

An evocative setting can really give your Inquisitor campaign an exciting edge. In this article, Gav Thorpe describes how he went about the creation of Karis Cephalon, the setting for the Studio Inquisitor campaign.

CREATING WORLDS

INQUISITOR CAMPAIGN SETTINGS

One of the things that really helps make a campaign work is having a well thought out, consistent setting which grows and changes over the course of the campaign, providing a 'real' environment in which the players' battles are set. Having done a bit of this myself, this is the first in a series of articles in which I'll be explaining how to go about doing just that – creating and running a world. To illustrate what I'm talking about, I will be developing the Imperial world of Karis Cephalon, the setting for our first Studio Inquisitor campaign.

GETTING STARTED

So, what are those basic details you'll need to know? Broadly speaking, you need to think of two things – politics and technology. In the Imperium, the two tend to be related to each other, and generally worlds are categorised by these two factors (see the box opposite for some examples of different Imperial worlds). Of course, Inquisitor being the

game it is, you may even want to set your campaign on a non-Imperial world; don't forget locations such as mining colonies on asteroids, orbital space stations, aboard starships and the like.

Many of the categories listed can be mixed and matched to create more complex environments, which come under the general heading of 'civilised world'. This is what I did for Karis Cephalon – I decided to go for a mix of agriculture, mining and commerce. I didn't want a cardinal world as such, but to create some intrigue and interest I gave the world a heavy Ecclesiarchy tradition, so that while it is actually ruled by an Imperial commander, the Cardinal of Karis Cephalon has a great deal of influence.

Technologically, I went for a fairly standard mix of high-tech and low-tech equipment. I wanted to create the impression that while the citizens of Karis Cephalon had access to certain wonderful advances of science, it was by no means complete. I picture a

world where steam-driven monorails criss-cross the continents on great steel constructions, but smaller combustion engines are not used. Instead, local transport is in the form of horse drawn carts and the like. It is this contradiction of different technologies which is one of the strongest themes of the Warhammer 40,000 universe, and I wanted a world which captured that theme in some very real ways.

PUT IT SOMEWHERE!

Have a look at a map of the Imperium and decide where you want your world to be. A world's location within the Imperium has an effect on many things, including how isolated it is from Terra, how much the Imperial organisations interfere with its running, how important it is considered and so on. A world in the Segmentum Solar, close to Earth, is likely to be old, established and an important part of the Imperium. Whereas a planet on the Eastern Fringe, at the edge of the Astronomicon and far from Terra, will be more of a frontier world, isolated from authority and left to its own devices for much of the time. Its locale will have other influences, such as the proximity of threats such as the Eye of Terror, the Tyranid hive fleets and Ork domains. Also, the position of your world will have some significance when determining its history (which I'll write about in a bit) and its part in major events that have affected the Imperium. This is where a bit of research will come in really handy.

Karis Cephalon is quite close to the centre of the Imperium, on the border between the Segmentum Solar and Segmentum Tempestus. Its location suggests that it's quite an old world, with regular contact with the Imperium, and reasonably close (in galactic terms!) to the spiritually important worlds of Terra, Ophelia and Gathalamor, establishing a reason for the Ecclesiarchy's greater influence in the world's politics. This also places Karis Cephalon quite close to the newly arrived Tyranid hive fleet Leviathan, and the growing Ork Waaagh! centred on Armageddon.



On the barren world of Zarona, two warbands struggle for supremacy.

IMPERIAL WORLD TYPES

AGRI-WORLDS

Agri-worlds are huge farms, geared towards exporting foodstuffs to hive worlds, forge worlds and other non-self-sufficient places. They have a low population density and technology can range from self-managed farming with automated harvesters down to horse and plough level. Agri-worlds don't have a lot of military resource and are often vulnerable to attack. There are few large conurbations, and most of the populace lives in scattered rural communities. Slave labour is often employed in lower tech environments.

DEAD WORLDS

These worlds have minimal, even non-existent, life traces. This results from ecological catastrophe, devastating internecine war, Imperial or alien intervention or no attributable cause. Occasionally a dead world may harbour ancient technology, alien ruins and other sites of interest to the Inquisition, and some may have research stations, exploratory camps or fledgling colonies.

FORGE WORLDS

Forge worlds are the sovereign domains of the Adeptus Mechanicus. They are planet-wide factories and may also serve as a base of operations for one of the Titan Legions. Forge worlds are essential for the supply of arms and armour to the Imperium's combat forces. They are also vast repositories of knowledge, with extensive libraries and archives which would contain much of interest to an Inquisitor. The Adeptus Mechanicus guards this knowledge jealously, though, and outside interference and visitors are not encouraged.



