



# Planet Brief

**CASCA**

**<Locanan SS>**

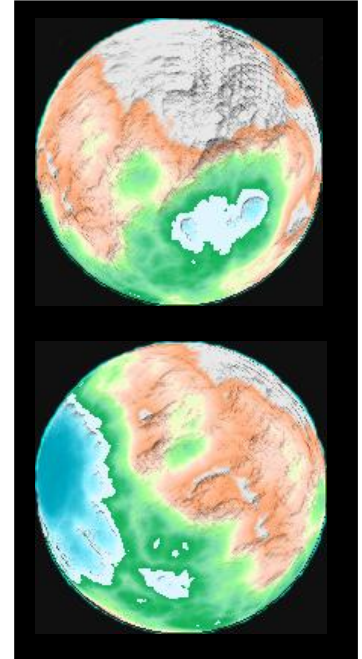
## Casca at a Glance

### CONTENTS

<b>OVERVIEW</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CASCAN BEGINNINGS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>VALUES AND ATTITUDES</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>CULTURE</b>	<b>3</b>

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- 5 Starport: Good. Core services, refits and specialty services.
- E Tech: Continuous warp.
- 5 Security: Personal weapons allowed but some particulars proscribed.
- A Atmosphere: standard
- 7 Biosphere: Cold world, abundant life forms.
- 6 Gravity: 1.5, Core standard
- 6 Social systems: Feudal technocracy.
- 6 Economy: Thriving
- 4 Sentients: humans.



Casca's most prominent features are the broad basin of the Naree Ocean and the high-elevation rocky ice cap that protrudes in the northern hemisphere of the globe, dominating the planetary landscape and affecting world-wide weather. Its markedly cold climate shapes patterns of settlement and local customs, leaving most of the population clustered in two relatively warm

and fertile equatorial regions.

The planet enjoys a contemporary imperial level of technology in most - though not all - regions of the globe. Some few backwaters actively embrace a markedly primitive lifestyle that the locals believe hark back to ancient days in Qua-lun, the Empire's ancestral and spiritual home. The world has become a steady producer of some basic mineral and

natural resources, but Casca is best known for spiritual and artistic cultural endeavors and exports relating to same.

Casca's rulership is a traditional premier House and Council structure dominated by the Lau Sa'adani of House Cordeyo. In Sector affairs the planet is most often encountered as an ally to others and a leverage chip in the bargaining of greater houses.

Primary: Blue-White (B)  
 AU distance: 22  
 Orbital Ring: 8  
 Diameter: 12000 k  
 Density: 6  
 Gravity: 1.5 (Core Standard)

Native Life: animal life forms, non-sentient  
 Atmosphere: Oxy-Nitro mix  
 Sea-Level Pressure: 13.5  
 Dominant Terrain: hills, plains, cold deserts  
 Biosphere: harsh cold, abundant life forms  
 Resources: potassium, carbon, silicon, silicates

## Cascan Beginnings

Casca was first settled by the Cordeyo colony expedition, making landfall in 57 SR<sup>1</sup>. That well-financed and politically connected group was intent on exploiting gemstone mineral resources reported by early survey fly-bys. Unfortunately, after landfall they found that most of the ‘minerals’ were misreads from sensor packages. Strong magnetic fields from the planet had interfered with equipment transmissions. They discovered that local surface-covering ooze cultures – large cold-tolerant ameboid life forms – bear a high concentration of silicate-bearing minerals. When read with faulty sensors, they reflected back a reading akin to the profiles for dilithiates and various precious gemstones. The colonists found themselves on a world of unexceptional mineral resources in an uncomfortably cold climate which, although friendly to the native flora and fauna, taxed the resources of humans.

Before a decision could be made to abandon the colony, the border wars that would lead to the Interregnum broke out and the settlement became mostly cut off from the Homeworld core. Over time, Cascans suffered a gradual loss of technology. The population reverted to a nativistic culture with a high premium on communion with nature, cooperation with harsh elements and elementals, a vivid local paganism fueled by Chau-sen and Chusto traditions (one of the few effective ways to mitigate the harsh climate, it turned out, without the aid of complex weather control technology), and a local leadership pattern that many heralded as a return to the (now idealized) spiritual warrior roots of Qua-lun of ancient Ástareth: the ur-culture that later flourished into the Sa’adani.

