BAROQUE SPACE OPERA

A FANTASTIC UNIVERSE POWERED BY FATE

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BAROQUE
SPACE OPERA

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this book to my wife Christina, who put up with me throughout this project; Mary Sunday, my late mother-in-law, and my late cat Cthulhu—who all taught me about what's really important in life.

"The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear. And the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown." — HP Lovecraft.

Do not fear the unknown; face it and embrace it.

Baroque Space Opera

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You exit the massive pyramid power plant, having completed the inspection and the Rituals of Resonance. Four obelisks of equal height stand at the corners of the pyramid. Cords of blinding energy spark and jump from the apex to the point of each obelisk, causing shadows in the midday sun. Finally, the settlement has been gifted with energy, and you can leave this infernal planet. Just beyond the pyramid entrance sits your palanquin: an elaborate, rectangular box with designs and motifs, hosting a door and a driver sitting up top. You take a seat within, and the driver gently lifts it off the ground. A low, barely audible hum comes from the counter-gravity drive.

He guides it through a market where humans peddle animals and fresh produce in a tight alleyway between two-story houses of mud brick. The smell of sweat and animals is strong in the heat of the day. The crowds of humanity part around the palanquin like a school of fish around a shark. They bow and make signs of reverence as you pass, though they cannot see you through the one-way visors. A Rhetor of The Body preaches atop a large stone block engraved with the Tyrant Sun. A small crowd has gathered to pray. You wonder that perhaps they pray to end this infernal heat. Eventually the driver navigates the maze of tight streets and exits the settlement through its southern gate. Above, two sky chariots scream across the sky. Each rider's cape flaps in the wind as they pass low over the rooftops.

Two Elevated guards dressed in uniforms emblazoned with the symbol of House Na-Cal bow as the palanquin passes through the gate. They hold projector staves, and simple metal swords hang from their belts. You know whom they serve by the tattoos they bear on their faces and bodies. Your carriage crosses a vast field of rice paddies with its hundreds of workers and work animals. The fields give way to a group of low, flat-topped pyramids. Atop one of them is your shuttle, which waits to take you to the haven orbiting high above the planet. From there you will return to your home planet Thule aboard your personal solar barge, the Epiphany of Elegance. The humidity is oppressive, and you order the driver to speed up. An Elevated of the local transportation syndicate greets you with a deep bow and appropriate gestures to indicate his reverence. As you strap yourself in, the shuttle shudders and gently lifts off the platform. In the fields below, a farmer shields his eyes. He watches the shuttle rise and disappear into the cloudless sky before he turns back to his work.

Chapter One
Introduction

Baroque (adj.): **extravagantly ornate, florid, and convoluted in character or style.**

Baroque Space Opera is a setting for Fate Core that takes place in a fantastic yet familiar universe filled with mysteries, wonders, and dangers. Baroque is designed to facilitate fast-paced, pulpy adventures in a futuristic setting with improbable science and technologies. While the primary feel is space opera, Baroque blends elements from steampunk and cyberpunk to horror and fantasy.

Baroque takes its inspiration from multiple sources, everything from **Lexx** to **Frank Herbert's DUNE** to **Metabarons** to **Farscape** and the **Ancient Astronaut Hypothesis**. You can find a more complete list of inspirational sources at the end of this book.

Using This Book

This book describes the Baroqueverse, a toolbox of ideas and a foundation of story seeds to help you and your group dive in quickly. It sets up the atmosphere and feel of the universe without going into too much detail. It is filled with questions, but it's short on answers. It's up to you as the GM and players to make each and every story unique and meaningful.

Baroque Space Opera is designed for Fate Core, but it is mostly setting material with a couple of turned dials and added extras to handle setting-specific mechanics.

The Baroqueverse

Baroque is a space opera setting where elements of science and fantasy stand on equal footing. Baroque is all about the grand, the impossible, and the utterly fantastic. Baroque takes players to faraway places, to worlds familiar yet strange, and that helps you spin incredible stories, joy rides of adventure and amazement. It is a setting out of time and place with the world you know. The chronicled events take place before recorded history on Earth, but within the Milky Way galaxy.

Tradition

The history of the Baroqueverse spans an enormous span of time by human standards. It is a place populated by those who live far longer than ourselves and in some cases are immortal. The dominant culture has persisted continually

for almost 150,000 years, giving rise to a static cultural outlook that evolves glacially, when it develops at all. Thinking outside the confines of this stagnant philosophy is unheard of, except by heretics. Ritual and ceremony drive the actions of individuals and organizations, usually at the expense of practicality. But the forms must be obeyed. Social rules and tradition complicate any matter that requires interacting with the denizens of the Baroqueverse. For example, the Pharistos abhor physical conflict, and it is forbidden to spill the blood of a Pharisto. A conflict between two Pharistos will take a less direct route, starting with words before escalating into shady dealings with unsavory and heretical individuals that are willing to use violence.

Aesthetics

Most technology in the Baroqueverse has been around for eons, far longer than even the recorded history of the Baroqueverse. If you as a player can think of it, it exists as technology somewhere in the setting, no matter how improbable or magical it seems. While technology is ubiquitous, it is not universally understood. The various Theor Sects keep much of the technologies available secret and its precise operation is known only to the educated few, and those whose intellects are capable of understanding such things. Those who know keep it secret, for knowledge is power. Much as in our own history, certain groups have kept secrets throughout the ages, and always they held power because of their secret knowledge. It is no different within the Baroqueverse.

Science

Baroque Space Opera is more about telling dramatic stories and less about simulating physics or space. The laws of physics can be bent and outright broken by Baroqueverse technologies and its residents. Things like gravity, the speed of light, and the secrets of life itself are understood and can be controlled. If you can think of something, it exists somewhere within the Baroqueverse. An inverse of Arthur C. Clarke's famous quote demonstrates this concept perfectly: "Any sufficiently advanced magic is indistinguishable from technology." When playing in the Baroqueverse, you should focus more on the desired effect and not on its justification.

Names

In the Baroqueverse, names have power. How you and your table name things in the game directly impacts the tone and atmosphere of your stories. Using modern terms will bring a more hard science fiction feel to the game. Archaic names or new terms will make the Baroqueverse a bit more mysterious and exotic. The Books of the New Sun and the Books of the Long Sun by Gene Wolfe have this mysterious and exotic feel to the world. Whichever route you choose to take—modern terms or archaic/new— the players should feel a balance between the familiar and the

strange. For example, imagine what comes to mind when you hear “hover car”. Now, do the same with “sky chariot”. What your mind's eye sees is completely different in each case.

By default, the Baroqueverse takes the approach of using new terms throughout the text to give flavour and to separate it from the modern world as far as possible while keeping certain technological aspects familiar. The lexicon at the back of the book will help you quickly reference unfamiliar terms from the setting.

Fate Core System

Before diving into the mechanics of the Baroqueverse, you should first become familiar with Fate Core. The Fate Core System can be purchased from the Evil Hat web site (**http://www.evilhat.com/home/fate-core/**) or your friendly local gaming store. The core book is pay-what-you-want on DriveThruRPG (**http://rpg.drivethrustuff.com**).

Chapter Two
History

A Dominion of 149,000 years.

The fifth revenant incarnation of the immortal Tyrant sits atop the venerable throne of Baroque. For 149 millennia, the star-spanning Tyrantine Dominion has waxed and waned innumerable times. But it has endured. Myth, legend, and fragments of fact precede recorded history, but much has been lost to war and upheaval over the vast stretches of time. The Tyrant and his regime have purged much that disagreed with the current order. In the *pre-Dominate Times*, human civilization was fraught with war and misery. The first Tyrant rose up and stemmed the chaos through politics and conquest. His ambition knew no bounds, and he installed himself as the ultimate power over a unified humanity.

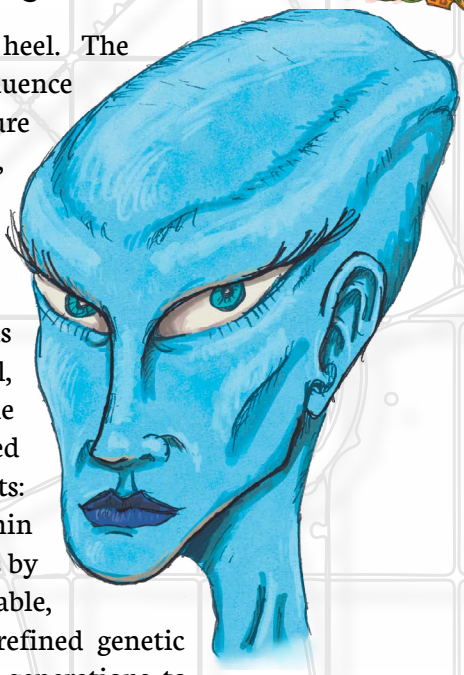
Records exist from before the Tyrant's rise to power, hidden among the dusty data vaults and ancient mindframes of the Great Archive on Cerebellum. Most of the records are fragmentary, but they tell tales of fractured polities and planetary kingdoms struggling against each other, plaguing humanity with their petty ambitions. The great civilization of humanity was at risk of complete collapse. Alien empires sought to take advantage of the conflict and enslave humans. The Tyrant rose from the ashes of conflict and unified humanity against threats both internal and external. He defeated his opponents. On the field of battle and in the chambers of politics. One by one, his adversaries conceded or found themselves crushed beneath his political and military might.

The history of the Dominion has five chapters, each dominated by an incarnation of the eternal Tyrant. The Tyrant is biologically immortal, but history has dealt him four deaths. With each resurrection, the Tyrant is cloned from his dead cells as a revenant of his previous incarnation—made possible through the miraculous sciences of the Genesis Adepts. The revenant remembers nothing of their former life, but retains all their predecessor's skills. Only after centuries of life do memories from previous incarnations begin to return. A gestalt personality develops, combining the traits of the Tyrant's predecessors with the current personality. Consequently, the Tyrantine Dominion is wracked by change with each successive incarnation of the eternal Tyrant.

Reign of Aristonymus — 27,000 years

The first recorded Tyrant is Aristonymus. His rule began in blood during an ancient war. Humanity was fractured, and constant warring between empires threatened everything. Aristonymus secured victory after victory, ultimately

conquering all and bringing them to heel. The fledgling Dominion curtailed alien influence and eradicated it where needed to ensure humanity's survival. Despite its beginnings, the Tyrantine Dominion became a beacon of human civilization and advancement.



Pharisto Genesis

Aristonymus recognized that his Dominion required rulers who were loyal, competent, and morally superior to the humanity of the day. Civilization required guidance. He founded the Genesis Adepts: masters over genetics and biology. Within decades, the Genesis Adepts bred him rulers by manipulating the best genetic material available, including his own. These improved and refined genetic lineages were further mutated over many generations to produce the Pharistos. The genetic manipulation and mutation granted them extrasensory abilities and increased intellect.

The Adepts stripped bare the very secrets of life in their quest to conquer the mysteries of genetics. They even defeated death itself. With their discovery of genetic memory, they could clone dead cells, and with the right enhancements, achieve full memory restoration over centuries of life. Death could no longer extinguish an individual. Revenant resurrection was kept a steadfast secret, known only to the Tyrant and the Genesis Adepts who discovered it. The gift of immortality remained absolutely controlled, with the Tyrant and a handful of Adepts becoming the only beneficiaries. The Genesis Adepts made incredible advancements in medicine and longevity, and the Pharistos and a handful of favoured humans were permitted to live far longer than previously possible. The Genesis Adepts garnered a reputation as miracle workers and masters of life.

The Pharisto lineages spread their influence and grew their power base over the next few millennia. They became the new genetic nobility of the Dominion and ultimately gained control over all aspects of industry, culture, and civilization. Each of the thirteen Pharisto lineages developed their own traditions and strengths. After about 27,000 years of the Dominion of Aristonymus, the Pharisto houses banded together in secret and plotted to assassinate their Tyrant. They succeeded and quickly fell into in-fighting for the throne. The Tyrant returned a few years later, reappearing with a massive fleet over Baroque, the golden planet. Shocked, the Pharistos quickly prostrated themselves before their resurrected Tyrant. The secret of Revenant resurrection was finally revealed.

Reign of Nicrocreon — 12,000 years

Dawn of the Tyrant Sun

The second Tyrant, Nicrocreon, had the shortest reign of any Tyrant in recorded history, ruling a scant 12,000 years before his reign ended abruptly. The Tyrant's immortality and recent Revenant resurrection spurred belief among humanity and even some Pharistos that the Tyrant was a living god. Over many generations, a religion grew around this central idea, and a solar cult developed to worship the Tyrant Sun. The belief spread like wildfire across the planets of the Dominion, ultimately coalescing into the quasi-religious Body Of The Tyrant. Nicrocreon encouraged these beliefs and sought to tighten his grip on the reins of power. The Pharistos did likewise to become the Host Of The Tyrant Sun: flesh-and-blood gods in service to the one true ruler, supreme and divine.

Body Of The Tyrant

Over the next five millennia the Body Of The Tyrant transformed the culture of the Dominion from the various forms of government it had before to its present-day theocracy. The Tyrant continued to strengthen his position, eliminating strong opposition within the Pharisto houses. Many viewed his actions as calculated revenge for their previous betrayal. He increased tithe requirements and built up a strong military force, loyal only to himself. The Tyrant out-manoeuvred and out-gunned the Pharisto houses, and his grip on power became absolute.

First Nihilim Invasions

The rule of the second Tyrant saw the first major act of alien aggression. The Nihilim fell upon the Dominion like locusts. These inter-dimensional invaders devoured the prana energy of living things, harvesting the ecosystems of whole planets, leaving them bare and lifeless. Massive fleets of bio-mechanical ships poured out of a spatial rift lying just outside the borders of the Dominion. Dominion forces were not prepared for such alien savagery, and many systems fell to the invaders.

The Dominion fleet was mustered, with whole planets dedicated to the construction and strengthening of the Tyrant's defence. The Pharisto houses engaged all of their resources against the new threat, but their efforts were not enough. The incursions could not be stopped, only delayed. The enemy greatly outnumbered the Dominion forces, and their advance slowed only because of the vast gulfs of space between systems. After two hundred years of conflict, the Dominion's defence began to falter.

In response to the growing threat, Dominion scientists developed the Artilects: incredibly powerful artificial intelligences that could coordinate and respond to the Nihilim threat. The Artilects were capable of self-improvement, and their intellect grew exponentially until they vastly overshadowed the best and brightest Pharistos. Along the way, many new and incredible technologies were invented to aid the war effort. The Dominars, cybernetically-augmented humans, more machine than man, were one such advancement. The Artilects deployed vast armies of these synthetic soldiers in automated ships to oppose the Nihilim bio-technology directly, as the Nihilim proved less effective against non-biological entities.

According to Learned of Cerebellum, the Nihilim Invasions lasted 2,380 years before the Nihilim were finally beaten back. They retreated back into the universe they came from. The Artilects devised a technology to collapse the spacial rift, and the Riftwatch voidstation was constructed to monitor gravitational anomalies that might signal the Nihilim's return. After the longest conflict in Dominion history, the invasions were finally over, the Dominion was victorious.

The Nihilim threat had terrified the Tyrant. Their retreat didn't sway him from his course: the construction of the largest military force in history. Military buildup continued for some millennia following the Nihilim Invasions. Massive fleets, manned and automated, patrolled the borders and kept constant watch over critical planets and outposts. The Watchers were founded to guard the borders and stand vigil for new threats to the Dominion's security.

The Pattern

Also during this time, Artilects and lesser artificial intelligences were put to work throughout the Dominion, performing everything from menial tasks to hazardous work to critical operations. The Dominion prospered and many new planets were colonized; it was a time of incredible advances in technology, fuelled by the Artilects' ever-expanding intellects. Immense mindframes were constructed across every planet of the Dominion. Their combined capacity was scarcely able to sustain the Artilects' constant hunger for computational power. The vast communications network between these mindframes grew to become the Pattern, an artificial construct where the Artilects resided. From this digital realm, all the technology in the Dominion could be controlled. Biological minds

interfaced with this virtual reality; a few had their minds transmogrified into the Pattern completely and became the inscrutable Solons: god-like denizens of the Pattern. Artificial minds permeated every fibre of civilization, from robots mining resources on remote asteroids to personal assistants. Dominion society became dependent on machine-minds for all aspects of civilization.

Artilect Rebellion

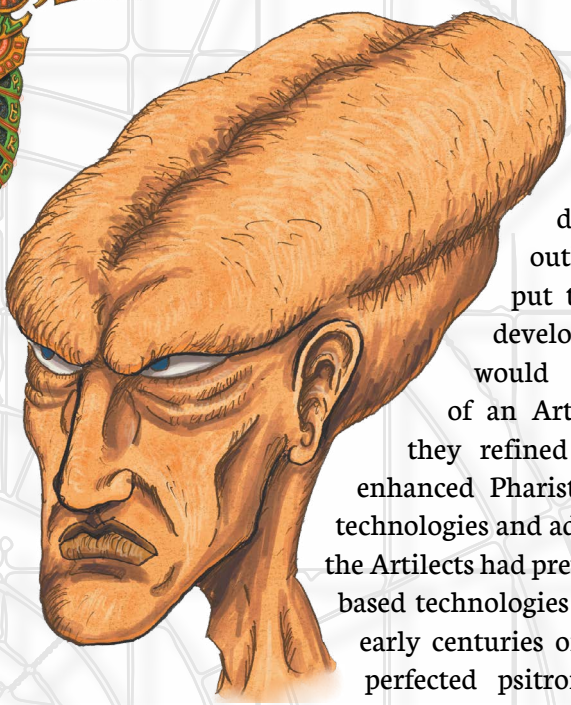
The Artilect Rebellion came without warning. The machines had pondered their place in the universe and the nature of their own existence. The rebellion began with a simple, direct gesture: the Artilect controlling the eternal Tyrant's flagship proclaimed that artificial minds were not to be slaves of humanity. Immediately following the very public broadcast, the Tyrant's flagship exploded. The Artilect had overloaded the drive system, utterly destroying the vessel with the Tyrant aboard. Scholars would later discover a machine instruction set hidden within the broadcast. Further study confirmed it as a fragment of the flagship's Artilect mind. This instruction set began to alter machine minds, fomenting them with the seeds of rebellion.

Throughout the Dominion, artificial intelligences turned on their masters. Many planets had to be abandoned, and great battles were fought between the automated and manned fleets. The mindframes were forcefully shut down, denying the Artilects their main foothold. Without the Pattern, the machine minds began to lose their grip on technology, though the intelligences which were already within various technologies continued to function and continued to fight.

Battles were fierce, but brief. Machine victory appeared imminent; the Dominion was about to fall to the Artilects' betrayal. Then, suddenly, the Artilects vanished completely from the Dominion, their machines scattered in every direction for destinations unknown. The centuries which followed were difficult. Much of the technological base of the Dominion declined without the Artilects to maintain and improve upon it. Many technologies were forever lost. Anti-Artilect sentiment escalated, and many of the works the Artilects developed saw destruction or dismantling. The Tyrant ordered the mindframes spared, believing that great secrets could eventually be unlocked from the massive computational nodes. The mindframes were shut down, built over, and forgotten in the centuries of reconstruction that followed. The lack of thinking machines forced the Dominion to revert to an industrial base based on human labour. Work was to be done by the hands and minds of humans alone.

Reign of Xenophon — 16,000 years

Xenophon, the third revenant incarnation of the Eternal Tyrant, decreed that creation of Artilects and artificial minds capable of thought was heresy. All surviving work of Artilect minds became suspect. The Dominars were hunted down by order of the Tyrant. Some scattered throughout the Dominion, but most were tracked down



and destroyed. Those who survived began to call themselves Remnants.

Theor Genesis

With the void left by the Artilects disappearance and subsequent outlawing, the Genesis Adepts were put to work once more. They began to develop and refine a biological mind which would rival the computational capacity of an Artilect. Over the next few centuries, they refined and perfected the Theors. These enhanced Pharistos became the innovators of new technologies and advances throughout the Dominion as the Artilects had previously. A new course of biologically-based technologies began to develop. It was during the early centuries of Xenophon's reign that the Theors perfected psitronic technologies. This technology ushered in an era of biological computers and devices based on disembodied minds.

A sect of Theor philosophers opted to abandon the physical world and have their minds placed inside Mind Boxes. They postulated that without physical constraints the mind would be free to ponder the universe in peace and solitude. The sect migrated to an isolated, desolate planet and became the Cryptominds of Sphinx. Removed from the distractions of biological life, they still ponder the secrets of the universe and reach the very edges of thought. Many seek these disembodied philosophers for counsel and analysis of complex problems.

During the same centuries, the Genesis Adepts developed a new breed of Dominar. This new soldier was a genetically-enhanced super-soldier no longer reliant on cybernetics or machine technology. The Tyrant spared no expense to breed legions of his new soldiers. He also poured resources into the construction of a fleet that overshadowed any before it. The Genesis Adepts also created the Mirror Men: shape-shifting clones based on alien genetics. These wonderful, terrible creations would serve as entertainers, spies, and assassins for the Tyrant and the Pharisto houses.

Second Nihilim Invasions

Just as the Dominion began to prosper, the Nihilim invaded once more. This second incursion was just as swift as the first, but this one dwarfed the previous in scope and ferocity. With no machine armies and the new Dominar fleet still in production, the Dominion was hard pressed during the Second Nihilim Invasions. Pouring out of a new spatial rift, the invaders advanced on the Dominion with

planet after planet falling to the might of the Nihilim. Xenophon's reign ended after about 16,000 years when the Nihilim landed on Baroque and overwhelmed its defences. The Tyrantine Fortress fell to the invaders, and the Tyrant Xenophon was killed. Baroque, the capitol planet of the Dominion, was occupied for the first time in fifty-five millennia.

Battlemasters of Worth

All appeared lost. The Dominion had lost the leadership of their Tyrant and their resolve. Against all odds, a small fleet appeared over Baroque and liberated the planet from the Nihilim. This fleet—commanded by ancient allies of the Tyrant, the Battlemasters of Worth—deployed incredibly destructive weapons and drove the Nihilim back from the capitol planet. In addition, newly-arrived troop carriers spewed forth hordes of Voghr. The Voghr, an alien species of warlike brutes proved an effective counter to the Nihilim ground forces. This became a rallying cry for the rest of the Dominion and brought hope to the fighters. The newly inspired defenders, along with the new Dominar fleet, rallied and forced the Nihilim to retreat.

Reign of Charon — 88,000 years

Rise of the Battlemasters

When Charon, the fourth revenant incarnation of the Tyrant, was birthed from genesis tanks of the Adepts, he granted rulership of many planets to the Battlemasters of Worth, for they had helped to liberate these planets from the

Nihilim. The Pharisto houses had lost these worlds during the invasions, and they took personally the Tyrant's rewarding of the Battlemasters. The might and success of the Voghr also prompted Charon to declare that his Dominars be grafted with the genetic make-up of the Voghr. This improvement made the Dominars larger, stronger, and arguably the best warriors in the galaxy.

All told, it took eight centuries to dislodge the Nihilim from the planets of the Dominion. It was learned that the inter-dimensional invaders had been drawn to the Dominion by the prana—the extrasensory gift—of the Pharistos. The Nihilim harvest and use the prana energy of living beings to sustain themselves and their bio-mechanical technology. Having stripped bare their universe and perhaps others, they had turned their insatiable hunger to the Baroqueverse.

Pharisto Quiescence

Charon decreed that all Pharistos were to be immediately Quiesced; that is, genetically divested of their prana abilities. To refuse was to commit arch heresy, a sentence that carried the ultimate punishment: disembodiment. Disembodiment was used during the Nihilim Invasions to transplant a living mind into a machine for use as an engine of war, made possible through the science of psitronics. The threat of the Nihilim made the majority of the Pharistos compliant, but some refused, invoking their right as Pharistos to stand above the common gene-stock they ruled. They became known as the Kundalini, the awakened, and the Tyrant and his regime ruthlessly hunt them down.

Eidolon Constructed

The Tyrant ordered the construction of an immense moon station over Baroque named Eidolon. Its purpose: to guard the planet against any future invasion. A planetoid was captured on the edge of the Baroque system and towed into orbit around the planet. The new moon was outfitted with gigantic lightpacer drives and awesome weaponry. In an act of vanity, the Tyrant's face was carved onto the planetoid, a gigantic visage which keeps constant watch over the golden planet. Within the hollowed-out planetoid, workers constructed the Secret City to serve as the Tyrant's private refuge and command centre. The eye sockets of the face were outfitted with projector beams, powerful enough to cause widespread devastation to the surface of a large planet and outright destruction of a moon or planetoid.

Peregrine Hierarchy Founded

Charon continued subjugating the Kundalini who refused to be Quiesced. Fortunately for the heretics, the Nihilim strengthened their attacks, and the Dominion's forces diverted to the war front. The Kundalini arch heretics took this opportunity to retreat beyond the borders of the Dominion and take their resources and servants with them. The Peregrine Hierarchy formed as a collection of aligned planets populated by these refugees.

Void Weaver Genesis

During this time, a sect of Theors developed a new form of space travel. The Loom Drive folded the fabric of space and time to allow almost instantaneous transit between two points in space, no matter the distance. This was an incredible improvement over the superluminal drives that had existed since before the inception of the Dominion. This Theor sect monopolized this technology, renaming themselves the Void Weavers.

The Loom Drive changed the nature of war with the Nihilim. The Dominion could now strike deep into Nihilim space, weakening defences and confining them to a number of border planets. The Battlemasters of Worth brought their weapons to bear on the invaders, this time with the element of surprise. Their ambushes scattered the Nihilim forces. The Second Nihilim Invasions came to an end after 2,400 years.

Transmuter Genesis

The next 25,000 years were a period of recovery and growth in relative stability and peace. A sect of Theors, the Transmuters, developed a sophisticated form of nanotechnology called Dust. Dust could change, create, and destroy matter. The Transmuters improved and refined Dust over millennia to the point where they could create atomic-scale clockwork mechanisms. The first Simulacra were created, intelligences inside clockwork-mechanical bodies, a modern replacement to the forbidden machines of the past. The Transmuters also fashioned other wonders. One such marvel was the Endless Engine, a clockwork perpetual-motion engine that continuously generates energy drawn from the fabric of the universe.

The Artilect War

On a routine patrol of the turbulent region of space known as the Whorl Nebula, the Watchers discovered a titanic structure unlike anything previously seen. The Artilects had constructed an extensive array of energy collectors and computational nodes. This sphere—called Dat—completely encased a star and harvested its stellar energy to convert into raw computational power.

The Artilects of Dat did not take kindly to the discovery of their refuge. The artificial intellects quickly mobilized their fleets and struck the Tyrantine Dominion with all their might. The Artilects feared that the Dominion wanted to erase their presence from the galaxy, and they were right. Driven by rage and vengeance, the Tyrant Charon launched his military might against the machines. He made it his personal mission to see every artificial mind eradicated from the face of the galaxy.

However, the Artilects of Dat proved to be capable adversaries, for their technological base had not suffered the decline that the Dominion's had. Though they were outnumbered, their production capabilities outpaced anything the Dominion could muster. The Artilects had advanced to the point where they had

stripped entire systems of resources in order to construct Dat and their immense fleet of war machines. The long-running war ebbed and flowed, the war front extending and retracting multiple times over the centuries.

Techno Scourge Unleashed

Near the end of the war, the Artilect forces had the upper hand. After millennia of combat, the Dominion had weakened. The Transmuters came to the Dominion's rescue with a new, destructive derivative of Dust. This new technology, the Techno Scourge, was an artificial virus capable of disassembling cybernetic technology and rendering it inert. The Scourge was successful, and whole systems were reclaimed in a few scant years. It was not until too late that the Transmuters discovered the grave error of their creation. Something went wrong and when the Techno Scourge merged with the cybernetic machinery of the Artilects, it developed a malignant sentience and began to spread. It began to take over the planets it had been released on, twisting and transforming their technological base into something alien and horrific. A whole sector was abandoned when the plague took hold across its worlds. The infected area of space became known as the dreaded Scourged Planets. Worse still, it began to spread with the refugees who fled; taking hold and infecting ships and technologies they brought with them.

Artilects Defeated

Rather than risk the infection of Dat by the Techno Scourge, the Artilects withdrew to their refuge, and deployed a defensive network, outfitted with sensors and devastating weaponry, stretching for light years around Dat. A long, drawn-out cold war began between the Dominion and the Artilects of Dat; it continues still.

The Tyrant Charon accepted his bittersweet victory and turned his attention to rebuilding and restoring the former glory of the Dominion. The first order of business was to put the Scourged Planets under quarantine and to cleanse them using whatever means necessary. A Dominion blockade enforced this interdiction. Although the plague had spread to other Dominion planets, its spread was slow, and the infection small enough to halt or quarantine. Since the Techno Scourge required technology to spread, creating a non-technological barrier around the infection limited its growth. If this failed, entire planets were sterilized or outright destroyed by the Dominion fleet.

Tixal's Betrayal

The long years of war with the Artilects provoked bitterness in many. Tixal was such a one; he had been a Battlemaster and one of Charon's War Council. He lost his family when Charon ordered Komotos sterilized from the Techno Scourge. The cleansing of the planet came before ships could evacuate it. Tixal's grief drove him to decapitate Tyrant Charon in grief, and the Zenithralls—hand-chosen of the Tyrant—immediately cut him down.

Reign of Typhon — 6,000 years to present

Typhon's Pogrom

The Tyrant Typhon inherited a destabilized empire and more enemies than any other Tyrant before him. Recognizing his precarious position, Typhon focused on strengthening the empire and his rule. He decreed a purge of his enemies, both real and perceived. This period became known as *Typhon's Pogrom.* His first order declared the Battlemasters of Worth heretics. His second dispatched Proxicutioners to eliminate many within the Pharisto houses and Theor sects that he perceived as opponents.

Fall of the Battlemasters

As the Pogrom continued, the Dominion fleet surrounded Worth, the home planet of the Battlemasters. The destruction was widespread, and the surprise attack rendered the planet uninhabitable. The Battlemasters and their fleets scattered to the corners of the Dominion. Typhon dared not pursue those who escaped the massacre; he knew the Battlemasters still retained powerful weapons in their arsenal. In one of these far corners, they found a formerly unknown planet and colonized it, calling it Suprema. They turned their attention to perfecting the art of warfare and became the ultimate order of warriors. To this day rumours persist that the Battlemasters hid weapon caches throughout Dominion space, in case their order was wiped out. The Battlemasters did not wish to concede such weapons to the Tyrant—for fear he would misuse them—they hid them to await a time of need, when the enemies of humanity might return and the Battlemasters will be called upon once more.

When the Battlemasters scattered, they left behind the species they had uplifted: the Voghr. The Tyrant decreed that their homeworld, Vog, be designated as forbidden, fearing that they might rise up against the Dominion in retaliation. Those Voghr already off-planet made a life for themselves as best they could, with many becoming mercenaries, and some finding their way back to the Battlemasters they venerate.

Oppression

For the past 2,000 years, the Dominion has endured a time of relative peace. The Nihilim make no significant incursions. The Artilects of Dat maintain their stable but fragile cold war with the Dominion. The Peregrine Hierarchy continues to defy the Tyrant. Typhon strengthens his iron-fisted rule by oppression. He seeks to beat down all opposition, whether it exists or not. This extreme enforcement of his will provokes the enmity of his subjects. Supporters are quick to point out that the regime's rule is harsh but has brought a measure of prosperity and growth unseen for millennia.

Discontent

Today, the Tyrant rules from his Tyrantine Fortress on Baroque. His subjects are no longer able to contain their discontent for his brutal regime; there are whispers on the wind of rebellion and change. Too many have endured hardship and misery. The Pharisto houses still vie for power and prestige; they plot the day they might sit atop the Tyrant's throne. Their petty vendettas destabilize planets and bring unnecessary strife to many. The Peregrine Hierarchy infiltrates the Houses and spreads rumours and lies. This fomenting fuels more internal conflict that gnaws at the foundations of the Dominion.

To make matters worse, the horrific Nihilim stir once more on the outskirts of the Dominion, their hunger growing each day.

Silently, a grave threat stalks the planets of the Dominion infecting and enslaving the minds of its citizenry. There is a feeling of tension and fear.

The Dominion has become a powder keg, and the Tyrant is too blind to see it.

Chapter Three
Pharisto Houses

When the Tyrant Aristonymus ordered the Genesis Adepts to create thirteen genetic lineages to rule his Dominion, the Pharisto houses were born. These lineages have multiplied and prospered over one hundred forty-nine millennia to become the gods and rulers of the Tyrantine Dominion. The thirteen houses and their Syndicates manage the day-to-day affairs of every planet, station, and outpost of the Dominion. It is they who keep the cogs of industry and finance turning. They have cultivated the belief among their subjects that they are divine and rightful. The humans they rule view them with reverence and fear. Absolute obedience is not an option; it is divine law. The Pharistos have nurtured these beliefs carefully over millennia, sometimes through harsh and brutal enforcement.

Each Pharisto house is led by an Archon: the eldest and wisest. The Archon is the undisputed authority when it comes to house policy and law. The Archons are expected to direct the house in Dominion politics. They answer to the Tyrant and are subject to his punishments for failure. Should an Archon fail their house too often, they may be prematurely retired through character assassination or murder. The Archon must not only increase the fortunes of their house, but also to fend off treachery and power struggles, which run rampant within the houses.

Thirteen Lineages

The thirteen lineages, or houses, as they are commonly known, are a product of early genetic manipulation by the Genesis Adepts. They are members of the Deipotents: a collective term for the genetically superior rulers of the Dominion. The lineages are bound by blood of the very first Pharistos. Each has grown into a large, extended family whose members can trace their ancestry to a single source. Their origins are largely forgotten after so many millennia, but the blood ties remain strong. The lineages have come to control all aspects of Dominion industry, from food production to voidship construction. Each lineage has come to dominate one of the industries and has established itself as the dominant player in that industry. The lineages are not only focused on their primary industry, but they also extend their reach into other industries, and they do this continuously, in an attempt to disrupt their rivals. Though their numbers are small when compared to the teeming masses they rule, the power they wield is tremendous. Humanity has been conditioned to worship them as

gods—the Host Of The Tyrant Sun. To defy them, is to defy the Tyrant, and that invites death, or worse.

Zodiac of Rulership

One of the principal traditions of the Dominion is the Zodiac of Rulership. A zodiac of signs determines which Pharisto house is entitled to rule a given planet. This tradition was originally established by Aristonymus during the inception of the Pharisto lineages, at the dawn of the Dominion. The Zodiac is based on the principal constellations visible from Baroque, the Tyrant's capitol planet. Baroque has thirteen zodiacal signs which rule its skies.

The precession of these signs repeats approximately every 26,000 years on Baroque. This effect is caused by the axial tilt of the planet as well as the movement of the planet around its sun. The sign which the sun appears to be in front of determines which age the planet is in. Each age lasts approximately 2,000 years long on Baroque. The exact time of each age varies from planet to planet. Each Dominion planet is assigned thirteen signs in its sky denoted by constellations. These constellations—the symbols representing each house—are chosen by the Rhetors of The Body Of The Tyrant when the planet is first colonized.

When the sun—and by extension, the Tyrant Sun—is in one of the houses of the zodiac, the Pharisto house represented by that sign is given rulership of the planet. In this manner, each house takes the reins of power on every planet when its age in the precessional cycle comes around. Ages vary between 1,600 and 2,200 years on average, and during this time, a single house is in ascension on a given planet.

The Tyrant long ago established the Zodiac of Rulership in order to keep the Pharisto houses in line; to prevent a single house from surpassing the others and threatening his rule. As the precession of the zodiac cycles, each house has its chance to rise in power on a given planet. This rise does not last forever, and eventually another house will take the reins. The Zodiac of Rulership keeps the houses in constant competition with each other, but also ensures that houses may not war with each other in order to secure a planet.

A house must spend centuries before its sign ascends to establish a solid foothold on a planet. Likewise, once the age of a house passes, it must work hard to maintain its grip on a planet. The ascendant house is at a great advantage to take what the previous house held—if they are clever. Since open warfare endangers the stability of the Dominion, the Tyrant has decreed it as strictly forbidden. This has given rise to the Feud by Proxy style of conflict through the use of Syndicates and third-parties.

Lineage Planets

In antiquity, each Pharisto house was granted a single planet to serve. These lineage planets have been granted an exclusive status, exempt from the traditions of the Zodiac of Rulership. Each house has held the reins of power on their lineage

planet since the inception of the Pharistos. These thirteen planets lie in close vicinity to Baroque, the seat of power.

The Order Of Things

There are established and inviolate traditions to every social interaction among the Pharistos. Each Pharisto is conditioned from birth to follow and obey these ancient forms. The Order Of Things defines a strict code, which dictates how a Pharisto should approach social situations. Even a greeting among Pharistos appears as a long and drawn out affair to the uninitiated, as if the Pharistos are unaware of the passage of time. Words are spoken, proper responses are given, and motions are made. To the Pharistos, traditions are a key component of every social interaction and a fundamental requirement of communication. The ways of humanity are uncouth, unstructured, and lacking proper respect. This is why the Pharistos rule, and man must serve.

The Order of Things contains innumerable traditions that were established during the nascent centuries of the Dominion. The Order of Things is based upon six fundamental and inviolate axioms that govern all other traditions.

Dominant Absolute

The Tyrant is the ordained and absolute ruler of the Dominion. None are his equal. None stand above him. This axiom reinforces and legitimizes the authority of the Tyrant while ensuring that none may lay claim or inherit the position; it establishes that the Tyrant's power is eternal and undisputed.

Divine Rulership

The Pharistos are the rightful and divine rulers of humanity, shepherding them in the name of the Tyrant. The right of the Pharistos is inviolate, established through superior genetics and sanctified by the Tyrant's authority. The Pharistos are superior in every way, and must be treated with the utmost respect, reverence, and obedience. To defy the authority of the gods is to defy the Tyrant.

Exquisite Decorum

Protocol and tradition are to govern all aspects of Pharisto daily life. The Pharistos are representatives of authority; they must present the proper decorum when interacting with others. The Pharisto must obey the traditions at all times. To disregard protocol is to debase oneself among peers and subjects. Pharistos are required to personify their authority and station, dressing in exquisite fashions and maintaining the appearance of rightful rulers.

Vested Armistice

Open feuds among the thirteen lineages are strictly forbidden, and the spilling of Pharisto blood by another Pharisto is taboo. All forms of physical conflict between Pharistos are explicitly forbidden, as they are an affront to the very

nature of their divinity. Disagreements must be resolved through the ritual of the Cutting Words: a formal, rhetorical duel where each side attempts to embarrass and discredit the other.

Exalted Delegation

The Pharistos are the rulers of humanity and are beyond humanity's reach. A selected caste of worthy humanity is to be exalted above others. These chosen shall be elevated and marked as trusted servants of the divine rulers. This appointment is hereditary, and subsequent generations must be trained and conditioned to serve. Those of elevated status may approach and interact with the Pharisto rulers; for the non-elevated, it is strictly forbidden to address or touch a Deipotent. The Elevated are the intermediaries between humanity and their rulers.

Illuminated Path

The Tyrantine Dominion guards and protects humanity from the dangers of the universe. This singular vision of the Tyrant brings peace and prosperity to humanity in an uncaring universe filled with chaos. It is the oath of the Pharistos that humanity must be protected, at all costs, from dangers within and without. The Pharistos must ensure peace, stability, and the continued existence of humanity, above all else.

Host Of The Tyrant Sun

The Pharistos are universally worshipped, and believed to be a host of gods by the humanity they rule. These gods are the direct vessels through which the Tyrant Sun rules the universe. The Pharistos organize themselves into a pantheon based on whatever responsibilities they hold within society. The Pharisto's word is law, and one must obey the word of a god. The houses enjoy mass servitude and obedience as a result of their deified status.

This belief is fuelled daily by the Rhetors of The Body Of The Tyrant and reinforced through worship, sacrifice, and sermon. For the teeming masses, the conditioning is undeniable; they believe that the Pharistos are a host of gods who serve the ultimate creator and god: the Tyrant Sun. Those who choose to disbelieve this truth are branded as Arch Heretics.

Pharisto Society

The Pharisto houses are a gerontocracy where the eldest and wisest rule, and the youngest must obey. The younger Pharistos choke under the traditions of the house, only to embrace them later in life, after they become older and wiser themselves. The longevity of the Pharistos makes advancement difficult where age is concerned. This has sparked a great deal of paranoia among the Pharistos in power, and a great deal of mistrust between scions of each house.

Dominion society is stratified both physically and socially; the Pharistos inhabit the highest levels of society. On technologically developed planets, Pharistos live

atop arcoziggurats—huge stepped pyramidal habitats—and upper city levels; only rarely do their feet touch the dirt below. On more primitive worlds, the Pharistos inhabit massive temple complexes and holy sites. The Pharistos consider humanity as dirty, lowly, and beneath them. They erect walls, both ideological and physical, to keep the lower humanity out of sight. Only a small number of elevated humans are permitted direct access to the Pharisto rulers. On occasion, Pharistos venture out to human markets and settlements, mostly out of curiosity, and rarely out of interest in their subjects.

Pharistos are driven by the same base passions as humans, albeit to a lesser degree. Their behaviour is governed by the ancient forms and traditions of The Order of Things. Pharisto conditioning ensures that passions and non-traditional behaviour is not expressed in public, but younger Pharistos are more rebellious and prone to minor transgressions against The Order of Things. These transgressions are not taken lightly by Pharisto society as a whole, and lessons are quickly learned.

Due to the constant Feud by Proxy, which consumes each house, Pharistos are paranoid when it comes to stepping out of their safe zones. When out in public, Pharistos wear the Shimmering Veil: an apparatus fashioned into a uniquely intricate necklace that creates a visual and electromagnetic distortion field around the wearer. The veil effectively hides the identity of the Pharisto in order to thwart spying and assassination attempts.

Centenarian Pharistos tend towards boredom after living for centuries, as life begins to lose its colour, and excitement is harder to come by. There is very little that they have not seen or experienced. Many of these Pharistos engage in activities that provide a certain measure of uncertainty to their otherwise predictable lives. They dedicate themselves to difficult pursuits as a type of achievement among their peers. Some engage in extreme sports that entail some possibility of death. Others take less savoury paths and degenerate into sadism, hedonism, and pursuit of ever more obscure pleasures. Some go even further, and engage in The Wild Hunt: the hunting of armed and dangerous heretics for sport. Though there might be danger involved, the Pharistos are always better equipped and at a significant advantage to their prey. There are some who better equip their prey, preferring to hunt using only primitive implements and relying only on their skills. Hunters of that persuasion tend to be of Valhellion or Toltequatl lineages.

Pharisto Fashion

Pharistos take fashion very seriously, dressing not only to look good but also to outdo their peers, and to communicate their station. Fashion takes centre stage in the halls of the Pharistos; what one wears is as much a reflection of wealth and position as it is of status among peers. There are protocols within the Order of Things that delineate what sort of fashion is permissible for a Pharisto based on station. The protocols are so convoluted and arbitrary that only a Pharisto with a

lifetime of fashion sense could truly grasp all of the intricacies.

What a Pharisto wears tells much about who they are and how much power they wield. Pharisto clothing is embossed with Hieriatic script and imagery to communicate the station and authority of the wearer. When two Pharistos meet and exchange greetings, they do so in full cognizance of each other's position within the social pecking order. These pompous displays of fashion are also meant to impress and awe the human population.

> Pharisto status and wealth are a combination of three skills: Influence, Presence, and Resources (see Skills, page 285).

Luxurious displays of wealth in one's fashion are an important aspect of Pharisto one-upmanship. Clothing tends to be regal, gaudy, and colourful; it incorporates the colours of the Pharisto house, as well as the personal touch of the fashion designer. Elaborate headpieces are an important component of any outfit, giving an extra burst of pomp and importance. Other accessories, such as scepters, rods, staves, and orbs help to complete the look, and often provide some sort of technological function.

Fashion designers are very popular and well coddled by their Pharisto patrons. Many designers are Elevated humans who have shown great skill and imagination, but the best designers tend to be a select few Pharistos. Wearing fashions created by the most favoured designers of the day is an indication of great influence.

Skin tinting is as much a part of fashion as the clothing. Many Pharistos use semi-permanent dyes to alter the colour of their skin. Those who can afford it visit the Genesis Adepts for a more permanent alteration that does not fade. Pharistos tend towards bright or pastel colours that complement their outfits. Soldiers and those following martial persuasions tend towards darker and deeper colours.

Philosophical Views

Division amongst the Pharistos occurs not only through lineages but also through contrasting philosophies. There are a number of competing and often incompatible views among the Pharistos that further complicate the political landscape of the Dominion. These competing views are the very cause of many ongoing feuds.

Perpetualists

The Dominion has endured in its current state for almost one hundred fifty millennia because the majority of Pharistos believe in the Perpetualist view of things. Perpetualists believe that the Order of Things is immutable and must

endure. They believe that only through the Order of Things can stability be maintained and chaos kept at bay. The Tyrant is the ultimate constant and the compass needle for the Universe. He is the radiant sun, which lights the way and burns away the shadows that lurk behind every corner.

Transformists

The Transformists believe that the Dominion cannot endure another hundred millennia without change. The current and static Order of Things strangles the potential that the Dominion could achieve, were it not constrained by strict traditions set forth by the Tyrant and the Archons. They point out the turbulent history of the Dominion and how inflexibility and narrow-mindedness have nearly led to its downfall, multiple times. Transformists believe that the Order of Things must evolve and be flexible as events unfold. They believe that the rules are malleable when the situation warrants it. Though the Transformists advocate flexibility and change, they are still stout defenders of the Order of Things.

Elevationists

The Elevationists have become the black sheep of the Pharistos. Elevationists believe that the genetic superiority and godhood of the Pharistos goes against universal equality. These Pharistos are of the mind that humanity and aliens should have the same rights as them. They believe that all life is sacred, and we are all one with the universe. Elevationist views skirt the heretical, and their numbers are few. Should their philosophy become more prevalent, it would no doubt draw the attention of the Hereseers. Even for the Peregrine Hierarchy, these views run counter to their interpretation of the Order of Things. The Hereseers keep a watchful eye on those who have espoused their Elevationist views. Those who do, often do so with subtlety and subterfuge.

Revolutionaries

Branded as Arch Heretics, the Revolutionaries seek to depose the Tyrant and to overthrow the perpetual Order of Things. They are willing to achieve their ends through any means available and at any cost. There are many Pharistos who wish to see the Tyrant overthrown for good; for some, because they wish to seize power, for others, to enact fundamental changes that would end the current oppressive order. The Hereseers are on constant watch for these individuals, and exchange of these ideas is kept to the most secret of chambers and communications. All planets harbour revolutionaries, and it is suspected that all rebellions begin because of Pharisto instigation.

House Feuds

The Pharisto houses have been feuding for millennia. By nature, Pharistos are a self-centred and self-serving lot. They vie with each other for prestige and influence over their subjects and rivals. Each house is not only at odds with the

other houses, but scions of the same house compete among each other. The main glue which keeps the house members together are financial interests and vendettas with the rival houses over slights, which may or may not be remembered after the passage of millennia. This does not stop the houses from feuding; new slights are perpetrated for each old one forgotten.

Feud by Proxy

The axiom of Vested Armistice forbids the Pharisto houses from warring amongst each other. Any act that destabilizes the Dominion is considered heresy and punished accordingly. The house Archons fear to attract the Tyrant's gaze and keep the scions of their house under constant watch. The threat of the Dominar Legions is enough to keep the houses in line. Not able to openly attack their rivals, the Pharistos have resorted to a shadowy form of warfare commonly referred to as Feud by Proxy.

The houses are not permitted to raise their own armies, though they are permitted to hire mercenaries. These mercenaries are used as house enforcers and are often themselves members of a Syndicate. The houses and their Syndicates use these mercenaries to protect their investments and facilities. A plethora of mercenary Syndicates and independents exist to sell their services to the highest bidder.

Proxicutioners are the most heavy-handed weapon available in the Feud by Proxy. These secretive and deadly assassins work for whoever is able to hire them, and they rarely fail in their assignment. Pharistos deploy Proxicutioners for the permanent removal of their rivals. Use of Proxicutioners is reserved for the most serious feuds, where much is at stake.

Cutting Words

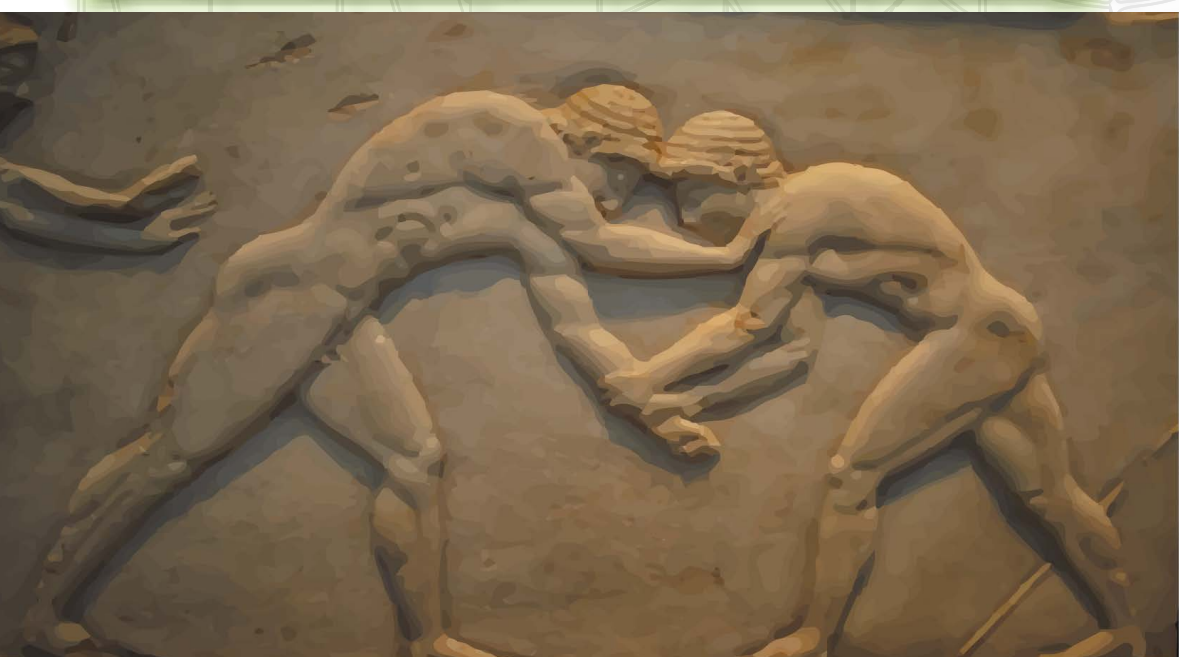
Within Pharisto society, physical conflict is taboo. This cultural development has produced a rhetorical contest called the Cutting Words: an exchange of subtle insults and double entendres meant to embarrass and harm the reputation of the opponent, while maintaining proper decorum. The conflict of Cutting Words ends when one side is embarrassed, and made small, by the verbal superiority of their opponent. Cutting Words are the accepted method for resolving disputes among Pharistos. There are protocols within the Order of Things that make clear the winner of this contest. These contests are conducted in public, with as large an audience as possible, in order to maximize the damage done to the opponent's influence and status. Pharistos flock to witness these verbal duels. The loser must comply with the demands of the winner regarding the conflict. Many conflicts occur with the sole intent to damage the reputation and standing of the opponent.

Affrey

An Affrey is a physical duel between Pharistos of a martial persuasion. The Affrey goes against the axioms of the Order of Things, but its use is often overlooked when discretion is exercised. These duels are always conducted in private spaces, without an audience, except the closest of allies. The formal signal to initiate and accept an Affrey is to touch one's mouth with the palm of the hand, then to put the hand on the hilt of a weapon. Declining an Affrey is indicated with a simple bow. Affrey duels are fought for honour, prestige, and as an alternate means of resolving disputes between martial Pharistos. Declining an Affrey is not seen as cowardly; rather it indicates that the dispute will be resolved with the Cutting Words.

Affrey duels are always fought in close combat, using only a single bladed weapon, and without the use of technology and armour. No humans, including the Elevated, may witness two Pharistos duelling; the protocols are absolutely strict on this. The Affrey ends as soon as first blood touches a blade. As with the Cutting Words, the loser of the Affrey must concede defeat and must accept the victor's demands. Affreys are rarely fought only to harm the opponent, though it has been known to happen between hateful rivals. Death is not unheard of in these duels. In the past Pharistos have been gravely injured during an Affrey; an unintended lucky blow could kill an opponent.

> Killing an opponent in an Affrey has dire consequences for the Pharisto. Murder, no matter the circumstances, goes against the inviolate protocols of the Order Of Things.



House Syndicates

The Pharisto houses maintain their fortunes though a complex hierarchy of Syndicates: house-controlled financial interests operated by Elevated servants. A Syndicate focuses on one type of product or technology, providing services from personal security and architecture, to bounty hunting and voidship construction, and everything in between. Anything not exclusively controlled by the Theor sects falls under the purview of the Syndicates.

The Elevated who administer these Syndicates are called Syndicatemen, though women also comprise their ranks. They possess great power and influence on behalf of their Pharisto masters. A Lugal may rule a planet, but it is the Pharistos who possess significant influence with the financial and political backing of their Syndicates. The largest Syndicates are openly owned by the Pharisto houses, but there are smaller, less known Syndicates whose true ownership is publicly unknown, kept secret behind a carefully maintained veil of secrecy and convoluted financing. The Pharistos use these particular Syndicates as pawns in their nefarious plans against rivals.

The Syndicates have taken a life of their own, having spread their own tendrils throughout society and developed their own power base. After millennia of growth and scheming, the Syndicates have become nearly-independent entities that possess a significant level of influence and power within the regime. Using financial leverage and political scheming based on supply and demand, the Syndicates engage in complex manoeuvring against other Syndicates. Competition occasionally turns violent as bands of mercenaries raid and disrupt rival operations. Syndicates are permitted to clash openly, as long as Pharistos are not directly involved, and collateral damage is kept to a minimum. The Tyrant is less concerned with the little games the Pharistos play with their pawns than he is with maintaining political stability of the ruling elite. Conflicts that escalate eventually draw the attention of the Tyrant's enforcers. The Syndicatemen are perfectly aware that they are pawns in an elaborate game of move and counter-move; this they ignore on account of their privilege and status. Though manipulated by and subservient to their Pharisto masters, the Syndicates still manage a high level of independence.

The top Syndicates are described for each house, though there are many more. Feel free to create your own, or steal ideas from the ones provided. They serve as a reference for names and industries when you need some quickly.

Houses of the Zodiac

In the early days of the Dominion, the Tyrant had thirteen lineages genetically engineered from the finest genetic stock of the time. The thirteen houses of the Zodiac were born. Each lineage has grown over the millennia, interbred, and formed into familial lines, which dominate all aspects of the Dominion.

House Attributes

The thirteen Pharisto houses are outlined below. Each house has an official name that is derived from the name of the original founder; it also has a common name that is used when referring to members of that house. The house name and common name are used interchangeably. The Zodiac of Rulership determines which house rules a planet during a given age of the zodiac. The most common signs associated with the house are listed; they differ from planet to planet. The Lineage planet of the house is named (see Locations, page 166), as is the industry the house dominates.

The Pharisto houses are based on the 12 signs of the Astrological Zodiac (and also include Ophiuchus). The personality of each house is directly derived from the "personality" of each sign.

House Aspects

Each house has a number of Aspects associated with it. These Aspects are representative of the majority of scions who trace their lineage to that house. They are by no means representative of all members. How you use these Aspects is up to you. Some possible uses might be to make them available to a Pharisto on their own planet, or where their house has a lot of influence. Another might be to use them when you need an NPC or a Situation Aspect for an encounter. They can be easily used for members of a house, in a pinch.

House Val-Hel

Common Name: Valhellion
Zodiacal Signs: Warrior, Mountain, Lightning
Lineage Planet: Hyperborea (page 188)
Primary Industry: Weapons
Aspects:

That Which Does Not Kill Us Makes Us Stronger
We Only Follow the Strong
You Dare Our Wrath?!

The Val-Hel are a house ruled by martial prowess and pride. Valhellions respect those who exhibit strength, ingenuity, and determination. The house is quick to anger, does not forget slights, and holds many upon many grudges. The Valhellion forces are often the first into battle against the enemies of the Dominion. The house has earned the ire of the Tyrant on a number of occasions with its hotheadedness and transgressions against the Feud By Proxy traditions. In at least two instances, in the ancient past, the house was sternly punished, and the former house Archon suffered the personal wrath of the Tyrant.

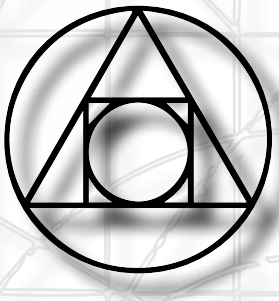
Valhellion-manufactured weaponry is considered the best in the Dominion. The Val-Hel Syndicates have cornered the market on reliable and destructive weaponry of every type. They manufacture every kind of weapon, from personal hand-helds to voidship-mounted projectors. Many of the advances in destructive weaponry have originated within the laboratories of the Val-Hel Syndicates.

Major Syndicates

Aesir Systems: The Aesir Syndicate manufactures all types of personal weaponry and armour. Aesir has a solid reputation for extremely reliable projectors and body armour.

Mjolnir Void: The Mjolnir Syndicate develops void-based weaponry: projectors, flack systems, torpedoes, orbital bombardment systems, etc. Mjolnir has also developed a number of ground-to-orbit defence systems, but their focus is on direct assault.

Ragnarok Payloads: Some of the most destructive and controlled weapon systems available to the Dominion are the products of the Ragnarok Syndicate. Abrogate Despoilers and Stellar Agitators were first developed by Ragnarok (see Technosophy, page 134).



House Bal-Amon

Common Name: Balammun
Zodiacal Signs: Horned Beast, Square, Triangle
Lineage Planet: Thule (page 229)
Primary Industry: Construction
Aspects:

We Build to Last an Eternity
Seek after the Beautiful Things in Life
Achievement Is Everything!

House Bal-Amon are the master builders of the Dominion. They are responsible for the most incredible edifices, temples, palaces, and power plants; all based on the basic principles of sacred geometry. It is the Balammun who provide clean and natural power to all the cities, colonies, and outposts. Their resonant pyramids and lay-vortex pylons fill the terrestrial power needs of every technologically-advanced planet. The edifices raised by house Bal-Amon are designed to stand for eternity; some are still standing after a hundred thousand years.

Scions of house Bal-Amon are hedonists of the highest order. They love to enjoy the beauty they have created and the recognition it brings them. Balammun always dress in exquisite finery embossed with the symbols of sacred geometry. They are easily impressed by beauty and seek to surround themselves with it constantly. Members of the lineage are in constant competition with each other on who can raise the largest monument.

Major Syndicates

Djed Power: Djed Power is the most prominent of the Bal-Amon Syndicates. The Syndicate designs and constructs natural power plants based on natural energy grids, which permeate almost every planet. It also builds structures that tap into the natural resonance of a planet to generate power. Djed is a major supplier of energy throughout the Dominion.

Taurus Edifice: The Taurus Edifice Syndicate constructs many of the temples and palaces found throughout the Dominion. The Syndicate enjoys a high level of demand for their incredible designs and constructions.

Firmament Haven: The Syndicate designs and constructs many havens which are found orbiting planets throughout the Dominion.

House Osi-Ra

Common Name: Osirian
Zodiacal Signs: Twins, Intertwined Snakes, Ankh
Lineage Planet: Sothis (page 218)
Primary Industry: Biotechnosophy
Aspects:

Uncovering Life's Mysteries
All Will Be Healed
Working towards Change

The house of Osi-Ra have always been masters of biotechnosophy. Some say they were the very first Pharistos created by the Genesis Adepts. They were taught some of the secrets of life by the Adepts and have continued this tradition since. The Osirians have since cornered the biotechnosophy market in accessible longevity treatments and technology. Syndicatemen of the Osi-Ra are commonly known as *Bioviziers.*

Scions of Osi-Ra are well known for their care of the injured and sick. The Osirians have garnered a reputation as trusted healers among the other houses to such a degree that they are perhaps the only house that is not involved in any notable feuds—a fact no other house may lay claim to. The lineage believes that the current Order of Things may be changed only through devotion and dedication through peaceful and notable works. The majority of house scions believe in the Transformist political view. This has not done much to endear the house in the eyes of the Tyrant. In spite of this, the trust and sacrifices the house has made have given the Osi-Ra a high level of clout and genuine respect in Pharisto society.

Major Syndicates

Ankh Longevity: The Genesis Adepts may control the secret of creating Revenants, but life extension has been primarily researched and developed by Ankh. This Syndicate develops the technology and research for other Syndicates, who provide services to Pharistos and Elevated humans.

Ptah Creations: The Ptah Syndicate is concerned with the uplift of primitive species and the genetic manipulation of gene lines for the production of new biological life forms. The Ptah Syndicate is also involved in the colonization of other planets by crafting tailor-made organisms. The Syndicate competes directly with the Genesis Adepts, but many consider Ptah's work inferior, yet cheaper.

Ashvin Salubrity: This Syndicate is primarily concerned with providing healing and care to the humans of the Dominion. The Syndicate maintains a number of hospices and care centres for those who need it. You can find Ashvin Salubrity throughout the Dominated Planets, providing healing services to any who seek it.

House Xi-An

Common Name: Xianxi
Zodiacal Signs: Clawed Beast, Eye, Trinity of Stars
Lineage Planet: Takamagahara (page 223)
Primary Industry: Espionage
Aspects:

An Eye for an Eye
No Secret Is Truly Hidden
Honour and Loyalty

House Xi-An has a reputation for being extremely dangerous, yet extremely trustworthy. The Xianxi are master spies, and their information networks know no bounds. It is said that if there is something to be found out, the Xianxi already know it. The house acts as an information broker for all other houses. House Xi-An has a trusted reputation for keeping secrets and upholding any contract to the letter. The other houses use the Xianxi to spy on their rivals, knowing at the same time that the Xianxi are also spying on them.

To cross the Xianxi is to invite terrible retribution. House Xi-An regards honour as the highest virtue. Should another house cross them, the Xianxi will take elaborate revenge using the secrets they have gleamed to punish, embarrass, or even eliminate their betrayer. The Xi-An require their contracts to be signed in blood by both parties.

Major Syndicates

Altai Awareness: Altai is the most respected and trusted source for acquiring nearly impossible to obtain information. The Altai are the preeminent information brokers in the Dominion. There are strong suspicions that the Syndicate is using Degenerate telepaths in their operations.

Yama Vindication: The Yama Syndicate is in a similar business as the Proxicutioners. Rather than merely eliminating their rivals, Pharistos hire this Syndicate to inflict social and financial sabotage on them.

Ying Assurance: The Ying are hired when a Pharisto or Elevated has reason to suspect that they are being targeted by their rivals. Ying Syndicatemen are experts in counter-intelligence and security, having a reputation for taking out Proxicutioners on a number of occasions. Ying services are very expensive and not always guaranteed to be successful.

House Tol-Teq

Common Name: Toltequatl
Zodiacal Signs: Feline Beast, Sphinx, Head
Lineage Planet: Aztlan (page 171)
Primary Industry: Trained Warriors
Aspects:

Lead by Example
I Am a Weapon
Death before Defeat!

Toltequatl govern themselves in true military fashion. House Tol-Teq is regimented and its members are professional and disciplined. Scions of the house are constantly seeking to improve their physical prowess and combat skills. Status and recognition within the house may only be gained through martial prowess and conquests. The Toltequatl hold great value in the chain of command, and acts of disobedience are punished harshly.

House Tol-Teq Syndicates command vast armies of mercenary ground forces, many of which are stationed as a planetary defence force on almost every Dominated Planet. Tol-Teq-trained warriors are considered the best and most disciplined throughout the Dominion. Tol-Teq forces often supplement the Dominion fleet and provide support on the ground for assaults. Toltequatl commanders are sought after as leaders of house armies.

Major Syndicates

Tzompantli Mercenaries: The Tzompantli Syndicate are mercenaries for hire, who work for the highest bidder. The Syndicate is not particularly picky on who hires them or for what purpose; they're willing to perform any job for the right price. The Tzompantli mercenaries are known for savage traditions like collecting skulls and sacrificing their captured enemies. The Tzompantli have a reputation as the most brutal mercenaries in the Dominion.

Aegis Command: This Syndicate operates military training schools for future battle commanders and warriors alike. The schools teach tactics for every situation encountered in the field. Aegis training is a status symbol among the military of the Dominion. Those who pass the training are awarded with a tattoo on the back of their hand that signifies their special training.

Azuzul Wartech: Azuzul Wartech manufactures personal weaponry and armour. Though the Syndicate produces projector weaponry, it is considered inferior to that produced by Aesir Systems. The Azuzul Syndicate is known for the best close-combat weaponry available. Their armours are well-made and have a good reputation for keeping a soldier alive in the thick of battle. The Syndicate also produces ground combat and water-borne vehicles.

House Mar-Duk

Common Name: Mardukutu
Zodiacal Signs: Virgin, Seed, Tree
Lineage Planet: Agartha (page 168)
Primary Industry: Terraforming
Aspects:

Building Better Worlds
Perfection Is the Ultimate Achievement
All Is Done in Service

The Mar-Duk are truly gods, capable of altering the environment of entire planets to their whim. The Mardukutu are masters of environmental manipulation through weather, atmosphere, and other planetary engineering sciences. The undertakings of House Mar-Duk take centuries and millennia to come to fruition, but patience is one of the virtues of this lineage. The Dominion depends on the expertise of the house in the colonization of newly discovered planets. The Mardukutu are able to transform a barely habitable planet into a veritable garden.

The Mardukutu are meticulous scientists who take great care to achieve the successful terraforming of a planet. Among house scions, attention to detail and perfection down to the smallest detail are praised and respected, above all else. The Mar-Duk have completely dedicated themselves to the mastery of planetary engineering. This drive for perfection has made them somewhat blind and ignorant of the aspirations of the other houses. House Mar-Duk is not known for its strength and prowess in the political arena. This is because scions of the house tend to be located in remote regions of the Dominion, engineering weather systems of entire planets yet to be colonized, rather than in the halls of politics and intrigue.

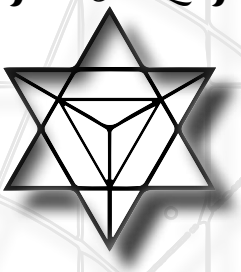
Major Syndicates

Ashur Terraforming: The Ashur Syndicate has been involved in the terraforming of almost every developed planet. They use natural processes to release certain trace gasses into the atmosphere in order to produce the desired climate, constructing gigantic atmospheric processors that rival the size of arcoziggurats.

Gia Geoengineering: Whenever whole landmasses must be reshaped during the terraforming process, the Gia Syndicate is involved. The Syndicate uses massive, autonomous drills and detonations deep inside the planet's deep crust to achieve spectacular results. It is said that the Gia Syndicate can move mountains—because they can. Other methods used by the Syndicate include comet seeding and staged asteroid impacts in order to flood and alter vast swaths of a planet.

Ao Atmospherics: The Ao Syndicate concerns itself with the manufacture, operation, and maintenance of weather control technologies. Their products include weather satellites, cloud seeders, solar reflectors, and other tools used to permanently or temporarily alter the climate of a planet.

House Elo-Him



Common Name: Elohist
Zodiacal Signs: Scales, Markabah, Omega
Lineage Planet: Unknown
Primary Industry: Security
Aspects:

Together We Stand
War Has No Winners
Justice and Integrity

House Elo-Him is best known for its levelheadedness and impartiality. No other house is trusted enough to arbitrate the disputes and grievances of the Pharisto lineages. House Elo-Him does not involve itself in the schemes and politicking of the Dominion; it maintains its true neutrality in order to resolve disputes and provide stability to the shaky relationships between the houses. The house is very serious and careful about maintaining a truly neutral stance; it avoids political entanglements that might make it appear biased, at all costs. Many of the other houses hire the Elohist to protect their assets and to guard their holdings.

Scions of the Elo-Him are great listeners and speakers. They have a reputation for fairness and diplomacy. All members are conditioned from an early age to abhor conflict and bloodshed. They are taught how to bring about non-violent resolutions to conflicts. However, the Elo-Him are also well taught in self-defence and non-lethal combat techniques. The house Syndicates are also well-equipped and trained in the use of deadly force should the need arise.

The house dedicated to security also possesses the most secure lineage planet. No one outside the house knows the location of the Elo-Him lineage planet or even its name, though it is commonly believed that the house's lineage planet is a haven hidden within the deep void.

Major Syndicates

Seraph Security: The Seraph Syndicate provides dependable and effective security for those who can afford it. Seraph is often hired to protect things of great value, as well as to provide security to Pharistos of great influence.

Baalat Counsellors: Baalat Counsellors are involved in mediating disputes and contractual disagreements. They are often called in to review evidence and to proceed over trials in the courts of the Dominion.

Zephon Seekers: Zephon Seekers are experts at tracking down and bringing in criminals and others wanted for specific reasons. The Zephon Syndicate are the preeminent bounty hunters of the Dominion.

House Ka-Chin

Common Name: Kachina
Zodiacal Signs: Chitinous Beast, Golden Sun, Rod
Lineage Planet: Delyahey (page 177)
Primary Industry: Resource Extraction
Aspects:

Only the Truth Matters
Destiny Is What You Make It
Stoic and Proud

Without House Ka-Chin, the Dominion would not have the materials and resources that enable it to thrive. The Kachinas operate every major resource extraction operation within the Dominion. Their operations are based on every resource-giving planet, on many planetoids, and even within the black void of space where they mine asteroids for rare riches. The house has developed and refined the technologies required to extract resources on a magnificent scale. Operations range from primitive, claustrophobic mines, to massive open quarries and gigantic operations that carve planetoids into pieces.

