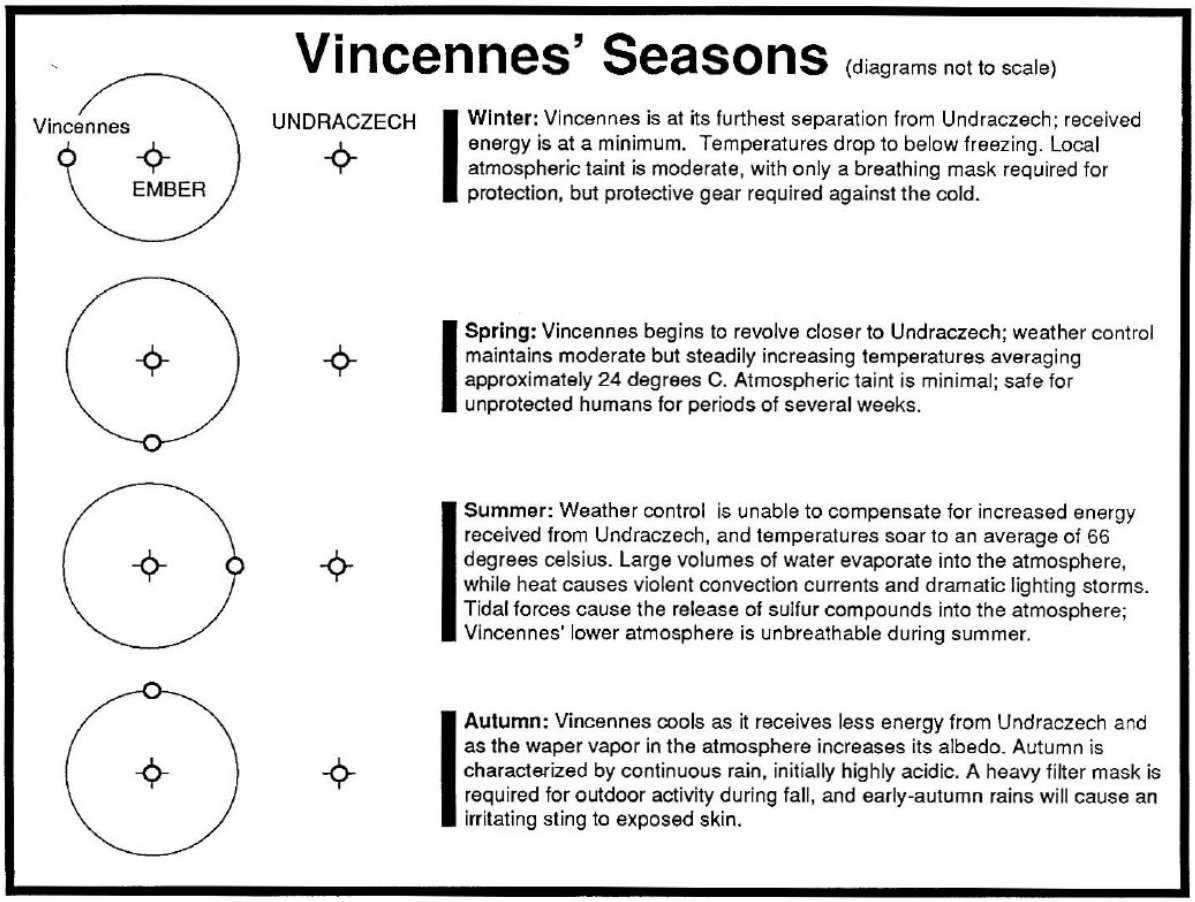
The surface layers of the oceans become virtual incubators for the algal colonies. This is especially true over the Shoal, since there is a smaller volume of water to absorb the increased energy. The xeno-coelenterate forms reproduce during this period, and the algal mats expand greatly. The mats also produce a tremendous quantity of oxygen through photosynthesis. The additional heat also evaporates a tremendous volume of water into the planet's atmosphere, and induces violent convection currents that cause spectacular lightening storms. These currents also make it hazardous for transports to fly to or from the planet's surface.

Local summer is also marked by increased levels of seismic activity due to tidal effects. This usually takes the form of sulfuric discharge along volcanic fault lines; undersea rifts are the source of most of this sulfur, but the volcanic islands and near-surface seamounts also put a considerable amount of sulfur and sulfur compounds into the atmosphere. The lightening often causes the sulfur to combust with the increased amount of oxygen, producing infrequent but spectacular sheets of flame, as well as noxious sulfur dioxide.

As Vincennes revolves away from Undraczech, it is receiving less and less energy from Undraczech, in accordance with the inverse square law. In addition, the vapor clouds that enshroud the planet during summer increase its albedo dramatically. As these factors cool the planet, the atmospheric vapor begins to condense, and forms precipitation. The coming of the rains marks the onset of local autumn.

"Autumn": The first rains to come are highly acidic, due to the level of sulfur dioxide in the atmosphere. This "acid rain" carves long erosion gullies in the soft volcanic basalt that comprises most of the islands; one larger island, Mila, is noted for its elaborate network of gullies that have been carved only in the past few decades. These gullies are extremely spectacular and are major tourist attractions.

As the rains continue, they become less acidic; by winter the sulfur content in the atmosphere has decreased to levels tolerable to humans with a simple breathing mask. During fall, the daily temperature drops steadily. While local weather control moderates the degree of decline, average temperature will continue dropping from day to day, leading to winter and a repetition of the cycle.



LIVING ON VINCENNES

One thing distinguishes Vincennes from all other high-tech, high-population worlds; its tech level. Vincennes is the only system in the Domain with a common civilian tech level above fifteen (although Depot/Deneb has achieved TL-16, it is a military system and thus not a major economic force). Vincennes's industries can produce high-stellar products more cheaply than any other system, and many items the system exports are TL-16 goods unavailable anywhere else in the Domain.

This combination has made Vincennes a very wealthy society. Nearly everyone on Vincennes has amassed some measure of personal capital, and most citizens have extensive investments in off-world trade and commerce. Nearly every level of society is

dependent on having secure off-world markets that can afford to purchase advanced technology. As a result, the Vincennes system also has a clear interest in supporting the Domain government; in spite of dissatisfaction with many of the Archduke Norris' specific policies, the system's commitment to the Domain and its security has never been seriously in question.

CULTURE

Most of Vincennes' early settlers were of Solomani stock; with the appointment of the Humbolts, Vincennes was viewed as a distinctly Solomani fiefdom. The Humbolts themselves encouraged this perception through preferential treatment for immigrants of Terran descent, and even today Vincennes has a distinctly Solomani character. This affiliation is solely cultural, however; the ideology of Solomani Sumpremacy has only a small extremist following.

Popular sentiment on Vincennes during the Solomani Rim War did lean towards Solomani independence from the Imperium, but with the Domain's remoteness from the Rim, this had little impact. One distinctly Solomani element visitors may notice is a lack of respect for titles of nobility. Citizens must acknowledge a degree of noble authority, but few will grant any privileges to nobles beyond that required by Imperial law.

Monogamous families are the norm, although this does not always entail cohabitation. Marriages for legal or financial convenience are not unusual, and persons in such a relationship frequently live apart, maintaining contact by holographic communication. Such marriages are known locally as "casuals", and typically are contractual arrangements renewed or terminated after two years.

HABITATS

Because of the violence of Vincennes's seasons, the population must live in sealed habitats most of the time. The severity of summer makes any form of surface dwelling unsafe, since the seas become too tumultuous for floating cities, and the erosion of the soil makes most surface facilities unstable.

The majority of the population lives in settlements along the Shoal, safe from the ravages of the summer. Although the engineering problems are very different from vacuum or other exotic environments, everyday life in an undersea settlement is similar to life in any arcology. The undersea cities typically follow the enclosed-dome style of architecture common to artificial habitats. Some of the more modern undersea structures are capped with "pylon towers"; during most of the year they project above the surface of the water, but during summer, they retract into the depths.

There is as much variety among the settlements as there is among cities on any world. Some are remote (often abandoned) mining outposts operating as low as TL-12, while others are TL-16 metroplexes extending across thousands of square kilometers and housing hundreds of millions of people. Nearly half the planetary population (4.7 billion)

is concentrated in a chain of settlements extending from the western shore of Kehmed, along the underground transgrav lines that radiate from the primary starport. This megalopolis is known as the Kehmed Metroplex, even though it is not actually on Kehmed itself. Other large settlements include Willis (1.4 billion), Nylemsi (1.2 billion) and Burke (700 million). Smaller settlements are often semi-permanent mining communities, supplying raw materials to the manufacturing complexes in the metroplexes. Most settlements are connected by transgrav lines; smaller communities can be reached by submersible.

Gravitic habitats are the second principal dwellings on Vincenes, and are the most visible expression of its technological advancement. Forty-three gravitic cities hover over the planet's surface, with three having populations over 100 million. Although some manufacturing is done at these cities, they are predominantly residences of the managerial classes and the wealthy. During the more placid seasons, the cities hover very low to the surface; some of the smaller cities actually set down in the oceans, and have receiving bays for submersibles in their lower levels. During the summer, the cities can be safe above the clouds, just as the undersea settlements are safe below the waves. Architectural styles vary; three common configurations are flattened sphere/disk, rounded sphere, or oblong, but there are numerous others. Most cities hover over fixed locations over the Shoal, keeping them close to industrial production sites.

One grav city, Melchen (pop 100 million) is extremely popular among tourists, since the administration of the city strives to maintain conditions close to human norms. Throughout the year, Melchen remains at an altitude where atmospheric pressure is close to one atmosphere, and unlike most cities, public areas and tourist hotels in Melchen are equipped with grav plates, counteracting the slightly higher local gravity. Melchen has starport facilities that many consider better than many worlds' primary starports, and the city attracts a great deal of commerce.

In addition to the cities, there are countless smaller "raft towns" that spend much of the year floating on the ocean surface engaged in sea-harvesting or, more commonly, manufacturing. When summer comes, these small settlements life from the ocean surface into the sky. There are also a large number of private yachts and individual gravitic residences that operate on the same principle. An entire subset of society, the so-called "Grav Set", lifts into the sky during the Vincennes summer.

HIGH TECH

Vincennes' markets are full of good – novelties, weapons, equipment – that are useful only because their high technology is a relative advantage. These goods are also expensive to purchase and maintain. The Rebellion is damaging economies throughout the Imperium and Vincennes is no exception; as fewer worlds are able to buy high-tech products, Vincennes' industries must either reduce prices or scale back production, both of which hurt the local economy. The system has two advantages to help it through this period. Firstly, it has such a substantial amount of reserve capital that can absorb some of

the losses incurred. And secondly, at least one industry on Vincennes is booming; sales of personal military equipment have never been better.

Specific areas of technological achievement on Vincennes break down as follows:

Transportation: Gravitic transportation is the most common form of transport on Vincennes. Above the surface, grav freighters shuttle between the starports, grav cities and orbit routinely. Below the surface, transgrav lines link each undersea metropolis into a transportation grid that crisscrosses the Shoal. Gravitic propulsion has been found unsuited to submarines and submersibles, however. Heat transfer in Vincennes' oceans causes very powerful seasonal currents that bat grav-subs around like leaves in the wind. Most submersibles use either water jets, or old-fashioned screws for propulsion, although even these are often gravitically-driven to increase output and efficiency. A new submersible design pioneered on Vincennes has a computer-coordinated articulated, flexible hull, and is propelled by the same body movements used by fishes and eels.

The only "land" transportation on Vincennes are all-terrain rovers that are sometimes used in mining or shallow areas. These vehicles are generally large (10-30 tons displacement), and are only used for short-range travel.