MEDIEVAL WORLDS

These have a technical base just prior to or just after black powder state. Establishment of wide surface cultural and political organisations, for example trade guilds, fiefdoms and such like. Some useful recruiting for Imperial Guard and Adeptus Astartes. As with feral worlds, these planets are vulnerable to attack as they have little central organisation and very crude battlegear.

CARDINAL WORLDS

Cardinal worlds are ruled over by the Ecclesiarchy and act as centres of spiritual and physical power of the Ministorum of Terra. The Ministorum has a great deal of temporal power and resources, and cardinal worlds tend to be well-defended, with a fairly high degree of technology and standard of living. Usually they are governed by a council of Cardinals (hence the name) or perhaps a lone Cardinal acts in the role of Imperial commander.

RESEARCH STATIONS

This category contains a wide variety of locations, including orbital stations, asteroidal emplacements and other major facilities on dead worlds, death worlds or on other planets. Research stations are responsible for a wide variety of research, from animal breeding and domestication to weapons testing and gene engineering. They are also listening and watch posts for planetary and system defence of important worlds.



GARDEN WORLDS

Garden worlds are paradises, with rolling plains, deep forests, impressive mountain ranges and sweeping coastlines. These are havens for Imperial nobles and those with the resources and power as retreats, where they can go hunting, fishing, camping and other such wilderness delights. As you can imagine, these worlds are hotbeds of intrigue and heresy as decadent nobles, rogue traders, Imperial commanders and their like mix together, plotting and scheming as their kind are wont to do...

MINING WORLDS

As agri-worlds are to foodstuffs, mining worlds are to minerals. These are ore-rich planets which export unprocessed minerals and metals for manufacture on forge worlds and hive worlds. They are usually very rough and ready places, full of hardened miners and their equally hardened families. Digging under mountains often turns up strange artefacts, ancient fossilised remains and other material that would grab an Inquisitor's interest.

DEATH WORLDS

These are planets which are too dangerous to support widespread human settlement. They vary a great deal in type. Typical worlds may be world-wide jungles which harbour man-eating plants and carnivorous animals, or barren rockscapes strewn with volcanoes and wracked by nuclear storms. These worlds are near-impossible to colonise but must be properly explored, which necessitates the provision of outposts and other facilities. Some harbour rich mineral, vegetable, animal or gaseous resources.