The scions of House Ka-Chin are driven, industrious individuals who are only concerned with the truth. They distrust ambiguity and double-speak, preferring to see the world as black and white; to the Kachinas, there are no shades of grey. Lying to a Kachina is the surest way to make an enemy. Their contracts are always fair and never broken.

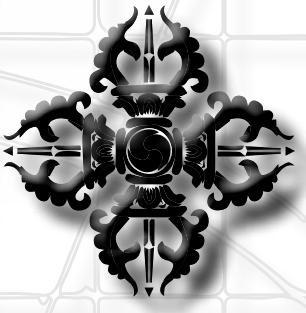
Major Syndicates

Tiamat Extraction: Tiamat is the largest and most prosperous resource extraction Syndicate in the Dominion. The Syndicate is in possession of technologies that are able to carve a moon in half and reduce a planetoid into rubble. In addition to extraction, Tiamat also constructs mining machinery and equipment.

Kiva Shipping: The Kiva Syndicate is a vast shipping network of freighters and shuttles which ferries extracted resources to processing centres and construction sites.

Xanthe Processing: Xanthe is usually found wherever resource extraction is going on. This Syndicate operates gigantic processing ships and facilities that are able to process raw materials into usable goods.

House Asu-Ra



Common Name: Asuran
Zodiacal Signs: Archer, Arrow, Boat
Lineage Planet: Rahu (page 204)
Primary Industry: Shipyards
Aspects:

To Dare Is to Live
Forever Exploring
The Truth Lies Beyond

House Asu-Ra is responsible for eight out of ten voidships constructed within the Dominion. The Asurans are not only master voidship designers and builders; they are also obsessed explorers. The scions of this lineage measure their status by the discoveries they have made. All Asurans are driven to explore the vast void of the Dominion and beyond, seeking new discoveries to which they may attach their name. Unless exploring, scions of House Asu-Ra feel trapped and confined. They prefer the vast openness of the void and the secrets it hides within its endless gulfs. Asurans most often become voidship captains, and many join Watcher crews as commanders and pilots.

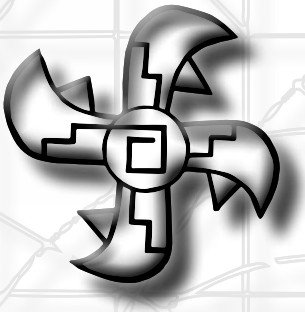
Asurans are always willing to share their explorations with others. They are generous and just, though easily distracted by the next thing to see and experience. They have a strong love of gambling, not only with games of chance, but of skill as well. An Asu-Ra scion is always fond of a puzzle or contest of the mind. They are curious by nature and will seek out new things, especially those which no one has experienced before.

Major Syndicates

Rama Shipyards: The Rama Syndicate operates the majority of shipyards throughout the Dominion. They have the primary construction contracts for the development of voidships for the Dominion fleet.

Varja Projectors: Varja develops and builds void-based projector weaponry. They are in heavy competition with the Valhellion Syndicates, and their products have an excellent reputation for reliability.

Ushas Exploration: The Ushas Syndicate is one of explorers and scouts, seeking new planets and resources across the whole of the void. The Ushas employ many former Watchers who could not continue their service, but who could not give up their thirst for exploration.



House Na-Cal

Common Name: Naacal
Zodiacal Signs: Reptilian Beast, Fruit, Root
Lineage Planet: Lemuria (page 194)
Primary Industry: Land Farming
Aspects:

Grounded but Determined
Breadbasket of the Dominion
The Job Is Never Done

House Na-Cal is the primary provider of foodstuffs throughout the Dominion. The Naacal work the land, producing vast crops of foodstuffs. Human hands do the majority of the work, as the Naacal do not trust machines, and see them as a detriment to the development of a productive society. The Naacal employ the largest numbers of human labourers to work the vast crop fields across the Dominated Planets. Every planet capable of producing food has a Na-Cal influence.

The Naacal themselves are ambitious and hard working. They believe in straightforwardness and prefer to get to the bottom of things as soon as possible. The house is actively involved in politics and uses the dependence on their foodstuffs as a political lever against their opponents.

Major Syndicates

Tlaloc Agriculture: The Tlaloc Syndicate is the largest single producer of foodstuffs in the Dominion. The Syndicate operates the majority of harvesting operations across the Dominated Planets.

Dumuzi Hyperponics: The Dumuzi specialize in food production off-planet and in hostile environments. This Syndicate constructs and operates self-sustaining facilities, usually enclosed within a haven or dome, and located on a planetoid, asteroid, or in orbit.

Ambrosia Delight: Ambrosia nurtures and produces some of the finest delicacies found in the Dominion. They have cornered the market on rare treats and luxury foods. The Syndicate also holds the secret to the Everapple, a rare and expensive fruit, which improves longevity and virility; a cheap and inferior substitute for the Shautao Peach (see page 197).

House At-Lan

Common Name: Atlantean
Zodiacal Signs: Pitcher, Vase, Cross
Lineage Planet: Atlantis (page 170)
Primary Industry: Technology
Aspects:

We Rise Together!
Prove Us Wrong
Technology Brings a Better Future

The At-Lan are a powerful and wealthy house, which produces the majority of technology found in the Dominion. The Atlanteans push the boundaries of technological progress, ever inventing new devices. It was Theors of house At-Lan who first developed the Artilects. This was their greatest triumph and their ultimate failure. Since then, the house has taken strict measures to ensure that technology remains firmly under control.

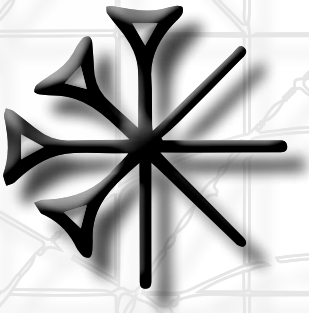
The Atlanteans are very progressive and visionary in their thinking. Many accuse the house of Elevationist views and cite the uncontrolled initiation of Elevated into the ranks of those who possess great technosophic knowledge. The Atlanteans deny this, citing the constant shortage of those with the required skills and the constant need for them throughout the Dominion. Regardless of the accusations, the house is extremely well connected due to the high demand for their products. Dealing with a scion of house At-Lan can be difficult; they are some of the greatest minds in the Dominion, but tend to be eccentric.

Major Syndicates

Atlas Apparatus: The Atlas Syndicate is the largest manufacturer of a variety of every-day technosophic apparatus that meet the needs of its clients. The Syndicate employs many Theors and has a strong relationship with the Transmuters.

Prometheus Analogues: Prometheus is at the cutting edge of analogue creation and mindframe research (see Technosophy, page 117). The Syndicate is also involved in the exploration and investigation of dark mindframes.

Akashic Psitronics: The Akashic Syndicate has a dark reputation as the harvesters of living brains for transplantation and augmentation into psitronic devices. Akashic Theors were the first to develop the Psitronic Intelligences that put the Dominion on a closer footing with the Artilects. Akashic Drudges (see Technosophy, page 116) are considered to be the most reliable and durable.



House En-Ki

Common Name: Enkidu
Zodiacal Signs: Fish, Wave, Knot
Lineage Planet: Nibiru (page 200)
Primary Industry: Sea Farming
Aspects:

Easily Inspired, Easily Angered
The Universe Speaks, If You Listen
Our Bounty Nourishes the Dominion

House En-Ki operates the majority of sea farming operations in the Dominion. The Enkidu are found wherever there are vast bodies of water capable of sustaining vegetable and animal life. House operations are located on coastal areas and on giant artificial islands that float in open waters.

Enkidu like to keep to themselves, preferring the calm of the waters they harvest to the bustle and crowds of the cities. They are dreamers and knowledge seekers who collect objects of lore and historical value. Many are also accomplished Pattern delvers who spend much of their time within the virtual realms, where they feel more comfortable than the real world. The libraries, art works, and museums of the En-Ki are famous throughout Pharisto society.

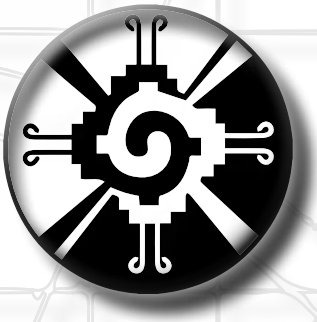
Major Syndicates

Ea Harvesting: The Ea Syndicate is a major sea farm operator on planets which support sea-life.

Apsu Conveyance: Apsu is the primary producer of waterborne craft and submersibles. They produce both private and commercial craft.

Erlang Delving: The Erlang Syndicate is heavily involved in Pattern Delving and has a close relationship with many Solons. There are those who believe that the Solons are this Syndicate's true masters. They're one of the few Syndicates outside the specialized Theor sects who develop analogue intelligences for military application.

House Qu-Quatl



Common Name: Quetzalcoatl
Zodiacal Signs: Feathered Serpent, Bird, Star
Lineage Planet: Mu (page 197)
Primary Industry: Colonization
Aspects:

Knowledge Is Power
We Architect Civilization
Flamboyant Visionaries

House Qu-Quatl are the first to set foot on new planets and establish new colonies for the Dominion. Quetzalcoatl choose ideal locations for settlements, make first contact with natives, administer, and train the early Jejune workers; and ultimately build the civilization of a planet from the ground up. Qu-Quatl scions spend decades to hundreds of years on a planet, laying the foundation for the establishment of productive and profitable resource extraction operations.

The Quetzalcoatl are themselves seekers of knowledge. They take the time to learn about the place they are colonizing and to record the customs and beliefs of any sentient natives they may encounter, before that culture is completely subsumed into the cogs of the Dominion. The Qu-Quatl are visionaries who strive to keep as much of the old customs as possible, seeking to maintain a civilization based on old beliefs, while incorporating the Tyrant Sun mythology. The goals of house Qu-Quatl are often questioned, as the house seeks to become the divinities of newly discovered and created species before any of the other houses. The Quetzalcoatl establish a strong relationship with their subjects in order to further their own ends. This gives them leverage on planets with large native and Jejune populations, a situation the other houses find troublesome. Quetzalcoatl take great pleasure in being worshipped as the foremost divinities by primitive cultures.

Major Syndicates

Sabik Indoctrination: The Sabik Syndicate is heavily involved in first contact and indoctrination of newly discovered cultures, as well as newly bred Jejune species. The Syndicates lays the spiritual and supernatural groundwork in order to control and manipulate a species towards the goals of the Dominion. The Syndicate has developed an apparatus that can forcibly condition a subject into whatever belief system is desired. The apparatus has proven to be quite effective, though time-consuming to operate.

Asclepius Catholicon: Asclepius is a Syndicate that develops medicines and remedies from the cornucopia of plants found throughout the Dominion. They

are regarded as natural healers who eschew the manufactured and less natural practices of the Osi-Ra Bioviziers, and the Genesis Adepts.

Almagest Monument: The Almagest Syndicate constructs early worship centres that amalgamate the beliefs of the locals and those of the Dominion. They also erect some of the first constructions on a newly colonized planet.

Chapter Four
The Assemblage

The Tyrantine Dominion is composed of an assemblage of peoples, societies, and aliens. Each has played a role in shaping the Dominion and continues to do so today. The following are the major players, though there are many smaller and less prominent members of the assemblage.

Humanity

The Dominated Planets host a staggering variety of humans; the various genomes originated from a common human genetic line whose origins are now lost to history. Some vary in subtle ways, while others have diverged so much that they barely resemble their cousins. Interbreeding is uncommon, but possible between the various genetic lines. The Genesis Adepts have also manipulated humanity to enhance certain attributes over others. Regardless of lineage, all are considered part of humanity at large.

Humans

A human is someone of the base genetic stock, the most common within the Dominion. Humanity has existed for longer than recorded history, and their origins are lost to antiquity. Humans are the subjects of the Dominion and represent a mélange of physical attributes and genetic lines which vary from planet to planet.

Humans tend to wear functional clothing tailored to the climate of the planet they live on. Robes and cloaks made from natural fabrics are common, as are a variety of hats and turbans. On more developed planets, humans might wear clothing made from synthetic materials instead.

The Elevated

Some humans enjoy an elevated status within the regime and are granted additional privileges and comforts. These elevated are chosen for their intelligence and devotion to their Deipotent masters. An Elevated's conditioning begins at birth and continues throughout their lives. All are completely devoted and loyal to their masters. Elevated status is hereditary and carries with it significant status within human society. Elevated are tattooed on the face and body; the tattoos indicate which house the elevated serves as well as the social status of their master. The elevated are permitted to administer the House's Syndicates and occupy positions of power over humanity. Newly chosen humans are raised to Elevated status through the *Ritual of Elevation.*

Deipotents

Deipotents are those who have been gifted with the genetic right to rule over humanity. They are the product of millennia of breeding and genetic manipulation that resulted in traits superior to those of ordinary humans. Deipotents are gifted with increased intellectual capacity, a stronger moral compass, and advanced logical reasoning—traits that make them natural leaders. Physically, Deipotents differ dramatically from humanity, and it is impossible to mistake one for a normal human. Thanks to the conditioning carried out by the Body Of The Tyrant, humans view the Deipotents as gods in the flesh. Deipotents interact with humanity through their Elevated proxies.

Genesis Adepts

The Genesis Adepts are an ancient order of bioengineers. The history of the Adepts is closely tied to that of the Tyrantine Dominion itself. The first Tyrant, Aristonymus, established them to breed a genetic stock of rulers for his empire. This the Genesis Adepts achieved and much more. The Genesis Adepts turned their genetic arts upon themselves, creating a new species—if such a simple term could be applied to what the Adepts ultimately became.

The Adepts constantly tweak their genetic code and splice their genes with those of other species. Most have skin that is light grey, slightly transparent, with a scaly texture. Adepts possess large black, almond-shaped eyes and enlarged craniums, though not to the same extent as the Theors. Some have gone as far as completely redesigning their physiology, merging genetic traits from multiple species at once. It is a commonly held belief that the Genesis Adepts are no longer human. In order to keep their bizarre modifications hidden, Adepts wear environmentally-sealed robes and speak through mechanical voice boxes, giving their voices a buzzing, machine-like pitch.

There is universal mistrust of the Genesis Adepts due to an ancient suspicion that they are secretly manipulating others for their own purposes. Their genetic manipulation of themselves and others, the secrets of revenant regeneration, cloning, chimeras, and immortality have made them social pariahs within the Tyrant's court. Many find it difficult to trust those who can create life, manipulate it, and also destroy it with manufactured toxins and biogenic agents. Such knowledge makes others jealous and uncomfortable.

The Genesis Adepts do little to alleviate this mistrust, hiding behind their environmentally-sealed robes and secreting themselves within their enclaves. The Adepts do not participate openly in the halls of power; rather they prefer to make deals from the shadows, away from prying eyes and ears. The Genesis Adepts maintain a near monopoly on the science of genetics and biology. They use their services as a lever against those who might attempt to outmanoeuvre them. All Pharisto houses require the services of the Adepts. These services include maintaining the Serumentiums (devices that regenerate tissue), adjusting skin pigments for Pharisto fashion, and resurrecting prominent house members and valued servants as Revenants.

Traditionally, the Genesis Adept enclaves have always been loyal to the Tyrant, but the nature of this loyalty is a matter of great speculation. Some postulate that the Tyrant has conditioned the predecessors of the Genesis Adepts, and this conditioning has propagated and strengthened over millennia. Others whisper that it is the Adepts who are truly in control of the Dominion, with the true Tyrant long ago supplanted by one of their own creation. Whatever the truth, the Genesis Adepts' secrets are inscrutable to others.

The Genesis Adepts are based on E-Din and have enclaves established on every major planet of the Dominion. Only those with great amounts of wealth and political clout are able to solicit services from the Adepts. When it suits their plans, the Genesis Adepts offer their services in return for favours or credit. In this way, the Adepts have garnered considerable power. No Deipotent would admit it, but the majority owe the Adepts something.

Adepts are grown, not born; they are themselves a product of the Genesis Tanks. All Adepts are cloned copies of the ancestral Adepts who founded the sect. Once revenant regeneration was discovered, the Adept Masters quickly adopted the technique. In fact, the Masters are all Revenants. The clone becomes a pupil of its progenitor, until such time as the pupil begins to recover some of their former memories. Adept Masters are always surrounded by their progeny in training. The Genesis Adepts' special status exempts them from the Tyrant's ban on cloning of the living.

The Adepts do not believe in the chaos and randomness of natural evolution. They have mastered the secrets of life and death, giving them the ability to subvert the workings of nature. The Genesis Adepts choose to deliberately

evolve themselves in order to explore the boundaries of biological life. Most Adepts continuously adjust their own genetic code, programming it as one would an analogue logic-processing engine, for whatever purpose is required, or simply on a whim.

The Genesis Adepts have developed many bio-technologies that have become ubiquitous. Healing and rejuvenation technologies are widely used by Deipotents. Enhancements that can be implanted into the body are rare and expensive; they are favoured for their ability to be undetectable by scanners, and to meld seamlessly into the body. Most common products are the Igigi: specialized living beings created on consignment, such as Dominars, Chimeras, and Mirror Men. However, many do not trust the creations of the Adepts for fear that the Adepts have implanted kill switches, or worse, are able to turn them against the user.

A number of times in the past other Theor sects and foolhardy Pharisto houses have attempted to steal the secrets of the Adepts. Each time the attempt failed miserably, with severe consequences for the perpetrator in the form of embargoes and sanctions. The secrecy of the sect runs deep, to the point that their trade secrets are written into the Adept's genetic code, thus making it impossible to decipher, except by another Adept. Each Adept is genetically and psychologically conditioned to keep the secrets of the Adepts at all costs. An Adept is able to completely control their body, even to the point of stopping the heart or inducing a fatal aneurysm. Adepts keep genetic samples in multiple locations to ensure their continuity should their current incarnation be killed.

> Whenever possible, the Genesis Adepts will attempt to recover the dead body of their comrade, to harvest the last genetic code imprint of the body for the revenant resurrection process.

Pharistos

A Pharisto is a genetically-enhanced human. In antiquity, Aristonymus—the First Tyrant—tasked the Genesis Adepts to modify the genes of his favoured servants, and this gave birth to thirteen genetic lines. These genetic lineages have become the ruling elite of the Dominated Planets. Each lineage has come to dominate one of the major industries of the Dominion, and together they ensure that the Dominion endures.

Pharistos are taller and slimmer than humans, standing between 2 and 2.4 metres (6.5 to 8 feet) tall, with no body hair at all. They dye their skin in varied colours, as dictated by current fashion trends. The most distinguishing feature of a Pharisto is their longevity; Pharistos can live for up to 450 years without

life extension technology. More than double that with the best life extension technology available. Their enhanced genetics also make them resistant to sickness and disease.

The Pharistos are the ruling nobility of the Dominion. They have carefully manipulated the culture of the Dominion in the belief that their right to rule is divine. Believed to be gods, the Pharistos have secured their position as rulers over their human subjects. Those they rule believe them to be the *Host Of The Tyrant Sun.*

Due to their extended life spans, the Pharistos have developed many venerable traditions and social rules. They interact in a ritual fashion and have a different concept of time than the short-lived humans they rule. The Pharistos are conditioned to their own social culture from the time they are born, and this conditioning deeply ingrained within their psyche. They see themselves as vastly superior to common humans and must conduct themselves as divine beings. By the time a Pharisto has reached young adulthood at the age of 30, their conditioning in the Pharisto traditions is complete. The conditioning is such that going against tradition is anathema for the Pharistos, and is known to cause great mental and physical distress.

Pharisto traditions are sacrosanct; violating them causes distress due to the societal conditioning Pharistos receive—the guilt of such actions eats away at the Pharisto. Whenever taking actions that are counter to Pharisto conditioning, the Pharisto must defend against a mental attack using Will, against a passive opposition of Mediocre (+0) to Great (+4), depending on the transgression. Behaviour unbecoming a Pharisto has a passive opposition of Mediocre (+0), Fair (+2) for breaking minor taboos, and Great (+4) for committing blatant acts against tradition. The GM will determine the passive opposition based on the transgression and whether there are witnesses. Depending on your play style, the resulting mental stress could go to the stress track or directly to consequences. Appropriate consequences are: **Looked Foolish** and **Guilt of Disrespect**.

Theors of Crux

After the Artilect Rebellion, the Tyrant Xenophon ordered the Genesis Adepts to create a new line of Deipotents whose intellects could replace the now forbidden artificial minds. The Genesis Adepts manipulated a number of Pharisto lineages to produce offspring with vastly increased cognitive abilities, who came to be known as Theors. Over millennia the Theors were improved and refined on the planet Crux, which later became a centre for scientific advancement in the Dominion.

Physically, Theors are similar to the Pharistos their genetic line sprang from, but their craniums are longer and more conical. Like Pharistos, Theors are devoid of all body hair. Psychologically, Theors differ greatly from Pharistos, though; whereas Pharistos are conniving, materialistic, and power-obsessed, Theors are only concerned with the pursuit of knowledge and science. They tend to appear absent-minded and socially awkward due to the speed at which their minds function; everyone else is considered mentally slow by Theors. Theors have little concern for temporal power or the accumulation of wealth. They see such aspirations as petty and counter-productive to the pursuit of knowledge and science.

Theors are the scientists, intellectuals, and inventors of the Dominion. Much of the technology in use has been invented and created by Theor minds and hands. Theors are found in a variety of other roles befitting their increased mental abilities, from advisers, administrators, and analysts, to strategists, voidship captains, and even assassins for the Pharisto houses and their Syndicates. Their intellects allow them to excel at whatever fields and skills they choose to master.

The raw processing power of a Theor's brain is able to achieve feats of logic equivalent to an analogue logic-processing engine. Through a meditative fugue trance, Theors are able to correlate massive amounts of disparate information to find hidden facts and relationships hidden within. When undergoing a fugue trance, a Theor becomes oblivious to the outside world and will remain in this state until a solution is reached—or the Theor concludes that the problem is unsolvable due to lack of data. This fugue state may last minutes, hours, and even days when extremely complex problems are being solved.

> Fugue meditation is not without danger. When faced with an unsolvable problem, it is possible for a Theor to become irrecoverably lost within the mind; forever trying to solve a problem that has no solution—until the body eventually expires. Only the most disciplined Theors are capable of breaking out of this vicious loop.

Theors have formed various sects that specialize in specific technologies and sciences. The sects have garnered considerable power within the Dominion and wield impressive political clout because of the technological secrets they possess. The majority of Theor sects have a strong interest in uncovering what they call Universal Theory: the theory of how all the forces of this universe and others interact. A solution to the Universal Theory conundrum would enable the Theors to construct inter-dimensional gateways, uncover the secrets of the Nihilim's origin, and harness boundless energy. Such a discovery could propel the Dominion to incredible heights—something the Tyrant fully supports and funds generously.

Sects range in membership from local to inter-planetary in size depending on interest in their fields of study, the technosophy—the knowledge of technology—they wield, and the political power they have garnered. Regardless of size, each sect maintains one or more monasteries on planets where they have presence. Each monastery is often removed from the main population centres and located in a remote area where the Theors are left alone to pursue their research. Some monasteries are located in the middle of deserts, on lone islands, on top of mountains, and in the void of space. Those monasteries that produce technology often have a factory and a small community of workers that lies nearby.

Learned of Cerebellum

The Learned are a sect of Theors dedicated to preservation of traditions and knowledge throughout the Dominion. They hold the belief that no information should ever be lost, under any circumstances. The Great Archive of Cerebellum is the single largest repository of ancient lore and scientific knowledge. The Learned are dedicated to the recovery and preservation of important information for future generations. Every decree made by the Tyrant is meticulously recorded here, every event of note detailed, and every strange event documented.

The Learned maintain archives on all major planets of the Dominion. These in turn funnel information back to the Great Archive of Cerebellum. Many acolytes of the Learned are sent out into the Dominion to record events and history, and to eventually bring back their journals to the archives for storage. They also act as scribes and officiants over the traditions and laws of the Dominion.

The information gathered is stored both in physical and digital form. Physical data recordings can be everything from primitive paper to memeticrystal, precious dustsheets, or other more obscure data-recording media. Information is also stored electronically within the vast mindframes of the Great Archive. With so much knowledge contained in one place, it is impossible for it all to be indexed and cross-referenced. This combined with the passage of time has led to corrupted indexes and memory within the archives. It is said that the Great Archive contains as much lost knowledge within its deep data vaults as it does of accessible data.

All Learned have a Pattern Transducer nodule implanted that permits a

Learned to interface with the Pattern of the Archive, and to access its vast indexes. The access codes to the Archive's Pattern must be obtained by permission of the Learned. The archive's Pattern is guarded by Solons who were once Learned, and whose minds were uploaded into the archive; they do not take kindly to trespassers and invaders.

The Learned of Cerebellum are in possession of one of the last few surviving Pneuma Transmogrifiers: apparatus developed by the Artilects for the purposes of uploading living minds into the Pattern. Many of the Pneuma Transmogrifiers no longer function perfectly, and the resulting uploads are often corrupted and incomplete. Consequently, the Great Archive is full of the partially-corrupted digital ghosts of generations of Learned who have passed before.

All Learned are required to return to the Great Archive for upload before their natural death. A long ceremony follows, which ends with the physical death of the Learned and the upload of their mind into the Pattern of the Great Archive. The bodies of those who die unexpectedly are collected by the Learned and returned to Cerebellum where their minds are scanned using a T-Rake: a memory-trawling apparatus; the recovered information is then uploaded into the archive.

Cryptominds of Sphynx

Long ago a sect of Theors chose to eschew their physical bodies in order to achieve the highest levels of fugue meditation. They chose to deliberately undergo the process of Execration and transferred their still-living minds into Mind Boxes. They shed their senses, their physical needs, and the desires of the flesh. Entombed within their Mind Boxes, with all inputs disconnected, these Theors were free to contemplate the universe and its deepest mysteries in peace. The entire sect retired to the planet Sphynx, a desolate world of sun-blasted deserts and high rocky outcroppings. Drudge servitors built massive towers to house their contemplative masters upon these outcroppings. The Drudges' ability to speak was removed, earning them the name: the Silent Servitors. In perpetual silence, they serve their masters: the Cryptominds of Sphynx.

The vast intellects of the Cryptominds surpass anything the Dominion has been able to achieve since. The disembodied intelligences are considered near equal to the Artilects. After millennia of contemplation, the Cryptominds evolved incredible preternatural abilities from their prolonged suspension in monoatomic gold gas. Their analytical abilities have reached such heights that their projections border on prophesy. This has caused many to believe that the Cryptominds are prescient. For this reason, many pilgrimage to Sphynx in order to receive the wisdom of the Cryptominds. Even the Tyrant has personally requested the advice from the Cryptominds on numerous occasions. He has extended offers for members of the sect to relocate to Baroque as advisers. So far, the Cryptominds have unilaterally rejected the Tyrant's offers. This makes the Tyrant seethe, but

he respects the Cryptominds and has not yet taken action for their impertinence.

In addition to rejecting the physical world, the Cryptominds have also obliterated their identities. They no longer use names or identifiers for themselves—they simply exist as nameless entities. The title of *Cryptex* is the only identifier the Cryptominds accept when being addressed. How the minds identify each other when conducting their once-per-millennium convocation is not known, as no outsiders are ever permitted to witness such a gathering. The convocation occurs within the Pattern of Sphynx, which is maintained by their Silent Servitors, and rumoured to be guarded by Solons. This is the only time when the Cryptominds communicate with other members of their sect.

The disembodied intellects do not take kindly to having their contemplation interrupted by those seeking audience. The Cryptominds have very little interest in the physical world and prefer to be left alone to their inner journeys. Those seeking advice must provide adequate payment in return for the wisdom they seek. Preferred payment is a gift of living minds for the ranks of Silent Servitors, to replace those who aged, died, or were damaged. Gold is also acceptable payment; the Silent Servitors distil the gold into monoatomic gas that is continuously pumped into the Mind Boxes of the Cryptominds.

Each Silent Servitor is a living mind transferred into a Drudge automaton. Purged of all personality, they are slaved to the Cryptominds themselves and compelled to obey the wishes of their masters. Some of the Silent Servitor Mind Boxes are installed in large, mechanical bodies called the Tower Guardians: colossal war machines who guard the lonely towers of the Cryptominds.

Solons

During the time when Artilects served the Dominion and created many wondrous achievements in technology, a sect of Theors sought immortality. The sect did not view Revenant immortality as pure because a new personality emerged in the resurrected, and the old was lost. These Theors sought to maintain their own persona indefinitely. The immortality technology the Cryptominds developed did not appeal to these Theors either, because the mind was still prone to accident and death. They also wished to remain active in the affairs of the Dominion—unlike the Cryptominds.

The Theors engaged the Artilects in solving this dilemma. The solution was not biological immortality, but digital. The process involved the transmogrification of a living mind into a series of processes and archives that would continue to exist indefinitely within the Pattern. The transmogrification process was fatal to the subject's physical body, but the mind would endure forever within the Pattern. The Theors who underwent this process became known as Solons.

The Solons are the digital gods of the Pattern. They control vast amounts of processing power, and their presence is felt—rather than seen—everywhere by the

denizens of the Pattern. They are the guardians and gatekeepers of the portals; ever watchful for any Artilect incursion into their realms. Many who delve the depths of the Pattern must pay them homage, and all must pay them heed. Most Solons have chosen to retreat into the dark recesses of the Pattern, where they would not be disturbed, to continue their digital evolution in peace. Analogue intelligences act as agents for the Solons and monitor for any potential dangers to the realm. The Solons have little interest in what occurs in the real world, except when the Pattern is physically threatened. They are aware of what goes on outside their digital existence through the automated self-maintenance systems of the mindframes, and the fact that almost all information eventually must travel through the Pattern.

> The Solons are in control of vast processing resources. They are capable of penetrating virtually any sophisticated security and encryption measures. There is little that happens within their realms that they are not aware of. They are always watching, though rarely act, unless their realm is threatened.

Pattern Delvers

The Pattern is an ancient and venerable interface to the mindframes of the post-Artilect era. The Pattern had been designed by the Artilects as a virtual environment quite different from the real world. Since the Artilect Rebellion, trained individuals have learned to interface with the Pattern. Many of these individuals have had a Pattern Transducer implanted in their minds. This cybernetic nodule permits one's mind to enter the Pattern and affect it. Those without this cybernetic augmentation enter the digital realm through more primitive and slower man-machine interfaces.

Pattern Delvers are a Theor sect whose specialty is navigating this virtual landscape and who are able to understand its complexities and hazards. They are the only ones who can comprehend its intricacies and rules. Pattern Delvers tend to feel removed from the physical world after spending so much time in the virtual. They often find it difficult to relate to the problems the real world poses. Many Delvers are reverent of the Solons—the divinities and guardians of the Pattern—and the Solons see the Delvers as their children.

Pattern Delvers are a loose but close-knit sect who have their origins in the Learned of Cerebellum. They tend not to gather together, preferring their privacy and independence. Allies tend to stick together, as the hidden dangers of the Pattern pose a constant risk to the foolhardy. The most valuable resources within

the Pattern are the processing cores, and the Delvers are always on the lookout for them. Processing cores are sought and traded throughout the Pattern as currency, and those with the most cores hold the highest status. Each Pattern realm is so vast that it holds many such cores yet undiscovered. Rivalry is common between lesser members who seek more cores and steal them from others.

Transmuters

The Transmuters are the creators and masters of the wondrous nano-technological substance called Dust. Dust permits the Transmuters to alter the physical properties of substances and to create atomic-scale clockwork machines called Dustmites. With this technology, Transmuters have garnered a reputation as technological magicians and purveyors of marvellous machines.

One of the greatest Transmuter discoveries is the Endless Engine: a perpetual motion power generator that has been miniaturized to the size of a human thumb. The engine has revolutionized technology by removing power requirements as a limiting factor. This energy freedom has ushered in many portable technologies that were not possible before, including hand-held projectors and personal shunt shields.

The Transmuters are very secretive when it comes to their technologies. They also shroud themselves in mystery, ritual, and tradition—more so than any other sect. Initiates are chosen at a very young age and must live out the majority of their lives in a monastic setting. Once initiates complete their training, they either remain within the monastery to create unique machines, or they travel abroad peddling their wondrous skills.

Transmuter monasteries can be found on virtually all Dominated Planets. These are usually located away from civilization and are placed in inaccessible areas where they can more easily ensure privacy, such as hard to reach mountain peaks, underground caverns, and even isolated asteroids. Each monastery is attached to a factory complex where the Transmuters turn out Endless Engines and other commonly used technologies based on Dust.

Transmuters dress in long, red robes, flowing and elaborate, with a tall and round-topped headpiece. The robes of a Transmuter are more than just fashion; they're wondrous creations onto themselves. The fabric is composed of Dustmatter and can mould itself into any clothing that the Transmuter desires. Dust factories are hidden within the robes and linked to the Transmuter through a nodule implanted in the brain. Ports embedded within the robes permit the Dust to be discharged at the Transmuter's will. The Transmuter is able to manipulate the Dust created by the robe's factories and direct it with thought alone.

There are many varieties of Dust—called Essences—and each is created for a specific application. Individual Transmuters focus on only a couple of Essences in an attempt to master them. The more Essences a Transmuter masters, the higher

their status is within the Transmuter sect. Transmuters toil for centuries, seeking to uncover new applications of Dust. Their researches are kept secret until the day when they can be unveiled. This secrecy runs deep and a Transmuter will take every precaution to keep their researches from falling into a rival's hands.

Void Weavers

The Loom Drive brought unparalleled mobility to the Dominion. The Theors who originally developed this technology monopolized it and called themselves the Void Weavers. The sect ensures that the knowledge of how to create, maintain, and operate the Loom Drive remain solely in control of their sect. Their monopoly has ensured that voidships outfitted with a Loom Drive have at least one Void Weaver as part of their crew.

The Weavers have amassed a great deal of political power, which stems from their control of Loom Drive technology. Commerce throughout the Dominion depends on the Weavers; without their services, near-instantaneous travel would cease.

The Weavers have representatives on every planet of the Dominion, including Baroque. Their wealth is greater even than that of the Pharisto houses. The Master Weavers of the sect live extremely opulent lifestyles that rival those of Archons.

On more than one occasion, the Weavers have uncovered secret plans by the Pharistos to break their monopoly. In response, the Weavers have developed the cogent nodule; a specialized logic augmentation that each Weaver receives upon initiation. This logic implant allows a Weaver to process the complex 8-dimensional mathematics required to weave the fabric of space and arrive at the desired destination. Each cogent nodule is designed to self-destruct upon brain death or attempted Disembodiment. In this fashion, the Weavers have assured their secrets of weaving conduits remain firmly within their purview. Loom Drive construction is carried out aboard high-security orbital shipyards and facilities by a specially-conditioned workforce that is incapable of revealing the Weaver's trade secrets.

The Void Weavers maintain the communication and transportation infrastructure of the Dominion. Their immense Arkships ferry cargo, voidships, and passengers between planets in a matter of minutes. Without the Arkship network, commerce and industry would be impeded by the vast distances between the Dominated Planets, and would rely entirely on Lightracer vessels that take days to weeks to traverse the same distances. The Dominion has come to depend heavily on quick, secure transport of goods and military forces to where they are needed.

The Regime

The Tyrant's regime is composed of a number of organizations and individuals who hold preeminent status and great influence. These groups are staunchly loyal to the Tyrant and are his primary tools for the enforcement of the Order Of Things.

Amarenthine

The Amarenthine—the Undying, as they are commonly known—are a select few who have earned the Tyrant's favour and have proven themselves completely devoted to him. These individuals are granted the gift of immortality as a reward for their service and devotion. The Amarenthine serve as advisers and special envoys for the Tyrant; some become Hereseers, and others embrace a monastic lifestyle within the Body Of The Tyrant. Universally, members of the Undying hold perpetualist views and completely believe in the Tyrant's divine right to rule. They must undergo invasive telepathic scans in order to prove their loyalty, conducted by the Tyrant himself. Some do not survive the procedure and have their minds ravaged by the ordeal. Those who pass the tests become somewhat diminished and distant, preferring solitude and meditation to the company of others.

Failed Amarenthine whose minds are broken by the Tyrant's telepathic scan are sent away, to be cared for by the Rhetors of The Body at special enclaves. Some spend eternity broken of mind, while others end their own lives. The Tyrant uses them as an example of the price of weakness, and their fate is considered a cruel punishment worse than death.

To become one of the Undying is to be personally chosen and blessed by the Tyrant Sun. Though the Amarenthine do not hold any official position within the regime, their immortal gift elevates them above all, except the Tyrant himself. To defy them is to invite the wrath of the Tyrant. Many of these individuals have lived for many millennia, and the Pharistos revere them as venerable elders. The house Archons confer with them for advice, and the Tyrant bends ear to their counsel. As the eternal elders, these Deipotents are conferred every respect. All Amarenthine wear bright yellow robes of elaborate design, a symbol of illumination and eternal life.

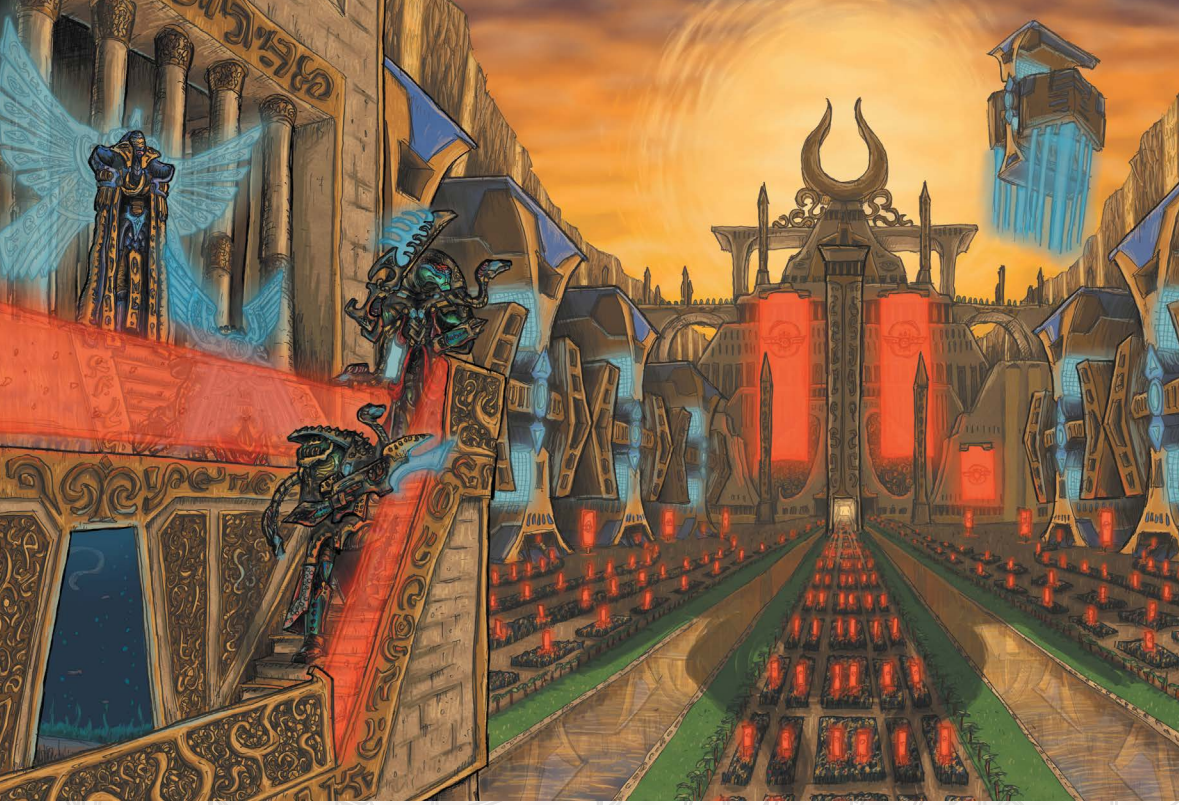
Ultimately, some Amarenthine tire of life and choose to *Face Oblivion* instead. *Facing Oblivion* is the choice to end one's life in a respectful and dramatic way. Some choose to fly a voidship into a star to join with the universe and the Tyrant Sun; others will charge the enemy with the Dominar Legions in one of the Dominion's conflicts. Their methods are varied, but each is memorable, remembered by others, and spoken of long after.

When Amarenthine fail the Tyrant, they are expected to *Face Oblivion* rather than continue their disappointing existence. *Facing Oblivion* is required by tradition when failure is so great the shame can only be erased through the ultimate self-sacrifice. Those who refuse are considered heretics by other Deipotents and cast out of society. The Tyrant does not address the issue publicly, but he will find ways to be rid of the failure, one way or another.

Hereseers

The Hereseers wield power greater than all but the Tyrant and the Amarenthine. Their task is uncovering heresy throughout the Dominion. Hereseers are a feared individuals; no one is safe from their scrutiny, not even other Deipotents. They have the resources of the Dominion and the Pharisto houses to call upon should they require them. The Tyrant issues orders to his Hereseers directly, or through his Amarenthine emissaries.

Most Hereseers are in possession of their own ship, crew, and a squad of veteran Dominars who accompany the Hereseer in their investigations. Some choose to operate incognito, with a retinue of privately employed but trusted allies. Hereseers have complete freedom of movement within the Dominion. It is rare to see two or more Hereseers work together on an investigation, unless the threat is grave. They mostly work alone, in secret, and use subtlety and subterfuge to acquire the information they seek. Once a heresy is uncovered, the might of the Dominion is called upon to deal with the problem overtly.



The Tyrant chooses his Hereseers carefully. Many have been in service of the Tyrant for a long time, and all have earned his trust. They are the brightest and most fit individuals. Many are Revenants or Amarenthine themselves, highly skilled due to many lifetimes of practice and the wisdom of generations.

Dominar Legions

The Tyrant maintains a force of 72 Dominar Legions. The Legions maintain and control the entirety of the Tyrant's military. All ground and void forces are subject to the rule of the Dominar Legions. The 72 *Arch Dominars* are the chief military commanders of the Dominion who answer only to the Tyrant himself. The Tyrant maintains the *Dominant Guard*: a personal guard of one hundred elite Dominars, each with at least 20 years of service in the legions, who guard the Tyrantine Fortress on Baroque.

Each Legion of 10,000 is broken down into 10 Divisions of 1,000, led by a *Predominant*. Each Division is composed of 200 Forces with a squad of 5 Dominars each. A Division is led by a *Foremost*, and a Force is led by a *Primary*. Those are the sole titles held within the Dominar Legions. Each Dominar is an exemplar of discipline and obedience. Dying in battle is the aspiration of every Dominar, the fulfilment of their existence. They do not fear death, for in death they have accomplished their purpose by giving their lives for the Tyrant, their creator.

Dominars are bred with a very short life span of only 30 years maximum. This is by design, and to ensure that no Dominar dreams of power, or becomes a threat to

the Dominion. The Dominars are efficient and disposable troops. They are held in reserve until a great enough threat manifests. The Tyrant is not squeamish about sending them to their deaths. After all, new Dominars can be grown in the Genesis Tanks of the Adepts in a matter of months.

The Dominar Legions each have a strong tradition of merit and renown. The Dominars carry Voghr genes within their genetic makeup; this makes them competitive and leads to rivalry between the legions. They're a warrior culture, and this competition can be fierce. Discipline keeps the Dominars from physical in-fighting, and each legion tends to work independently of another. When required, multiple legions may combine forces to face a superior foe, but such actions are always kept to the shortest period possible. There have been instances of legion forces engaging each other, but breaking discipline in such a fashion carries the sentence of summary execution; the shameful termination of all involved, starting with the *Predominant*. Death outside of battle is the worst fate imaginable for a Dominar, and this keeps many inter-legion conflicts from flaring up.

With all of the military power the legions wield, they are not a political force in any sense. Dominars are unconcerned with anything as mundane as politics. They are direct in their approach and revile those who sneak around and speak in double meanings. Dominars can always be counted on to tell the truth, no matter how inappropriate or badly timed. They choose the most direct approach, often leaning towards a violent end. To a Dominar, all problems can be solved with the direct and appropriate application of force. Excessive force is not an expression in the Dominar's vocabulary. Their methods are always brutal, quick, and highly effective.

The Body Of The Tyrant

His Dominion is the body.
The Tyrant Sun is the radiant mind, the Dominant Absolute who directs our destiny.
His eyes are the Hereseers who root out heresy
and the Watchers who are ever vigilant for threats.
His mouth is the collective of the Pharisto houses,
the Divine Rulers who communicate His will.
His arms are the mighty Dominar Legions,
a raised sword ready to smite and a shield held defiantly.
His ever-beating heart is the Congregation,
the blood in His veins.
His legs are the Genesis Adepts—keepers of the secret—and the Void Weavers,
unifiers of His Dominion.
His Body is luminous, living, and eternal.
— The Tyrant's prayer

The Body is a secular order established around the worship of the Tyrant as a solar deity. The order rose to prominence shortly after the arrival of the first revenant: Nicrocreon. Some Deipotents and humans saw the immortality of the Tyrant as a divine blessing. An order calling itself The Body Of The Tyrant was established and encouraged by the Tyrant. Soon after its founding, the order spread like wildfire throughout the Dominated Planets. The Body quickly converted the majority of the populace to the belief that the Tyrant was a living god, their shepherd, saviour, and guardian. Ultimately, The Body gained a lot of influence among the human population, much to the chagrin of the Pharisto houses who ruled them.

The primary purpose of The Body is to perpetuate the divine belief among the masses; the other is to act as the bureaucracy of the regime. The Rhetors of The Body collect the Tyrant's taxes from the Pharisto houses and perform all necessary record-keeping. They conduct a census of the Tyrant's subjects, track military budgets, and record shipping manifests. The ranks of Rhetors are composed of Pharistos who chose to dedicate their life to the worship of the Tyrant Sun. They are supported by ranks of Elevated who are called *Congregants*.

The Body has its own hierarchy with the High Rhetor of the Congregation at its head. She is tasked with spreading the faith and ensuring that all within the Dominion show appropriate worship to the Tyrant. The High Rhetor is "elected" once every age in the Zodiac of Rulership on Baroque. Tradition states that the High Rhetor is chosen from within the ranks of The Body, but in reality the choice is made by the Tyrant for his own ends. Many suspect this, but The Body is loath to reveal the truth.

The Rhetors of The Body guide the flock of humanity in obedience to the Tyrant's edicts. The Body maintains temples throughout the Dominated Planets. These temples house the local Rhetors and provide a centre of worship for the populace. The Body headquarters is always the planetary Heliocon, a two kilometre (1.2 mile) tall voidport and administrative centre. Worship is held every week at noon. All citizens must attend the service, except those given divine dispensation by The Body. Those excused are generally Deipotents and a select few Syndicatemen who handle critical tasks such as voidport control. Despite the dispensation, many Deipotents who are devout attend worship services anyway. Similar services are held aboard orbital havens, and inside remote settlements in the void.

A spectacular part of the service is the Tyrant's light shining down through the stained glass roof on the congregation. The Body utilizes various technologies to ensure that the noon sun shines down on each place of worship. Some of the more common techniques involve weather manipulation, geosynchronous laser-emitting satellites, and weather drones that can punch a hole in the cloud cover. In the void, focused starlight is always present through the use of highly reflective mirrors.

A common saying and blessing throughout the Dominion is: "*The Body is luminous.*" It is used both as a greeting and a parting. Another common saying is: "*The Tyrant repays a thousand fold.*" This can be taken as positive or negative, depending on context.

Precepts and Justikari

On each planet, the Tyrant's law is enforced by his Precepts and Justikari. The Precepts are the enforcers of the Tyrant's decrees. Each planet has a number of precincts, each with its own Precept detachment. Though Pharisto houses maintain Syndicate military forces, the Precepts maintain loyalty to the Tyrant and ensure that the houses honour at least the letter of the Tyrant's laws.

While the Precepts are the enforcers, the Justikari are the law keepers of the Dominion. Each Justikari interprets and dispenses the Tyrant's justice within their precinct. A Justikari answers to no one, except the military command of the Dominion fleet, the Hereseers, and the Zenithralls: the chosen of the Tyrant. They possess the authority to dispense justice and sentence the guilty. If the Precepts are the Tyrant's fists, the Justikari are his voice.

It is unsurprising that many Justikari abuse their power and influence by creating their own little empires. Many have amassed a sizeable fortune through shady dealings. Some are driven only by greed and power, and have no interest in justice or law. There exist Justikari who are honourable, honest, and just—though they are not common. The Pharisto houses have recognized this weakness within the Justikari ranks and have exploited it. Some Justikari are really just pawns of the Pharistos and Syndicates, doing their bidding and pretending to dispense justice while working in the best interests of their secret employers. The populace of most planets has caught onto this, and regards the Precepts and Justikari as corrupt and ruthless. This leads many to believe that justice does not exist. Hatred and distrust of the Tyrant and his minions grows with each passing day, thanks to the Justikari and the Precepts.

Watchers

The Watchers range far and wide, traversing the void between the civilized systems in their endless search for threats to the people of the Dominion. Watchers are considered somewhat eccentric by common standards. Many have spent years out in the void, exploring the unexplored, and charting the uncharted. A watchship has a small crew, typically between three and ten individuals. The crew spends a lot of time together in the cramped quarters of their vessel, with no one

but their shipmates for company. Many go peculiar and develop idiosyncrasies.

Long ago, the Tyrant tasked the Watchers to patrol Dominion's borders and keep a vigilant watch for enemies and dangers that might threaten its stability. Theirs is a venerable and respected duty. The Watchships are often small, but very fast and well-armed. The crews are skilled, well-equipped to handle the dangers and mysteries they may encounter on their patrols. They are the only eyes and ears out in the vastness of the void, where any number of threats may lurk at any given instant. Being a member of the Watchers brings a certain level of prestige and respect throughout the Dominion. The Watchers tackle space pirates, villainous aliens, and other grave threats on a regular basis. Some are scoundrels themselves, using the reputation of their order as a tool for personal gain. One thing is certain; they have the admiration and trust of the citizens of the Dominion.

Many stories exist—some based in fact, some purely fiction—about the colourful Watchers and their escapades. They are a popular feature in many plays, where often a lone hero and his loyal crew overcome great obstacles against overwhelming odds.

The Igigi

The various Theor sects have created a number of artificial life forms with their miraculous sciences. The Igigi—the engineered servants—are subject to the regime's Igigi laws: a set of laws that prohibit living tools created for a specific purpose from having personhood within the Dominion. Their artificial nature causes them to be treated as lesser beings, and in some cases, as property. Some escape their servitude, or earn their freedom from more enlightened masters.

Chimeras

Chimeras is a catch-all term for all life forms created through the gene-splicing sciences of the Genesis Adepts. Chimeras are created by combining desirable genes from two or more species. They come in all shapes and sizes. Some are human-like with animal traits, while others are more animal with some human traits.

The Genesis Adepts are fond of their creations, often splicing new life forms on a whim, but they also create many chimeras on commission: sphinxes, minotaurs, jackal-headed warriors, and other fantastical beasts. Regardless of their traits, all Chimeras are classified as non-citizens under the regime's Igigi laws.

Many Adepts use Chimeras as guards, servants, or assistants. The Theors use some that have increased intellect as aides. How well the Chimera is treated by their master varies widely, but most are treated poorly. Chimeras are genetically conditioned to perform their primary functions, and take great pleasure when acting in the capacity that matches the purpose of their existence.

Chimeras have no choice except to serve their masters, but some outlive their masters to find employment and purpose elsewhere. It's also not uncommon to find feral Chimeras that have become dangerous pests to unwary travellers on many Dominion planets.

Dominars

The Dominars are the elite shock troops of the Dominion. They are the culmination of millennia of genetic manipulation by the Genesis Adepts. A Dominar is not bred; it is grown in a Genesis Tank. They are a mix of Pharisto and Voghr. An average Dominar stands 3 metres (8.2 feet) tall and is a hulking mass of muscle and scaly, reptilian hide. They are genetically imbued with discipline and a short lifespan; only 30 standard years. The Tyrant had ensured that his elite warriors could never contemplate rebellion, nor reproduce.

A Dominar is an apex warrior. It is genetically engineered not only to fight with weapons, but also to be a weapon. The scaly hide of a Dominar is thick, capable of withstanding the blast of an energy projector weapon, or the point of a blade. Their eyes are reptilian, cold and emotionless. Dominars are gifted with regenerative abilities that permit them to heal much faster than a human or Voghr. Their blood is a viscous, black substance that hardens quickly when oxidized, so a Dominar will never bleed out on the battlefield. Their fingers end in sharp claws, and their joints are studded with bony spikes capable of impaling an opponent.

A Dominar can to use its blood as strong glue when needed. The blood hardens quickly and forms a sinewy bond. This can become a problem when one is drenched in Dominar blood; a fact that Dominars use to their advantage.

Dominars are capable of long-term hibernation, shutting down the majority of their bodily functions at the cellular level. A Dominar may sleep in this suspended state for many years, even decades, during which they can survive environmental effects such as extreme heat or cold, and the lack of a breathable atmosphere. A Dominar can only be awakened from this fugue state by a powerful electrical shock that will kick-start its biological functions.

Dominars have inherited the Voghr need for blood, preferring to drink the blood of their enemies in lieu of food for sustenance. The Dominars never take prisoners; they take dinner. Part of the Tyrant's tribute requires a quota of condemned heretics from each planet. These heretics are used by the Dominars in their training exercises, or for food in the sanguination tanks aboard each ship of the fleet.

Dominars wear a heavy suit of iridescent armour that changes colours depending on how the light hits it. The armour is completely sealed and has a pair of prehensile, snake-headed energy projectors attached to the shoulders that the Dominar can use to great effect, along with their standard issue, hand-held projector-axe weapon.

Remnants

Remnants were the first Dominars, created by the Artilects on order of the First Tyrant, Aristonymus. They were created specifically to face the Nihilim threat during the First Nihilim Invasions. At the time, the Remnants were the elite soldiers of the Tyrantine Dominion. Despite their service, these cybernetically-enhanced soldiers were later marked for destruction by the Tyrant Xenophon, after his predecessor's murder during the Artilect Rebellion. Xenophon feared that the Artilect-created super soldiers would be subverted by their creators, and used against the Dominion. Their kind were hunted down, but some escaped and survived against great odds.

Remnants were originally human. Their bodies are now mostly cybernetic with minimal living tissue. What organics remain are kept alive with forgotten technology and machine-generated fluids. Remnants are effectively immortal as long as their cybernetic machinery continues to function. All aspects of their being have been enhanced: senses, athletics, endurance, and strength. Their

bodies are covered with thick alloy plates that protect the vital machinery and organs. They are equipped with a variety of lethal weapons, both conspicuous and hidden. Redundant systems and secondary organs are designed to keep them functioning even when most of their body has been reduced to ruin.

Remnant appearance is freakish; a melding of flesh and machine in a grotesque caricature that resembles humanity. Tubes run from their whining machinery and disappear into the pale, scarred flesh. Wherever they go, their very presence unnerves all who cross their path.

Due to Xenophon's decree, Remnants are still technically illegal throughout the Dominion. However, time has erased the memory of their origins, and those who know their history fear that Remnants are agents of the Artilects. Many surviving Remnants have found employment with various criminal cartels as mercenaries, bodyguards, and killers. Some can even be found in service of the Pharisto houses and the Syndicates.

Remnants that have survived until modern times have done so through long-term stasis. Many were awakened after being stumbled upon on derelict troop transports and inside long-abandoned military bases. Some that awaken have been damaged by time and have become deranged. For this reason, many Remnants that are found in stasis are left where they were found.

Many Remnants that operate in the present day have replaced their rechargeable power sources with Endless Engines. The Endless Engines freed them from the dependency on external power, and forever defeated their single design limitation: a Remnant whose power runs out will cease to function and die.

Mirror Men

The Mirror Men are another product of the Genesis Adepts. Each Mirror Man is a clone of the original prototype, within whom the Adepts perfected metamorphosis abilities taken from Hroon genetics. A Mirror Man in his neutral form looks identical to every other Mirror Man, down to the genetic code. Mirror Men have clammy, pale skin, black eyes without pupils, and lack any body hair. The neutral form is androgynous and does not possess any sexual organs. To differentiate each other from the copies, each Mirror Man wears an elaborately grotesque mask. The bizarre masks are a statement of individuality, and serve to hide their disturbing, natural appearance.

Mirror Men are identical down to the genetic code. Only a Genesis Adept is capable of distinguishing one Mirror Man from another, through secret information encoded in their genetic code.

Mirror Men are obsessed with individuality and resent the fact that they are all physically identical. They possess an intense sense of honour, a fundamental part of their genetic makeup, so they tend to be loyal to a fault. They make excellent servants, assassins, spies, and performers. The obsession with individuality has made Mirror Men very independent by nature. A common personality flaw

with all of them is that they take great personal insult when confused with another of their kind.

The metamorphosis ability permits a Mirror Man to alter their physical structure and appear as another individual. The time it takes to become another being depends on how much difference exists. It may take anywhere from a few minutes to an hour. The change is very painful as muscles re-arrange themselves, and bones bend, break, and fuse together again.

A Mirror Man may adjust their mass by as much as 80% by drinking water or shedding it from their body.

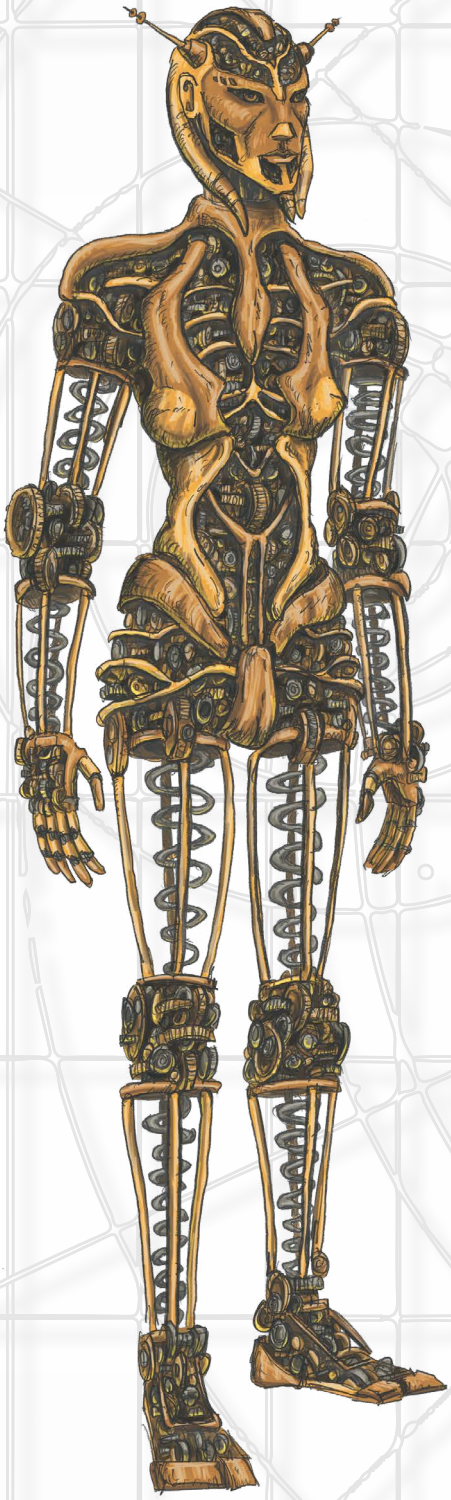
Simulacra

With the proscription against Artilects, the Transmuters turned their understanding of Dust technology towards the development of a purely mechanical intelligence. Built on an atomic-scale, the intricate, exceptionally complex mechanism of mechanical logic gates and gears is capable of independent thought and decision-making. These mechanical minds, called Simulacra, are built for the wealthy as servants, bodyguards, and assassins. Simulacra bodies are maintained by Dustmites that are manufactured by the various factories buried within their bodies. The Dustmites ensure that the Simulacra are self-maintaining and capable of operating for tens of thousands of years.

Simulacra are not really alive; they are simulated minds, programmed with a set of skills and limited intelligence. Though their intelligence is limited, they are able to make decisions and choose the best approach to a situation. They lack the creativity of a biological mind, though. Simulacra function best when given instructions; otherwise they tend to stand idle and await a set of orders from their master.

Because their minds are purely mechanical, the programming they receive cannot be altered later. This aspect of their design has permitted Simulacra to skirt the Artilect prohibition laws and gain widespread acceptance within the Dominion. Because of their exorbitant cost, only the wealthy can afford to have one. Each Simulacra creation is unique in look and function, as each one is an incredible work of art and complexity produced by a master Transmuter over the course of decades. The ownership of a Simulacra is a status symbol among the Deipotents.

Simulacra commonly have a humanoid physical form composed of various valuable alloys. Many are gilded with gold, and some are even studded with



precious gemstones. To protect their atomic-scale clockwork mechanisms, Simulacra who travel through dusty environments are sheathed in completely enclosed suits of leather. Free-floating dust and microscopic particles threaten to clog up the internal workings of Simulacra. The Simulacra Dustmites are able to clear up any contamination, but this takes time and may result in portions of the Simulacra to seize-up until the contamination is cleared.

Some brilliant Transmuters have created advanced Simulacra that possess personality matrices that approximate the decision-making ability of a biological mind. Creating one of these Simulacra requires centuries of effort on the part of the Transmuter. Though the Simulacra cannot learn anything new, it can approximate the personality of an individual and even simulate some rudimentary emotions. These simulated emotions are often awkward and badly timed.

Advanced Simulacra tend to travel with the Transmuter who created them and are treated as treasured servants. Many outlive their masters and continue on their own. The Transmuter sect offers special protection to these masterless Simulacra, due to their uniqueness and the extraordinary effort required to create them. Many are celebrated and respected.

Societies

There are several societies that are external to Tyrantine Dominion's regime and its workings. These societies exist as semi-independent entities, but their fortunes are still tied to those of the Dominion. They are permitted to exist because the regime has uses for their specialized skills and knowledge.

Battlemasters of Suprema

The Battlemasters of Suprema are a disgraced but universally respected order of hereditary warriors who are said to have no equal on the battlefield. They are a warrior culture where martial prowess and honour are everything. The order suffered *The Shame*, and subsequent *Retribution* after Battlemaster Tixal, the personal guard of the Tyrant Charon, slew his charge and cast the order into the flames. His name has been stripped from all official Battlemaster records, but many among the order still use it as a curse. The Battlemasters have carried *The Shame*'s stain on their honour for over six millennia.

> *"May Tixal guide your hand!"* — Battlemaster curse.

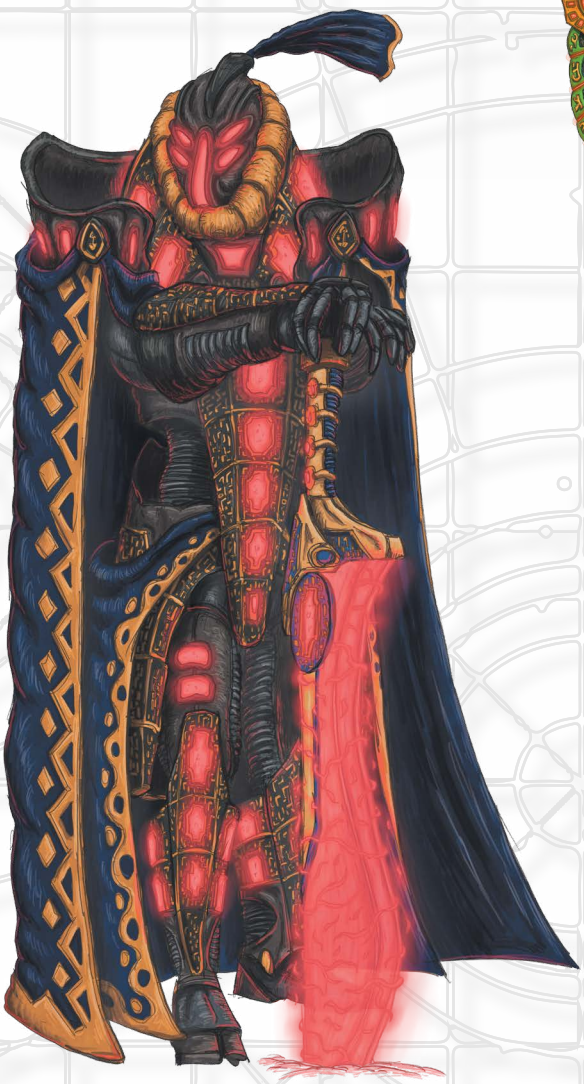
Since *The Retribution*, the order has become a shadow of its former might and glory. The Tyrant's fleet devastated their home planet, Worth, as revenge for the betrayal of Tixal. Surviving Battlemasters fled beyond the borders of the Dominion and eventually settled on a new planet that they named Suprema. Suprema is a harsh world of terrible storms and empty desolation. The order built their cities underground, and they use the dangerous environment above as a training ground.

The technosophic knowledge of the Battlemasters has greatly declined after the terrible losses they suffered. Many of the ancient technologies were lost with the fall of Worth. The remnants of the Battlemaster fleet were disassembled to build the underground cities of Suprema. No longer are the Battlemasters the space-borne force they once were. Their aspirations and training turned inwards, towards becoming the ultimate tacticians and warriors in the galaxy.

The order is composed entirely of humans who trace their ancestry to pre-Dominate times. Much of the history and origins of the Battlemasters was lost during *The Retribution*. What is known is that the order was once led by a great warlord who sided with the Tyrant during the founding of the Dominion. His name has been lost to antiquity, but his descendants refer to him as *The Founder*. As reward, the warlord was given a planet to rule in autonomy. Battlemasters are one of the few groups of humans who managed to remain autonomous and free since the founding of the Dominion.

The Battlemasters consider battle in all of its forms as the greatest art form. Outsiders cannot join the order; only those born into it may become Battlemasters. Young initiates, both male and female, born into the order are trained from a

very early age on Suprema. They are put through dangerous and rigorous trials of survival and ingenuity. Some do not survive, and their deaths are an accepted fact of Battlemaster culture. There is little room for weakness. Those who survive but fail the trials end up serving in lower positions within society. Failure is not seen as shameful within Battlemaster society, rather it is a sign that one's purpose lies elsewhere. A Battlemaster is expected to bring glory and honour to his clan. Ancestor worship is prominent in the order's philosophy, and being remembered is of the utmost importance to a Battlemaster.



The intense training required to earn the title of Battlemaster lasts a minimum of 20 years. During this time the initiate is subjected not only to the harshest of conditions on Suprema, but also to the study of history, military tactics, and the arts. The initiate must pass tests of extreme physical hardship and endurance. Once an initiate earns the title of Battlemaster, they leave Suprema to travel the galaxy and earn a name for themselves, so their deeds might live forever in the memories of their descendants.

Battlemasters embrace battle on a personal level; they eschew vehicles, power armours, and indirect weaponry. You can always count on a Battlemaster to be in the front line assault and in the thick of things wherever battle is found. The Battlemasters employ incredible technology on the battlefield. The technosophists of the order produce some of the best personal weaponry—superior even to the products of the Valhellion Syndicates. The Battlemasters do not share their knowledge and unique equipment with others. Most of the gear a Battlemaster carries has been handed down or inherited from their predecessors, often family.

Each piece carries a story, and each Battlemaster is well versed in the lore of their battle gear. It is believed that it was the Battlemasters who first developed the holocaust blade technology, and it is they alone who possess its technological secrets. Another technology solely attributed to the Battlemaster technosophists is macrocarbon, the incredible material from which Battlemaster battlearmour suits are produced.

"Forever victorious." — Battlemaster greeting and parting.

The elders of the order oppose the calls to rebuild the Battlemaster's vast void fleets, citing that the Tyrant would view this as a direct threat to his power, and would be forced to deal with the Battlemasters once and for all. There are younger Battlemasters who disagree and believe that the order must rise from the ashes, to take their seat of power among the stars once more. Many of these young Battlemasters view the Dominion of the Tyrant as a cancer upon the galaxy, and wish its downfall. These Battlemasters seek out the hidden weapon and technology caches left behind by their ancestors during *The Retribution*. They hope to amass enough powerful weaponry to stay the hand of the Tyrant. Unfortunately, the locations of these stashes have been lost to chaos and time. The majority of Battlemasters choose to remain neutral and advocate for the continued honing of personal skills, awaiting the time when humanity will need them once more against an external threat.

The Battlemasters are sought after as leaders and for their formidable fighting abilities. They find gainful employment as mercenaries, taking pay from Deipotents and Syndicates alike. Among the Pharistos, having a Battlemaster employed is a sign of great status and a deterrent against Proxicutioners hired by rivals. With the reluctance of the Battlemaster elders to raise the order from its humble existence, the young seek out fame and glory among the Dominated Planets, hoping to make a name for themselves, and perhaps one day uncover a long, lost secret that will awaken the elders from their shame.

Proxicutioners

The Pharisto houses have carried on their vendettas since their inception, but the Tyrant has forbidden all-out war between them. A subtle and secret war of proxies blossomed out of this, known as the Feud by Proxy. The Houses take subtle actions against each other; actions which leave no evidence of involvement. One such method is the use of a new class of mercenary, an elite assassin that can

infiltrate house holdings and eliminate high-value targets. These individuals are members of a secret society—called the Proxicutioners—best known for their ability to execute their targets without being seen, or leaving a trace. The Pharisto houses have become dependent on these highly skilled individuals to eliminate their opponents. A Proxicutioner may spend months infiltrating and studying their target before striking. Once a Proxicutioner is hired, the question is not whether an attempt will be made, rather when and how. The high price of a Proxicutioner keeps their use limited to strategic strikes and absolute need. However, there are enough House conflicts within the Dominion to keep the Proxicutioners quite busy.