Space: In the early days of the frontier, Vincennes had the largest shipyards in the sector and supplied a vast number of vessels for commercial and military use. Vincennes's shipyards were mostly orbital facilities, with some also located near the System-Defense base at Friend (see "Other Settlements", below). Raw materials were mined in-system, shipped from Vincennes, or imported. Until recent years its shipbuilding industry was in decline, but is has been revitalized as demand for naval vessels has increased with the Rebellion.

Civilian ships produced at Vincennes were of the highest performance and reliability, but their high-technology actually proved a marketing liability. As Vincennes' designs became more and more advanced, fewer and fewer starports were able to service and maintain these vessels. While parts of a lower tech-level could be substituted, these gradually eliminated the advantages of the original (and expensive) high-tech deign. Currently, the only TL-16 ships in civilian use are either merchants operating solely in the Vincennes area, or megacorporations for whom the advantages of TL-16 construction outweigh the expense of maintaining such vessels.

With the establishment of Depot/Deneb, the system lost a great many naval contracts. This, combined with the increasingly limited market for high-tech civilian designs, left a great many of Vincennes' shipyards abandoned. As demand for military vessels has increased, however, many of these have been re-opened. Most of the naval contracts being built at Vincennes are recon probes, couriers, and other non-combat vessels. Those that require armament usually have it fitted at Depot. One combat vessel produced entirely at Vincennes is the *Senoma*-class 10,000 ton destroyer, a mixed TL-16/14 craft which has seen considerable action against Vargr raiders in coreward Deneb sector.

Energy: Nearly all of Vincennes' energy needs are met by fusion power, or in some cases by small fuel cells. The only alternative source in common use is sea turbines; these range from ten to two hundred meters in diameter, and are driven by the convection currents caused by seasonal temperature changes. While less efficient and cost-effective than fusion, they enjoyed a certain popularity at one time, and many are still in use at smaller settlements.

Medicine: Vincennes is a center of medical technology and treatment for the surrounding subsectors; both the Navy and the Scouts send severly injured personnel there for treatment. Cloning and regrowth of injured or damaged organs and limbs is commonplace. Anagathics are readily available; SuSAG maintains its largest facility in the Domain at the city of Markel, north of Kehmed.

Neurology is the most unique of Vincennes' medical sciences. Brain transplants, while not routine, are also not uncommon. Patients of such operations typically have an 80-90% survival rate. The procedure is most commonly used when a patient's body is damaged beyond the point where piecemeal cloning can replace destroyed tissue. A completely new body is cloned from surviving tissue, with the brain transplanted from the original body.

Military: Vincennes is a major producer of personal weapons for the military forces of the Domain, both government and private. Plasma rifles and the FGMP-16 are not mass-produced on any other Domain world. One weapon system unique to Vincennes is the gravitic rifle (also produced in pistol and carbine form). This weapon is similar to a Gauss rifle, but uses mircogravitic modules rather than magnetic fields to accelerate the round. The result is a much higher round velocity, and hence a greater accuracy and penetration.

Those who think of TL-16 weapons only in terms of firepower may be surprised to learn that Vincennes is also a major exporter of low-tech weapons such as swords and bows. These weapons are commonly extruded monofilament construction, giving them astounding penetration. Personal shields made of advanced composite materials are also available. Unlike advanced energy weapons like the plasma rifle, these weapons do not require expensive TL-16 repair parts; they combine the advantages of high-tech construction with the flexibility of low-tech primitive equipment.

Neural weaponry is outlawed on Vincennes, although the technology exists to produce crude forms of neural guns and shields. A limited number of these weapons are produced for police use; the main impediment to their wider use by law enforcement is not technology, but a lack of individuals trained in their use.

Vincennes' heavy military technology is comparatively backward, at approximately TL-14. With the establishment of Depot barely a subsector away, contracts for heavy weapons production drained away and Vincennes' military industry stagnated. Circumstances have improved recently, as even TL-14 systems are advanced compared to

most worlds, and the demand for military equipment has risen sharply; TL-14 is still higher than much of the Domain.

Environment: Vincennes's greatest impact on the surrounding subsector may well be in the area of environmental engineering. Terraforming procedures and equipment developed on Vincennes have improved living conditions on several worlds throughout the region, such as Paven.

Paven is a habitable world orbiting the third star of the Vincennes trinary, Guazhumiim, a G1V star over 300 A.U. distant. Paven was originally uninhabitable, with a runaway greenhouse effect that resulted in searing temperature and pressure. It was the first world that environmental technicians from Vincennes attempted to terraform. The program was begun in 690; within two centuries it was possible to grow crops on Paven, and until a recent blight (see below), Paven supplied most of Vincennes' foodstuffs. Technology developed during the Paven terraforming project has since been applied to other worlds in the subsector, such as Frisgar (Vincennes/Deneb 1025).

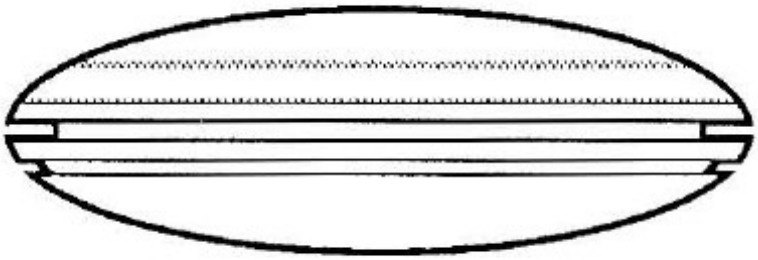
In two areas of technology, Vincennes has developed even farther than the TL-16 that sets it apart from most worlds; Communications/Robotics and Communications. These two fields merit special notice, because the lifestyle predominant on Vincennes is dependent on the widespread availability of advanced robotics and communications equipment.

Both advances were induced by the undersea environment in which most of the population lives. Cumbersome protective equipment is required to work in the high-pressure environment in the planet's deeper mining regions. The hardsuits used by early miners provided personal protection and enhanced strength, similar to modern Battle Dress. These suits became more automated and more elaborate over time; eventually, they were fully automated and no longer required a human operator. Today, not just mining but industrial production and most domestic tasks are preformed entirely by human directed robots.

Communications with these robotic work teams was difficult, because electromagnetic waves do not travel well in a dense medium such as Vincennes's oceans. As a result, radios, as well as laser and microwave communications, are not effective beyond fairly short ranges. The need for more effective communications spurred the development of more powerful EM-based communications, and the early invention of meson communications that ignored the volume of intervening material.

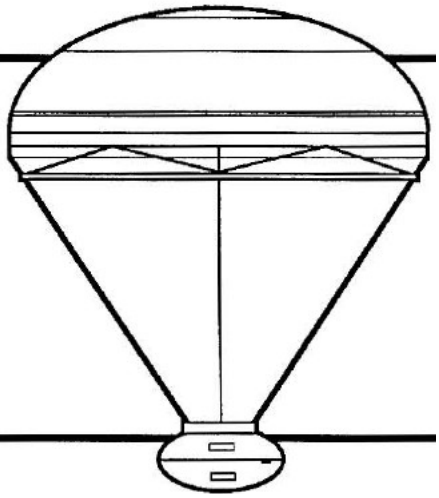
MELCHEN (Flattened Sphere/Disk)

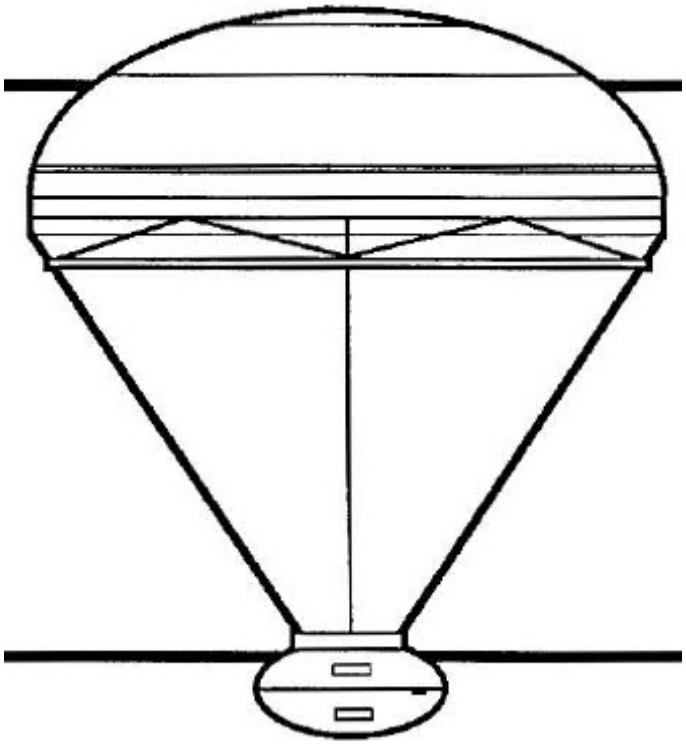
Melchen is primarily a tourist city, and frequently moves about the skies of Vincennes to maintain standards of temperature and pressure close to human norms. Most cities do not require this degree of mobility, so the flattened sphere/disk configuration is more commonly found in smaller gravitic habitats that spend the winter and spring on or near the planet's surface.

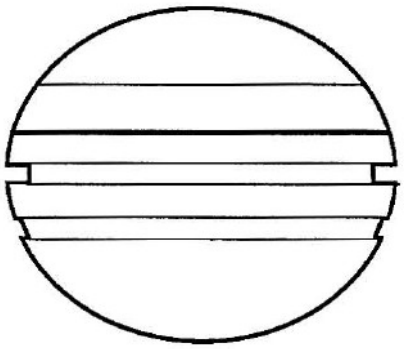


DUMOROV (Disk/Cone):

Dumorov hovers in a more or less fixed location over the undersea Kehmed megalopolis. While it does not move about the planet, it does change altitude seasonally. During the winter and spring, the city lowers to sea level; the lower extension contains docking bays for submersibles which carry goods directly from undersea factories. During the summer, it returns to higher altitudes; goods stockpiled during the summer can then be sold to orbit at significant profit, since storms make the surface inaccessable.

