

TRAVELLER[®]

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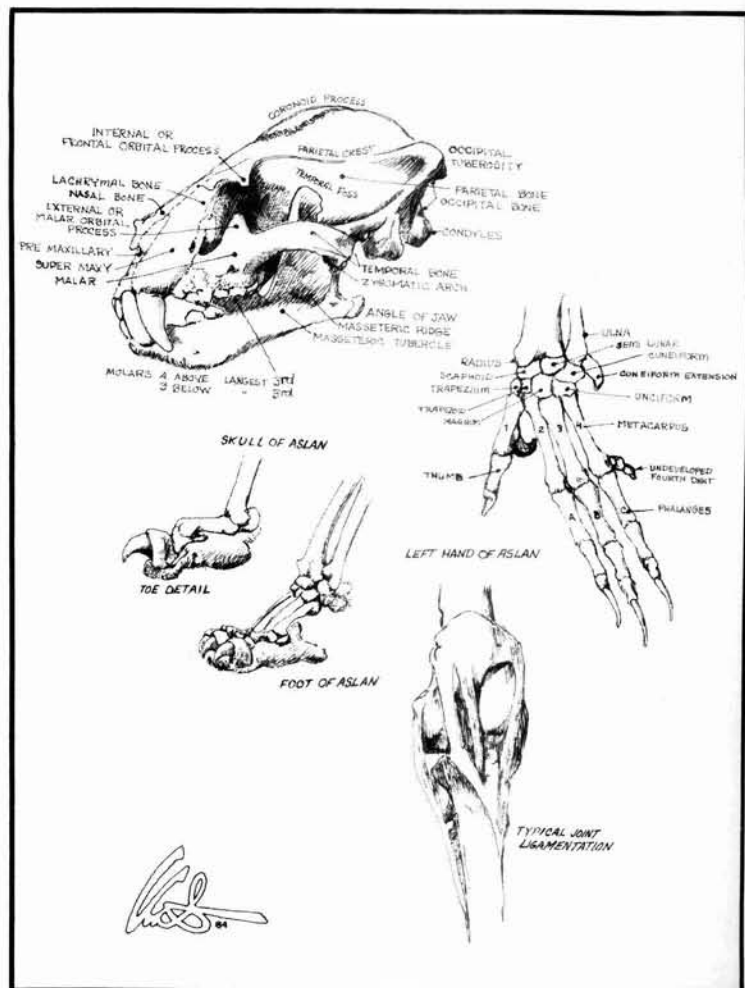
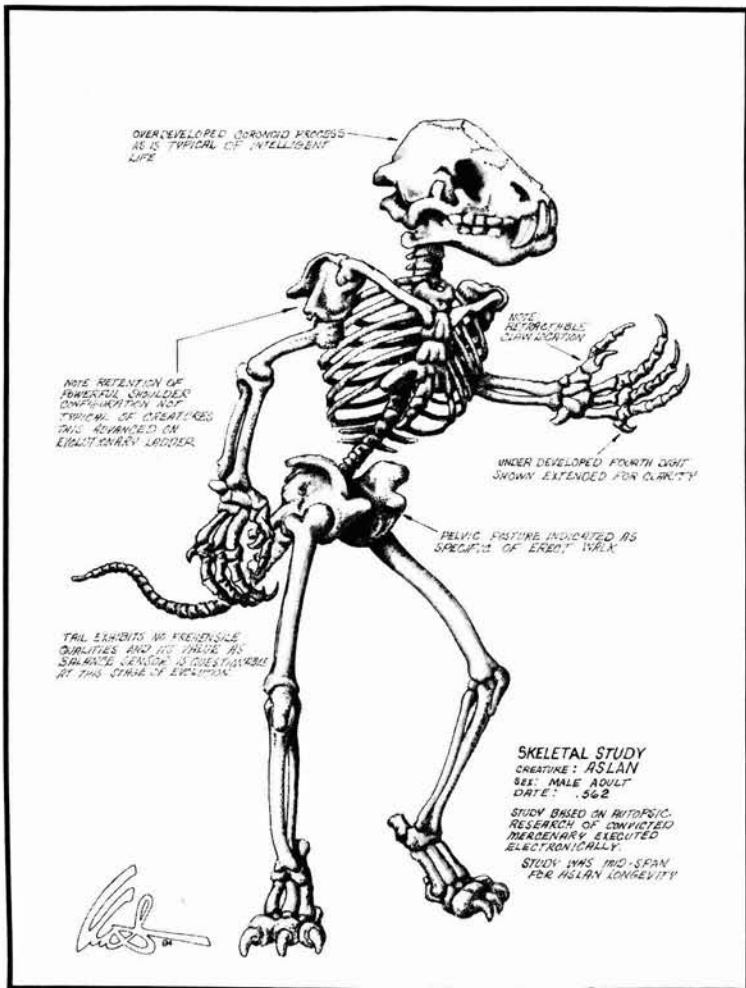
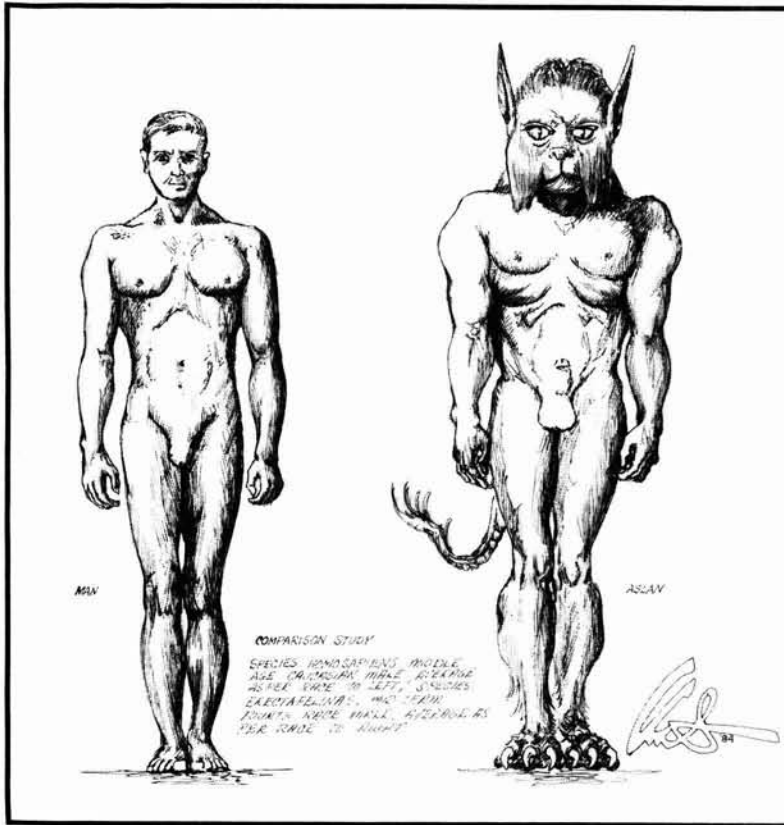
Alien Module 1