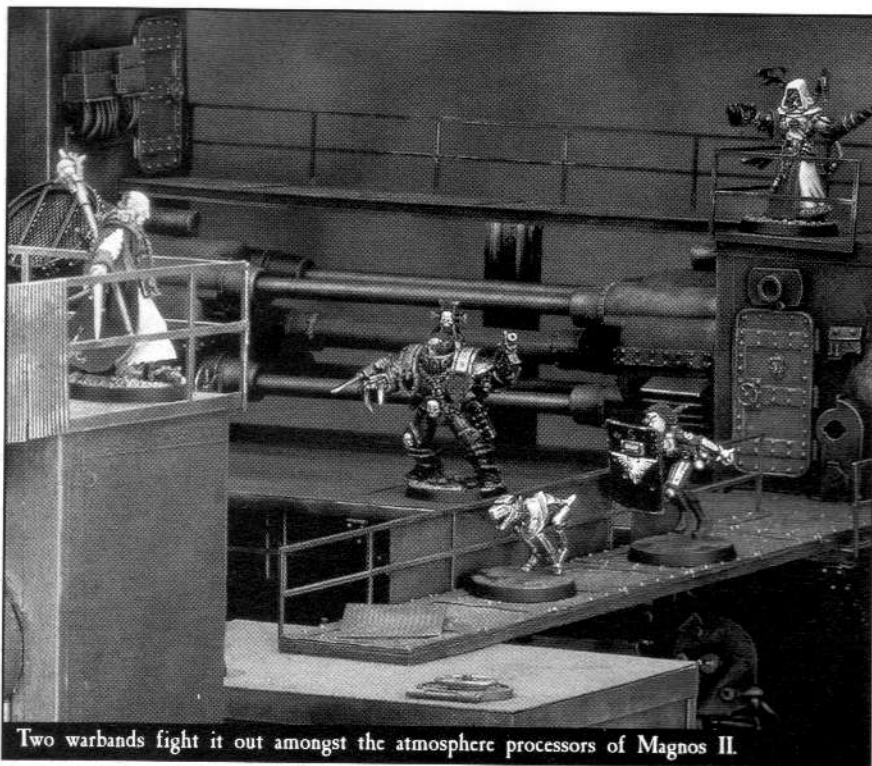
FERAL WORLDS

Feral worlds have a technological state which is considerably pre-black powder, even pre-Bronze or Stone age in the most backward cases. Sometimes they are a good source of Imperial Guard and Adeptus Astartes recruits. The Imperial commander is often distant, in orbit usually, with infrequent surface forays to establish purges of psychic talent and mutation. Warrior cults and widespread religious heresy in general are common amongst feral worlders, and Imperial commanders of such planets are frequently under suspicion of 'going native'.

HIVE WORLDS

The bulk of a hive world's surface is generally inhospitable, even deadly, to human life after centuries of pollution. Massive urban conglomerations called Hives, many miles in height, are the principle population centres. Factory, mining and atmosphere processing are the main industries. There is a high import/export ratio, particularly of foodstuffs and fresh water incoming, with machinery and war material outgoing.





Two warbands fight it out amongst the atmosphere processors of Magnos II.

POLITICAL ORGANISATION

How is your world ruled? Does it have a sole Imperial commander (this is usually the case) or some kind of committee? Does the title pass by hereditary right or is there some form of election system? What other

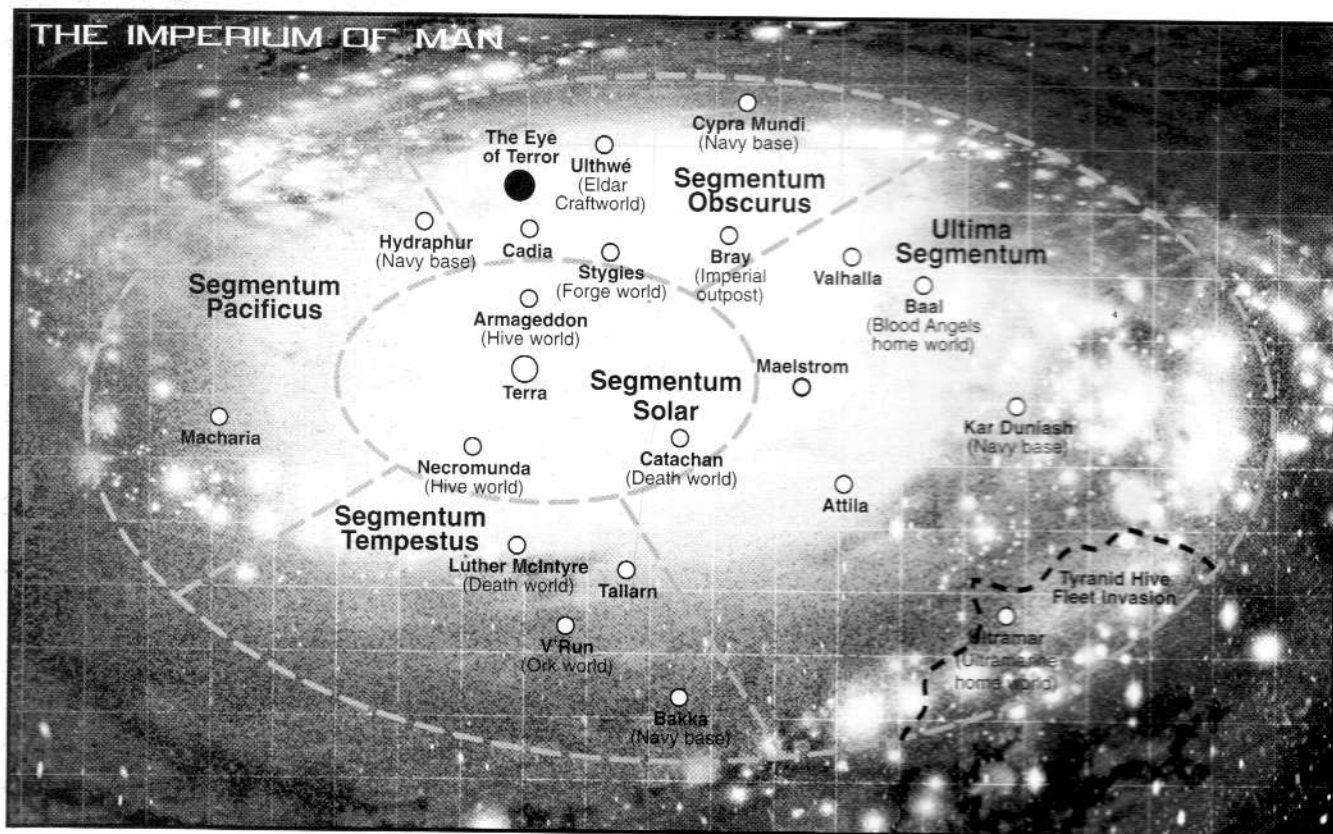
organisations have some power on the world? Examples include: trade guilds, workers unions, planetary aristocracy, slavers, manufacturing cartels, religious cults and of course Imperial organisations such as the Adeptus Mechanicus, Arbites, Sisterhood and the Adeptus Astartes.