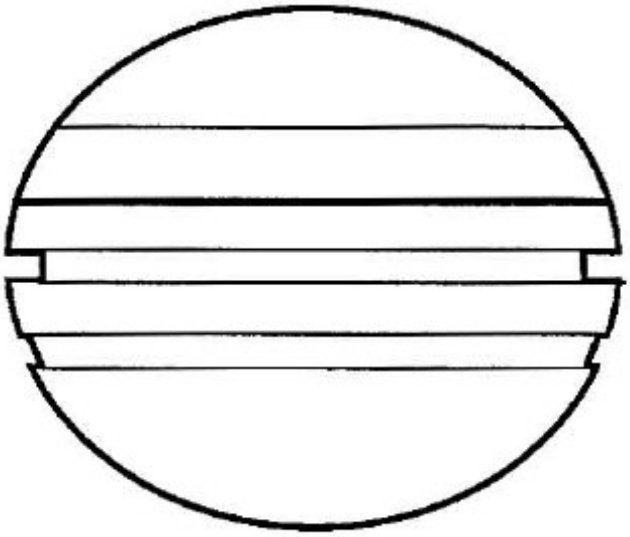






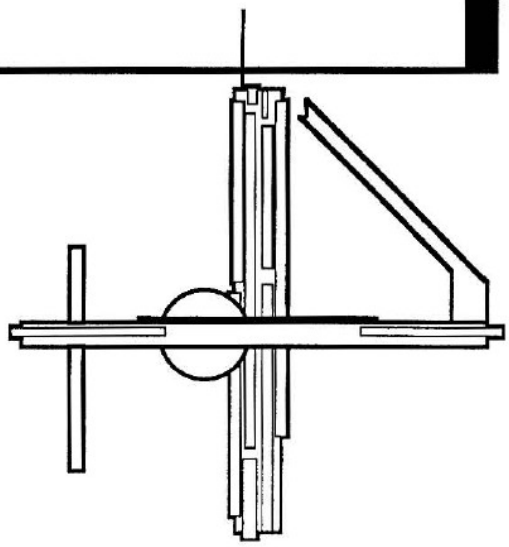
MALIN TEKHAR (Sphere):

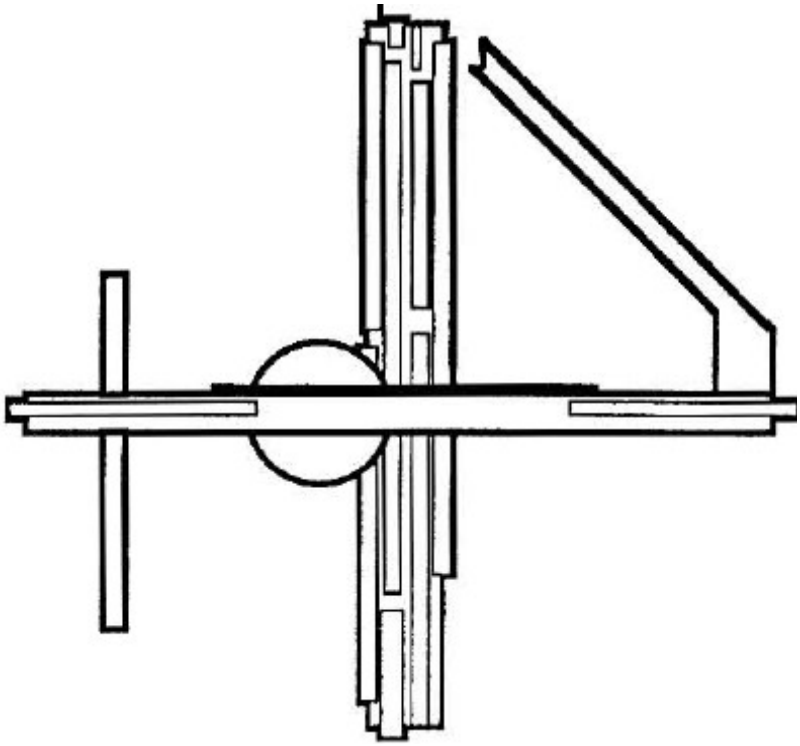
Malin Tekhar is largely an administrative city; it seldom comes within a kilometer of the surface. Very little actual production take place there. Its design allows a fair degree of mobility, but Malin Tekhar's movement is usually confined to station-keeping (over Darrow, an island south of Kehmed) and compensation for air currents. The Spherical configuration is common to cities that require some measure of mobility, but do not touch down in the oceans.



FOXHUNTER (Irregular):

Because they are not at all aerodynamic, irregular structures are usually completely immobile. In addition, they are highly susceptible to strong air currents, such as those that take place during Vincennes' summer. Most irregular structures are smaller, temporary industrial facilities. Foxhunter is unusually large for an irregular structure; begun in 1098, it was to be built as a octahedral Grav City. The construction film, Bialsh Vincennes LiC, went bankrupt in 1108, and had to sell the existing structure. It has hovered in Vincennes' horse latitudes (where air currents are relatively placid) for eleven years, and there are no plans to complete it. Its economy is based largely on small manufacturing, and it also maintains an inexpensive repair dock for grav freighters and spacecraft.





THE FUTURE

Vincennes' future is uncertain. The components to achieve the most impressive technological power in Imperial and Regency history are present, but many detractors and obstacles stand in her way. The coming decades will be crucial to Vincennes' continued development both as a society and as a symbol of human innovative prowess. Most believe Vincennes can overcome these obstacles, but at best the planet's destiny remains shadowed in doubt.

OTHER SETTLEMENTS

The Vincennes system is more than a single world; it has several populated worlds in addition to the vast population on, above, and orbiting Vincennes itself. These settlements include:

Wood Station (Y000135-G): Research laboratory in the planetoid belt around Undraczech, named for the Solomani astrophysicist E.A. Wood, who first identified the relation of the graviton to the unified field theory. When first established in 920, the station monitored gravitic wave patterns in the belt caused by Ember. In 1092, however, it was placed under Imperial Navy jurisdiction and declared off-limits to unauthorized traffic. Countless rumors abound as to its current function; among the most plausible is that it is the site of crude matter-transfer experiments. Since these experiments involve the conversion of matter to energy, they would have to be performed well beyond populated areas. Various antimatter experiments are also rumored to have taken place in the belt.

Friend (G212764-G): World subordinate to Vincennes, supplying raw material to supplement Vincennes' own resources. Most settlements are on mobile mining platforms (gravitic or tracked) that cross the surface seeking materials. While they can be considerable in size (with some several thousand tons in displacement), these mining platforms carry only a few sophonts, with robot workers prevalent. For unknown reasons, anthropomorphic robots enjoy widespread popularity on Friend. Because it orbits Ember, Friend undergoes similar seasonal climate changes as Vincennes, but these changes are less pronounced and usually pass unnoticed within the artificial habitats of the mining settlements.

The planet's one satellite, Greenwood, is a captured comet in a highly elliptical orbit; it's cometary tail takes on spectacular and unusual forms as it is buffered by solar wind from both Ember and Undraczech. It is visible from both Vincennes and Friend at Ember-sunset (so long as Undraczech is not above the horizon).

Paven (EB87676-F): Until recently, Paven was Vincennes' main source of food. In 1118 a grain blight swept across the planet and wiped out nearly the entire crop. The source of this blight is unknown, but it was probably inadvertently brought by a merchant ship. While Vincennes can afford to import foodstuffs from other sources, Paven is on the brink of famine; foodstuffs have been channels through Vincennes starport in a massive relief effort. This blight is considered to constitute an atmospheric taint, although it is not harmful to humans directly (but stepping out into Paven's atmosphere right after eating any grain product can create a distinctly embossing situation, as blight microbes make their way into the stomach…). In addition, departure from the planet must be accompanied by a physically unpleasant (and extremely undignified) personal decontamination procedure.

Merchant's Advisory: The VTCC has organized a famine relief effort known as the "Paven Foodlift", and it has been managed with the Commission's characteristic bureaucratic inefficiency. The program has lasted three years, and circumstances on Paven have improved only marginally. The Support Services Bureau has been pressing

merchant vessels into the relief effort; dealings with the VTCC should be kept to a minimum, to avoid having one's vessel "temporarily" nationalized.

Discontented rumblings among the merchant community hold that the major exporters in the Commission are manipulating the Paven crisis to eliminate competition from Free Traders and smaller shipping companies. Several lawsuits have been filed on behalf of merchant's groups.

TRAVELLERS' NOTES

The traveler to Vincennes should make not of the season he or she arrives, because this will determine what protective gear is necessary. Heavy filter masks are the order of the day during autumn, while light masks and cold-weather gear are in order during winter. No protective gear is required during spring; although some particularly sensitive people may react to the trace quantities of sulfur taint, the atmosphere is safe for prolonged exposure. During the summer however the atmosphere is completely unsafe without at least a full hardsuit such as a Scout Walkabout Suit. Even with this protection, high winds and violent storms make outdoors unsafe without extensive safety equipment; tethers, lighting conductors, etc.

Travellers will also find it difficult to reach the surface and undersea settlements from orbit during summer (landing is a Difficult and Hazardous task), and most traffic is routed through the orbital settlements.

Traffic in the inner system is heavy, but visitors arriving in their own spacecraft have several options. Vincennes' orbital starport is an extensive facility, with numerous ship berths, hotels, and duty-free shops. Orbital berth are also the least expensive. From the highport, shuttles provide regular service to all gravitic cities, and seasonal service to all surface starports and spaceports. During the summer and early fall, flights to the surface are typically by charter only, and few pilots will fly unless there is a break in the weather over the Shoal.

The Highport is also home to the corporate headquarters of "G", the largest (virtually the only) marketers of TL-16 products in the domain. "G" imports goods from the surface in bulk; since its executives are all members of the Trade and Commerce Comission, it is able to circumvent most of the VTCC bureaucracy. "G" ships from the highport to its branches throughout the Domain, using both its own transports and hired freighters. Free traders can also buy directly from "G" at the highport.

Landing directly at one of the gravitic cities is also an option. The larger cities have facilities capable of handling vessels under four or five hundred tons, with a service level equivalent to a Type C port. Unfortunately, berthing expenses are considerable, and most ships that land at Grav Cities are Grav-Freighters loading supplies to take to orbit.

Vincennes Down Starport is an extensive facility built on high ground on Kehmed, and is the only permanent land settlement on the planet. Kehmed is composed of harder rock that does not erode as easily as the volcanic basalt of the islands, and the foundations of

the starport buildings and landing pads pass down to the bedrock. Even so, the rains have worn away the surface around the buildings, and it is possible to tell the age of an individual building or landing pad by how far "ground level" is above the actual surface. A unique feature of Vincennes Down is its use of tractor and repulsor technology to guide incoming and departing spacecraft, especially larger vehicles.

Numerous smaller ports exist; most are built on platforms or rockmat colonies in shallow areas, and provide services at widely varying levels of quality. These are generally built near undersea settlements, and mostly serve grav freighters ferrying goods from factory to orbit. If the main orbital and surface starports are full to capacity, these ports often receive business from the overflow.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES:
VISITING VINCENNES FOR FUN AND PROFIT

Most travelers are by nature adventurous; as the life-style suggest, most Vincennes inhabitants are not. However, Vincennes' wealth allows citizen to hire more intrepid individuals to carry out more unusual tasks for them, tasks for which robots would be either inadequate or merely a bad investment.

Mercenary: The appeals to a sense of adventure that are the basis of military recruitment everywhere have been understandably ineffective on Vincennes. As a result, the Vincennes armed forces; both ground and space, often hire mercenaries to supplement normal recruiting. Pay is adequate, benefits are excellent, and equipment is obviously among the finest in the Imperium.

The Special Branch also hires a great number of off-world mercenaries, especially for the armed-intervention teams. Getting employment with the SB is difficult; some experience with law enforcement is preferred, as well as military or para-military experience. It is more common to be deputized by the SB than to receive full employment.

Recently, the Support Services Bureau has begun hiring independent investigators; supposedly a network of unscrupulous smugglers have been violating the Paven interdiction, selling food at wildly inflated prices and risking the spread of the blight to other worlds. If this network does exists, the Commission wants it disrupted; any information, especially shipping schedules and flight paths, would be handsomely rewarded.

Roving Recorder: One common source of employment is recording adventures for entertainment purposes. This is especially popular on Vincennes, since it allows locals to vicariously enjoy a more "real-life" heroic life-style. Using advanced cybernetics, it is possible to implant a pocket holocommunicator on an individual's body.

There are several entertainment companies that will pay handsomely for data recorded in this manner; anyone with even a minimal reputation for getting into danger will be approached at some point by one of these companies. Rates are commonly Cr50-100 per day, with additional payment for particularly stunning and exciting recordings. Payment is received at the end of a half-year period; recording are then edited down to a streamlined, entertaining format.

Some cybernetic recording companies simply provide the holovid equipment and leave their agents to their own devices. The more affluent companies, however, actually create structured situations into which their agents can be drawn. Often the agents are not aware that the adventures are structured; thus their responses are more genuine.