Adventure and Intrigue with a Proud Warrior Race

Aslan

Game Designers' Workshop



Aslan

Humanity is only one of thousands of life forms which have chosen intelligence as their way of dealing with the universe. Of those thousands, there are six major intelligent races. Each progressed technologically to the point of inventing jump drive, and then expanded into space with that technology, colonizing and settling vast territories. Uncounted other races have eagerly embraced jump technology when it was given to them and used it in similar pursuits.

The six *Major Races* claim for themselves a higher status than the so-called minor races, and since most of the major races are dominant within known space, the claim has some *de facto* merit. Although there is no absolute agreement as to exactly which six are the major races, common usage accepts the Vargr, the K'kree, the Hivers, the Droyne, Humaniti (lumping the Vilani, Solomani, and Zhodani branches of the human race into one), and the latest on the scene— the Aslan.

The Aslan, the youngest of the major races, are the subject of this **Traveller** module. With it, the race can be incorporated into any and all aspects of **Traveller**. Whether the Aslan are to be used as player characters, non-player characters, patrons, opponents, or just as a backdrop against which adventures may take place, this module provides the referee and the players with sufficient information to deal with the Aslan, both as individuals and as a fully visible society.

Aliens in Traveller: Basic **Traveller** deals with characters as humans within an Imperial society which is fairly comprehensible to most players. Outside that society, aliens are different in culture as well as physiology, and a careful presentation of what shapes an alien's character is necessary if players are to deal with or role-play those aliens.

THIS MODULE

This booklet presents one alien race— the *Aslan*— and deals with it in depth. Both physical and psychological differences are examined, and their bearing on specific game rules is explained. Using this material, players and referees alike may confidently make use of the Aslan in any **Traveller** adventure or campaign.