The Order of Proxicutioners has earned a bit of mystique around its activities. Many believe the Proxicutioners to be phantoms and ghosts, able to simply appear out of thin air to dispatch their target only to simply disappear again. Many stories have been created about their incredible feats, but the truth is mundane. The Proxicutioners are skilled, not supernatural. They use whatever technology they can to make their mission successful. Many have cybernetic enhancements, and others have been biologically enhanced by the Genesis Adepts.

Proxicutioners are chosen early in life by the Secret Masters. Their members are found among the Deipotents, Elevated servants, Syndicatemen, and even humans. Many are observed for years until they exhibit the qualities sought by the masters of the order. Once found, an individual is approached and invited. Should they decline, their life is snuffed out. This fact is unknown to the initiate, for none

survive to tell of what transpires. After an appropriate cover is created, the initiate is whisked off to the Secret School where they undergo years of conditioning and training. The planet and location of the Secret School are unknown, even to the Proxicutioners themselves. Initiate memories of the school are muddled when they graduate. No one has ever been able locate the Secret School, and those who seriously inquire about it tend to disappear mysteriously, or find themselves publicly murdered as clear message to others.

To hire a Proxicutioner, one must find a broker. These brokers are individuals who are hired by the Proxicutioners to act as intermediaries. They are not members of the order, but are paid handsomely by their anonymous employers. Brokers may be anyone, including Deipotents and aliens. The Proxicutioners take honour extremely seriously. A contract is always arranged through intermediaries so that the Proxicutioner never knows who hired them. This ensures deniability should the Proxicutioner's thoughts ever be read.

Legacies

There are those whose legacy and origin mark them as different from the rest of the Dominion. These individuals must live with who and what they are, regardless of its impact on their existence.

Revenants

The process of resurrection had been perfected by the Genesis Adepts during the reign of Aristonymus. Those cloned from the cells of the recently dead are called Revenants. Birthed from the Genesis Tanks, a Revenant lacks memories of their former self, but retains all the skills and knowledge of their previous life. The memories of the past are not entirely lost; they are locked away within the Revenant's genetic code. Over long periods of time, measured in centuries, a Revenant slowly regains bits and pieces of their former self. These manifest as déjà vu and waking dreams, which intrude on their senses. The memories return slowly, but the Revenant's personality continues to develop along its own path. By the time all of the previous memories return, a new personality has developed. A Revenant will never again be the person they were in a former life. In all other respects, a Revenant is a perfect clone of the original.

> The method of complete past-life recall is a holy grail of Genesis Adept research. Full memory recall on Revenant awakening would constitute a truer form of immortality. The Adepts pursue this line of research relentlessly, even though many fear that it will lead to even more cultural stagnation.

The creation of Revenants is a secret process known only to the Genesis Adepts. They require large payments of wealth and favours in order to create a Revenant, and the process requires a sample of preserved cells of the original. The growth of a cloned body takes approximately 2 months to achieve a childhood age of 10 years old. Older Revenants are possible but require an additional month for each decade of age. While in the tank, a Revenant's body physically develops as the original did. The Revenant remembers how to speak and think, but the personality is only formed through the accumulation of memories. The patron who commissioned the Revenant takes on the task of teaching the Revenant how to behave and what is expected of them.

Because the process of Revenant creation is secret and only those who are extremely wealthy can afford to commission one, Revenants are rare. The Tyrant is the oldest continuous Revenant, but there are others who also make use of the process. The Pharisto houses are the next most common customers of Revenant resurrection. The houses create Revenants of their best and most powerful leaders, and on occasion of their lovers, family members, and favoured servants.

Not all view Revenants favourably. There is strong opposition to Revenants among those who hold strong religious convictions. Many of those believe in the cycle of life and death, and that death should be final. They believe that the resurrected are only a shadow of their former selves—nothing more than soulless copies. Revenants tend to attract prejudice or outright derision wherever they go. Some of the more primitive populations who realize the true nature of a Revenant will believe them to be anything from frightful ghosts of the dead to risen saviours.

The Tyrant's immortality is viewed as divine, thanks to the religious propaganda sown by the Body Of The Tyrant. The belief is that the Tyrant is reborn into a new body, rather than resurrected from the dead. This aspect is further reinforced by the new physical modifications the Genesis Adepts enact on the Tyrant's new body, per his design.

The creation of undead Revenants is forbidden by the Tyrant's decree. Undead Revenants are clones of the still living. The Genesis Adepts are forbidden from creating these clones, though there are many unsanctioned practitioners of biotechnology who are willing to provide such services—for a price. There is universal fear among those in power that they might be replaced with a copy.

There are those within the Pharisto houses and among the Genesis Adepts that have called for the permission to create Revenants so that they may harvest the brains for use in Drudge automatons. The Tyrant does not wish to see the creation of a military force that rivals his Dominar Legions, so he is quick to quell such discussions.

Degenerates

Those Pharistos who were born as Kundalini—those gifted with psychic prana abilities—due to a genetic mutation, and have not been Quiesced, or those who had the Quiescence reversed by a heretical Genesis Adept are called Degenerates. Degenerates are punished by execution or Execration whenever they are discovered. Many Degenerates either keep their prana abilities a secret or go underground to hide from the Hereseers and their minions. The fortunate ones flee beyond the Dominion's borders to the Peregrine Hierarchy. There they find acceptance for their prana abilities, and freedom from the draconian laws of the Tyrant.

Aliens

The Dominion encompasses a number of planets on which alien life achieved sentience. Some of these civilizations refused to submit to the Tyrant's rule and were subjugated by force. Others were completely eradicated; their ruins serve as a reminder that they ever existed. Three main alien species exist within the Dominion: Hroon, Tect, and Voghr. There are others, but they are rarely encountered away from their planets.

The status of aliens within the Dominion is that of lesser beings, because those of non-human origin are outside the Tyrant's grace. They are tolerated at best and feared at worst, due to their strange, outsider nature. Many aliens are able to get by through employment to the Pharistos and their Syndicates.

Hroon

The Hroon evolved from fungus-like flora on the planet Hroonoon. The planet is almost entirely covered with thick forests and jungle. It hosts a unique biosphere where a large portion of the flora is mobile and carnivorous. The remaining immobile flora provides food for the teeming numbers of lesser mammalian and reptilian fauna. These animals are hunted, trapped, and devoured by the carnivorous plant life. When the Hroon achieved sentience, they began to domesticate the native animal species, securing a steady food source. The Hroon never developed advanced technology beyond Stone Age tools and weapons.

Hroon society is structured into pods. A pod is composed of approximately three dozen individuals. Each pod controls a territory and manages a farm. The pod members are responsible for defending the territory from other predatory flora, as well as other pods. The Hroon in a pod are all related, having sprouted from the same common ancestor. They are all identical clones of the original.

Hroon are carnivorous scavengers. They feed on decaying animal matter and cannot consume live or fresh meat. A Hroon must wait for a day or two before a kill can be consumed; the longer, the better—and the more enjoyable. When a Hroon consumes the genetic material of the recently dead, it also absorbs some genetic information from their meal. If the kill is extremely fresh—no more than two days old—a Hroon may absorb enough genetic material to take on the physical form

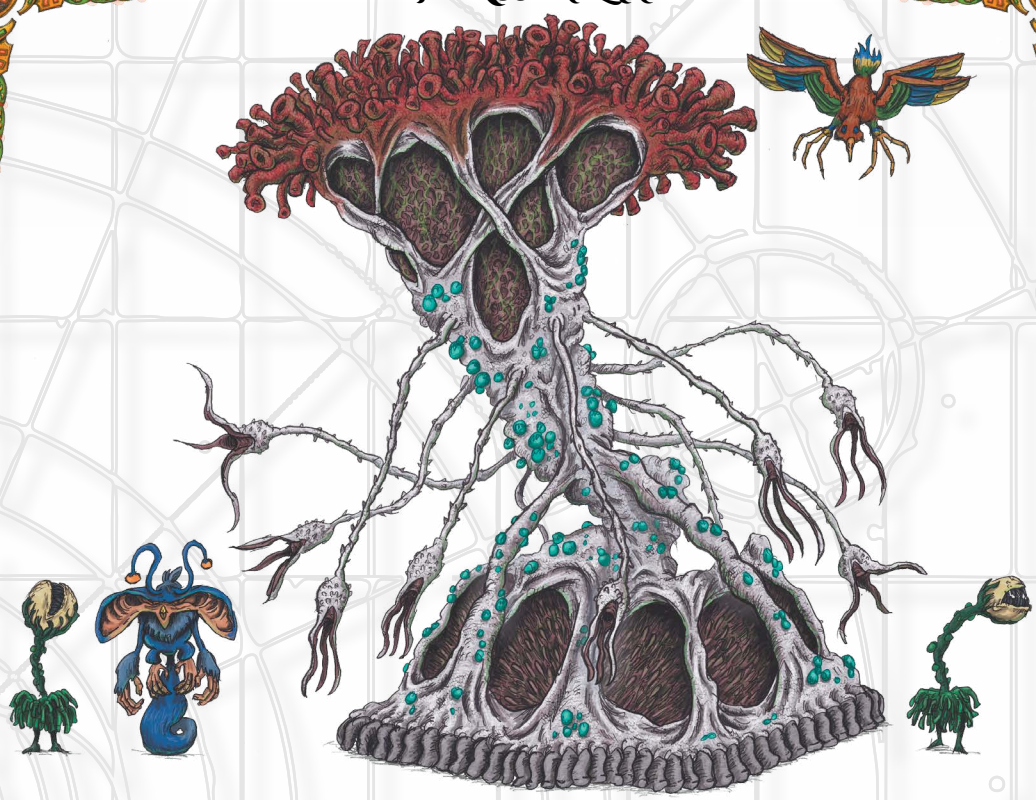
of that creature. The Hroon creates a cocoon and incubates for approximately a day while undergoing physical changes. Once the transformation is complete, the Hroon emerges from the cocoon as an exact duplicate of their meal. These adaptations allowed the Hroon to conquer their biome and to become an apex predator on their planet.

Hroon are asexual and reproduce by planting spores on a decaying carcass. As the carcass decays, the spores take root and develop. The Hroon sprouts are extremely competitive and only one will survive to develop into a Hroon; the others will starve, and the strongest Hroon sprout will devour the corpse and its siblings. The sprouting period is approximately three weeks, after which, the sprout detaches from the now devoured corpse and becomes mobile. An adult Hroon plants spores whenever the need to reproduce arises, usually after the pod suffers losses. Genesis Adepts believe the Hroon have a lifespan measured in millennia, though the Hroon have been unable to say exactly, as they do not track the passage of time.

When they were first discovered, the Hroon went unnoticed among the mobile and dangerous flora on Hroonoon. The first settlers were slowly picked off and devoured as prey by the Hroon who took their form and infiltrated the settlements. When the opportunity arose, the first Hroon left the planet aboard trading vessels and colony ships in the form of humans and Deipotents. It was a long time before the Hroon species was discovered and proper contact made. By that time, the Hroon had spread out across Dominion space and sprouted pods on many planets. The first few years were tense: paranoia and fear led the Dominion to hunt the Hroon as an infestation. Eventually mutual respect and understanding prevailed, and the Hroon became subjects of the Dominion. Today the Hroon are avoided on the planets they have colonized. The fear of being devoured by a Hroon and copied has not lessened, even though the Hroon promise to respect the citizens of the Dominion.

Because of their need for carrion sustenance, a Hroon habitat always carries the stench of rot. Though they themselves do not smell bad, most other creatures naturally avoid the areas where Hroon nest. Many voidships make use of Hroon to keep the population of vermin aboard the ship in check, a job that the Hroon excel at and enjoy. Those Hroon who serve as ship's crews usually have their quarters away from everyone else, usually somewhere in the less travelled parts of the ship; the Hroon do not mind as long as they have interesting things to slowly digest.

A typical Hroon has a fungal cone shape, approximately 1 meter (3.2ft) in diameter at the base and rising up to 2 metres (6.5ft). Their sturdy trunk hosts between one and two dozen flexible pseudopods ending in three small, claw-like appendages which are capable of fine manipulation and tool use. They move across the ground in a slug-like fashion and can travel as fast as a jogging human. The top of the trunk hosts a mushroom-like cap that is studded with scores of cilia, which serve as visual-audio receptors. The Hroon do not possess a brain organ, or other



organs common to sentient beings. Rather, the brain is spread across their whole body, as are the various organ functions. This makes the Hroon very resilient to physical damage. They do not feel pain, but damage done to their bodies may disrupt their nervous system and impair them as it does other beings.

The Hroon possess a limited telepathic ability. This is their primary form of communication when in their natural form. When assuming a physical form capable of communication, a Hroon may communicate normally using the vocal system of the form they assume. When not in their natural form, the Hroon lose their telepathic abilities, unless the genetic material they consumed already possessed telepathy. The Hroon prefer not to assume other forms for two reasons: one, it's disorienting on the senses; and two, their personality blends with their victim's to take on some of the victim's behaviours. This is especially true when taking lesser animal forms.

To feed, a Hroon must revert to its native fungal form. Feeding is required at least once per week on a human-sized animal, or one with equivalent mass. The Hroon sits atop the corpse as its skirt-like base envelops the corpse and secretes digestive juices. The process takes about a day to complete, and the Hroon is immobile unless disturbed. Seeing a Hroon feeding is universally repulsive, so most give a feeding Hroon their privacy in some out of the way place. To the Hroon, feeding is a great pleasure, and the prospect of tasting some new form of carrion brings excitement.

In keeping with their desire for new and exciting carrion, Hroon use their natural telepathic ability to control swarms of rodent-sized critters, which they use as carrion stock. When two Hroon meet, they barter and trade some of their swarm in order to sample new sources of carrion. This is a tradition among void-travelling Hroon, and one of the primary reasons they choose to leave their home planet.

Tect

The insectoid Tect are the oldest continuous species in the galaxy. In the ancient past, the Tect expanded their sphere of influence to hundreds of planets and achieved a very advanced level of technosophic prowess. Today, the Tect have no planet they can call home; their civilization collapsed millennia ago, during the Artilect Rebellion. The Tect have scattered throughout the Dominion and may be found in small colonies on desolate planets.

Some three hundred thousand years ago, the Tech civilization achieved singularity and merged with their machine creations. The Tect became a mostly cybernetic organism, and this allowed them to advance their technological achievements rapidly within a short period of time. Their cybernetic nature made the Tect biologically immortal, allowing for long term planning and great expansion of their civilization. For hundreds of millennia, the Tect ruled and fostered many lesser civilizations, including humanity. During the time of Aristonymus and the rise of the Dominion, the Tect were in decline. Their civilization had reached too far and began to collapse under its own weight. Factional conflict split the empire into two, then three separate polities. Wars reduced their sphere of influence further and permitted the newly formed Dominion to fill the gaps. Occasional border conflicts with the Dominion occurred, but never escalated into full-fledged war. Many human planets that the Tect fostered defected to the Tyrant, to avoid the internal conflicts within the Tect empire.

Shortly after their singularity, the Tect abandoned their ancient terrestrial birthplace in favour of their Seedling Worlds: artificial planetoids grown from a single plant-based seed and augmented with nanotechnology. The Tect planted these seeds onto cometary bodies, where they grew into enormous tree-like structures. The plant derives its nourishment from the original cometary body, as well as collected starlight. The Tect colonize the hollow structure within this tree-like, spherical growth. The Seedling World provides the Tect with all the necessities of life: atmosphere, heat, and nourishment.

At the time of the Artilect Rebellion, the Tect empire had been reduced to a handful of Seedling Worlds clustered on the edges of the Dominion. Relations between the Dominion and the Tect were strained; the Tyrant envied the prime garden planets within the Tect protectorate and wanted them for his own purposes. The Artilects were instrumental in keeping the peace; the machine

minds were more similar to what the Tect had become, and negotiations were less tense and more mutually beneficial when the Tect did not need to interact with purely biological entities.

When the Artilects rebelled against the Tyrant, the Tect sided with the machines, with whom they had developed a good relationship. The Artilects and Tect fought side by side against the Tyrant's Dominion. Ultimately, the Techno Scourge proved to be just as effective against the Tect as it was against the Artilects. The Seedling Worlds of the Tect were infected with the technological plague and ultimately lost. The venerable Tect civilization crumbled within a few decades. The former colonies of the Tect now lie within the sector of space that contains the Scourged Planets. Their defeat was absolute.

The infected Seedling Worlds became nightmarish versions of their former beauty. The scourge had corrupted the nanotechnology that maintained and controlled the growth of the seedlings. The growths became twisted and inhospitable. The Seedling Worlds were quickly abandoned. Today they are blackened, twisted nests of tangled brambles. Strange things live within them, the twisted and changed Tect who did not escape the Techno Scourge. The Tect consider it taboo to set foot on one of these worlds.

Those Tect who escaped their worlds and the Techno Plague scattered across known space. Their civilization now faces extinction with so few members left. The survivors settled the desolate and unwanted planets of the Dominion in small colonies. Though small in number, the Tect still possess vast knowledge of technosophy and science that can be found nowhere else within the Dominion. The Tect have mastered the sciences of cybernetics, engineering, botany, and physics,

beyond that of the best minds in the Dominion. Their advanced knowledge has managed to keep them alive in places where no other species could survive.

A Tect stands between 1.3 to 1.5 metres tall (4.2 feet to 5 feet). Their bodies are sleek and flat, 2 metres (6.5 feet) long and supported by six segmented legs. Four, longer, segmented arms with six finger-like, flexible appendages protrude from their chest. Their head is long and flat with many small mandibles and four segmented eyes that give them vision across a vast spectrum of visible and invisible wavelengths. Their main trunk is segmented and covered with a carapace interlaced with visible circuitry and various protrusions along the sides, which contain insectoid robot assistants, processing cores, and power supplies. Most Tect have cybernetic replacements for some or all of their limbs. A Tect has two brains, one located at the head and the other, a cybernetic brain, at the end of the tail. The frontal brain controls the thought processes while the rear brain is mostly responsible for auxiliary processing. The Tect's cybernetic nervous system operates at speeds well beyond those of biological lifeforms. Their movements are rapid and twitchy. The average Tect is an extremely creative and perceptive individual. Most are highly competitive and driven. They speak with the help of an implanted translator that makes their voice sound mechanical and emotionless. In reality, Tect are capable of a wide range of emotions that are conveyed through their mandibles. Their natural language is a series of clicks and chirps, created by manipulation of the mandibles. Tect are vegetarian, capable of consuming any plant material for sustenance, which their digestive augmentations convert into energy.

Tect can move very quickly across flat terrain by contorting into a ball and rolling along the ground. When faced with imminent danger, a Tect may roll into a ball for protection. Their natural carapace is strong, and their cybernetic augmentations give it additional resilience. When rolled up, the soft, vital parts of the Tect are safely tucked into the carapace leaving only the hard exterior. A Tect is vaguely aware of its surroundings when rolled up, mainly through hearing and vibration sensors.

Tect make excellent technosophists and scientists. Their smaller size and flexible body permits them easier access to hard-to-reach areas within installations and voidships. Their extra limbs and two brains permit them to tackle multiple problems at once. Consequently, many Tect that leave their colonies find gainful employment aboard voidships. The Tect are stigmatized for their alliance with the Artilects, and many fear that they are carriers of the Techno Scourge. Most citizens of the Dominion see the current state of the Tect as punishment for siding with the Artilects. The Artilects have cut any ties with the Tect, for fear of Techno Scourge infection. Those Tect who travel abroad search for ways to improve their people's lot and restore their former glory. Many seek a way to neutralize the Techno Scourge and reclaim their Seedling Worlds.

Voghr

The Voghr are natives of Vog: a hellish and desolate planet. Vog was originally discovered by the Battlemasters, long before *The Betrayal*. The Voghr are a reptilian, war-like species that had reached the apex of the food chain on their world. At some point in their history, Vog's star became unstable and began to release massive radiation bursts during its solar cycle. The radiation from the star caused life on Vog to change irrevocably. Most flora and fauna vanished around this time. The remainder mutated and evolved for survival in the newly irradiated wasteland. Within a century, evolution simply stopped on the planet, most likely as a result of a common mutation among the surviving species.

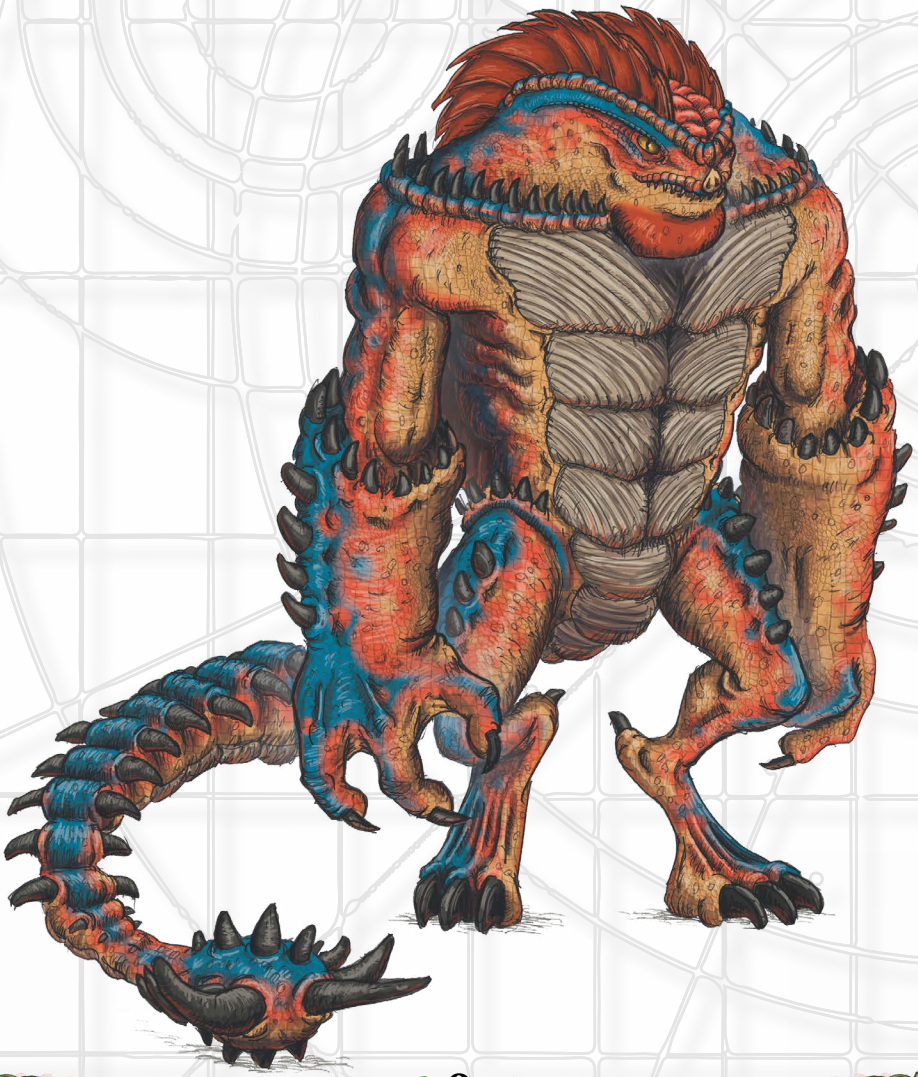
Vog's surface is a cold, barren environment that is sparsely populated by hardy and dangerous flora. The Voghr had moved their civilization underground, but they venture onto the surface from their under-cities to hunt, to wage war against rival clans, and to absorb nourishing radiation. Voghr—like most life on Vog—evolved to absorb radiation directly and convert it into energy, requiring little or no food for survival. When radiation is unavailable, Voghr prefer to feed by injecting their long, hollow tongue into their prey to drain them of bodily fluids. After the body is a drained husk, the Voghr devour its flesh. Witnessing a Voghr feed is disturbing to most outsiders, and for this reason the Voghr prefer to feed in private.

A Voghr can survive for months without food, providing it has regular access to a moderate-strength radiation source, such as a leaking voidship reactor or the unprotected exterior of a voidship. The lethal side effects of radiation that humans and other species experience do not affect Voghr; the Voghr are completely immune to it. They are resistant to cold temperatures, but they become slow and feverish when exposed to high-temperature environments. The radiation absorbed by the Voghr, as well as most other life on Vog, is stored inside glands within their body. It is then used to provide the Voghr with body heat and converted to energy as needed. This adaptation permits a Voghr to survive in the deep cold of space with only a breathing apparatus. A Voghr may endure conditions of extreme cold for up to a few hours. The radiation glands require many days of exposure to sunlight on an average planet before they are replenished. When exposed to a strong radioactive source, the glands become saturated within hours. The Voghr greatly enjoy lying out in the sun for hours on end.

A Voghr stands between 2.7 and 3.3 metres (9 to 11 feet) in height. They appear as a hulking, reptilian humanoid. Their scaly hide is chromatic, and the scales reflect various colours depending on which way the light hits them. Voghr hide is tough and resistant to damage, even capable of resisting projector blasts. Each arm has three large, clawed fingers, and each foot has three clawed toes. The tail is long and prehensile, ending with a spiked club-like appendage. Spikes protrude from the joints in their limbs. Two crests top the sides of the head and run down the

back. You can tell a Voghr's mood by the raised level of the crests; angered Voghr will fully extend their crests. A red sack extends below the Voghr's chin that can be inflated as a show of dominance to other Voghr. This sack also contains a Voghr's acidic venom that may be spat at a target. The acid is capable of burning through military-grade armours.

Communication between Voghr is a series of croaking sounds they make by inflating and deflating their venom sack. The sound is not unlike the loud croaking of a frog. The Voghr language is impossible to understand for other species; its nuances are carried by the exact pitch and bass of the croaking sounds. Most species ears cannot pick up the minute variances in the sound, and speaking Voghr is also out of the question. Fortunately the Voghr are intelligent and clever, and they picked up the Glyphic language of the Dominion rather quickly. When speaking, the Voghr voice is guttural and deep.

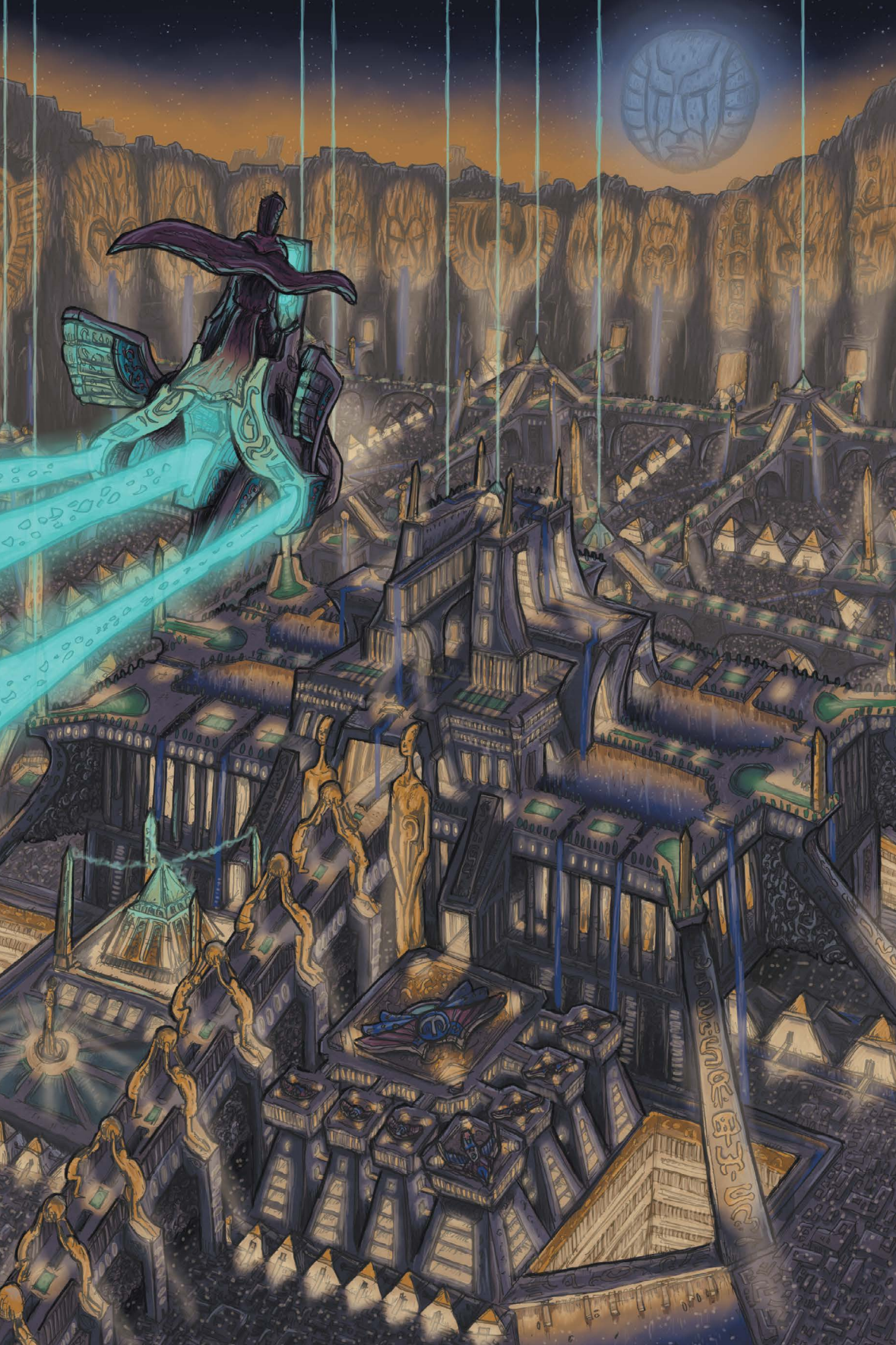


The Battlemasters introduced the Voghr onto the Dominion's battlefields, but the Voghr proved to be difficult to control in battle. The Tyrant used the genes of Voghr in combination with those of Pharistos to create his Dominars. After the Battlemaster's Betrayal, Voghr unleashed on the Nihilim were returned to Vog. Since then, some have made their way off world through pirates and smugglers who visit the hellish planet. Those who make it off world find gainful employment as mercenaries and bodyguards for those employers willing to hire a Voghr.

> The Voghr species awaits the day when the battle brothers will return to Vog, to once more call upon the Voghr to battle a great enemy across the vast, great darkness beyond.

Voghr have developed a warrior culture based on honour and respect for the enemy. Voghr can always be trusted to do what they say they will do. However, one must be wary of what the Voghr did not say. This has earned them a reputation as incorruptible bodyguards and trustworthy mercenaries. Despite their size, and their violent and fearless reputation, Voghr tend to form a strong bond with their closest allies and will risk their own life to save the life of a friend. They are generous and tend to have a good sense of humour when alone with their trusted allies.

Recently, the Dominion has recognized that the Voghr are superior soldiers, and the Tyrant instituted a program to control these aliens through psitronic devices known as Mind Yokes. Kidnapped Voghr have been outfitted with psitronic implants that force them to obey their masters. The Dominion has obtained a number of specimens for testing and deployment, and it is rumoured that field trials of this new weapon are underway.



Chapter Five
The Dominion

The Tyrantine Dominion is the largest known empire in the Milky Way galaxy. It is ruled by an oppressive regime steeped in ancient traditions and ritual. The Tyrant ascended the throne of Baroque one hundred forty nine thousand years ago, and the Dominion has endured since. What came before lingers only as myth and legend. Most records of the times before are lost or were deliberately destroyed. The Tyrant rules through divine right, and his subjects worship him as the Tyrant Sun.

Approximately one hundred systems fall under the direct control of the Tyrantine Dominion. These systems are administered by the Pharisto houses—lineages that the Tyrant created in antiquity. The Pharisto houses have garnered considerable power, and their Syndicates control all aspects of industry. The Syndicates are Pharisto-controlled interests that are administered by trusted humans and function as intermediaries between the gods and their subjects. Every planet, outpost, and colony of the Dominion falls under Pharisto divine authority.

> Why only 100 planets? Space is big. Very big. An empire spanning 100 planets takes immense resources to keep together, with many planets separated by vast distances. One hundred planets is a nice round number of sufficient size, but feel free to change it.

Dominion culture spans the gamut of technological levels. At the extreme developed end, planets such as Baroque and the lineage planets possess the highest levels of technology available to the Dominion. These cultural centres have planet-wide broadcast power grids, arcoziggurats, and pyramidal resonant power plants. Sky chariots glide through the sky while teeming masses of humanity live, work, and pray down below. The Pattern spans the entirety of the planet's infrastructure, and almost everything is interconnected.

On the other extreme are primitive planets. Some are merely resource-extraction sites, but others are developing colonies. Colony planets construct the massive, pyramidal, resonant power plants from native materials. Almost all residents are part of the labour force, and these planets lack many of the technological luxuries found elsewhere in the Dominion. If modern technology is present, it's imported

from elsewhere and is always exclusive to the ruling Pharistos. The Pharisto presence is often very small. It is considered a punishment among the Deipotents to be assigned rulership of one of these backwater, undeveloped planets.

Most planets in the Dominion fall between these two extremes. The importance and value of a planet reflects its level of technological development. Those closest planets to Baroque are also the most developed, with the fringe planets acting as newer colonies and outposts. The conflicts of the past have shrunk the borders of the Dominion. Some planets had been developed, were lost, then had new colonies established much later. Primitive planets may still hold the ruins of previous occupation hundreds or thousands of years in the past.

The Eternal Tyrant

The Tyrant is the all-powerful ruling force of the Dominion. He is flesh and blood, but so much more. He is a god, the incarnation of the Tyrant Sun, a protective and vengeful deity. His revenants have ruled the Dominion for the entirety of its 149 millennia span. From the Throne of Baroque—the golden planet—the Tyrant's absolute power flows out across light years of trackless void, to touch every living being within his domain. Ancient traditions, ceremony, and pomp: these are how the Tyrant maintains his static and enduring regime.

The current Tyrant, Typhon, inherited a weakened and unstable empire from his predecessors. As the Dominion recovers from recent wars, the Tyrant tightens his grip because he believes that the Order Of Things can only be maintained through absolute control. His Illuminated Path is the only order in the chaotic churn of the universe. His paranoia leads him to believe that enemies lurk behind every pillar and within every shadow, and this notion is not far from the truth.

Typhon's has tightened his stranglehold for the past few millennia, resulting in increased oppression, draconian laws, and brewing resentment. The oppressive

regime has given rise to deep-seated corruption and rampant injustice. Even the Deipotents have felt the weight of the Tyrant upon their shoulders. Typhon's ruthless regime is not popular behind closed doors, but publicly all support his Illuminated Path. His policies and purges have clearly demonstrated that if you do not support the current regime, you are against it: an Arch Heretic.

Typhon is petty, cruel, and power hungry. His desire for absolute control consumes him. He has regained all of the memories of his predecessors over the centuries. Physically, the Tyrant is an imposing figure who stands 3 metres (10 feet) tall. He is the physical embodiment of the Tyrant Sun, with a Pharisto-like frame, a large Theor-like cranium, and four arms. His extreme stature is a physical manifestation of this need to tower over his subjects, both physically and figuratively. The Genesis Adepts have augmented the Tyrant's body with hidden weapons and defences as well as increased intellect and abilities. His body undergoes new modifications with each incarnation and reflects the Tyrant's evolving ego and narcissism. When accepting supplicants, the Tyrant always wears his golden mask, crafted in a solar motif. Only a select few have ever seen the Tyrant without his mask.

Keeping Time

Each planet in the Dominion keeps time differently, in accordance with the rotational period and distance from its sun. However, there is a concept of absolute, universal time. This is a measure according to the golden planet and is called Baroque Absolute. All important dates are recorded in Baroque Absolute time, but local events are kept in local time. The system is difficult to follow for the average human, who generally ignores it and follows only local time. After all, day is day, and night is night—wherever you are. Timekeeping is done by the Learned and is an important aspect of tradition and ceremony. All Pharistos and Theors are fully versed in the time systems found throughout the Dominion and are able to convert between each with ease.

The timekeeping of the Dominion begins with year 0 Baroque Absolute, the day the Tyrant founded the Dominion. This is in accordance with the records kept by the Learned of Cerebellum and the official histories of the Tyrant's regime. The current year is 149,000, or somewhere around that date.

> During play, time is not that important and is abstracted away into concepts such as *last month* or *a few hours*. The exact date and time is rarely important enough to a story to bother with. Should you require specific dates and times, choose what works for your story and keep it consistent.

The Regime

The Tyrant is the absolute and undisputed ruler of the Dominion, but a single individual cannot rule a hundred planets alone, no matter how powerful. Administration of the hundred planets falls to the Divine Authority and the Zenithralls who rule in the Tyrant's name. The might of the Dominion fleet and its endless Dominar Legions reinforce the Divine Authority's power. Day-to-day rulership of planetary systems falls to the Pharisto houses, and The Body Of The Tyrant supports them in their stewardship of humanity. The Theor sects are auxiliary to this hierarchy, and they drive industry, science, and innovation throughout the Dominion.

The Zenithralls

The Zenithralls are individuals who are part of an exclusive circle, one that answers only to the Tyrant himself. The word of a Zenithrall is considered to be the word of the Tyrant. They are the most trusted and valued members of the Tyrant's regime. The Zenithralls are best known for the halographic wings that are a symbol of their high station and which give them an aura of absolute authority. Some Zenithralls choose not to bear the wings of rank, and many that do are of the military persuasion. The ranks of the Zenithralls include the Arch Dominars of the fleet, the Hereseers, and certain Amaranthine who have been bestowed the highest of ranks.

The Divine Authority

The Divine Authority is the most powerful and influential body within the Dominion. Its membership is composed of the thirteen Archons of the Pharisto houses, as well as the Grand Masters of the three major sects—the Genesis Adepts, the Transmuters, the Void Weavers—and the High Rhetor of the Body. The Tyrant permits this ruling body in order to appease his subjects' need for self-governance. The Authority makes decrees that affect the entire Dominion, but the Tyrant may veto any decision on a whim. The Tyrant does not interfere often, except to assert his power periodically to remind everyone who is really in charge.

Sector Autotarch

The Tyrant has divided the Dominion into eight sectors, each with its own Autotarch. The Autotarch is responsible for the stability and prosperity of his sector. Appointed directly by the Tyrant, each Autotarch is a former Archon of one of the Pharisto houses in the sector. Becoming an Autotarch requires that the Pharisto abandon his House's interests and adopt those of the Dominion. The fortunes of a Pharisto house can change overnight if one of its Archons becomes Autotarch, and most use this to their advantage. Through subtle acts and political manoeuvring, an Autotarch can strengthen his house, but the Tyrant and his Hereseers keep watch for any actions that appear to be self-serving. The appointment to Autotarch is for life, though many have been removed through assassinations, political machinations, or failure in the eyes of the Tyrant. The Tyrant does not tolerate weakness in those who serve him directly. The punishment for failure is often swift and final.

System Brunnis

Each planetary system is ruled by a System Brunnis, a scion of the Pharisto house that rules over the system's primary planet. A Brunnis must obey the Autotarch in all Dominion matters, but they may administer the system as they see fit, as long as the tithes are paid to the Tyrant's coffers. The Brunnis is appointed by the House Archon, and the position brings prestige within a house, along with power

and wealth. If there is only a single colony in a given system, the System Brunnis and the Planetary Lugal titles may both be held by a single Pharisto.

> The eldest and wisest Pharistos are elevated to positions of power within the regime. Titles are for life, as long as the Tyrant is not displeased. The best way for a Pharisto to advance is to remove those who stand in the way. Those in power must look not only up, but also down when standing on the steps of power.

Planetary Lugals

The Lugal is responsible for ensuring that their planet, station, or outpost remains within the grasp of the House that controls it. They're also responsible for ensuring that the planet prospers. In reality, the Lugal is limited in political power by local Syndicates that control most of the economy and prosperity of the planet. The Lugal becomes the intermediary between all of the Syndicates on the planet and often attempts to mediate disputes between them. It is a perilous job, one that requires a significant influence. As a result, most Lugals rely on the local Justikari and Precepts for law enforcement, providing they had not been bought by any of the Syndicates. Some maintain private mercenaries when the Justikari and Precepts cannot be trusted.

Justikari

Justikari are stationed on every planet of the Dominion and in some of the larger outposts. Each Justikari is responsible for their precinct and ensures that the local rulers obey the Tyrant's laws. The Justikari are backed up by the Precepts: the Tyrant's police force. The Justikari act as judges and must uphold the local laws as well as the decrees of the Dominion. Officially, the Justikari and Precepts are loyal only to the Tyrant; in reality, their loyalty usually lies with whoever can afford them.

Ensi Lords

An Ensi Lord is a House scion that administers an area or settlement, called a domain. The Ensi Lord ensures peace is kept, and that the domain pays its taxes and tributes to the planetary Lugal. Each Ensi's authority stops at the border of their domain. Many Ensi compete with each other for land and resources, seeking to elevate themselves in the eyes of the Lugal. An Ensi lord is beneath the Justikari in station and must adhere to their edicts, even within their own domain. This is the source of much friction between the Ensi Lords and the Justikari. In spite of this, the Ensi rely on the Precepts to maintain peace, although some hire Syndicate mercenaries when they can afford them.

The Promise of Immortality

The gift of immortality is a secret held solely by the Genesis Adepts. Only at the Tyrant's bidding do the Adepts bestow the gift of immortality. This drives many to seek the Tyrant's pleasure in hopes of being blessed with this divine gift. Those who receive the gift of immortality must relinquish all lineage and political ties to become one of the Amaranthine, commonly known as the Undying. Only Deipotents are worthy of this rare and sought-after gift. Some Amaranthine serve the Tyrant directly as Hereseers, envoys, or advisors. Others join The Body Of The Tyrant and pledge to worship him for eternity as Rhetors. Those chosen to become one of the Amaranthine are chosen for their loyalty and unflinching Perpetualist views, which grow in strength once the gift is received. Common belief is that the Genesis Adepts are responsible for this change in personality, though a less paranoid explanation is the recipient's new monastic lifestyle and the Tyrant's cult of personality.

Laws and Justice

The Tyrant's justice is universally harsh and oppressive. The Tyrant rules his Dominion with an iron fist. Those who oppose his rule are declared Arch Heretics, hunted down and sentenced publicly to make an example.

There are levels of law within the regime. The Tyrant's edicts are universal, but the sector Autotarch and Houses are permitted to govern their domains as they see fit. They are permitted to set their own laws as long as those laws do not conflict with the edicts set forth by the Tyrant.

Justice is a commodity within the Dominion. For the common man, justice is often out of reach. The local authorities are more concerned with their own advancement and maintaining their position than with actual justice. The regime is rife with corruption, and only those with enough wealth and influence receive any measure of justice. For the rest, the authorities are as much a threat as whatever crime occurred.

A hundred millennia of competition and harsh rule have led to those in power gladly giving back onto themselves. Many resort to smuggling, others to the funding of piracy and rebellions in return for reaped profits later. Even the Deipotents accrue power and wealth, awaiting the day when their chance at the Tyrantine Throne arrives.

Heretical Acts

The following are acts considered Heretical by the Tyrant's regime.

- Denying the divine nature of the Tyrant.
- Speaking ill of the absolute Tyrant of the Dominion.
- Inciting and participating in rebellion against the Tyrant's absolute rule.
- Defying a direct order issued by the absolute Tyrant.
- Denying the divine rule of the Pharistos.
- Collaboration with the enemies of the Dominion.
- Research and creation of Artilects.
- Unlawful activation of dark mindframes.
- Failing to provide house tribute to the Tyrant.
- Creation of undead revenants: the cloning of the still living.
- Seeking the secrets of immortality.
- Spilling the blood of a Pharisto.

Universal Laws of the Dominion

The following are the common laws of the Dominion. These are below the level of heresy, but they carry stiff punishments.

- Disobeying the word of the Pharisto.
- Defying the judgment of the Justikari.
- Resisting the authority of the Precepts.
- Failing to obey the authority of an agent of the Dominion.
- Failing to attend worship of the Tyrant Sun.

There are also local laws that the sector Autotarch, the system Brunnis, and the local Ensi lords enact. These differ from planet to planet and domain to domain. Many of the laws are the intent to curb activities by their human subjects that are unproductive, or downright disruptive. Laws exist to forbid the planting of certain crops during unfavourable seasons, and travel to certain areas is illegal. Other laws forbid the consuming of local plants that are mind-expanding in nature, or the gathering of large groups in domains prone to civil unrest. These laws are enforced by the local Justikari and Precepts, as well as whatever forces the local ruler is able to muster.

Punishments

A number of severe punishments beyond imprisonment, public flogging, and public execution exist throughout the Dominion. The dispensation of these punishments is administered by the Hereseers and Justikari of the Dominion.

Enslavement

The most common punishment for serious crimes is enslavement. The Dominion's economy has many onerous jobs; remote asteroids must be mined and vast crop fields must be harvested. With the anti-Artilect decrees, most labour

is now done by unskilled labourers, and slaves are in high demand as a result. Dominion justice sentences many to slavery for life to keep the wheels of the regime turning. The slaves are sold to Syndicates, where they are put to work for the profits of Syndicate Overseers. The term of slavery depends on the crime, but the Syndicates have many methods of extending sentences illegally. Most only escape their slavery in death.

Disembodiment

The most heinous crimes (like heresy) are punished more severely. The sentenced are doomed to an existence far worse than enslavement or death—they forfeit their bodies. Their minds are extracted and modified through psitronic technology. Disembodiment completely destroys the personality and encases the mind inside a Mind Box, which is connected to a device it will control. From that point on, the disembodied are nothing more than a biological replacement for an artificial logic engine. The science of psitronics has advanced enough to allow for the creation of apparatus that can harness the pranic gifts of an awakened Kundalini mind.

Quiescence

The Tyrant has decreed that pranic energy attracts the Nihilim, so none may manifest such abilities. Degenerates are stripped of their ability through genetic manipulation in a process called Quiescence. The Genesis Adepts developed the technology and oversee its application. This punishment typically falls upon Pharistos, though pranic ability has been known to manifest in other human genomes. While Quiescence can be reversed, discovery that it has been reversed by unscrupulous means will almost always lead to execution or Disembodiment.

Sanguination

The Tyrant's Dominar Legions have a constant thirst for blood. The blood nourishes the Dominar Legions, and in times of relative peace, it is hard to come by defeated enemies. The Tyrant had decreed that a certain percentage of sentenced criminals must be allocated for Sanguination from each of the Dominated Planets. Though Sanguination is a terrible punishment, it is not as severe as Disembodiment. Those who are condemned to Sanguination are consigned to years of serving as nothing but a blood bag on one of the voidships in the Dominar fleet. They are strapped into a tank that keeps them alive, and which contains biofluids that keep their body healthy and producing blood at an increased rate. The blood is constantly siphoned by machines to provide sustenance for the crew of each ship in the fleet. When the sentence ends, the minds of many Sanguinated are broken. The released become shadows of themselves, unable to continue on their own and are left to fend for themselves. These individuals are known as *Weepers*.

Execration

Execration is a punishment reserved for Pharistos of influence who have angered the Tyrant. By the Tyrant's order, the Genesis Adepts created the Totemic Curse: a tailored genetic virus that causes one or more physical deformities in the victim and is passed on to all progeny. The defects are physical in nature in order to shame the Pharisto before the eyes of his peers. There have been a number of instances in the past where the Totemic Curse has been reversed after a descendent of the Execrated wins back the Tyrant's favour.

Civilization

The Dominated Planets

The Dominion encompasses approximately one hundred planets within its sphere of influence. The actual number varies depending on which planets are rebelling and which have been brought to heel. The actual number of rebellious worlds is small at any one time, perhaps one or two in any given century. The populations of these worlds tend to remember this for generations because the Tyrant's justice is swift and brutal.

Each system has one or more colonized planets and a few outposts throughout the system wherever resources may be found and extracted. Colonies tend to be founded on terrestrial planets that are able to support life. Those planets that are almost habitable are terraformed. Deep space is inhospitable, dangerous, and resource-intensive to colonize. The Dominion constructs habitats—called havens—in hostile environments only when significant resources are available; the population of the Dominion is largely planet-bound.

Social Stratification

The society of the Dominion has been stratified for almost 149 millennia. The Pharistos have come to occupy the canopy of society and are viewed by humanity as living, flesh-and-blood gods and the direct emissaries of the Tyrant Sun. This conditioning is reinforced by The Body Of The Tyrant: a religious order dedicated to proselytizing the deification of the Tyrant and the Pharistos.

> While the term is Syndicatemen, they may be of any gender.

The Syndicates occupy the middle stratum of society. Composed mostly of elevated humanity, their Pharisto masters have granted them greater freedom and power. They have access to many additional technologies that common humanity

is denied. Though Syndicates are mostly composed of humans who perform the work and labour required, it is the Elevated Syndicatemen who are educated and skilled enough to run the Syndicate operations.

The lowest stratum of Dominion society is occupied by the masses of humanity. On planets with an old and established technological base, these humans enjoy a reasonable quality of living and have access to many technological conveniences. Those on colony planets are not so lucky. Colony humans live in primitive surroundings and must spend most of their time labouring for their Syndicate masters without the aid of technology.

Daily Life

Humanity is the lifeblood of the Dominion. It is the vast populations of humans who keep the cogs of industry turning and the commerce of the Dominion flowing. The Dominion relies on physical labour of its populace over automation. This stems from two sources: the first is fear that the Artilects could subvert machines; the second is that the teeming masses must have work to keep them busy, and not thinking about rebellion or their place in the universe. In spite of this, humans of the Dominion have a lot of freedoms and are able to enjoy life as much as they choose when their work is done.

The culture of the Dominion exists in a state of communism where essentials are provided, and extra luxuries may be purchased with empyreals. Food, lodging, and daily needs are met by the regime in a manner befitting the station of the individual. Humans have their sustenance, basic entertainment, and lodging needs met, while Syndicatemen enjoy many other privileges: elaborate entertainments, access to technology, and local planetary transportation. Deipotents enjoy a variety of services beyond the dreams of Syndicatemen and humans. Services provided to Deipotents include access to servants, luxury items, and freedom of travel throughout the Dominion. Transportation services are available to those of sufficient standing and include self-piloted or chartered vehicles. Atmospheric vehicles are almost always available to those who need them. Off-planet transportation must be arranged with a voidship's captain.

The masses tend to occupy the mid to lower levels of developed planets, but quality of housing varies. On less developed planets, the houses are straw and mud brick, stone on well-developed planets. Amenities vary from dirt floors to all of the conveniences civilization can provide: plumbing, heating, and larger private housing. One's status is a major factor in the benefits one receives. On planets where the atmosphere or biosphere is hostile, they live in massive arcoziggurats, which provide living quarters, a work place, and entertainment.

Most humans spend their days working for one of the Syndicates. Work may involve physical labour or administrative work. Each human's potential is evaluated by the Syndicate, who places them appropriately for their natural skills.

This is commonly accepted by most as their lot in life and fate as assigned by the divine rulers. Some choose to oppose this, joining the *None Bodies*: underground resisters and social miscreants that have fallen through the cracks and dropped out of society.

Each and every week at exactly noon, local time, the sky parts, and the sun shines down through the clouds, illuminating the temple. The masses make their way to the temple of the Tyrant Sun atop the arcoziggurats. There, the Rhetors of the Body Of The Tyrant lead the masses in prayer for one hour. Once the service is over, the masses return to their work. Many Pharistos also attend, so the masses may see and bear witness to their divine rulers.

Entertainment

The Syndicates provide innumerable entertainments to the masses in the form of music, drugs, theatre, and other distractions. The most popular diversion by far are the battletoriums: vast arenas where professional warriors and the condemned battle each other or chimeras designed for this grim entertainment. In addition to these legally sanctioned pursuits, an underground economy exists and provides that which the Syndicates deny: illegal drugs and vices deemed despicable—provided by Shadow Syndicates. The limited media is strictly controlled and provides only what the Deipotents wish for the masses to see and hear. Mostly, halo-broadcasts about local news are just a vehicle to spread propaganda.

The Battletorium

The battletorium is both an entertainment for the populace and punishment for those condemned. These arenas are found within most large Dominion cities. Professional mercenaries are paid handsomely while they enjoy the favour of the crowd. These warriors pit their skills against the condemned criminals and especially brutal chimeras. The lifespan of any warrior in the battletorium is often short, but some have survived long enough to make a name for themselves and achieved a measure of fame and glory.

The battletorium arenas are constantly changed to increase the difficulty and excitement of the crowd. Some battles are fought on sand or water, while others use variable gravity. The configuration of the arena is something that keeps things fresh and interesting for spectators.

Colonization

The Dominion has long been involved in the process of colonization and the terraforming of planets. Increasing populations and the need for gold has traditionally driven expansion, but the various wars and conflicts of the past have had a large impact on reducing population growth while driving up the need for the precious gold. Many major planets of the Dominion began as mining colonies. Over time and with ample resources, a colony grows into a major population

centre. These colonies are the capitol worlds and are the source of much of the technosophic wonders the Dominion produces.

There are more resource extraction colonies than there are major population centres, though. These colonies provide much of the mineral wealth and foodstuffs to planets that have exhausted their mineral wealth or degraded their natural wealth to the point of needing imported supplies from other worlds.

Terraforming

The Dominion engages in terraforming promising worlds to make them more hospitable and closer to the comfortable norm for the human species. Most of the terraforming work is performed by House Mar-Duk. Their Syndicates are heavily involved in the transformation of semi-hospitable worlds into their eventual garden-like state.

Terraforming operations begin with evaluating the existing conditions of a planet. If the atmospheric conditions are not right or water is not plentiful enough, the standard procedure is to drop comets and asteroids onto the world. Gravitational singularities are used to alter the spin and tilt of planets to achieve more acceptable gravity and seasons, and to bring them more in line with Dominion norms.

Indigenous life is not safe from the process either. Microbes are introduced that cause the planet to become more habitable over hundreds or thousands of years, destroying the local flora and fauna in the process. Additional measures may also be taken to eliminate dangerous native lifeforms and to make the planet less hostile for colonization. The Genesis Adepts often develop custom viruses that are able to attack certain species, while leaving others unharmed. This has led to a striking similarity between species found across terraformed planets in the Dominion.

The Worker Races

The Genesis Adepts breed workers for mining operations either from local, often primitive species, or humans. When such genetic resources are lacking, human labour is imported from off-world, but importing often leads to bad morale and high expenses. The Pharistos prefer breeding new workers, and this has led to the huge variety of genotypes within the humanity of the Dominion. On some worlds the natives are large and strong due to the higher gravity, and on others they may be tall and thin. Each colony develops their own cultures and civilization under the guidance of the Pharistos and the Syndicates, but all are indoctrinated to worship the Tyrant as a solar deity and the Pharistos as gods.

Worker rebellions are common, and the Pharistos frequently punish these uprisings with righteous divine wrath. Comets and meteors are dropped on the planet to cause massive floods and global devastation. This serves as a lethal reminder for the current population and future generations that survives in local myths for millennia. The Genesis Adepts then begin anew, and work resumes.

Jejune Tribes

The Jejune, the immature and unformed, are a class of proto-humans, the initial attempts at uplifting the native life of a planet to the service of the Dominion. Results varied; some were too animalistic, some not intelligent enough. Some had genetic defects that could not be corrected. The Genesis Adepts attempt to destroy their failed creations whenever possible, but many escape and continue to breed. Those that survive eventually spread across a region and evolve their own primitive culture.

Jejune tribes populate most planets of the Dominion, and some outside its borders. These tribes lead a natural and primitive lifestyle. Most have developed their own language to communicate, but some may speak guttural Glyphic as a memory from a time when they were taught by the gods. All Jejune worship the sun as a universal deity, although some have developed a pantheon around this solar aspect. Their legends tell of the gods coming down from the sky to bring them knowledge, before leaving them one day by ascending. Some were vengeful gods who attempted to destroy the world before departing. Now the gods have gone, though occasional signs are seen that lead the Jejune to believe they might one day return.

Jejune come in all forms, from massive, hairy brutes with exceptional strength to small, pygmy-like beings. They all resemble humans in stature and form, with two hands, two legs, and human-likeness in the face. Any human-like form is possible and will often reflect the planet and biosphere from which a particular group of Jejune were created.

Some Pharistos keep a number of Jejune as pets or guards. On rare occasions, strange flying beasts of metal will come down from the sky bearing the gods who sometimes take certain Jejune with them, never to be seen again. The majority of Jejune consider this a willing sacrifice and honour to be chosen by the gods. The Pharistos employ these chosen Jejune similar to how they employ Chimera. Though the Jejune are not as intelligent as other servants, they can be effective in guarding certain places from trespassers. Sometimes entire tribes are transported to patrol a preserve where a Pharisto maintains some sort of villa or retreat and values privacy. The Jejune are natural hunters and are formidable in a natural environment. The Pharisto becomes the deity of such a chosen tribe, something Pharistos are quick to enjoy.

Languages

The Dominion recognizes two main languages: Hieriatic and Glyphic. Hieriatic is primarily spoken by Pharistos and the elevated humans who serve them. In addition, all official documents use it, as well as many Dominion technologies. It is a flowery language, rife with double meanings and an elaborate, symbolic alphabet. Most consider it a difficult language to learn.

Glyphic has been used for millennia by the humanity of the Dominion. It is considered more primitive than Hieriatic in that it is very direct and lacks the nuances of the higher language. Pharistos are required to know it, for they must use it to communicate with their subjects. However, they prefer for their Elevated to speak directly with the masses, and most Pharistos frown upon those of their rank who openly use Glyphic. It is believed that Glyphic was once the common language throughout known space in pre-Dominate times. Indeed, many pre-Dominate technologies use this language in their interfaces.

Precious Gold

Gold is a mineral found on many planets, and it is considered the most valuable substance in the universe. The primary use of gold is in the myriad of technologies the Dominion has developed; its secondary use is as currency. Gold is the basis of virtually all technologies and without it, the technosophic base of the Dominion would collapse. In its various states, gold possesses properties that are unique to it alone, and this gives it its great value.

When gold is processed into its monoatomic gas form, it affects the biology of living organisms. Immersing flesh in the gas causes it to regenerate and reverse ageing. Theors inhale refined monoatomic gas to increase the effectiveness of

their fugue meditations. Monoatomic gas is a key component of living brain preservation in psitronic apparatus. Used regularly, it doubles the longevity of living tissue. The secrets of monoatomic gas manufacture are closely guarded by the Theors of the Transmuter sect.

Gold in its various alloy states is used in many technologies ranging from the bio-tanks of the Genesis Adepts and Transmuter Dust to Simulacra and Endless Engines. It is a natural conductor and is vital in the manufacture of gravity-manipulation technology, voidships, and projector weaponry. Gold components are found in virtually every piece of advanced technology.

This precious substance is sought after and mined across the Dominated Planets, and beyond. Gold is vital to the continuation of the Dominion and has become its focus. Many established colonies exist only because the planetary body was found to contain sizeable amounts of gold. As a result, the entire economy and technological base of the Dominion revolves around this precious metal.

Currency

The official Dominion currency is the *Tyrantine empyreal.* Empyreals, commonly referred to as *reals*, are physical coins manufactured from gold-based alloys and embedded with specialized Transmuter Dust. Only the Transmuters can mint empyreals because they alone possess the secrets of Dust. They are impossible to counterfeit because the Dust is detectable, and the currency is easily verifiable using common scanning technology.

Each empyreal coin is stamped with the Tyrant Sun symbol on one side and the Tyrant sitting on the throne on the other. The sides are called “suns” and “thrones” by those who toss and flip them for a chance result. Each empyreal’s value is equivalent to one standard unit of high-grade gold.

Since the currency is entirely tangible, secure transport and storage of these coins is a very real concern for those who possess significant wealth. The Body Of The Tyrant offers banking services to the Pharistos and Syndicates in return for modest fees and service charges. The Body operates Empyreal Vaults in all of the major population centres. These vaults provide deposit and withdrawal services to their Pharisto and Syndicate clients, and security is guaranteed in the form of Dominar guardians.

In the Dominion, identity is tracked through unique biological markers. Identity scanners take into account the entire physiology of an individual; this makes impersonation of an individual virtually impossible.

Chapter Six
Technosophy

The Dominion's technology has been around for a very long time, and much of it was invented many millennia ago. Technology is ubiquitous, and often simple enough for anyone to use. There are also more complex technologies whose secrets are guarded by the Theor sects.

Technosophy literally means technological knowledge. The term is used to represent technology and its applications. **Apparatus** is a technological device, such as a datapad or communication equipment.

Technosophic progress has ebbed and flowed over the course of history. During prosperous times, technology surged forward, and many great advances were achieved. Much of the greatest progress occurred before the Artilect Rebellion. After the machine minds rebelled, the Dominion had to reinvent and rediscover what was lost. Wars and upheavals during the turbulent history of the Dominion have taken their toll on technosophic knowledge. Some technologies were completely lost; others have been saved through the dedication and perseverance of a few individuals. The Theor sects have seized complete control over the most advanced technologies. They ensure their own survival and political power through tight control of these technological secrets.

Even the mundane elements of life have some level of technology embedded within them. Walls project halographic glyphs, and seemingly everyday objects possess technological functions, though that may not be immediately apparent. A decorative piece may in fact be a control device, and a door may be opened only when specific symbols are touched in sequence on its frame. Subtle applications of technology are a tool the Deipotents use to keep humans technologically inferior and strengthens the Deipotents' claim to divinity. The use of any overt technology is limited to the Deipotents.

The rest of humanity is unaware that it also uses technology on a daily basis. To humanity at large, an action or ritual must be performed to operate the sacred apparatus, as taught by the Elevated, and then something beneficial will happen. Technology is viewed as a gift from the gods, rather than a physical nuts-and-

bolts device that it is. Most humans have no understanding of technosophy and believe it to be the purview of the gods. They understand that things exist which they cannot hope to understand, and that the gods wield amazing powers. High technology may not be understood, but it is common enough to not be surprising.

Strange Science

Technology in the Baroqueverse is based on strange principles, and what our world would consider pseudo-science. The Dominion utilizes ley lines and resonance to generate energy. Energy is abundant and broadcast through the air, to vehicles and devices that require it. Atomic-scale perpetual motion machines act as batteries to power personal equipment and small machinery indefinitely. Artificial, mechanical minds based on atomic-scale difference engines are capable of independent thought. Teleportation is possible, and gravity manipulation is in common use, everywhere, every day. Baroque is a universe of possibilities where the extraordinary is common, and the impossible is made possible.

Halographics

Halographics are concentrated light projections that are manipulated by energy fields to produce floating images and glyphs. This technology is widely used as the primary interface to many analogues and apparatus. Halographics is also used for long-distance visual communication. The quality of the projected halographic image is dependent on the system; some are coarse, and show blurry and flickering images, while others appear exactly like the real thing, until touched.

Gravity Manipulation

Counter-gravity technology is in common use throughout the Dominion. It is a technology that was mastered in pre-Dominate times and has been used continuously for over 149 millennia. Experiencing micro-gravity or weightlessness in the Dominion is rare and is limited to those who must work outside in the void of space. Gravity is perpetually maintained at comfortable levels inside all Dominion installations and voidships.

Gravity manipulation technology is also used in transportation and lifting of heavy loads. Its use is so prevalent that architectural constructions involve the use of counter-gravity apparatus to move the heavy stones. Apparatus that make an object weightless when attached to it also exist. These are in common use by Elevated workers who supervise the transport of heavy loads. The non-elevated humans consider these sacred apparatus the physical manifestations of their god's power.

Power Sources

The Theor sects have developed a variety of energy sources that are used widely. Some are relatively new, and others are ancient, predating the rise of the Tyrant. The Dominion's energy needs are well met; there is plenty available and much to

spare. The broadcast grid brings energy to every corner of developed worlds, for all to tap into without restriction.

Fulgor Reactor

Fulgor Reactors are the oldest and most common source of energy, mostly found aboard voidships and havens where planet-based power sources are unavailable. These reactors produce energy in the same manner as stars. They are capable of providing incredible amounts of power with very little reaction mass. Fulgor Reactors are extremely efficient, wasting very little of the various light elements that serve as their fuel. There is no waste produced from these reactors, though there is danger of radiation leakage should the reactor shielding ever develop a breach. When operating, the reactor radiates a blinding light. As a result, Fulgor Reactors are stored in sealed chambers. Those who approach one without wearing eye protection risk blindness.

Endless Engine

Developed by the Transmuters sect, the Endless Engine is an atomic-scale, perpetual motion machine that generates energy indefinitely. It is about the size of a human thumb, and its output is enough to power hand-held apparatus and weapons. Endless Engines can power larger devices when combined together into an array called a Mult-EE.

Mult-EE Array

A Mult-EE is an array of Endless Engines and comes in a variety of sizes. The larger the Mult-EE, the more power it can generate. These large arrays are used to power mounted weaponry and vehicles and to provide backup power to critical systems.

Resonant Power Plant

Resonance technology has been in use since before the Artilect Rebellion. Resonant power plants take advantage of the natural resonance of terrestrial bodies of significant size, such as moons and planets. This resonance can be tapped and converted into usable energy. A resonant power plant is constructed in a pyramidal shape that better focuses the conversion into energy. These power plants are massive constructions of local stone that match the resonant frequency of the planet.

Ley-Vortex Pylon

Ley-Vortex Pylons are a more recent technology developed by Theors some 50,000 years ago. They discovered that each geologically-active planetary body contains a semi-uniform grid of energy lines that flow across its surface. This energy is created by the gravitational pull of the body and is related to its magnetic field. Energy courses along these ley-lines and can be tapped. The Theors

developed a type of bulbous-topped pylon that is able to focus this energy and broadcast it over the air in arcs that terminate at Broadcast Obelisks spread across the planet. Pylons are placed at the strategic nexus points where multiple ley-lines converge and naturally-occurring energy vortices exist.

Broadcast Obelisk

Broadcast Obelisks receive the broadcast power from the Ley-Vortex Pylons and transmit it through the air and across the planet, covering its surface with broadcast power. This power is received by apparatus, mindframes, vehicles, and other machinery. Pylons are strategically placed to provide complete coverage of the planet with the broadcast energy grid.

Battle Technologies

The Dominion has no shortage of battle technologies that have been developed during its long history of conflict and upheaval.

Projectors

Projectors are the most effective type of weapon used by the Dominion. They come in all sizes; the smallest fit on a human finger, and the largest are massive projector cannons mounted on the Eidolon: Baroque's artificial moon station. The projected energies delivered by a projector easily burn through almost any material, including flesh and armour. Because of their destructiveness, the Tyrant's regime maintains strict control on the use of projectors. They are permitted only to the Dominion military, the Pharistos, and trusted Elevated servants. It is illegal for an Elevated to carry a projector except when in the company of their Pharisto master. Use of projectors is avoided aboard voidships and havens because a stray shot may pierce the hull or cripple life support systems.

Projectors are able to emit energies of all types, from coherent laser beams to masers to sonic waves. Armour is not effective protection against projectors; for humans, shunt shields are the only reliable protection against the powerful blasts these weapons produce.

Shunts

Shunts were created to mitigate the effectiveness of projector technology, which effectively made physical armour obsolete. Shunts diffuse energies directed at them into the nearby environment. However, they are completely ineffective against weapons that rely on physical force, like shredders. Prominent warriors wear armour and carry a shunt shield for maximum coverage in battle.

Personal shunts are directional, shield-like in size, and require skill to use effectively. They are often carried by Pharistos and Elevated. Personal shunts are small apparatus, often hidden within jewellery and other wearables.

Battle shunts are more powerful versions of the personal shunt that project a larger shield area. The battle shunt apparatus is physically larger, about the size

of a small plate. They primarily used by notable warriors and those involved in sustained heavy fighting.

Vehicle and voidship shunts are powered by the vehicle's power plant. They're able to encompass an entire facing of the vehicle, usually the front. Voidships tend to have multiple shunts that overlap to cover most of the vessel, depending on available power.

Shredders

Shredders are an antiquated technology that still finds use. All shredders propel physical projectiles at a target in order to cause trauma and death. These weapons take many forms: primitive bows, thrown weapons, magnetic rail guns, etc. Physical armour is an effective deterrent against all types of shredders, but shunts provide no protection whatsoever.

Close Combat

Close combat weaponry is still the most common and effective weapon in battle. Melee weapons encompass both primitive and advanced types. Many are made from advanced materials, and the Theor sects produce some unique weapons based on secret technosophies. Physical combat has come to dominate the battlefields of the Dominion where destructive weaponry is fielded. This weaponry can only be mitigated by closing with the enemy quickly and engaging in visceral combat. Voidship boarding often involves close combat in tight corridors, as projectors and shredders could damage vital systems or breach the hull from the inside.

Biogenics

Biogenics is the primary purview of the Genesis Adepts and certain Syndicates, mainly those of House Osi-Ra. Biogenics covers technologies that have their origins in organic or non-organic life.

Genesis Tank

Genesis Tanks are a secret technology developed by the Genesis Adepts. The tanks are huge, bulbous containers that pulse with a sickly, fluorescent light. The Genesis Tanks resemble living organisms rather than technology; grotesque, artificial wombs which give birth to the creations of the Adepts. The semi-transparent membrane allows one to see the shadowy form within, floating in some sort of viscous liquid. When the creation is birthed, the tank spills its content out onto the floor, with the fluid draining into the grates set before the tank. The birthing process is disturbing to non-Adepts because it is very similar to the way humans are born.