Merchant: Vincennes, being a major economic power, abounds with opportunities for independent merchants. Assuming one can wade through the VTCC bureaucracy (experience dealing with the Support Services helps), a fortune can be made shipping

high techthe high-tech goods throughout the region. With numerous merchants being commandeered for the Paven famine relief, those who can avoid having their vessels nationalized will find numerous cargoes "orphaned" by the foodlift. These also gives an unusual advantage to smaller vessels, such as the Type-J Seeker or conceivably even a Type-S Scout-Courier, since their small capacities make them unlikely to be nationalized, and since many smaller manufacturers are increasingly desperate for a means to export their goods.

The Paven foodlift provides some particular opportunities for employment, especially working outside the official foodlift program. With the foodlift only marginally effective, black-market prices for synthetic foodstuffs have skyrocketed. The VTCC has banned independent trade with Paven and interdicted the planet, ostensibly to prevent exploitation of the suffering of the planet's inhabitants by profit-minded free traders. (This is, of course, what the VTCC itself is doing, but the Commissions' Public Relations Office has kept this from becoming popular perception).

For those willing to risk the System-Defense Boats enforcing the interdiction around Paven, there is considerable money to be made smuggling food to the surface. Chemicals and bioengineered products for soil reclamation are also in demand; Paven is still an agricultural world, although it may take years or even decades to recover from the blight. There is also, understandably, a considerable demand for passenger transport off the planet.

Rumors in the merchant community hold that an underground humanitarian organization has been smuggling food to Paven, and helping to relocate refuges elsewhere in the subsector. Needless to say, the Commission is anxious that such an organization, if it exists, not be allowed to upset the VTCC's monopoly on the relief effort. Keep in mind that the Commission is still subordinate to the Imperial Legate, and that if it can be proved the Commission is exploiting the crisis, Imperial/Domain authorities would certainly step in to help the people of Paven, and the ensuing investigation could disrupt and discredit the commission itself.

[**Referee's Information:** This is obviously the smuggler's perspective on the investigatory adventure seed in the Mercenary section. An interesting twist would be for characters to begin as VTCC Investigators, infiltrating the smugglers' network and revealing valuable information to the Support Service Bureau. Over the course of the adventure, however, they could come to see the smugglers as a humanitarian organization, the only group actually helping the people of Paven. They would then have to spend the latter part of the adventure undoing their accomplishments working for the VTCC.]

No world is simply a water world, or a vacuum world, or an agricultural world, and while Vincennes' technology is certainly of interest, it is more than just an unusually high-technology world. Like all worlds, it is home to intelligent beings existing in a society that is both unique, and still distinctly Imperial. It is at least equally important as Mora or Deneb or any other major world itself to the preservation of the Domain in these troubled

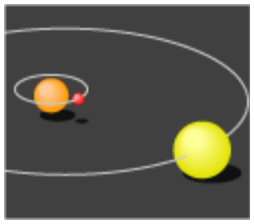
times. Visiting this system should be a top priority for any Traveller in the Domain of Deneb.

Vincennes System Details

Orbit	Name	UPP	Remarks
Primary	Undraczech	K7 V	
0	Wood Research Station	G000138-G	As Re
1	(Empty Orbit)		
2	(Empty Orbit)		
3*	Ember	M7 V	
0	Friend	F212764-G	
40	Greenwood	YS00000-0	Captured Comet
1	Vincennes	A899AA6-G	Hi In Cp
4	Bascom	Small GG	Size 40
4	Turbot	G652239-F	Mining Colony
30	Chariot	Y200000-0	Va Ba
50	Heighat	Y300000-0	Va Ba
5	Shinden	Small GG	Size 50
55	Defense	F410367-G	System Defense Base
6-11	(Empty Orbits)		
12*	Guazhurniim	G1 V	
0	Craddick	YS00000-0	Va Ba
1	Lagahar	YS00000-0	Va Ba
2	Anashaldi	Y530000-0	
3	Paven	DA77766-G	Ag Ni Mi
9	Wharton	HS00246-E	
4	Shozhul	Large GG	Size 220
2	(Ring System)	YR00000-0	
7	Plotkin	YS00000-0	
10	Stopover	F320134-F	Refueling Station

* Companion stars.

Vincennes is a trinary star system. The planet Vincennes orbits the star Ember. Ember, in turn, orbits Undraczech. This binary pair is accompanied by the distant companion Guazhirniim. The system is 7.5 billion years old.



The layout of this system is somewhat unusual, and defies conventional theories of planetary formation. However, despite the best efforts of thousands of hopeful prospectors over the centuries, not the slightest trace of Ancient involvement has ever been detected anywhere in the system...

Undraczech
K7 V (orange dwarf)
Temperature: 4,200 K Luminosity: 0.115 Mass: 0.6 Radius: 0.006 AU

Ember
Separation: close (0.4 AU); eccentricity 0.05 (0.38 AU to 0.42 AU)
M7 V (red dwarf)
Temperature: 2,800 K Luminosity: 0.2 Std Mass: 0.3 Std Diameter: 0.3 Std

Guazhirniim
Separation: distant (55 AU); eccentricity 0.11 (49 AU to 61 AU).
G1 V (yellow dwarf)
Temperature: 5,960 K Luminosity: 1.22 Mass: 1.04 Radius: 0.01 AU

NOTE: It would take a 1G ship three weeks to travel between the Undraczech/Ember sub-system (where Vincennes is located) and the Guazhirniim sub-system (which contains the world of Paven). For this reason most inter-system travel is done via jump drive.

System Data

Undraczech

Inner Limit: 0.12 AU Life Zone: 0.32 AU to 0.44 AU
Snow Line: 1.7 AU Outer Limit: 24 AU
100-diameter limit: 1.2 AU
Ember creates a forbidden zone at 0.35 to 0.45 AU.
Base orbital radius: 0.42 AU. Bode constant 0.3

Orbit	AU	Zone	Planet	Type
(1)	0.40	Life	(Ember)	Companion Star

Ember

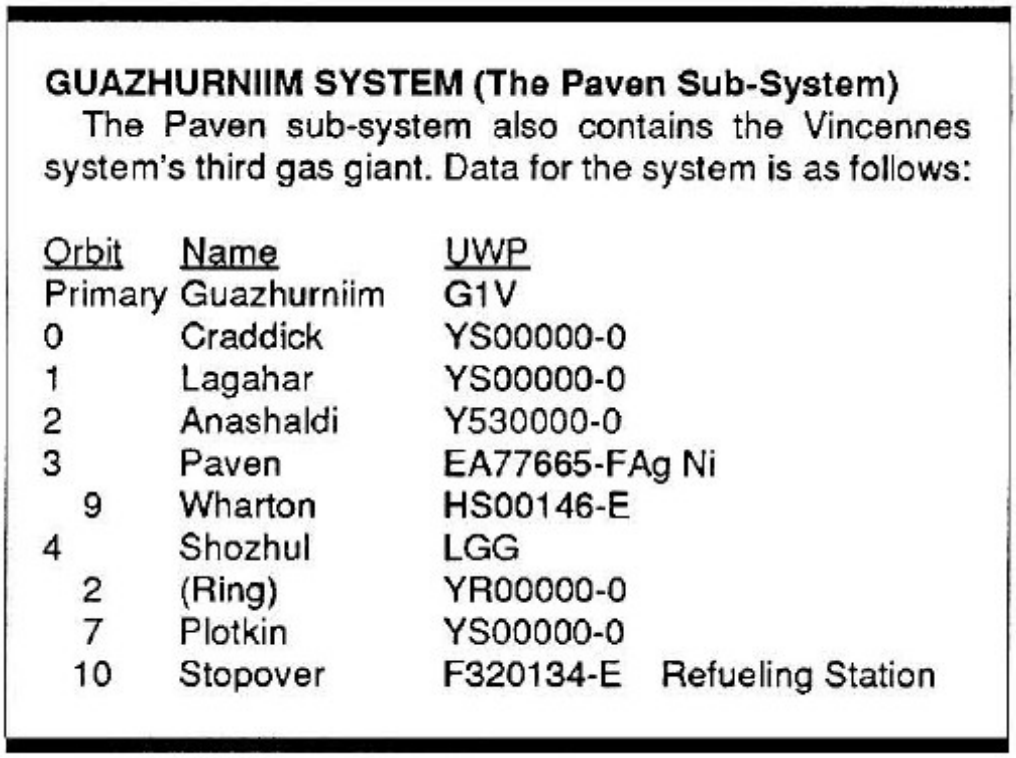
Inner Limit: 0.022 AU Life Zone: 0.06 AU to 0.08 AU
Snow Line: 0.32 AU Outer Limit: 4.4 AU
100-diameter limit: 0.4 AU
(entirely within Undraczech's 100-diameter limit)

Undraczech creates a forbidden zone beyond 0.127 AU.
Base orbital radius: 0.077 AU. Bode constant 0.3

Orbit	AU	Zone	Planet	Type
1	0.08	Life	Vincennes	Terestrial

Guazhirniim

Inner Limit: 0.21 AU Life Zone: 1.1 AU to 1.4 AU
Snow Line: 5.5 AU Outer Limit: 44 AU
100-diameter limit: 1.0 AU
Base orbital radius: 0.74 AU. Bode constant 0.4



GUAZHURNIIM SYSTEM (The Paven Sub-System)

The Paven sub-system also contains the Vincennes system's third gas giant. Data for the system is as follows:

Orbit	Name	UWP	
Primary	Guazhurniim	G1V	
0	Craddick	YS00000-0	
1	Lagahar	YS00000-0	
2	Anashaldi	Y530000-0	
3	Paven	EA77665-FAg Ni	
9	Wharton	HS00146-E	
4	Shozhul	LGG	
2	(Ring)	YR00000-0	
7	Plotkin	YS00000-0	
10	Stopover	F320134-E	Refueling Station

Orbit	AU	Zone	Planet	Type
0		Inner	Craddick	YS00000-0
1	0.74	Inner	Lagahar	YS00000-0
2			Anashaldi	Y530000-0

3	1.14	Life	Paven	EA77665-F Ag Ni	
9			Wharton	HS00146-E	
4	2.34	Middle	Shozhul	LGG	
2			(Ring)	YR00000-0	
7			Plotkin	YS00000-0	
10			Stopover	F3201134-E	Refueling Station

Vincennes itself has 11 billion sophonts, but Paven is also a major world, with 600 million inhabitants.

Long form (GT:First In style)

Planets orbiting Undraczech:

Montmartre (small, low-iron, terrestrial, desert world)

Diameter: 5,400 miles Density: 4.0 g/cc
Mass: 0.23 Gravity: 0.49 G
Local Year: 288 days Day: 30 hours
No moons
Atmosphere: Exotic, 0.20 (very thin) Hydrographics: 10%
Ecosphere: complex animals, partially compatible biochemistry
Frigid (197 K) Albedo: 0.1
Resources: average MSPR: 0 PR: 0


Montmartre

Sorbonne (small, low-iron, terrestrial, desert world)

Diameter: 5,200 miles Density: 4.1 g/cc
Mass: 0.21 Gravity: 0.49 G
Local Year: 486 days (555 local days) Day: 21 hours
No moons
Atmosphere: Corrosive, 0.63 (thin) Hydrographics: none

Frigid (187 K) Albedo: 0.09
Resources: average MSPR: 0 PR: 5 (500,000)
Spaceport: II Govt: Captive CR: 6 (totalitarian) GTL: 10 (TL 12)

Sorbonne was founded as a penal colony, although it has since developed some light industry and is also used for hostile-environment military training.