Usability: This module requires a **Traveller** rules set in order to be played. There are several rules sets available, any one of which will serve. It is specifically designed as a companion to *Starter Traveller*, and is oriented toward that rules set. However, this module may be used in conjunction with any **Traveller** rules: *The Traveller Book*, *Basic Traveller*, *Deluxe Traveller*, or of course, *Starter*.

Advanced character generation systems provided for the Aslan Space and Military services are compatible with **Traveller Book 4**, *Mercenary*, and **Book 5**, *High Guard*. Advanced Aslan character generation requires that you have these two books.

Compatibility: **Traveller** players can find any number of activities which include or deal with Aslan, whether inside the Imperium, or beyond its borders. The Aslan Hierate (their empire) is located spinward and rimward of the Imperium. The Aslan sector map shows the sectors of the Hierate in relation to the Imperium.

Where the Imperium and the Hierate touch, humans and Aslan

frequently encounter each other. Aslan worlds under Imperial rule are found scattered up to 40 parsecs inside the Imperial border. Independent Aslan worlds are found throughout the region spinward and rimward of the Imperium. Adventurers in the Spinward Marches can venture rimward through the Trojan Reach to the Aslan colonies in that sector, and then further across the Aslan-controlled Great Rift into the Hierate itself. Adventurers in the Solomani Rim can venture through Solomani territory to l'aheako (Dark Nebula) sector, which holds the Aslan homeworld of Kusyu.

The adventure provided in this module envisions an expedition by humans starting from the Spinward Marches and proceeding through the Hierate on a quest with an Aslan patron. Ultimately the players can role-play Aslan characters to test their ability to absorb and understand Aslan culture. Materials in this module allow both the referee and the players to enjoy the adventure. Even if the adventure is not played out, the information in it will help players and referees better understand the workings of Aslan society.

Contents: This module consists of four parts— the cover, the rules, the charts, and the adventure.

The inside of the *cover* has a sector map showing Aslan territory and provides an idea of its size and power.

The *rules* provide the changes and alterations to the **Traveller** rules which are necessary for Aslan characters and situations.

The *charts* reiterate the material in the rules and present it in a format designed for quick reference.

The *adventure* (at the back of this module) takes the travellers deep into Aslan territory on a quest which allows interaction with the Aslan in depth.

BASIC FACTS

The following basic facts, although well known in the **Traveller** universe, are repeated here for convenience and clarity.

The Imperium: The Third Imperium, established over eleven hundred years ago, is a human-dominated interstellar empire encompassing more than 11,000 worlds in about 21 sectors. It is a neighbor of the Aslan Hierate, and also contains a significant (more than 3%) Aslan population.

The Aslan Hierate: The Hierate is that region of space controlled by the Aslan race. Due to the nature of Aslan government, it is a rather loose confederation of worlds with little central direction. The binding force of the Hierate is less that of government or nationalism,

Aslan

Traveller Alien Module One

An alien race for use with **Traveller**.

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and more that of common heritage, culture, and tradition.

The Hierate includes more than 4,000 clans spread across about 7,000 worlds in 17 sectors.

The Solomani Confederation: Another human-dominated interstellar community, the Solomani Confederation borders on the Hierate and has a long history of rivalry and enmity with Aslan worlds on the Hierate frontiers.

The Solomani Confederation covers about 2,400 worlds in six sectors. It claims nearly a thousand more worlds in Imperial, Aslan, and neutral space.

TIME-KEEPING AND OTHER STANDARDS

In any **Traveller** activity, there is a need to keep track of time and its passage. The generally accepted **Traveller** method uses Imperial standards. The Aslan have their own units of measuring time.

Imperial Standard: Timekeeping in the Imperium is based on the standard day, composed of 24 standard hours. Clocks and watches count time using standard hours, minutes, and seconds.

Aslan Standard: Aslan timekeeping is based on the rotational period of their homeworld, Kusyu. This period, the *eakhau* (day), is equivalent to just over 36 standard hours. The timekeeping table shows the basic Aslan units of time, their value in the next lower Aslan unit, and their Imperial equivalents. Referees and players are encouraged to adopt Aslan timekeeping practices where appropriate for added atmosphere and interest.