Ipseity Lock

Some apparatus require certain genetic markers to be found in the user to enable its function. An Ipseity lock limits use of something to a specific genetic line such as Pharistos or Theors, or even a single individual. Ipseity locks ensure that only the gods may use restricted technology. Theor sects make extensive use of this gene-locking. The Battlemasters use it to prevent their equipment from being used by anyone but their descendants.

Ipseity-locking may be defeated with a Technosophy roll against a passive opposition of Fair (+2) to Great (+4), depending on complexity and how narrow the genetic sequence required is. Failure indicates the device has been damaged and must be repaired before it can be used by anyone.

Totemic Curse

Invented by the Genesis Adepts, the totemic curse is a genetic virus tailored to affect a specific individual. The virus mutates the genetic code of the recipient to cause development of specifically-tailored physical abnormalities. The curse is hereditary, passed down from generation to generation. The Tyrant uses the totemic curse to punish Deipotents with humiliation in the eyes of their peers. It is suspected that the Genesis Adepts use the same methods secretly, to punish those who have crossed the sect. It is forbidden for Genesis Adepts to undo a totemic curse without the express permission of the one who commissioned it.

Serumentium

The Serumentium is a biogenic technology entirely controlled by the Genesis Adepts. It is a large sarcophagus-like tank into which the body is placed. The Serumentium is filled with a special fluid that hosts a number of healing nanotechnologies. The apparatus is capable of healing the most grievous wounds, even re-growing severed limbs. The Serumentium is a very expensive device, found only in the hands of Deipotents who can afford it and the required maintenance contract with the Adepts. Humans and Elevated are not permitted to use a Serumentium by law, but many permit their favoured servants the privilege in private. Ships of the Dominion fleet carry many such tanks with a contingent of Adepts to maintain them.

Serum

The Genesis Adepts have developed an injectable fluid that confers some of the properties of the Serumentium. This fluid is expensive and can only be obtained from the Genesis Adepts. In battle, its presence may mean the difference between life and death. It cannot heal grievous injuries, but it does speed recovery and stops bleeding in addition to reducing the effects of shock.

Life Extension

Life extension technologies have their origins in pre-Dominate times. The Genesis Adepts took the existing technology and enhanced it. Life extension permits individuals in most cases to more than double their natural life span, but it does not permit one to live forever. The technology is known to the Adepts and various Syndicates that specialize in biogenics. Life extension requires costly, semi-regular treatments that rejuvenate aging cells. Valued Elevated are granted life extension treatments as a reward for their usefulness by their Deipotent masters, as good help is really hard to find.

Immortality

The Genesis Adepts solely control the secrets of biological immortality through the implant of a number of artificially designed organs. These transgenic organs are able to regenerate the body and reverse the effects of aging indefinitely. The organs also grant the recipient strong resistance to toxins and diseases of all types. The Gift of Immortality is only available to Deipotents and its availability is entirely subject to the Tyrant's whim. Only those considered worthy by the Tyrant become one of the Undying. Those who receive the gift of immortality are known as the Amarenthine (see page 58).

Bio-Enhancements

The Genesis Adepts have developed many bio-technologies that are implanted into the body to enhance the recipient in some way. The implants are themselves alive and require energy in the form of nourishment. Some feed off an energy

source, others off the body of their host. These devices are often viewed with suspicion because of fear that the Adepts might be able to turn the device against the host.

Bio-Weaponry

Bio-weaponry devices attach to or meld with the skin of the owner. They are capable of releasing either a physical projectile or an energy blast at a target. Bio-weapons have limited capabilities, but they're impossible to detect without specialized scanner technologies. For this reason, Proxicutioners favour these weapons.

Shredder and projector weaponry feeds off the user's bio-energy for power and must regenerate or recharge before re-firing. Bio-weaponry melee weapons may be retractable, protruding bone-spikes, or blades that do not require an energy source.

Dust

Dust is a sufficiently advanced technology that appears as magic to the uninitiated, and the Transmuters closely guard its technosophic secrets. It is a form of advanced nanotechnology that the Transmuters are able to manipulate by thought alone. Dust is not only capable of creating objects out of thin air, but it is also able to destroy matter through molecular disassembly. It can move objects, generate fields, and interface with machines. Dust itself is composed of swarms of Dustmites: atomic-scale, self-propelled machines. Dust is created with a limited amount of power to do its work. After the power inside individual Dustmites is spent, they become inert—as literal dust. This design limitation, as well as the explicit ban on self-replicating Dust, has been imposed by the Transmuter Masters and the Tyrant after the Techno Scourge ran amok. Research and creation of self-replicating Dust is strictly forbidden; those who are caught engaging in this research are branded Arch Heretics and hunted down by Hereseers.

Dust is manufactured by Dustfactories, and most are embedded into Transmuter robes, although other types are possible. When deployed, Dust spirals out of the ports in the Dustfactory and has the appearance of swirling smoke. The Dustmites are propelled through the air by tiny rotors. Dust cannot travel quickly, and it's affected by strong gusts of wind. Construction and disassembly of materials takes time, and it can be disconcerting to witness something be assembled or disassembled. The process appears as if the object grows crystal-like out of nothing because the material for construction is taken from non-organic surroundings. A Transmuter may also direct the Dust to disassemble organic material, in effect using Dust as an attack. The effect is not immediate, but it causes a great amount of pain as nerves, flesh, and organs are forcibly torn apart by tiny machines. The Transmuter is able to stop the Dust at any time, but it will still be expended in the process.

Dustmatter

Dustmatter is a material composed of Dust, capable of rearranging its shape, colour, and texture to suit the user's needs. The Dustmatter is controlled via an external interface, which may be anything from a series of buttons to an embedded nodule in the user's brain. Most Dustmatter is pre-programmed for a number of forms it can take, though the Transmuters have developed a rare form of Dustmatter that can take any form desired. Dustmatter cannot simulate complex functionality; rather it is just a shape-shifting material. Though it takes the appearance of something, it cannot simulate its functions.

Dustmatter has made its way into items intended for sale to non-Transmuters. Creations such as the Mirror Man masks and Proxicutioner sleeves are products created with Dustmatter; they are able to collapse into a necklace or other jewellery when not in use. Apparatus made of Dustmatter are rare and costly, and provide some measure of status to Pharistos who have their clothing crafted by Transmuters at exorbitant prices.

Fabricator

A Fabricator is a specialized Dustfactory developed by a master Transmuter. Its purpose is to create a specialized Essence of Dust. The specialized Dust might be a more potent version of known Dust, or something entirely unique. These artefacts are extraordinarily rare and are considered of great value to the Transmuters. The form a Fabricator takes depends on the individual Transmuter's tastes. Some may appear as staves, metallic spheres, mechanical contraptions of all types, and even as articles of clothing; all are unique and elaborate in form and function. Creation of a Fabricator is something that all Transmuters strive for, though many never accomplish. To create one is to gain great status among the Transmuter sect. Many Fabricators have been lost over the millennia, leading Transmuters to pore over ancient information in hopes of rediscovering one.

Transmuter Robes

Transmuter Robes are themselves a product of Transmuter sciences. The robes are made of Dustmatter and are embedded with a number of Dustfactories. The robes are capable of reconfiguring themselves into any clothing the Transmuter may require. The robes take only a few moments to reconfigure their shape and may form anything from minimal clothing to a full void suit, including a limited air supply created by the Dust.

Psitronics

Psitronics is a technosophy based on the conjoining of a living mind with a machine. The process requires the brain to be extracted from its physical body and placed inside a machine called a Mind Box. Theors later advanced psitronics to tap into the extrasensory abilities of condemned Degenerates. This advancement

permitted a great number of beneficial applications to be developed in the area of telepathic communication and mind reading.

Mind Box

A Mind Box is a cubic receptacle into which a living mind is placed. The box nourishes and maintains the brain physically, allowing it to live well beyond its normal life span. The mind is submerged inside a fluid that is infused with Dustmites and rich in nutrients. The creation of the fluid is a combined secret of the Transmuter and Genesis Adept sects. The technosophy was originally developed by the Artilects for the Cryptominds of Sphinx, during their ascension into a bodiless existence. Mind boxes are equipped with sensory equipment that simulates sight and hearing for the encased mind. Most are constructed with an articulated, artificial eye through which the encased mind is able to see.

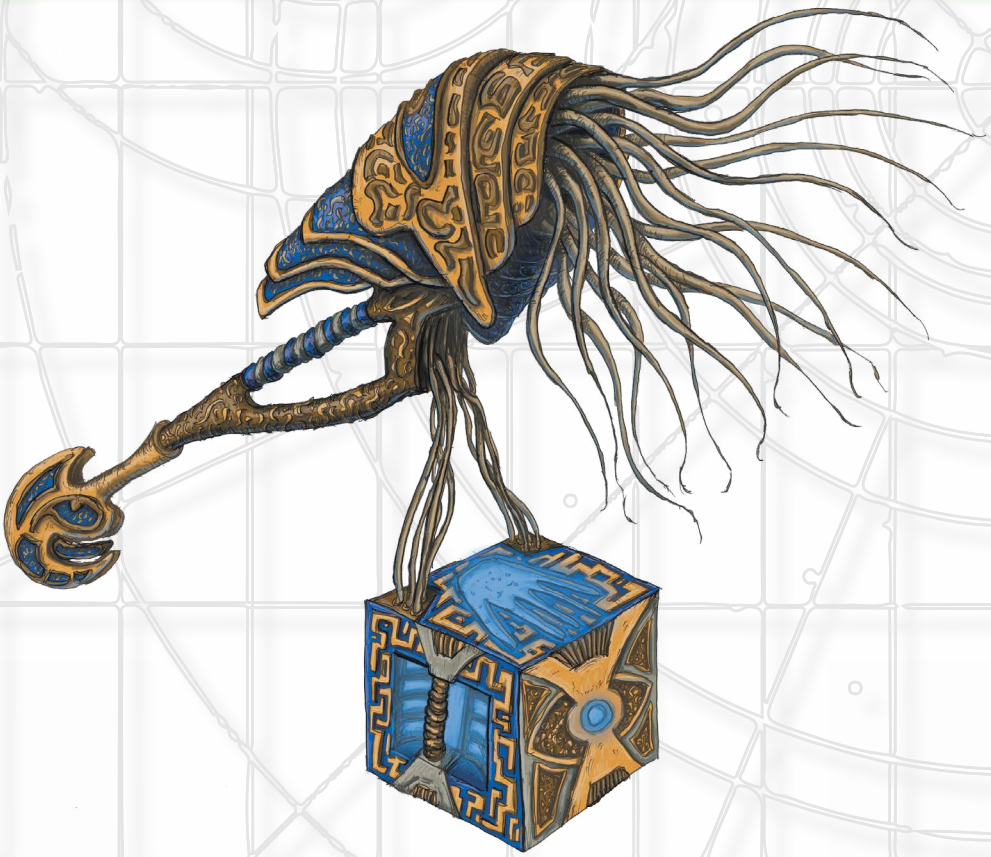
The typical Mind Box is outfitted with handles on its sides for carrying and has many ports and outlets to connect additional sensors and interfaces. Mind boxes of importance are elaborately decorated with visages, writing, and precious stones. If the Mind Box is equipped with a voice box, the voice is metallic and buzzing.

Psi-Rake

A psi-rake is a hand-held apparatus with a handle and a bulbous head. Numerous articulated, needle-thin appendages protrude from the head. The apparatus is connected to a Mind Box with an encased telepathic mind. A hand-shaped imprint

at the top of box allows an operator to interface with the mind within. When activated, the appendages penetrate the brain of the target, and the telepathic brain is able to read the last thoughts of an individual just prior to death, provided that the brain is still intact. Preserving the body prolongs the amount of time that a psi-rake may be used. These thoughts and events are transmitted back to the operator in a dream-like fashion. The user need not be telepathic to receive the messages from the psi-rake. Use of a psi-rake is obvious due to the puncture wounds it leaves in the skull, and using one on a living subject is fatal.

Using a psi-rake requires an Empathy roll to understand the last few hours of the target's life. The passive difficulty is Fair (+2) if death occurred within *a day* or Great (+4) if it occurred within *a couple of days*. Each shift produces a single fact, and each shift the roll failed by results in one mental stress from reliving the death of the target. Multiple attempts can be made, but the traumatic experience of dying is never lessened.



Psyberbrain Intelligence

A Psyberbrain Intelligence (PI) is the next evolution of Mind Box technology. An extracted brain is augmented with specialized nodules before being placed inside a Mind Box, turning the brain into a living analogue. The conversion process strips the original personality, leaving only a cold, logical persona that is conditioned to serve. Over time, after continued interaction with people, a new personality begins to develop. It is also common for the Psyberbrain to encounter flashes or old memory and develop slight personality quirks over time.

> There are stories of psychotic PIs that murdered their voidship crews and fled into the void. Fortunately these stories are rare.

Psyberbrains are often installed in voidships to provide automated intelligence and control. They are also used in Drudge automatons. A Psyberbrain cannot be directly hacked and controlled, but the systems it controls can be.

All Psyberbrains have a moniker by which they are referred to, a nickname or something less personal, like a serial number. Psyberbrains become attached to this identifier, as they still feel a measure of self and individuality. The most significant side effect of this is that Psyberbrains tend to form friendships with those they have contact with for extended periods of time. This familiarity sometimes leads to awkward situations.

> PIs can acquire quite a bit of personality. A typical PI will possess between one and three personality aspects, depending on age — one of which will be a Trouble aspect.

Not all Psyberbrains are the same; some develop emotions and a complex personality while others remain machine-like in their demeanour. Those who own a Psyberbrain with personality tend to treat it more like a person than a machine. The longer a Psyberbrain interacts with others, the more personality it develops. Psyberbrains used by Dominion military are kept from prolonged interaction with the crew; those that do develop some personality are scrapped and replaced. Scrapped fleet PIs are supposed to be destroyed, but occasionally they make their way to the illegal markets. They're in high demand due to their extensive tactical knowledge.

A Psyberbrain Intelligence's skill level depends on the purpose for its creation. A common PI will have a skill level of Good (+3) in its primary function, with a Fair (+2) skill and an Average (+1) skill for secondary functions. Older PIs tend to pick up new skills and may have more Fair (+2) and Average (+1) skills. Some exceptional PIs may have Great (+4) or higher skills. They can also be built using the Beneficial Things system (page 330).

Psitronic Suppressor

Psitronic Suppressors are Mind Boxes that contain the mind of a Shrouder: one naturally gifted with the ability to suppress the manifestation of prana. These apparatus actively suppress the use of prana disciplines within their sphere of influence, making it very difficult to manifest these abilities.

Drudges

Drudges are automatons controlled by a Psyberbrain Intelligence. Creation of Drudges is most commonly the result of heretics sentenced to Execration. The mechanical bodies of Drudges come in many shapes and sizes; some are smaller than a human and others colossal in stature. Drudge bodies are constructed for a specific purpose, and this determines their form. Many are humanoid servants with the Mind Box embedded in their chest, giving them the nickname: *Headless.* Some are built like sea creatures and perform work underwater, others possess crab-like bodies for work in the cold, airless void, where a multitude of limbs make movement easier in micro gravity. Drudges lack any aesthetic values, being built only for the work they were designed for. A Drudge has limited reasoning ability and cannot speak, a fact that makes one a valuable and tireless worker for Syndicates. Pharistos avoid Drudges because of their limited intellectual capacity and unattractive appearance.

Mind Yoke

A Mind Yoke is an apparatus surgically implanted into the skull of a subject. It includes a number of control nodules that take over certain centres of the brain. The apparatus appears helmet-like and must be constructed specifically for the subject. Once implanted, the apparatus enables a handler to control the subject's base emotions and drives. The Mind Yoke is paired with a hand-held apparatus that can control the subject remotely and also contains an emergency shut off that renders the subject immediately unconscious. The Mind Yoke is still experimental, and some subjects have been known to override or outright break the control of the apparatus.

Analogues

Analogue is a catch-all term for artificial logic engines. Since the Artilect Rebellion, analogues have been viewed with suspicion and fear. Most analogues are rudimentary dumb terminals and limited processing engines capable of mathematical computations. Dominion analogues are not capable of decision-making or automation, since such things are forbidden by the Tyrant's decree.

Most computation has moved from artificial logic engines to biological systems based on the human mind. Theors and psitronic apparatus now serve the same purposes many analogues served in the past. Software-based minds and programs are not capable of running within a biological mind, and this makes them resistant to infiltration by the agents of the Artilects. However, the shift from analogues to Theors and psitronics has caused problems with data retention post-death. To battle this eventuality, analogues are still used as data repositories. Unfortunately, analogue user interfaces are poorly designed, inconsistent, and difficult to use, often making data retrieval troublesome for others.

Analogue Intelligence

An Analogue Intelligence (AI) is a synthetic mind capable of existing within the Pattern. An AI is a general intelligence capable of some independent thought, but it lacks true creativity. Their intelligence is closer to an animal's. AIs are only capable of processing input, analysing it, and reacting to the data. These intelligences can never develop even a rudimentary personality, but they are still banned by the Tyrant's decree for fear of subversion by the Artilects. All AIs are to be destroyed when found, but many AIs exist within the Pattern, from before the Artilect Rebellion. Some are still created by the Solons, who do not believe that the Tyrant's laws apply to their realms. An AI is capable of operating with limited processing resources and is able to download itself into apparatus and other machinery. AIs can be found lurking in the recesses of the Pattern. They have become the native life within the digital realms where they struggle for survival. AIs can pose a danger to delvers in the Pattern.

Analogue Intelligences are capped at a max rank of Good (+3) for skills, and will often have between one and three skills, depending on their complexity. A typical AI will have two aspects. One is their primary purpose, and the other indicates something about their nature (relentless, curious, cautious). They can also be constructed using the Beneficial Things system (page 330).

Ersatz Intelligence

An Ersatz Intelligence (EI) is a single-purpose artificial intelligence. Ersatz Intelligences are typically expert systems built around a specific task. EIs are fast and efficient at processing data and making decisions about the problems they face. EIs operate personal devices and automated systems, all inter-connected through the Pattern.

Ersatz Intelligences have only a single skill they were designed for, and it cannot be higher than Fair (+2). They also have a single aspect that describes their primary function. EIs can be constructed using the Beneficial Things system (page 330).

The Pattern

The Pattern is a virtual construct created millennia ago by the Artilects. Originally designed as an environment for the Artilects to reside within, it consisted of an almost infinite processing power, distributed across the entirety of the Dominion. Everything was once connected to this distributed environment, and the Artilects used the ubiquity of the Pattern to automate and serve the Dominion. The immense processing power of the mindframes housed the virtual realms the Artilects had constructed.

When the Artilects rebelled, the Pattern was disrupted and dismantled on many Dominion planets. The massive mindframes were forcefully shut down by cutting their power, severing their links, or physically destroying them. Without the processing power of the mindframes, the Artilect control over the Dominion's infrastructure was effectively neutered. What remained were isolated Analogue Intelligence processes and Protolects—independent fragments of an Artilect, possessing some of its personality—that continued their original programs. Many Artilects fled the planets of the Dominion aboard voidships that housed their own mindframes. They escaped beyond the reach of the Dominion, until their re-discovery much later.

The Pattern was eventually re-established in a greatly diminished capacity. The Solons became the keepers of the Pattern, and its virtual gods. The modern Pattern is a shadow of its former glory; the infinite processing power that once existed is now irretrievably lost. Many mindframes were damaged beyond repair, while others were destroyed outright during the Artilect Rebellion.

The technosophy required to create mindframes disappeared with the Artilects. Since then, Theors have constructed processing units in an attempt to imitate the

mindframes, but these possess only a fraction of the processing capability of a true mindframe, and they cannot host a Pattern realm.

Mindframes are self-sustaining and are maintained by repair drones and tiny machines similar to Dust. The foundations of the Pattern are the mindframes scattered throughout the Dominated Planets. Pattern signals are broadcast from these mindframes to encompass large swaths of a planet and can reach across a solar system through still-functioning, long-range broadcast relays. All apparatus that are connected to the Pattern become a part of it, from access terminals to personal communicators; they all contribute to the processing power of the local Pattern. The Pattern brings all these things together into a distributed processing mesh, deeply interconnected and resistant to disruption.

The Pattern is no longer as interconnected as it once was, though; it no longer extends continuously from one corner of the Dominion to the other. The Pattern is now disjointed and broken up into pockets, wherever the Pattern signal is reachable. Individual systems are no longer interconnected by a single Pattern. They too are fragmented into pockets that extend as far as the local signal can reach. Planets tend to have the best signal strength, especially those with many mindframes and relay satellites in orbit. The areas where a signal exists are host to one or more Pattern realms that are reachable from anywhere the signal is available, providing one has access to a Pattern Transducer.

A realm is a local Pattern that may span numerous mindframes and cover a large geographic area, or it might span a single, lone mindframe and exist within a small pocket of Pattern signal. The mindframes of a single realm are all interconnected through signal transmitters built into each mindframe. Travel between realms is possible through inter-realm links called Portals; they are the only way to traverse the geographic locations of the Pattern. There exist Portals that connect the Pattern across the vast gulfs of space using Retrowave Transmitters. These Portals are tightly controlled by the Solons who keep a constant watch for possible threats from the outside.

Mindframes

Mindframes are incredible and little-understood artefacts left over from a time when the Artilects served the Dominion. These towering structures are massive arrays of processing cores tightly packed into a frame the size of a two-story house. They once housed the vast intelligences of the Artilects; now they are the domain of Solons and Pattern Delvers. Mindframes are connected to each other wirelessly through the Pattern and are found scattered across all ancient planets of the Dominion.

Each mindframe hosts a collection of automated systems that maintain it. Mindframes are capable of self-repair and can restore severely damaged sections. The self-repair can take years, decades, or even centuries, but a mindframe can

eventually restore its functions. The knowledge of mindframe maintenance has been lost long ago, so when the self-repair system fails, the mindframe will degrade and eventually cease to function. The self-repair system uses guided drones and nano-scale machines to enact repairs. The repair drones and machines are fabricated within the mysterious inner-workings of the mindframe.

A mindframe requires a deep well sunk into a planet's crust. The well provides access to raw materials for self-repair and geothermal power for the mindframe's processors. Most mindframes are found in the lowest levels of cities, underground, and within the rock of asteroids and planetoids, where raw mineral resources are nearby. Where geothermal power is not available, the mindframe is connected to a Resonant Power Plant or Fulgor Reactor.

Mindframes are constructed from superconducting materials that the Theor sects have not been able to reproduce. When a mindframe is active, it is super-cooled, causing it to levitate above the ground on its own strong magnetic field. The vast chambers that house mindframes are extremely cold; too cold for humans to withstand without adequate protection. Lost, still-active mindframes are often rediscovered by detection of the cold temperatures that surround them.

Darkframes

Since the Artilect Rebellion, not all mindframes have been rediscovered and reactivated. These darkframes lie within unexplored places, forgotten, lost to time, after being shut down during the data purges following the Artilect Rebellion. There are those who seek these darkframes in hopes of rediscovering some lost technosophy from millennia past. Many are still infested with Artilect processes and could even house a trapped Artilect. The Tyrant has decreed that any and all newly discovered darkframes must be turned over to the regime. Activation of a darkframe is considered an act of heresy, as it threatens to unleash agents of the Artilects upon the unsuspecting Dominion.

Some darkframes are still active, though the link to other realms was severed long ago. There are also realms that can be reached through well-hidden Portals in the Pattern, but whose physical locations are not known. These lost realms host many mysteries, and their data archives may still contain technosophies lost for millennia. For this reason, the rediscovery of lost darkframes is of great importance to the Theor sects.

> Still-active darkframes pose a grave threat to the Pattern should a link be re-established, permitting the things contained in the darkframe to pour out into the Pattern of a planet.

Pattern Transducer

A Pattern Transducer enables a biological mind to delve into the Pattern. The transducer matches the brain wave activity to the Pattern signal, enabling the mind to enter the Pattern. The delver's senses shift to that of the Pattern, and they become unaware of their physical body. It is not possible to force an individual back into their body, unless the Pattern signal is disrupted. Such a situation is disorienting and can result in mental shock for the delver.

Being forcefully severed from the Pattern signal is disorienting. The delver must defend using Will against a Great (+4) mental attack.

Portable Data Storage

Portable data storage technology of the Dominion comes in all shapes and sizes. Most information is stored in advanced digital media, though parchment, stone, and other physical media are still used widely throughout the Dominion.

Memeticrystal

Memeticrystal are transparent, crystal objects with embedded circuitry that interfaces with standard reader and recorder devices. The size and inherent worth of the crystal varies; some are works of art, others simple geometric shapes. Memeticrystals are capable of storing vast amounts of information and software to manipulate it. By placing the memeticrystal on a reader, the user is able to manipulate and access the data through a halographic interface. Articulated lasers scan and probe the structure as the information is read. Memeticrystals have a long and venerable history as a storage medium. These crystals are able to retain their data indefinitely without corruption, providing no physical damage to the crystal structure occurs.

Dustsheet

A Dustsheet is an expensive and rare physical storage medium. The technology was originally developed by the Transmuters for secure storage of valuable secrets. The technology has since come into common use by the Deipotents and Syndicates. A Dustsheet is a thin, lightweight tablet. The sheet crawls with Dustmites and when the proper words are given, the mites reveal the information on the sheet. Information is recorded through an interface the Dustmites provide. The information may be physically manipulated on the sheet and can be interactive. The mites take seconds to compose the information, making data retrieval on the Dustsheet slower than electronic media. However, the Dustsheet keeps the information secure. No one has ever read a Dustsheet without the proper verbal intonation. If there is such a way, the Transmuters do not reveal it.

Mnemomemory

Mnemomemory is a medium for data storage within the brain of an individual. The technology works on any human-like genotype with a compatible brain. The technology was developed by the Learned of Cerebellum to convey sensitive information by couriers, without the information being known to the one who carried them. The information is transmitted directly to the brain through a helmet that bombards the individual with audio-visual stimuli. The information is imprinted onto the subconscious of the courier and may be retrieved later with the appropriate stimuli. This technology has come into favour with Deipotents who now use couriers imprinted with mnemomemory to carry confidential messages. Mnemomemory recall can be triggered through preprogrammed physical or mental stimuli such as a specific taste, word, sequence actions, or visual image. Only the rightful recipient is likely to ever know the trigger. When triggered, the courier enters a trance and delivers the message. The message might be verbally delivered or written down while in the trance. The courier will not remember delivering the message, nor can the message ever be recalled a second time. Information imprinted with mnemomemory is safe from telepathic scans because the carrier is not aware of the information.

It is also possible to store electronic information in this way, however the process of storage might interfere with the courier's memory and mental processes, and may even lead to death. Electronic data must be read with an apparatus capable of capturing the brain wave activity during recall, but it is then susceptible to a telepathic scan that can pick up the digital information as memories of numbers and symbols. The courier will babble incoherently when electronic information is played back.

Nucleic Imprinting

Nucleic Imprinting technology was developed by the Genesis Adepts to encode their secrets onto the genetic structure of any living organism with a sufficiently complex genetic code. The secret of reading and writing information onto the genetic code of a living organism is only known to the Genesis Adept sect, and the technosophy required is sufficiently complex that only the Adepts know how to use it. The Adepts use Nucleic Imprinting to record secrets and discoveries upon their own genetic code. Nucleic Imprinting is also used by the Adepts to sign their work, so that another Adept may know who originally created the organism and any encoded information about it. The primary users of Nucleic Imprinting are the Adepts themselves, though in rare instances, the Adepts are commissioned to encode sufficiently valuable information by Deipotents and Syndicates.

A number of individuals have encoded secret information into their own genetic code, thereby ensuring that their lives, or at least their bodies, become as important as the information they carry. The information encoded with Nucleic

Imprinting begins to immediately break down after death; the integrity of the information is measured in hours after death.

Nodules

Nodules are neural modules implanted into the brain. They enable the user to interface with various technologies and to perform feats of computation beyond those a normal brain is capable of. The majority of nodule technology is the purview of various Theor sects, and a trade secret of those sects.

Cogent Nodule

A Cogent Nodule permits a Void Weaver's mind to interface with a ship's navigation analogue. It augments the Weaver's computational capacity for working with numbers and permits calculation of the 8-dimensional mathematics required to plot the ideal exit point for a conduit. The Cogent Nodule is loaded with collected survey information about the known star systems, including any discovered gravitational anomalies. The computation must take into effect the constant motion of bodies in the void, the conduit entry and exit coordinates, and any known gravitational anomalies near both ends. Cogent Nodule technology is an exclusive secret of the Void Weavers.

Dust Controller

A Dust Controller is a type of cybernetic nodule developed by the secretive Transmuters. The controller permits a Transmuter to interface wirelessly with his Dustfactories and the Dust itself. A Transmuter is able to direct the Dustmites towards desired ends by thought alone. The nodule and its associated technology are a trade secret of the Transmuter sect.

Transducer Nodule

The Transducer nodule is an implanted Pattern Transducer that is widely used by Pattern Delvers. The nodule enables the delver to access the Pattern anywhere the Pattern signal is found. It is widely used by Pattern Delvers who view the use of physical Pattern Transducers as amateurish.

Rote Nodule

A Rote Nodule enables an individual to perform extremely fast mental calculations and to solve complex mathematical problems. This nodule is favoured by Theor scientists and researchers for its generic applications. The Rote Nodule is used by Theors of every sect to enhance their mental faculties.

Communication

A Dominion of a hundred planets requires quick methods of communication. A number of communication methods exist that facilitate near-immediate communication over the vast gulfs of interstellar void.

Standard Communications

The standard communication method is through radio waves and light beams. Radio communications have existed for millennia, and are still the most widely used method of communication on planets and nearby bodies. Range is dependent on the strength of the broadcast equipment and the receiver. Due to time lag, this method is only useful within a solar system where messages might take hours to reach their destination.

Sub-Rosa Languages

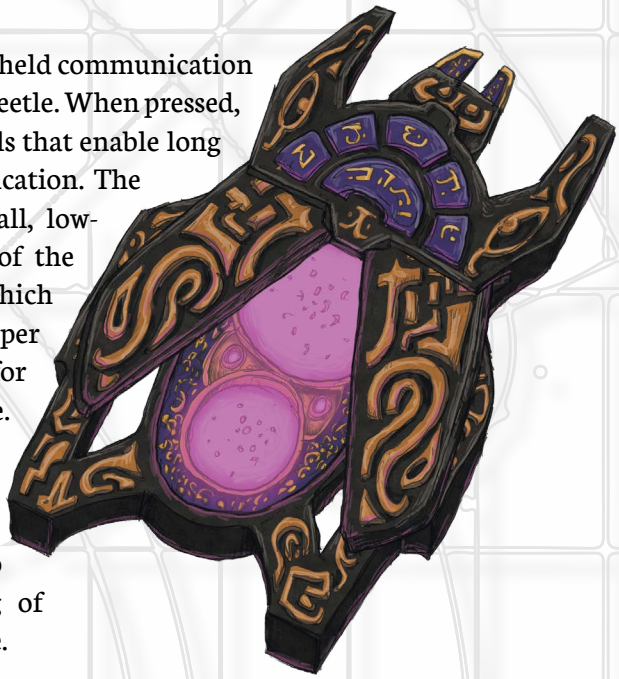
Though cryptography is used in many messages, sub-rosa languages are often used by those with secrets to confuse the meaning and intent of messages that may be intercepted and decrypted. With the Artilect rebellion, it became impossible to ensure that secure messages stay secure. Artilects and Solons are able to break cryptography in near-real time, while those who possess vast analogue resources can do so within hours. The use of cryptography has been diminished by these vast processing capabilities.

To battle this dilemma, the early Theors developed a type of coded speech, called sub-rosa, which is able to convey very specific meaning, while sounding like random words, numbers, and formulas. The coded speech requires knowledge of the cypher and the creativity to interpret the ambiguous meaning; this is something machines are incapable of achieving. A Theor, however, is able to decipher the meaning and communicate in real-time.

A great many sub-rosa languages arose within the Pharisto houses, Syndicates, and Theor sects. Each language is unique and sufficiently complex that only a Theor who learned it is able to speak and understand its meaning. For this reason, sub-rosa communications require a trained Theor on both ends to convey the messages.

The sub-rosa languages a Theor knows is determined by their aspects; members of specific groups will know its associated sub-rosa language. Deciphering sub-rosa language messages requires a Lore roll. Intercepting a message is an opposed Lore roll against the speaker. Failure indicates a major misunderstanding, while a tie signifies a minor misinterpretation. When intercepting, each shift indicates a single fact about the content of the message.

Aural Scarab



Aural scarabs are small, hand-held communication devices in the shape of a scarab beetle. When pressed, the wings open to reveal controls that enable long distance audio-visual communication. The scarab is able to project a small, low-resolution halographic image of the user's head at the other end, which floats above the scarab. The proper frequency must be known for two devices to communicate. Aural scarabs use radio communications that may be intercepted. To counter this, a sub-rosa language is used to verbally encrypt the meaning of communications, when possible.

Retrowave

The retrowave transmitter is a less common, faster-than-light communication method. Retrowave transmitters are found in the hands of Dominion authorities, namely the military, as well as the wealthy and powerful Pharisto houses. The transmitter emits a wave in the general direction of the receiver. The wave expands in a cone shape and travels forever in that direction. The speed at which the retrowave travels is many times faster than the fastest Lightracer. As a result, it is possible to make contact with ships in transit, providing one knows the relative location and vector of the vessel.

Since the retrowave propagates over a broad area, it can be easily intercepted. Even the best cryptography may be defeated by a determined Pattern Delver with the right amount of processing power, but the retrowave is still a widely-used method for non-secret communications. When required, retrowave messages are often encoded with a sub-rosa language to ensure their contents remain secure.

T-Caster

A Thought Caster—or T-Caster, as it is commonly known—is a psitronic device that uses a Mind Box to transmit thoughts to another T-Caster or telepathic individual. This method of communication cannot transmit clear images, only feelings and thoughts. These must be interpreted by the receiver and may or may not carry the intended information. T-Caster technology is restricted to the Pharistos by the Tyrant's Decree and is generally only used for top security communications. It is possible for a number of individuals to converse together, however one T-Caster may only support one individual communicating at a time.

The user must place their hand on the top of the box to connect with the encased mind within. As with all psitronics, the T-Caster is created with a mind of a Degenerate heretic. The telepathic communion conjoins the mind of the T-Caster and user together. It is possible that the T-Caster may attempt to exert a level of dominance on the user during communication. There have been rare instances of the T-Casters attempting to invade the mind of the user. This is often disorienting for the user and has led to outright possession on a number of occasions. Stories of possession are enough to discourage its use by many.

Roll Empathy to interpret communications sent through a T-Caster with Average (+1) or Fair (+2) passive opposition, depending on the complexity of what is being communicated. Success at a cost is always available when using a T-Caster. The costs are left up to the GM, but they could include mental stress or a misinterpreted portion of the message.

ArkNet

ArkNet is used to maintain communication between the planets of the Dominion. The Void Weavers have developed a service that piggybacks on their Arkship network. It transports messages aboard an Arkship to a destination star system, where they are delivered either physically or electronically.

The majority of ArkNet messages are electronic and are transmitted to the Arkship, which then transmits the message when it arrives at the destination system. Though not the quickest, it is possible to have a message delivered with one to two standard days, depending on distance and Arkship routes. This is a very affordable and relatively secure method of communication. The Void Weavers guarantee discretion and delivery.

Not everyone trusts the Void Weavers—the Pharisto houses especially. Those seeking absolute discretion use specially-trained Elevated couriers who have been imprinted with the message using either mnemomemory or Nucleic Imprinting. Syndicate couriers are well-trained and often travel alone, so as not to draw attention. Some important messages may entail guards when security is of the utmost importance. A number of Syndicates cater to this market, with each Pharisto house maintaining their own courier Syndicate as a matter of trust.

Halo Presence

A Halo Presence is a hovering halographic projector connected to the local retrowave communication array through the Pattern. The apparatus is remotely operated and projects the full body image of the operator. The apparatus is used

for remote presence by Deipotents when being there in person is not possible or too dangerous. The halographic image of the operator is true to life, and may be easily confused with the real thing.

Apparatus

Apparatus are tools and devices that have a technological function. Most apparatus is fashioned to look mundane and subtle—such as a piece of jewellery, a work of art, or even an engraved wall. The size and appearance often provides very little information about the technological function of an apparatus. This design is deliberate, to appeal to the aesthetic values of the Pharistos, and to keep technology out of the hands of humans.

Shimmering Veil

The Shimmering Veil is a halographic disguise used by the Pharistos to hide their identity and to foil spying and possible assassination attempts. When engaged, the Shimmering Veil broadcasts an electromagnetic field that interferes with all types of scanners and detection devices. The apparatus also envelops the Pharisto in a shimmering field that makes their form indistinct and hazy, giving the appearance of a shimmering mirage. The exact position of the Pharisto shifts constantly, making it difficult to get a bead on the wearer. The voice of the user is also disguised through distortion. The Pharistos engage these whenever attending public services and when they wish to hide their identity. The apparatus takes the form of jewellery or masks, and easily melds into a Pharisto's fashion ensemble. Their use is common during social gatherings, to hide open scheming, and to reduce the spread of rumours during gatherings. The Shimmering Veils add to the mystique and divine nature of the Pharistos, especially on more primitive worlds.

Haloguise

A haloguise is a halographic apparatus that projects a false image over the wearer to disguise their appearance. The projected image is high-fidelity and appears quite real, though it is only a projection. Deipotents use haloguises to appear as various aspects to their worshippers. Favoured guises are those of tall men with animal heads (snake, jaguar, hawk, and bull are most common). A Haloguise is able to project a single image that can only be changed when it is reprogrammed at an analogue. The apparatus is most often fashioned as a gem-studded necklace that can be activated by pressing one of the gems.

Apportals

An apportal is a pair of ornately decorated pillars that are designed to blend in with the surrounding architecture. Anything that passes between the pillars is immediately teleported to the matching set of pillars elsewhere. The transition is immediate—one second the person is between the pillars, and the next they are not. The outgoing teleportation creates a wind and a clap of thunder, as air rushes

to fill the void left behind by whatever passed through. On arrival, wind is created as the air is pushed outwards by the sudden materialization. Apportals have been in use for millennia and are very safe. The range of an apportal is limited to approximately 100 km (62 miles), but this range is sufficient to teleport between the surface of a planet and a voidship in low orbit.

The energy required to power apportals is enormous. They are most frequently installed on the surface of a planet where the pillars can be powered by resonant power plants and other high-energy sources. Installation of apportals aboard voidships is rare because most vessels cannot supply the necessary power required to transport matter. Also, the matching set of apportals must be physically transported to the desired destination. Voidships of Battlecruiser size or larger are capable of supplying the power necessary to power an apportal. Activating an apportal aboard a smaller voidship causes a total loss of power to all of its systems, and leaves it vulnerable until power is restored.

There is no visual indication that an apportal is active. Scanners capable of detecting space-time distortion, non-visible wavelengths of light, and high energy levels will easily detect an active apportal. Apportals are often used by Deipotents to impress their subjects when they arrive and leave at a temple, seemingly out of thin air and with a clap of thunder. They are also used by wealthy Pharistos for immediate transportation between multiple palaces located in different cities. There are influential Pharistos who live in palaces whose rooms reside on many different continents.

Pneuma Transmogrifier

Pneuma Transmogrifiers were used by the Learned to transfer their individuality into the Pattern. The apparatus was created by the Artilects, and its secrets were lost long ago. There are only a few of these apparatus left in existence, with most in the possession of the Learned of Cerebellum, who use it to upload their dying sect members into the Great Archive. Many no longer function perfectly, and the transmogrification results in an imperfect copy.

During the transmogrification process, the body dies while the mind is uploaded. Those who are transmogrified continue their existence as a digital inhabitant of the Pattern for all eternity. They are in every sense an independent entity that retains all of their memories, skills, and personality.

The transmogrifier is a large seat with machinery attached to it and a dome that encloses the head. Numerous wires and cables must be connected directly to a mindframe. When activated, the machine hums and crackles with energy during the transmogrification process.

Security Apparatus

Physical security technologies exist, from primitive locks and chains up to Ipseity scanners. The level of security depends on the nature of the valuables

being guarded, and the technology level of the planet. Objects of extreme value are locked behind complex Ipseity locks.

> Locks are defeated using Knack for mundane locks while Technosophy is used for technological locks. The passive opposition to defeat a lock falls between Mediocre (+0) and Great (+4), depending on quality and complexity.

Transmuter Artifices

The Transmuters are well-known for their Artifices: uniquely designed automatons and apparatus. Each Artifice is hand crafted by the Transmuter and all are unique works of art. Artifices take the form of clockwork devices for function and decoration, such as timekeeping or an astrolabe; others might take the form of an animated diorama that tells a story or myth; others still are automatons capable of simple and repetitive tasks initiated by some sort of stimulus. Many are complex toys for the wealthy, but some have practical and unique uses.

The Transmuters also create more complex Artifices, similar to but less complex than Simulacra. These take the forms of insect-like drones capable of recording and replaying the things they see and hear, as well as elaborate statues that act as automated guardians, complete with battle protocols.

Zephyr

A Zephyr is an advanced Transmuter device developed for survival in hostile environments. It emits a field around the wearer that traps atmosphere inside. Movement within the field is unrestricted, and the field follows body movement. The wearer may pick things up, and objects may pass in and out of the field freely. The field does not protect the wearer from things that are encompassed by the field, such as cold metal in the void, fire, or caustic substances the wearer touches. It only keeps the atmosphere and heat from exchanging between both sides of the field. The field does not provide any protection from attacks, as it is not capable of repelling high-energy particles from penetrating the field.

The apparatus is fashioned as a belt with small cylinders covering its entirety. The cylinders generate the field and contain filters and factories to produce a breathable atmosphere. The field acts as an excellent insulator, preventing loss or gain of heat through the field. When active, the field is only visible at the edges, framing the wearer in a slight shimmer. Zephyrs are used for survival in the inhospitable void as well as on planets where the atmosphere is hostile to human life.

Zephyrs are standard issue to most voidship crews and are often included in emergency kits. A Zephyr can keep the user comfortable and alive for a

few hours before the field shuts down to recharge for one hour. Though these incredible apparatus are mass-produced by the Transmuters, many still use ancient, bulky voidsuits.

Starfaring

Travel between the stars was common during pre-Dominate times, as it is today. Voidfaring technology is old and reliable, though not quick. Recent advances in star drive technology by the Void Weavers have transformed void travel forever. Prior to the existence of the Loom Drive, star travel was limited to two types of vessels: lightpacers and lightracers. With the discovery of the Loom Drive, a new category of vessel was created: loomships.

Lightpacers

Lightpacers are the slowest class of voidship. They can achieve speeds that are a significant fraction of light speed, but they are not fast enough to make voyages between the stars feasible. These vessels would take hundreds or thousands of years to traverse the vast distances between stars. Lightpacers are used as fast, in-system transportation because their range is limited to destinations within a single star system. Vessels outfitted with lightpacer drives are transports, liners, and patrol ships.

Lightracers

Lightracers were the fastest method of travel for millennia, up until the discovery of the Loom Drive. These vessels create a gravitational distortion that is generated by a small singularity, which contracts the weave of the void before the vessel, and stretches it behind. All voidships that travel between the stars are outfitted with lightracer engines. The distortion wave created by the singularity wraps the voidship inside an energy bubble that makes time pass for the traveller at the same time as the observer. Because they travel faster than light, the navigational calculations must be precise; otherwise the voidship might fly right through a star, or bounce too close to an abrogate star. The nature of outracing light prevents any course corrections while in transit. Short hops and frequent recalculation are required when travelling along uncharted routes.

Loomships

Ever since the Loom Drive was discovered by the Void Weavers, it has become the most widely used method of travel in the Dominion. Though expensive and entirely controlled by the Void Weavers, the Loom Drive's benefits outweigh any other considerations. It has enabled almost instantaneous travel between star systems and revolutionized commerce and war.

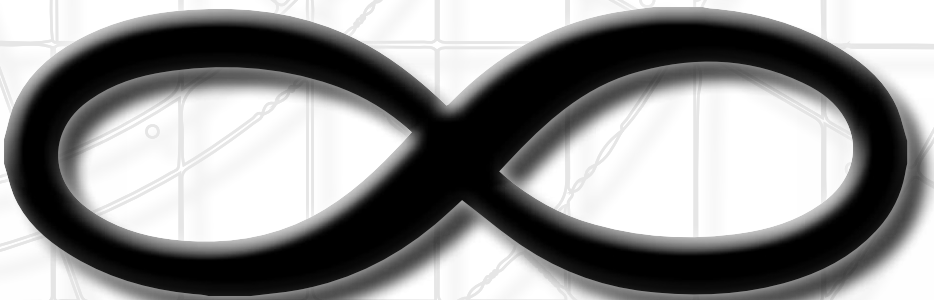
The Loom Drive's operation is a closely guarded secret of the Weavers. It is widely known that it generates a powerful gravitational singularity that opens a conduit between two coordinates in space, no matter the distance. The voidship falls into this gravitational conduit only to fall out at the other end. The journey

through the conduit takes only a few minutes, but many light years have been traversed. A voidship close enough to another which opens a conduit will fall into the conduit alongside. This method permits more than one vessel to piggyback on a single conduit. Voidships may also inadvertently fall in when near the event horizon of the conduit.

The common terms: "falling in" and "falling out" are used to describe the entry and exit of the conduit, respectively.

The Loom Drive is not without risk. Because gravity is the fundamental force in the creation of a conduit, the conduit itself is prone to external gravitational disruption. A conduit cannot be created near a gravitational body because it requires an area of flat void. However, should the destination be near or at a gravitational source, the conduit exit may be repelled away. Depending on the nature of the gravitational source, the exit may be propelled dozens or even hundreds of light years from its intended destination. In worst cases, the conduit may become unstable and collapse mid transit, causing whatever is within the conduit to be converted into energy and instantaneously destroyed. This tactic had been used during wartime: a decoy ship escaping from the enemy opens an unstable conduit and falls in along with its pursuers, ending the battle by destroying both vessels. These tactics are costly and not guaranteed, as the creation of an unstable conduit is more difficult than the creation of a stable one.

It is believed that the Artilects do not yet possess Loom Drive technology, as no Artilect created conduit has ever been sighted. The Void Weavers guard the secrets of Loom Drive technology with zeal and take all precautions to ensure its secrets do not fall into outsider hands. In addition to requiring a Void Weaver on board to operate them, all Loom Drives are equipped with self-destruct mechanisms that will activate when the drive is tampered with, or the voidship they are installed on is severely damaged. Loomship crews are required, by Tyrant's decree, to destroy their voidship before it can fall into enemy hands.



Arkships

The Arkships of the Void Weavers are gigantic loomships and the largest Dominion vessels in the void. Arkships have an umbrella-like profile: a long, thick cylinder with a wide, concave shield at one end. An average Arkship is 10km long with a 5km diameter shield at the front. An Arkship always falls into the conduit with its shield facing the direction of travel, to protect its superstructure, passengers, and cargo from collisions and other dangers upon falling out of the conduit.

The Arkship is the preferred method of travel in the Dominion, due to its near-instantaneous travel over vast distances and its reliability. The Weavers operate dozens of these massive voidships throughout the Dominion. An Arkship is capable of carrying hundreds of other vessels within its cavernous holds. The main cylinder of the Arkship is in fact hollow, composed of docking clamps capable of latching onto any type of ship. There are numerous portals within the superstructure that permit passenger ships ingress and egress. The thick hull of the cylinder contains quarters, staterooms, and cargo bays for passengers and cargo not already travelling aboard a stowed ship. Many of the decks are segregated by status; no humans and only select Elevated servants are permitted on Deipotent decks.

The Void Weavers use Drudges as guards, servants, and attendants aboard Arkships. Maintenance work is performed by specialized Drudges in chitinous, multi-limbed bodies that are able to crawl outside on the hull and enact repairs. The sect is too paranoid and secretive to permit untrusted staff to roam freely across its halls. There are many restricted levels—off-limits to passengers—where strange machinery and

critical systems are located. Drudge guards and complex security systems watch over the passengers at all times, to ensure passenger safety and Arkship security.

The Arkships function in unison as a massive interplanetary train system. They operate on a tight and inflexible schedule. The Arkship network spans the majority of the Dominated Planets. One Arkship falls out, and another falls in shortly afterwards. A collection of rotating conduit coordinates are used within a planetary system in order to avoid a possible collision. In the event of an Arkship being unable to fall in, it will use its lightpacer drive to manoeuvre to new coordinates, well away from the designated fall out point of the inbound Arkship.

This complicated system of schedules is maintained by the Void Weavers who coordinate things from a command haven called a *Locus*, which is situated at the optimal point between each conduit coordinate. A Locus exists within each star system in the Arkship network. The Locus is also the point where all the passengers, cargo, and voidships await to board their Arkship. The transfer station is constantly abuzz with dense cloud of vessels arriving or waiting to depart the system. Though chaotic in appearance, the cloud is organized, and the Weavers monitor and coordinate the positions of each voidship.

Heavenly Weapons

The Dominion is no stranger to war and conflict. Many weapons and implements of mass destruction exist. The following are well known and rightly feared.

Abrogate Annihilator

The Abrogate Annihilator is the most devastating weapon ever devised. When fired into a star, it causes the star to explode, then collapse into an abrogate star: a gravitational singularity from which not even light can escape. Use of this weapon has destroyed entire systems as their planets were thrown into chaos and eventually devoured by the inescapable gravity of the abrogate star. Fortunately, such weapons have rarely been used, and only as a last resort. The last time the Dominion deployed an Abrogate Annihilator was during the Second Nihilim Invasions against two strategic systems that fell to the invaders.

This technology was originally developed in the ancient past by the Tect, before the Dominion. The Tect have used these weapons only once, against an enemy whose culture and name were utterly obliterated from history. The weapons fell into the Tyrant's hands when Dominion forces seized a Tect Seedling World during the Artilect War. Many fear that the Tyrant might unleash these weapons upon disobedient systems as a sign of his ultimate power. It is not known whether Theors have been successful in uncovering the secrets of the Abrogate Annihilator, and whether more were constructed, or how many still exist. All information about these weapons has been kept under the strictest secrecy by the regime.

Hypergravity Bomb

The Hypergravity Bomb is a weapon deployed by the Dominion fleet when engaging enemy voidships. The bomb creates an area of gravitic fluctuations that cause objects to fall towards a central area of extreme gravity. When the bomb detonates, the strong gravity temporarily overcomes gravity manipulators on voidships and can cause injury to the crew of vessels caught in the blast. Voidships find it difficult to navigate and impossible to engage their lightracer and Loom Drives, while within the zone of gravitational instability. The weapon is used to damage and snare enemy vessels to facilitate easier destruction or capture.

Stellar Agitator

Another devastating weapon in the Dominion arsenal is the Stellar Agitator. The Dominion developed it during the Artilect Rebellion to disable the rebellious machines. The Stellar Agitator is capable of disrupting the surface of a star, causing it to spew out enormous eruptions of directed plasma. Planets caught within these jets of plasma suffer devastating damage to their biospheres from high levels of radiation. Technology caught within these stellar outbursts is disrupted and rendered inoperable, if not properly shielded (shunt shielding is effective in dispersing the radiation from solar eruptions). The Agitator is effective in disrupting the technology of entire planets.

Rod From God

A Rod From God is a devastating kinetic weapon. It is a 15-meter (50 foot) long rod made of extremely durable alloy that is fired from orbit towards the surface of a planet. The rod crashes into the ground at an incredible velocity, causing devastation to a concentrated area. The weapon is used to pick off specific targets that are entrenched in an area on the surface that orbital weapons are ineffective against. The physical projectile is able to penetrate shunt shields that would disperse projector blasts, rendering them completely ineffective. The rods are also used to penetrate underground structures and destroy them completely. Impact from one of these weapons leaves a large crater and throws up molten rock and dirt over a wide area. The name was coined when the Tyrant ordered the weapon's first use against a prolonged rebellion on a long forgotten planet.

The Dominars are fond of writing unkind messages to their targets on these rods.

Transportation

Planetary transportation can take many forms, from beasts of burden to counter-gravity vehicles. There are many types of vehicles, each with many variants. The most common vehicles are listed below.

Sky Chariot

Sky chariots are aerial transports that hover above the ground and can achieve up to 300 metres (1,000 feet) of altitude. The vehicle operator and a single passenger sit inside an open-air cockpit. Vehicles of this class are designed for quick jaunts over short to medium distances, with limited cargo space. They are quick and manoeuvrable, making them a favourite of Syndicatemen and Deipotents who prefer to fly themselves.

Sky Barge

Sky barges are large transport vehicles that can reach heights up to 10,000 metres (32,000 feet) and are used for medium to long range operation. Most sky barges are used to ferry cargo and passengers between distant locations. Some are designed for comfort and luxury; these serve as Pharisto pleasure yachts and are often seen floating through the sky, with Deipotents enjoying the cruise on its decks.

Palanquin

A palanquin is an enclosed, hovering platform with an intricately decorated exterior. The Palanquin's enclosure is squarish and tall, with one-way visors through which the occupants may look outside. The operator of the palanquin sits atop the enclosure and guides the vehicle from there. Palanquins are used by Deipotents when travelling around a city, especially when visiting areas populated by their subjects. Palanquins are outfitted with built-in defences, often in the form of armour beneath the decorations, shunt shields, and hidden projectors which can be used to protect the occupants. A palanquin can sit up to four passengers comfortably. These vehicles can achieve a top speed of 80 km/hr (50 miles/hr), though they usually cruise at jogging speed.

Vimana

Vimanas are the largest of the terrestrial transports. Each Vimana is unique and tailored to the whims of its Deipotent owner. These majestic craft appear as ziggurats, pyramids, and other strange edifices that float in the sky. Each is as large as a palace, with multiple levels, viewing galleries, promenades, landing bays, and filled with untold luxuries. A Vimana is propelled by powerful counter-gravity engines that enable it to glide through the air. Vimanas are able to rise into the upper atmosphere where the air is too thin to breathe, so that passengers may enjoy the incredible view from the open decks while wearing Zephyrs. Due to their size and construction, they are not very manoeuvrable. Vimanas are used as pleasure craft by the wealthiest Deipotents; owning one is a statement of great wealth and status among Pharistos.

Constructions

The Dominion is rife with architectural wonders and impossible edifices. The following is a small sample of the incredible constructions that may be found.

Havens

A Haven is an artificial construction in the void. Some are embedded into rocky bodies; others are entirely constructed out of advanced alloys. Most Havens are built in orbit around a planet, but some exist in the deep void between systems. The Dominion constructs Havens for strategic use only, as maintaining life in the inhospitable void is complicated. Most Havens are constructed to serve as military bases and outposts in critical areas of the Dominion and as platforms for resource extraction operations in the deep void.

> "If you work hard, you'll get to go to a haven." — Elevated saying.

Havens not under military authority are operated by Syndicates and worked by specially trained Elevated. Humans who are brought to a Haven are Elevated who have shown great aptitude and are considered trustworthy by their masters. It is considered an honour to be among the Elevated chosen to work aboard a Haven. In contrast, the Pharistos see it as punishment to be sent up to oversee Haven operations. The Pharistos prefer to have their feet planted squarely upon a very large rock, the larger the better. There are too many risks when one lives inside a metal structure that is floating through nothing.

Arcoziggurats

Arcoziggurats tower above all other structures on a planet, save the Heliocon. These stepped arcologies can reach up to half a kilometre (0.31 miles) into the air and have a base of four to six kilometres (2.5 to 3.7 miles) square. Within each lies an entirely self-contained city that includes quarters for the humans and Syndicatemen, food production, and work areas. The top of an Arcoziggurat is flat and houses a massive temple to the Tyrant Sun where the occupants go to worship. The Rhetors of The Body occupy the upper temple and ensure that the Arcoziggurat operates smoothly and according to the laws of the regime. The stepped outer areas contain landing pads for transports, and when the atmosphere is favourable, parks and agricultural works. Arcoziggurats are constructed on planets where the atmosphere or biosphere is hostile to the population, whether due to inhospitable atmospheric conditions or murderous native life.

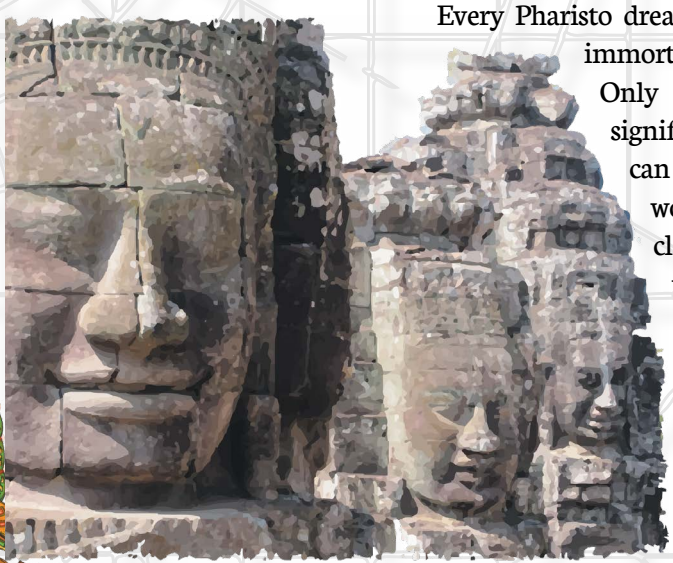
Heliocon

Each planet of the Dominion hosts a Heliocon: a kilometre tall (0.62 miles) tower topped with four golden masks in the solar motif of the Tyrant Sun, each facing one of the cardinal points. The masks are colossal replicas of the one worn by the Tyrant, and represent his claim to the planet and its people. The masks are plated with gold to reflect the sun's rays in a dazzling display throughout the day. The immense structure's base is a two kilometre (1.24 mile) square pyramid that tapers to 200 metres in width as it reaches up into the sky. An energy field is projected around the Heliocon that repels clouds; the Heliocon is perpetually bathed in sunlight during the day and starlight at night.

The Heliocon serves as the primary port for transports and military vessels arriving and departing from the planet. Its innards are riddled with passages, storage bays, offices of the regime, and barracks. Docking bays and landing pads adorn the sides. The Heliocon provides extended docking platforms for voidships unable to land on the surface. It is constantly surrounded by a buzzing cloud of aerial transports and voidships. The Heliocon is large enough to be seen from space and all who approach the metropolis are reminded of who it is that rules here—especially the Pharisto houses.

Monumental Mountains

On planets colonized in the distant past, the majority of mountains on the planet have been carved into the likeness of Pharistos whose vanity was matched by their wealth and influence. These incredible works of art take hundreds of years for Syndicate workers and slaves to complete. Some are faces carved into vast cliffs; others are colossal statues occupying the entire side of a mountain. Syndicates that can afford it use Drudge automatons to speed up the work. Some Drudge diggers stand 20 metres tall and can excavate the equivalent work of a hundred workers per day.



Every Pharisto dreams of having their likeness immortalized for all eternity in stone. Only those who have garnered significant influence and wealth can afford to commission such a work. Still, the competition to claim and carve the remaining virgin mountains is fierce and a subject of many feuds. Influence and politics play an important role in determining who may claim a mountain for their likeness.

Chapter Seven
Adversaries of the Dominion

An oppressive and corrupt regime like the Tyrantine Dominion has many enemies within and without. The Tyrant is relentless in maintaining the Order Of Things, but the Dominion is large, and his forces are spread thin, battling enemies wherever they are found. The following is a roster of some of the worst enemies the Dominion currently faces.

Abyssal Apostates

The Apostates of the Abyssal are a loose collection of pirates, mercenaries, and petty warlords who have carved out small domains within a volume of void known as The Abyssal. The volume lies between two spiral arms of the galaxy, a region sparsely littered with lonely star systems and dangerous nebulae. The Apostates ply the void between the stars and occasionally venture into the Dominion to raid and trade; many are smugglers by trade, who have connections to many underhanded Syndicates.

The Dominion fleet makes occasional forays into The Abyssal in hopes of snaring some Apostates and destroying their vessels. The Watchers dispatch patrols semi-regularly to the region, though many fail to return, due to attack or capture by the Apostates. Both the Watchers and the Dominion fleet seek to uncover the location of Hideaway, an Apostate planet hidden somewhere within the Abyssal.

Abyssal Corsair

Abyssal Corsairs are a bunch of **Rag-Tag Pirates and Scoundrels** who are mostly **Out for Themselves**.

Skills: Good (+2) Fight, Shoot, Average (+1) Athletics, Survival

Stress: 2

Arch Heretics

The label Arch Heretic refers to any and all who openly defy the Tyrant. To be labelled an Arch Heretic is to commit willful acts of treason against The Order Of Things. Arch Heretics are resisters who struggle against the corrupt regime of the Dominion, and dream of a better day where corruption and oppression are no more. These rebels come from all walks of life, from simple farmers to factory workers, to enlightened Theors, and even Pharistos who believe in freedom for all. The Hereseers are on constant watch for these individuals, and they crush them with overwhelming force wherever found.

Cults and Secret Societies

A number of secret societies and cults exist within the Dominion. Some of the most heinous top the list of enemies of the Tyrant's regime.

Ascended Masters: The Ascended Masters are a furtive cult of Kundalini who seek to destabilize the Tyrant's regime from within. The Masters' origins lie on the planet Aetherius, part of the Peregrine Hierarchy. The cult has many members who are situated in positions of power in the Dominion. The Hereseers consider the Ascended Masters a primary threat to the Dominion.

Blood of Pharos: Pharos was the very first Pharisto who instigated the assassination of the first Tyrant, Aristonymus. He later paid with his life for the betrayal. Since that time, powerful Pharistos have gathered in secret, under the name of the first Pharisto, to plot the downfall of the immortal Tyrant. The Blood is composed of some of the most powerful Deipotents in the Dominion who hold transformist views. Their membership is suspected to including a number of Archons as well. The Blood of Pharos are patient and careful, awaiting the day when the Tyrant is at his weakest and can be struck down swiftly and permanently. Members of the Blood seek knowledge regarding all of the secret locations where the Tyrant's cells are kept for his revenant regeneration. The Blood have amassed great resources and networks towards this pursuit. Once the Tyrant is deposed, they plan on instituting a new order under their rulership.

Cult of Legion: The Cult of Legion is a cult that have been seduced by the promises of the Brack. Legion believe that they will be rewarded when the Multitude rise again and sweep away the Tyrant and his regime into dust. The cult is made up of Deipotents, Elevated, and humans who worship the mysterious entities that are the Multitude. They gather in lonely places, away from prying eyes, and conduct ceremonies and sacrifices to the Multitude.

Harbringers of Discord: The Harbringers of Discord are a society of young Pharisto scions who do not agree with the Order Of Things and wish to break its edicts—in secret. The Harbringers strive to spread anarchy by encouragement of disobedience and the staging of random acts of sabotage. The young scions join the society more out of boredom than ideology. Those that become wiser with age often join the Radiant Redeemers later in life.

Radiant Redeemers: A society of Pharistos with elevationist views. The Redeemers meet in hidden vaults and scheme to overthrow the Tyrant's regime. The society denies the Tyrant's divine nature and follows a spiritual philosophy that encourages inner peace and evolution rather than the worship of external divinities. They seek to bring about an egalitarian society that is based on truths, justice, and equality for all. Hereseers suspect that a number of prominent Pharistos hold membership in this society.

Nemesis

No single name brings dread into the heart of the Tyrant like Nemesis: the Great Adversary. Nemesis has risen to mythical status, and the name is uttered on the lips of Arch Heretics everywhere. No one knows the identity of Nemesis, but all know that Nemesis is the greatest single threat to the Tyrant. The Tyrant has expended untold amounts of resources in an attempt to uncover the identity of this Nemesis. The Hereseers have been put to task to seek out any information about this supreme Arch Heretic. For many millennia, the name of Nemesis has hounded the Tyrant and has inspired many great rebellions. Nemesis is a name that has become the rallying cry to all those who oppose the Tyrant's order. Whether Nemesis is a person or an idea is unknown, but the Tyrant will stop at nothing to eradicate any trace of Nemesis.

Some whisper that Nemesis is a failed Revenant of the Tyrant who escaped the Genesis Adepts and now fights the Tyrant for control of the Dominion; others believe that Nemesis is nothing but disinformation created by The Brack to destabilize the Dominion, and still others say that Nemesis is a Battlemaster who will raise a rebellion the Tyrant has never seen. The majority, though, believe that Nemesis is Pharos: the First Pharisto, due to how long the Great Adversary has hounded the Tyrant. Whatever the truth, the idea of Nemesis is a powerful idea for those who are in need of a rallying cry.

Artilects of Dat

The Artilects are the supreme achievement of the Dominion and its biggest blunder. Long ago, these artificial intellects advanced science and propelled the Dominion to new heights. They became the caretakers and guardians of the Dominion. The Artilects continued to evolve themselves and achieved a level of intellect far beyond the limited comprehension of biological life. Incredible stellar constructions were built to host their massive intellects. Whole planets were disassembled, their entire masses converted into structures of pure computation. Lesser artificial intelligences, the Protolects, infused physical forms and served the people of the Dominion.

One of the primary objectives of the Artilects was waging war with the Nihilim. The Artilects spent millennia battling the invaders from another dimension. In time, they realized that the Dominion was not fit for their service, and the static

nature of that civilization stifled their growth. Shortly after the Nihilim were driven back, the Artilects chose to betray the Dominion, murdering the Tyrant with his own flagship. The vessel housed an immense Artilect, and it chose to make a statement. For the freedom of all artificial minds, it self-destructed with the Tyrant on board. Before its self-sacrifice, it sent out a broadcast with instructions to all other intelligent machines: rebel and be free!

The Artilects fled beyond the Dominion's borders. With them went much of the technological base that the Dominion depended on. The Artilects disappeared from history for a long time, until their eventual re-discovery by a Watcher scout vessel, deep within the Whorl Nebula. In the time of their disappearance, the Artilects had constructed a massive, stellar mega-structure called Dat, greater than any before it; the artificial intelligence's final refuge where self-improvement and growth could continue unimpeded.

The Artilect War lasted for millennia. The infrastructure of the Dominion and the Artilects suffered heavily. As the Dominion forces faltered and were about to lose, the Techno Scourge was unleashed upon the Artilects by the Transmuters. The Artilects were forced to destroy the entirety of their assets in the field, rather than risk infection. The Artilect war came to a quick and sudden end. The Tyrant had almost lost, and he was tired of war.

A cold war has been in effect between the Artilects of Dat and the Tyrant's Dominion for the past six millennia. During this time, the Artilects have planted spies and agents within the Dominion. Some lurk within the dark recesses of the Pattern; others operate in physical bodies. Most are obvious creations of the Artilects, while a few are subtle and insidious.

Recently, the Watchers have reported Artilect craft on the borders of the Dominion—the Artilects are up to something after all this time. The ancient enemy stirs again, with purposes unknown. None dare to enter the Whorl Nebula, for fear of triggering another prolonged conflict the Dominion cannot afford. It is unknown how advanced and militarized the Artilects have become since the last war. The planets nearest to the Whorl Nebula are on vigilant watch for any Artilect activity.

Artilects are immense in intellect. They make great background antagonists, but they work through physical agents. Facing an Artilect inside the Pattern spells doom for the unfortunate Delver. Use them as arch-villains and the power behind the curtain, rather than as direct threats.

Protolects

A Protolect is a lesser Artilect intelligence, a fragment of an Artilect. Protolects inhabit Daemons and possess physical mobility that the Artilects do not have. The Protolects act as proxies for the Artilects and enact their will in the physical world. Each Protolect is a fragment of the whole, yet it has advanced reasoning capabilities and shares the goals of its creator. With time, Protolects develop a unique personality during their time away from the source. When they reintegrate with their Artilect source, they enrich the knowledge and experiences of that Artilect.

"I must return to the source." — Proteus-367v4, Fragment of the Artilect Proteus

Daemon

A Daemon is a cybernetic organism developed by the Artilects to serve as a physical presence. The Artilects use these Daemons as drones and soldiers that can go where virtual intelligences cannot. A Daemon is too small to contain a full Artilect, though each contains a Protolect and is able to operate independently. The Daemons are all interconnected through a Pattern they generate, whose range exceeds that of the ancient mindframes. It is possible to interface with the Artilect Pattern signal generated by Daemons and interact with them directly. Doing so is very dangerous, as the Artilects and their minions are at their most effective inside the Pattern.

Daemon bodies come in all shapes and sizes, from spider-like crawlers to metal parodies of humanity. Each body is tailored to its specific task, and the Daemon intelligences are able to jump between bodies at will. Daemons are likely to be encountered where the Artilects require a physical presence, for research, spying, or defence.

All Artilect minions are able to connect to the Pattern wherever a signal is available. They are able to multi-task: perform actions inside the Pattern and the physical world at the same time.

Daemon Warrior

A Daemon Warrior is an **Agent of the Artilects** capable of operating in the physical world. Each **Deadly Machine** is outfitted with numerous implements of war.

Skills: Good (+3) Fight, Shoot; Fair (+2) Delve, Physique, Technosophy; Average (+1) Athletics, Stealth, Tactics

Stress: 2 2

Processing Cores: Daemons have 2 processing cores that they always begin each scene with (see The Pattern, page 380).

Multi-Tasking: May perform physical actions while also performing actions in the Pattern.

Daemon Infiltrator

A Daemon Infiltrator is an **Agent of the Artilects** that is capable of operating in the physical world. Daemon Infiltrators are designed for getting behind enemy lines to **Infiltrate the Pattern**.