Sorbonne

Charonne (standard, low-iron, terrestrial, hostile/nitrogen)

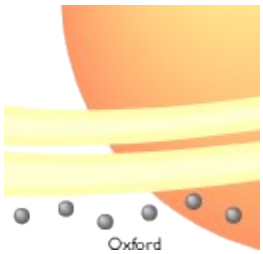
Diameter: 7,800 miles Density: 4.4 g/cc
Mass: 0.76 Gravity: 0.78 G
Local Year: 2.66 years Day: 23 hours
2 large moons:
Reims: 450 miles diameter, 45 PR orbit
Chartres: 350 miles diameter, 60 PR orbit
Atmosphere: Exotic, 1.41 (dense) Hydrographics: 30%
Ecosphere: complex animals, compatible biochemistry
Frigid (159 K) Albedo: 0.28
Resources: average MSPR: 0 PR: 5 (500,000)
Spaceport: 0 Govt: Corporate CR: 4 (controlled) GTL: 12 (TL 15)

Charonne' primary income comes from the manufacture of biological agents and chemicals too dangerous to produce on Vincennes itself.

Charonne

Oxford (gas giant)

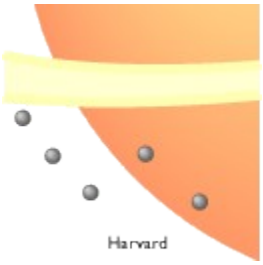
Diameter: 46,500 miles Density: 1.0 g/cc
Mass: 36.6 Gravity: 1.06 G Local Year: 6.11 years Day: 13 hours
10 small inner moons, 6 large moons, 5 small outer moons. Prominent ring system.



Oxford

Harvard (gas giant)

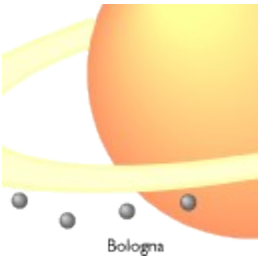
Diameter: 68,000 miles Density: 0.7 g/cc
Mass: 80.0 Gravity: 1.09 G
Local Year: 15.4 years Day: 11 hours
8 small inner moons, 5 large moons, 3 small outer moons. Ring system.



Vincennes Belt (planetoid belt)

Bologna (gas giant)

Diameter: 29,000 miles Density: 1.4 g/cc
Mass: 12.4 Gravity: 0.93 G
Local Year: 112 years Day: 17 hours
7 small inner moons, 4 large moons, 6 small outer moons. Ring system.



Planet orbiting Ember:

Vincennes (standard, medium-iron, terrestrial, Earthlike, ocean world)

Diameter: 12,755.2km (8,000) miles Density: 5.8 g/cc
Mass: 1.08 Gravity: 1.06 G
Local Year: 25 days Day: tide-locked
No moons
Atmosphere: Oxygen/Nitrogen, polluted (high oxygen), 1.30 (dense)
Hydrographics: 93%

Ecosphere: complex animals, partially compatible biochemistry
Torrid (339 K / 66ºC) to Very Cold (253 K / -20ºC) Albedo: 0.42
Resources: very rich +2 MSPR: 6 PR: 10 (11,000,000,000)
Starport: V Govt: Dictatorship CR: 4 (controlled) GTL: 13 (TL 16)

See other pages for full details.


Vincennes

Planets orbiting Guazhirniim:

Mushiiru (tiny, silicate, terrestrial, rockball)

Diameter: 2,500 miles Density: 3.0 g/cc
Mass: 0.02 Gravity: 0.17 G
Local Year: 228 days Day: tide-locked
No moons
Atmosphere: none Hydrographics: 10%
Ecosphere: complex animals, incompatible biochemistry
Torrid (326 K) Albedo: 0.15
Resources: average MSPR: 0 PR: 0Diameter: 7,900 miles Density: 4.9 g/cc


Mushiiru

Paven (standard, medium-iron, terrestrial, Earthlike, ocean world)

Diameter: 6,200 miles Density: 5.0 g/cc
Mass: 0.43 Gravity: 0.71 G
Local Year: 436 days (476 local days) Day: 22 hours
2 small moons: Gavot: 10 miles, 3 PR Sarab: 60 miles, 7 PR
Atmosphere: Oxygen/Nitrogen, 0.85 (standard) Hydrographics: 66%
Ecosphere: complex animals, identical biochemistry
Cool (294 K / 21ºC) Albedo: 0.31
Resources: average MSPR: 9 PR: 7 (600,000,000)
Spaceport: III Govt: Oligarchy CR: 4 (controlled) GTL: 12 (TL 15)

See other pages for details.


Paven

Gemana (standard, medium-iron, terrestrial, hostile/nitrogen)

Diameter: 7,900 miles Density: 4.9 g/cc
Mass: 0.88 Gravity: 0.88 G
Local Year: 684 days Day: 14 hours
No moons
Atmosphere: Exotic, 1.06 (standard) Hydrographics: 10%
Ecosphere: complex animals, nearly identical biochemistry
Cold (271 K) Albedo: 0.26
Resources: average MSPR: 0 PR: 0

Gemana

Khiikanu (tiny, low-iron, terrestrial, rockball)

Diameter: 1,000 miles Density: 3.1 g/cc
Mass: 0.001 Gravity: 0.07 G
Local Year: 3.51 years Day: tide-locked
No moons
Atmosphere: none Hydrographics: none
Frigid (186 K) Albedo: 0.1
Resources: average MSPR: 0 PR: 2 (600)
Spaceport: I Govt: Oligarchy CR: 2 (free) GTL: 12 (TL 15)

This insignificant rockball was the site of a Rule of Man system defence installation, now nothing but ruins. The planet is governed by a clique of hereditary nobles, who claim descent from the original Terran Navy personnel -- although most historians seriously doubt the truth of this! Most of these nobles actually spend most of their time on Paven.

Khiikanu

Madhala (tiny, low-iron, terrestrial, rockball)

Diameter: 3,100 miles Density: 3.8 g/cc
Mass: 0.04 Gravity: 0.27 G
Local Year: 7.67 years Day: 26 hours
No moons
Atmosphere: none Hydrographics: none
Frigid (143 K) Albedo: 0.11
Resources: average MSPR: 0 PR: 3 (4,000)
Spaceport: II Govt: anarchy CR: 4 (controlled) GTL: 12 (TL 15)

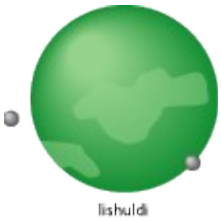
Madhala has numerous very small deposits of valuable ore, too scattered for large-scale commercial exploitation but enough to provide a living for several

thousand independent miners. Most are recent immigrants to the Vincennes system.

Iishuldi (standard, silicate, terrestrial, hostile/ammonia)

Diameter: 16,500 miles Density: 1.5 g/cc
Mass: 2.45 Gravity: 0.57 G
Local Year: 18.7 years Day: 14 hours
2 large moons
Atmosphere: Corrosive, 0.57 (thin) Hydrographics: 30%
Ecosphere: complex animals, partially compatible biochemistry
Frigid (105 K) Albedo: 0.59
Resources: average MSPR: 0 PR: 1 (80)
Spaceport: 0 Govt: Corporate CR: 2 (free) GTL: 13 (TL 16)

This planet is home to a corporate-owned research facility. Little is known of its activities.



Labalaan (standard, silicate, terrestrial, hostile/ammonia)

Diameter: 10,200 miles Density: 1.7 g/cc
Mass: 0.66 Gravity: 0.40 G
Local Year: 48.9 years Day: 720 hours
No moons
Atmosphere: Corrosive, 0.48 (very thin) Hydrographics: 10%
Ecosphere: complex animals, partially compatible biochemistry
Frigid (79 K) Albedo: 0.59
Resources: average MSPR: 0 PR: 2 (900)
Spaceport: III Govt: Corporate CR: 5 (repressive) GTL: 13 (TL 16)

The sole reason for settlement on Labalaan is its spaceport. A joint venture between the Vincennes government and a private consortium, this spaceport is intended to relieve the mounting pressure on Vincennes' main starport by diverting transient traffic away from the main spacelanes. Extensive handling and repair facilities for bulk freighters and LASH tenders are under construction, after which the starport is expected to reach Class IV (CT: Class B). The consortium is

using convict labour for the construction work, accounting for the high law level (and the many delays to construction).


Labalaan

Amshida (tiny, silicate, terrestrial, icy rockball)

Diameter: 4,100 miles Density: 1.3 g/cc
Mass: 0.03 Gravity: 0.12 G
Local Year: 133 years Day: 19 hours
1 large moon
Atmosphere: none Hydrographics: none
Frigid (48 K) Albedo: 0.51
Resources: average MSPR: 0 PR: 0

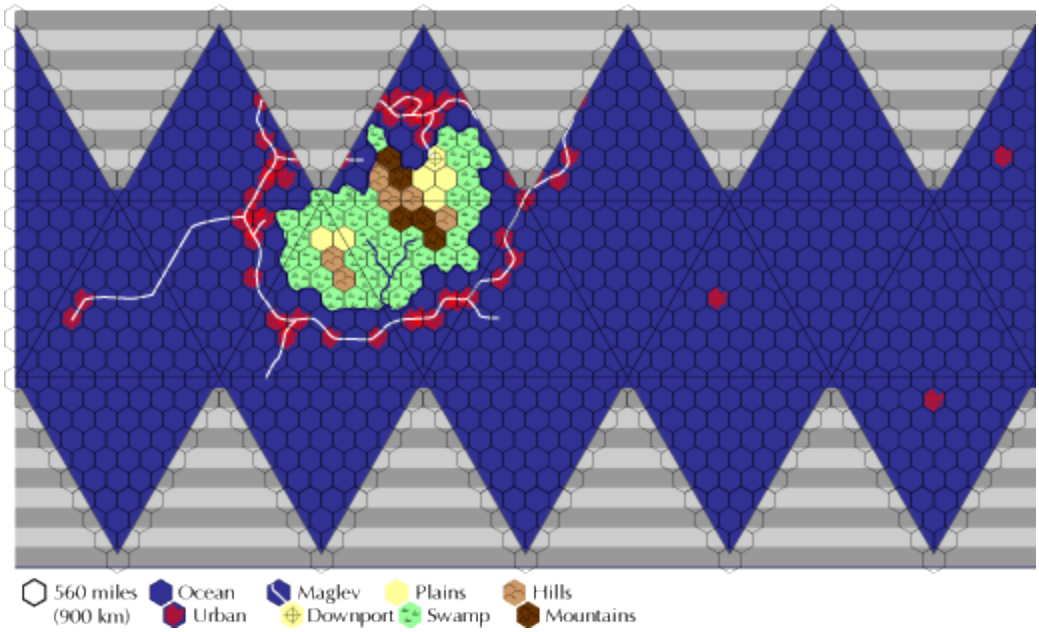

Amshida

VINCENNES PLANETARY DATA

Diameter: 8,000 miles (12,850 km)
Density: 5.8 g/cc Mass: 1.08 Gravity: 1.06 G
Local Year: 25 days Day: tide-locked
No moons
Atmosphere: Oxygen/Nitrogen, polluted (high oxygen), 1.30 (dense)
Hydrographics: 93%
Ecosphere: complex animals, partially compatible biochemistry
Torrid (339 K / 66ºC) to Very Cold (253 K / -20ºC) Albedo: 0.42


Vincennes

Vincennes



Vincennes is a medium iron world, very slightly larger than Terra. Its atmosphere is oxygen-nitrogen, with a density of 1.3 Terran-normal. The oxygen level in the atmosphere is about 35%, nearly twice that of Earth. This causes irritation and drying to exposed skin in humans (especially the eyes, lungs and mucous membranes) and can lead to hyperventilation. Facemasks and respirators are therefore recommended when venturing outside a controlled environment. Corrosion and flammability are also ever-present hazards on the world.

93% of the planet's surface is covered by water. This is rich in single-celled life that uses photosynthesis, giving the ocean a distinctive green-blue tint and also accounting for the high oxygen level. More complex aquatic lifeforms are also plentiful, feeding on the plantlife and each other.