ASLAN TIMEKEEPING

Period	Equivalent	Translation	Imperial Value
ftahea	212.2 eakhau	Aslan year	320 days
eakhau	16. tekhaao	Aslan day	36 hours
tekhaao	8. khtauaao	Aslan hour	137 minutes
khtauaao	64. areiaao	period	17 minutes
areiaao	8. uealaaao	sprint	16 seconds
uealaaao	–	Aslan second	1.988 seconds

Aslan Calendar: The Aslan calendar is based on the revolution of Kusyu around Tyeyo, its star. The Aslan year (*ftahea*) is about 320 standard days, or about 212.2 eakhau long. The same calendar is used on most Hierate worlds.

There are no subdivisions in the Aslan calendar: each day has a unique name. For game purposes, each eakhau is consecutively numbered from 1 to 212, much like the Imperial calendar. Every five years, a 213th day is added to keep the calendar in sync.

The Aslan calendar takes as its starting point the first selection of the *Tlaukhu* as supreme council on Kusyu about 3,200 years ago (–2083 Imperial). The current Aslan date 3644 corresponds to the Imperial date 1111.

Money: For simplicity's sake, Aslan currency is not considered in this module. All prices are given in standard Imperial credits. Prices tend to be slightly higher for Aslan goods (reflecting, in part, an unfavorable exchange rate), but the details of economics are omitted from consideration in the scope of this module.

REFEREE'S NOTES

This module is intended to be as complete as possible. The materials in it supplement the basic **Traveller** rules, and no other rules or published materials are necessary in order to use the module or its scenarios. At the same time, materials presented in this module expand on a variety of **Traveller** materials, and they can be used to greater advantage in Aslan situations when used in conjunction with this module.

Other Necessary Material: In addition to **Traveller** and this module, both players and referee will require ordinary accessories such as paper, pens, pencils, dice, graph paper, and, perhaps a calculator.

Other Desirable Materials: The entire line of **Traveller** products elaborates and expands on the universe of the future. All can be used in conjunction with this module. Especially useful items include:

Supplement 8, Library Data (A-M): Gives encyclopedic entries on

a variety of topics that round out the **Traveller** universe.

Supplement 11, Library Data (N-Z): Completes the encyclopedic presentation of **Traveller** background information.

Game 1, Mayday: Presents a boardgame version of personal combat for ship to ship combat.

Game 2, Snapshot: Presents a boardgame version of personal combat for shipboard conflicts.

Book 4, Mercenary: Presents advanced character generation for members of the Army and Marines. In addition to elaborating on what is presented in some of character generation, it details advanced military hardware.

Book 5, High Guard: Presents advanced character generation for members of the Navy. In addition to elaborating on the Navy, it handles the construction of large naval spacecraft.

Administering this Module: Much of this module is background on the Aslan and their culture. Based on this culture, this module also provides rules changes and additions for **Traveller** to allow the implementation of Aslan within the game. Finally, the adventure illustrates how the rules and background work with an Aslan setting. It should be run as any **Traveller** adventure is run, with the referee administering events and guiding the adventurers (without actually making decisions for them) along a course that will lead to the most enjoyable game. This may require improvisation, interpolation, or unplanned interaction using the **Traveller** rules and material in this module as a basis, but requiring creative input from the referee as well.

Player Materials: Ultimately, players and referees will use this module as a reference on Aslan. Everyone should have free access to the rules material in this module; it is as much a part of the **Traveller** rules as anything in the basic set. The adventure is secret, however, until it is over. Maps can be made available as required for the players' information.

The Aslan Race

The Aslan are a race of intelligent beings; their starfaring culture is the youngest of all the major races, having had star flight for less than 3,200 years. Despite their youth, their spread through space has been rapid, driven by the instinctive territorial desires which are central to the makeup of the Aslan male.

ASLAN PHYSIOLOGY

Aslan are descended from four-limbed carnivorous pouncer stock which was originally near the top of the food chain in the forests of Kusyu (Kilrai' 0406 A876986-E). About 1.8 million years ago, Kusyu's climate shifted, with the result that the extensive forests of Tafahti (Kusyu's largest continent) almost completely disappeared. As the forests dwindled, so did the small fauna upon which the Aslan had preyed, forcing them to venture out into the expanding grassland plains. The large grazing animals in these regions were too much for a lone Aslan to kill, and they began hunting in *ahriy* (prides) of several families. The strongest male became the leader, and his family received the best parts of kills, choice sleeping places, and first drink at any waterhole.

