

ARCHIVE DATAFILES:

CRYSTAL SABERS

The crystal saber is the famed weapon of the Guardian, used by the Order since the early third century, OL. While plasma blasters, laser cannons, and projectile weapons are still found throughout the known galaxy, the saber serves as an elegant melee weapon whose use takes years to perfect. As much a means of defense as offense, the training and use of a saber is essential for members of every sect of The Light.

BOLAN CRYSTAL

The most essential component of the crystal blade is bolan crystal, a rare but naturally-occurring mineral found on several planets throughout the Empire. Much like Radiants themselves, bolan maintains an intimate connection with The Light, naturally producing a tremendous amount of energy. For this reason, the Nara used bolan as a means of powering spacecraft for centuries before passing this technology on to the rest of the galaxy. Today, most space-going vessels are powered by bolan reactors – despite the relative rarity of the material. This makes bolan all the more valuable, with the Order regularly competing with private corporations for control of crystal mines.

THE BLESSING OF BOLAN

“SMALL VEINS OF BOLAN HAVE BEEN FOUND ON ANY NUMBER OF WORLDS, BUT THOSE WITH SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF THE MATERIAL QUICKLY FOUND THEMSELVES PROPELLED TO THE FOREFRONT OF GALACTIC HISTORY BY MEANS OF SIGNIFICANT WEALTH AND POWER. RHO AND SELLONAE HAVE SOME OF THE LARGEST RESERVES ON RECORD AND ARE SIMILARLY SOME OF MOST INFLUENTIAL PLANETS IN THE EMPIRE...”

Bolan is of tremendous strength, able to withstand virtually any impact or explosion. Many salvagers make considerable income harvesting bolan cores from starship debris, as it is the only component of a vessel to consistently survive a ship's destruction.

Only one known material is able to successfully cut

through bolan – a metallic alloy known as vyllah steel. Created through a lengthy and intricate process, vyllah steel was first developed by the Yaru centuries before their eradication. The Yaru had used the dangerous smelting process as a rite of passage before forging the metal into elaborate body armor. The technology was lost after the destruction of Yarut, but was later recovered by psychometry of Yarutian artifacts in the second century. Today, miners used vyllah-tipped tools to chisel through bolan veins and extract valuable crystals. Widespread creation of the alloy is halted by the extreme rarity of the metals involved.

THE VYLLAH STEEL RECIPE

“VYLLAH INVOLVES A COMBINATION OF RARE METALS. FEW PLANETS HAVE ALL OF THE NECESSARY INGREDIENTS TO FORGE THE MATERIAL WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT IMPORTS. ONLY TWO PLANETS CAN FORGE VYLLAH WITH ONLY LOCAL RESOURCES: YARUT AND LURIO. LURIO'S ABILITY TO SMELT ITS OWN VYLLAH STEEL INTO ARMOR PROVED A DECISIVE ADVANTAGE DURING THE LURIAN WARS...”

THE FIRST CRYSTAL SABER

In the early third century, the human Master Ferrick Shae began an elaborate study of bolan crystal and its properties. After years of work, Shae found that by channeling his own connection to The Light, he could cause a crystal to release its natural energy, glowing brightly with dazzling color. Though beautiful, the energy caused the blade to resonate in such a way as to destabilize molecules and cut through virtually any material. Despite the loss of a limb, Shae's fascination with this property perpetuated his studies.

Shae was a student of several ancient human methods of sword fighting and was fascinated at the prospect of harnessing bolan's capabilities into a formidable weapon. To do so, he needed a proper way to grip the crystal – and found his solution in the ancient Yarutian traditions. Forging a hilt of vyllah steel allowed him to carry a piece

of bolan nearly a meter long without injury. When activated and glowing brightly, the bolan proved to be an impressive weapon — cutting through virtually any material with relative ease. Thus the first of the crystal sabers had been forged.

In the centuries to follow, the use of crystal sabers expanded dramatically, leading to widespread adoption by members of the Order. Within a decade, the Bellati and Vindori sects began to take root, calling on the use of the saber as a major component of their doctrine. By the fifth century, the saber had become both the official weapon and a powerful symbol of The Order of The Light, with mandatory instruction in its use required by all training academies.

NEW FIGHTING STYLES

“SHAE MAY HAVE BEGUN WITH ANCIENT HUMAN TECHNIQUES, BUT LATER SABERMASTERS LEANED FAR MORE HEAVILY INTO RIKKAN TRADITIONS. RIIK'S HISTORY OF MILITARISM HAD DEVELOPED A NUMBER OF FIGHTING STYLES AROUND THE USE OF THE TAASHAT, A DEADLY, DOUBLE-EDGED BLADE OF BONE. MANY OF THE MOST PROMINENT SABER STYLES ORIGINATE FROM HERE...”

MODERN CRYSTAL SABERS

Crystal sabers still maintain their importance within the Order and continue to require the utmost training. Saber instruction progresses through seven cumulative “forms,” though the upper forms are rarely seen outside of the Bellati and — occasionally — Vindori. Knights of all sects are required to master at least the first form with the option of progressing further. While the Bellati are most widely known for their swordsmanship, skilled saber-wielders are found in every branch of the Order. Increasingly since the Dominari Rebellion, some Venefari adherents have sworn themselves to the practice of pacifism, which the Order has accommodated by waiving saber requirements.

Though combat styles have changed little in the last several centuries, the crystal sabers themselves have undergone notable design improvements. Most modern saber hilts include an activator to ignite a blade with an artificial infusion of energy — a technological workaround that accelerates the ignition of the crystal beyond a natural application of The Light. This is supplemented by a battery, which also allows the blade to remain activated

even after it has left the hand of its bearer. Most modern hilts also include aural dampeners which eliminate the loud snapping, hissing, and humming created by the activation of the crystal.

In its innate, unpowered form, the crystal of most sabers appears a drab, opaque white. Once activated, it produces a brilliant light and consistent color. A saber's hue derives itself from a unique phenomenon which has much to do with the alignment of its first user. When first activated, the crystalline structure of the blade is altered by the sensitivity of the bearer, affecting the light emitted. This change is permanent and is unable to change thereafter — even with subsequent users of different sensitivities. The colors culturally associated with each of the Six Sects of the Order were derived from the saber colors prompted by their adherents.

■ VENEFARI	BLUE
■ DOMINARI	RED
■ QUIORI	GREEN
■ MEDICARI	SILVER
■ BELLATI	PURPLE
■ VINDORI	GOLD

When activated, a crystal saber can cut through virtually any material. Though some substances are able to resist the molecular shift and slow down a saber's destructive potential, only two materials are able to withstand it completely: vyllah steel and bolan itself. Though the touch of a saber will often superheat vyllah metal, the molecular composition of the steel allows it to resist any permanent destruction.

While some enemies of the Order have attempted to use vyllah's properties to forge defenses and armors against the Guardians' most sacred weapon, the difficulty in obtaining the necessary parent metals of the vyllah alloy usually prevent it from being carried out on any significant scale. Bolan's resistance to itself has underscored the importance of skilled swordsmanship, with dueling skills serving as a key component of training at any Guardian academy.