The planet has a single continent, with an area of 12.1 million sq km (about the size of South America). This is mostly low-lying, with heavily eroded hills and extensive swamplands. Mosses and bindweed-type plants are the only native life on land. The continent is in the northern (bright face) hemisphere.

Facemasks and respirators are recommended when venturing out on the surface of Vincennes.

Vincennes is tidally locked to its primary, with an orbital period of 24.9 standard days. The sun Ember itself orbits around Undraczech once every 110.5 standard days. This means that the planet's bright face has two suns in the sky roughly half the time, and one sun the rest of the time. The dark face has a day/night cycle, as Vincennes' orbit brings Undraczech into view for half of the 25-day "year".

Vincennes has no moons. Ember takes up about 2.9 degrees of the sky (six times the diameter of Sol as seen from Terra). Undraczech ("Undie" to irreverent locals) is about half that size (1.8 degrees), but brighter. Shadows on the world appear soft and blurry; when both suns are in the sky it is difficult to discern a shadow at all. Note, however, that most Vincenniens live in artificial habitats lit by white light, which ignore local conditions and operate on a Terran-standard 24-hour day.

Vincennes suffers from dramatic fluctuations in temperature as its orbit around Ember takes it closer or further from Undraczech. Average temperatures on the dark face vary between 253 K (-20 C) and 295 K (22 C) over a 25-day period, while on the bright face summer temperatures can reach 339 K (66 C). A vast oceanic icecap covering half the planet forms then melts again on a regular basis, dumping huge amounts of thermal energy into the local weather systems. The result is almost constant violent storms, sweeping right around the planet with no land masses to halt their progress. Only for a brief period in mid-winter does Vincennes know calmer weather - this is referred to by the locals (somewhat perversely) as "springtime".

PAVEN PLANETARY DATA

Because of its importance in the system, Paven is also detailed in full here.

Diameter: 6,200 miles Density: 5.0 g/cc
Mass: 0.43 Gravity: 0.71 G
Local Year: 436 days (476 local days) Day: 22 hours
2 small moons: Gavot: 10 miles, 3 PR Sarab: 60 miles, 7 PR
Atmosphere: Oxygen/Nitrogen, 0.85 (standard) Hydrographics: 66%
Ecosphere: complex animals, identical biochemistry
Cool (294 K / 21ºC) Albedo: 0.31 Axial tilt: 15 degrees

Paven is a medium iron world, somewhat smaller than Terra and slightly less dense. Its atmosphere is oxygen-nitrogen, slightly thinner than Earth's but breathable without artificial aid. About two-thirds of the planet is covered by water: from space this appears as a patchwork of sea and land with many islands and oceans. About six landmasses are large enough to be given the status of continents.

The planet enjoys a temperate climate, with average temperatures just one degree lower than those of (pre-global warming) Terra. The flora and fauna of Paven are rich and diverse. Many species show exceptionally close parallels to Terran lifeforms, leading to the widely held theory that the world was terraformed

during the Second Imperium. Much of Paven's surface is cultivated, and food is its major export.

Paven has two moons, but they are not visible to the naked eye and cause no significant tides. Its sun takes up about 1.0 degree of the sky (twice the diameter of Sol as seen from Terra).

HISTORY

The first known contact with Vincennes was circa -2150 (Imperial), and was made by one of the few expeditions the Rule of Man sent beyond the original borders of the First Imperium. The *Vincennes* was the first Solomani ship to enter the system, and gave its name to the system's habitable planet. Although plans were made for the settlement of Vincennes, the Rule of Man's increasing internal turmoil made any expansion impossible.

With the onset of the Long Night, a group of Solomani exiles attempted to settle the planet, living in subterranean habitats on Vincennes' single continent. Cut off from outside technology and supplies, however, the colony's population soon feel below levels necessary for perpetuation, and it became one of the countless settlements that died out during the Long Night.

The system was recontacted when the Third Imperium began its Spinward expansion through Corridor, with colonization beginning in the second century. The challenges of the environment on Vincennes spurred a number of technological advances that established Vincennes as the most rapidly developing world in the frontier. Its position as a nexus of regional activity and technological innovation dates from this period.

In recognition of this development, Vincennes was made subsector capital in 243, when District 192 was integrated into the Imperium as the Vincennes Subsector. As part of formal integration into the Imperium, the subsector was placed under the dominion of an Imperial noble family, the Humbolts.

A powerful family of Solomani origin, the Humbolts were granted this distant fief following charges of High Treason – charges that were never conclusively proven, thanks to the suspicious deaths of several key witnesses. Dominion of the Vincennes subsector was essentially a polite form of exile.

Vincennes was integral to the development of the Domain of Deneb, as its industries produced high-technology goods for the settlement of the Frontier. With the outbreak of the First Frontier War, Vincennes turned to manufacturing ships and equipment for the Imperial Navy.

The historian Albrecht Heinzmann has hypothesized that the Humbolts encouraged Grand Admiral Olav hault-Plankwell in his bid for the Imperial throne following the First Frontier War, hoping to regain influence in the Imperial Government and return to

Capital. Unfortunatley this period in history is too confusing for Heinzmann's hypothesis to be proven.

Still in 628, following the Civil War, the Humbolt family was again charged with extreme violations of Imperial law. Among their offenses was the exploitation of the native sophonts of Perez (Vincennes/Deneb 1221). The Humbolts were foreably extracting a highly potent hallucinogen from the beings, by an inhumanly cruel process of interest only to the sadist or the most dedicated historian. The breaking of the Solomani dominance at the Imperial court meant that their allies in the Moot were no longer able to protect them, and the Humbolts were exiled beyond the Imperium.

Since the Humbolt's exile, the subsector has been under the dominion of a far more reputable family, although conspiracy enthusiasts still ascribe most of the criminal activity in the subsector to the Humbolts' continued presence. The incident ended Vincennes' political status in the Sinward frontier, and political power shifted to the Deneb and Mora systems.

In the modern era, Vincennes has continued to be a world of great technological achievements and, consequently, great wealth and economic importance. The "Vincennes/Dd" production microcode can be found imprinted on goods throughout the Domain.

Vincennes recently sought to reestablish its political standing by submitting a bid to become the new Domain capital. Visitors to the system may note a great deal f local resentlment that Mora was chosen over Vincennes ("more politically stable and centrally-located", according to a spokesman for the Archduke Norris). Still, Vincennes remains the most economically powerful system in central Deneb sector, and one crucial to the survival of the Domain in the era of Rebellion.

The Early Years: -2150 to 57

Discovery and Settlement of Paven

The Vincennes system was discovered in -2150 by scout units of the Navy of the Rule of Man. A small group of Solomani colonists was settled here under the auspices of the Imperial Navy. Their purpose was to act as a supply depot in this sparsely-populated border region, providing support to elements of the fleet operating against the flank of the Vargr incursions. When the Second Imperium collapsed. Over the following years the mostly-Solomani crew of the Imperial ships set themselves up

The Long Night

During the Long Night, Vincennes never quite lost its technology or civilisation. However, its neighbouring worlds – mostly settled by a thin scattering of prospectors and homesteaders – went into terminal economic decline and were abandoned. Most of their inhabitants eventually moved to Vincennes (and by the time of the Third Imperium, most records or memory of these colonies was lost). By -1400 most of the ships of the navy were unused and useless hulks in orbit, prey to vacuum welding and micrometeorite damage.

For the next millennium and a half, Vincennes history was a confusion of petty dynastic squabbles, territorial wars, and occasional bursts of high culture – which produced some stunning works of art and music. Technology declined to a sustainable level of between 3 and 5, with some exceptions where particular knowledge or advanced capability was preserved. Historical records of this period are sketchy and contain many obvious distortions and inaccuracies.

The Settlement of Vincennes

This equilibrium was shattered in the years after -200. Free traders (Zhodani, Vilani, Sword Worlder, even Sylean) began calling at the Vincennes system with greater frequency, and the people became aware once more of the outside galaxy. "navy" on a month-long journey through realspace to the neighbouring Undraczech/Ember star system. Here they established a small colony on the marginally habitable world of Vincennes.

While the founding of Vincennes may have been a token gesture, carried out more for prestige than practicality, the world soon proved to be genuinely valuable. Its oceans were teeming with life, and mineral surveys of the seabeds discovered rich deposits of ore in easily-workable form. The population increased rapidly: Solomani organised and financed the new mines, farms and factories, while peasantry provided the workforce. Strategic purchases of imported high technology from free traders allowed the serious environmental problems of Vincennes to be overcome. In -34 an even greater step was taken BTV, the system's first biotechnology company. This utilised the rich variety of single-celled life in Vincennes' oceans as raw material for the production of drugs and pharmaceuticals, and gave Vincennes its first high-value export industry. By the time the Scouts from the Third Imperium reached the region in 49, it was Vincennes that was the economic centre of the system.

Early Contact with the Third Imperium

Vincenneswas quick to see the benefits membership of the Imperium would bring to burgeoning industries. It was, however, determined to secure the best deal possible. Vincennes did secure agreement that the world would become the subsector capital, and Vincennes was granted the hereditary title of Imperial Marquis as a guarantee that Vincennes' local affairs would remain independent of Imperial control.

Furthermore, in an important symbolic gesture the treaty incorporating Vincennes into the Imperium (in 57).

Vincennes in the Third Imperium 57 - 589

Incorporation into the Imperium

The subsector government was formally established on Vincennes in 58, when an Imperial Duke arrived. In fact, most of the subsector was uncolonised at this stage, so the Duke had little actual work to do.

In 57 the Imperial calendar was adopted in that year, replacing the old Terran calendar used previously.

Development and Growth

For the next few centuries, Vincennes prospered as a centre of Imperial trade and colonisation. It was situated on the direct route between Deneb (gateway to the Imperial Core) and Mora, the centre of development for the Spinward Marches; and the world benefited greatly from passing traffic as well as acting as a centre for local development. As in the Second Imperium, the primary export of the system was supplies for starships: but now these consisted primarily of hydroponics systems, specially tailored high-nutrition, low-bulk foodstuffs and dietary supplements. Medicines and pharmaceuticals also became a local speciality, as colonists and scouts visited many new worlds with strange, hostile biospheres. On a different note, Vincennien brandy and Vincennien hallucinogenic drugs (as preferred, or as permitted by local law) became the recreational substances of choice for seven subsectors.

Although Vincennes did not establish any colonies itself during this period (its own growing industries absorbed all its population) it did provide financial and material support to many of the newly-settled worlds in the subsector. This gave the Marquis of Vincennes a lot of informal power and influence in the region: a development which was largely overlooked at the time by Imperial authorities more concerned with events in the Spinward Marches.

The Development of Undersea Arcologies

Although the earliest settlement on Vincennes had been on the planet's single continent, the almost constant hurricane-force winds meant that construction had to be largely underground. As soon as the available technology allowed (in c. 250) it was decided to shift most of the population into new underwater arcologies, safe under the oceans from the planet's weather conditions and – more importantly – closer to its primary sources of mineral wealth in the deep sea trenches.

The arcologies were mostly financed and built by the Crown, out of taxpayers' money and the profits of trade. However, in 262 Emperor Yves assigned each of them (along with a share of its revenue) to his favourite nobles to administer as fiefs. Until that date, most of the nobility had maintained their traditional homes and estates on Paven; but now the majority moved to their new luxury accommodation in the arcologies. Paven therefore fell victim to the "absentee landlord" syndrome. The nobles now saw that agricultural planet as just an extra source of revenue rather than a home to be cherished, and so exploited its inhabitants mercilessly.