The Aslan which has evolved from those beginnings is, like humans, an upright biped averaging 2 meters in height and 100 kg in weight. There are two sexes: male and female, of which the most notable external difference is the male's increased size and more impressive mane. Females outnumber males by a ratio of 3:1.

The Aslan hand has three fingers opposing one medially-placed thumb, and all have retractable claws. In addition, Aslan have a single highly specialized claw under each thumb; this dewclaw folds back jack-knife fashion into a horny covering in the base of the thumb and palm. The presence of these claws and the general nature of their body structure make the Aslan somewhat clumsy by comparison with humans, but what they lack in dexterity they make up for in strength and endurance.

Aslan sleep about one-third of the time: shaped by their

homeworld's rotation period, their sleeping time is roughly 10 to 11 hours (one-third of Kusyu's 32-hour day). Like humans, lack of sleep degrades their abilities drastically.

True to their pouncer ancestry, Aslan are capable of short bursts of speed somewhat greater than that manageable by humans. They also have slightly superior hearing and night vision. Otherwise, they are one of the most human-like of all alien races, excepting, of course, the Vargr (who are, after all, genetically-altered mammalian stock originally from Earth).

Early Terran explorers regarded the Aslan as "lion-like," and the simile has stuck ever since, although the Aslan bear little resemblance to Terrestrial lions. Nonetheless, this early misnomer has influenced a great deal of human thinking about the Aslan, including terminology (the use of *pride* to translate *ahriy*, for instance) and ascribed behavior—which is not at all leonine. The derivation of the word *Aslan* is unknown, but is sometimes credited to human explorers who first contacted the race.

HISTORY

From the earliest days when they were hunters on Kusyu's grassland plains, the Aslan have had a curious dichotomy in their social organization. Females were traditionally responsible for provisions and improvement of life, while males existed largely for defense and war. The early hunts were conducted by females, and females are generally credited as the innovators in the areas of toolmaking, animal husbandry, and eventually, agriculture (developed to support herds of livestock, not for direct consumption). Males adopted female innovations reluctantly, but it was the female of the species who strived always to improve the Aslan way of life.

The Aslan eventually hunted to virtual extinction most of the large carnivores which threatened them on Tafahti. At this point, fire, metalworking, agriculture, and many other developments had brought the Aslan to the verge of civilization, and the security they now enjoyed permitted development of a number of civilized communities on Tafahti.

The territorial instincts of the Aslan male made the general trend of Aslan social development a feudal one. Families formed into prides, and prides formed into clans under the leadership of a dominant pride. Clans practiced a variety of semi-feudal procedures of fiefdom and vassalage which led to the development of a few very powerful clans, but this was generally the limit of social organization in most Aslan civilizations. Although tradition and ritual gradually evolved to curb the aggressive male character, wars were common as clans sought greater power or greater territory, and as population pressure increased on Kusyu, wars grew both more common and more intense.

Kusyu barely escaped a global conflict of devastating proportions, saved by two developments which took place at about the same time. First, the Aslan instituted their Hierate—an agreement on the part of the 29 pre-eminent clans to meet and discuss their differences on a regular basis, replacing the previous procedures which dealt with each problem on a case-by-case emergency basis. This helped ease rivalries and pressures, although it did not eliminate them, and under the new Hierate system there grew up an increasing formality in warfare (the concept of highly limited wars with outside *referees* was introduced at this time).

The quasi-government was clumsy at best, and probably would not have withstood the test of time if not for the second great innovation—the invention of jump drive. About 96 Aslan (– 1999 Imperial), barely a century after the *Tlaukhu* came into being (the exact date and circumstances of the discovery remain shrouded in mystery); the two most powerful clans (the Yerlyariuwo and the Khaukheairl) cooperated to an unprecedented degree to produce a star drive. It opened the stars to the Aslan race.

Star travel was the ideal way to satisfy the territorial drives of the race. At first expansion was slow, limited by the gradual development of jump technology. But every new planet discovered



opened new territories for colonization. The era of 96 to 2100 Aslan (approximately – 1999 to – 242 Imperial) was an era of expansion and cultural flowering not unlike Earth's Ages of Discovery (1450 to 1600 AD, and 2100 to 2300 AD).