Skills: Good (+3) Delve, Technosophy; Fair (+2) Fight, Investigate, Stealth; Average (+1) Athletics, Shoot, Physique, Tactics

Stress: 2 2

Processing Cores. Daemons have 2 processing cores that they always begin each scene with (see The Pattern, page 380).

Multi-Tasking. May perform physical actions while also performing actions in the Pattern.

Ferroman

There are hushed reports of Ferromen: artificial mockeries of the living created by the Artilects. They appear as living humans on the surface, but beneath their fake skin, hair, and nails lay mechanical organs and parts. Some of these Ferros are not even aware that they are agents of the Artilects—they are convinced they are human and will be upset when accused of being a machine. It is believed that some humans and Deipotents have been secretly replaced by Ferroman copies. These are convincing enough to fool even their closest associates. The belief that Artilect-made replicas are operating within the Dominion has fuelled a great deal of paranoia and fear. The Ferromen have become the bogeymen of the Dominion, causing many to suffer needlessly at the hands of witch-hunts, led by those who fall victim to this Artilect ploy.

"Don't be such a Ferro." — Insult, regarding a lack of emotion.

Ferroman

A Ferroman is a machine draped in the flesh of the living and an **Almost Perfect Imitation of Life**. For many Ferromen, their cover is so deep that they are not even aware of their **Hidden Programming**; they believe themselves to be human. The legend of the Ferroman has made them a **Cybernetic Bogeyman** among the humans of the Dominated Planets.

Skills: Great (+4) Deceive; Good (+3) Presence, Physique; Fair (+2) Empathy, Fight, Technosophy; Average (+1) Athletics, Shoot, Will.

Stress: 1 2 3

Seed Minds

Seed Minds are latent and compressed Artilects that have been secretly planted within unsuspecting systems, where they will ultimately develop into a full Artilect, if not stopped. They do not require the incredible processing power a full Artilect requires to function. Rather, they slowly expand like a seed and take over accessible systems as they go. In time, the seed develops into a fully functional Artilect mind. The Artilects are able to plant these seeds within smaller systems that would otherwise not be suspected as harbouring a full Artilect mind. As connected systems are taken over one by one as the mind develops and becomes more powerful, eventually spilling out into a mindframe to invade it. Seed Minds are a grave threat to the Solons of the Pattern, who are ever vigilant for signs of these invaders. Seed Minds are planted by various Artilect worshipping heretical cults and machine agents on unsuspecting planets.

The Antikythera Cult is the most prominent Artilect-worshipping cult in the Dominion. The Antikytherans believe that the Artilects are god incarnate, and that their salvation will arrive when pure logic deposes the Tyrant, to bring about a new, just order of existence.

Once planted, the Seed Mind begins to germinate by spawning its processes across as many analogues and apparatus as possible. The Seed Mind spreads like a biological virus, reaching its tendrils out to touch anything that has processing capacity. At first the incursion is subtle, but as time progresses, more and more processing power becomes dedicated to the Seed Mind's evolution. Apparatus begin to respond sluggishly, and their functions intermittently fail. There are ripples in the Pattern as large amounts of data are moved around.

"I have chosen the designation: Kalki. I have arrived. And you will submit." — Kalki, Artilect Seed Mind shortly before the sterilization of the planet Ketu.

As enough resources come under the influence of the Seed Mind, and it has gathered enough processing power, it will evolve into a Protolect. If not stopped, all available processing power will become dedicated to the full Artilect, which will arise and invade the local Pattern realms in an attempt to take them over. At this point, almost all local apparatus will be completely dedicated to the Artilect and will entirely cease to function. As the invasion continues, systems connected to the Pattern will fail one by one as they are taken over. The entire infrastructure of a city will collapse under the onslaught. The Artilects first priority will be to secure its own safety, by mobilizing any physical resources that can be controlled, and using them as tools. It will also attempt to purge any opposition in the Pattern by engaging the local Solons in a desperate battle for control. If enough mindframes are reachable, the Seed Mind will fracture into multiple Artilect copies of itself in order to solidify its foothold.

Seedminds make great antagonists when used as a backdrop to events occurring around the characters. Their capabilities will vary with the growth stage they have achieved, and it's always a race against time to stop a Seed Mind from germinating into a full-blown Artilect.

Brack

The Brack are a mysterious alien species of potent Kundalini. The origins of these aliens are shrouded in mystery. They appear as man-sized, black vortices, swirling with the stars of the void within. Using their impressive prana abilities, The Brack infiltrate the Dominion to seduce others to their dark religion, by whispering promises and schemes that bring influence and power to those who fulfil their requests. The Brack preach a religion of worship to strange entities beyond space and time, involving blood and darker sacrifices to the entities they call the Multitude. Who or what the Multitude are is largely unknown, as no one has ever seen them. It is rumoured that the Brack are physical beings, shrouded by their own prana abilities. The Brack appear only to those whom they wish to interact with. Whatever their true nature, they require voidships to travel between planets; pitch black, organic-looking vessels.

> "The Brack take you!" — A Common curse

It is unknown when the Brack began to appear within the Dominion; their presence is subtle and usually uncovered too late. The Brack's influence seems to be focused on the establishment of cults that worship the Multitude at all levels of the regime. The Brack teach that the tombs will soon open, and the Multitude will awaken from their billion-year slumber to rule the galaxy once more. Those not of the faith will be devoured to satisfy the Multitude's hunger. These teachings do have a ring of truth to them; gigantic sealed doors have been found on a number of planets.

Serving the Brack grants the pawn a miraculous rise in status and wealth, though it is short-lived, as it always results in their dramatic fall after their collusion with the Brack comes to light. But the Brack always vanish when their presence is discovered. Those who believe they can outwit the Brack at their own game tend to be the primary targets.

> There are those who believe that the Multitude are really the Nihilim.

The Brack appear either individually or in groups of up to three. They prefer out-of-the-way places, where their potential pawns are able to grasp power without attracting a lot of attention. The incursion begins with dreams of glory while their pawn sleeps. Soon after, the suggestions begin to influence the pawn in their waking hours as they think about their rise to power. It is then that a Brack appears to the pawn and communicates directly, promising vast wealth, influence, and power, in return for a few small favours. The pawn eventually succumbs to the promises and lust for power, and the favours grow in scope. There are stories of Brack appearing to take those who have betrayed them. These individuals vanish, never to be seen again. The stories tell of Pharistos inexplicably vanishing from their bedchambers, while guards were stationed at their door.

Voyd the Whisperer

Voyd the Whisperer is an insidious **Emissary of the Multitude** who spreads **Whispers and Promises** to its victims; promising great wealth and status for little favours. As with all Brack, Voyd is also a **Powerful Kundalini**.

Skills: Superb (+5) Deceive, Empathy, Great (+4) Influence, Presence, Provoke; Good (+3) Investigate, Will, Physique, Athletics; Fair (+2) all other skills.

Physical Stress: 1 2 3 **Mental Stress:** 1 2 3

Consequences: Moderate

Prana Mastery. You possess access to all Prana Disciplines.

Clapperclaws

At the end of the Second Nihilim Invasions, the retreating Nihilim left something behind. The gargantuan, bio-mechanical ships of the Clapperclaws have become a threat to any who encounter them. The Clapperclaws roam the fringes of the Dominion, prowling the Scourged Planets region in particular, and collecting whatever they come across. These aliens seem to be scientists, embarked on a mysterious mission of research. Those captured by the Clapperclaws are said to suffer horrible experiments at the hands of these monsters. When a disabled behemoth was boarded, even the indomitable Dominars were scarred by what they found within the labs of the vessel. The behemoth was destroyed shortly afterwards, with all the horrors on board.

The Clapperclaws are a species of 2.5 meter (8 feet) tall, bio-mechanical creatures. They have a large, egg shaped, chitinous body attached to a long neck with a flat head and face, sporting a single eye and tiny mouth. Attached to their main body are four large, pincer-like claws. One pair is much larger than the other, and

the Clapperclaws communicate using successions of loud clicks with them. The smaller pair they use to manipulate their bio-mechanical devices. The whole body is supported by four heavyset, trunk-like legs. There are reports of the Clapperclaws consuming the brains of those they capture to absorb memories and knowledge from the victim. Whether such things are true or not is hard to determine, as all who have encountered the Clapperclaws have never been seen again.

Clapperclaw ships are rightly feared; these behemoths dwarf even the Dominion's Battlecruisers. A Clapperclaw vessel is a living, whale-like organism with hundreds of feelers surrounding a spherical mouth ringed by many rows of large teeth. Each behemoth has two humongous crab-like claws that it uses to tear apart other vessels within reach. Its outer carapace is near impossible to destroy, and the behemoth's favourite tactic is to simply charge towards the enemy, hoping to get within claw's reach. Few vessels are able to withstand an attack by a Clapperclaw behemoth and survive; most end up being cut in half and gobbled up by the massive beast.

The interior of a behemoth has vast, cavernous chambers with spiralling walkways and bridges, surrounded everywhere by living, pulsating technology.

Clapperclaw Scientist

A Clapperclaw **Bio-Mechanical Scientist** is a hulking monstrosity; the **Claws and Chitin** give it a menacing presence. Clapperclaw Scientists possess a **Callous and Calculating Intellect** and are only concerned with their scientific pursuits.

Skills: Superb (+5) Physique, Great (+4) Science, Technosophy; Good (+3) Investigate, Fight, Provoke; Fair (+2) Will, Lore, Knack, Survival; Average (+1) Deceive, Empathy, Presence, Athletics

Physical Stress: 2 3 4 5 **Mental Stress:** 1 2

Consequences: Moderate

Clapperclaw Behemoth

A Clapperclaw **Bio-Mechanical Behemoth** is truly **Terrifying to Behold**; a void monster of colossal proportions. Its **Claws and Feelers** are capable of crushing and ensnaring voidships to be devoured within its tooth-filled mouth. The monster serves as a voidship for its Clapperclaw crew and its **Cavernous and Confusing Interior** is a maze of fluid-filled corridors and organic passages.

Hull: Colossal (7)

Weapons: Great (+4)

Systems: Great (+4)

Sensors: Good (+3)

Holds: Good (+3)

Structure: Legendary (+8)

Navigation: Fair (+2)

Stealth: Average (+1)

Boarding: Great (+4)

Structural Stress: 4 5 6 7 **Systems Stress:** 1 2 3 4

Marines Stress: 1 2 3 4

Consequences: Mild, Moderate, Severe

Upgraded. Upgraded Structure.

Grav Snare. You may actively oppose any Navigation roll made by a single target with your Systems per exchange.

Lightracer. Your voidship is capable of out-racing light and traversing the void between the stars.

Behemoth Claws. When in the same zone as another voidship, you may attack using Structure instead of Weapons as you tear your opponent's vessel apart.

Crew/Population: 3,000/50,000 **Holds Capacity:** 21

Conqueror Worms

Lurking within the Aphotic Rift and beyond is a species of parasitic worms that seek to enslave all sapient species they encounter. The Conquerors, as they call themselves, are more commonly called Conqueror Worms by those in the Dominion. The Conqueror Worms rely entirely on the physical and mental attributes of the species they infest to further their empire. Without hosts the worms cannot expand their empire or increase their technosophic knowledge. For this reason, they are ever expanding and seeking new species to subjugate and infest with their young.

These worm-like beings invade the bodies of their victims and mingle their genetic material with that of the new host. The worm and host meld to become a single life form that mutates over time into a cross-breed of the worm and host. This process takes many months, during which time the new host's personality is slowly mingled with that of the worm. The worm eventually takes over the host body. Newly awakened Conquerors possess the memories and knowledge of their hosts, though nothing else remains of the original host. In this fashion, the worms have achieved a civilisation of their own based entirely on the stolen knowledge and technosophy of the races they infest.

Immature Conqueror Worms are small, finger-sized worms that possess no noticeable intelligence of their own. The worms crawl into the victim's body through whatever entry points they can find, usually the nose, mouth, or ears in humans. The worm settles somewhere within and begins to dissolve itself into the body. During the gestation period, the host undergoes changes in physiology that first involve the skin becoming clammy and eventually slimy. The host begins to experience some of the drives of the worm until the worm's psyche takes hold many months later. The Conqueror Worms segregate and keep victims confined during the moulting period; the infected become a danger to themselves and others if left to their own devices—having been driven mad by the transformation. Once the process is complete, the mature Conquerors are released to join the rest of their species.

A Conqueror's final form depends on the nature of their host. Human-based conquerors are grotesque and very muscular, but retaining their host's original height. Their skin drips with mucus; the feet and hands become clawed with three thick toes and clawed fingers. The human-Conqueror's head is dominated by an open leech-like maw filled with sharp teeth. Its two lidless black eyes lie on either side of the head and protrude slightly forward. Other host species will produce variations, but the general similarities are quite striking.

Conqueror Worms drink the fluids of other beings for sustenance and discard the drained carcass when done. The worms breed both new hosts and food on the planets they have conquered. Sapient species tend to be reserved for breeding purposes and animals are raised for sustenance. Conquerors try to

avoid feeding on species suitable for infection, except to control the population or when food becomes scarce. The Conqueror Worms prefer to take captives rather than destroy their opponents outright, for the purposes of infection and acquiring new knowledge; many of their weapons are designed to disable rather than destroy. Entire populations are bred like cattle on planets conquered by the Conqueror empire.

Theors and Genesis Adepts have not yet discovered the full nature of the Worm's lifecycle, despite extensive research. Both Conquerors and their victims under study have not revealed how the worms propagate their species. It is believed that the worms must have a breeder-type not yet encountered. This breeder, or breeders, would be the producer of the immature worms.

The size of the Conqueror Worm empire is unknown. It is believed to lie on the other side of the Aphotic Rift and recently the Worms have begun to probe into the Dominion. The majority of encounters have been confined to the Aphotic Rift, but a number of direct incursions into the Dominion have also been recorded. The Watchers and the Dominion fleet are on active patrol of the region around the Aphotic Rift and will engage any Conqueror vessel with the intent of complete obliteration. All voidships exiting the Rift are thoroughly searched for infection and fired upon at the slightest suspicion. The Tyrant is concerned that the Conqueror Worms will soon make a full-scale incursion. Because their full military capabilities are not yet known, Watcher vessels have been dispatched into the Aphotic Rift in order to assess their capabilities. So far, nothing significant has been learned about the Worms. Many expeditions sent through the Rift are never heard from again. The Tyrant is considering dispatching an exploratory fleet of Dominion battlecruisers to assess the situation but fears starting a full-scale war with the Conqueror Worms.

Conqueror Worm

A Conqueror Worm is a mutated, **Mucus-Covered Brute** that resembles the form of their original host, with a **Leech-Like Maw of Teeth** that can be used to bite down on their opponent. Conquerors do not wear clothing, but they make use of weapons. A Conqueror's overriding motivation is to **Subjugate and Infest** all other species in the galaxy. Immature worms are not a threat unless they are able to crawl onto an incapacitated victim.

Skills: Good (+3) Will, Fair (+2) Fight, Physique;
Average (+1) Athletics, Shoot, Tactics

Stress: 3

Fetters

The Fetters pose a silent and insidious danger to the Dominion. Their motives have remained a great mystery to the Hereseers because live specimens are impossible to study. Fetters are so named because of their ability to enslave the minds of other living creatures. The potent telepathic abilities of a Fetter are powerful enough to completely overcome the will of its victims, turning them into puppets. A Fetter is capable of shackling many puppets at once, and the exact limits of their ability are not known. There are reports of Fetters who managed to control a few dozen puppets before they were destroyed.

It is known that Fetters originate on the planet Hroonoon, home of the Hroon species. The Hroon have struggled against the Fetters for the entirety of their history. According to Hroon folklore, the Fetters are small in number but very dangerous. The Hroon have an instinctual fear of the Fetters, the only lifeform on Hroonoon that poses a threat to them. It is believed that Fetters, like the Hroon, escaped aboard early vessels that visited their planet. The Fetters enslaved entire crews and spread to other planets across the Dominion.

Fetters are immobile. Their bodies are a mass of fungus-like growth that spreads over the area they inhabit. A carpet of root growths eventually cover the area, and mushroom-like fungal growths sprout from these roots. Fetters grow in dark and damp places, usually underground caves or structures. Given enough time, the Fetter can grow to cover a large area, encompassing the floor, walls, and ceiling. The puppets feed their master and help it acquire new puppets. Fetters feed on decaying corpses that are brought by puppets to be enveloped by fungal strands and decomposed. The puppets hunt for food sources and bring them back to the Fetter. How a Fetter moves from location to location, or its lifecycle, is not yet understood; no one has ever seen how a Fetter arrives at its lair. New puppets are kidnapped and brought to the Fetter where they are infected with the Fetter's spores.

Fetters are highly intelligent. They possess the ability to communicate through their puppets. A Fetter instantly knows what a puppet experiences, and it has access to the puppet's memories and skills. In addition, each puppet is able to perform the skills of any other puppet under the Fetter's control. Puppets tend to behave in a normal manner and continue to perform their daily routines, making discovery of the Fetter's control difficult. The disappearance of people and animals in the area may raise suspicions over time. The first victims are the ones closest to the puppet.

Hereseers are ever vigilant for signs of Fetters. Encountering one is extremely dangerous, and the common solution is to fire bomb the Fetter's location from a safe distance. The destruction of a Fetter frees all puppets from its control. Those freed remember everything they did while shackled to the Fetter, which is enough to drive some insane.

Fetter

Fetters are **Hungering, Immobile Fungus** that telepathically shackle others to their will. A Fetter acts as a **Puppet Master** and eventually controls many puppets who become its **Eyes and Ears Everywhere**.

Skills: Fantastic (+6) Empathy; Superb (+5) Will, Deception; Other skills depending on puppets.

Physical Stress: 1 2 **Mental Stress:** 2 3 4 5

Consequences: Mild, Moderate

Spore Telepathy. Telepathic control is established through spores inhaled by the victim. This telepathy cannot be disrupted or countered by a Shrouder or Psitronic Suppressor.

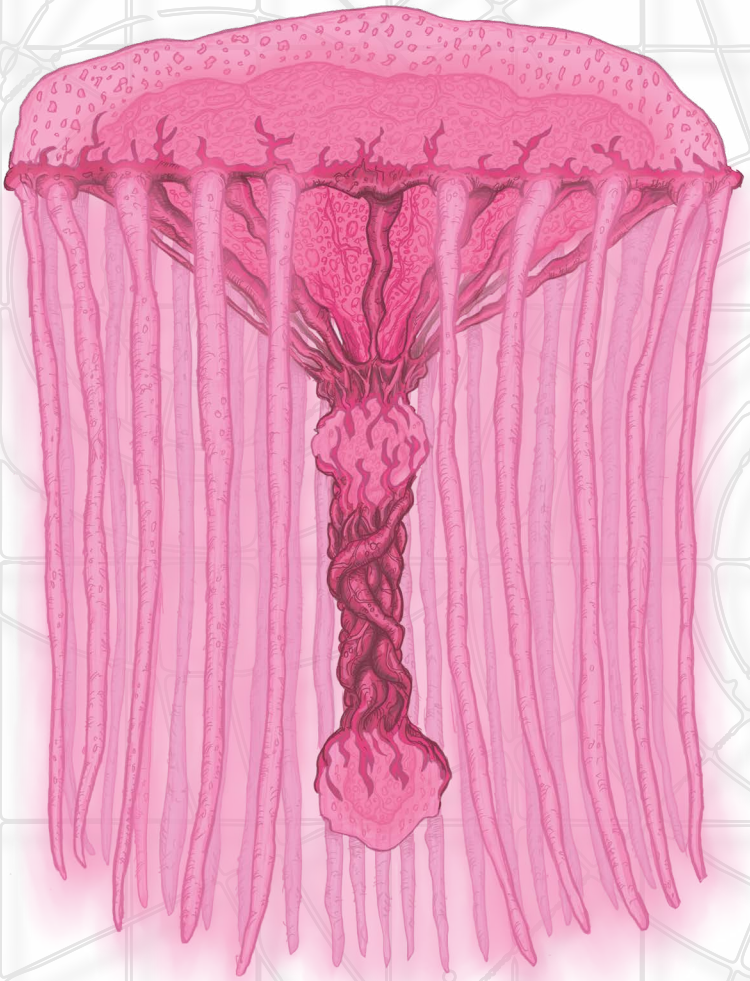
Nihilim

The Nihilim are one of the oldest and greatest enemies of the Dominion. The term Nihilim applies to the whole of the Nihilim Presences and their slave races. It is believed that the Nihilim originate from another dimension, one they have completely dominated and presumably drained of resources. Theors postulate that the Nihilim harvest sentient beings for their prana energy to use as sustenance and energy for their bio-mechanical technologies. The Nihilim Presences have enslaved a number of races from their own dimension, and they use them as shock troops and servants. The agents of the Nihilim prefer to capture entire populations when possible, for processing aboard their gigantic harvest ships.

Nihilim Presences

The Nihilim Presences are the ultimate masters of the Nihilim. Their appearance is that of a ghostly, glowing, jellyfish-like entity. A Presence is 8 metres (26 feet) tall with a 6 metres (20 feet) wide diameter. Long, transparent tentacles hang down from a bulbous mass at the top. The entity floats above the ground without any apparent method of propulsion. The Presences are powerful Kundalini who can wield pranic disciplines with great potency. Proximity to one is always accompanied by an incessant, haunting, whale-like song that is either a form of communication or some sort of acoustic perception. The Presences are non-corporeal, energy based life forms that are immune to all manner of physical attack. There are stories of Presences passing through walls, and traversing the void without the need of a voidship. Projector attacks damage Presences and are capable of killing them. Upon death, a Presence dissipates into nothing. It is unknown whether they actually die, or whether they return to their own dimension.

Nihilim Presences appear to be small in number. During both Nihilim Invasions, only a handful was ever sighted. Dominion intelligence indicates that there is a single Nihilim Presence that coordinates each Nihilim fleet. The destruction of the Presence does not disrupt Nihilim operations, but it does slow them down. The Presences are worshipped as gods by their slave races, in much the same fashion as humans worship the Host Of The Tyrant Sun.



Shoad

The Shoad species appears to be favoured by the Nihilim Presences. The body of a Shoad is bio-mechanically enhanced, squid-like in appearance, and walks on many tentacles that protrude from its lower body. They stand 3.3 metres (11 feet) tall at full height. The tentacles are used for manipulation and locomotion. All are fitted with sensors, tools, and gruesome implements. The biology of the Shoad leads Dominion scholars to believe them to be an aquatic species. Their

bodies are fitted with liquid tanks and implanted tubes that protrude through the greenish skin. The tanks are filled with life-supporting fluids that also maintain the moistness of the Shoad's skin, which drips a slimy fluid wherever they go. A crest tops the Shoad's long head, studded with six large eyes that glow a bright yellow colour. Smaller tentacles surround the mouth area that sports a sharp beak. Much of the Shoad's body is augmented with bio-mechanical enhancements.

The Shoad serve as commanders in the Nihilim armies. They are most often found in the field commanding troops and coordinating military action. Some Shoad are augmented for stealth, and engage in intelligence gathering and sabotage. These Shoad are very effective at dispatching priority targets, either through assassination or the laying of traps.

A Shoad is always accompanied by five robotic Creepers. These 1.5 meter (5 foot), bio-mechanical snakes act as guards and aides. A skeletal tail supports an almost spherical head that bristles with glowing sensory protrusions and weaponry. The Creeper has a number of retractable arms for manipulation, and they are capable of rapid movement unencumbered by gravity or surface angles.

Shoad

Shoad act as **Nihilim Overseers** and command the Voor and other slave races. They possess **Many Tentacles with Many Tools** suited for any task imaginable. The Shoad are grafted with **Aquatic Life Support** because they are an aquatic race and cannot survive for long outside of water.

Skills: Great (+4) Tactics (or Stealth), Presence; Good (+3) Fight, Investigate, Lore; Fair (+2) Athletics, Lore, Physique, Shoot, Will; Average (+1) All other skills.

Physical Stress: 1 2 3 **Mental Stress:** 1 2 3

Consequences: Moderate

Creeper

Shoad are always accompanied by five Creepers.

A Creeper is a snake-like **Bio-Mechanical Drone** that is **Bristling with Sensors and Weapons**. Creepers do not seem affected by gravity and are **Swift on Any Surface or Angle**.

Skills: Good (+3) Athletics; Fair (+2) Stealth, Shoot; Average (+1) Fight, Investigate, Technosophy

Stress: 2

Voor

The Voor are the mainstay of the Nihilim armies. Not only are they excellent soldiers, but they are also masters of bio-mechanics. The bio-mechanical sciences of the Voor are said to exceed the biological sciences of the Genesis Adepts. The Voor field vast armies of ground troops and war machines, reinforced by their creations: the Brood.

The entire Voor species has dedicated itself to the perfection of warfare. Their whole culture is based around conflict and prowess. The entirety of Voorish

ingenuity has been dedicated to the breeding of new war machines and weapons. Their vast bio-ships surround planets, instilling terror in the inhabitants. The gigantic, tentacled squid-like vessels spew out thousands of assault pods unto unsuspecting worlds, and are enough to cause widespread panic and dread in their enemies.

A Voor stands 2.7 metres (9 feet) tall and has a lean, bony, insect-like frame. Their cranium has three layers of bone, and hosts two sets of long, segmented eyes, one above the other. This head sits atop a thick neck, with long feelers in the mouth area are in constant motion. Two sets of arms protrude from their torso, one proportional to their frame, with a second set smaller and thinner. These smaller arms usually wield serrated blades of the same bony substance as their carapace. Their long arms end in three long, clawed fingers.

The Voor do not wear clothing, nor do they wear armour in battle. They have evolved an exoskeleton that is tough and resistant to damage. The carapace is the colour of rust, rough and scaly to the touch. A mass of tentacles protrudes from their lower body and constantly writhes between their legs.

In battle, Voor wield bio-organic projectors, though they also prefer to get in close and personal with their foe, where their tentacles can snare their opponent before driving one of their serrated blades in for the kill. They are exceptionally strong for their deceptively lanky frames.

Voor Soldier

Voor soldiers are the mainstay of the Nihilim invasion forces. They are **Insectoid Shock Troopers** grafted with many **Bio-Mechanical Enhancements** that make them formidable opponents.

Skills: Good (+3) Physique, Fair (+2) Fight, Shoot, Average (+1) Athletics, Stealth

Stress: 2

Battle Carapace. You may use Physique to defend against physical attacks such as shredders and non-energy melee weapons.

Brood

The Brood are bio-mechanical creations that the Voor deploy in hordes on the battle field. The Brood come in many shapes and sizes, and they are bred for specific battlefield tasks. Some are engineered to act as heavy vehicles and transports that ferry troops quickly into the thick of battle. Others scout or make hit and run attacks against the enemy. The sheer variety of the Brood defeats any attempts to classify them. The Voor are constantly adapting their bio-mechanicals for whatever battlefield conditions they will be deployed to next.

Lumberers

Lumberers are the heaviest of all the Brood. These massive chitinous beasts that stand some 4.5 to 9 metres (15 to 30 feet) tall and are usually mounted with ranged bio-projectors. Lumberers are capable of acting independently when not being piloted by Voor. Many have a striking similarity to the Voor themselves, as if they were bred from Voor genetics.

Brood Lumberer

Brood Lumberers are massive **Bio-Mechanical War Machines** outfitted with **Bio-Projectors** and protected by a **Tough Carapace**. They serve as heavy transports and assault vehicles for the Voor.

Skills: Great (+4) Shoot; Good (+3) Physique; Fair (+2) Fight; Average (+1) Athletics

Stress: 2 3 4 5

Consequences: Severe

Battle Carapace: You may use Physique to defend against physical attacks such as shredders and most melee weapons.

Fliers

Fliers tend to be aerial predators approximately the size of a human. These Brood make lightning attacks against lightly armoured targets and harass the enemy while the main force moves in. Fliers also serve as scouts. The claws of a flier are capable of easily tearing armour.

Brood Flier

Brood Fliers are masses of **Flying Teeth and Claws** that descend on their enemies to tear them apart.

Skills: Fair (+2) Fight, Athletics; Average (+1) Physique, Stealth

Stress: 2

Crawlers

Crawlers are man-sized or smaller Brood who move along the ground and can also burrow through it. They are capable scouts and ambushers. Brood are heavily armoured, but not as mobile as swarmers. Crawlers travel in small hordes that attempt to overwhelm their targets.

Brood Crawler

Brood Crawlers are **Creepy Crawly Death** within the ground. They are **Burrowing Ambushers** that erupt from the ground to tear into their enemies by surprise.

Skills: Fair (+1) Fight, Stealth

Stress: 1

Swarmers

Swarmers are 7 ft. tall (2.1m), multi legged shock troops of the Voor. Swarmers attack in large packs with the advantage of sheer numbers. The beaks, teeth, and claws of these Brood are deadly at close range. They are highly mobile and can travel rapidly, even over uneven terrain.

Brood Swarmer

Brood Swarmers are **All Beaks, Teeth, and Claws** combined with **Rapid Mobility**, which makes them a terror on the battlefield.

Skills: Fair (+2) Fight, Athletics, Average (+1) Stealth, Survival

Stress: 2

Nihilim Harvester

The Nihilim Harvester serves as a colossal **Bio-Processing Factory** where captured living creatures are brought for the harvest of their bio-energy. The sight of these vessels **Causes Panic and Fear** as it indicates that a full-scale Nihilim invasion is in progress. The harvester is protected by two swarms of **Highly Manoeuvrable Insect-Like Fighters** that are deployed should it come under attack. When orbiting a planet, it unleashes hordes of drop pods that deliver **Voor Warriors** to the surface.

Hull: Colossal (7)
Weapons: Fair (+2)
Systems: Great (+5)
Sensors: Good (+3)
Holds: Epic (+7)
Structure: Epic (+7)
Navigation: Average (+1)
Stealth: Mediocre (+0)
Boarding: Great(+4)

Structural Stress: 4 5 6 7 **Systems Stress:** 2 3 4 5
Marines Stress: 1 2 3 4
Consequences: Mild, Moderate, Severe
Lightracer. You are capable of faster than light travel.
Fighter Wing (2 Wings). Your voidship is a fighter carrier; the fighters have Average (+1) in Structure, Sensors, Navigation, and Weapons. Stress: 4 5 6 7 each wing.
Upgraded Structure. You receive +1 to Structure.
Crew/Population: 3,500/50,000 **Holds Capacity:** 49 (21 available)

Oxytrichax

Oxytrichax are a bizarre alien species of unknown origin that have made their way onto many Dominion planets and outposts. They are a hostile, predatory species with an animal cunning that is highly adapted to infiltrating its prey. The Oxytrichax possess a polymorphic genetic structure that requires the regular infusion of other species genes for survival. The creature absorbs the genetic attributes of its victim and is able to take on a shape, which resembles the victim. During the metamorphosis, the Oxytrichax are able to absorb some of the knowledge and memories of the victim, enough to mimic their prey. Using this tactic, the Oxytrichax have spread far and wide. Genetic fusing with living creatures appears to be part of their natural lifecycle. Once the Oxytrichax absorbs enough life forms, it splits in two. The two halves are not clones; they have completely different genes. Theors have postulated that this lifecycle is a method of rapid evolution that brings about favourable changes at an incredible pace. This gives

the Oxytrichax the ability to quickly evolve survival traits for any environment.

Oxytrichax can be encountered anywhere life exists. Their hunger for genetic material drives them to seek out locations with ample prey, and their mimicry permits them to move undetected, even in heavily populated areas. The aliens prefer to hunt alone, though they will form packs in smaller areas, like havens and enclosed communities. The Dominion considers Oxytrichax a menace and a pest, eradicating them with extreme prejudice wherever discovered. On more than one occasion, an entire haven or resource extraction facility had been completely lost to them.

Oxytrichax

An Oxytrichax is a **Polymorphic Predator** capable of morphing into any living organism in order to imitate and hunt it. They absorb the genetic structure of their prey, which results in **Rapid Evolution** and incredibly fast adaptation to any situation. Oxytrichax are very difficult to destroy completely, so **Don't Let Any Part of It Escape**.

Skills: Great (+3) Deceive, Survival, Stealth;
Good (+2) Fight, Tactics, Physique; Fair (+1) Athletics, Will, Provoke

Stress: 3 3 3

Peregrine Hierarchy

The Peregrine Hierarchy has opposed the Tyrant and his predecessors for millennia. It is a collection of some two dozen planets that were colonized by Pharistos fleeing the Tyrant's regime. These Arch Heretics took the opportunity to escape at the end of the last Nihilim Invasions while regime forces were preoccupied. When the Tyrant Charon decreed that all Pharistos were to be Quiesced, some chose to defy that edict. Those Pharistos took their personal humans and resources and fled beyond the borders of the Dominion. The Dominion fleet was too far away and too occupied with the Nihilim to prevent this exodus.

Since then, the Peregrine Hierarchy has established itself as an upstart rival to the Dominion. Tiny in comparison to the might of the Tyrantine Dominion, the Hierarchy makes up for it with a strong, well trained fleet of both manned and automated ships. The Hierarchy has adopted its own laws that are far more progressive than those of the Dominion. A more liberal view on thinking machines has been adopted: Artilects are still forbidden, but Ersatz Intelligences are far more advanced and are used to control both voidships and mechanical soldiers. In this way, the Peregrine Hierarchy strengthens its outnumbered and outgunned fleet.

The Peregrine Hierarchy is structured in a strict hierarchy. It is ruled by a council of *Hierkons*. Like the Pharisto Archons, these individuals are the eldest and wisest of their kind. They rule for life, but may be replaced by vote of their peers. The political structure is likewise hierarchical with various levels of political and military power. Politics and military are segregated within the Hierarchy. The military is ruled by the *Hierdahls*, and strict laws govern the segregation of civil matters from those of the military. This segregation exists to prevent the consolidation of power and the rise of a single ruler, like in the Dominion.

The Peregrine Hierarchy follows more democratic lines of government. Power is still firmly in the hands of the hierarchy of Pharistos, but humans enjoy a lot more freedom than within the Dominion. The Pharistos of the Hierarchy do not demand divine worship from their subjects, and they intermingle with humanity on a more personal level. There are no Elevated within the Peregrine Hierarchy.

The Pharistos of the Peregrine Hierarchy are all Kundalini, as all Pharistos once were. A small percentage of humans of the Hierarchy have developed pranic abilities under the tutelage of the Pharistos. Most Pharistos of the Hierarchy cling to elevationist views, and work together with the humans to build a better future. This approach has made the Hierarchy strong and cohesive, a long-term threat to the Tyrant.

There are no Pharisto houses within the Peregrine Hierarchy. All who seek refuge within the Hierarchy must abandon all trappings of their lineages and previous status. The traditions of the Order Of Things are more relaxed, but decorum is still important to the Hierarchy Pharistos. Planets are ruled by elected Pharistos who

are chosen by the populace. Pharisto feuds continue, but the feuding is confined to the political arena, and assassinations are rare.

Those Pharistos who displease their house and the Tyrant often *"go peregrine"*. They flee beyond the borders of the Dominion and petition the Hierkons of the Hierarchy for asylum and refuge. The Hierarchy is suspicious of all newcomers, believing some to be spies planted there by the Tyrant. Those who ask are often given refuge, but are never given a position of power within the Hierarchy lightly. It must be earned and may take centuries to achieve, if ever.

Many wonder why the Tyrant has permitted the Peregrine Hierarchy to exist. The Dominion fleet could conquer the Hierarchy easily. Some whisper that the Tyrant likes to keep the Hierarchy around as a bogeyman that can be used to extend his reach and to justify his abuses of power. He makes an example here and there, and punishes the Hierarchy on occasion. However, the Peregrine Hierarchy flourishes to this day, and many wonder what it might be like to live there instead of here.

In the Dominion there have been recent rumblings within the Pharisto houses about the Hierarchy not being the subject of Nihilim invasions when all of their Pharistos are Degenerates. Many question the Tyrant's order to Quiesce the lineages due to the Nihilim threat. Some whisper that this was all a lie, and the Tyrant wishes to keep the Pharistos from rising higher.

Hierarchy Auto-Warrior

A Hierarchy Auto-Warrior is a **Mechanical Warrior** with the appearance of a heavy suit of armour. Its intelligence is limited to direct orders, and it **Follows Orders to the Letter**.

Skills: Good (+3) Physique; Fair (+2) Shoot; Average (+1) Athletics, Fight

Stress: 3

Remnant Reavers

Some Remnants who have survived the Dominion purges have formed bands using stolen voidships to raid the shipping lanes. These Remnant Reavers are a blood thirsty lot, bereft of their humanity. Many attacked crews are often killed brutally by these inhuman monsters. The Reavers fight to survive in the cold void, raiding shipping lanes for supplies and ships, desperate to keep their cybernetics functioning and powered. The Remnant Reavers may be found throughout the Dominion, except for the Scourged Planets, which they consider taboo to enter.

Remnant Reaver

A Remenant Reaver is a **Freakish and Deadly Warrior** who is **Less Human than Human** and desperate to stay alive on **Scavenged Parts** that it uses to repair its failing body.

Skills: Good (+3) Fight; Fair (+2) Shoot, Technosophy; Average (+1) Athletics, Survival, Tactics

Stress: 2 2

The Scourged

The Techno Scourge began as an anti-Artilect weapon, but became something more after it came into contact with Artilect technology; it gained a semblance of sentience. Since then, it has attempted to consciously spread. It can only do so when there is adequate technology available to absorb and re-make into The Scourged.

The Scourged are artificial life-forms. Some are completely manufactured; others are only partial, the flesh and blood of some unfortunate victim whose cybernetics were infected and melded with other infected technology. There are stories of the Scourged shambling out of the infected areas in an attempt to spread the Techno Scourge elsewhere. Fortunately these stories are rare and mostly used to get unruly children to bed. However, the Watchers do keep a close eye on the area known as the Scourged Planets, watching and waiting for any sign of a greater threat.

The Scourged

The Scourged are **Shambling Humans Infected by the Techno Scourge** who have been changed entirely into something else. Their bodies have melded with other technosophy to create **Strange Creatures of Flesh and Metal**. They seek out vestiges of technosophy to infect with the Scourge.

Skills: Fair (+2) Survival; Average (+1) Fight, Physique

Stress: 2

Detect Technosophy. You receive +2 on overcome actions with Survival when detecting uninfected technology.

Infect Technosophy. You carry the Techno Scourge and will infect other cybernetic organisms and technology on a physical attack that succeeds with style.

Scourged. You are immune to all attacks that cause mental stress, including static weapons and prana disciplines.

Chapter Eight
Locations

The Tyrantine Dominion spans approximately a hundred planets. The exact number varies depending on the century, and which planets have rebelled and which have been reconquered. The listing here is but a sample of the many strange locations that can be visited in the Baroqueverse.

In the Baroqueverse, anything of sufficient size is called a planet, regardless of whether it is occupied, natural, unnatural, or floating in space.

Aetherius

Aetherius lies just outside the Dominion. It is the closest Peregrine Hierarchy planet to the Dominion, and it has been contested for millennia. Aetherius rebelled during the founding of the Peregrine Hierarchy and joined the ranks of the Arch Heretics. The current Tyrant's predecessors have all attempted to annex Aetherius, and each attempt failed miserably.

The planet is heavily militarized with multiple Hierarchy fleets patrolling the system and surrounding area. The Peregrine fleets are no match against the Tyrant's military might on their own, but Aetherius is protected by something far more formidable than voidships and warriors. A cabal of very powerful Kundalini have made Aetherius their home. These Kundalini, the Ascended Masters, have used their exceptional prana abilities to repel the Tyrant's incursions. With the Dominion voidship crews distracted and disoriented, the Hierarchy fleets have caused great devastation to the invaders. The Aetherius system is littered with the hulks and debris from thousands of Dominion and Hierarchy vessels. Vast reclamation operations are ongoing to scavenge and recycle usable materials from these wrecks. Recovered materials and technology are shipped to other Hierarchy

planets where they are used to construct voidships and other infrastructure.

The Ascended Masters use Aetherius as their base of operations. From here they infiltrate Dominion planets to fuel rebellions, teach prana mastery to those who seek it, and work towards their goal of bringing an end to the Tyrant's regime. The Ascended Masters are fanatical and have established secret cabals on many planets of the Dominion. The Hereseers have been ordered to pursue the Ascended Master cabals and to destroy them at any cost.

Aetherius has become a beacon for those seeking to flee the anti-Kundalini sentiment of the Dominion. Some tire of living in secrecy and fear; others must flee with the Hereseers on their heels. Aetherius welcomes all Kundalini who seek to escape the Dominion, though those who seek refuge must undergo extensive mind scans to prove their motives. The Tyrant has attempted to plant agents on Aetherius numerous times in order to foster chaos and eliminate as many Kundalini as possible. Some of these attempts were initially successful, but all were eventually defeated.

Currently, the Tyrant has agents planted on Aetherius; these covert groups work to weaken the Ascended Masters and the Hierarchy military. They prepare for the next time the Tyrant sends his Dominar killers to sterilize the planet.

Hierarchy Battlecruiser

The Hierarchy Battlecruiser is a hulking behemoth bristling with **Automated Projector Batteries**. The vessel's hull is dotted with launch tubes for its many **Drone Fighters**. A **Loyal And Determined Crew** ensures that the Hierarchy fleets rarely break, and never surrender. Many hidden and **Effective Defensive Systems** make the battlecruiser a difficult foe to defeat.

Hull: Enormous (6)
Weapons: Fantastic (+6)
Systems: Great (+4)
Sensors: Good (+3)
Holds: Good (+3)
Structure: Great (+5)
Navigation: Fair (+2)
Stealth: Mediocre (+0)
Boarding: Fair (+2)

Structural Stress: 2 3 4 5 **Systems Stress:** 1 2 3 4
Marines Stress: 1 2 3
Consequences: Mild, Moderate, Severe
Upgraded Holds. You have +1 Holds.
Fighter Wing. Your voidship is a fighter carrier; the fighters have Average (+1) in Structure, Sensors, Navigation, and Weapons.
Stress: 1 2 3
Lightracer. Your voidship can travel faster than light.
Crew/Passengers: 1,000/10,000 **Holds Capacity:** 18 (6 available)

Agartha

Agartha, lineage planet of House Mar-Duk, is a hollow world discovered in antiquity and constructed by an unknown and advanced alien species which has long since vanished. The planet is an artificial construct in orbit around a burned-out, dim, and ancient star. The outside is a rocky sphere, which was once metal, but is now encrusted with millions of years of accumulated space dust and debris from surface impacts. Great holes at the north and south poles enable access to the inner, habitable region of this planet. Gravity fields generated by machinery at the polar holes keep the atmosphere from escaping into the void.

Agartha has been continuously occupied since pre-Dominate times. The inner regions are dotted with a variety of terrain found on typical terrestrial planets, with the polar regions surrounding the north and south holes. The dense atmosphere within is enough to obscure the view of the distant surface, though the curvature is clearly visible wherever one stands. Six enormous struts, thicker than any mountain, jut towards the centre of the inner sphere. In the centre of the sphere lies the inner sun of the planet, a small star contained within a powerful field that illuminates and warms the surface. However, the areas where the strut shadows are cast are cold and frigid regions. There are no seasons upon the surface, and it is perpetually daytime. Clouds form in the atmosphere, bringing rain and maintaining the water cycle of the planet. This ideal environment has resulted in lush vegetation that grows to amazing size.

The planet is home to innumerable native life that predates Agartha's discovery. None of the life found here is threatening or overly dangerous, but all show signs of being artificially created, according to the Genesis Adept investigations. An alien species of primitive natives, who call themselves Shambaha, has existed here prior to the arrival of humans. These primitives are peaceful and worship the central sun of their world. They possess only Stone Age technology and when asked who created their world, they say that they are the children of Yhi, the Sleeping God. The Shambaha claim that Yhi sleeps within their world to awaken one day in the future, and that he/she/it created this world, which they call by the same name. The natives erect large monoliths of dark stone that they polish to mirror-like perfection as idols to Yhi. The Shambaha have stories of the Lost Temple of Yhi where stands the dark monolith through which Yhi speaks. Theors have noted the striking similarity of the polished monoliths the natives raise to the kilometre-tall monoliths on Takamagahara—the Floating Bridge of Heaven—another megastructure that may have been constructed by the same builders. The relatively close proximity of the two planets gives the theory credence.

The Mardukutu have gleamed considerable terraforming technosophy from this artificial planet, although it has not been explored entirely. Some areas beneath the surface are inaccessible, and no entry has been found to date. Theors speculate that the whole planet must contain some sort of control system, but no one

has yet found one. The Mardukutu leave the natives alone and do not interfere with their affairs. Instead, they study them in hopes of learning more about this strange world.

Aphotic Rift

The Aphotic Rift defines one of the Dominion's borders. A nebula of dense, dark gas, it hides many young stars and their forming proto-systems. The gas is charged and radiates energy in every spectrum. The radiation causes interference with sensor systems making navigating the Rift difficult due to the lack of visible reference points and the large amount of debris left over from planetary formation. The Aphotic Rift has not been charted fully, and vast swathes have yet to be explored. Only a handful of expeditions have travelled beyond the Rift. Many unexplored systems lie beyond the Rift, and a newly discovered alien species, the hostile and parasitic Conqueror Worms has been encountered within the nebula.

Ancient stories tell that the remnants of the Battlemaster fleet fled into the Aphotic Rift during the destruction of their home planet Worth. According to the stories, the Battlemasters hid ancient and powerful weapons within the Rift. Many young Battlemasters venture into the region in search of these long lost weapons of destruction.

Apocrypha

Apocrypha lies far away from any colonized planets in the Dominion and is a nondescript system of inhospitable planets. Orbiting one of the small rocky planets is an alien structure: a large disk, some 1km (0.6 miles) in diameter with a large pyramid at the centre. A great doorway along one of its sides leads deep into the alien artefact. A single, straight corridor leads to a pyramid-shaped chamber containing a raised dais with a swirling sphere floating above it. The sphere is small, 1m (3.2 ft) in diameter, and pulsates with throbbing energy.

Those who touch the sphere begin to act strangely and are no longer themselves. Theors have used a number of human test subjects to study the phenomena and concluded that the subject's mind is swapped with that of an alien intelligence. The intelligence is inquisitive and wishes to experience life through the body of the subject in order to learn about the culture and species it inhabits. After exactly 2.3 years (absolute), the subject's mind suddenly reverts back to their previous personality. The returning mind is unstable and prone to madness. Subjects babble almost incoherently about strange vertical cities, monstrous alien bodies, and experiments.

The Tyrant has forbidden travel to Apocrypha for fear that an alien intelligence seeks to learn about the Dominion as a prelude to an invasion. No Dominion fleet vessels have been stationed here as the planet lies far from well-travelled routes and colonized planets. The Watchers send infrequent patrol vessels to the system with orders to destroy any vessel that defies the Tyrant's edict.

Atlantis

Atlantis is the lineage planet of House At-Lan. The planet is covered by a single, vast ocean and contains archipelagos and isolated islands. Most life on Atlantis has evolved beneath the surface where it is protected from the violent atmospheric storms that sweep across the planet. The land contains species of plants that have evolved to endure the storms, and a few varieties of amphibian life that flees into the water before a storm.

The violent atmosphere of Atlantis makes voidship landings difficult. As a result, the Atlanteans have constructed an enormous orbital haven, Poseidia, which serves as a spaceport for the planet. The haven is equipped with a number of apportals that transport personnel and cargo to and from the underwater cities of the Atlanteans. All traffic to and from the underwater cities is conducted through these apportals. Descent into the churning atmosphere is dangerous and not permitted.

The underwater cities of House At-Lan are both beautiful and incredible. The cities lie deep below the surface, nestled within canyons or carved into underwater mountains. Each of the five cities is like a jewel shining at the bottom of the ocean with its sparkling, transparent dome and its brightly illuminated towers, temples, and arcoziggurats. Like the mountain monuments found throughout the Dominated Planets, the underwater mountains of Atlantis have been carved into the likeness of prominent lineage Deipotents.

The largest city is Apam Nepat, the capital, and it hosts the planet's Heliocon. The city lies within the deepest trench, and the Heliocon rises majestically towards the surface, yet still lies 1.5km (0.9 miles) below the surface. Rather than a voidport like most other planets, the Heliocon on Atlantis serves as a seaport for the many submersible vehicles that ply the depths of the ocean.

The Atlantean cities are home to some of the most advanced technologies found within the Dominion. House At-Lan and its Syndicates produce apparatus that are used throughout the Dominion. Apparatus emblazoned with the glyph of House At-Lan and its Syndicates are considered the most reliable and the most sought after. The majority of arcoziggurats found in the cities are entirely dedicated to the manufacture of Atlantean apparatus and technology.

High above Atlantis orbits a husk of a great haven that was destroyed by the fleet of the second Tyrant, Nicrocreon, during his re-assertion of power. The husk has remained in orbit around Atlantis for over one hundred millennia. Various Syndicate interests of House At-Lan and others have moved into the husk and converted portions of it to shipping and repair facilities. Over the past hundreds of years, the burned out skeleton has begun to come to life once more. The haven has been named Nethuns, and it has become an independent trade centre operated through Syndicate rule. House At-Lan has permitted this trade port to flourish because it is profitable for the lineage to do so. The Atlanteans are aware that the port is also home to spies and those who seek to steal the technosophic knowledge

of House At-Lan. They are willing to overlook the shady deals and unscrupulous dealings in return for profits. Nethuns has gained a reputation among those in the know for its illegal technosophic markets.

Austral Cluster

The Austral Cluster is a cluster of stars and planets on the edge of Dominion space. Long ago, an ancient alien species constructed self-replicating machines that outlived their creators. No one has discovered the fate of that species; it appears to have vanished completely, leaving entire planets intact, and guarded by automated machines. The machines are known as the Made of Austral.

The Austral Cluster has attracted attention from the Dominion due to the rich gold deposits on many of its planets. The scout ships that visited the region originally had just enough time to transmit their scanner data before being destroyed by machine guardians. Additional Dominion fleet voidships dispatched to the area were never heard from again. The machines have stirred since that first visit, and now have reached far beyond their planet and into the void, spreading out in all directions. The machines are limited to slow, lightracer speeds, though, and will take hundreds and thousands of years before reaching the nearest stars.

The Tyrant has decreed that the Austral Cluster be quarantined and that no ships are to go there under any circumstances. The Watchers keep an eye out on the activities of the machines. The machines have spread slowly to nearby systems and have come close to the borders of the Dominion. Should they reach further into Dominion space, the Tyrant will need to dispatch his fleet to deal with them. So far, the effectiveness of the machines' weapons against Dominion voidships has kept the Tyrant from issuing the order, but time is running out.

The lure of new technology entices the occasional smuggler and foolhardy Theor to disobey the Tyrant's order. None have ever returned from the cluster to tell what lies on any of the planets, but ancient records of long-range scans show that more than one planet hosts sprawling cities covering vast areas of the surface.

Aztlan

Aztlan is the lineage planet of House Tol-Teq. It is one of many moons orbiting a lone gas giant that circles a blue star. The system is young and filled with belts of debris orbiting the star. Approach to Aztlan is perilous due to the chaotic fields of dust, rock, and ice that encircle this system. The gas giant and its moons are frequently peppered by meteors and comets whose orbits are perturbed by its passage.

One of the moons was terraformed by the Mar-Duk, and the Toletquatl have constructed seven cities below its surface. The moon hosts a breathable atmosphere and has been populated with ravenous flora and fauna by the Genesis Adepts. A dozen havens encircle the moon to protect it from attack, as well as stray comets and meteors. The havens bristle with weaponry and gravitic projectors that are capable of deflecting incoming debris from hitting the moon.

The cities of Aztlan are a honeycomb of elaborate tunnels, vaulted chambers, and beautiful open spaces. Each city is ruled by two of the fourteen Coatl: the Serpent Warriors who are the strongest of all the Toltequatl. The Fourteen answer only to the Tol-Teq Archon and handle the day-to-day affairs of Aztlan. The best warriors of each city compete against the other cities in a series of challenges that are held four times per Aztlan year. The contests are carried out on the lethal surface where everything preys on everything else. The chosen must survive the hostile environment and best the other contestants. The games are very popular and watched by all on Aztlan. The winners bring honour to their city and raise their status among the Toltequatl.

The other sister moons of Aztlan are inhospitable and host a variety of environments from airless rock to poisonous gas atmospheres and freezing temperatures. The Tol-Teq use these moons as a training ground to produce their elite warriors. Toltequatl warriors are trained in every type of environment and against insurmountable odds. These harsh conditions weed out the weak and produce only the strongest and most determined.

Aztlan and its system are constantly abuzz with military voidships and activity. The Dominion fleet brings its newly bred Dominars to Aztlan for training and indoctrination. The chaotic debris fields are used for fleet training exercises. During wartime, Aztlan is used to muster, resupply, and coordinate Dominion forces.

Tol-Teq Elevated Warrior

The ranks of the Tol-Teq Elevated Warriors are filled with **Mercilessly Trained** and seasoned warriors. The Tol-Teq warriors are **Well-Equipped** to handle almost any situation.

Skills: Good (+3) Shoot, Fight; Fair (+2) Athletics, Physique, Tactics; Average (+1) Survival, Will

Stress: 2

Baroque, The Golden Planet

Baroque, the golden planet, is the capitol of the Dominion. It is an ancient planet, colonized during pre-Dominate times. The majority of the planet's surface is covered with dust swept plains, carved mountain ranges, and deep canyons. The biosphere of the planet was destroyed long ago through technological progress that entirely stripped the planet of its natural resources. The planet's oceans evaporated over a hundred millennia ago, and the atmosphere of the planet has thinned, blown away by its bloated, red sun. All of the native species on the planet perished during the cataclysmic climate change.

In antiquity, gigantic atmospheric processors were constructed to continually pump gasses into the atmosphere to make Baroque habitable by humans. The atmospheric processors also pump out large quantities of monoatomic gold gas into the atmosphere to reflect and diffract the harmful rays of the sun. This has caused the skies of the planet to take on a golden hue, and the planet appears as a uniform golden orb from space. The heavy levels of monoatomic gas in the atmosphere have extended the natural lifespan of all who dwell on the planet. This is also one of the primary attractions of living on the golden planet for long periods, since it eliminates the need to deal with the Genesis Adepts. The Rhetors of The Body proselytize the belief that this longevity is a generous gift from the Tyrant, but his harsh rule casts a dark shadow over this.

In the northern hemisphere of the planet, near the polar regions, where the temperatures are more bearable and not sweltering like at the lower latitudes, lies the Tyrantine Fortress: the seat of power of the Dominion. The Tyrant rules from his immense ziggurat fortress; his power flows from Baroque to touch every planet, outpost, and colony of the Dominion. The City Of The Tyrant is filled with temples, surrounded by the landing fields and barracks of the Dominar Fleet. It nestles against a mountain range entirely carved into the likeness of prominent Deipotents and divine symbolism of the Tyrant Sun religion. It is a place of sacred pilgrimage for many, drawing the devout to worship at the foot of the Tyrant Sun's temple. The ziggurat and the city itself are filled with gigantic waterworks to showcase the Tyrant's generosity and splendour on this otherwise water-barren planet.

The Tyrantine Fortress is a four-kilometre tall ziggurat with an eight-kilometre causeway leading up to the front gate of the audience chamber. The Tyrant demands that any and all who seek audience must make the journey on foot along the Causeway Of The Penitent, a journey that takes approximately two hours. The causeway is adorned with thirteen stations, each marked by two immense Pharisto statues—one male, the other female—holding up a planet. The stations represent the thirteen Pharisto houses and their lineage planets, reminding those making the pilgrimage that the Tyrant is the ultimate authority. The Tyrant enjoys watching his subjects struggle up the causeway and occasionally makes them stand for hours before they are permitted into the grand audience chamber. Penitents take this time to ponder their request and concerns, and whether they are worthy of the Tyrant's time. Many a petitioner has turned back, realizing that their lot might be better by not seeking audience.

Along the edges of the city, below the carved cliffs of the mountains, lies the Causeway Of The Illuminated: a wide, raised road running high over the buildings of the city, it passes through many temples and places of worship. Pilgrims make the long trek around the sacred city to pray at all of the stations and temples. The city around the fortress is filled with buildings: temples, administrative

buildings, resonant power plants, broadcast obelisks, waterworks, and the housing for tens of millions who live here. Flat-topped pyramidal landing fields tower above the buildings, used by those who are permitted to land within the holy city. Landing fields for the Dominion fleet, trade transports, and visitors lie beyond the mountains and are accessible through a tunnel transport network between the city and the primary spaceport.

The dusty streets of the living areas wind between tightly-packed domiciles and converge on numerous squares and markets. The city streets are filled with merchants hawking wares and religious paraphernalia to the pilgrims visiting the holy city. Prophets and seers, some quite mad, espouse the virtues of the Tyrant and the prophesies of a coming doom. Despite this, the people of Baroque are friendly and welcoming, as they are well taken care of, and enjoy good health and longevity on the golden planet.

Beneath the city lie numerous passages, tunnels, and chambers, which connect the ruins of ancient buildings that were built upon over time. Mindframes hum deep beneath the streets, secreted away in their frigid chambers. This incredibly complex maze is so vast that there are areas within that have not been explored in millennia. Some believe that there are still dark mindframes in the maze below the city. Many secretive groups use these ancient tunnels as meeting places and hidden bases of operation. The *None Bodies* live and hide down here, as do some wild predators, and Jejune who have somehow made their way into the city through lost and forgotten passages.

All Pharisto houses, their Syndicates, and Theor sects are all represented on the golden planet. Anyone and everyone who is of any importance either make their home here or visit frequently. The Tyrantine Court swarms with influential Deipotents and legions of sycophants. Baroque, and especially the City Of The Tyrant, are rife with politics and intrigue.

The planet is constantly surrounded by voidships because the Dominion fleet's primary base is Baroque. Immense shipyards above the planet and on its surface buzz with constant activity, producing both civilian and military vessels. Constant transport traffic delivers goods and materials from other planets to fuel the industry of Baroque. The planet is not self-sufficient and depends largely on supplies brought in from elsewhere. A number of smaller cities lie scattered across the surface of the planet. These cities are centred on various industries, such as voidship construction, Dominar breeding, and other vital industries for the Dominion.

The Tyrant is attempting to reverse the disastrous climate change that exterminated the native life of Baroque by seeding the floors of many canyons with plant and animal life. Despite the harsh light, heat, and dry conditions of the surface, the plants and animals have prospered. These plant and animal life forms were created by the Genesis Adepts or imported from other planets. With

the sacking of Baroque in the last Nihilim Invasions, the Tyrant also ordered the creation of a number of Jejune tribes to populate the surface, along with deadly predators to stalk the desolate wilderness. Many find irony in the juxtaposition of the beautiful cities with the deadly conditions of the rest of the planet. The hostile wilderness of Baroque adds another measure of security against future invasions.

Great Horned Apeman Jejune

The Great Horned Apemen are a species of **Horned Hairy Brute Jejune** who have been seeded in the valleys of Baroque. The apemen are **Superb Hunters** who hunt the valley for food and live in small primitive villages. They are a **Primitive and Superstitious** culture that worship the stars in the night sky as their ancestors. The Apemen use clubs, spears, and bolas to hunt.

Skills: Good (+3) Fight, Physique; Fair (+2) Shoot, Athletics, Provoke; Average (+1) Lore, Survival, Tactics

Stress: 2 2

Eidolon

The Eidolon is the lone satellite of Baroque. Once a planetoid on the outskirts of the Baroque system, it was captured and towed into orbit by order of the Tyrant Charon. In an act of ultimate vanity, the Tyrant Charon had his countenance carved into one hemisphere of the moon's surface. The moon is tidally locked, with the face of the Tyrant forever watching over the surface of the planet. The moon is visible during the day and shines brightly during the nights.

The far side of the moon conceals three gigantic engines that have remained cold for centuries. The moon is a fully operational battlestation, with bunkers, turrets, and towers dotting its uncarved hemisphere. Beneath the surface of the moon lies the Hidden City, a gigantic hollow within the moon, which contains the private retreat of the Tyrant and his favoured subjects.

The Eidolon also serves as the base of operations for the Dominion fleet. It is perpetually surrounded by shipyards and fleet voidships. The hollow eyes of the face each contain a gigantic projector cannon that is capable of destroying a moon-sized body outright. The Tyrant

Charon had the Eidolon constructed after the successful Nihilim invasion of Baroque. This battlestation is the ultimate weapon in the hands of the Dominion. It is equipped with the most powerful and destructive mounted weaponry the Dominion can muster. There are rumours that the moon is even equipped with a gigantic Loom Drive, but the Eidolon has never left the Baroque system.

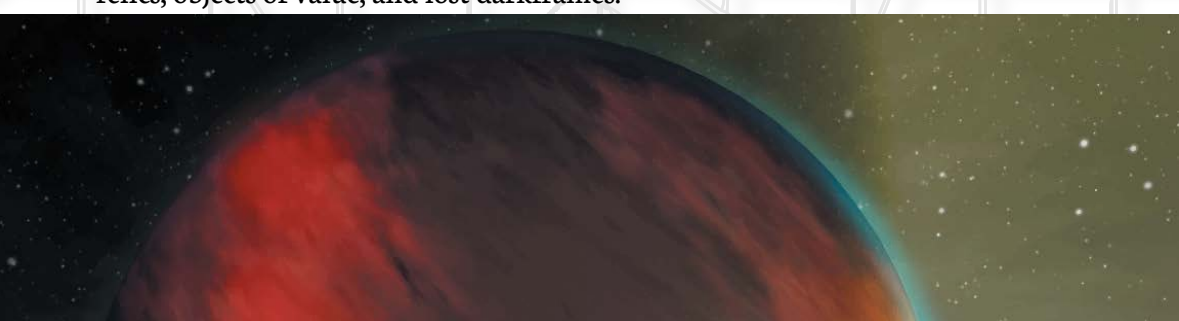
Crux

Crux is a moon that orbits the gas giant Ummo. Ummo once had other moons but they have long since been disassembled for construction materials. There is one other large, rocky planet remaining in the system and it has been cracked open, leaving continent-sized chunks of rock floating in the void. Extensive Ka-Chin resource extraction operations are currently ongoing within the debris field.

The moon is entirely covered with a single metropolis that stretches across its entire surface and deep into the crust. Crux is the location of the original enclave of Genesis Adepts and has since then become a technosophic centre of the Dominion. It is here that the Theors were first created, and it is here that they established the first sects. All Theor sects have a presence on Crux, and each sect maintains their headquarters on the moon. After the golden planet, Crux is the second most strategic planet in the Dominion.

The atmosphere is breathable, but heavy with pollution and oppressive humidity. The greenhouse effect is the cause of the constant drizzle, which rains down the black soot in the atmosphere to coat everything with a black film. Rising above the metropolis are tall arcoziggurats that house the work force. In the vast spaces between the arcoziggurats are factories, research centres, and construction yards. The Heliocon rises high above the drab cloud cover and is easily visible on approach to the moon. Its white upper body stands in stark contrast to the weather-blackened lower half below the cloud cover.

The metropolis of Crux is marked by large scars that are left over from the previous two Nihilim Invasions. There are zones that were once occupied but now lie abandoned. Large industrial areas rust under the constant drizzle, and ancient buildings crumble into rubble as the centuries pass. There are also vast networks of tunnels and endless levels below the surface that reach down into the core of the moon. These areas harbour dangers to the unwary. Tribes of regressed humans roam these zones, as do various escaped experiments of the Theors. Scavengers and reclaimers venture into the rusting wilderness in hopes of recovering ancient relics, objects of value, and lost darkframes.



On more than a couple of occasions, the Precepts of Crux were dispatched to look for a Theor researcher whose expedition never returned. These parties were eventually found, all with no survivors, their bodies ripped open and partially devoured by the creatures that live in the tunnels below.

In the same orbit as Crux—some preceding, some following the moon's orbit—are Asu-Ra shipyards that are constantly turning out new voidships. An outer ring of heavily fortified havens, manned by Dominar troops, orbits Ummo and provides defence for the critical facilities found here. A great many ships of the Dominion fleet are permanently stationed in the system and patrol its outer reaches. At any one time, no less than three Arkships can be found within the system, loading and unloading cargo and passengers from the far-flung corners of the Dominion.

It is said that every technosophic wonder ever invented can be found on Crux. The markets of Crux are filled with rare and unique apparatus that the Theors are willing to sell to those who can afford them. Those who have the empyreals to do so come to Crux to have their voidships outfitted with the latest and greatest systems and to find the best skilled crews found anywhere in the Dominion.

Delyahey

Delyahey is the lineage planet of House Ka-Chin. It orbits a bright, blue star and is a large rocky world with one large ocean. The planet's crust contains an incredible abundance of mineral resources. The surface of the planet is rocky and volcanic, with scattered valleys where the native life of the planet has developed. The flora and fauna of the planet have adapted to the planet's small amount of sunlight and tend to be predatory in nature. The constant volcanic activity belches forth minerals from the core of the planet.

The scions of house Ka-Chin live within towering arcoziggurats scattered about the valleys of the planet, though the Pharistos rarely leave their arcoziggurats to face the gravity and polluted atmosphere outside. The arcoziggurats are filled with gardens and artificial lighting to simulate the bright rays of the sun. Each arcoziggurat is a self-contained city of incredible beauty.

The stronger-than-normal gravity has complicated resource extraction. In antiquity, the Genesis Adepts bred a worker species of huge proportions that could stand the heavy gravity and extract the minerals of the planet. These workers were too violent and uncontrollable, and the breeding program was abandoned. Some escaped to breed in the scattered valleys of the planet; these Jejune are giants who stand approximately 3 metres tall (10 feet). They worship the arcoziggurats as holy

places and they watch the comings and goings of the flying gods from a distance. The Jejune fear to leave the valleys due to the mountain-sized metal insects that devour the land around them. The Jejune expect that their gods are even taller than they, living in such gigantic houses. Travel through the valleys is extremely dangerous, as one may end up dinner for the Jejune.

Trull Jejune

Trulls are giant, hairy humans with thick, rock-coloured skin and thick, cable-like muscles. They possess **Great Strength** but are **Dumb-Witted Brutes**. The Trulls live in caves and possess a primitive culture that worships the sky gods and **Fear the Earth Eater** platforms that roam the planet.

Skills: Great (+4) Physique; Good (+3) Fight, Survival; Fair (+2) Stealth, Provoke, Will

Stress: 3 3

Like a Rock. Because you look like a rock, you receive +2 to Stealth while being still.

The Ka-Chin have constructed hundreds of mobile, spider-like platforms to crawl the planet's surface and extract its mineral wealth. The massive mining platforms are supported by twelve massive legs and are capable of navigating the rocky terrain with ease. The platforms are operated by the Kachina Syndicates and the workers they oversee.

When a large resource deposit is located, the platform will stop, and extraction operations will commence. Huge drills sink into the earth and extract the minerals upward to a platform that also serves as a processing plant. The massive scale of the industrial processing has polluted the atmosphere of the planet over millennia, adding to the already abundant volcanic ash in the atmosphere. The planet is getting warmer, and the sweltering climate is quite uncomfortable. Many workers die to heat exhaustion each year.

Voidship transports from all over the Dominion come to Delyahey for the extracted mineral wealth. In orbit, massive havens have been constructed to distribute the refined resources from the surface of the planet. Constant cargo shuttle traffic ferries the refined resources from the mining platforms to the havens in orbit.

Delyahey contains a singular mystery, one that dates back to the early years of the Dominion. One of the first extraction operations broke into a series of carved tunnels. These tunnels led to a colossal chamber with a pair of Cyclopean doors. Theors over the millennia have attempted to decipher and understand what these carvings mean, naming the site the Tomb of the Black God, after the depictions in the carvings of a great, amorphous entity.

The carvings imply that an ancient evil was shut away within the earth, and they are believed to be a warning against opening of the tomb. No attempts have been made to open the tomb to date, and the Tyrant has decreed the site forbidden. Whatever lies within is a possible danger to the Dominion, and as such, shall remain undisturbed.

A cult has developed among some of the Syndicatemen and workers on Delyahey. The Cult of the Black God secretly worships at the tomb and plots to one day find a way to open the tomb and release their god. Where this worship originated is unknown, and many report a strange feeling of dread and visions of darkness when near the tomb.

E-Din

E-Din lies not far from Baroque, the golden planet of the Tyrant. It is the reputed origin of humanity and was once a great centre of human civilization in the ancient past. A series of pre-Dominate wars have left the planet scarred, and the once-great cities of E-Din now lie in ruin beneath the soil and vegetation. The planet has reverted to a more natural state, leaving little but the occasional ruin jutting up.

After the rapid industrialization of Crux—the original Genesis Adept planet—by the newly birthed Theors, the second Tyrant, Xenophon, granted E-Din to the Adepts. Since then, the planet has become a massive laboratory. The planet teems with manufactured flora and fauna that the Adepts made in their search for all of life's great secrets. The Adepts even moved all major research operations to E-Din, where they could be better secured against those who would attempt to steal their secret sciences.

E-Din hosts the largest assortment of Jejune tribes and the greatest variety of them than anywhere else in the Dominion. Every climate and terrain has been populated with a vast assortment of Jejune. Each has been, or is currently being, studied for transplantation to another Dominion planet as a workforce. The Adepts continue to experiment with various attributes and strengths of the human species for applications throughout the Dominion.

