Author's Note

Four years ago in Summer of 2019 I began a project that ended up consuming my creative life, the research and development of the native language of the Zhodani people, Zdetl. The reason was fairly straightforward - I had added a Zhodani character to my stories and wanted to know more about her people, culture and language - from artistic perspective it seemed logical. The project began simply enough, just me making up new words for things and publishing them in the various **Traveller**™ forums accompanied by hand-drawn illustrations.

It wasn't long before I realized the task was far more than I'd anticipated.

I needed more than just more words - I needed to come up with actual grammar and rules to define word usage. At the time, there wasn't much information available in **Traveller**™ canon about Zdetl; the Wiki, usually a good source for such tidbits, was surprisingly sparse when it came to languages. A web search turned up Robert Eaglestone's excellent **Vilani Grammar and Glossary,** but in nearly 40 years of Traveller world building, that was the only book relating to language that I was able to find. Fortunately, what was written was enough for a start, and so it began.

In 2021 I began formally working on an actual grammar text, Beginning Zdetl. Like many first-time conlangs (constructed languages), the Zdetl grammar outlined in that book was strongly influenced by another conlang, Esperanto, with certain minor but necessary structural changes (the Object-Verb-Subject word order of Zdetl being the most noteworthy). With the impetus of many late-night chat sessions with other dedicated members of the Zhodani Language and Cultural Institute, I was able in a few months to put together a truly functional grammar text suitable for individual or group study. Beginning Zdetl was released in June 2022, a few weeks after the MayDay! online convention that year.

And now here we are, two years later, with another book about to be released. The question I suppose is, why? Wouldn't one be enough? Did I not cover everything in the first book?

Of course not - languages are evolving creations that ideally should outlive their creators and grow beyond one person's vision. And in truth, I'd begun planning for a rewrite of Beginning Zdetl from the moment I released it to the world. There were parts of it I felt were incomplete, and others that needed further explanation.

An artist, after all, must never be completely satisfied with his work.

author's note

I began rewriting in earnest in early 2023, but certain events soon overcame that effort. Partway through the first third of the book, the Zdetl entry in the Traveller Wiki got edited - and new information was revealed that had previously been unavailable. This new information outlined additional grammar and word construction guidelines that made the language deeper, more complex, and more poetic than my original design. I was faced with a choice - to either scrap my own work, ignore the new data, or find a way to integrate them into a unified whole.

I chose the third option, and the book you now hold is the result. Like the previous one, it's the result of many late-night discussions, lots of coffee, and a considerable amount of work. It can be used independently of Beginning Zdetl, being on its own a comprehensive grammar text, but is better used in companion with that first book.

The companion dictionary is also still useful, though the lexicon is now more than twice the size of that volume.

In this book you will find not just a bunch of rules, but lessons that give real context and functionality to Zdetl. Because the purpose of any language is to communicate and converse, its focus is on conversation. You'll also find chapters about daily life among the Zhodani people - what they eat, how they live, what they do for fun - which will hopefully enhance your understanding of the uniquely alien human culture.

That's enough talk. I suppose its time to thank the people who made this possible.

As usual there's the men and women of the ZLI, who are now too numerous to mention but without whom I'd not have enjoyed it nearly as much, and my good friend Maksim Smelchak, who was instrumental in getting the project off the ground and into space.

Thanks again to Marc Miller and the good people at GDW and Far Future Enterprises for creating Traveller and making it possible to do this, as well as Mongoose Publishing for continuing the good work and keeping Traveller alive.

Another special shout-out to P.O. Bergstedt, who created the Zhodani truetype font used in this book.

And last but not least, to the late J.R.R. Tolkien, who first showed me that languages weren't confined to the real world but could, in fact, be imagined and created intentionally.

If I've forgotten anyone, just write your name on a page somewhere. I'm sure there's room.

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