Vilani Resistance Grows on Paven

Over the next two centuries, popular unrest on Paven against Vincennien rule would grow steadily. Unable to keep order themselves, the nobles turned to the Crown for assistance: royal troops established garrisons and turned Paven into a virtual police state. Rebellious villagers were often deported en masse to Vincennes, assigned to the lowest levels of the arcologies and the undersea mines. Unable to fight the State openly, the people of Paven turned to passive resistance. This included the recovery (or outright re-invention, to be honest) of their Vilani cultural traditions and heritage, suppressed during two millennia of Solomani domination.

The Struggle for Hegemony in the Vincennes Subsector

During the mid-400s, relations between the Imperial government and the Vincennes Crown became more strained. At last, the Imperial Dukes took notice of the informal sphere of control that the emperors of Vincennes wielded over the other worlds in the subsector, and recognised the threat to their own authority. The result was a long series of political confrontations and manoeuvring as each party strove to establish their hegemony. The Crown (Emperor Georges IV and then Empress Marianne during this period) was careful to avoid any open provocation that would lead to direct Imperial intervention -- although on several occasions the subsector Duke attempted to manufacture an incident that would justify exactly that. Instead, each side used a mixture of bribery and concealed threats to persuade other world governments to ally with them.

In the long term, the deeper pockets of the Imperium gave it the advantage in this campaign, although the cost was high – including the expansion of the Imperial Navy research centre on HRD/Deneb (1623), a Ministry of Colonisation regional headquarters on Jonkeer/Deneb (1324) and investment in several new starports and Scout bases throughout the subsector. Matters finally came to a head in 506 with the Paven Incident.

The Paven Incident of 506

In that year, an open rebellion broke out on Paven (financed and supported by covert off-world interests, as subsequent investigation would prove). Lurid tales of massacres (and cannibalism – although this was never proven) inflamed public opinion on Vincennes, and a huge expeditionary force was organised to put down the rebellion. At that point, the revolutionary committee on Paven appealed directly to the Imperial Duke to be recognised as a sovereign and independent world under Imperial law, and thus entitled to Imperial protection against "off-world invasion".

Their argument was that the 55 AU distance between Paven and Vincennes was far enough that all travel between the worlds was done by jump drive, making them effectively two different star systems. The Duke publicly accepted this argument. He ordered the Imperial 258th Fleet (which, coincidentally, just happened to be on standby in a neighbouring system) to jump immediately to Paven and interdict the world, preventing the Vincennien force from landing. In response, Empress Marianne despatched most of Vincennes' SDB fleet through normal space to Paven – simultaneously making a political point and confronting the Imperial Fleet with a superior force.

For several tense weeks, the two fleets faced off against each other in orbit, as the massacres continued on the planet's surface and Imperial couriers rushed to call reinforcements from the fleets in neighbouring subsectors. However, now face-to-face with the reality of open war against the Imperium – a war she knew she could not win – Marianne was forced to back down. The terms included the surrender of most of her off-world interests: selling the royal holdings in other worlds' economies to the subsector Duke and to the Imperial family on Capital. (However, the price agreed in return would provide a huge capital boost to Vincennes' economy and her own private fortune). In return, the Imperium agreed to regard Paven as part of the Vincennes system rather than an independent world – this was, after all, simply a return to the status quo ante and thus no real blow to their prestige.

Aftermath

The long-term result of the Incident was that Vincennes' power in the subsector was curtailed. This triggered something of an economic downturn in the region, as Vincennes turned inwards and the flow of Imperial investment to counterbalance it was also cut off. Vincennes itself flourished, however. Marianne invested the proceeds of liquidating the royal family's off-world assets into setting up new heavy engineering and industrial plant, to balance the world's existing strengths in the "softer" biological sciences. This reduced the construction costs of new arcologies, led to a settlement of Undraczech's other planets and moons and the establishment of orbital industries, and made Vincennes into a major shipbuilding power. (The greater military potential this would eventually give her world was doubtless not missed by Empress Marianne).

As for Paven, the Imperial Navy jumped away from the world and left the Vincennien fleet free to crush the rebellion as "a matter of internal security". The subsequent oppression was thorough and brutal, and ever since then the Pavenese have regarded the Third Imperium's action as the worst kind of betrayal.

Rise and Fall: Vincennes in the Civil War Era 589 to 696

The (First) Frontier War

The bad feeling between Vincennes and the Imperial government gradually faded into the background as tensions with the Zhodani grew along the frontier. Vincennes' new shipbuilding industry proved invaluable in strengthening the Imperial Navy to resist the Outworld Coalition, and much of Admiral Plankwell's victorious fleet in the (1st) Frontier War was manufactured in Vincennes orbit.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, however, the ambitious young Emperor of Vincennes Armand II saw an opportunity to re-establish his world's power and "reverse the humiliation of 506". With most of the Imperial fleets withdrawn to the Core to fight for the Imperial throne, there was nothing to stop Armand's bid for glory.

The Vincennes Zone of Protection

In 609, Armand declared the formation of the Vincennes Zone of Protection, a region five parsecs in radius. These worlds could now rely on the Vincennes planetary navy for protection against "rampaging Vargr and Zhodani" in the absence of the Imperial Navy. (It was no coincidence that the Zone covered the same area as the Second Imperium-era Kingdom of Paven).

Some worlds were willing to accept this "protection" voluntarily; but when Achemadon/Deneb (1224) and Kauai/Deneb (1520) resisted Armand ordered them bombarded from orbit. That quickly brought the dissenters into line; those planets which had fleets of their own (none of them as large or capable as that of Vincennes) saw them integrated into the Vincennes navy. Vincennien garrisons were imposed on the worlds in the Zone, paid for by "contributions" levied on each planet. The Imperial authorities protested these developments but could do nothing to prevent them: any Imperial commander who amassed a force large enough to challenge the Vincennes navy saw greater profit in heading off through Corridor towards Capital than in squabbling over this backwater.

Armand and Arbellatra

When the Second Frontier War broke out, Armand initially stayed neutral, contenting himself with informing the Imperial High Command that since his forces were protecting their rear area, they could concentrate all their ships on fighting the Zhodani. However, when the young Admiral Alkhalikoi took over command and started winning significant victories, Armand saw the political benefit in sending a detachment of his navy to serve under her as an "allied fleet" (Arbellatra herself consistently referred to it as the "Vincennes colonial squadron", however). Once Arbellatra had secured a negotiated peace with the Zhodani, Armand was one of the advisors who counselled her to make an attempt for the Imperial throne. In return for his support, he asked for formal recognition of the Empire of Vincennes as an independent ally of the Imperium. Arbellatra told him that she agreed to this, and so the Vincennes Expeditionary Force accompanied her to Capital while the rest of Armand's navy stayed to strengthen its grip on the Zone.

Arbellatra won the Civil War, although the Vincennes portion of her fleet never returned to the Domain of Deneb (it was incorporated directly into the Imperial Navy; a fleet stationed in the Ilelish sector currently carries its battle honours). However, when a courier brought the news to Armand in 623, Arbellatra deferred recognition of his independence on the grounds that as Regent (in the absence of an Emperor), she did not have the authority to cede control of any Imperial territory.

The Empress Strikes Back

Over the next decade, Arbellatra strengthened Imperial control throughout the sector (including establishing the first x-boat links), and re-based strong Imperial fleets all around the border of the Zone. In 634, having finally accepted the title of Empress, she felt secure enough to pay her first ceremonial visit as monarch to the Domain of Deneb (to show the flag, overawe opponents, reward supporters, deter the Zhodani, and visit her homeworld again). The tremendous Imperial fleet gathered to escort her made a stately progress around the Domain, and finally entered orbit around Vincennes in 636.

Armand, meanwhile, had contracted a debilitating and incurable disease that left him almost helpless. However, despite his weakness he confronted Arbellatra during a private audience and challenged her to make good on her word. She simply smiled and replied "I have", then handed him a portable datareader. On it, he saw the text of his world's original Treaty of Membership in the Imperium: like many such treaties, it did indeed state that "the Empire of Vincennes shall enjoy independence and autonomy within the Third Imperium, as defined in the Imperial Constitution and as guaranteed by the Emperor." Looking at her timepiece, she added "You have always enjoyed independence within the Imperium – as should your neighbouring worlds. Now, if you will excuse me, I'm expecting a series of important despatches from a fleet courier." With that she left

– and Armand was soon confronted by the news that overwhelming Imperial forces had jumped into every system in the Vincennes Zone.

As they arrived in each system, the Imperial ships broadcast an announcement that they were restoring order in the name of the Empress 0150 and added that they "thanked the colonial navy of Vincennes for its assistance in preserving the peace during the recent upheavals – a service that happily is no longer required." In most cases the Vincennien commanders took the hint and either jumped out straight away, or surrendered their ships. Only in Sarden/Deneb (1424) did the local Vincennien fleet resist. It was almost completely destroyed, although at a high cost in Imperial lives and ships. The survivors were condemned for treason against the Imperium, although by the Empress' intervention their sentence was commuted from death to exile. The "Battle of Sarden" has since gone down in Vincennien popular history as a glorious fight against impossible odds, fought for the honour of the flag – the truth was less romantic, involving certain unwholesome activities by the local commander's staff that he was afraid would come to light once Imperial control over the system was re-established.

The Polite Occupation

With the Zone dissolved (although in fact the Empress never formally admitted that it had ever existed – and most Imperial histories of the period omit any mention of it) Arbellatra quickly strengthened Imperial control of the region. Most of the Vincennes navy was handed over to the local defence fleets of the surrounding worlds, filled out by Imperial Navy reservists until the worlds could train enough native crewmen to man the ships. Armand, now a bedridden and broken invalid, could only watch as Imperial inspectors dismantled his war machine, demilitarised his ships, and forced the sale of his armaments industry to their friends in the megacorps, who converted most of the industrial plant to civilian applications. He died shortly thereafter.

The "polite occupation," as Vincenniens named it, lasted some 60 years. Although Vincennes nominally kept its privileges and status within the Imperium, suspicious Imperial nobles and officials kept a close eye on every activity of the government – making it plain that any return to military adventurism would not be tolerated. Frequent "courtesy visits" by units of the Imperial Navy and Marines reinforced the message. This period came to a gradual end as the growing tensions between Solomani and Vilani factions in the Imperium reached crisis point and redirected attentions corewards. While this infighting led to fears that Vilani resistance on Paven would be rekindled, these were largely unfounded – although in 695 the Imperial authorities did allow the Vincennes Crown to strengthen its military garrisons on Paven. This is generally regarded as marking the point where the strict demilitarisation of the Empire was relaxed.

The Vincennes economic miracle 696 - 1120

The Flying Cities

During the following centuries, relations between the Imperium and Vincennes were normalised. Having learned their lesson, the planet's Emperors avoided any suggestion of interstellar adventurism, and concentrated their efforts on Vincennes' industrial development. These were good years for the world, as it advanced rapidly in technology and wealth.

In a deliberate homage to Arbellatra's Imperial Palace, in 710 the royal family financed the construction of the city of Blish. This vast spherical arcology was suspended in the air by counter-gravity generators and offered a home to 700,000 people (later modifications would increase that number to a million, as well as giving the city thrusters to allow it to move to and from orbit). While Blish relied heavily on imported technology, the government encouraged local companies to invest in facilities to allow construction of similar cities entirely from local resources. The immense research and development effort needed to construct the flying cities, as well as the awe-inspiring manufacturing plants needed to produce the parts, had the desired effect. Vincennes leaped forward in technological capacity and became the Domain's principal supplier of components for large-scale construction projects -- from arcologies to space habitats as well as CG platforms of all kinds. The biotechnological and pharmaceutical industries also prospered, as did the production of vehicles and consumer goods.