There are not only legitimate power blocs to consider. Are there rebels on the world, who wish for a change in rulership? There may be pro- and anti-Imperial factions vying for dominance, terrorist groups who are pro-alien, or anti-mutant. There may be subversive religious sects. These underground factions can be used to aid or oppose the Inquisitors, depending on circumstances.

It is the interplay of these organisations – their politicking, backstabbing powerplay – that can generate many campaign and scenario plots as the Inquisitors try to unravel dastardly schemes and bring troublemakers to account.

What are the resources of these organisations? Do they have their own security forces, do they hire mercenaries (perhaps from off-world), is there a militia or standing army of some kind?

As I mentioned earlier, I wanted the Ecclesiarchy to play a strong part in the running of Karis Cephalon, as well as the standard planetary government. I opted to have the planetary commander as a democratically elected official, voted for by the ruling elite of the world. This electorate is formed from the farm and mine owners as those with economic influence gain political influence on Karis Cephalon. For some extra colour I also gave Karis Cephalon a slave underclass



RESEARCH

It's worth spending some time reading existing material, such as Warhammer 40,000, Codexes, White Dwarf and Black Library publications. For a start, there's probably plenty of things that will inspire you for ideas, while it will also highlight areas you might want to think about when creating your world. Plus, of course, it's fun reading all that background information...

of mutants. Mutant labour is an important commodity, and would be a defining part of life on Karis Cephalon. Obviously a large mutant population would be frowned upon by certain members of the Inquisition, while the elite are built upon the use of slaves and would be very keen to protect their interests against interference. The slaves themselves are another dimension. With any forced labour, insurrection is a very real threat, and I created a mutant underground movement which engages in terrorist activities to repeal the slave laws (without much success to date, I might add!).

ECONOMY

How does the world and the population sustain themselves? Is there a free economy or a socialist distribution of wealth and resources? How does money reflect political power? Is there a feudal system of taxation, or a more centralised economy? Does the world trade with other planets, or is it self-sustaining. The interaction with other worlds can be used to kick off a campaign and draw the Inquisition's attention. For example, what if a mining world suddenly stops fulfilling its contracts to an important military factory? The Inquisitors must find out what has stopped the mines producing, or perhaps someone on the inside is feeding information to human or alien pirates so that they can ambush the convoys en route.

This can also happen internally on a world. Picture a hive world where something has happened to the water processing plants. Water is in short supply, the populace is on the verge of dehydration and rebellion, those with the correct contacts start running black market supplies, and all the while no one knows why the water has stopped flowing.

As I mentioned, Karis Cephalon has a mix of agricultural and industrial

economy, and is generally self-sustaining. Individual wealth is based upon slave labour for the majority, and I figured that most of the people on Karis Cephalon were either members of or worked for one of a few merchant families that hold most of the planet's wealth. Only those of the Ecclesiarchy clergy would be outside this framework, although the Ministorum would also have its own mines and farms for generating wealth.