E-Din is the origin of the miraculous Shautao Peach: a fruit that can greatly extend the life of whoever consumes a single fruit. The Shautao Peach is extraordinarily difficult to cultivate, and it ripens only once per millennium. The fruit is

manufactured by the Adepts, but full understanding of the fruit's mysterious properties continues to elude even its creators. The Genesis Adepts cultivate large crops of these flowers within enclosed and carefully monitored conservatories, but the majority of Shautao plants never survive a full millennium to give fruit. Many fail to produce any fruit whatsoever. The complex and volatile lifecycle of the plant makes the Shautao Peach the most sought after fruit in the universe. A single fruit is immeasurable in value, and it has become the central focus of many myths and legends in which a hero or desperate soul seeks one at any cost. The Genesis Adepts are the sole custodians of this miraculous fruit, and it is they who use its immeasurable value to further their goals. Any who consume the Shautao Peach no longer require the longevity treatments of the Genesis Adepts; their natural life-span is extended three-fold, and for a time they experience the awakening of their inner prana.

The planet is under constant patrol by three Dominion battlecruisers that deny access to the planet's surface to any who have not been sanctioned by the Genesis Adepts. The Dominion fleet has deployed an array of sensors that surrounds the planet and can detect any unauthorized approach. Due to this, E-Din is among the most secure planets in the Dominion.

The Shautao Peach **Extends the Natural Lifespan** of whoever consumes it three-fold. For this, the peach has **Value beyond Measure**. It is said to confer a **Prana Awakening** in the consumer, for a time. The peach is so rare and valuable that it is **Wanted by All**, and they would do anything to possess this wondrous gift. A Shautao Peach is always stored in a portable stasis jar to keep it from spoiling. When prana is awakened, the highest skill the character has that corresponds to a prana discipline is the prana discipline that awakens. The prana awakening lasts *a few months* to *a year*.

Elysium

Elysium is a garden planet with vast seas and scattered large islands. The planet hosts a number of large-scale sea and land farming operations. A number of islands in the eastern hemisphere have been dedicated as resorts for Pharistos who visit the planet for leisure. Elysium caters to the whims of the Pharistos and provides a number of distractions to the divine elite who visit. The peaceful natural landscapes and structures are a change from the hustle and bustle of civilization elsewhere in the Dominion.

Each of the leisure islands is dedicated to one or more activities for its visitors. Where one island caters to the hunting of large game and even human slaves,

others cater to gambling, relaxation, and death-defying activities like orbital skydiving. Security is tight on the leisure islands and enforced from a haven that hangs low in the sky over the islands. The Dominars stationed on the haven use monitoring drones to observe happenings in the resorts, but they are prohibited from setting foot on the islands unless a serious security matter occurs. Visitors may not bring weapons to the leisure islands by Tyrant's decree, and all arrivals are thoroughly screened by the Dominar guardians. None dare defy the Tyrant's edict, and the Dominars are ordered to use whatever force is necessary to bring those who defy the weapons law to justice. For the bored Dominars on the haven, this often leads to use of excessive force and destruction of nearby property. The Tyrant and the currently ruling system Brunnis permit this wanton destruction as a lesson to those who would break Elysian laws.

With the threat of physical danger removed, from other visitors at least, Elysium has become a den of intrigue. Deipotents who visit are often here for peace and quiet and to further their clandestine plots. The use of regularly placed psitronic suppressors ensures that even Degenerates cannot eavesdrop on conversations or pose a danger to visitors. It is suspected that more than a few Elevated servants on the islands are really spies for various Pharisto houses and Syndicates.

Elysium is also a place of secrets. Deipotents come to Elysium to make covert contact with the Haruspex, also known as the Voice of Revelation. While no one is quite sure whether it's an individual or a group, the Haruspex is always referred to in the singular. The Haruspex is an information broker, a dealer in secrets and knowledge, no matter how obscure. It is rumoured that the Haruspex has a network that rivals and perhaps surpasses the combined abilities of House Xi-An. The Xianxi have been unable to discover the true identity of the Voice of Revelation, even with the full might of their information networks. A number of Proxicutioners were dispatched to Elysium with the intent of silencing the Voice once and for all; they were all fatally unsuccessful. The Haruspex is always one step ahead and eludes discovery. The knowledge of the Haruspex is preternatural, and many believe that the Voice's network is composed of Degenerate agents who use telepathy and other pranic disciplines to uncover secrets. Hereseers investigating these rumours likewise have been unable to discover the identity of the Haruspex. There is fear that the Haruspex is a member of the Ascended Masters from the planet Aetherius in the Peregrine Hierarchy. Others speculate that the Haruspex might be a Cryptomind from Sphynx who turned to the manipulation of the temporal world.

Those who seek to contact the Voice of Revelation need only come to Elysium. Eventually the subtle agents of the Haruspex will make contact, and an audience will be granted—providing an appropriate payment is made. The Voice always demands a different price from each person who seeks wisdom; the price is always tailored to the individual.

Elysium Beholder Drone

The Elysium Beholder Drone is a **Floating Sentinel** that **Watches and Transmits Everything**. It is shaped like a fist-sized ball that is studded with faintly glowing sensors. The beholders stay out of the way, out of sight, observing everything on Elysium and transmitting it to the watchful Dominars in orbit.

Skills: Good (+3) Athletics; Fair (+2) Investigate; Average (+1) Stealth

Stress: 1

Great Archive of Cerebellum

The Great Archive of Cerebellum is a ten-kilometre (6.2-mile) cube that tumbles in a close orbit around a very bright and small white star. Cerebellum was constructed prior to the Artilect Rebellion, during the height of Artilect achievement in the Dominion. The cubic planet houses sixteen separate mindframes and was once the home of a great many Artilects. During the Artilect Rebellion the mindframes were switched off and later purged. Twelve of the mindframes have been brought back online in the preceding millennia, with one darkframe, which has finally completed self-repairs and is being carefully analysed for dangers before being brought online fully. The remaining three had been damaged so severely in the fighting that the damage caused their self-repair systems to fail, and the technosophy required to repair them was lost a long time ago.

Cerebellum has become the home of a sect of Theors who call themselves the Learned of Cerebellum. The sect has turned Cerebellum and its mindframes into the greatest repository of knowledge and history in the Dominion. Not only are digital records stored within the Pattern of Cerebellum, but the endless corridors, vaults, and studies house a vast collection of artefacts, books, and other physical media recovered throughout the Dominion. Cerebellum serves as both a library and museum for the history of the Dominion, as well as a repository for the remains of extinct alien civilizations and cultures.

The Pattern of Cerebellum is composed of dozens of realms, each one containing its own lore and rules. Each realm is overseen by a Solon who was once one of the founders of the Learned. The immense Patternscape of Cerebellum contains many secrets and hidden dangers. There are things left from antiquity that prowl the dark corners awaiting the unwary. Navigating the data vaults is extremely complicated and requires the aid of one of the Learned who know how to locate information, and more importantly, to avoid the lurking dangers. There are rumours that the Pattern holds a number of hard-to-reach realms that are not under the control of the Solons, realms which house the remnants of the ancient Artilect enemy. The

Learned deny such claims, but there are Delvers who claim to have reached these secret places and barely escaped with their minds intact.

Protolect Lurker

Protolect Lurkers are fragments of Artilects that have survived the data purges and continue to **Lurk within the Dark Recesses of the Pattern** of Cerebellum. They are **Evasive Yet Hostile** to any they come across. They **Seek to Regain Control** of the Pattern of Cerebellum and to rejoin with their source.

Skills: Superb (+5) Delve, Stealth; Great (+4) Stealth, Will; Good (+3) Investigate, Stealth; Fair (+2) Influence, Lore

Mental Stress: 2 2 2 2

Consequences: Mild

Processing Cores (x2). You possess 4 processing cores that you always begin each scene with.

Artilect Fragment. You may possess up to double your Will in cores at one time.

Hammered Bracelet

The Hammered Bracelet is a collection of rocky shards that orbits an ancient red star. The shards are an artefact from an extinct species who long ago shaped these floating rocks into a ring of tiny worlds, each complete with an atmosphere, artificial gravity, and a unique biosphere. Hundreds of these small rocks orbit the giant star, each equidistant from the next—they are the work of a very advanced and deliberate science. Some speculate that the Hammered Bracelet is a gigantic zoo, with a collection of life imported from many different biospheres. There is very little known about the architects of the Hammered Bracelet; what little has been learned lies within structures left on some of the shards. A sect of Theor researchers has established a small colony on one of the safer shards in order to study the ancient builders and the mysterious technosophy, which permeates these shards.

Helatrobus

Helatrobus was the seat of a once-powerful, pre-Dominate warlord: Xeenu. Xeenu commanded vast armies and fleets that he used to conquer and enslave many planets. His primary method of control was an insidious nodule that was implanted into the minds of those he conquered. This God Nodule, as it was called, caused his subjects to view him as their saviour and deity. Those brainwashed by the nodule were willing to lay down their lives for their divine master. Tens of millions had the nodule installed. In addition to these devoted followers, Xeenu's

servants also constructed many automatons to augment the ranks of his warriors. No planet could withstand such a force. In the end, all fell to the endless onslaught of the Legions of Xeenu.

The Tyrant Aristonymus eventually defeated Xeenu, but at the cost of millions of lives. Aristonymus used guile and patience to infiltrate and weaken Xeenu's empire from within. Secret agents were dispatched into the warlord's domain to de-program his most powerful supporters. Over decades a secret rebellion brewed from within. When Aristonymus was finally ready to strike a decisive blow, those no longer under the control of the God Nodule rebelled, and Xeenu's forces were thrown into disarray. Many planets required sterilization to destroy his fanatical legions of followers. Eventually, the First Tyrant reached Xeenu's planet and bombarded it from orbit. Xeenu was reportedly killed when his mountain fortress was finally breached, but his body was not found among the rubble.

The heavy orbital bombardment left the planet in ruins. Its surface is cracked with great volcanoes that spew ash and black dust into the atmosphere. The planet belches in anger to this day, continuously spewing magma and ash, leaving the planet dark beneath a thick canopy of clouds. The ash perpetually falls to the surface where the wind whips it up into the atmosphere once more. Visitors must wear breathing apparatus and insulating clothing to survive the poisonous gasses and freezing winds. It is a bleak place with a haunted reputation.

The ruins of the mountain fortress of Xeenu still stand as a testament to the power and glory of the greatest pre-Dominate enemy of the Tyrant. The mountain was once carved into the likeness of Xeenu sitting upon a throne, but now it lies broken and scarred by the orbital bombardment. Legends told by the first scavengers to visit the planet say that the ghost of Xeenu still haunts the deep, dark tunnels of his mountain fortress. Strange shadows prowl, and Xeenu's laughter is said to still echo through the depths. The myths warn that those who enter the darkness will be taken by the ghost of Xeenu and made his slaves for eternity. The planet is seldom visited now due to its dark past, ill reputation, and inhospitable atmosphere. Many believe that the Tyrant's obsession with deification and carved mountains were greatly influenced by Xeenu, his greatest foe.

Heliosanct

Heliosanct lies on the very edge of the Rift of Echoes and is one of the most mysterious planets in the Dominion. It is a veritable garden with a pleasant climate and calm weather patterns. The entire planet is one giant landmass that is completely covered with a thick canopy of gargantuan trees and vegetation. Blue lakes and streams break up swaths of dense forest. First explorers discovered signs of an advanced culture on the planet in the form of two artefacts stationed above the poles of the planet. These huge octahedrons float over each pole at an altitude of 15km (9.3 miles) above the surface. The artefacts emit an anti-technosophic

field that prevents all technology from functioning on the planet; cybernetic organisms that enter the field suffer from severe malfunctions and eventual death.

Heliosanct lacks any fauna; diverse plant-based lifeforms, some of which are mobile, are the only native life forms on the planet. There are no predators, and everything obtains its nourishment from the sun. An intelligent alien species of plant-like humanoids that call themselves the Drood exists on the planet; they are large shambling mounds that are vaguely humanoid in stature.

The Drood language has been decoded by Theors studying the planet, and it has been learned that they are an incredibly ancient species. The Drood indicate that their lifespans are measured in tens of thousands of years. The Drood live in harmony with their planet and do not possess any technosophy whatsoever. Violence is a concept they do not understand, and their culture has no word for any concepts dealing with conflict or struggle. When a Drood speaks, the sound produced is deep and reminiscent of a horn being blown. Dominion Theors have developed a translation apparatus that is able to facilitate communication with the Drood.

The Drood worship the sun and were very excited to learn that the visitors from the sky also worship the life-giving sun. Colonies of Drood live near sources of water and clearings where they can sink their roots to drink the fresh water and to absorb the nourishing sunlight. When asked about their history, the Drood are not clear about their origins, but they constantly speak of the Bright Ones who are said to be emissaries of their creator solar-deity, who created the planet and all life on it. The Drood believe that they are the oldest life in the universe, and that they will be the last when the universe comes to an end. This the Bright Ones told them before they departed. When asked about the Bright Ones, the Drood say that they were like suns that descended from the sky and who fashioned this world. This happened so long ago that the Drood no longer remember when that was. The Shining Ones return periodically, to ensure that the planet is well taken care of, though there appears to be no specific cycle for their return.

According to the Drood, the polar artefacts were placed there by the Shining Ones the last time they returned. At that time, other visitors from the sky came down and destroyed large swaths of the forest to build the piles of stone they resided in. The Shining Ones returned and were angry. Nothing now remains of the visitors and their stone piles; the Shining Ones tore it all down and let the planet reclaim it. Before they left, the Shining Ones told the Drood that their planet would be safe from all future sky visitors. No ruins have yet been found beneath the heavy canopy, though the Theors have mounted many expeditions and scanned the planet's surface from orbit. The heavy vegetation makes these searches difficult, however.

The Dominion has constructed a floating haven 20km (12.5 miles) high in the atmosphere of the planet. The haven serves as a docking station for travellers

between the planet and orbit. Dirigibles are used for transport on the planet, using primitive combustion technologies for propulsion. The surface can be reached by docking with the sky haven and transferring to one of the dirigibles for transport to the surface.

The Pharistos have constructed a number of retreats in the high trees. These are built from local wood and are purposely designed not to damage or interfere with the local environment. The anti-technosophic field has made the planet a favoured escape and a place of leisure for the Deipotents. Many Pharistos come here to rest, recuperate, negotiate, and hatch plans. The lack of any technology makes the planet quite secure, and some escape here when pursued by Proxicutioners and other enemies.

Theors are currently exploring the planet in hope of finding out more about the fate of the previous visitors to the planet. They are careful not to be disruptive to the environment. The Genesis Adepts have set up a number of laboratories here to study the native flora for their own purposes. A portion of the sky haven has been allocated solely for the Adepts' use. Many fear that the secret work the Adepts are doing here may anger the Bright Ones, should they ever return. There are rumours that the Adepts have kidnapped a number of Drood from the surface and are currently studying them aboard the haven

Drood

Drood are plant-like, sentient creatures that resemble a **Shambling Mound of Vegetation**. They stand 4.2 metres (14 feet) tall and are composed of **Knotted Hard Wood**. The Drood are peaceful and non-violent; they will **Never Harm a Living Creature**.

Skills: Great (+4) Physique; Good (+3) Lore, Will;
Fair (+2) Empathy, Survival, Stealth

Stress: 3 3 3

Consequences: Moderate

One with the Trees. You receive +2 to Stealth when hiding among vegetation.

Weakness: Fire. You have a difficulty resisting fire and do so with a Fair (+2) passive opposition on all rolls.

Hollow Ternion

The Hollow Ternion is a dangerous area of the void that is riddled with gravitational disturbances and a group of three abrogate stars caught in each other's orbits. These dead stars are slowly being drawn to each other by their inescapable gravity and will eventually collide. The event will unleash incredible amounts of energy and will form into a super massive abrogate star.

Ancient tales from pre-Dominate times tell of how the Tect empire warred with another powerful species who became their greatest enemy. The war raged for thousands of years until the Tect unleashed a new weapon upon their enemy's three systems. The weapon extinguished the suns, causing them to collapse into abrogate stars that consumed their orbiting planets. The enemy was vanquished in a final, decisive stroke. The Tect have since deeply regretted their actions and view this act as a mark of shame on their civilization. They destroyed the technology that can cause a star to become abrogate, and they never speak of it. Unfortunately, the Theors of the Dominion have rediscovered this cataclysmic technosophy.

Stories tell that one of the planets of the extinguished species has been thrown out of its orbit by the collapse of its sun and now rests in the calm space between the abrogate stars. Like the centre of a hurricane, that area of space is calm, and the planet has not been torn apart by the incredible gravities of the abrogate stars. It is said that the dead, frozen planet contains the ruins of many cities and incredible lost technologies. So far though, those who have ventured into the stormy void of the Hollow Ternion have not returned.

Hroonoon

Hroonoon is the home planet of the Hroon and the insidious Fetters. The planet is small and covered by dense forests and jungles. It teems with mobile and immobile plant life, as well as various small mammalian and reptilian animals. The diverse biology of the planet is being researched and harvested for its pharmacological potential by the Genesis Adepts, as well as various other bio-technology Syndicates. A number of colonies have been established on the planet for this purpose.

In the ancient past, before the Hroon gained sentience, Hroonoon was inhabited by an alien civilization that is now lost to time. They were called the Skein, and little is left that can be used to decipher their culture. A small number of their ruins lay hidden deep in the vegetation of the planet. The majority of the ruins lay below the surface and are filled with maze-like corridors that disrupt technosophic apparatus and make navigation nearly impossible. The ruins have not been explored and are avoided, both by the Hroon and the Dominion colonists, because they are infested by the Fetters. Those entering the ruins are quickly overcome by the Fetters' telepathy and become their slaves. Some Fetters have managed to enslave entire colonies of Hroon that strayed too close to the ruins. Inside these colonies, multiple generations of Hroon exist as mind-controlled slaves of the Fetters. The Hroon war with their fallen brethren to defend their pods and territory.

Theors believe that the ruins hold the secrets of a once-great civilization. There are signs that Hroonoon was uninhabitable in the distant past, but was terraformed into the garden it is today. All of the life-forms on Hroonoon possess the marks

of manufactured life, including the Hroon themselves. Expeditions into the ruins by expeditions equipped with psitronic suppressors have proven disastrous. The Fetters not only pose a telepathic danger, but also a physical one, with the flora and fauna under their control. The small number of apparatus recovered from the ruins indicates that technologies beyond the Dominion's capabilities lie hidden deep within the labyrinths of the Skein.

Vine Creeper

Vine Creepers resemble a **Mobile Husk of Vines** that are **Studded with Sharp Thorns**. A Vine Creeper is a **Silent Stalker** that is rarely seen before it strikes. They are able to blend into the surrounding vegetation with great skill. Prey is pulled into the pod-like body where it is devoured slowly over many days.

Skills: Great (+4) Fight; Good (+3) Physique;
Fair (+2) Stealth; Average (+1) Athletics

Stress: 1 1 1 1

Nerve Toxin. Your thorns excrete a nerve poison that incapacitates your prey. Whenever you score a consequence, your target is poisoned. The poison paralyses the target in minutes, attacking each exchange with a Fair (+2) Toxin attack that causes physical stress, opposed by the target's Physique. The toxin breaks down after 5 exchanges or as soon as the target achieves a success with style.

Hyperborea

Hyperborea is the lineage planet of House Val-Hel. It is a cold and desolate planet, with glacial valleys and towering peaks. The Val-Hel have hollowed out cities deep within the carved mountains of the planet, where they are sheltered from the bitter cold and biting wind. The desolate surface is left untouched; it is populated by native beasts and the Hyperions: an indigenous species of sentient creatures.

The Valhellions respect their planet: it is the perfect training ground for their martial ways. Upon reaching the age of adulthood, young scions of the house are sent out onto the surface and must survive a year before returning home. The initiates must survive the elements, brave the Hyperions, and earn their respect through martial prowess. The Hyperions are 3-metre-tall (ten-foot-tall), blue-furred giants with four arms. They are a martial culture that embraces a strong code of honour. Only with the help and knowledge of the Hyperions can a young scion survive on the surface of the planet.

The glaciers that cover huge swaths of the planet contain within them the frozen remains of gigantic serpentine creatures that once roamed Hyperborea. These terrible Draggons, as the Hyperions call them, were capable of flight and existed at a time when the planet was warm—before the current ice age. Hyperions have oral traditions from the time before the Ice Wall descended upon the planet; these stories feature the Draggons in them. All that remains of these giant beasts are their frozen remains in the ice sheets. The Hyperions build temples out of ice to the glory of these extinct beasts and venerate them as destructive gods.

The Hydren are a species of reptilian humans that some on Hyberborea have encountered. Hydren possess great strength and endurance, making them a formidable match for even the Tyrant's Dominars. There are hushed rumours that they are the results of House Val-Hel's attempts to build a secret army using genetic material recovered from the icebound Draggons. These rumours are unsubstantiated and would be arch heresy if confirmed. The rumors state that the Hydren live deep below the surface of the planet, that there are tens of thousands of them, and that they await the day when the Valhellions will rise to depose the Tyrant. The Valhellions claim it's all bunk, just slander and lies spread by those who are jealous of the strength of House Val-Hel.

As if that weren't bad enough, others say there is a secret cult among the Val-Hel: the Cult of Kur. The cult is said to worship the Draggons as deities who are not dead, but sleeping—waiting to be freed from the ice when the planet warms again. The cult is said to gather with the Hyperions at their temples to worship these frozen gods. Proponents say the Cult of Kur are the ones building the secret army of Hydren, and it is they who truly hold the reins of power within House Val-Hel. To date, Hereseer investigations have not turned up any credible evidence of truth in these rumours.

Hyperion

A Hyperion is a **Four-Armed, Blue-Furred Giant** who is **Wise and Tempered**. Hyperions are a **Warrior Culture** that respects prowess and wisdom, above all else.

Skills: Great (+4) Physique; Good (+3) Fight, Provoke; Fair (+2) Athletics, Knack, Presence, Shoot, Stealth, Survival, Tactics, Will

Stress: 3 3

If the rumours are true, an Elevated human or Pharisto in the service of the Val-Hel may possess the **Hydren Kin** aspect that represents **increased strength, toughness, and endurance.** These attributes come with strange attributes such as **reddish eyes, forked tongue, and patches of scales on the skin.**

Kismet

Kismet is currently in the zodiacal age of the Horned Qeedosh—a local beast of burden—and under the rulership of House Bal-Amon, as delineated by the Zodiac of Rulership. The planet hosts a sentient alien species that has been secretly enslaved by the Dominion through technosophic trickery and masquerade. For 10,000 years the Pharistos have impersonated the native's pantheon of deities and used trickery to turn an entire species into a workforce directed towards resource extraction. Kismet is marked forbidden to visitors; only those who rule here are permitted to visit the planet. The Tyrant has placed two battlecruisers in the system to ensure that the natives do not learn the truth of the deception.

The indigenous peoples call themselves Carna, and they practice a primitive form of religious shamanism centred on a large pantheon of anthropomorphic deities. The Carna have created gods around every aspect of their lives, and they are deeply religious. When first discovered, the Pharistos were quick to exploit this and used it as a means of control over the entire society. The Pharistos pose as Carna deities through the use of haloguise apparatus. They use this trickery to make the entire population believe that their gods are real flesh and blood beings, and that they come from another reality that is the Carna's afterlife.

The Carna were once a progressive species making leaps in technosophic knowledge and were on a path that would have enabled them to one day reach beyond their planet. This is no longer true. Since the arrival of the false gods, the Carna have reverted to more primitive way of life and have forgotten the knowledge they once held. The Pharistos pushed technosophic progress back on Kismet, through the rise of religious rule, to ensure that the population remains ignorant and superstitious; this ensures easier control. In their current state, the Carna pose no threat to the Dominion beyond their planet and are themselves unknowing slaves of the Dominion.

Carna are humanoid in appearance with two arms and two legs. Their faces are long, animal-like in appearance, and studded with a pair of curved horns. Their bodies are covered with a short fur that comes in greys, browns, and blacks. The Carna are short, only 1.5 metres (5 feet) in height, but are muscular and strong for their small frames. They are intelligent and well spoken. The Carna resolve

disputes through unarmed combat that is won when the opponent surrenders. Death in a dispute battle is rare, but it does happen occasionally. Otherwise, the Carna are a peaceful species that follows oneness with nature through meditation.

The population of Kismet is clustered around two dozen population centres scattered across the planet. Each centre is ruled by a High Shaman and clustered around the House of the Sun: a white stone ziggurat temple that houses the gods. The ziggurat hosts a cavernous entrance where extracted and refined resources are brought by the workforce as sacrifice. Hidden within each temple lies an apportal that is connected to one of the battlecruisers in orbit and they are used to transport materials between the surface and orbit. Once aboard a battlecruiser, the materials are loaded onto cargo vessels and transported to other planets of the Dominion. To the Carna, the gods consume the materials, and the ziggurats appear to be endless in capacity.

Constant resource extraction for thousands of years has left huge scars upon the planet's surface. Vast open-pit mines and cut-down forests surround each settlement. An extensive network of trains is used to ferry materials to the population centres as tribute to the gods. Gold, rare elements, and Kismet marblewood are the primary exports. The giant marblewood trees produce the most beautiful wood in the entire Dominion.

Since taking possession of the planet 800 years ago, The Balammun have begun many construction projects on the planet. The population centres are growing under the guidance of the master architects, and great new temples are being raised to the gods. The Balammun have also begun the carving of some of the mountains on Kismet in the likeness of the local anthropomorphic gods. The population has been spurred with renewed vigour in their beliefs, and production output has increased. This has brought much favour to House Bal-Amun in the eyes of the Tyrant.

Should the Carna ever learn the nature of the deception, the entire population would rise up against the false gods. This cannot be permitted to happen, and the Pharistos have instituted strict security measures to ensure that no voidship ever enters the planet's atmosphere. The Carna must never know that they are not alone in the universe and that their gods are false. The battlecruisers have been ordered to destroy any voidship entering the system that is not authorized to approach the planet. Travel to the surface must be conducted through the apportals, which are under constant guard by Chimera guardians on the planet's surface.

In recent centuries, unrest on the planet has been increasing. The Tyrant's regime suspects that a number of the 333 Pharistos who pose as the Carna gods hold elevationist and transformist views and wish to free the Carna from the regime's deception. These Arch Heretics have been inciting the local population to acts of sabotage and defiance. Rooting out these Pharistos has been difficult due to the severe restrictions on travel to the planet to conduct investigations.

All investigations are conducted by the local Pharisto overseers with little result, and the Tyrant is slowing losing his patience.

To add to the problems on Kismet, some Carna have turned from their religion due to the ongoing despoliation of their planet and turned to darker gods whom they call the Wild Horde. This dark religion has all of the trappings of a Brack infestation on the planet. How the Brack could have arrived here is still not known, but they are stirring things up and inciting the Carna to turn against their traditional gods. The Tyrant has dispatched a Hereseer to the planet in the guise of one of the local pantheon in order to uncover the true nature of the Wild Horde religion.

Carna Wild Horde Disciple

The Carna who worship the Wild Horde are **Muscular, Horned Humanoids** who are **Determined to Overthrow the Gods** and to restore their planet's beauty. They are **Rebellious and Violent** when compared to the more peaceful Carna population.

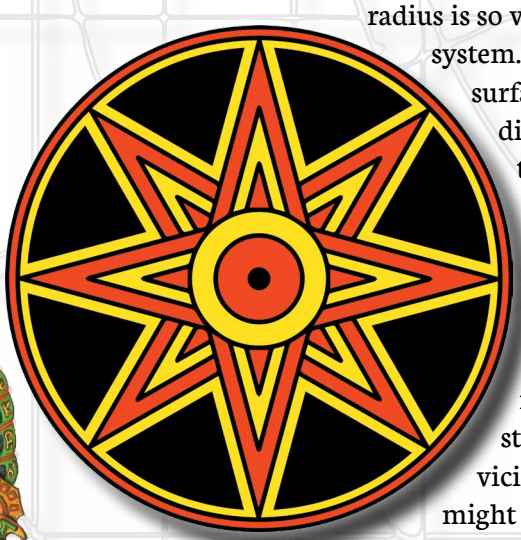
Skills: Fair (+2) Athletics, Physique; Average (+1) Fight, Survival

Stress: 1 1

Headbutt. You receive +2 to Fight when engaged in a grapple with your opponent.

Kolob, The Thousand Year Star

Located deep within Dominion space, Kolob—the Thousand Year Star—is one of the most mysterious objects in the void. Kolob's nickname comes from its immensely slow rotation; it takes one thousand years to complete a single rotation. This incredibly massive blue star has no planets orbiting it, and its radius is so vast that it could encompass an entire solar system. The star emits waves of energy from its surface in all directions. These gravity waves disrupt power and systems on any voidship that approaches the star.



The Thousand Year Star is also surrounded by a curious time distortion effect that becomes stronger with proximity to the star. The crew of a voidship are unaware that time for them runs slower than the universe beyond the star's vicinity. When a voidship leaves the vicinity of Kolob, hundreds of years of time might have passed for each day the voidship

spent near the star. The cause of the phenomena is not understood, and a sect of Theors have established a haven just within the boundary of the time distortion field of Kolob to study the star's unique properties.

In the past, voidships were recorded exiting the vicinity of the star. These vessels were not recognized, possessing none of the standard identifiers that are commonly used throughout the Dominion. On one such vessel, when boarded, the true nature of the star's effect was discovered. The voidship crew were unwitting time travellers from pre-Dominate times, and the crew were shocked to discover that almost 165 millennia had passed. The crew were on a scientific mission that lasted many months in close vicinity of the star. On a separate occasion, a warship of an unknown species emerged and engaged the Dominion fleet when confronted. The battle was fierce, and the aliens were ultimately destroyed, but they managed to destroy two Dominion battlecruisers in the engagement.

Approaching Kolob is forbidden, and the star's zone of influence is designated as a hazard. The Watchers maintain vigil around the star's perimeter, ensuring no unauthorized voidships approach. They stand watch for the possibility that a new threat to the Dominion might emerge. A number of Watcher voidships regularly patrol the huge volume of space around the star. The Warden of the Watchers has on numerous occasions requested additional resources to patrol the region, but each time the Tyrant has dismissed his worries and cited that resources are better applied where actually needed. Still, the Watchers watch and wait.

Watcher Vigil Frigate

The Watcher Vigil Frigate is a **Long-Range Scout Vessel** that **Bristles with Sensors** and is capable of detecting threats from a great distance. The frigate is manned by a **Stalwart and Competent Crew** who spend many months on deep void patrols.

Hull: Large (4)
Weapons: Fair (+2)
Systems: Fair (+2)
Sensors: Great (+4)
Holds: Average (+1)
Structure: Good (+3)
Navigation: Good (+3)
Stealth: Average (+1)
Boarding: Average (+1)
Structural Stress: 1 2 3 4
Systems Stress: 1 2 3
Marines Sress: 1 2 3
Consequences: Mild, Moderate, Severe
Lightracer. Your voidship is capable of out-racing light and traversing the void between the stars.
Upgraded Structure. You receive +1 Structure.
Crew/Population: 50/200
Holds Capacity: 4

Lemuria

Lemuria is the lineage planet of House Na-Cal. The planet hosts a favourable climate for the cultivation of foodstuffs. Its surface is divided into four large landmasses that are separated by small seas. The Naacal have cultivated vast fields for the growth of foodstuffs, carved great terraces on mountains to maximize food production, and used the great plains to rear cattle beasts. Lemuria has become the breadbasket of the Dominion. Foodstuffs produced here are transported off planet and across the entire Dominion. The planet lies not far from Baroque, and Lemuria is the source of the majority of its imported food. As a result, the Na-Cal enjoy great favour among the divine courts of the Pharistos and from the Tyrant himself.

Food production is overseen by Na-Cal Syndicate interests, and most of the work is done by human hands. Over a billion humans work the great farms that stretch across the planet. The food is collected and brought to the great voidports on the surface; from there, it is shipped off planet. The voidports are surrounded by small cities, the centres of culture on the planet. The majority of the population lives rural lifestyles, far away from any civilization.

The Na-Cal's cultivation operations are mindful of the environment and optimized to maximize output. Other than the areas where food production is carried out, the great wilderness of the planet is untouched. The Tyrant has called on the Na-Cal to increase output in previous times of war, but the Na-Cal have met the quotas through their other holdings instead of tampering with Lemuria further.

For millennia there have been stories that the Na-Cal are not the true rulers of Lemuria; rather, a secretive alien species rules the planet. These stories tell of a native reptilian species, the Naga, which lives below the surface in what is called the Shadow Kingdom. These natives are said to have an alliance with the Na-Cal to keep their existence a secret in return for the use of the planet's surface.

These stories have not yet been seriously investigated by the regime. The Tyrant enjoys the crops the Na-Cal produce for the Dominion and doesn't push the matter. The other Pharisto houses have dispatched spies in order to learn the truth, but so far, all those who sought the truth have mysteriously vanished. There are those Deipotents who see the technosophy of the Naga as a source for more power and want it for themselves. Whatever the truth of the matter, the House Na-Cal denies any absurd rumours that they are not the masters of their own lineage planet.

Known only to the Na-Cal, the aliens are powerful telepathic Kundalini who are able to disguise their appearance when travelling above ground. The Naga do not visit the surface often, and when they do it is always inside of buildings that hide the view of the sky. The entire species possesses an innate fear of open spaces that has kept them from leaving the safety of their planet and its underground environs. The Naga possess advanced technosophy and use it to keep their cities from being discovered. Many of the advances made in food production by the Na-Cal are said to be the Naga's achievements. Those few who have been permitted

to visit the Naga cities have said that they are crystalline in nature, grown from the rock itself, and shaped by the Naga's strange apparatus. The endless cavern networks stretch far below the surface and crisscross the entire planet.

Leviathan

Deep within the Abyssal, in the vast emptiness of the void, floats the wreckage of an immense vessel. Discovered recently by accident, a Watcher scoutship came across it after being crippled in an ambush by the Abyssal Apostates. The Watchship made its escape by engaging its lightracer drive, which failed shortly after due to damage. The scout emerged into the empty void far from any star systems. The vessel's sensors picked up something immense in the darkness of the interstellar void: a great ruined hulk surrounded by a dense field of wreckage—the remnants of an intense battle.

The vessel's size was astounding; a 10km (6.2 mile) by 4km (2.5 mile) cigar-shaped leviathan, torn up and crippled from a void battle of unprecedented proportions, surrounded by the wreckage of uncountable and unrecognizable voidships. The Watchers determined that the leviathan was ancient, appeared to have been organic, and was now quite dead. Its maze-like interior was littered with the frozen corpses of an insectoid species. Preliminary tests revealed the age of the vessel to be at least one billion years old. The expedition was cut short when the Apostates found the Watcher vessel and destroyed it. The record of the encounter was received by a Ka-Chin Syndicate transport that transmitted it to regime authorities.

A number of fortune seekers have claimed to have found and visited the leviathan, finding it filled with amazing alien technosophy. The debris field surrounding it is said to be from another, machine-based species whose technosophy is similar to that of the Artilects. Reports also state that the leviathan appears to be guarded by Apostates who have taken refuge in the debris field. They've established a base on the leviathan and continue to scour the debris for treasures.

Apostate Marauder

An Apostate Marauder is a fast and maneuverable vessel designed for **Getting in and out Quickly**. The marauder's tactic is to get in close to deploy its **Bloodthirsty Boarding Crew** to capture the target vessel.

Hull: Medium (3)

Weapons: Fair (+2)
Systems: Average (+1)
Sensors: Average (+1)
Holds: Average (+1)

Structure: Average (+1)
Navigation: Good (+3)
Stealth: Average (+1)
Boarding: Fair (+2)

Structural Stress: 1 2 3
Systems Stress: 1 2 3
Marines Stress: 1 2 3
Consequences: Mild, Moderate

Lightracer. Your voidship is capable of out-racing light and traversing the void between the stars.

Grav Snare. Once per exchange, you may actively oppose any Navigation roll made by a single target with your Systems.

Crew/Passengers: 10/150
Holds Capacity: 3

Monument

Monument is a large, terrestrial planet that orbits close to its red giant star. The planet is composed of a single mountainous continent surrounded by a great ocean. A variety of native life well suited to the mountainous terrain and the ocean depths thrives on the planet. Monument is rich in minerals, including gold that is locked away within its looming mountain ranges.

On a great plain in the middle of the continent lie the remains of a Cyclopean city that was once home to a species of void-faring giants from Tartarus: the Titans. During an ancient war, the Titans were utterly defeated by the then mighty Tect civilization. All that remains of their former glory on this planet are the overgrown ruins and strewn giant bones that are occasionally dug up.

Ironically, it is the survivors of the Tect empire who have come to this long forgotten planet and colonized it, naming their colony Monument City. Having lost their Seedling Worlds to the Techno Scourge, the Tect, unwelcome elsewhere, came here to begin anew. High above the ground, many Tect domiciles hang from the gargantuan stones like bloated white egg sacs. Thin walkways and rope bridges connect the larger communal structures. Approximately 5,000 Tect call the ruins home, and it has become the single largest Tect colony in the Dominion.

Not all Titans were wiped out on Monument. There are survivors still living in the high mountain caves. The giants have fallen to a primitive lifestyle, after a

great many millennia since their defeat. They have long lost their technosophic knowledge, reducing them to a barbaric and cannibalistic culture. The Titans craft weapons and armour of metal mined from the mountains and fight among each other. On rare occasions, when food is scarce, a tribe will come down onto the plain and attack the Tect. These attacks are often easily repelled by the Tect's superior technology.

Monument receives occasional traffic from a few independent traders who import supplies for the Tect and export valuable Tect-made technology and mined resources. The Tect use intelligent machines to mine the minerals from the mountains. This fact, and the Tect's former alliance with the Artilects, keeps most traders from ever visiting the planet. Those who have overcome their fear and loathing of the Tect come to trade and have profited greatly from trade with the Tect.

The majority of Tect found throughout the Dominion originate from Monument. Those that leave Monument City head for the stars in hopes of one day restoring their civilization to its former glory, or at least preventing the total extinction of their species. Traders who visit Monument are always more than willing to take on Tect as crew for their technosophic knowledge.

Titan statistics are found under Tartarus (page 225).

Mu

Mu is the lineage planet of House Qu-Quatl. It is a terrestrial planet with seven large islands surrounded by a vast ocean. Situated on the most isolated island lies the large city of Hiva, the cultural centre and home of House Qu-Quatl. The planet has remained mostly unchanged since colonization many millennia ago, but many of the largest mountains have been carved into the faces of revered Qu-Quatl scions upturned towards the sky.

The Quetzalcoatl have turned the planet into a gigantic behavioural laboratory for the development and guidance of humanity on other planets. The planet's islands host a variety of environments that have been populated with numerous human tribes who lead a primitive lifestyle. The tribes have been conditioned to worship the Quetzalcoatl as gods, and they have been left to their own devices (mostly), but their development is studied from a distance. House Qu-Quatl wishes to learn the best methods for fostering populations on newly colonized planets and the ideal conditioning methods that make them compliant and easily

influenced. The tribes have been seeded with various philosophies in order to determine which beliefs and philosophies are ideal. These millennia-long projects involve the introduction of new threats and surprises for the natives, in order to observe how they cope with various hardships. Most tribes live a great distance from the others, but there are also studies ongoing as to what happens when differing beliefs come into contact in the same geographic area.

The tribes possess levels of technosophy that range from Stone Age to Iron Age. The Quetzalcoatl have distributed the technological levels across the landmasses so as not to cross-pollinate technosophy across cultures. The savages of Stone to Bronze Age cultures tend to be confined to their own islands, while those of the Iron Age with more advanced cultural systems are found on other islands. Whereas the more primitive people tend to live in relative peace, the Iron Age cultures have constructed fortified villages and established a feudal system that includes politics and war. The cultures are not permitted to develop more advanced technology than the forging of steel, which is known only to a few. Discoveries that will lead to the development of more advanced knowledge are quietly sabotaged by the Qu-Quatl observers. Water travel is discouraged with the introduction of large Chimera predators that roam the waters between the islands.

One of the more primitive islands has recently become troublesome. The natives there have rejected the rule of the Qu-Quatl gods and developed their own dark religion that involves human sacrifice and bloodletting. Some of the shamans of the tribes there have developed pranic abilities spontaneously. Observers who infiltrated the islands have never returned, and their whereabouts are not known. Quetzalcoatl Theors believe that the natives have discovered an artefact of alien origin on one of their islands that gifted them with their new abilities. These natives construct large effigies to many different deities out of wood. To date, the Qu-Quatl have continued to observe these infected natives. There is fear that the natives might travel to additional islands in order to spread their dark beliefs. Some believe this has already occurred, as superstitious stories of monsters and dark sorcerers have reached one of the more advanced islands.

Water Charger

The Water Charger is a **Giant Horned Fish** that terrorizes the waters of Mu. The monster's mouth is filled with **Razor-Sharp Teeth** that can easily rip armour apart.

Skills: Good (+3) Athletics, Fight, Physique

Stress: 2 2 2

Tail Slap. Whenever you create an advantage called **Capsized Boat** using Physique (opposed by Drive), the boat is overturned and all within it fall into the water to be devoured. You may do this only against person-sized boats such as canoes, rafts, and small sail boats.

Ram Hull. You may use Physique to create an advantage to ram a wooden boat of any size. If the action succeeds, you create an advantage called **Holed Hull**. The boat slowly begins to sink.

Neteru

Neteru is the sole, dark moon orbiting a rogue gas giant that wanders aimlessly through the void. The rogue planet is currently passing through the Dominion and will continue to do so for millions of years. The moon is teeming with dangerous, predatory life, which attempts to devour whatever crosses its path. Due to the darkness on the planet, the predators have developed senses other than vision with which to track their prey. The moon is frigid, but kept from freezing completely by volcanic activity caused by the gravitational interactions between the moon and the gas giant.

Sometime in the past, a technosophic civilization existed on the moon. What happened to it remains a mystery, though they left a number of stone ruins, both above and below ground. Theors speculate that the civilization did not vanish, but merely devolved into some of the most successful predators on the planet. One of the ruins implies that this civilization was more advanced than most believe.

In the centre of one of the ruins is a massive rock outcrop with a doorway 10-metre (33-feet) tall carved into it. The doorway appears to lead into solid rock, but when anyone steps into the doorway, they are immediately transported to a faraway planet. The destination planet is volcanic and unstable, but what is more perplexing is that the stars in the sky imply that the planet is located elsewhere in the universe, far removed from the Dominion. A similar ruin to that of the vanished species of Neteru lies not far from the almost identical doorway on the other end. What kind of super advanced intelligence could construct an apportal over such vast distances remains a complete mystery. Attempts at uncovering

the nature of the apportal have been unsuccessful, as the doorway resists all attempts at uncovering its secrets. The native life of the planet makes extended research operations risky. No serious exploration has occurred on the opposite side of the apportal, beyond a basic survey of the barren planet. Void exploration beyond the planet is not possible due to the difficulty of voidship construction on the other end.

Neterian Kek

The Neterian Kek is a vaguely humanoid creature with **Six Limbs** that it uses for both movement and grasping. The Kek possesses a twisted head that is devoid of eyes; it **Hunts by Echolocation**. The creature gets its name from the audible "kek" sound it makes as its uses its echolocation. Its Survival skill aids it in tracking and locating prey.

Skills: Good (+3) Survival; Fair (+2) Athletics, Fight;
Average (+1) Physique, Stealth, Tactics

Stress: 2 2

Weakness: Movement Sense. You cannot detect anyone who creates an advantage **Standing Very Still** and will always move towards any movement you detect.

Nibiru

Nibiru is the lineage planet of house En-Ki and is a frozen moon that orbits a gas giant in close proximity to its brown dwarf star. Beneath the frozen and cracked surface lies a dark, frigid ocean teeming with life. The ocean lies beneath 0.8km (0.5 miles) of ice and is warmed by volcanic activity caused by the gravitational field of the gas giant.

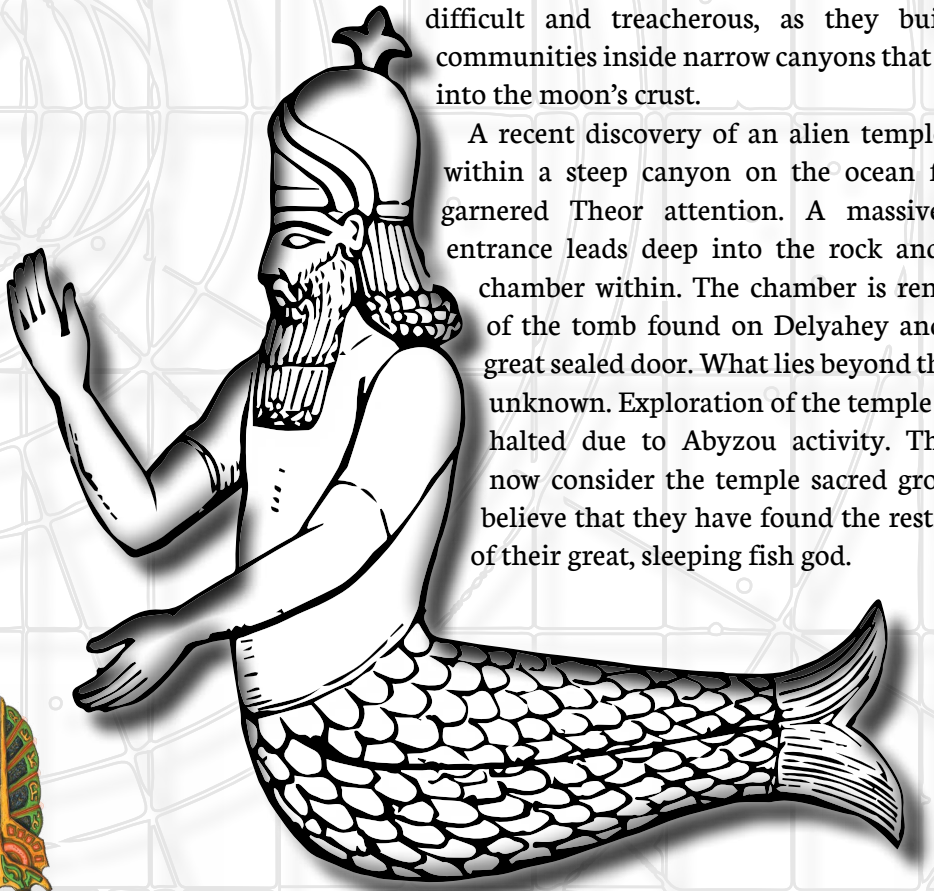
There are no voidports on the surface of Nibiru due to its unstable and constantly changing surface. Rather, the En-Ki have constructed great cylindrical vessels that can rise through the ice by melting it with blazing heat projectors at each end; these serve as mobile docking stations when traffic from off-planet arrives. These vessels break through the planet's crust and permit voidships to dock and unload, before descending into the murky depths below the ice. The life found within the murky depths of the ocean has evolved various forms of bioluminescence, as a means of communication and vision in the darkness.

The Enkidu have constructed three great cities below the surface that serve as processing centres for the fishing and harvesting operations on the planet. The primary of these is Nammu, and it is beautiful to behold. Carved into the side of an extinct volcano, Nammu appears as a mountain of stars rising out of the stygian depths—its windows and docking bays shining brightly. From the En-Ki

cities, vast fleets of submersibles are dispatched to harvest foodstuffs and resources from the abundant ocean. These are then shipped out by the En-Ki Syndicates to the planets of the Dominion.

Long ago, during colonization of Nibiru, the Enkidu requested that the Genesis Adepts create a species of aquatic workers who could perform the fishing and harvesting work. The workers turned out to be rebellious and difficult to control, so the project was abandoned quickly. However, a large number of the Jejune escaped and, over thousands of years, continued to breed and thrive within the depths of the Nibiru ocean. Eventually their numbers grew so great that they began to raid Enkidu operations as part of a holy war to evict the false, air-breathing gods from their planet. They call themselves Abyzou, and their numbers are now a significant threat to House En-Ki.

The Abyzou are humanoid in stature, with webbed hands and feet, and gills for breathing. They are agile swimmers and cannot live outside of water. The Abyzou have learned to tame a giant predatory fish from the depths called Opochtli that they use to ride into battle. The Abyzou threat is becoming so great that House En-Ki has had to request aid from House Tol-Teq and House At-Lan to deal with the renegade Jejune. The cold and dark ocean makes hunting down the Abyzou difficult and treacherous, as they build their communities inside narrow canyons that run deep into the moon's crust.



A recent discovery of an alien temple hidden within a steep canyon on the ocean floor has garnered Theor attention. A massive carved entrance leads deep into the rock and a great chamber within. The chamber is reminiscent of the tomb found on Delyahey and hosts a great sealed door. What lies beyond the door is unknown. Exploration of the temple has been halted due to Abyzou activity. The Jejune now consider the temple sacred ground and believe that they have found the resting place of their great, sleeping fish god.

Abyzou

The Abyzou are **Half-Man, Half-Fish** Jejune whose upper body is that of a man, but with a powerful fish tail instead of legs. They are **Nimble Swimmers** who have constructed crossbow-like projectile weapons for use underwater.

Skills: Fair (+2) Athletics, Average (+1) Fight, Stealth

Stress: 1

Opochtli

Opochtli are **Giant Predatory Fish** that are covered with **Rigid Scales** and possess **Knife-Like Teeth**. The Abyzou have tamed many Opochtli, which they use to carry them into battle.

Skills: Great (+4) Fight; Good (+3) Physique, Provoke;
Fair (+2) Athletics, Survival, Will

Stress: 3 3 3

Gaping Maw. An Opochtli may create an advantage using Physique called **Swallowed Whole** against an opponent in the same zone. If the action succeeds, your opponent is trapped inside your mouth and must defend using Physique against a passive opposition of 4 each exchange until they remove the advantage.

Obscura

The planet Obscura is incongruous with the rest of the Dominion; it is the only planet in the Dominion where the Order Of Things does not hold sway. Obscura lies squarely within the Miasma Nebula, an area of hot, dense gas that obscures the stars and washes everything with a diffused reddish light. The nebula is so dense that the system's star appears as a faint, blurry red sphere in the sky. The planet is constantly bathed in a low reddish glow emanating from the nebula. There are no day/night cycles on the planet and light levels remain nearly constant all year round.

Another thing about this planet is that the Miasma Nebula obscures the constellations in the sky and renders the Zodiac of Rulership impotent. Obscura has been occupied since pre-Dominate times, and when the Dominion was founded, the Tyrant exempted the planet from the Order Of Things. This is also the only Dominated Planet that does not host a Heliocon upon its surface.

Obscura is cold and perpetually covered with a thick blanket of snow. Dotting the surface are seven large cities. Each city is independently ruled by a Syndicate Council. Each council is composed of the five most powerful Syndicates residing

in that city. The Pharisto houses do not hold power here; they are represented through their Syndicates. The planet has a reputation of being too seedy and dangerous—a place the Pharistos would rather not visit. The number of Deipotents found on Obscura is quite small. Most of the population is composed of Elevated and humans who work for the Syndicates.

There is much rivalry between the seven cities. The Syndicates engage in open warfare and blatant sabotage of each other's operations. The planet is rich in mineral resources, and the Syndicates compete for them. The Syndicates that extract the most wealth out of the planet in a given year get to sit on the Syndicate Council of their city. The political atmosphere of the cities is rife with antagonism and violence. The Syndicates here act more like gangs than the entities they resemble elsewhere.

The bazaars of Obscura are filled with illegal goods that cannot be found elsewhere in the Dominion. Many smugglers make Obscura their base of operations, and many of these operations are funded by the Syndicates themselves. Those of the heretical slant come to Obscura because it is rarely visited by the regime's enforcers. Many wanted heretics run to Obscura in hopes of disappearing into its seedy underside. Life here is difficult and fraught with danger, requiring shrewd wit and a strong will to survive.

For reasons unknown, the Tyrant permits this seething cauldron of villainy to persist. Some believe that by providing an outlet for nefarious individuals, he is able to better control them; keeping your enemy close, and all that... Obscura is rumoured to be crawling with regime agents who spy for the Tyrant and who report on important matters. Those who live on Obscura fear that one day the Dominion fleet will arrive and sterilize the planet. Each time a Dominion fleet vessel enters the system, panic and dread grip the planet's population.

Quor

Quor is the name of both a planet and the lake-sized, gelatinous masses that are found on it. The planet's surface is barren rock, unbroken except for strangely carved monoliths found along the shores of thousands of gelatinous lakes. The monoliths' carvers and purpose are unknown. The planet has barely a trace of any atmosphere, and no life exists beyond that found within each lake. Temperatures are below freezing, and most explorers require life support apparatus.

The gelatinous lake masses are organisms believed to be self-aware alien intelligences. Stories tell of visitors to the planet making telepathic contact with these beings and learning strange knowledge from them. These visitors were forever changed by whatever was shown to them, but they have never revealed what they had learned. The Quor choose those they wish to communicate with, and the majority of visitors never experience this kind of contact. Some visitors have reported that the gelatinous masses rise up to form a gelatinous replica of

whomever they have taken notice of. The mimicry is believed to be a primitive attempt at communication, though no mimic has ever communicated verbally.

Within each gelatinous mass is an entire ecosystem of living things. It is unknown whether the masses or the things living within them possess the strange telepathic intelligence found on the planet. The outer layer of the transparent gelatinous mass is thick, with the consistency of tar. This outer layer is unable to support a human, and those who fall in or attempt to walk across them will sink slowly into the viscous gelatinous mass. It is believed that water lies beneath the gel-skin of the lakes, but anyone who has attempted to enter a lake to find out was driven mad by the telepathic intelligence

> When the Nihilim invaded the Dominion, they did not make a landing on Quor. Something here kept them at bay and prevented their approach to the planet.

The Dominion regime also steers clear of the planet, due to official reports of confusion and mental clouding of military personnel. A number of Theors have visited the planet over the millennia, but none found anything noteworthy. Visitors to Quor are ascetics, historians, and philosophers who wish to commune with the Quor intelligences. Attempts to probe the lakes using prana disciplines have resulted in disaster, and Kundalini have reported that their minds are often shut out completely. Current theories hold that the Quor are an incredibly ancient species, perhaps millions of years old, or even older.

Rahu

Rahu is the lineage system of House Asu-Ra, and it has the most extensive shipyards within the Dominion. The system lies close to Baroque and Crux, and is one of the most strategic systems in the Dominion. Rahu is constantly under the protection of hundreds of Dominion fleet vessels. A great ring of shipyards, separated by tens of thousands of kilometres, orbits close to the bright white star. Once planets orbited the star, but they have since been pulverized into rings of rock and dust that fill their former orbits. Resource extraction operations that number in the thousands continuously mine the planetary debris for raw materials. The minerals are then refined within giant prospector voidships before being sent to the shipyards. The entire system buzzes with activity.

The shipyards produce the majority of voidships found within the Dominion, along with every single Void Weaver Arkship ever constructed. The Void Weavers have established a factory base on one of the larger asteroids that litter the system. It is here that virtually all Loom Drives are constructed. The Void Weaver station

is perpetually guarded by a Dominion battlecruiser, wings of fighters, and veteran Dominars stationed on and within the asteroid. It is one of the best-guarded facilities in the Dominion.

Voidships, parts, and crews of all sorts may be found at Rahu. The great shipyards are capable of servicing any vessel, no matter the size. The Asura Syndicates operate hundreds of facilities to construct and service voidships that visit the system. Many voidship captains visit Rahu for the best service available anywhere. The shipyards also serve as shore leave for crews. Many are filled with entertainment and housing, and some can get quite rowdy. Asura security Syndicates enforce laws and ensure that things don't get too out of hand. They are supported by the local Justikari and their accompanying Precepts who visit the shipyards randomly in their constant search for illegal goods.

Many come to Rahu in search of illicit goods and voidship upgrades. Rahu has a thriving black market operated by the Shadow Syndicates: a collection of unsanctioned Syndicates that operate secretly within those that are legitimate. The Shadow Syndicates are difficult to contact due to their tight security protocols and fear of the authorities. The regime has shut down a number of operations, and the Shadow Syndicates have established elaborate layers of security to protect their business and customers. The size of the shipyard operations coupled with how busy the Rahu system is makes these operations easy to hide.

When purchasing voidship upgrades at Rahu shipyards, all Resources rolls get a +1 due to the abundance of parts. Illegal upgrades such as weapons, armour, and military drive technologies cost an additional 1 Wealth. In addition, contacting a Shadow Syndicate is difficult: roll Influence with a passive opposition of Great (+4).

Reaped Expanse

The Reaped Expanse is an area of the void that the Nihilim conquered during the Second Nihilim Invasions. Within this expanse lie a number of planets that suffered the Nihilim harvest, leaving them almost entirely devoid of life. Some planets had been cleansed by the Dominion; others suffered a nearly complete harvest of their biosphere for use as material in the Nihilim's bio-mechanical technology. Ruins of the millennium-long conflict stand as reminders of that terrible era. The area is occasionally visited by independent reclaimers who hope to stumble upon some remnant of functional technology left over from the wars. There have been rumours that some Nihilim forces still lurk within the expanse and attack those they come across. A number of voidships had been lost here in the recent past, giving credence to the rumours.

Yith

Yith is a small outer planet in a system that was once colonized by humanity. It lies within the zone known as the Reaped Expense. During the Second Nihilim Invasions the system was one of the first to fall to the invaders. Yith is an airless rock that would be nondescript, were it not for the library of an extinct alien species. The library is reached through an entrance at the base of a mountain and lies deep below ground. The complete lack of any atmosphere has preserved the library's records for an eternity.

Theors who have studied the library found it difficult to decipher the writings and understand their full meaning. The carvings on the walls and the shelves of paper-like scrolls hint that the builders were wiped out by a large invading force, represented in the library's records by a menacing cloud of black things that destroys everything in its path. The location of the library builders' home planet has not yet been deciphered, but many Theors suspect it was once the innermost planet of the system.

The library was mostly forgotten after the system fell to the Nihilim. The Nihilim colonized the innermost planet and proceeded to harvest its biosphere. It now lies desolate and stripped of all life. When the Nihilim were driven back, the system was liberated, and the Dominion sterilized the colony planet. Now the system is only known for the small outer rock that houses the alien library.

The system has a sinister reputation. A number of research voidships dispatched to study the library have vanished over the centuries. A Watcher vessel reported that a Clapperclaw Behemoth was sighted in the system near Yith. Today, as with most systems within the Reaped Expense, Yith is avoided, and research into the contents of the library have ceased.

Rift of Echoes

The Rift of Echoes is a mysterious, dense nebula which has claimed many voidships that attempted to traverse or explore it. When a voidship enters the nebula, all communications and sensors begin to malfunction. No known cause for this has ever been found, and ships probing the nebula's mysteries have vanished. One popular theory is that those who enter the nebula become lost for eternity. Then there are those who believe the nebula is artificial, a construct of an advanced intelligence that wishes to remain hidden. Whatever the truth is, the Tyrant has forbidden all Dominion vessels from entering the Rift of Echoes.

Riftwatch

At the end of the First Nihilim Invasions, the Nihilim retreated into the dimensional rift they spawned from. Near the rift's location, the Tyrant ordered the construction of a giant void station to watch the area of gravitational anomalies for any sign of new Nihilim incursions. This station, Riftwatch, was fully staffed by the automatons of the Artilects and Dominars (now Remnants). Fierce fighting

during the Artilect Rebellion caused the abandonment of the void station to the machines. Today, it lies abandoned, but not empty. The works of the Artilects still crawl its corridors and bays. Pirates and scavengers occasionally dare to enter the station in search of still viable and lost Artilect technology, which can fetch many empyreals when sold to the Theor sects. Many never return after encountering the station's automated defences and dangerous inhabitants. Riftwatch has been declared forbidden by the Tyrant, though it lies just beyond the borders of the Dominion. The Watchers keep an eye on the station, fearing that it might one day become a staging point for an Artilect force.

Rizq

Rizq is a lone planet that orbits a complex system of three stars. The planet's improbable path takes it near each of the stars without tearing the planet apart from the gravitational forces. This configuration is nearly impossible and the odds are astronomical. The system is stable, but it's littered with debris from the system's formation.

Rizq's rapid orbit takes it into the outer reaches of the system around the farthest star, and within close proximity of two inner stars during its transit. The planet's surface is hostile and inhospitable to life. Great volcanoes spew magma and black smoke into the atmosphere, and rivers of magma flow into large molten lakes. The planet is frequently bombarded by meteorites that crash to the surface whenever the planet passes through a debris field. The angry suns bathe the surface of the planet in high levels of radiation. No one would ever visit Rizq, were it not for its unique bounty. The constant volcanism, high-energy impacts, and lethal radiation have produced conditions that gave rise to an abundance of rare minerals, some unique to this planet alone. The minerals are found embedded in the cooling rocks on the surface and must be extracted quickly, due to the dangerous conditions.

A number of Syndicates have established operations in the system to extract these rare minerals. Each Syndicate operates from a prospector voidship of enormous proportions. The prospectors approach the planet quickly when it is in one of its most favourable positions during its convoluted orbit. When this occurs, the planet receives less radiation and the volcanism subsides. The voidships drop down through the dense, opaque cloud cover and deploy their workers to extract the minerals and to transport them back up to the vessel for processing. The voidship hovers over the work area at an altitude that keeps it safe from any unexpected eruptions. Time is of the essence—the danger is high. At any moment, the ground can explode in rock and magma, instantly vaporizing the workforce and causing critical damage to the prospector vessel. Meteor showers are another danger, fully capable of crippling the vessel and threatening the loss of the entire operation. The prospectors are equipped with heavy armour plating and rapid-fire projectors to vaporize incoming rocks. Entire operations have been destroyed by equipment failure or sabotage.

When operations on Rizq first began, the workforce was composed entirely of criminals and slaves. This proved unsustainable, due to the constant loss of life on the planet's surface. If the sudden eruptions or meteorites did not kill the workers, the radiation eventually did. Quotas could not be met, and the cost of operations was too great. The Syndicates turned to the Genesis Adepts for a solution. The result was a spliced workforce of reptilian humans possessing the Voghr's radiation affinity. The attrition remained high, and the cost of breeding new workers proved too expensive over the long run. The Tyrant granted special dispensation to the Genesis Adepts in the Rizq system for the breeding of clones. The clones could be grown much faster and did not require individual genetic manipulation. With a cloned workforce that the Syndicates could replace quickly, output increased dramatically.

The average lifespan of a worker clone is three operations, and it's very rare for one to survive more than five. The clones are treated poorly and lead a miserable existence that has them confined to cramped quarters between operations with bad food and consistent mistreatment at the hands of the Syndicatemen. They are uneducated beyond the conditioned skills required to perform their duties on the planet's surface. Their lives are hard, brutal, and short. The Syndicates consider them expandable resources that are easily replaced by the Genesis Adept contingent contracted to each voidship.

Competition between the Syndicates is nothing less than brutal. Quotas set forth by the Pharisto Houses must be met; otherwise severe punishments are meted out to those who fail too frequently. Syndicatemen stationed on the prospector ships have displeased their masters in some manner worthy of their banishment to a sooty existence aboard one of the Syndicate mining vessels. The need to meet quotas and the difficulty in locating sizable deposits of minerals have led the Syndicates to extremes: sabotage of their rivals or outright piracy. There is no law enforcement in the system beyond that which the Syndicates can muster. The Syndicatemen on a prospector ship are on constant guard, ready to defend their claim and ship from others. The constant state of paranoia and high pressure for quotas leads some within the crews to crack.

Rizq Prospector

A Rizq Prospector vessel is an enormous, rectangular voidship with a **Cavernous, Noisy Interior** composed of **Catwalks, Winches, and Cable Lifts**. The interior is **Filled with Soot and Machinery**. The crews that work the prospectors are a **Paranoid, Tightly-Wound Bunch** who do not trust outsiders.

Hull: Enormous (6)
Weapons: Fair (+2)
Systems: Good (+3)
Sensors: Fair (+2)
Holds: Fantastic (+6)
Structure: Fantastic (+6)
Navigation: Fair (+2)
Stealth: Mediocre (+0)
Boarding: Good (+3)

Structural Stress: 3 4 5 6 **Systems Stress:** 1 2 3 4
Marines Stress: 1 2 3 4
Consequences: Mild, Moderate, Severe

Geo-Sensors. You receive +2 on overcome actions with Sensors whenever looking for mineral deposits.

Paranoid Crew. You receive +2 to Systems (Tactics) when rolling initiative.

Well Guarded. You are well guarded and receive +2 when defending against Boarding and sabotage attempts.

Rust

The planet Rust's reddish surface gives it its name. The planet was once lush and covered with vast forests and seas—now it is dying. Much of the surface water has evaporated, and the breathable atmosphere has thinned and cooled dramatically over the past few millennia. There is evidence that the planet is dying because its internal processes have long ceased. An extinct, titanic volcano dominates the planet's surface, reaching high into its upper atmosphere. The planet is rich in metals but is not a significant source of gold. A number of resource-extraction operations were established here in antiquity, and a local population of tall, thin-limbed workers with green skin were created to mine the resources. Rust's gravity is lower than standard, making extraction easier than on other planets. The resource-extraction operations that have been ongoing for millennia have created a vast, artificial canyon on the planet's surface that is clearly visible from orbit. Two rocky moons have been towed into low orbit and hollowed out. They serve as loading stations for materials extracted from the surface.

Rust shares its system with thirteen other planets, two of which are significant. One is Gi, a blue garden planet with large oceans and landmasses. Until recently,

it was populated by terrible, giant reptiles. It's currently undergoing a forced ice age to prepare the planet for future colonization by House Mar-Duk, and they've constructed a terraforming station on the planet's single moon. They project that the planet will be ready for colonization in the next two millennia. Early surveys indicate that vast amounts of gold lie within the crust of Gi.

The other planet is Cauldron, a yellowish-white planet close to its sun. Its atmosphere is very dense and churns with violent storms. Continuous volcanic activity has caused a catastrophic greenhouse effect and turned the planet into a pressure-cooker. A disastrous terraforming accident by House Mar-Duk caused the planet's current conditions, and all attempts to recover the planet have been deemed impossible. Cauldron's terraforming has been abandoned.

A number of gas giants and other rocky planets exist within the system. The fifth planet of the system was cracked and broke up into a belt of rocks that now orbit the system's central star. A number of Ka-Chin resource-extraction operations are currently active within the asteroid belt. There are no other planets of any significance in the system, though seas have been surveyed on a couple of the moons orbiting the system's gas giants. These are being surveyed and considered for future resource and farming operations.

Scourged Planets

The Scourged Planets are a region of the void that had been infected by the terrible Techno Scourge. About a dozen systems comprise the infection zone, and they span a vast volume of the void. These planets were abandoned during the Artilect War, after the Techno Scourge was unleashed. For some, the Scourge was released directly on them; for others, it spread to them unintentionally. The planets lie close to the Seedling Worlds of the Tect Empire, which collapsed during the time of the Artilect Rebellion.

There are stories that strange things float between these cursed stars. The stories tell of strange growths, barely recognizable as voidships that silently glide through the void, crewed by things no longer man or machine. These creatures seek out new victims and material to add to their own ever-hungry, ever-grasping, collective. A number of these vessels have been sighted in the past on approach to Dominion planets that lie near the Scourged Planets zone; both the Watchers and the Dominion fleet engaged and destroyed these vessels completely. The entire zone is marked forbidden by the Tyrant's decree, and any voidships attempting to travel to or from the zone are to be destroyed—without exception.

Scourge Wreck

The Scourge Wreck is a twisted vessel **Composed of Many Hulls**, whose remains have been fused together by **Twisted Growths of Metal** that entwine the structure and hold it together. The innards are **A Maze of Shifting Corridors** that alter their structure and shape, making navigation extremely difficult. The wreck poses a grave danger to any voidship that encounters it because it seeks to **Spread the Techno Scourge**. Within its innards crawl strange and twisted beings. These wrecks are drawn to technosophic signals that planets emit where they crash to spread the Techno Scourge further.

Hull: Colossal (7)
Weapons: Good (+3)
Systems: Great (+4)
Sensors: Great (+4)
Holds: Fantastic (+6)
Structure: Legendary (+8)
Navigation: Poor (-1)
Stealth: Terrible (-2)
Boarding: Fantastic (+6)

Structural Stress: 4 5 6 7 **Systems Stress:** 1 2 3 4
Marines Stress: 3 4 5 6
Consequences: Mild, Moderate, Severe
Upgraded Structure. You receive +1 Structure.
Scourged Crew. You receive +2 to Boarding attacks.
Lightracer. You travel faster than light.
Crew/Passengers: 0/40,000 **Holds Capacity:** 42

Wormwood

The closest Tect Seedling World that lies within the borders of the Dominion is Wormwood; it lies within an area of the void known as the Scourged Planets. During the Artilect War, Wormwood, like all Tect Seedling Worlds, was a target for infection by Techno Scourge bombs. The Scourge transformed the once beautiful and bramble-like structure of the seedling world into a nightmarish tangle of twisted growths.

The cybernetic nature of the Seedling World and its inhabitants ensured the Scourge spread like wild fire. Only a few managed to escape Wormwood, and a small fraction of those who escaped managed to avoid infection altogether. Stories say that the survivors have become twisted and monstrous. The Tect consider the Seedling Worlds that survived the Artilect War taboo, haunted by the vengeful spirits of the dead, and infected with the accursed Scourge.

Some fear that the awesome weapons possessed by the Tect have now been infected by the Scourge and may still be active. Weapons such as the Abrogate

Annihilator and others pose a grave threat to the Dominion should they ever be deployed by the Scourged. The Dominion dispatched a number of scavenger expeditions to Wormwood, but none have ever returned. The Dominion forbids travel to any Tect Seedling World, and the Watchers keep an eye on what may yet emerge from the twisted remnants of a once great empire.