Luckily, the Aslan had come on the scene during the Long Night (342 to 2323 Aslan; – 1776 to – 30 Imperial) in human space: the era between the Second and Third Imperiums in which humaniti was splintered into many rival states. As a result, the Aslan never confronted any human state at a time when it was significantly stronger than an Aslan clan. This was important, for the clans of the Hierate were never (and are not now) capable of acting in concert as a human empire could; clans each conduct wars on their own, sometimes with assistance of others, sometimes without, but never with a sense of central purpose or unity. Some human worlds accepted Aslan domination as a superior alternative to the chaos of the Long Night, and now remain within the Hierate with human or mixed human and Aslan population embracing Aslan culture and society. Other worlds resisted, and sporadic warfare characterized the Aslan Border Wars (1100 to 2810 Aslan; – 1120 to 380 Imperial) which lasted until the Third Imperium appeared on the scene. The *Peace of Ftahlr* (2810 Aslan) established much of Aeitle Sakh (Reaver's Deep) sector as a buffer zone between Aslan and Imperial spheres of influence; the population in the buffer zone was left independent of both interstellar communities.

Recent Troubles: Recently, the Aslan have had a number of confrontations with the Solomani Confederation. Following the inconclusive end of the Solomani Rim War (3505 to 3519 Aslan; 990 to 1002 Imperial), the Imperium's strength effectively prohibited Solomani expansion in that direction; naturally enough, Solomani attention has since turned to other frontier areas, including the Aslan territories. Fortunately for the Aslan, the encounters have primarily been between the Solomani and either the Yerlyariuwo or the Khaukheairl, both clans strong enough to hold their own with the Solomani. Tensions have risen to near-war levels, but full-scale belligerency appears unlikely.

SOCIETY

The Aslan have long been a warrior race; they are noble and proud, devoted to those in authority above them and responsible for those who owe fealty from below. Aslan society is based on the family and its relationships.

Family Structures: An individual Aslan is usually a member of a family (*ekho*) of from 2 to 12 persons under a patriarchal leader.

This family will generally include the male family head, one or more wives, plus children and various blood relatives of the leader (unmarried brothers and sisters, aged surviving parents no longer maintaining separate families, adopted orphans of blood relatives). Several families combine into a pride (*ahriy*), with one family dominant. The leader of that family is also the leader of the pride. Other families owe him and his family their fealty. A number of prides form a clan (*huiha*), with one pride dominant. Again, prides in the clan owe fealty to the clan's leader. The clan's leader is expected, in turn, to protect and provide for members of the clan, settling disputes between prides within the clan, and administering his holdings wisely and well.

Clans may, in turn, owe fealty to more powerful clans, particularly where blood relationships exist. The *Tlaukhu* consists of the 29 pre-eminent Aslan clans, the strongest within the Hierate; many other clans owe them fealty, either directly or through a chain of other clans. Overall, however, clans owing fealty to one of the *Tlaukhu* are in the minority; most clans are independent and function accordingly.

Duelling: Aslan pride makes them a touchy race, and it is quite easy for Aslan to give or take offense. This behavior originated in the struggles for dominance within families and prides, and remains a basic part of the Aslan personality. Over the centuries, Aslan touchiness has grown formal and extremely ritualized; this rigid pattern of behavior has been necessary to reduce conflict and injury in the settlement of personal disputes. Non-Aslan who do not understand these ritual forms of conduct find it difficult to get along with individual Aslan. For their part, most sophisticated Aslan have learned a certain amount of tolerance towards those who do not fit into the Aslan cultural pattern, but the cultural patterns are deeply ingrained, and offense is still taken from time to time.

Aslan society generally categorizes abrasive, uncultured, or offensive behavior into three classes: *familiarity*, *impoliteness*, and *discourtesy*. Familiarity is the treatment of social superiors as equals; it involves social interaction, extreme friendliness, or condescending treatment by a lower class Aslan toward an upper-class Aslan. Impoliteness stems from a lack of proper education or upbringing; it might include failure to address a social superior by the correct honorifics, failure to respond promptly when addressed, or losing one's temper in public. Discourtesy is a deliberate insult, and springs from contempt, a lack of respect, malice; outward actions may often be perceived by Aslan as discourtesy although not meant to be so by someone alien to Aslan culture. Any of these three behaviors can give offense, and an offended Aslan becomes an enemy. Discourtesy, however, is grounds for duelling.