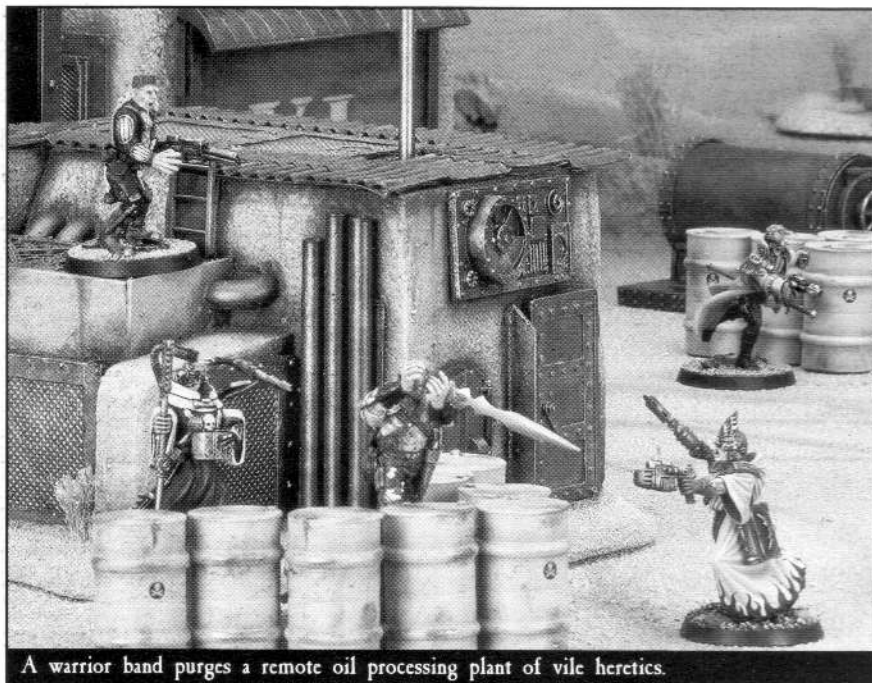
HISTORY

Nothing adds depth and gravitas to a setting like a bit of history. If you can make the players feel like this world has had an existence of its own before they arrived, that it's not just been constructed for them, then it becomes more real as an environment.

The detail of your history can vary. You can keep events that happened a long time ago reasonably vague, even mythical in some cases. Establishing a history isn't as difficult as it sounds, all you really need are a few key events that help to define the way the world is nowadays, or that introduce elements that may be picked up on in storylines during the campaign.

A good start is a timeline – a record of events that have occurred prior to the characters arriving. This is for your own reference more than the players, and is something which you can expand upon at a later time. The first thing to establish is how long the world has been settled. Does it pre-date the Imperium, was it settled during the Great Crusade, or has it been discovered (or rediscovered) in the last 10,000 years? This has an effect on the sort of world it will be, what customs and traditions may exist, and the kind of relationship it has with the rest of the Imperium. Generally, the older a world, the more set in its ways it will be. It may have religions that precede the Emperor and have been modified by the Ecclesiarchy, brutally stamped out, or perhaps still exist in heretical cults that are hunted down by the authorities. Over a long history, a world is likely to have been through all sorts of events, such as rebellions, alien invasion, Chaos incursions, schisms of faith, etc. Have a look at the background in Warhammer 40,000 publications and decide what was happening on your world during important ages such as the Horus Heresy, the Age of Apostasy, Macharius' Crusades and similarly important times of upheaval and





A warrior band purges a remote oil processing plant of vile heretics.

change. Was the world affected at all, involved heavily in these events or isolated from the turmoil engulfing the rest of the galaxy?

As well as the world's involvement in wider events, it's a good idea to come up with one or two pivotal moments in its own history. These should be something that have changed the course of the world's development, politics or economy in some way, such as a civil war, a natural catastrophe, or perhaps outside intervention such as an

invasion. A dramatic event like that can be used to explain why things are the way they are in the 'present' day.

For Karis Cephalon, its location would suggest that it was probably around at the time of the Horus Heresy, and definitely would have been involved in the centuries-long religious schism known as the Age of Apostasy. For some local flavour, I concocted a revolution a few thousand years ago, during which an old monarchy was overthrown by popular revolt,

establishing the new 'aristocracy' of plantation owners, mining families and slave traders. Perhaps there are still royalist factions on Karis Cephalon (though after several thousand years it's unlikely). It also serves to give Karis Cephalon a bit of a reputation for uprisings, and adds tension (and inspiration) to the current situation involving the mutant slave populace.

PLOT HOOKS

As well as older history, if you can come up with a few recent events, that have occurred just before the players arrive, or just after they've got there, this will add a sense of urgency and a feeling of the passage of time. Some of these should be connected to the campaign you have planned – cult activity, suspicious goings on, portents of doom – as well as unrelated occurrences which will serve to both mislead the Inquisitors and also reinforce the idea that the world doesn't solely revolve around the actions of the players.

Current affairs are a great source of plot hooks – ideas for adventures or campaigns that the players might follow up. You don't have to have plot hooks worked out in much detail, just enough that you have an idea where they will lead, and enough to excite the interest of the players without giving too much away.

Plot hooks can be characters as well as events, such as the arrival of a certain



Inquisitor or other important dignitary. Your plot hooks can be tied in with ancient history as well, with all manner of prophecies, mystic cycles and recurring events to foreshadow troubles yet to happen.