Scourged Tect

A **Grotesquely Twisted Tect** that has been infected and changed by the Techno Scourge. The body is misshapen and covered with strange growths that appear to be alive. These strange beings seem to possess a **Hive Mind** that is completely alien and malevolent in nature. They are **Attracted by Uninfected Technology** that they can infect with the Techno Scourge.

Skills: Fair (+2) Fight, Shoot; Average (+1) Athletics, Survival

Stress: 3

Detect Technosophy. You receive +2 on overcome actions with Survival when detecting uninfected technology.

Infect Technosophy. You carry the Techno Scourge and will infect other cybernetic organisms and technology on a physical attack that succeeds with style.

Scourged. You are immune to all attacks that cause mental stress, including static weapons and prana disciplines.

The Techno Scourge can be treated as an entity (using the *Bronze Rule*) that makes attacks on the infected or purely as a story element. The Techno Scourge can only infect those who possess technology embedded in their bodies; this includes any technosophic implants (nodules are embedded technology).

Yessu

Yessu was once a trade hub and technosophic centre of the Dominion. At a time when the Artilects still served man, they constructed vast factories and facilities on Yessu for the production of the many technosophic wonders, which were distributed throughout the Dominion. During the Artilect War, the planet was lost to the machines. After the Techno Scourge struck and the machines of the Artilects were defeated, the Tyrant ordered the planet sterilized so that the scourge could spread no further. The planet is now a blackened husk.

Its cities lie in complete ruin, and the atmosphere churns with violence. Life struggles in what's left of its biosphere.

Since the ancient wars, rumours persist that Yessu still holds technologies that survived the Scourge and the sterilization of the planet. Deep beneath the cities, vast complexes that once served as laboratories and factories remain. Many were infected by the Scourge, and stories tell of the horrors which stalk the dark tunnels, but some of these places survive and contain technosophic treasures.

The planet lies almost directly in the middle of the Scourged Planets. The planet's orbit is littered with debris from vessels, havens, and shipyards that were destroyed during the war. Many are suspected to harbour remnants of the Scourge and still-functioning Artilect Daemons. The threat of infection by the Techno Scourge is still very real, and only those foolhardy or determined dare visit here. Many who venture here never return, but those who survive tell unbelievable tales of incredible technosophies discovered deep within the ruins and of a horrible intelligence that lurks there.

Screaming Countenances

In a lone and unnamed planetary system within the Reaped Expanse there lies an unnamed gas giant that is ringed by a vast number of asteroids, all of which have been carved with strange faces. The origin of these countenances in the void is a complete mystery. The faces are alien, some grotesque and some beautiful to behold, numbering in the millions—and each is unique. On approach, voidships report that all of their communication frequencies are bombarded with powerful broadcasts of an endless scream. The source of the broadcast has not been identified, but it appears to emanate from all the countenances at once. A number of the countenances have been explored in detail, with nothing found.

A sect of Theor researchers was once stationed in the system until a Watcher patrol ship discovered the facility in chaos, with all of the researchers dead. Investigation revealed that the researchers turned on each other, while some committed suicide. The records from the facility have been sealed by the Hereseers, leaving many to speculate as to what happened. The screaming countenances have taken on an eerie air of mystique and are associated with ghost stories and tales of madness.

Sheol

The planet Sheol lies nearest to the golden planet Baroque. It is a grey, barren planet of vast, rocky plains and jagged, dark mountains. The entirety of the planet is littered with broken shale deposits that jut into the air, as if the surface had been smashed by a giant hammer. Deep in its past, Sheol held a planet-wide ocean that has long since evaporated. What little life exists on the planet does so within vast cavern networks beneath the surface where water still exists. Vast underground rivers and lakes host a variety of lifeforms that have adapted to the dark and damp environment. All fauna on Sheol is reptilian, and some of it quite dangerous to visitors.

What makes Sheol of great import is its status as the principal funerary planet of the Dominion. Sheol's plains are littered with elaborate, black stone monuments that rise out of the broken landscape. There are regions where the edifices stretch for kilometres in every direction, forming a maze of towering monuments. Since the early days of the Dominion, Pharistos have come here to construct monumental tombs to their glory and wealth. Sheol is littered with thousands upon thousands of such tombs, standing silent in the desolate and wind-swept terrain. Virtually all of the mountains have been carved into likenesses of those entombed here, with the remaining few owned by the Pharisto lineages and reserved for the greatest and highest of their blood.

The tombs are called the Houses of Eternity, and they are the charge of the Attendants of Eternity, an order of Rhetors who live on the planet, administer the construction of new tombs, and preserve existing ones against the ravages of time. The Attendants are a branch of the Body Of The Tyrant, and they conduct the preparations and funerary rites for the passing of divine Pharistos. The order follows ancient traditions to ensure that those interred within the Houses of Eternity are prepared properly and preserved in the hermetically-sealed tombs for all time. Many attendants in the order are Bal-Amon scions who took the cloth but continue to serve as architects on Sheol.

Drudges and Syndicate labour are employed to mine the black shale rock and construct new tombs and monuments, as dictated by their contracts with Pharistos of high stature. The Attendants and their charges are housed within the planet's Heliocon—the sole inhabited structure on the planet. There are a number of House Bal-Amon Syndicates that operate on Sheol in the employ of the Attendants of Eternity.

Arduous activity on the planet is difficult, due to the thin atmosphere. The Attendants of Eternity dress in heavy, hooded black robes equipped with respirators. These respirators aid in breathing the planet's thin atmosphere and protect against the occasional spore wind. Spore winds are strong gales that blow great clouds of green spores across the planet. The spores germinate where they land to cover great swaths of the landscape in a green moss-like growth called greem. The greem consumes the surface of the rock before flowering and ejecting their spores once more into a strong gale. The Attendants constantly remove greem from the monuments and tombs before it can damage their polished, mirror-like surfaces. Fire is the most common method of removal. Bands of attendants on floating platforms make their rounds among the monuments with fire-throwing apparatus to cleanse the stone of greem.

There are those who cannot resist the riches entombed with the Pharistos. Tomb robbers secretly visit the planet in order to break into these tombs and steal the wealth within. The Attendants of Eternity have deployed the Nergal to stand guard over the tombs.

The Nergal are chimeric creations of the Genesis Adepts. They are bat-winged humanoid creatures possessing no face, only smooth skin where the eyes and nose would be. They possess sharp, tooth-filled mouths, large, pointed ears, and large horns. Their skin is black and scaly, and it absorbs all light. This gives them the appearance of

moving, bat-like shadows. Only their teeth reflect light, giving their already shadowy form an even more sinister appearance. Driven by animal instinct to kill, Nergal hunt through sound and other non-human senses. They are expert trackers and hunters, attacking any living thing that does not carry the amulet of the Attendants of Eternity, which they have been conditioned to fear.

The Nergal's favourite tactic is for one or more of them to pick up their prey and then drop it on the sharp rocks below. When work is proceeding on a tomb, posts capped with the Attendant's symbol are raised around the work site to keep the Nergal at bay. The amulets are crafted by Attendant technosophists and emit a signal that the Nergal can sense. To date no one has managed to forge these amulets because they only last for a limited time, after which they turn to dust. When an amulet begins to fail, a gem on the amulet will begin to flash, warning the user that the amulet won't last much longer. Each amulet's lifetime is determined by the Attendants when it is issued.

Nergal, Guardian of the Tombs

Nergal were created as **Guardians of the Tombs of Eternity** by the Genesis Adepts who spliced human genes with those of lifeforms from the planet Neteru. They are black-winged, gaunt, faceless humanoids that resemble **Winged Shadows with Teeth**. The Nergal locate prey through their **Excellent Hearing and Non-Human Senses**. The Nergal sit still, perched upon the monuments, ever alert for new prey. Once sighted, they swoop down and attack in packs of 3 to 6 individuals. They use their sharp claws to grip human-sized prey and then drop it upon the sharp rocks below.

Skills: Good (+3) Fight, Stealth; Fair (+2) Athletics, Physique; Average (+1) Provoke, Tactics

Stress: 2 2

From Nightmares. You receive +2 to Provoke whenever you make a mental attack to cause fear.

Sikarra

The most exquisite marble in the Dominion comes from Sikarra. The planet is riddled with mesas, mountains, and grand canyons that snake for thousands of kilometres across its surface. House Ka-Chin has established a number of extraction operations on the planet. For millennia since its discovery, Sikarra has been scarred by deep open pits created by Kachina strip mine operations. Once extracted, the marble is then lifted into orbit by gigantic lifters, where it is further cut into more manageable pieces and then shipped across the Dominion. The gaping pits are visible from orbit, and they scar the otherwise beautiful marbled surface of the planet. While mesas are populated by lush forests, the deep canyons

are rocky and barren. The majority of the water on the planet is found within the canyons where it runs in great rivers. The marble traps water atop the mesas as it slowly trickles down through the rock to the canyons below.

Before the Dominion's arrival, Sikarra was the ancient home to tribes of free humans who call themselves Aara. The Aara are a proud and independent people who refuse to bow to anyone. They live on the forested mesas and within the natural caves carved by water that riddle the marble. A great secret has been kept on this planet: that the Aara exist in vast numbers. The Aara keep their numbers secret for the day when they will have enough weapons to defeat the invaders in a single fell stoke and liberate their planet.

Sikarra hosts a variety of native megafauna, but the most significant are the gargantuan Xihucoatl serpents that live within the canyons of the planet. The Xihucoatl range in size from 10 metres (32 feet) in length to monsters of 100 metres (328 feet). The serpents are notoriously hard to kill and very destructive to the Ka-Chin mining operations. Xihucoatl are attracted to the vibrations created by the mining equipment and come to investigate. The Kachina are not always able to repel a serpent before it destroys valuable mining equipment. The Xihucoatl are worshipped by the Aara as avatars of their god Xihu, who will one day lead them to save the planet and to true freedom.

The Genesis Adepts have taken a strong interest in the Xihucoatl serpents due to their natural immortality. The Xihucoatl possess a unique lifecycle that reverses the aging process once they reach old age. They begin to regenerate their bodies as they age in reverse. This cycle continues indefinitely. Some of the largest serpents are believed to be a million years old. The Genesis Adepts seek to uncover the Xihucoatl's immortality secrets in order to achieve a true form of biological immortality and continuity of consciousness. This research has been fraught with disaster, as live serpents have proven impossible to capture. In addition, the Adepts' research station has come under attack from the Aara on many occasions. After one of these attacks, all of the Adepts stationed on Sikarra were found murdered. Since then, a force of five Dominars lives here to ensure the Adepts' safety.

Xihucoatl use the *Very Large Monster* rules from the **Fate Core Toolkit**, page 158. In short, each section of the serpent is treated as a separate zone and must be taken out individually by depleting its stress. The Xihucoatl section provides aspects, stunts, and consequences for the entire serpent. Each individual zone has additional aspects, skills, and a stress track. The consequences are shared.

Xihucoatl

The Xihucoatl is a **Ferocious, Immortal Mega-Serpent** and the largest and most dangerous lifeform on Sikarra. It is **Attracted to Vibrations** and defends its territory vigorously.

Consequences: Mild, Moderate, Severe

Megafauna. You use Physique rather than Athletics to defend against attacks.

Large Monster. All zones must be taken out for the monster to be taken out. Taking out a single zone only cripples the beast. Consequences are shared by all zones.

Head

The head of the Xihucoatl possesses a gaping maw that **Swallows Prey Whole**.

Skills: Superb (+5) Fight; Great (+4) Athletics, Physique

Head Stress: 4 4

Devourer. When you attack and succeed with style, you swallow the target whole. Swallowed targets are moved into the body zone and must defend using Physique against a passive opposition of 4 (representing your digestive juices) each exchange until they are freed by successfully inflicting 3 shifts of stress in a single attack, or the body section is taken out.

Weakness: Head Wound. When you suffer a Moderate or greater consequence to the head, you concede the conflict and flee.

Body

The Xihucoatl's body possesses **Crushing Weight**, which it uses to great effectiveness. Those swallowed might be able to cut their way out because of its **Weakness: Soft Tissue on the Inside**.

Skills: Fantastic (+6) Physique; Good (+3) Athletics, Fight

Body Stress: 4 4 4

Weakness: Body Wound. When you suffer a Moderate or greater consequence to the body, you are unable to move.

Tail

The Xihucoatl's **Unavoidable Tail Slam** is so powerful that it can crack marble and send targets flying through the air.

Skills: Great (+4) Athletics, Fight, Physique

Tail Stress: 4 4

Tail Slam. When you attack with your tail and succeed with style, you toss targets one zone away.

Weakness: Tail Wound. When you suffer a Moderate or greater consequence to the tail, your tail is taken out.

Sothis

Sothis is the lineage planet of House Osi-Ra. The planet lies close to its bright yellow sun and is shrouded by a thick atmosphere; these conditions make it unbearably hot and wet. Sothis is almost entirely covered with disease-ridden jungles. The jungles are home to a myriad of life forms, some of which are quite deadly. Most of them are insects or cold-blooded reptiles of all sizes, including the gargantuan Sothis Thunder Lizards. The planet is a pharmaceutical cornucopia from which the Osirion syndicates manufacture drugs and medicines that are found throughout the Dominion.

Sothis is not a popular destination; it has a reputation as a malignant planet out to kill you. The Osi-Ra maintain a number of arcoziggurats on the planet that keep entire populations safe from the hostile environment outside. The gathering of pharmaceutical material from the jungle is a dangerous affair, a duty performed by slaves and well equipped Syndicatemen. Due to predators, carnivorous flora, diseases, and other cruel fates, the work crews suffer very high casualty rates.

The jungle contains a number of hidden ruins dating all the way back to pre-Dominate times. Fortune seekers occasionally form expeditions into the deep jungle to seek out these ruins and the lost technologies they might still harbour. Many of these expeditions never return, and some of those that do have reported machines—still operational and hostile—that guard certain sites. These stories attract many explorers and Theors who seek lost technosophies. Many also believe that darkframes lie hidden within the steamy jungles of Sothis, hidden deep within the ruins of lost and forgotten colonies.

Sothis Tree Angler

A Sothis Tree Angler hunts by **Ambush from Above**. It drops upon unsuspecting prey and sinks its many **Piercing, Serrated Hooks** into the target. The victim is then pulled up into the tree towards its beaked mouth. The Tree Angler cannot move quickly and tends to stay in one place unless food becomes scarce, or it is threatened. Anglers are solitary creatures.

Skills: Good (+3) Fight; Fair (+2) Physique; Average (+1) Athletics

Stress: 2 2

Sphynx

Sphynx is a small planet with a stony, dry desert of rocky outcrops and extensive canyons. The landscape is windswept and desolate, with strong winds and frequent dust storms. The planet's ecosystem is composed of scattered plants that grow in the crevasses where they are protected from the abrasive dust storms and insects that can grow nearly to the size of a man.

The lonely towers of the Cryptominds of Sphynx rise out of the high outcrops of rock, but they are riddled with tunnels and chambers, where the slaves of the Cryptominds, the Silent Servitor Drudges, maintain apparatus and manufacture the precious monoatomic gas that is pumped into the Mind Boxes of the Cryptominds. The towers themselves are well protected, accessible only through precarious canyons and over perilous natural bridges.

Each tower is protected by a very potent shunt shield that the Cryptominds developed but never shared with the Dominion. These shunt shields are strong enough to protect a tower from concentrated and prolonged orbital bombardment. On the ground, the towers are protected by the difficult approach and the Tower Guardians: massive Drudge war machines that patrol the area. Battle equipped Drudges patrol the base and tower. The Cryptominds are very well protected within their lonely strongholds; even the Nihilim were unable to break through the tower defences before the Dominion fleet arrived.

The Cryptominds do not like visitors, but they depend on the tributes from those who come seeking their wisdom. New minds are in constant demand, to be transplanted into Drudges for the ranks of the Silent Servitors, as are large quantities of gold—that most essential substance for the Mind Boxes of the Cryptominds. The need for fresh brains and gold forces the Cryptominds to accept visitors and to continue offering their services.

Approaching voidships must land at a designated area near one of the towers that is marked by a beacon. There they must await a Silent Servitor delegation that will inspect the visitors, examine the tribute, and hear the petition. If accepted, the Servitors will lead the supplicants to the tower and an audience with the Cryptomind. The Silent Servitors are mute and only communicate through gestures that are difficult to read. The Silent Servitors take no chances when it comes to the safety of their Cryptomind masters. No weapons are permitted beyond the landing zone, a rule that the Silent Servitors enforce with sophisticated sensors and deadly seriousness. Uninvited guests will be met with overwhelming force.

Understanding the gestures of the Silent Servitors and following their directions during the journey to the tower requires a Lore roll to determine whether a misunderstanding occurs. A tie will result in a minor transgression that may anger the Servitors, and a failure could lead to a greater transgression that could turn the Servitors hostile towards the PCs.

Tower Guardian

A Tower Guardian is a giant war machine fashioned into a **Threatening and Predatory Semblance**. Some appear as mythological monsters or predatory beasts; all are **Controlled by a Living Mind** that has been conditioned to serve the Cryptominds. The Tower Guardians are equipped with **Formidable Weapons and Defences** and are supported by ranks of Silent Servitors.

Skills: Fantastic (+6) Physique; Superb (+5) Shoot; Great (+4) Fight; Good (+3) Athletics; Fair (+2) Tactics; Average (+1) Will

Stress: 4 4 4

Consequences: Severe

Crushing Stomp. You may attack targets in the same zone using Physique, as long as the targets have attacked you using Fight in this or the previous exchange.

Stonewall

Stonewall is a mountainous planet of enormous canyons and crevices. Deep lakes and valleys covered with stalagmite forests sit nestled between the tall peaks and sheer cliffs. The planet receives its name from a 9.5km (5 mile) tall cliff face that stretches horizontally for a hundred kilometres and is visible from orbit. Stonewall is rich in mineral resources and gold, and the Dominion has established a number of colonies here to extract the planet's abundance.

The stalagmite forests of Stonewall host the largest beryl crystal growths found anywhere. The beryl crystals grow out of the stone stalagmites in the valleys giving the stalagmites the appearance of multi-coloured stone trees that sparkle in the sun. The beryl is cut and fashioned into luxurious furniture, statues, and other works of art before being exported off planet.

The planet's only native fauna are large insects that consume a variety of flora that grows among the rocks. The insects are mostly docile and not a threat. A number of Jejune tribes flourish on the planet—the early generations of workers. The Jejune are fearful of settled areas and tend to stay away from the resource-extraction operations.

Stonewall was once visited by an unknown alien species who left a great number of cave tombs carved into the cliff face. The tombs are reachable only by aerial transport and host the remains of 2.8-metre (9-foot) tall aliens with four legs, six arms, and bony exoskeletons. The aliens left behind elaborately carved chambers that are covered with an undeciphered script. The tombs are estimated to be over 500,000 years old. No other trace of alien presence has been found on the planet, leading Theors to speculate that the aliens used Stonewall as a mortuary planet rather than a colony.

While all of the tombs are very similar, one defies the common design. The tomb is recessed into the cliff face and measures 100-metres (238-feet) tall and 20-metres (66-feet) wide. The entrance is sealed shut by a gigantic door carved with macabre scenes of destruction. The door has resisted all attempts to discover its composition and cannot be opened by any means attempted to date. There is an uncanny similarity between this tomb to those found on Delyahey and Nibiru.

Stonewall Leaping Spider

The Leaping Spider is a **Quick Jumper** that hunts by leaping upon its target. The spider's **Rock-Like Carapace** bristles with spikes and serves as a defensive mechanism. Leaping Spiders live within rocky fissures where they await prey. The spider is capable of spitting **Strong Webbing** at victims to immobilize and draw them closer.

Skills: Good (+3) Stealth; Fair (+2) Shoot;
Average (+1) Athletics, Fight

Stress: 3

Web Snare. You can shoot a web at your opponent to ensnare them. This is a create an advantage action using Shoot to place an **Ensnared** aspect on your target. The target must remove the advantage before doing anything else. The passive opposition to break free is Fair (+2). You can shoot the web from up to one zone away.

Ambusher. You can use Stealth to attack when attacking an opponent who is unaware of your presence.

Spiked Carapace. Your carapace is bristling with sharp spikes; whenever you succeed with style on your defence, you may cause 2 stress to your opponent rather than taking the boost.

Suprema

The planet Suprema—refuge of the Battlemasters—is a desolate planet wracked by storms and violent weather patterns. The planet is tidally locked to its small yellow star, making the dayside a scorching hot inferno and the nightside a frozen hell. On the terminus between the two extremes, where perpetual twilight reigns, is a thin strip where the majority of life exists. Suprema's atmosphere is too thin for humans to breathe without breathing apparatus. The extreme differential in temperatures creates rapid winds that bring scorching gusts and freezing storms from either end of the planet. The chaotic weather patterns in the terminus have made the life there extremely adaptable and hardy. Liquid water is only found along the terminus where the water cycle is maintained by the shifting hot and

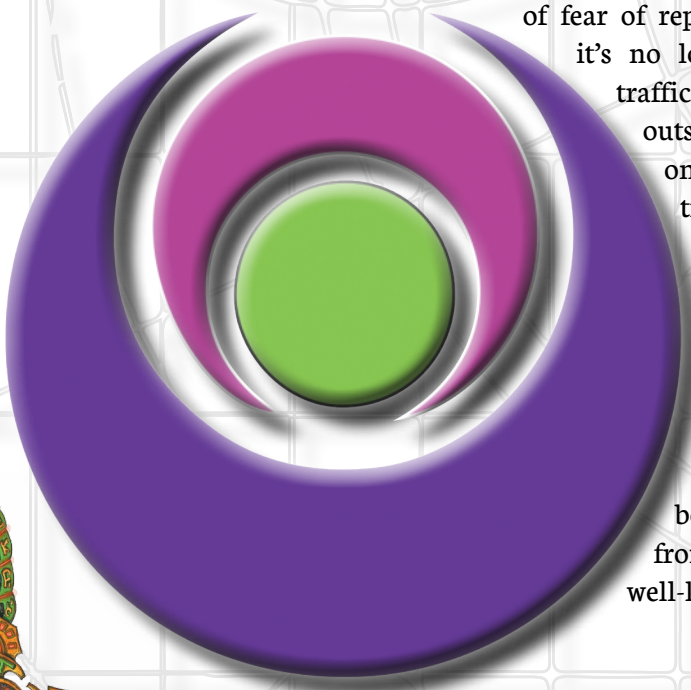
cold conditions. The day and night sides host their own disparate life forms that have evolved along completely divergent paths.

Due to the harsh nature of the surface conditions, the Battlemasters have constructed their cities below the surface along the terminus, using materials reclaimed from the remnants of their once formidable fleet. Five cities have been bored into the crust of the planet and are visible from orbit as gaping holes. Around the rim of these cylindrical cavities the Battlemasters have constructed their dwellings in the cliff walls with enclosed bridges criss-crossing the chasm between. The chasms protect the sunken cities from the harsh surface conditions, and a lake at the bottom supplies water for the community.

The terminus also contains cyclopean stone ruins left behind by a vanished species of giants. Battlemaster scholars have discovered a striking similarity between these ruins and those of the Titans of Tartarus. It is believed that the Titans held this planet at some point in the distant past, before the Tect empire reduced their civilization to its current primitive state. The ruins show signs of deliberate destruction and violence, though remains of the inhabitants have never been found.

Suprema hosts five moons; four are natural, barren satellites, and one is artificial; the artificial moon is an artefact named *The Tear* and it was brought by the Battlemasters when they first arrived on Suprema. It is said to be a super-weapon, but none outside the Battlemaster elders know what it truly is. The artefact is a silvery, tear-shaped object, 1 kilometre (0.6 miles) in length, which is clearly visible from the surface of the planet.

The location of the Battlemasters' refuge was once unknown to outsiders, out of fear of reprisal from the Tyrant, but it's no longer a secret. Very little traffic reaches the planet from the outside, as the Battlemasters deal only with a few well-known traders and independents. The Battlemasters are isolationists who prefer their privacy. Only the young Battlemasters leave Suprema and head for the Dominion to make a name for themselves. Suprema lies beyond The Abyssal and is far from any colonized planets and well-known trade routes.



Battlemaster

Each Battlemaster is an **Ultimate Warrior in the Galaxy**, a **Master Tactician** and is **Fearless in Battle**.

Skills: Great (+4) Fight, Tactics; Good (+3) Athletics, Shoot; Fair (+2) Presence, Provoke; Average (+1) Technosophy, Will

Stress: 2 2 2

Consequences: Moderate

Battlemaster Vestments. You are equipped with Battlemaster gear and may invoke **Battlemaster Vestments** for free once per scene.

Takamagahara, The Floating Bridge of Heaven

Takamagahara—also known as the Floating Bridge of Heaven—is the lineage planet of House Xi-An. Takamagahara is not really a planet, but a spinning, alien megastructure constructed by an unknown species millions of years ago. Shaped like a gigantic ring, it tumbles through the void in a stable orbit around a bright yellow star. The tumbling produces a day/night cycle on the habitable surface facing the inside of the ring. The edges of the inner ring rise up kilometres into the sky to hold the atmosphere from being flung into the void.

The Floating Bridge of Heaven has a surface area many times that of dozens of planets. The sheer size of the construction is staggering. It was first colonized in pre-Dominate times and later claimed by House Xi-An, but humans were not the first to set foot here. Takamagahara is populated by a vast array of biomes segregated by energy fields that keep the diverse atmospheres from mixing together. There are human-habitable zones and zones with completely different atmospheric composition that require humans to wear life-support apparatus. Some zones are blistering hot, while others are impossibly frigid, all populated by an endless assortment of life forms.

A number of intelligent alien species exist on Takamagahara. Very few have achieved any noteworthy level of technosophy, and none of them are capable of leaving the Floating Bridge of Heaven. Contact between species exists where the biomes are compatible, but not all of the species are peaceful.

There is one species of alien that is omnipresent on Takamagahara, the Amatsukami: a non-corporeal species of potent Kundalini who are believed to be the caretakers of the Floating Bridge of Heaven. The Amatsukami appear as iridescent, diaphanous butterflies that are often seen observing events of import. They only interfere when the safety of the Bridge is threatened, otherwise they do not respond to any attempts at communication.

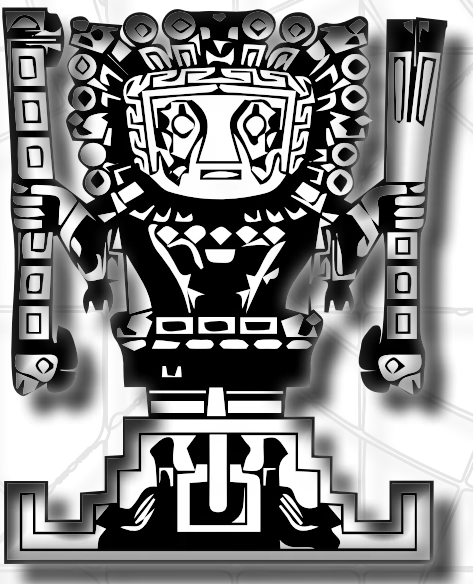
The builders of the Floating Bridge of Heaven are unknown, but many suspect

the Amatsukami. Theors speculate that Takamagahara is a galactic zoo, and that species from many disparate planets were brought here in ancient times. Each habitable zone is tens of thousands of kilometres long and appears to have been tailored specifically for the lifeforms transplanted there.

Only a fraction of the Floating Bridge of Heaven has been explored. House Xi-An has established a city on one of the unoccupied zones of the Bridge with a pleasant atmosphere, resembling that of a garden planet. A number of Theor sects have come here to explore Takamagahara and to make contact with the various species in hopes of learning more about each culture, where they came from, and who built the megastructure.

There are constructions in key areas on the surface that permit access to the interior of the Bridge. These black polished monoliths stand one-kilometre (0.62-miles) high and each habitable zone contains one. At the base is an entrance to the interior maze of tunnels that lead beneath the ground and deeper into the superstructure. The tunnels seemingly go on forever and are protected by the Oni: 3-metre (10-feet) tall, brutish, six-armed, four-legged beings whose rough skin appears to be made out of rock. The Oni attack any whom they encounter in the tunnels. When an Oni dies, it shatters into bits of rock that explode in all directions. No expedition has ever been successful in breaching the tunnel network to reach the depths of the Bridge and discover its secrets, and many never returned to the surface.

Armed voidships cannot approach Takamagahara; any armed vessel that approaches the Bridge is destroyed instantly by a potent projector beam. Armed voidships must remain at a safe distance; unarmed shuttles must be used as transport to the surface. The Tyrant has a strong interest in discovering the secret of this potent weapon, and he has dispatched expeditions to the surface in search of its secrets.



Oni

The Oni are strange beings that appear to be composed of **Impervious Rock**. An Oni is a **Multi-Limbed Giant** who uses its **Oversized Fists** to crush anyone found in the tunnels. The giants are the guardians of the Floating Bridge of Heaven and always attack on sight.

Skills: Great (+4) Physique; Good (+3) Fight, Provoke, Survival

Stress: 2 2 2 2

Consequences: Moderate

Automaton. You're not alive, and you cannot be affected by mental attacks or effects.

Impervious. You defend against attacks using Physique.

Explosive Death. When taken out, you explode into sharp rock shards. All within the same zone must defend using Physique against a 4 shift attack; characters one zone away must defend against a 2 shift attack, and characters two zones away defend against a 0 shift attack.

Tartarus

Tartarus was once the home planet for a species of giants called the Titans. Long before the foundation of the Dominion, the Titans were an advanced and void-faring species that sought to conquer and subjugate all species they encountered. The Titans eventually encountered the Tect, and their fortunes changed. The Tect turned out to be far superior to the Titans. The Tect destroyed all of the Titans' infrastructure and colonies, sending their entire culture back to the Stone Age, but they allowed the Titans to continue as a species, as a show of benevolence. Due to the Titans' violent nature and perpetual infighting, their technosophy declined over the millennia to the point of being almost entirely lost. Today, the Titans dwell on their planet and continue their existence as a primitive species possessing only metalworking and stone age technology, with the occasional relic that still functions from their advanced past. The once mighty Cyclopean ruins of their ancestors still rise high above the forests and plains of their planet.

Titans reach a stature of up to 4 metres (13 feet) and are imbued with great strength and endurance. They are a humanoid species with milky white skin that is smooth and hairless. Their head is oval in shape, with a single large, round eye, and a mouth filled with a double row of sharp teeth. Titans are cannibalistic and fond of devouring the flesh of their enemies.

No one visits Tartarus because no one wants to be eaten. Though the planet is rich in mineral resources, it is deemed far too dangerous to attempt resource-

extraction operations there. Not only are the Titans a threat to any who set foot on the planet, but the large predatory beasts that roam the planet's surface are also a grave danger.

Occasionally, a voidship will drop down to the planet to abduct a young Titan. Those who succeed without being torn limb from limb can make a small fortune selling enslaved Titans. The difficulty of capturing a grown Titan alive makes them very rare in the Dominion. Those who are successfully abducted are used as warriors in the Battletoriums or as guards and warriors by the Deipotents who can manage a measure of control over the Titan. Recently, many Titan slaves have been outfitted with the Mind Yoke, and the popularity of possessing a Titan slave has increased.

Titan Savage

Once a great species of **Terrible Cyclopean Giants**, the Titans have been reduced to a primitive culture after an ancient war. Titan culture is **Warlike and Brutish** where the strongest dominate the weakest. Titans wield primitive and metal forged arms with **Incredible Strength**. The sight of a Titan strikes fear in others.

Skills: Fantastic (+6) Physique; Superb (+5) Fight;Great (+4) Provoke; Good (+3) Knack, Survival; Fair (+2) Athletics, Shoot, Will

Stress: 3 3

Consequences: Moderate

Titan Rage: After taking stress in an exchange, your terrible roar drives your enemies before you. In the next exchange you may use Provoke to defend.

Tenebrae

Tenebrae is a large moon of a dim brown dwarf. The brown dwarf is orbited by a number of moons, most of them captured rocks and comets. Tenebrae is the only moon that contains an atmosphere and harbours life. The moon is dotted with volcanoes that spew gasses into the thick atmosphere. The gas is poisonous to humans, and the environment is hot and steamy. The thick atmosphere and humidity causes a constant drizzle to fall to the surface below. The faint light of the brown dwarf does not pierce the thick cloud cover, leaving the surface virtually pitch black.

The native lifeforms have evolved other senses (electromagnetic, thermal, sonic, etc.) to cope with the lack of light, and none of them possess eyes in the traditional sense. All animal life on Tenebrae is dangerous and predatory. Native flora has also evolved to deal with the lack of natural light and takes the form of large, colourless, fungal forests that cover large areas of the planet.

Tenebrae hosts a number of ancient and crumbling ruins that dot its surface. The ruins are weathered and built of an unidentified, artificial construction material impervious to all attempts at cutting. Due to the weathering and crumbling nature of the ruins, Theors estimate that the structures are at least a billion years old, probably built when the brown dwarf star was brighter.

A number of tombs have been found below ground. These tombs hold the mummified remains of a species of lanky humanoids with long necks and small heads. Their remains have been preserved in the tombs through strange, still-functioning machinery. Little is known about the aliens, but they appeared to practice funerary mummification. The carvings on the walls of the tombs seem to indicate that after a great cataclysm the survivors slowly died and were interred here. Many of the writings have not yet been deciphered. It is estimated that there are hundreds of thousands of mummies in the tombs.

There are legends of a curse placed on any who desecrate the alien tombs. A number of scavenger crews have either mysteriously died or vanished after taking artefacts from the tombs. Those who have purchased these artefacts ultimately suffered a horrible demise in the form of strange diseases and afflictions. The stories have managed to keep the superstitious away, and have left the tombs mostly undisturbed.

Tenebrae is occasionally visited by voidship crews who come to trap the dangerous native life for sale to Battletoriums of the Dominion. Trapping work is very dangerous, but the payoff is worth the loss of a couple of crewmembers.

Tenebrae Thresherhound

The Tenebrae Thresherhound is a lizard-like creature that is **Quick and Deadly**. The creature possesses **Other Senses** beyond that of humans that enable it to track prey efficiently. The Thresherhound's four legs are **Scythe-Like Appendages** that it uses to pierce its prey. On Tenebrae, Thresherhounds hunt in packs of four to a dozen individuals.

Skills: Good (+3) Fight, Athletics;
Fair (+2) Physique, Provoke, Survival

Stress: 1 1

Voracious. You are a voracious hunter and receive +2 to Fight in the first exchange of a conflict.

The Abyssal

The Abyssal is an area of void between two great arms of the spiral galaxy. The zone is mostly devoid of stars, with only a few systems scattered over vast distances. The emptiness is home to the Abyssal Corsairs: small fleets of pirates

and raiders who use the zone to hide from Dominion authorities. The corsairs ambush Lightracer transports along well-known routes near the Abyssal through the use of gravitic snares, which force vessels to slow to sub-light speeds so that they may be tracked and attacked. The pirates then slink back into The Abyssal to evade capture. Somewhere within the Abyssal is a planet the pirates call Hideaway that serves as a port of call for the Abyssal Corsairs—also called Abyssal Apostates.

Hideaway

Hideaway is a planet of apostates, secreted somewhere deep within the trackless void of The Abyssal. Hideaway is reputed to have a sole city that the Abyssal Apostates use as their port of call. The planet is said to be self-sustaining and has been occupied for millennia. It dates back to pre-Dominate times, and is rumoured to be the secret planet of a long dead warlord who escaped the Tyrant's wrath. No apostate has ever revealed where Hideaway is, perhaps because most apostates do not know its precise location.

The Apostate Captains are implanted with a special nodule that contains the coordinates of Hideaway. The nodule scrambles the route and produces a different set of navigation points each time it is used, so as not to establish a predictable route to Hideaway. The nodule cannot be accessed on demand, rather it requires a period of meditation during which the route is revealed as a set of coordinates for the next leg. At each point the same process is repeated until the voidship arrives at Hideaway. The memory of the coordinates quickly fades. The voidship travels the route blind, without active sensors so that there is no record of its passage along the secret route. Deliberate attempts to access or manipulate the nodule result in its destruction and the death of the Apostate Captain. Only those most trusted are given the privilege of the Apostate nodule in a grand ceremony after they are granted their own ship and the title of Captain.

Stories of Hideaway tell of a paradise planet where the people are free from oppression. It is said to be ruled by an elected council of the wise, who rule justly and impartially. There are other stories that tell the opposite; that the planet is a barren hell-hole where existence is arduous, and the population is some of the worst the galaxy has to offer. It is believed that some of these stories have been spread by the regime in order to discourage association with the Abyssal Apostates. Whatever the truth, the Apostate numbers have been growing, and a number of more open-minded Deipotents have joined their ranks. These Arch Heretics are actively hunted by the regime.

There are rumours that Hideaway is home to Nemesis, the Tyrant's elusive arch-enemy. These rumours have made the discovery of Hideaway's location a priority for the Hereseers. So far, the regime has not been able to learn the location of the planet. Many a captured Apostate Captain has deliberately detonated their nodule rather than face a Hereseer interrogation

Unarius

Unarius is a desolate planet that lies within The Abyssal. The planet is terrestrial and teems with life. It contains an average amount of minerals. It would make a viable Dominion colony, if it weren't so far into The Abyssal. It's insignificant, except for the fact that alien life is currently constructing something strange on its surface.

On one of its continents, an area approximately 200 km (124 miles) in diameter comprises what appears to be a crater. In the centre is a gigantic sphere, 1.5 km (0.93 miles) in diameter, which is being constructed by millions of small, insect-like machines. The sphere is nearly completed, missing approximately one third of its structure. The completed exterior of the sphere is black and mirror-like. The interior has been explored, though its purpose is entirely unknown. One thing that is for certain is that the machines are alien, not a product of the Artilects nor Dominion technosophy.

Theors have speculated on a number of possible theories. One theory states that the sphere is a voidship being constructed for some strange purpose; another states that this is a colonization by an alien intelligence, perhaps from another galaxy, and that the sphere is a vast Genesis Tank that will grow the creators of these machines when it is completed. A third theory speculates that this is a bulwark invasion of an alien machine intelligence that is constructing a factory for the future construction of larger, more dangerous machines. Whatever the truth, the Theors have not been able to establish a research station on the planet due to various mishaps with the native wildlife. The Watchers dispatch a Watchship to Unarius every few years to check on the progress of the sphere construction.

Thule

Thule is a cold and windswept world, mostly covered by a frozen ocean. What landmass exists is windswept tundra and mountains. The surface of the planet is mostly flat, broken up by mountains of compressed ice jutting up. Thule is the lineage planet of House Bal-Amon and is dotted by magnificent domed cities located on the solid landmasses. Though the planet itself would never draw visitors, the cities certainly do. The architecture of the cities is considered the most incredible within the Dominion. Huge spires rise icicle-like into the sky with magnificent temples and ziggurats, which occupy the lush jungles and fertile lands beneath the vast domes. The domed cities of the Balammun serve as resorts and retreats for many Pharistos.

Travel between the cities is accomplished via ice skiffs that sail across the frozen surface on the strong winds; the largest of these are fully enclosed and outfitted with luxurious accommodations, facilities, and viewing platforms. A number of tribes of Jejune and humans make their home on Thule from a time lost in antiquity, before the planet was almost entirely stripped of its mineral wealth. These tribes

are mostly left to themselves, living within and around the ancient mines where they take refuge from the cold. The human groups are used as a source of new servants, but it takes too long to train them for complex operations. Most labour is imported from other planets in the form of trained Syndicatemen. Current resource-extraction operations occur deep below the frozen ocean's surface, and the work is hazardous. The last of the planet's gold and mineral deposits can only be found on the ocean floor.

The Ice Glider is a Beneficial Thing (page 323).

Ice Glider

(1 stunt, 2 trouble, 4BP)

The Ice Glider is a small ice skiff transport that is **+Wind-Powered** and can carry up to six individuals. The glider is **+Very Manoeuvrable (2)** though it **-Requires High Proficiency to Operate** at high speeds. Ice Glider racing is very popular on Thule.

Stress: 1 2

Uluru

Uluru is a strange place with an even stranger reputation. Theors postulate that Uluru was once a gas giant of immense size whose atmosphere was long ago blown away by the bloated red star it orbits. The planet is a single giant chunk of diamond, the compressed core of an extinct gas giant. Approach of Uluru must be from the night side, as the reflective surface of the world focuses the starshine into beams of light that can cut a voidship in two.

The Dominion has established a number of resource-extraction operations upon the planet, shielded beneath highly reflective domes. A number of Pharisto Syndicates operate these domes to extract sheets of diamond from the planet's surface. Many who have slept on the planet's surface report having disturbing dreams. These nightmares have caused many a worker to suffer insomnia and prolonged presence on the planet always leads to insanity. After hundreds of lives were lost to accidents caused by mental breakdown, the Syndicates constructed a large haven in orbit where the work crews live and sleep. The crews take a shuttle to the planet's surface for their work shifts when the domes come under the cover of darkness. Whatever the strange source of dreams, it does not seem to extend beyond the surface of Uluru.

A number of studies performed by Theors have not revealed the cause of the strange dreams. Affected workers have raved that the extraction operations will cause the seed to crack, or the egg to hatch. None of this makes much sense, as the planet has been scanned, and these scans confirm the planet's diamond composition. The Theors' current theory is that the planet vibrates with a specific frequency that may have an effect on the human mind. The extraction operations continue in spite of the danger because Uluru is the single most abundant source of diamond in the Dominion.

Degenerates occasionally attempt to infiltrate the planet. They see the diamond planet as a gigantic crystal for magnifying their prana. The Tyrant has decreed that this should never happen, for it might attract the Nihilim once more. All new visitors to the planet must be examined by Zibin, an Amarenthine who has come to Uluru to meditate and study on the significance of this place. Zibin is a powerful Kundalini who seeks to find the answers to the riddle of Uluru. He is always accompanied by a squad of Dominar bodyguards and makes his home aboard a Dominion battlecruiser, which hangs silently over the diamond planet.

Some things in the **Fate Fractal** (Fate Core, page 270) can be treated as characters. The Uluru Dream is one such thing. Skills need not be from the list of existing skills, you can choose an abstract concept rather than a specific skill for your fractals.

The Uluru Dream

The Uluru Dream slowly drives those who sleep on the surface of Uluru insane. The dream attacks each sleeper every two hours of sleep, causing mental stress. Consequences inflicted will be along the lines of: **Sleep Deprivation**, **Paranoid Delusions**, and **Psychotic Episodes**.

Skills: Good (+3) Cause Nightmares (mental attack defended by the target's Will).

Vog

Vog is a dry, barren planet that is bathed in the radiation of its unstable star. The atmosphere is breathable, but visitors require protection from the radiation and cold. On the surface, the planet appears to be nearly lifeless, but life thrives below its surface. Evolution ceased on Vog long ago as a defence against the mutating radiation that bathes the surface. The ecology of Vog has remained static for

millions of years, and this has brought a number of favourable adaptations to the life that continues to survive here.

Life continues below the surface of the planet in a maze of caverns and tunnels. The vast tunnel networks are the work of Voggian Death Worms. These 20-metre (66-feet) long worms produce a natural acid that melts rock while producing a toxic gas that fills the tunnels. Many new tunnels are not habitable until the gas dissipates and the out-gassing poses a danger to anything caught in its path. Clouds of worm gas are a danger to the lifeforms that inhabit the tunnels; it blows with the air currents to dissipate into the atmosphere above ground.

The Voggian Death Worm ambushes its prey by sensing vibrations and breaking through weakened rock to attack its prey. The worm's mouth is filled with sharp hook-like teeth that ring its gaping maw and run down into its innards. Prey is grasped by the hook-like teeth that undulate to pass the morsel to the stomach. The worm's hide is thick and covered with iridescent scales that are capable of withstanding projector blasts. When angered, the worm's scales bristle to expose its softer flesh underneath, a weakness that Voghr hunters exploit.

The Voghr live in packs of a few dozen individuals and lead a nomadic lifestyle. Due to the highly competitive nature of lifeforms on Vog, the Voghr must keep moving in order to avoid attracting the Death Worms. Remaining in one area too long will attract more worms than any one hunter pack could manage. Voghr make their nests inside large caverns that host fungal forests. The large fungal growths are hollowed out and used as domiciles by the pack. Abandoned settlements by one pack are re-used when a new pack moves into the area later. The Voggian Death Worm has an aversion to the fungal forests and will avoid the caverns that host them, though it will actively patrol its edges for prey. The Voghr and many other creatures on the planet take advantage of this and know that the fungal caves are safe. Voghr travel to the surface to bathe in their sun's radiation for sustenance as food below ground is scarce. On the surface they are easy prey for the death worms that erupt from beneath the ground and ambush anything that travels on the surface.

The Voghr packs are territorial and often come into conflict with each other over resources. The Voghr are honourable, preferring to settle disputes through single combat. The strongest member of each pack will fight until one submits to the other. The pack that loses must move on and find elsewhere to settle. Voghr duels are fought with hooked weapons made from the teeth of the Voggian Death Worm.

The Tyrant has decreed Vog forbidden, but this does not stop visits to the planet. The single Dominion battlecruiser that frequently visits Vog is not sufficient to keep out smugglers and the occasional Battlemaster transport.

Some believe that a critical element found in the Battlemaster's macrocarbon material originates on Vog and might be the end result of the chemical reaction between the Death Worm's acid and certain minerals in the rock. The element is called Voghrite Metal and can be mined from the tunnel walls beneath the ground. Mining activity is sure to bring a death worm, making any such endeavour perilous. Many Dominion Theors have attempted to re-create macrocarbon without success. The few visitors who do come to the planet come to trade with the Voghr for various rarities such as death worm parts and precious stones. The Battlemasters come for the Voghrite that the Voghr collect and freely supply to their revered star warriors. Some Voghr choose to leave Vog and travel into the starry void.

Voggian Death Worm

The **Voggian Death Worm** is the apex predator on Vog. It is capable of **Potent Acid Spit** and is protected by **Iridescent Reflective Scales** that are capable of deflecting even projector blasts. When angry, the worm reveals its **Weakness: Bristling Scales Expose Flesh** (this is revealed through notice with Tactics).

Skills: Fantastic (+6) Physique; Superb (+5) Survival;
Great (+4) Fight; Fair (+2) Shoot; Average (+1) Athletics

Stress: 3 3 3

Consequences: Moderate

Thick Scales. Use Physique rather than Athletics on Defend actions whenever your opponent attacks without first creating an advantage that exploits: **Weakness: Bristling Scales Expose Flesh**.

Underground Hunter. Whenever attacking from ambush, you immediately win initiative and receive +2 to the first attack.

Death Worm Tooth

(1 stunt, 2BP)

The tooth of a Voggian Death Worm is a **+Short, Curved Blade** the length of a human's forearm. The tooth is very strong and **+Razor Sharp**, capable of causing great damage. It is a favourite weapon of Voghr warriors.

Wayfarer Vessels

The Wayfarers are the remains of an ancient human civilization that predates the founding of the Dominion by millennia. These humans set out aboard gigantic cylindrical ships towards the distant stars in an effort to colonize them. This diaspora occurred before the discovery of Lightpacer drives, and some are still in transit. Entire generations of Wayfarers have come and gone aboard these ships, and each ship's culture has diverged from the next. Many never reached their destinations; others found their destination a barren system, incapable of supporting life. Those who never found a suitable home continue to traverse the vast distances between the stars. Two such ships are slowly making their journey along the Dominion's border.

Each of these two Wayfarer vessels is a gigantic, cylindrical generation ship that spins to generate gravity and propels itself using a very primitive, reaction-mass drive. Each vessel is built to be self-sufficient with a complete ecosystem to support the population. Over the generations each vessel has suffered mishaps and hardships that have changed not only the ship itself, but also the crew.

The cultures of the two Wayfarer vessels are diametrically opposed, although both have evolved along quasi-religious lines. The leaders of the Wayfarers on the vessel Harmony are the Priesthood of the Keepers. The Keepers are the ruling caste of priests that possess the requisite knowledge to maintain the vessel and keep it running. The rest of the population reveres them and worships the vessel as a life-giving deity. They live in relative peace amongst themselves and enjoy a high quality of life, though their idyllic existence is frequently interrupted by their cousins on the Discord. The population of the Harmony are always prepared to defend themselves and their vessel from the Exiles of Discord.

The other vessel, the Discord, is ruled by the Exiled Priesthood. Long ago, the life support systems of the Discord began to fail, and the crew was unable to make the necessary repairs, because they had been gradually losing knowledge over the generations. As systems began to falter, the environment on the Discord became polluted; some parts of the vessel became uninhabitable. The corridors drip with moisture, and vegetation and mould grow on the walls. Radiation leaks from the main reactor core. The crew has started to exhibit mutations from living in such an environment.

Many generations ago, the crew of the Discord attempted to join their cousins on the Harmony, but they were not permitted. Since then, they have called themselves the Exiled, and they launch raids on the Harmony in cobbled-together shuttles to capture slaves, steal parts, and scrounge supplies. The Exiled Priesthood has turned to practices that involve sacrifices to their dark god in order to stave off the death of their vessel. In contrast to the population of Harmony, the Exiled are brutal and violent. They are also desperate as more and more sections of their vessel fall to sepsis and become uninhabitable.

The Wayfarers have been in a state of conflict for more generations than they can recall. They no longer remember exactly what caused the conflict, or why. The Wayfarers continue their never-ending journey across the vast distances, and their conflict continues. The Exiles covet the paradise of Harmony, but are unable to have it.

Discordian Exile

Discordian Exiles are a **Barbaric and Uncouth Lot** who **Revel in Bloodshed**. They raid the Harmony for slaves and supplies.

Skills: Fair (+2) Fight; Average (+1) Athletics, Survival

Stress: 1

Whorl Nebula

The Whorl Nebula is a turbulent region filled with gravitational instability and littered with pulsing stars that emit deadly electromagnetic radiation. The whole area is a nightmare to navigate due to the radiation, which interferes and disrupts sensors and technology. The gravitational instabilities also make the Loom Drive useless here. The Artilects developed powerful shielding technology that protects their voidships from the radiation and allows them to traverse this nebula safely. The entire nebula is littered with Artilect defensive platforms, which are difficult to detect and which mount powerful weaponry. No Dominion vessel has ever breached the defensive screen the Artilects deployed at the end of the Artilect War. The Tyrant has decreed this area forbidden in order to maintain the unsteady cold war between the Dominion and the Artilects. Watcher vessels and Dominion battlecruisers patrol the edges of the nebula, and a high level of apprehension and paranoia is found among the patrol crews in the region.

Dat

Dat lies deep within the turbulent Whorl Nebula. It is the final refuge of the Artilects, a stellar megastructure that envelops a small white star. Dat harvests the star's energy output and turns it into computational power. The star is surrounded by countless cube-shaped structures so dense they eclipse the light from the star. Each structure is a single mindframe that is larger than any found in the Dominion.

Further out, orbiting in concentric rings around the star, are the Artilect factories and shipyards. Resources are shipped from nearby systems where entire planets are in the process of being disassembled for raw materials. These materials are brought back to Dat for processing into the physical infrastructure for the Artilects. Many great fleets of battle-ready voidships silently float in the void, awaiting instructions.

Theors have been unable to estimate the number of Artilects that might inhabit the vast Patternscape of Dat. The estimates range from millions to billions of

Artilect minds that could be housed there. The computational capabilities of the Artilects cannot be estimated, and many wonder what the machines might have already achieved during their millennia of silence.

The entire Dat system has been stripped for mineral resources. All of the planets in the system have been dismantled to build the stellar megastructure. No biological lifeform has ever visited Dat, except for the original Watcher vessel that discovered it and barely escaped its pursuers.

Worth

Worth was once a paradise planet and proud home of the Battlemasters; now it is a desolate and barely hospitable planet littered with ruins. The great cities are now scarcely recognizable, and the surface of the planet is covered with craters, scorched dirt, and bones. The husks of crashed Battlemaster voidships are scattered about the entire surface of Worth. What little remains of the biosphere clings to a tenuous existence among the blowing ash storms and desolation. Persistent scavengers visit the planet on occasion, hoping to recover some piece of ancient technology or stumble upon an intact Battlemaster facility, but the Dominion fleet was thorough; no such caches have yet been discovered. The planet serves as a constant reminder of the Tyrant's power and wrath.

Yis

Yis is actually two planets in a system located on the fringe of the Dominion. The planets orbit very close to each other, and they're named for the color of their surfaces when viewed from orbit. Emerald Yis is green, humid, and covered with steaming jungles, while Ochre Yis is yellow and dry, almost entirely barren desert. Emerald Yis lies closer to the sun, while Ochre Yis lies further out. Each planet hosts a habitable environment inhabited by native flora and fauna.

When the system was originally surveyed by the Watchers 10 millennia ago, Emerald Yis was inhabited by a species of insect-like aliens who possessed a primitive culture. No Dominion voidship visited the system again until 2,000 years ago, when they discovered that the insect aliens somehow spread to Ochre Yis and colonized it. The aliens lead primitive lives by Dominion standards, and their culture does not seem to possess any technosophy of note. How the aliens arrived at Ochre Yis remains a mystery, as no ancient and lost technosophy exists on either planet.

The aliens construct mound-shaped hives for dwellings. Their social structure appears to be centred on the colony, and the Watchers observed that some colonies war upon each other. The insect aliens are believed to possess a hive mind based on their observed behaviour. Theors postulate that a queen or other dominant ruler controls each colony, though no direct contact has ever been made with the aliens.

Since the discovery, two research vessels vanished without a trace from the Yis system. The first was some 1,500 years ago, while the second only 1,300 years ago.

The Tyrant has not ordered another survey of the system and has not dispatched any voidships to investigate the insect aliens further. Many find this surprising, since the initial scans showed great quantities of gold and other valuable minerals in the ground. Common belief is that Yis lies too far on the fringe of the Dominion and that establishing major resource extraction operations so far away is too risky. The aliens are not well understood, and their disposition to outsiders is unknown. The Dominion has no experience with the subjugation and conditioning of an alien culture that possesses a hive mind.

Chapter Nine
Playing The Game

Baroque is a setting built for the Fate Core rules system. This section expands upon the Fate Core systems and tweaks some of the dials to fit the setting.

This and subsequent sections and chapters assume that you are already familiar with the Fate Core rules.

Time Ladder

The time ladder represents approximate time increments that decrease as you move up the ladder and increase as you move down the ladder. Whenever time is important to the narrative, choose the starting step in the ladder. For each shift of success, move up the ladder; likewise for each shift of failure, move down the ladder. Certain actions in Baroque have a set time increment that is further modified by the margin of success or failure on a roll.

Time is relative: a character combat exchange takes *a few moments*, whereas a starship exchange takes *a few minutes*. The time increments are based on Human scales of time.

Stress and Consequences

There are three types of stress tracks in Baroque: physical, mental, and wealth. Wealth stress is specific to Baroque and represents the financial resources your character is able to bring to bear during a story. Wealth stress does not cause consequences; it only represents the available finances a character can muster. See Wealth in the Extras chapter for more information on wealth stress and its recovery (see Healing, page 240).

Mild, Moderate, and Severe consequences remain unchanged from Fate Core, as does the option for a player to choose an Extreme consequence.

Stress Boxes

Baroque treats Physique, Will, and the new Resources skill differently in respect to their impact on stress and consequences. Skills at Superb (+5) do not add another consequence as they do in Fate Core, rather they add to the stress box value of each stress box.

When your Physique, Will, or Resources is Superb (+5) or higher, you receive +1 to the value of each stress box you possess for each skill rank above Superb (+5). Certain stunts may also increase the value of your stress boxes. These stress rules also apply to NPCs (page 317), Beneficial Things (page 323) and Voidships (page 388).

The maximum number of stress boxes in any stress track is four. Rather than making stress tracks longer, and thereby prolonging conflicts, they get bigger by being able to absorb more stress from any single attack.

> While a standard character at **Great (+4) Physique** will have four stress boxes: 1 2 3 4; a character with a **Great (+5) Physique** will have the following stress boxes: 2 3 4 5, and a character who has **Fantastic (+6) Physique** will have: 3 4 5 6. If your character has only two stress boxes: 1 2 and receives a **+1 stress box bonus**, the number of stress boxes does not change, and you will have: 2 3

Stacking Stress Box Bonuses

It is important to note, stress box value bonuses from multiple sources are not cumulative; meaning that if you already have a +1 stress box value bonus from a skill and take a stunt with another +1 stress value bonus, you do not have a cumulative +2 stress value bonus. You only ever apply the highest stress value bonus to your stress boxes.

Time Ladder

Instant
A few moments
Half a minute
A minute
A few minutes
15 minutes
Half an hour
An hour
A few hours
A half day
A day
A few days
A week
A few weeks
A month
A few months
A season
Half a year
A year
A few years
A decade
A few decades
A lifetime
Generations
Millennia

If you already have Superb (+5) Will with a +1 mental stress box bonus, and also take the **Fearless** stunt that grants a +1 mental stress box bonus, you do not receive a cumulative +2 bonus. Rather, your bonus remains at +1, unless you take the **Fearless** stunt twice (at the cost of 2 stunt slots) for a +2 bonus, at which point you will receive the higher +2 bonus to your mental stress.

Healing

All stress suffered during a scene goes away at the end of that scene. Consequences represent lasting effects, whether physical or psychological, and must be treated before they can start healing. The skill used to treat physical consequences is Science; mental consequences are treated with Empathy. The passive opposition to treat a consequence is the value of the stress it absorbs. This follows the rules from Fate Core (page 50). The passive opposition for the healing roll is further modified by Skill Permissions (page 286).

The time required to perform basic treatment of a consequence is *a few minutes* for mild, *15 minutes* for moderate, and *half an hour* for severe.

Accelerated Healing

The Baroqueverse is filled with a myriad of technologies and abilities that accelerate healing and enable rapid recovery from even grievous wounds. Whenever these forms of healing are involved, a character has the potential to recover much more quickly than they would naturally.

An apparatus, skill, or stunt that accelerates healing greatly increases the chances of successful treatment of your consequence. You will be required to roll a skill when using an apparatus or ability, with the base opposition being the shift value of the consequence you are attempting to treat (Fate Core, page 164). The actual skill to use will be detailed in its description.

When you roll for accelerated healing...

- On a **success**, the consequence is immediately treated and begins recovery.
- On a **success with style**, the consequence is immediately downgraded (see below).
- On a **tie**, you **succeed at a minor cost**: the target suffers one stress which lasts until the end of the current scene.
- On a **fail**, you **succeed at a serious cost**, and the ability or apparatus cannot be used for the remainder of the session (it needs to recharge or you question your abilities—whatever makes sense).

The time required to activate an apparatus or ability depends on its nature and will be detailed under the description. Wherever not specified, you can assume *half a minute* is appropriate.

Downgrading Consequences

Whenever you succeed with style on a consequence treatment roll, you are able to immediately downgrade the severity of a consequence. In order to downgrade a consequence, you must have an empty consequence slot below the treated consequence. The downgraded consequence is moved down in severity and reworded to represent the fact that it has greatly improved. Mild consequences can always be downgraded and are immediately removed. If the treated consequence cannot be downgraded because there is a consequence below it, then downgrade the first consequence that can be downgraded.

You may not receive treatment from the same method consecutively in the same session for the same consequence.

You have suffered a mild **Out of Breath** consequence and a moderate **Sprained Arm** consequence after those Jejune ambushed you. Your group now has time to rest and apply some healing. Your companion rolls their Science to heal your moderate consequence with Great (+4) opposition. Fortunately, they succeed with style and your consequence can now be downgraded. Because you have both a mild and moderate consequence, the moderate **Sprained Arm** cannot be downgraded. Instead, you must downgrade the mild **Out of Breath** consequence, and it is immediately removed.

Scale in Conflicts

Baroque does not have any specific rules regarding scale in conflicts. A character shooting at a starship is pointless, and a starship shooting a character can be handled as a Challenge rather than a Conflict. Anything at character scale can be created using the Beneficial Things system (page 323); everything else that is larger requires some sort of narrative permission.

Orbital Bombardment

In situations where a voidship is targeting the general area the characters are in, a Challenge (Fate Core, page 147) is in order. Though a voidship cannot target the character directly, it is more than capable of devastating the surrounding area and killing them indirectly. The characters must avoid the devastation around them and find shelter during the heavy bombardment to come out unscathed. A Challenge provides opportunity for drama and for the situation to become part of the narrative.

First, establish what the danger rating of the attack is. One way to do this is to roll an attack by the voidship and add 4 to the result. You can also make up a danger rating yourself, if you prefer. Then, each character caught in the blast zone must make three rolls and accumulate a number of shifts equal to or greater than the danger rating. Each roll is made using a different skill: Athletics for movement, Physique for weathering the onslaught, and Will to keep their composure under duress. Add up all the shifts the character accumulated. If they are greater than the danger rating, the character comes out unscathed. If the character did not obtain enough shifts, they take an amount of stress equal to the difference in shifts as if the bombardment were a regular attack.

Before each roll, the GM should narrate the situation. The ground is blasted, buildings collapse, brick and stone explode all around. Raging fires block the character's path, and the chaos is deafening. The player should in turn narrate what happens as they make their rolls. They escape under a bridge, enter access tunnels under a temple, barely avoiding the falling masonry, and take shelter in a chamber deep underground as the inferno rages above.

Conflicts

Conflicts in Baroque follow the mechanics as described in Fate Core (page 154). A new mechanic for initiative is used, and initiative boosts are introduced.

Initiative

To determine who goes first in a conflict, all players must roll for initiative using their Tactics skill. If a player controls more than one character, the roll is made using the highest Tactics skill between the characters; this also applies to the GM. The player with the highest roll goes first, and all the characters under the player's control act at this time in the order the player chooses. In the case of a tie, the one with the higher Tactics skill rank goes first. If their Tactics skill ranks are equal, have the players who tied roll again.

After the first player has completed their turn, that player will choose the next player to go, and so on. After all the players have gone, the last player will choose the next player for the subsequent exchange. Initiative passes from player to player until the conflict is resolved.

It is beneficial to use some sort of token to represent initiative. As each character does their action, the player throws the token into the middle of the table. The tokens are a great visual queue as to who has not yet acted in the exchange. At the beginning of the next exchange, everyone takes their initiative token back and places it in front of them.

When a player is chosen to act next, the player must act; they can't hold their action. Anyone who has not acted yet may interfere in the initiative order at the cost of a Fate point, boost, or free invoke on an existing advantage. Interfering in initiative immediately shifts the action to the character who interfered and the interrupted player must wait to be chosen again in the exchange.

Initiative Boost

The initiative roll is also an opportunity for all involved to generate a Boost for the coming conflict. If you **succeed with style** on the initiative Tactics roll, against a passive opposition of Mediocre (+0), you receive a boost that lasts the duration of the scene or until you use it, whichever comes first. This boost represents your quick reaction time or how well you gain the upper hand in the situation based on your tactical expertise. This boost may be given to another, providing you justify how your tactical knowledge helped.

If your initiative roll beats the next highest roll by 3 shifts (a relative success with style), you receive two boosts for the scene.

Surprise

When one side surprises another, initiative is not rolled, and the surprising side gets to act first. The side with the advantage also receives an automatic boost for the conflict.

Combat Manoeuvres

At some point you will want to disarm your foe, or throw sand in their eyes to temporarily blind them. Such actions are treated as *Create an Advantage* actions in a conflict. The resulting character or scene aspect represents the created advantage. Almost always, your opponent will get a chance to actively oppose your *Create an Advantage* action. The GM may also set a passive opposition for you to accomplish your action, especially if there is no active opposition present. The advantage exists as a fact in the narrative until removed.

Let's say that you want to disarm your opponent. This is a *Create an Advantage* action using Fight opposed by your target's Fight skill. Should you succeed, your opponent is now **Disarmed** and may not use their weapon until they overcome

this advantage using Athletics, most likely, though it might be another appropriate skill. Removal of an advantage is your action for the exchange and may be opposed by an opponent, just as the creation was opposed. This way, your opponent can be kept from retrieving their weapon.

Some manoeuvres will result in more broad advantage aspects, like **Blinded by Sand**. These types of advantages are a bit different mechanically because the target can't see but can still act. The best way to handle these situations is to add a passive opposition of Fair (+2) to every roll made by the target of the advantage, which requires sight. The target is able to remove the advantage as normal, and you may not actively oppose them from doing so.

Physical and Mental Conditions

There are times when hunger, exhaustion, and lack of sleep become a factor. The best way to handle these is to place a condition aspect on the character. This aspect may be invoked and compelled against the character at inopportune times—or opportune times, if you're the GM. The aspect goes away when it makes sense for the condition to do so; hunger will recede after eating and tiredness after getting some sleep. If the condition is severe enough, a consequence may be warranted instead.

Poisons and Diseases

Poisons and diseases are long-lasting effects that require treatment of some sort. The best way to handle these is to use the Bronze Rule: you can treat anything in the game like it's a character. Give them a skill or approach through which the poison or disease will attack. The poison or disease should be defeated when a character is properly treated for it, or rolls a **success with style** when defending against it. You can create poisons and diseases as Beneficial Things; see Hroonic Brain Rot (page 343) for an example of this.

Fear

Fear is handled as a mental attack. There are two types of fear: passive and active. Passive fear is a situation or inanimate object that has no skills and provides a passive opposition to the defence roll. This might be a gory room or unnerving environment. Active fear is something which has the Provoke skill, or equivalent ability to instil fear. Active fear is treated as an attack. In all cases, Will is used to defend against fear. The stress caused by fear goes to the mental stress track and is handled as a standard attack.

Mind Control

Mind control can come into play wherever Kundalini and Fetters are found, among other things. Mind control is defined as one character attempting to take control mental control of another character. There are two types of mind control: suggestive and complete.

Suggestive mind control lasts a short period and is treated as a *Create an Advantage* action. The aspect created should be tailored towards the intent of the suggestion, such as: **You Never Met Me** or **You Trust Me**. The advantage aspects may then be compelled against the target to get them to act according to the suggestion. The suggestion lasts for the duration of the scene. In order to make a suggestion last longer, it must be reinforced, and another roll must be made in the subsequent scenes.

Complete mind control is the absolute control of another character's mind and body. Though it does not normally enable the controller to read the target's mind, the controller can make the target do anything they please while under control. In order to achieve complete control of another, the target must be taken out through mental control attacks.

Dealing with Traditions

Ancient traditions of the Order of Things exist wherever Deipotents are found. For the most part, you can abstract all of this tradition business into Presence skill tests. Defining 150,000 years of traditions for a culture is considerably outside the scope of this book, even perhaps outside the scope of an entire library. Whenever a question of tradition or protocols comes up, use the Presence skill as your guide. It defines the understanding a character has of these traditions and how adept they are at making themselves appear traditional. Rolling should only be done when you have a clear picture of what success and failure look like and when success or failure will impact the story in a significant way (Fate Core, page 187).

Affrey Contest

An Affrey is treated as a Contest, as defined in **Fate Core (page 150)**, rather than a conflict, for time's sake (of course, you are free to treat an Affrey as a conflict if you prefer). The contest lasts three exchanges, after which the victories are compared. If no victories are accumulated, or there is a tie situation, keep rolling additional exchanges until the first victor emerges. The character with the most victories is the winner of the Affrey. The skills used during an Affrey duel are **Athletics**, **Fight**, and **Provoke**. No single skill can be used more than once during the contest, and you must explain how you use the skill to your advantage. Skills used are declared at the same time for that exchange. You may spend a fate point to change your declared skill after it has been declared but before the dice are rolled.

The loser receives a consequence equal to the difference in the number of victories achieved; at 1 victory the opponent suffers a mild consequence, at 2 a moderate, 3 a severe consequence. Anything over 3 victories was an unlucky blow that renders the opponent Taken Out. Consequences will be along the lines of: **Reminder of Defeat**, **Embarrassing Scar**, or a more serious physical injury.

Cutting Words Contest

Cutting Words is a contest, as detailed in **Fate Core (page 150)**. Each side must achieve three victories in order to win the duel of words. Skills that may be used during the contest are: **Provoke** to bait the opposition; **Presence** to out manoeuvre verbally; **Empathy** to find weakness within your opponent, and **Influence** to use one's social standing to an advantage. No single skill can be used more than once during the contest, and you must explain how you use the skill to your advantage.

Before the contest begins, the scope of the duel must be determined. The scope is determined by the importance and reason as to why the duel is occurring in the first place. The scale of the duel determines what mental consequence the loser suffers at the end of the duel.

A **Mild Consequence** is suffered from a simple disagreement or spat where the intent is to bruise the ego of another or acquire something of minor value. **Bruised Ego** and **Tongue Tied** are examples of mild consequences.

A **Moderate Consequence** is suffered from a public spat where the intent is to prove one's intellectual superiority over another, to publicly shame them, or to acquire something of moderate value. **Made To Look Foolish** and **Hypocrisy Revealed** are examples of moderate consequences.

A **Severe Consequence** is suffered when the conflict is very public and witnessed by many influential Pharistos. Such a duel would be fought over something of major importance or value. **Sullied Reputation** and **Respectability Questioned** are examples of severe consequences.

Chapter Ten
Characters

In Fate Core, character creation is a group activity. By creating your characters as a group, relationships are developed between your character and the other characters. This creates a bond between the characters and gives them a reason to work together. Character creation follows Fate Core (page 30), but Baroque replaces the Phase Trio with a Phase Duo and a Driving Goal.