Duelling is a common way by which insults and slights are resolved, especially if rituals and other tension-relieving forms fail to defuse the problem. Duels follow well-established rituals and are fought to the death only rarely. The rules of conduct and protocols which govern them clearly state what is allowed and not allowed.

A challenge to duel is never made lightly. At the same time, reluctance to challenge is seen in Aslan culture as weakness, a trait few Aslan wish to exhibit. Properly, anyone may challenge at any time. Most challenges are issued in response to discourtesy; elaborate but informal rituals have evolved wherein one party is discourteous and actually gains stature if the other does not reply with a challenge. Much of this behavior seems incomprehensible to individuals not steeped in Aslan culture.

The rituals for duelling, however, are strictly segregated by gender. Males and females never duel; insults and slights by the opposite sex are dismissed with the excuse that males (or females) don't understand female (or male) honor. When a transgression becomes too blatant, too extreme, or too unacceptable, then a member of the insulted Aslan's immediate family (and of the correct sex) will respond to the discourtesy with a challenge.

The barriers against certain duels within a family are almost as strong as those for cross-gender duelling. Children never duel with their parents (which socially includes any adults in their family of

the previous generation, not just their biological parents).

Duels between Aslan take place as personal combat. Combatants use only their hands (and dewclaws); combat continues until one side receives a wound. In the case of grave insult, the fight may continue to unconsciousness for one participant. The winner has his or her honor satisfied; the loser is required by social and ritual standards to apologize (even if he or she was the one originally insulted).

For non-Aslan, one way to gain an Aslan's respect is to be willing to challenge to duel when required, and to duel if challenged. Aslan consider those who do not embrace their culture to be *tahiwihateakhtau* (barbarians). Willingness to behave in the honorable fashion is one indication that one is not a completely ignorant barbarian. Since Aslan especially respect prowess in battle, upholding one's honor in a duel is especially respected.

Feuds: Disputes between families, or between prides, usually take place because of slights, insults, mistreatments, or problems which have not been resolved to both parties' satisfaction. The families may back different scientific theories; one family member may have won a competition which the other family had traditionally won; a family may have rejected a proposed marriage between it and the other family.

Feuds are an intermediate step between duels and wars. Strangely for Aslan society, they are unstructured and lack rituals to control them. If kept at a low level, a feud is a pretext for discourteous behavior and sparks many duels. If allowed to get out of hand, it involves the vassal prides and families of each side and can erupt into war.

Wars: Disputes between clans (usually over ownership, control, or access to land) are, like duels, also highly ritualized. They are resolved through formal clan wars. Like duels, such wars are given highly specific rules (agreed upon by all parties in advance). There are many modes, from ordinary military conflicts to *wars of assassins* to *capture the flag* games in which some token must be removed from an enemy stronghold in order for victory to be won. Unlike duels, most (but not all) clan wars do involve the death of enemy personnel. In some cases (particularly *wars of assassins*), the war may be bloodless, akin to the *counting coup* practices of certain Indian tribes from early Earth history.

Land: A deep-seated territorial instinct causes male Aslan to have an inordinate (from the human point of view) concern for the acquisition and control of land. The ownership of land is a major goal in the lives of most Aslan males. An Aslan's stature is determined by the amount of land he (or her husband) controls, and the amount of land controlled by his family, pride, or clan. The lowest classes in Aslan society are landless, providing the farmers, laborers, craftsmen, and workers essential to the society.

The largest landholds are in the hands of the *Tlaukhu*, and consist of many worlds and parts of worlds. Since holding such an extensive territory is beyond the ability of one Aslan, an extensive network of vassals (usually sons, brothers, or male relatives by marriage) administer it in the clan head's name.

The Aslan concept of nobility springs from landholdings and Aslan social level could originally be correlated with the landholds of the family: any family with a landhold was noble, with higher social level equated to greater landholdings. Today, any Aslan of social level 9+ is considered noble. This does not mean that a noble male himself has land, only that he comes from a family which holds land.

Landholds are passed on from father to son. Originally, sons fought for the right to inherit their father's landholdings; the losers became subordinate to the winner, or left to seek a new landhold for themselves. On large landholds, the losers became vassals to the winner and administered part of the landhold as their own. Primogeniture (the automatic passing of landholds to the eldest son) is a recent cultural innovation, having come into favor about 2300 to 2400 Aslan. Sons who do not inherit are *ihatei* (literally, second sons). With the development of starflight, *ihatei* became the vanguard of Aslan exploration and conquest of space.