By deliberate policy, the Crown used every available means to encourage local companies into these growth industries, rather than rely on foreign investment. The domination of Vincennes' shipbuilding industry by the Imperial megacorporations, as a result of the Civil War, was a cause of much resentment on the world: and the government did everything in its power to limit or even roll back this off-world involvement.

Social Division and the Formation of Leresif

Since space on the flying cities was naturally at a premium, they tended to be used for high-value export industries and as living quarters for the better-off section of the community, including the nobility and the rapidly expanding middle class. This led to a growing social division between city-dwellers and arcology-dwellers. The government had originally planned to move the entire population to flying cities, but sheer logistics made this impractical. Instead, during this period the population and number of arcologies grew to the extent that an almost-continuous band of settlement right around the continent developed. This megalopolis became known as "Leresif" (from an old word for a coral reef).

However, the growing unpopularity of Leresif as a place to live compared to the glamorous new cities led to it becoming a sink for the unwanted, the failures and the losers of society. While this may be something of an exaggeration – even today, there are plenty of successful businesses and prosperous families in Leresif – the stereotype grew until it became a self-fulfilling prophecy. Anybody with the drive to do well in life saw it as their primary goal to get onto a city, and failure to "escape" from Leresif might destroy their self-confidence forever.

Tourism, Folklore, Traditional Music, Exotic Food, and Cannibalism (allegedly)

An unforeseen benefit of the flying cities was the growth of the tourist trade, as the Domain's wealthier inhabitants came to see these technological marvels and participate in the gilded life of Vincennes' bright young things. While the early cities were functional in shape and design, later ones became increasingly esoteric, adventurous and striking in appearance – in order both to attract visitors and to instil local pride in their inhabitants (and of course to make a reputation for the architects).

Even Paven began to benefit from tourism, as adventurous travellers discovered its ancient historical palaces and cathedrals (some dating back to the Rule of Man and the Long Night) and savoured its rich artistic treasures. Some even dared to experience the local Vilani peasant culture, with its undertones of danger and rebellion (and quaint folkloric customs, traditional music and distinctive French-Vilani cuisine). If a few unwary travellers were robbed of all their possessions, held for ransom, or simply disappeared (and no, the rumours of ritual cannibalism have never been proven), that simply added to the excitement.

Economic Strength, Technological Progress

As a consequence of this economic boom, Vincennes developed a strong trade surplus. Demand for Vincennien products -- be they high-tech manufactured items or consumer goods -- far outstripped supply; and the megacorporations found themselves in the almost unimaginable situation where their CrImps were actually less valuable than the local Vincennien currency. During the late 9th and early 10th centuries, Emperor Albert II, Empress Elisabeth III, and Emperor Jean exploited this situation to gradually buy out the controlling stakes held by the megacorps in Vincennes' economy. Instead, they encouraged the setting-up of joint venture schemes, which gave the off-world companies a foothold in Vincennes' economy but allowed the local partners to call the shots. The Vincennien Crown also offered serious tax incentives for research and development, encouraging companies to set up test facilities and laboratories on the planet or elsewhere in the system. The result of this was that Vincennes was recognised by the IISS as having achieved TL 15 in 912, almost a century before the Imperium officially reached that tech level. The Second Survey labelled the

world as "incipient TL 16" and that was in turn made official in 1087. Vincennes saw a massive and sustained growth in population during this period, far in excess of Imperial norms, and mostly from economic migrants come to work in the world's thriving industries.

The Perez Scandal of 1025

In general, Vincennes played the role of loyal Imperial world during this period, although its interpretation of the Imperium's best interests often differed from that of the higher nobility. The exception was the notorious Perez scandal of 1025. In 952, the long-established and venerable Vincennien corporation BTV patented Reve 3, a potent psychoactive compound. Users reported full-sensation hallucinations of remarkable power and clarity in which their deepest-held desires were fulfilled. Physical side effects were minimal; although the drug was addictive, this addiction was curable using TL 15 medicine. The only downside was that a tiny minority of users reported strange experiences in which they felt trapped, and driven to perform bizarre actions against their will - almost as if they were caught in someone else's fantasy.

Naturally, Reve 3 quickly became immensely popular on Vincennes, and on other worlds in the sector which either permitted recreational drug use or couldn't prevent it being imported. The drug also came into widespread medical use as a psychology tool. BTV's share value soared, and many other corporations rushed to produce their own versions of the compound (BTV's IP lawyers were kept busy that decade). It eventually emerged that the main ingredient of the drug was a natural substance extracted from the brainstems of *ndiki*, a semi-aquatic race of carnivore trappers found on the world of Perez/Deneb (1221) (the ndiki were communal creatures which jointly built structures similar to beaver dams in Perez's many watercourses to trap their prey). A race then ensued among the corporations to acquire breeding populations of ndiki. By 975 the species was effectively extinct in the wild, as the entire population was rounded up into vast corporate factory farms.

This quickly became a cause celebre among environmentalists in the Domain, especially after it emerged that the process used to extract the raw Reve 3 caused extreme pain to the animal concerned. Demonstrations, boycotts and pickets outside the offices of BTV and the companies selling similar ndiki-derived drugs became frequent. However, the situation leaped into wider public awareness in 1002 with the publication of a best-selling book claiming that the ndiki were sophonts. This was based on a study of journals and travellers' tales from the initial settlement of Perez, describing the tool-using and problem-solving abilities of the ndiki and the remarkable level of cooperation they showed in their building and hunting activities. Of course, BTV strongly denied the claims and produced evidence purporting to prove that ndiki were mere unintelligent animals. In 1009 they even provided two sample creatures to the University of Deneb for independent study, which appeared to prove the company's point.

However, the controversy refused to go away: the secrecy and high security with which the corporations guarded their Perez facilities fuelled numerous conspiracy theories.

In 1025, the scandal broke in full force. In that year, an otherwise unidentified group of people broke into BTV's compound and captured several dozen ndiki as well as copies of BTV's corporate records dating back 75 years. These were handed over to the IISS base on Northammon/Deneb (0921). Tests quickly proved beyond any doubt that the ndiki were indeed sentient beings. Worse, BTV had known this all along and deliberately concealed it -- the two ndiki handed over for study in 1009 had been chosen because they were congenitally subnormal. The implications were shattering: Imperial citizens had been deliberately enslaving and torturing to death intelligent beings in order to produce and sell an addictive drug!

As BTV's share value went into freefall and millions of ex-customers launched legal suits against the company, the Imperial Ministry of Justice set up a full scale investigation. The legal ramifications went deep into Vincennien society, because the company's board of directors included many prominent nobles -- and even the royal family was implicated. Empress Colette IV managed to escape actual prosecution herself, but abdicated the throne in disgrace in favour of her young son. Two of her cousins were among the Vincennes notables to be tried and found guilty of conspiracy to commit acts of slavery and genocide. BTV itself was broken up and its remaining assets sold off, while the megacorporations quietly disowned their subsidiaries on Perez and threw them to the MoJ's wolves. On Perez, the IISS set up a programme to close down the farms, return the ndiki to their natural environments, and assist their development. The planet was interdicted to prevent further exploitation of the native sophonts: this Red Zone was lifted in 1063 but the ndiki remain a protected species under Imperial law.

The Fifth Frontier War

In 1107, the Fifth Frontier War broke out. Keen to prove his loyalty (and win a massive government contract for Vincennes) Emperor Pierre III offered to construct and equip an entire new subsector fleet for the Imperial Navy at TL 16. He pointed out the tremendous technological superiority this would give the Imperium over its Zhodani opponents. However, Sector Duke Lagaashiga turned down the offer. The official reason was the need for compatibility between Imperial forces and the difficulties of maintaining TL 16 equipment with standard Navy facilities and technicians. The real reason was that the Duke feared the undue influence Vincennes would gain if the local Imperial Navy fleet was entirely dependent for spares, refits, and trained staff on a single world in his sector. Pierre accepted the decision, but still ordered the building of a TL 16 CruRon for

his planetary navy as a technology demonstration (and, effectively, a way of saying to the Navy "nyah nyah nyah, look what you're missing!").

More practically, the war did see an expansion of Vincennes' industry to produce not entire ships, but selected advanced-technology systems that could be retrofitted into existing vessels. For example, Vincennes is currently the Domain's leading exporter of black globe generators. Immigration to Vincennes also reached a new peak during this period, as individuals and companies relocated away from the war-torn Spinward Marches.

Vincennes Today... and Tomorrow

As of today, Vincennes is a confident and expanding society. Having advanced by two tech levels in as many centuries, the people are now eagerly looking forward to the day when they will be officially recognised as having attained TL 17. Vincennes' government is fond of drawing parallels with Terra in the third millennium pre-Imperium, as a comparable example of rapid technological and economic development. The unanswered question is: will the rest of the Imperium follow them onwards into the future, or fall back into stagnation and decay? And if the Imperium does falter, could the Vincenniens then go on to emulate their Terran forbears in another, and far more dramatic way? Nobody says it aloud; but in their hearts, you can tell that many Vincenniens believe it.

Law level: 6
Control Rating: 4 (controlled)

The watchword of the Vincennes legal system is "to protect the common welfare". As a result, any activities which might threaten the physical structure of the cities or public order are dealt with harshly. Subversive, treasonous or rebellious acts receive the same treatment. Possession of firearms is strictly controlled.

However, matters which are seen as the concern of the private individual or organization are rarely legislated against. The Vincennes government sees no need to restrict its citizens' consumption of sex (between consenting sophonts of legal age for their species), drugs (as long as intoxicated individuals don't pose a threat to others or to the city) or indeed rock'n'roll (as long as it avoids openly subversive lyrics). Offences such as rioting, public brawling, etc are theoretically strictly punished, but the police often turn a blind eye – especially in licensed entertainment districts and on weekends – as long as the participants avoid damage to the city structure and to innocent foreign tourists. Freedom of speech is guaranteed by law, as long as certain subjects are avoided (such as criticism of the Imperium and its policies; although careful criticism of government ministers – as distinct from the Emperor himself – is usually permitted).

Equally, the State imposes few limitations on the business practices of local corporations, except as required by public opinion or Imperial law, or the need to cement royal control of an industry. In particular, Vincennes' lax attitude to enforcing intellectual property rights and Imperial patent law is a constant source of tension with offworld megacorporations. They regularly condemn Vincennes as a haven for intellectual property piracy, although their own subsidiaries conducting research on the planet are often just as implicated.

The Vincennes Police Service is generally efficient and non-corrupt, although it does tend to show favouritism to the wealthy and powerful. Vincennien nobles can usually get away with the most, followed by wealthy off-worlders, citizens of the flying cities, ordinary off-worlders, then at the bottom of the pile the denizens submerged cities.

In addition, mention must be made of the Intendants. As described under Government, these are direct appointees of the Crown who serve as high-ranking judges in the courts as well as in various other senior civil service roles. They have full authority to carry out legal investigations, either by themselves or through their appointed agents, and have wide powers to subpoena witnesses and confiscate documents. They are accountable only

to the Crown, and are widely feared – being the closest Vincennes gets to a secret police service.

Trials are held before a panel of magistrates, who will be chaired by an Intendant in the case of serious crimes. There is no jury system on Vincennes – the judges are required to determine guilt or innocence as well as decide sentence. They may also question witnesses directly, or order a trial to be postponed while further investigations are made.

Vincennes does not impose the death penalty. The usual reason advanced is the pragmatic one that criminals should be forced to pay back society for their crimes: punishments therefore normally involve fines for lesser offences and penal servitude for greater. Traditionally, this servitude was to work in Vincennes' seabed mines or in the penal colony. Occasionally criminals will be offered a remission of their sentence if they agree to serve as test subjects in the research programmes of Vincennes' biotechnology companies. (This is an entirely voluntary choice on their part – at least, that's what the Vincennes government tells Imperial inspectors).