For Karis Cephalon, I set up a plague sweeping the mutant populace, leading to an upsurge in pro-mutant violence and activity. I also decided that the portents of the warp have led many to believe that Karis Cephalon is located at the centre of an astrological convergence. This will last for several years and narrow the gap between real space and warp space, allowing daemons and other entities to break through more easily. Such an event occurs very rarely and not only has it started to attract attention within the Inquisition, Adeptus Astra Telepathica and Scholastica Psykana, but also undoubtedly alien races will be drawn towards the world. If that wasn't enough, rumours are circulating that in the labyrinth of catacombs beneath the capital is an ancient weapon from the Dark Age of Technology, known only as the Angel. All three of these plot hooks can be expanded upon depending what grabs the players' attention, and maybe they are all linked in some way...

TELLING THE PLAYERS

Now that you've thought about all this, you need to find a mechanism to inform the players of some basic details. Depending on the character they are playing, this could take the form of an official briefing, gathered rumours, research in ancient tomes and the like. Present them with a document which contains information pertinent to their character, and unveil more as the campaign progresses. In fact, the quest for information may actually form a scenario to play – how about a heist on a library or archive to dig out some secrets, or perhaps the kidnapping of a local historian or archaeologist who has been digging around in places he really shouldn't be!

Opposite is an Inquisitorial report on Karis Cephalon which I would hand out to players before the campaign starts.

Well, that's just a few pointers to going about creating a world for your Inquisitor setting. In future issues I'll be looking at developing actual locations within your setting, and also scripting a campaign for your players.

REF: Inq/01159704311/BR
AUTHOR: Inquisitor Raxus
SUBJECT: Karis Cephalon; an overview
THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: "Knowledge is power, guard it well."

>>ATTACHED SYSTEM DATA DOWNLOAD<<
>>TRANSMITTING<<
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Name: Cephalon
Sector: Coptis
Location: Segmentum Tempestus
Attitude: VH40/HS110
Distance from Terra: 5,300 light years
Primary type: 3M
Orbital bodies: 5; d-class; d-class; Cv-class; M-class; D-class

>>ATTACHED PLANETARY DATA DOWNLOAD<<
>>TRANSMITTING<<
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Planet: Karis Cephalon
Mean Orbital Distance: 145,900,000 km
Mass: 1.02
Orbit: 1.24
Rotation: 1.45
Equa. Diam.: 10,900 km
Gravity: 1.12
Satellites: None

>>PLANETARY DATA DOWNLOAD COMPLETE<<

Founding: Karis Cephalon was originally settled during the Golden Age, and was rediscovered during the Great Crusade circa 350.M30.

Notable Historic Events: Until the late 33rd Millennium, Karis Cephalon was ruled by a Monarchy. A popular revolt, led by trade and farming leaders and aided by much of the planetary army, overthrew the ruling elite and established a semi-democratic process. The new regime was officially recognised by the Adeptus Terra in 881.M33.

Notable Features: Karis Cephalon possesses a large mutant population which forms a slave labour force for the planetary economy. Local laws segregate such slaves, and they have no legal rights. There have been several abortive slave revolts in the planet's history but none have seriously threatened the power of the ruling classes.

Karis Cephalon is the centre of the Lucid tendency, a highly puritan faction within the Ecclesiarchy. The Cardinal of Karis Cephalon has great influence at the Synod Ministra on Ophelia, and also much local authority on Karis Cephalon itself.

Past Inquisitorial Involvement: See separate sub-files on [a76h] Slave-trading; [um872] licensed mutants; [y76bg] Ministorum power blocs

Recent Investigations: None within last thirty years.

Unsubstantiated Data: The Capital of Karis Cephalon is built around the Amethyst Palace, which itself is centred on a pre-Imperial construct known locally as the Needle of Sennamis, possibly of non-human origin. Some Inquisitors have speculated that the Needle acts as a psychic conductor, and that it has a warp resonance. However, this has never been detected or measured by conventional means.

The Amethyst Palace has extensive catacombs which are believed to house numerous Dark Age technologies, including a weapon known as the Angel [ref: Codices of Alurha, vol. 5, 'The Angel of Destruction was brought forth and the light of death razed the sinful city to ruins.']

The family of the current Imperial commander has been investigated several times over the last three centuries for connections with diabolic cults, irregular practices and possession of unholy artefacts and materials. No conclusive proof was discovered in all cases.