Contact with the reunified and expanding Empire occurred in 341 S.R.; after nearly three centuries of isolation and creative coping with challenging local conditions, Casca re-entered the Sa’adani family during the consolidation of Shanovar Sector. The natives are unabashedly ethnocentric, now hailing their unintended exclusion from Empire as a golden age of enlightenment on Casca. They are proud and touchy about their traditions and values, believing that they safeguard a more pure form of the enlightened path than most others follow in the Empire. They also have a strong Chusto practice and a somewhat higher percentage of wild psi talents than is typical in the Empire.

## Values and Attitudes

Cultural values of the Cascans are summed up by this saying: “Surmount what you can. Become one with what you cannot.” This is reflective of their practical survival skills and their willingness to move beyond the obvious to other ways (spiritual, mental, emotional) of coping with challenges that cannot be conquered solely through physical means.

Echoes of old Ástareth legend are found in one of Casca’s nicknames: “Acor na Lovianis”, or Lovianis’ Home, a reference to the resemblance of ice-realm Cascan landscapes to the mountainous icy hell that ancient goddess was said to rule over. The world is not nearly as harsh as many (even most) borderline cold worlds, but clearly difficult enough for colonists short on resources, and cut off from sources of technological supply. Cascan popular culture has kept this image alive, of the quintessential rugged survivalist who survives by embracing ancient virtues.

To this is added a subtext of enduring that which is challenging in order to prove one’s worth or worthiness. Shigasue who run houses of entertainment here capitalize on this cultural reality and the Lovianis mythology – for that deity was said to be a sadistic lover - and houses of erotic torment are rather more popular on Casca than on many other worlds. An unusually high percentage of Cascans also find their way into the most physically demanding and mentally challenging areas of Imperial service, such as the elite Imperial guard or intelligence services, or the Navy’s marines. The writings of Cascan philosophers focus on suffering, surmounting and transcendence.

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<sup>1</sup> S.R. is the common abbreviation for Sa’adani Reckoning. This time accounting numbers years from Adan Esker’s publication of the Unity Manifesto, the first move in establishing what would grow to be the Sa’adani Empire.

## Culture

During the Forgotten Years when the colony grew to maturity on its own, native arts took root that remain distinctive to this day. Construction done with ice is both novelty and mainstay to some. Some Cascan resorts in the cold zone are built almost entirely out of ice stabilized with a coating of durabond to protect from interior heat sources. Ice sculptures remain a respected and diverse art form and have gained surprising popularity as an export to aristocrats who commission pieces shipped by speedy courier to elite parties in the Core and other sectors. The native paintings and drawing styles are heavily influenced by nature themes and elements of conflict or transcendence. Folk art reflects the habits of a folk used to long winters and the occupation of idle hands in beautifying the everyday things around them. There is little on Casca that is purely functional in form: if an item does not have at least a graceful line, and hopefully a fine artistic embellishment, the native Cascan will scorn it for something more ornate.

Life in the warm zone on Casca belies the frozen grip of the rest of the planet, and that is where most of the population and trade concentrates. Equatorial culture is laid back, underclad and leisurely compared to the rest of the globe, although this comparative “warm weather attitude” may not be evident to off-worlders with a different scale of climatological and social measurement. Even in the warm zone, cultural homage is paid to the cold-climate dwellers who are, today, a minority of the planet’s population. The so-called “beach latitudes” of the planet are a hotbed of political and economic intrigue, however, with much activity beneath the surface, not evident to onlookers outside of the close-knit Cascan caillou and aristocratic trade families.

Casca does a minor business exporting native cultural artifacts and an adequate business harvesting pharmaceutical components from the native oozes and other indigenous species. The world has never been a power player in subsector politics, but is a swing vote in certain council interests and one of the unpredictable blocks of support in shifting alliances across the sector. Cascan government officials are more often courted as minor alliance partners than as heavy-hitting decision influencers. They have learned how to leverage this to their best advantage in trade and economic affairs. The presence of Cascans in someone’s power elite is evocative of old tradition and hardy worthiness.

This planet today is on a continuing upswing of economic prosperity, due not least of all to its being a waystation on the subsector transport route called the Courzava Circuit.