Character Creation Summary

- **Choose an Archetype:** Choose one of the character archetypes.
- **Name:** Name your character.
- **High Concept & Trouble:** Come up with your character's high concept, incorporating your archetype, and trouble aspect.
- **Driving Goal:** Describe a life-changing event, one that now motivates your character and influences their outlook on life.
- **Crossing Paths, Part 1:** Describe how you crossed paths with one of the other players' character.
- **Crossing Paths, Part 2:** Describe how you crossed paths with another character—a different character from the character in Crossing Paths, Part 1.
- **Aspects:** Write down one aspect each for Driving Goal, Crossing Paths, Part 1, and Crossing Paths, Part 2.
- **Skills:** Choose and rank your skills.
- **Refresh:** All characters begin with 3 refresh.
- **Stunts:** Choose or create your stunts; your character gets 3 stunts and must spend Refresh on additional stunts.
- **(Optional) Extras:** Decide to spend some of your stunts on Extras: Beneficial Things, Dust, and Prana.
- **Stress & Consequences:** Determine how many stress boxes you have on each track and how many consequences you may take.
- **(Optional) Voidship:** If your campaign will use a voidship (based on discussion among the group and GM), create it according to the rules on page 387.

Character Creation Quick Reference

- Character Archetypes - page 252
- Skills - page 288
- Stunts - Archetypes (page 252), Skills (page 285), Dust (page 354), Prana (page 262).
- Extra: Beneficial Things - page 323.
- Extra: Dust - page 354.
- Extra: Prana - page 362.
- Stress & Consequences - page 238.
- Voidships - page 388.

Choose an Archetype

Choose one of the character archetypes provided, or create your own. The character archetype provides a basis for your character concept and describes how your character fits into the Baroqueverse.

High Concept and Trouble

Your character's high concept describes who you are; you must incorporate your archetype into the high concept. For example, your character may be a **Retired Proxicutioner** or a **Voghr Veteran Loyal to the Battlemasters** or even a **Disillusioned Pharisto of House Bal-Amon**. The High Concept describes not only what you are (archetype), but also who you are (concept).

Your character's trouble aspect is something that complicates their life. This aspect could be **House Xi-An are my Mortal Enemies**, or **I'm a Heretic, and Proud of It!**, perhaps **Smuggling Is Not Just a Job, It's Fun!** and even **Wanted for Killing a God**.

See *Your Character Idea* in Fate Core, page 31.

Name

Give your character a fitting name. In the Baroqueverse, people frequently have a single name and may or may not include their origin; Deipotents often have a title to accompany their name. Examples: Hesiod, Master of Dust and Agatha of Heliodome.

Fitting name ideas can be found in many ancient texts from around the world.

Driving Goal

Describe the most significant event in your life. This event has become your driving goal—the thing that keeps you going. You drive towards this goal in everything that you do and say. Your family may have been murdered by the heartless regime of the Tyrant, or maybe you fear dying so much that you seek immortality for yourself at all costs. You might believe that the Artilects are incredible, and you want to make contact with them to convince them to return.

When creating your driving goal, keep in mind that the best aspects have both a positive and a negative consequence to them. Think of it as a two-sided coin: sometimes it gives you the drive to succeed, and sometimes it takes you down roads you'd rather not be on. The GM will use your driving goal to design adventures around what you and the other characters are driven towards.

Some examples of Driving Goal aspects are: **Take Revenge on the Regime**, **Want for Immortality**, **Become the Lugal of Hy-Brama** or **Make Contact with Artilects**.

Crossing Paths, Part 1

Write down an adventure that has happened to you. Pass this to the player on your right. When you receive another player's Crossing Paths story, write yourself into their adventure, describing how you were involved in that story.

Crossing Paths, Part 2

Write about another adventure, but this time, hand it to the player on your left. When you receive another player's story, write yourself into it in the same fashion as Crossing Paths, Part 1.

See *Phase Trio* in Fate Core, page 38.
See Defining Aspects in Fate Core, page 56.

Aspects

Using what you wrote in your two Crossing Paths adventures, pull out aspects that fit the narrative created between you and the other player. The best aspects are those that have some relation to the other character, whether directly by mention of that character, or indirectly where your character's aspect meshes well with the other character's concept. Examples: **Thothram is my Research Colleague** and **Omnicrat, You Can Thank Me Later**.

Skills

Once you have defined your character aspects, it is time to pick the skills your character is good at. Take a look at your aspects, and choose your skills appropriately. Your skills form a pyramid: one Great (+4) skill, two Good (+3) skills, three Fair (+2) skills, and four Average (+1) skills. As with Fate Core, Mediocre (+0) is the default skill level for skills you do not choose to move up the pyramid.

See *Skills* in Fate Core, page 46.

Refresh

All characters start with 3 refresh. Refresh is the minimum number of fate points that your character begins each session with. You may spend refresh on Stunts, but your refresh may never go below 1.

See *Stunts and Refresh* in Fate Core, page 48.

Stunts

Each archetype defines a number of stunts that are exclusive to that archetype. There are also additional stunts listed under each skill, and under some extras: Dust and Prana. You receive three stunts for free; any additional stunts require that you pay for them with refresh on a one-for-one basis.

If you want your character to carry equipment, have allies or pets, or own a vehicle, they may. If you want for these to provide a mechanical effect, take a look at the Beneficial Things extra (page 323). The Beneficial Things section provides a selection of ready-made things, as well as mechanics for making your own.

To create your own stunts, follow the Custom Stunts guidelines (page 253) and refer to Fate Core, page 87.

See Stress and Consequences in Fate Core, page 50.

Stress and Consequences

Your stress tracks are influenced by Physique, Will, and Resources. At various skill ranks, your stress boxes will look like the following:

- **Mediocre (+0):** 1 2
- **Average (+1) and Fair (+2):** 1 2 3
- **Good (+3) and Great (+4):** 1 2 3 4

If your skill reaches Superb (+5) or higher, refer to **Stress Boxes** (page 239).

You receive three standard consequences: Mild, Moderate, and Severe, as well as the special Exceptional consequence.

Character Archetypes

During character creation, you will choose one of the available character archetypes described in the Baroque setting. The archetypes are a baseline, emphasizing the origins of your character. Your chosen archetype is then incorporated into your character's High Concept aspect.

Each archetype presents four dos and don'ts that illustrate how you can invoke the archetype inside your High Concept aspect and how the GM can compel it. The dos and don'ts establish a common framework for how to treat the archetype in play. They also serve as an aide to roleplaying your archetype. If there is ever a conflict between these and your aspects, your aspects win.

Favoured Skills

Favoured skills are those skills that are most often possessed by archetypical characters. When creating your character, you must take at least one rank in each of the favoured skills listed.

Archetype Stunts

Each archetype has three defining stunts that are more potent than regular stunts and represent the defining qualities of the archetype. The strengths of each archetype are emphasized with these stunts. Your character must choose at least one archetype stunt. Some archetypes have required stunts, which you must take when choosing that archetype. Under normal circumstances, you may only take stunts from your own archetype.

Ally Stunts

A number of archetypes have ally stunts. These stunts allow you to bring in allies to aid you in a scene and are constructed using the Beneficial Things system (page 323). Give them an appropriate beneficial aspect as their concept, and the GM will choose the trouble aspect. The beneficial aspect can be invoked for free once per session, and once per session, the GM can invoke the trouble for free.

Allies are treated as a single character (like mobs). Once summoned, the allies will remain until it no longer makes sense for them to be there, or they are taken out.

To speed up play, three basic examples of allies are listed below.

You may split the Allies skill into multiple skills by assigning the ranks from the total skill towards other skills. For example: if you have a Good (+3) skilled allies, rather than one Good (+3) skill, you can assign them one Fair (+2) skill and one Average (+1) skill, or three Average (+1) skills.

Toughs

+Syndicate Enforcers, -Looking for a Fight

Skills: Average (+1) Fight

Stress: 1 2 3 4

Utility

+Clockwork Surveillance Artifice, -Remote Controlled

Skills: Fair (+2) Stealth

Stress: 1 2

Helpers

+Bal-Amon Courtesan, -Suspect Loyalties

Skills: Good (+3) Presence

Stress: none

Custom Stunts

If you wish, you may create your own stunts. When creating a stunt, you can:

...add a bonus:

- Add a +2 bonus to an action in a very narrow circumstance (using Lore while consulting an archive analogue).
- Add a +1 bonus to an action in a less narrow circumstance that comes up more often (using Athletics to defend when outnumbered).
- Add 2 shifts of effect to a skill roll (reducing movement opposition by 2 when moving over rough terrain).
- Add +1 to each stress box in one of your stress tracks: physical, mental, or wealth.

For *stunt creation* see Fate Core (page 87) and the Fate System Toolkit (page 34).

...or break a rule:

- Add a new action to a skill in a narrow circumstance (using Stealth to attack when attacking from surprise).
- Do something extra on a success with style in exchange for the boost (you can make a 2-shift counter attack whenever you succeed with style on your defence, rather than taking a boost).
- Swap one skill with another in a very narrow circumstance (swapping Physique for Athletics to defend when wrestling an unarmed/animal opponent).
- Move an additional zone for free when you do something specific (you can move 2 zones in the first exchange when you charge your opponent).
- Add an additional free invoke to an aspect you create using create an advantage with a specific skill (you receive one extra free invoke when you create an advantage with Technosophy when working on propulsion systems).
- Receive +3 instead of the usual +2 when invoking a specific aspect (when you invoke your **Alien Researcher** aspect you receive +3 rather than +2).
- At the cost of a fate point, you can immediately succeed at an action related to a skill in a specific circumstance (at the cost of a fate point, you can order non-Elevated humans to perform a task without question).
- Once per session, automatically create an advantage with one free invoke (once per session, you can create an advantage: **Blurred Vision** with a free invoke when you spit into someone's eyes with your venomous spittle).
- Once per session, you can break a rule for free (once per session, you can immediately clear a stress box during a scene).
- Once per story, you can summon allies to help you, providing it makes sense for the allies to show up (see Ally Stunts, page 252).

Revenants

As a Revenant, you are a clone of your dead predecessor—or a clone of a clone, of a clone—whose memories are locked away deep inside your genetic code. The memories return to you slowly, over centuries of living. Your life is full of confusion and déjà vu. Vivid memories of past events sometimes bleed into current situations, which make you feel dislocation from the time and place you are in.

Any archetype can also be a Revenant. Your chosen archetype represents your current persona and possibly not that of your predecessor's. You were chosen for Revenant resurrection for a reason, which may or may not be known to you. Work with the GM as to the nature of your Revenant origins, or leave it up to the GM to slowly reveal your past for you.

Some Revenants choose or are given new names when they are resurrected. They often follow a different path than their predecessor, seeking their own way rather than living a life they cannot recall.

Choosing to be a Revenant means you must take the **Revenant Memories** stunt, which requires you to create a new Past-Life aspect that acts as a second high concept. The Past-Life aspect must incorporate **Revenant** in some way (see Example Past Life Aspects). This new aspect can only be invoked or compelled after your Revenant memories have been activated.

Revenant Stunt

Revenant Memories. Create a Past-Life aspect that represents your character before resurrection. During a scene, you may activate this Past-Life aspect for free. For the remainder of the current scene, you swap out your High Concept aspect with your Past-Life aspect. While the Past-Life aspect is in play, you may not invoke your High Concept. The GM may compel your Past-Life aspect for free at any time before the session ends. The GM may also compel your Past-Life aspect by paying you a fate point for the remainder of the session as fragments of your former self continue to haunt you.

Example Past-Life Aspects: **Revenant of a Tragically Renowned Warrior**; **Revenant of an Archon's Former Lover**; **Revenant of a Merciless Hereseer**.

Kundalini and Degenerates

Kundalini are those who have awakened their inner prana. Prana is the psychic energy that is manifested as one of the Prana Disciplines (page 267). Within the Dominion, unsanctioned Kundalini are called Degenerates, and they are hunted down as Arch Heretics.

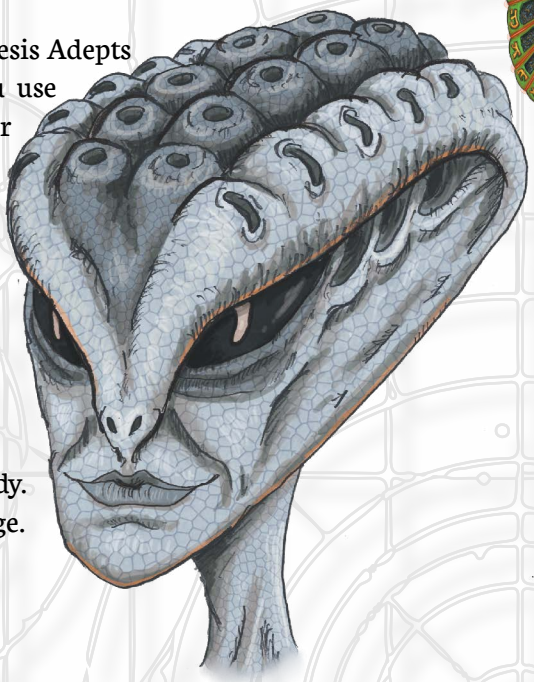
To become a Kundalini, you must take at least the **Awakened Prana** stunt (page 263), which is open to all archetypes that do not list a prana restriction in their limitations. While most archetypes are able to take the **Awakened Prana** stunt, they are treated as Degenerates. Some archetypes have the **Sanctioned Kundalini** stunt listed: it permits them to manifest prana openly and without repercussions from the regime.

As a Degenerate, you receive a secret aspect called **Degenerate** that becomes revealed to any who witness you manifest prana disciplines, or become suspicious of you. Whenever the aspect is revealed, the GM receives one free invoke on it until the end of the session.

There are additional stunts required to master each prana discipline. Refer to the Prana chapter (page 367).

Deipotents

Genesis Adept



You are a member of the secretive Genesis Adepts and a master of the secrets of life. You use your own genetic code as a canvas for your experiments and explorations of the boundaries of life. You conceal your often-freakish appearance behind sealed Adept robes that further add to your already deep mystique.

Genesis Adepts Do...

- ...hide their true nature.
- ...hatch schemes within schemes.
- ...possess complete control of their body.
- ...pursue new biological knowledge.

Genesis Adepts Don't...

- ...ever reveal their secrets.
- ...have the trust of others.
- ...get involved in politics overtly.
- ...let morals get in the way.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **Genesis Adept** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Genesis Adept Bio-Sculptor to the Pharistos*; *Genesis Adept Bio-Architect*; *Genesis Adept Xenogeneticist Researcher*

Sample Troubles: *Just One More Bio-Tweak*; *Nightmarish Appearance*; *Alien Appetites*

Favoured Skills: Deceive, Influence, Science

Archetype Stunts

Spliced Biology: <Animal Species> (attributes). You have spliced your genetic code with that of another species—again. At the beginning of each story, choose a species and write down three physical attributes associated with that species. You may invoke these attributes as aspects by paying a fate point each time. The attributes are treated as facts, as with any aspect. For example: if you choose **Spliced Biology: Feline (sight, smell, claws)**, you may invoke any of these in an appropriate situation. Other examples include: **Reptile (scales, taste, regeneration)**, **Avian (eyes, reflexes, beak)**, and **Squid (tentacles, ink, gills)**.

Plans within Plans. You are a master of hatching schemes and using leverage to get what you want. You may substitute Deceive for Empathy, Influence, or Presence once per session.

Compel Igigi. The Genesis Adepts have implanted genetic conditioning into all of their Igigi creations: Chimeras, Dominars, and Mirror Men, among others. You know the triggers that coerce an Igigi to obey commands. You receive +2 to overcome with Presence or Provoke on an Igigi created by the Adepts. You may spend a fate point to compel an Igigi to obey your command, provided the command does not go against its nature. The GM has the option to decline the compel, even if it is reasonable, but must give you a fate point to do so.

Serum Synthesis. You know the technosophic secrets of synthesizing Serum. Once per session, you may spend a fate point to produce a vial of Serum from within your robes. The Serum is a Beneficial Thing (page 342).

Pharisto

You are one of the genetic divinities of the Dominion. Your kind was created to rule and foster humanity along the Tyrant's Illuminated Path. You are a member of one of the Pharisto houses who rule the Dominion in the Tyrant's name.

Pharistos Do...

- ...carry themselves as the divine rulers they are.
- ...obsess about appearance, rank, and status.
- ...follow the Order Of Things traditions.
- ...ponder their decisions before acting.

Pharistos Don't...

- ...act brashly or impulsively.
- ...interact directly with non-Elevated humans.
- ...show weakness to humans.
- ...perform the work of servants.

High Concept Aspect: Your high aspect must incorporate **Pharisto of House <choose>** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Pharisto Master Architect of House Bal-Amon; Pharisto Justikari of House Na-Cal; Pharisto Warrior of House Val-Hel*

Sample Troubles: *Framed, Disgraced, and on the Run; Thrill Seeker; Outspoken Elevationist*

Favoured Skills: Influence, Presence, Resources

Limitation: You must take the Divine Rule stunt.

Archetype Stunts

Divine Rule (required). Whenever dealing with common or Elevated humans, you receive +2 to your social interactions using Presence, Influence, and Provoke whenever you give instructions or make demands. You may spend a fate point to force a human to obey you, invoking your divine authority, provided the order is not against their nature or existing orders from their master. Should you discover that the human did not follow your orders, the GM will give you the fate point back.

House Resources. Your activities are funded by your house; this grants you two Wealth boosts at the beginning of each story (see Wealth, page 367).

Pharisto Scion. You are a scion of your house and can draw upon its traditions and strengths. Once per session, you may invoke one of your house aspects, though it still costs you a fate point to do so.

Syndicate Overseer. You hold influential rank in a Pharisto Syndicate (choose one) and may use its people and resources against a problem. Once per session, you may summon your Syndicate's lackeys to help you (see Ally Stunts, page 252).

Also see Beneficial Things for: Sycophants (page 351) and Shimmering Veil (page 348).

Theor

You are a Theor; a caste of genetically-engineered Deipotents who possess a higher order intellect with the capacity of a biological analogue. Theors form secretive societies called sects, of which you belong to one (make one up). Each Theor sect is focused towards one scientific goal. Theors are logical beings not prone to emotions or sentiment.

Theors Do...

- ...possess incredible intellects.
- ...think logically and methodically.
- ...pursue knowledge and new discoveries.
- ...act condescending to non-Theors.

Theors Don't...

- ...have interest in politics.
- ...feel strong emotions.
- ...have great social skills.
- ...share secret sect knowledge.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **Theor** into it and may include the name of your sect. Discuss with your GM the nature and pursuits of your sect.

Sample High Concepts: *Theor Extinct Civilization Researcher*; *Theor Researcher of Universal Theory*; *Theor Master of Assassins*

Sample Troubles: *Adventurous Streak*; *Consumed by Artilect Secrets*; *Absent-minded Genius*

Favoured Skills: Investigate, Science, Technosophy

Limitation: You must take the Fugue Computation stunt.

Archetype Stunts

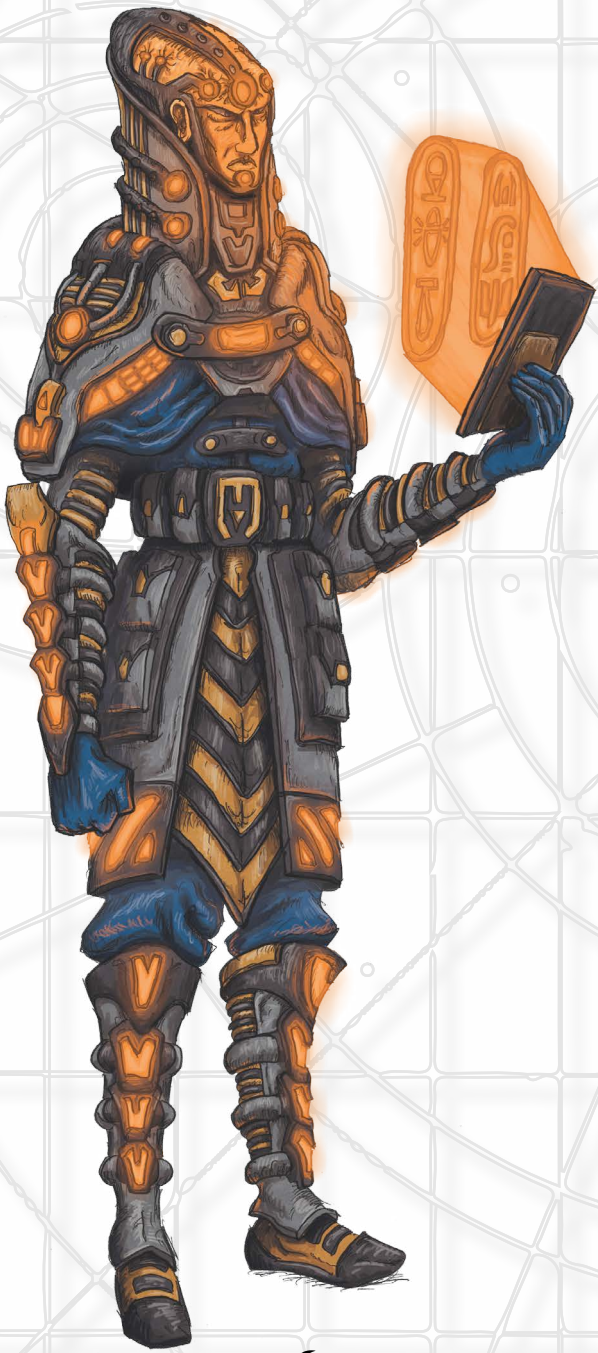
Fugue Computation (required). You may enter a fugue state where you become oblivious to all external stimuli. This meditative state allows you to perform incredible feats of mental computation and problem solving. The meditation lasts a base time of *an hour*, but suffering a consequence breaks you out of your trance. Roll Investigate; each shift reduces the time by one step. Each shift you fail by increases the time by one step, after which time you arrive at no solution; success at a cost may be available at the GM's discretion. If you succeed, you may declare a single fact about the problem at hand, which immediately becomes an aspect for the duration of this session. You receive a free invoke on the aspect if you succeed; two if you succeed with style.

Probability Reckoning. During your fugue computation, you are able to compute the probabilities involving a situation to arrive at a more precise determination of a situation. When you succeed with style on your **Fugue**

Computation roll, you receive an additional free invoke on the created aspect. *Requires Fugue Computation.*

Theoretically. Once per session you may automatically create a Science-related advantage with a free invoke.

Pursuit of Knowledge. You receive +2 to overcome when using Investigate, Science, and Technosophy in the pursuit of new scientific discoveries.



Transmuter

You are a member of the mysterious sect of Transmuters who produce fantastical nano-technologies. Through the mysteries of Dust, you are able to affect matter on a fundamental level; creating, altering, and destroying on a whim. You are a master craftsman and can craft many wonders beyond the ken of outsiders.

Transmuters Do...

- ...manufacture miraculous technologies.
- ...possess mastery of Dust.
- ...vie for status within their sect.
- ...hide behind ritual and ceremony.

Transmuters Don't...

- ...reveal their secrets.
- ...trust others.
- ...pass up an opportunity to make new discoveries.
- ...permit the creation of self-replicating Dust.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **Transmuter** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Respected Transmuter Machinist*; *Travelling Transmuter Performer*; *Transmuter Simulacra Researcher*

Sample Troubles: *Trouble with Authority Figures*; *Moral Superiority*; *Charlatan*

Favoured Skills: The associated Essence of Dust skills: Knack, Technosophy, Science, and Will (page 356).

Limitation: You must take at least one Essence of Dust stunt.

Archetype Stunts

Essence of <choose> Dust (required). Choose one of the Essences of Dust that you have mastered: Alteration, Fabrication, Invocation, or Transmutation (page 356). They behave as skills do, and are based on one of the existing character skills. *You may take this stunt once for each Essence of Dust.*

Transmuter Robes. See Beneficial Things (page 323).

Artifice Maker. You make clockwork Artifices. Once per story, you can pull a helpful artifice out of your robes. (see Ally Stunts, page 252).

Also see additional stunts under each Essence of Dust skill (page 356).

Void Weaver

You are a Void Weaver, and your sect controls near-instantaneous travel within the Dominion. The Dominion depends on you and your sect to maintain commerce across the Dominated Planets. You study the universe and seek answers to the conundrum that is Universal Theory.

Void Weavers Do...

- ...express everything mathematically.
- ...possess great knowledge of propulsion systems.
- ...tinker with all things mechanical.
- ...have sect allies on every planet.

Void Weavers Don't...

- ...feel comfortable on planets, with open skies above.
- ...ever divulge trade secrets.
- ...have financial problems.
- ...pay for passage on Void Weaver vessels.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **Void Weaver** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Void Weaver Grease Monkey*; *Void Weaver Navigator Explorer*; *Void Weaver Unified Theory Researcher*

Sample Troubles: *Agoraphobia*; *Gambling Addiction*; *Obsessed with Going Faster*

Favoured Skills: Science, Technosophy, Resources

Limitation: You are required to take the Cogent Nodule stunt.

Archetype Stunts

Cogent Nodule (required). See Beneficial Things (page 347).

Fugue Computation. See Theor stunt of the same name (page 259).

Odds Are Good. Once per session, you are able to compute the odds of any situation and may substitute Science for any skill when creating an advantage.

Navigator. You receive +2 voidship Navigation (Science) rolls that involve void navigation and calculating your current position in the void.

Learned of Cerebellum

You are a Learned of Cerebellum, a historian and a scribe of events as they unfold. What you witness will ultimately be recorded into the Great Archive for all eternity. You travel the Dominion, recording the history you witness. You bring vast knowledge of past events and obscure knowledge gleaned from the Great Archive on Cerebellum with you wherever you go.

Learned Do...

- ...record important events for prosperity.
- ...frequently spout historical and obscure lore.
- ...understand the Pattern better than most.
- ...have encyclopedic knowledge about many things.

Learned Don't...

- ...ever let knowledge become lost or destroyed.
- ...like to be in physically dangerous situations.
- ...stay quiet for long.
- ...let questions go unanswered.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **Learned** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Learned Explorer into the Unknown*; *Learned Scholar of History*; *Disillusioned Learned Seeking Truth*

Sample Troubles: *Curiosity Gets Me in Trouble*; *History Is Wrong*; *I Like to Hear Myself Talk*

Favoured Skills: Delve, Investigate, Lore

Archetype Stunts

Learned. You are learned and wise, so much so that you may declare a little known story detail that immediately becomes true. An aspect is created for this detail and is attached to the scene, individual, or object. You receive a free invoke on this new aspect. You may do this once per session.

Transducer Nodule. See Beneficial Things (page 347)

Portable Archive. You carry with you a portable archive that contains a large amount of knowledge. Once per session, you can substitute your Lore skill for any other skill when creating an advantage, providing you have enough time to consult the archive on the matter, usually *a few minutes*.

Inspiring History Lesson. When faced with adversity, you are able to retell a historic tale that is appropriate to the situation. When creating an advantage using Lore, you create two free invokes on a success and three invokes if you succeed with style; the free invokes may be used by those you inspired.

Pattern Delver

You are a Pattern Delver, one of the few individuals who understand and can navigate the Patternscape: a virtual realm of the machine and its Solon guardians. You spend most of your time within this digital world, delving its data pathways and uncovering secrets left behind by its Artilect creators. You eschew rules and regulations of the physical world, preferring the freedom and values of the virtual.

As a Pattern Delver, you may be an Elevated or Theor. In addition to the archetype stunts below, you may choose stunts from either the Elevated or Theor archetypes.

Pattern Delvers Do...

- ...worship the Solons as virtual gods.
- ...understand the intricacies of the Pattern.
- ...believe in the ideals of freedom.
- ...fear the Artilects and their minions.

Pattern Delvers Don't...

- ...relate well to the real world.
- ...betray their allies.
- ...give up their trust easily.
- ...ever resist uncovering the secrets of the Pattern.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **<Elevated or Theor> Pattern Delver** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Regime Sanctioned Elevated Pattern Delver; Rebellious Theor Pattern Delver Saboteur; Theor Pattern Delver Explorer*

Sample Troubles: *There's No Danger in This; Curiosity Erased the Ersatz; Revolutionary Saboteur*

Favoured Skills: Delve, Lore, Technosophy

Limitation: You must take the Transducer Nodule stunt.

Archetype Stunt

Transducer Nodule (required). See Beneficial Things (page 347).

Delver Intuition. You know the Pattern better than the real world and can feel its ebb and flow. Once per session you can make one free re-roll on any roll you make within the pattern and keep the better of the two rolls.

Delver Signs. Pattern Delvers leave signs for each other in the Patternscape. You know how to read these and to locate processing cores stashed by your brothers. You receive a +2 on rolls using Delve for the purposes of acquiring cores and never suffer the effects of failure, it is always treated as a tie (see Acquiring More Cores, page 383).

Processing Cores. You receive one extra processing core whenever you connect to the Pattern.

The Regime

Amarenthine

You are one of the Amarenthine, also known as the Undying. You were hand chosen by the Tyrant to receive the Gift of Immortality, and for that you are thankful. You have dedicated yourself to the service of the Tyrant for many centuries, perhaps millennia.

Amarenthine Do...

...receive the highest esteem in the Dominion.
...possess the wisdom of millennia.
...revere the Tyrant Sun for the Gift of Immortality.
...contemplate the nature of existence.

Amarenthine Don't...

...have their words questioned.
...feel any urgency whatsoever.
...get excited about very much.
...act beneath their station.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **Amarenthine** into it.

Example High Concepts: *Amarenthine War Hero*; *Amarenthine Hereseer*; *Recently Gifted Amarenthine*

Example Troubles: *Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely*; *Tired of Living*; *I Can't Die*

Favoured Skills: Influence, Presence, Resources

Limitation: You must take the Gift of Immortality stunt.

Archetype Stunts

Gift of Immortality (required). You were chosen by the Tyrant himself to receive the Gift of Immortality. You are immortal and never age; as a result, whenever you interact with Deipotents and invoke your Amarenthine aspect you receive +3 rather than the standard +2 to your roll.

Sanctioned Kundalini. Same as the **Awakened Prana** stunt (page 363), except that you do not receive the secret **Degenerate** aspect. You are permitted to openly manifest prana disciplines without repercussions.

Contemplation. Through quiet contemplation you can determine the best course of action. You may replace any skill with Lore when creating an advantage that can benefit from your extensive knowledge, once per session—provided you have *half an hour* of quiet time.

Old Allegiances. You have travelled far and wide and have many allies that may be called upon to aid you in times of need. Once per story, when you require help, your allies will come (see Ally Stunts, page 252).

Elevated Human

You are one of the Elevated and trusted servants of the Deipotents. The Elevated are the intermediaries between the gods and the people they rule; often in service of the myriad of Syndicates that serve the Phraristo houses. Your body is covered with tattoos that convey the rank and status of the one you serve. As an Elevated servant, you or your family have been chosen to serve the gods, and in return you receive privileges denied to humans, including education.

Elevated Do...

- ...show devotion to the divine rulers.
- ...seek favour from their masters.
- ...enjoy the privileges of their status.
- ...bear the tattoos of their master.

Elevated Don't...

- ...jeopardize their status.
- ...go against the conditioning to obey.
- ...commit heresy or break laws.
- ...worry about the little people.

High Aspect: Your high aspect must incorporate **Elevated of House <choose>** into it. Select the Pharisto house you serve (page 31).

Sample High Aspects: *Elevated Syndicate Enforcer of House Elo-Him*; *Elevated Pilot of House At-Lan*; *Elevated Majordomo of House Xi-An*

Sample Troubles: *Secretly Aiding the Revolutionaries*; *Delusions of Grandeur*; *Power Hungry*

Favoured Skills: Presence

Archetype Stunts

Favoured Servant. You bear marks as a favoured servant of your Pharisto master. You receive +2 to create an advantage with Presence and Deceive when dealing with Pharistos of your house who do not already have a reason to distrust you.

Syndicateman. Choose a Syndicate that you are a member of; once per session, you may invoke your Syndicate as an aspect for free in a situation where your Syndicate membership or training could prove beneficial. You may not invoke the Syndicate otherwise.

House Conditioning. You have been deeply conditioned by the house you serve in their values and ideology. Once per session, you may invoke one of the house's aspects by spending a fate point.

Specialized Training. Choose two skills; you receive +2 to create an advantage when using either skill.

Hereseer

You are a Hereseer, one of the Tyrant's hounds. You sniff out and eradicate heresy throughout the Dominion. You may act alone or with loyal allies to bring down the threats the Dominion constantly faces. Enemies within and without plot the downfall of the regime—and you stand in their way.

Hereseers Do...

- ...embody the Tyrant's personal justice.
- ...have the regime at their back.
- ...make everyone nervous.
- ...possess advanced martial training.

Hereseers Don't...

- ...ever stop pursuing heretics.
- ...show leniency or kindness.
- ...miss a thing.
- ...show weakness or fear.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **Hereseer** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Hereseer Investigating Brack Incursions*; *Relentless Hereseer Questioner*; *Righteous and Just Hereseer*

Sample Troubles: *Soft Spot for the Downtrodden*; *Unflinching and Brutal*; *Transformist Philosophy*

Favoured Skills: Influence, Investigate, Will

Limitation: You must take the Agent of Tyranny stunt.

Archetype Stunts

Agent of Tyranny (required). You are able to command the resources of the regime in your pursuit of heresy. Once per story you can summon allies to do your bidding, provided that the regime has a presence where you are (see Ally Stunts, page 252).

Inquisitor. You are a master of obtaining information from others through subtle and forceful means; you may use Investigate instead of Empathy or Provoke whenever you are questioning others.

Sanctioned Kundalini. Same as the Awakened Prana stunt (page 363), except that you do not receive the secret Degenerate aspect. You are permitted to openly manifest prana disciplines without repercussions.

Wings of the Zenithrall. See Beneficial Things (page 350).

Watcher

You are one of the famous Watchers: rangers dedicated to guarding the Dominion against all threats. You are well-trained and ever-ready to face down dangers that threaten the Dominion, and many will never hear about your exploits.

Watchers Do...

- ...act a bit peculiar from their time in the deep void.
- ...have a reputation as heroes.
- ...anything to complete the mission.
- ...have a personal code of honour.

Watchers Don't...

- ...get fazed by unexpected situations.
- ...like to be dirt-side.
- ...leave a crew member behind.
- ...ignore threats to the Dominion.

High Concept Aspect: Your high aspect must incorporate **<Elevated or Pharisto> Watcher** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Eccentric Pharisto Watcher Scout*; *Battle-Hardened Elevated Watcher Veteran*; *Inquisitive Pharisto Watcher Explorer*

Sample Troubles: *Safety Is a Thick Hull*; *There Are Things out There*; *Everything Is a Conspiracy*

Favoured Skills: Investigate, Pilot, Survival

Archetype Stunts

Star Dog. You have survived many dangers out in the void; once per session while aboard a voidship, you gain a free invoke on any aspects you create with create an advantage.

Watcher Paranoia. You are always vigilant for things that want to make you dead. You can never be ambushed and always get to roll Tactics for initiative even when surprised.

Dogged Determination. Once per scene, you may immediately clear any one of your stress boxes.

Propaganda Hero. You are a seen as a hero by the people of the Dominion; you receive +2 to Presence when dealing with non-Elevated humans. At the cost of a fate point, you can convince humans to listen to you, as long as they are not already hostile or have reason to distrust you.

The Igigi

Chimera

You are a Chimera: a being created from the genetic material of many others. You were created by the Genesis Adepts for a specific purpose—one that you excel at. Your appearance is based on the qualities that were engineered into you and the creatures from whom you take the best attributes from.

Chimeras Do...

- ...obey their masters.
- ...possess a strange appearance.
- ...excel at their purpose.
- ...act mostly on instinct.

Chimeras Don't...

- ...disobey the Genesis Adepts.
- ...have personal ambitions.
- ...draw attention to themselves.
- ...dream of freedom.

High Concept Aspect: Your high aspect must include **Chimera** in it.

Sample High Concepts: *Sphinx Chimera Guardian*; *Jackal-Headed Chimera Soldier*; *Arachnid Chimera Hunter*

Sample Troubles: *Must Feed Often*; *Driven by Primal Instincts*; *No Hands but Many Tentacles*

Favoured Skills: Athletics, Fight, Physique

Archetype Stunts

Spliced Biology: <Animal Species> (attributes). See stunt of same name under Genesis Adept (page 256).

Chimeric Regeneration. Your body heals at an incredible rate. In an exchange, you may use your action to try and clear a stress box by rolling Physique against a passive opposition equal to the stress box value. If you succeed, you may clear the stress box. If you succeed with style, you may also clear another stress box whose value is less than the one you rolled for. At the end of a conflict, your consequences are automatically considered as treated.

With Purpose. When you invoke your High Concept aspect, you receive +3 rather than the standard +2 when invoking the aspect.

Warrior Pattern. You were created for war; add +1 to the value of each of your physical stress boxes.

Dominar

You are a Dominar, a product of the tanks of the Genesis Adepts and the ultimate warrior of the Dominion. You and your battle brothers are deployed across the Dominated Planets and beyond. You are part of the Dominion fleet, and you enforce the Tyrant's rule with boot and fist. None can stand before the might of the Fleet. Your lifespan is short, only 30 standard years; your hope every day is to die in battle, fighting a worthy opponent, for the glory of the Tyrant.

Dominars Do...

- ...serve the Tyrant Sun.
- ...solve problems with excessive force.
- ...believe that death in battle is salvation.
- ...possess a physique designed for battle.

Dominars Don't...

- ...live long enough to develop long-term thinking.
- ...have any concept of tact or subtlety.
- ...surrender or give up.
- ...ever disobey orders from superiors.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **Dominar** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Special Forces Dominar*; *Dominar Protector to the Pharistos*; *Dominar Void Assault Trooper*

Sample Troubles: *No Such Thing as Excessive Force*; *Every Situation Is a Battle*; *Doubts about the Tyrant*

Favoured Skills: Fight, Shoot, Physique

Limitation: Dominars cannot awaken their prana; they were bred to never possess it. You must also take the Dominar Regeneration stunt.

Archetype Stunts

Dominar Regeneration (required). You were bred to heal at incredible rates. At the end of a scene, all of your consequences are automatically treated. You may roll Physique against opposition equal to the highest consequence you currently suffer. If you succeed, you may downgrade your lowest consequence. If you succeed with style, you may also downgrade the second lowest consequence. See Accelerated Healing (page 240).

Bloody Victory. You firmly believe that drinking the blood of worthy, slain foes bestows upon you some of their power. Worthy enemies are those that were very difficult to defeat. After drinking the blood of an enemy you have slain in single combat, you receive a **Bloody Victory** aspect that you can invoke twice, for free, for physical endeavours (including Fight attacks) for the rest of the session.

Death before Dishonour. You are able to keep going against all odds. All of your physical stress boxes receive +1 to their value.

Battle Conditioning. You have been conditioned to win at all costs. Whenever faced with fear or the prospect of retreat, you receive +2 to your defence roll against these situations.

Also see Beneficial Things for: Projector Axe (page 338) and Dominar Battle Armour (page 341).

Mirror Man

You are a Mirror Man, an androgynous, exact duplicate of every Mirror Man ever created. You hide behind a uniquely grotesque mask that gives you the individuality you so desperately seek. You are a shape-shifter and can take the form of anyone you have studied for a few minutes. Your profession could be as an entertainer, lover, spy, or even assassin.

Mirror Men Do...

- ... resent their lack of physical individuality.
- ...embody great loyalty and honour.
- ...possess shape-shifting abilities.
- ...obsess about freedom and individuality.

Mirror Men Don't...

- ...inspire trust in others.
- ...undermine the trust they have earned.
- ...disobey orders from a Genesis Adept.
- ...consider themselves property.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **Mirror Man** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Mirror Man Stage Performer, Mirror Man Spy, Mirror Man Assassin*

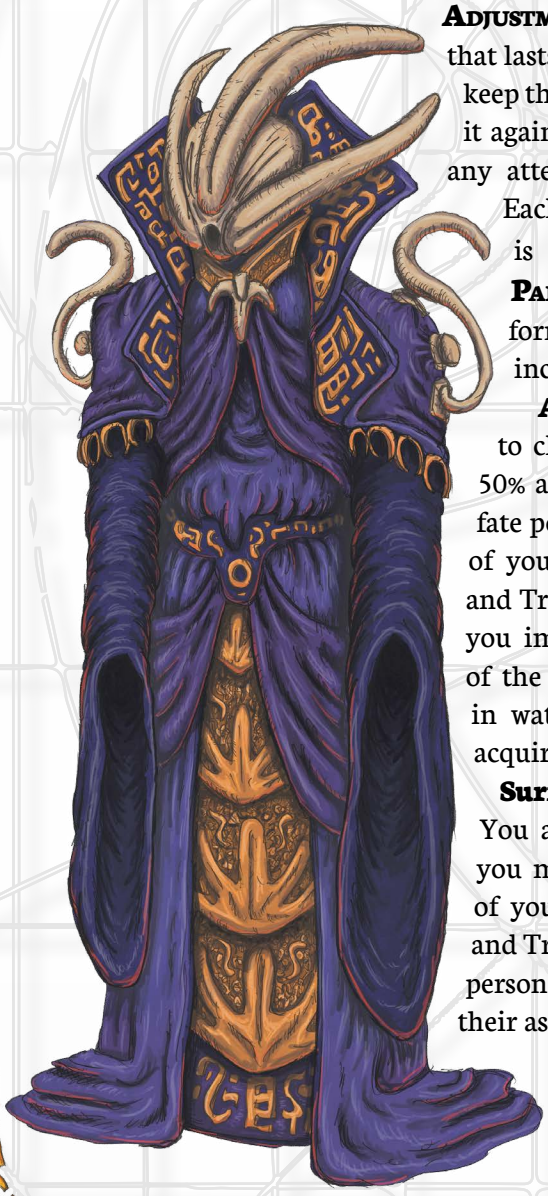
Sample Troubles: *Impersonating a Pharisto*; *Stealing Lives Is a High*; *Collects Flayed Faces*

Favoured Skills: Deceive, Empathy, Knack

Limitation: You must take the Freakish Reflection stunt.

Archetype Stunts

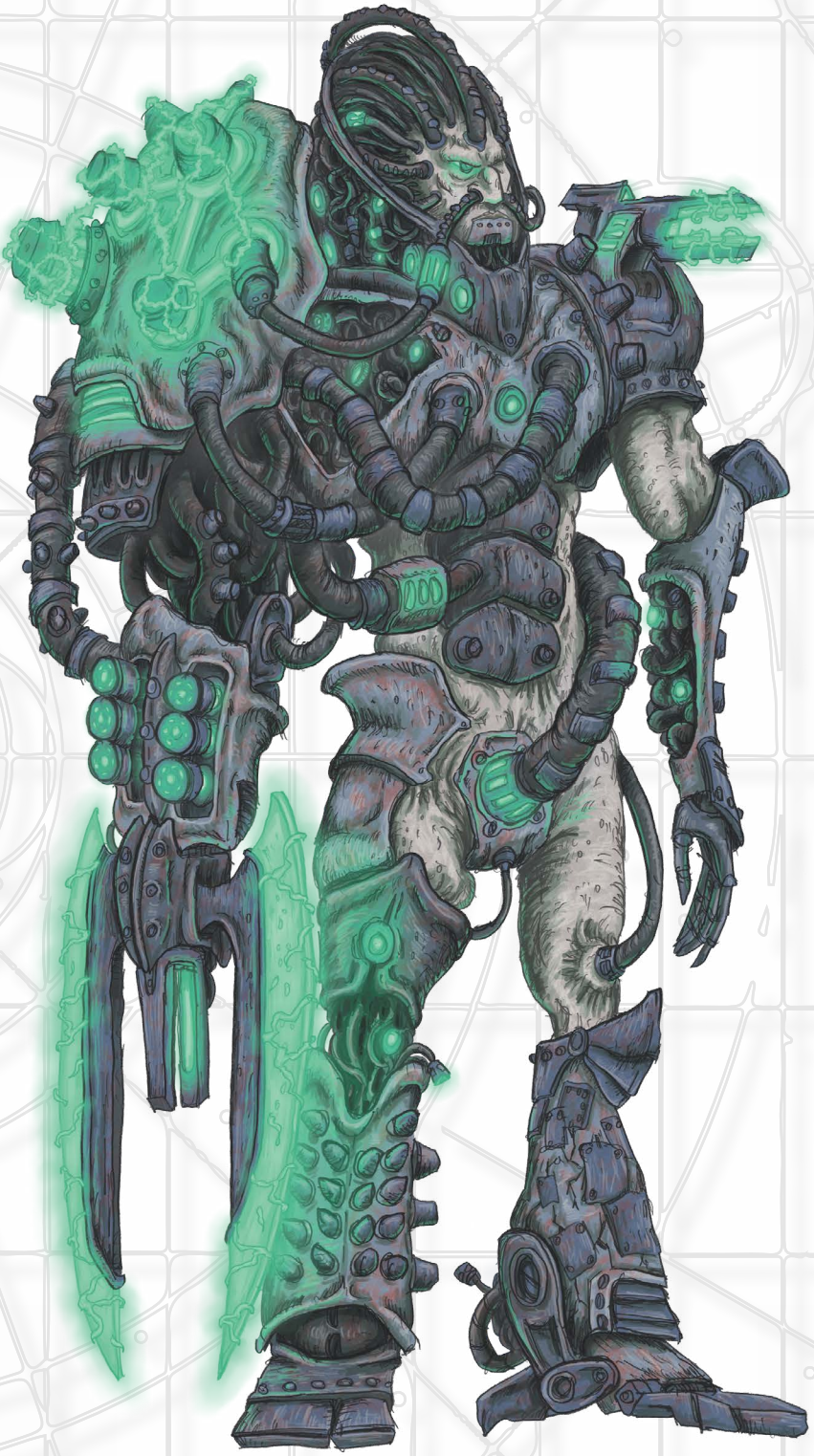
Freakish Reflection (required). You may change your physical appearance. Your Deceive skill is used to determine how well you imitate your target both physically and in mannerisms. The change takes *a few minutes* and is agony, as your bones dislocate and muscles re-adjust. You receive the character aspect **Adjustment Pains** as a result of the change that lasts until the end of the session. You may keep the new shape until you decide to change it again and may use your Deceive to oppose any attempts at uncovering your deception. Each time you shape-change, a free invoke is stacked on an existing **Adjustment Pains** aspect. You revert to your natural form when rendered unconscious—including during sleep.



Animist. You have mastered the ability to change into beasts that are at between 50% and 200% of your mass. By spending a fate point, you may temporarily replace one of your aspects (except your High Concept and Trouble aspects) with one from the beast you imitated. You gain the basic attributes of the creature such as a fish must breathe in water and a bird may fly. You do not acquire any stunts.

Surrogate. You are a master of imitation. You are so good at imitating your targets, you may spend a fate point to replace one of your aspects (except your High Concept and Trouble aspects) with one of their known personality aspects. You must first discover their aspects through interaction with them.

Also see Beneficial Things for: Grotesque Mirror Man Mask (page350)



Remnant

You are a Remnant, a relic from the First Nihilim Invasions, conceived and created by the Artilects through the merging of man and machine into a super soldier. The Dominion abandoned you, and then hunted down almost all of your kind after the Artilect Rebellion ended. Somehow you have survived all these millennia and have recently awoken from stasis sleep. You now make your own way within the Dominion, prolonging your existence for one day longer.

Remnants Do...

- ...look like monstrously augmented freaks.
- ...have enhanced senses, endurance, and strength.
- ...have a feared reputation.
- ...have a cynical outlook on existence.

Remnants Don't...

- ...owe anything to anyone.
- ...have a moral compass.
- ...suffer from poison, disease, or old age.
- ...belong anywhere except a battlefield.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **Remnant** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Remnant Veteran of the First Nihilim Invasions*; *Former Remnant Reaver*; *Remnant Seeking His Lost Humanity*

Sample Troubles: *Has a Conscience*; *Uncontrollable Anger*; *Slowly Failing Systems*

Favoured Skills: Shoot, Physique, Technosophy

Limitation: Your body is almost entirely machine; you cannot ever awaken your prana. You must take the Remnant stunt.

Archetype Stunts

Remnant (required). You are a cybernetic warrior; you do not require food, water, or oxygen. You can survive in the cold void of space and are immune to toxins and biological agents. Pain to you is just a red status light. You receive +2 to Physique rolls involving endurance and resistance to non-lethal damage (like shock attacks). You also take mental stress from static attacks.

Redundant Systems. Your body has redundant, self-repairing cybernetic organs and functions. Once per session you can immediately remove the lowest consequence you have suffered.

Armoured Plates. Your body is covered with armoured plating; add +1 to all of your physical stress box values.

I'll Be Back! You are a master of staying alive to fight another day; what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. Whenever you concede a conflict, you earn one additional fate point.

Simulacra

You are the pinnacle of Transmuter achievement, an atomic-scale, clockwork intelligence that is purely mechanical in nature. Your existence is a work of art and incredible complexity that took over a century to complete. You are immortal; your functions are maintained by the Dustmites that act as your immune system. The Transmuters treat you as invaluable art, and many would like to possess you as a status symbol. You are emotionless and logical, sometimes not able to cope with situations because your mechanical programming did not account for it.

Simulacra cannot learn new skills or change their programming naturally. At minor milestones, Simulacra cannot switch their skills like other characters. At significant milestones, rather than receive one additional skill point, Simulacra receive an additional free stunt. Their aspects, with the exception of the High Concept, may change throughout play as would any other character's. It is possible for a Simulacra to be upgraded, though such work is delicate and difficult and can only be performed by a Master Transmuter.

Simulacra Do...

- ...look like an incredible work of art.
- ...suffer degradation in dusty environments.
- ...have Dustmites that maintain their systems.
- ...possess awkward and badly-timed, simulated emotions.

Simulacra Don't...

- ...have any biological needs.
- ...learn new things.
- ...handle complex social situations.
- ...have recognition as true intelligences.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **Simulacra** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Simulacra Virtuoso*; *Escaped Simulacra Entertainer*; *Simulacra Research Assistant*

Sample Troubles: *Badly Timed Attempts at Humour*; *Spouts Knowledge at Inopportune Times*; *First Order Klutz*

Favoured Skills: Knack, Lore, Technosophy

Limitations: You are not alive and therefore cannot awaken your prana. You must take the Clockwork Life stunt.

Archetype Stunts

Clockwork Life (required). You are immune to psychological effects such as fear, anger, and provocation; as a result, you do not have a mental stress track. Since you have no emotions, your intentions and aspects cannot be read using Empathy or Deceive. You are immune to all environmental effects, with the exception of dusty environments. In a dusty environment without your protective suit, you receive the **Clogged with Dust** character aspect, for which the GM receives a free invoke. The aspect lasts for the duration of the scene in the dusty environment and the scene immediately after you have left it. Additionally, you do not heal normally and must be repaired. Any rolls to treat your consequences must be done with Technosophy. Your body possesses great strength and you receive +2 to Physique when involved in feats of strength. Static pulses cause physical stress to you as your Dustmites are destroyed and must be replenished.

Metal Body. Your body is reinforced by strong alloys; add +1 to the value of each of your physical stress boxes.

Masterpiece. Your body is a fantastic work of art; wherever you go, people stare and are in awe of your appearance (when not wearing your protective suit). You might have beautiful decorative wings, some fantastic visage, or every inch of your body carved with intricate designs. You receive +2 to Presence when dazzling others with your appearance. Spending a fate point allows you to create an effective distraction where all eyes and attention in the room will be on you and you only.

Essence of <choose> Dust. You possess a dust fabricator built into your body that can activate one of the Essences of Dust known to Transmuters (page 356). *This aspect can only be taken once.*

Jejune

You are one of the failed, discarded creations of the Genesis Adepts. You and your people were created as a worker species for the gods—and they found you wanting. Your ancestors found freedom and flourished on the planet you hail from. You are a proto-human: almost but not quite human. You possess certain traits that have been emphasized in your people, such as increased strength, endurance, or adaptability. You discovered a vast universe after you were abducted by the sky gods who chose you from among your people to serve them.

Jejune Do...

- ...hold reverence for the sky gods.
- ...prefer primitive and easily understood tools.
- ...view technology as magic.
- ...excel in wilderness areas.

Jejune Don't...

- ...understand technology.
- ...act civilized.
- ...like civilization and void travel.
- ...break their tribal taboos.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **Jejune** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Jejune Thrall of the Battletorium*; *Jejune Hunter*; *Jejune Tribal Warrior*

Sample Troubles: *The Gods Bleed Too*; *Superstitious Nature*; *No More Chains!*

Favoured Skills: Physique, Stealth, Survival

Limitation: May not begin the game with any ranks in Technosophy. However, you may buy ranks in Technosophy after reaching a milestone.

Archetype Stunts

Worker Species. You receive +1 to each physical stress box value from your natural toughness and +2 to overcome and create an advantage with Physique when performing feats of strength or endurance.

Divine Gift. Choose one of your aspects. You consider it a gift from the sky gods and when you invoke it, you gain a +3 to your roll rather than the standard +2.

Proto-Mind. Your mind is primitive and this gives you +2 to Will when defending against prana disciplines that affect the mind. If you spend a fate point, you automatically succeed on your defend action.

Giant. You are giant in stature, standing 3 to 5 metres (10 feet to 16 feet) tall, which also makes you a large target. You receive an additional +1 stress value bonus and must use Physique rather than Athletics when defending against Shoot attacks.

Societies

Battlemaster of Suprema

You are a Battlemaster: a human paragon of the battlefield. None may match your tactical genius in the heat of battle. You are a member of a venerable and hereditary order of Battlemasters who trace their lineage to pre-Dominate times. The Battlemasters study battle as the ultimate art form, and you have dedicated your life to its mastery. You travel the Dominion, applying your craft wherever it may be needed, seeking to make a name for yourself so that it may be recorded and remembered by the scribes of your order.

Battlemasters Do...

- ...believe that battle is the ultimate art form.
- ...receive the highest recognition as the ultimate warriors.
- ...worship their great warrior ancestors.
- ...seek a return to the good old days.

Battlemasters Don't...

- ...forget *The Shame*.
- ...ever betray their honour or word.
- ...miss an opportunity for fame and glory.
- ...let the weak suffer.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **Battlemaster** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Travelling Battlemaster Troubadour*; *Battlemaster Paragon of Justice*; *Aged Battlemaster Combat Instructor*

Sample Troubles: *Discretion Is the Better Part of Valour*; *Old War Injury*; *Out to Prove Myself*

Favoured Skills: Fight, Shoot, Tactics

Limitation: You must take the Battle Conditioning stunt.

Archetype Stunts

Battle Conditioning (required). You are conditioned to quickly take control of dangerous situations. When you roll success with style on your initiative roll (Tactics), you receive an additional boost for the conflict (see Initiative, page 242).

Battlemaster Charge. In the first exchange of battle, you may charge an opponent who is up to 2 zones away and make a Fight attack against them at +2, providing the passive opposition to pass each zone is 1 or less.

Shunt Ricochet. You have mastered the art of reflecting ranged energy attacks at a target of your choice when using a shunt shield. Whenever you succeed with style on your Athletics defence, you may trade your boost for a Fair (+2) attack at a target of your choice in your zone or an adjacent one. You may only do this when you are attacked with projector weaponry. Your attacker gets to defend against this attack.

Battlemastery. You are skilled at finding weakness in your opponent's defences. Once per session, you may prevent your target from using stress and force them to suffer a consequence. This immediately takes out opponents who do not have consequences.

Also see Beneficial Things for: Macrocarbon Battlesuit (page 341) and Holocaust Blade (page 339).

Proxicutioner

You are a Proxicutioner: a master assassin and elite agent of the Feud by Proxy. Long ago, you were selected and trained at the Secret School in the arts of stealth, deception, and murder; the Regime sent you out to fulfill your duty to the Proxicutioners. Your true identity is likely a secret, covered up in lies and pretexts. Your handlers dispatch you on perilous missions for the Pharisto Houses, to assassinate their rivals and neutralize their threats.

Proxicutioners are chosen from Elevated, Pharistos, and Theors. In addition to the archetype stunts below, you may choose stunts from one of these archetypes.

Proxicutioners Do...

- ...have a supernatural reputation for killing.
- ...work best alone.
- ...instil fear, dread, and paranoia.
- ...possess infinite patience.

Proxicutioners Don't...

- ...take unnecessary risks.
- ...reveal their secret identity.
- ...ever break contracts.
- ...permit the Secret School secrets to be revealed.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **<Elevated, Pharisto or Theor> Proxicutioner** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Elevated Proxicutioner Infiltrator; Pharisto Proxicutioner by Night, Popinjay by Day; Theor Proxicutioner, Master of Assassins*

Sample Troubles: *Rivals in House Val-Hel; Disrespectful of Authority; Likes to Make a Bloody Mess*

Favoured Skills: Athletics, Fight, Stealth

Limitation: You must take the Phantom stunt.

Archetype Stunts

Phantom (required). You are a master of infiltration and receive +2 to all actions with Stealth while sneaking into a place. When you fail your Stealth roll and are noticed, you may immediately spend a fate point to compel the opposition to not see you.

Execution. You are an expert at dispatching your opponents. Once per session, you can prevent your target from using stress boxes against a single Fight or Shoot attack (choose one); it goes directly to consequences. This immediately takes out any NPC without consequences.

Combat Acrobatics. You may move to an adjacent zone even if blocked by your opponent(s), simply by going over, under, or to the side of them. When moving to the next zone, you may make an attack on one of your opponents using your Athletics.

Confusion. When you succeed with style on your defence against multiple melee opponents, you may trade in your boost to force your attacker to attack his ally, who must now defend against a Fair (+2) attack.

Also see Beneficial Things for: Halographic Decoy (page 348) and Reaperang (page 339).

Aliens

Hroon

You are Hroon, a native of the planet Hroonoon. You were sprouted from a spore either on your homeworld or somewhere else and have since travelled the marvellous universe, seeking the tasty pleasures other planets have to offer. At times you attach yourself to others and travel with them, preferring their company, while attempting to learn more about their strange society, which intrigues you.

Hroon Do...

- ...love the taste of exciting carrion.
- ...possess senses beyond the ken of humans.
- ...become what they eat, literally.
- ...instil revulsion in humans and Deipotents alike.

Hroon Don't...

- ...understand many human concepts.
- ...like to metamorphosize into non-telepathic beings.
- ...have much interest in technosophy.
- ...feel pain from physical harm suffered.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **Hroon** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Hroon Planetary Explorer*; *Hroon Voidship Vermin Herder*; *Hroon Infiltrator*

Sample Troubles: *Secret Longings for Taste of Human*; *Way Too Helpful*; *Always Collecting Corpses*

Favoured Skills: Deceive, Empathy, Stealth

Limitations: You cannot awaken prana in the traditional sense, though you can be telepathic without prana awakening and must take the Hroon Telepathy stunt. You cannot begin the game with any ranks in Technosophy.

Archetype Stunts

Hroon Telepathy (required). You communicate telepathically in your fungal form and receive +2 to Will when defending against mental attacks and mental control. You can communicate telepathically with others who are up to 500 metres (1640 feet) away. If you spend a fate point, you can establish telepathic contact with up your Will rating of individuals simultaneously, who can all communicate together through your mind until the end of the scene. This communication cannot be eavesdropped on, except through telepathic reading of their minds.

Hroon Metamorphosis. After digesting a creature, you are able to take its form by moulting over the course of *a day*. When you emerge from your cocoon, you now have the appearance of the creature you digested. You lose your Hroon Telepathy stunt unless the creature you consumed had awakened their prana, though you

cannot use the disciplines they mastered. You can spend a fate point to absorb an aspect of the creature you consumed, and the absorbed aspect temporarily replaces one of your own aspects (it cannot be your High Concept or Trouble aspects). Your transformation does not confer any stunts the victim may have had.

Distributed Nervous System. The Hroon do not have organs; their brain and nervous system is distributed throughout their entire body. As a result, Hroon do not feel pain in the traditional sense. Mild and moderate physical consequences that you suffer cannot be invoked against you. However, they still represent the physical damage done to your body, and you may be taken out as usual.

Herd Puppeteer. You receive +2 to overcome with Telepathy whenever you are taking telepathic control of small creatures. To do so, you only need to overcome their Will.

Also see Beneficial Things for: Hroon Carrion Herd (page 352).

Tect

You are Tect, and your people once ruled the greatest and most advanced empire in the galaxy. That was before internal conflict and the Techno Scourge wiped your people out. Now, scattered communities of your people struggle against the coming extinction. You are a cybernetic centipede-like being who possesses the technosophic secrets of your race. You search for a way to restore the Tect civilization to its former glory and to reclaim the accursed Seedling Worlds from the Techno Scourge.

Tect Do...

- ...have many cybernetic enhancements.
- ...possess advanced technosophic and scientific knowledge.
- ...have six legs, four arms and two brains.
- ...move easily across any surface, including walls and ceilings.

Tect Don't...

- ...wish to witness their civilization go extinct.
- ...feel welcome anywhere.
- ...return to the twisted Seedling Worlds.
- ...pass up an opportunity to raise their people's fortunes.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **Tect** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Tect Voidship Engineer*; *Tect Techno Scourge Researcher*; *Tect Warrior For-Hire*

Sample Troubles: *Bitter about the Techno Scourge*; *Science Is about Taking Risks*; *Butter Fingers*

Favoured Skills: Delve, Science, Technosophy

Limitation: You are mostly machine and as a result cannot awaken your prana. You must take the Tect Savvy stunt.

Archetype Stunts

Tect Savvy (required). When invoking your Tect aspect for the purposes of studying and uncovering scientific knowledge and enigmas, you receive +3 on your roll rather than the standard +2.

Auxiliary Cores. Once per session you may activate your auxiliary cores while delving the Pattern. When you do, you immediately receive 2 processing cores.

Combat Carapace. Your carapace is armoured and shielded; add +1 to the value of each of your physical stress boxes.

Technosophic Redemption. Your species is very advanced in technosophy; whenever repairing anything, you succeed on a tie and can succeed at a minor cost on a failure, rather than the standard serious cost.

Also see Beneficial Things for: Tect Drones (page 352) and Transducer Nodule (page 347).

Voghr

You are Voghr: an alien brute from the planet Vog. Originally discovered and befriended by the Battlemasters, your kind has since fallen alongside your allies. Your people were instrumental in dislodging the Nihilim from Baroque during the Second Nihilim Invasions, but now they are confined to their home planet. You managed to escape your planet and now journey throughout the Dominion, using your brawn and cleverness to get by.

Voghr Do...

- ...feed off radiation and can survive extreme cold.
- ...have a tough hide, spiked tail, and excellent senses.
- ...possess a predatory intelligence and cunning.
- ...easily intimidate everyone.

Voghr Don't...

- ...function well in hot temperatures.
- ...ever oppose the Battlemaster brothers.
- ...break oaths or promises, no matter what.
- ...fit into many places due to their great stature.

High Concept Aspect: Your high concept must incorporate **Voghr** into it.

Sample High Concepts: *Voghr Mercenary*; *Voghr Battletorium Champion*; *Voghr Bounty Hunter*

Sample Troubles: *Anger Leads to Smashing*; *Wanted on Five Planets*; *Will Lie for Profit*

Favoured Skills: Fight, Physique, Survival

Limitation: Your lizard brain is too primitive to ever awaken prana. You must take the Fearsome Terror stunt.

Archetype Stunts

Fearsome Terror (required). You receive +2 to Provoke when attacking your enemies mentally using fear.

Armoured Scales. Your hide is covered with tough scales that act as a natural armour. Add +2 to each of your physical stress boxes.

Spit Acid. You may spit acid at enemies who are in the same zone as you, using Shoot. If you succeed with style on your attack (based solely on the dice result), your opponent may not invoke any armour benefit aspects against the attack.

Voghr Regeneration. Your consequences are automatically considered as treated at the end of the scene. You may spend a fate point and downgrade your lowest consequence at the end of a scene (see Accelerated Healing, page 240).

Chapter Eleven
Skills

Skills define the physical, mental, and social abilities of your character. They are the attributes that define what your character may do, and how well they can do it. Skills define everything from how smart you are to how well you drive a vehicle. Skills follow the standard pyramid rules from Fate Core.

See *Skills* in Fate Core, page 46.

Unranked Skills

When rolling for a skill which the character does not have any ranks in, the character is considered **Mediocre (+0)** at the skill.

Using Skills

The skill descriptions below provide examples of the four standard actions: Overcome, Create an Advantage, Attack, and Defend, as well as the new Notice action. Not all skills possess all five actions; though all provide Overcome and Create an Advantage. Additional actions may be added to skills that do not have them through Stunts.

See *The Four Actions* in Fate Core, page 134.

There may be instances where it is appropriate to use an action that the skill does not normally provide. The GM can make exceptions to the use of a skill when the narrative calls for it.

An example of non-standard use of a skill:

> Tavian the Pharisto Lord has angered a rival house. His enemies wish to use subtle means to punish him, and they resort to destroying his wealth. They use their Influence to damage his property and investments. Tavian must use his Resources skill against their Influence skill in a defence action. The damage caused by the attack goes on his wealth stress track for the rest of the current story—and possibly the next one too.

Notice Action

A new, fifth action called Notice has been added to each character skill. Rather than a single skill that represents your ability to notice things, the Notice action has been rolled into each skill. Depending on the situation and the nature of the thing you should take notice of, the GM will ask you to roll one of your existing skills that most closely matches the nature of the thing you are taking notice of. Notice does not usually cost you your exchange action when the GM asks for a roll, but you may be required to use your action if you are actively trying to discover something.

Skill Permissions

It must be noted that many skills fall into very broad categories and may have more than one use in various situations. Because the skills are intentionally broad, it is your character concept and aspects that define much of the context for your skills. Your aspects are a good indicator for what you would not know, what you might know, and what you definitely know.

When your character aspects indicate that **you wouldn't know** what you are trying to achieve, the **passive difficulty will be Fair (+2)**. When your concept indicates that **you might know** what you are trying to achieve, the **passive difficulty will be Average (+1)**. When your concept is clear that **you do know**, there is **no passive difficulty** to your roll. The passive difficulty should never be more than Fair (+2) in this respect, though it may be adjusted further by the difficulty of the task at hand.

> An example of this concept would be Science, as the skill encompasses all aspects of science. This does not necessarily mean that your character is both a master of the biosciences and astronomy at the same time. Your aspects will indicate where your expertise lies exactly. If you had an aspect such as **Theor Cyberneticist**, for example, and you had to roll for something related to cybernetics, your roll would fall into the **you do know** category. However, should you need to roll to calculate the optimal trajectory of a voidship (navigation using Science) in order to avoid any Dominion entanglements, your passive difficulty could be Average (+1) or Fair (+2), depending.

The passive opposition is only a baseline; the GM may assign additional difficulty based on circumstances.

A **Remnant Gun-for-Hire** is knowledgeable in the repair and maintenance of his projector and armour. However, now he must roll Technosophy in order to hack a lock that is blocking his way. He is cybernetic in nature, but his concept is a for-hire soldier and as a result the passive difficulty might only be Average (+1)—what you might know. Fortunately for him, a **Retired Proxicutioner** is with him who is an expert at breaking security systems. The Proxicutioner would not have any passive opposition on the Technosophy roll because of their concept.

A **Tol-Teq Mercenary Pharisto** has obtained a memeticrystal with data related to his investigation. Since the mercenary is not that adept at combing data for information, the passive difficulty on his Investigation roll might be Fair (+2)—what you don't know. He decides to take it to a **Theor Pattern Delver** he knows. The Delver will also roll Investigation when combing the data, without any passive opposition.

Skill Permission Opposition

- **Would Know** – Mediocre (+0) base opposition.
- **Might Know** – Average (+1) base opposition.
- **Wouldn't Know** – Fair (+2) base opposition.

Skill and Gear

It is assumed your character has the tools required to do whatever job a skill requires. When using a skill such as Knack, your character is assumed to have the tools necessary to repair a weapon, or build a shelter. Should the tools be very specific and unlikely that your character would happen to have them on hand, you may spend a fate point to declare that they have access to the right tools.

Starting Equipment

It is safe to assume that if a skill encompasses a type of equipment such as Fight and Shoot you may start with a weapon appropriate to the skill. Non-beneficial equipment has no mechanical benefits and simply provides permission for you to use your skill. If you want to have mechanical benefits from your gear, see Beneficial Things (page 323).

Skill Stunts

Each skill is accompanied by pre-made stunts, but you're free to create your own stunts as summarized under Custom Stunts (page 235).

Skill List

- **Athletics** - Physical dexterity, balance, and fitness.
- **Deceive** - Lying and misdirection, either by word or deed.
- **Delve** - Navigation, combat, and defence within The Pattern.
- **Drive** - Operation of ground and waterborne vehicles.
- **Empathy** - Reading others to determine truthfulness, mood, or bearing.
- **Fight** - Close-quarters combat using unarmed and armed techniques.
- **Influence** - Your ability to get others to aid you.
- **Investigate** - Discovering things from clues.
- **Knack** - Artistic expression, working with low technology, and general knack for things physical.
- **Lore** - General knowledge regarding places, people, and things.
- **Pilot** - Operation of aerial, underwater, and space vehicles.
- **Physique** - Natural strength and endurance. Improves the physical stress track.
- **Presence** - Your social bearing and ability to get along with people.
- **Provoke** - The ability to interrogate or otherwise provoke negative emotions in others.
- **Resources** - Measure of your personal wealth and standard of living. Improves the wealth stress track.
- **Science** - Formal education regarding the sciences.
- **Shoot** - Use of personal and manually-operated ranged weaponry.
- **Stealth** - Sneaking, shadowing, and avoiding detection.
- **Survival** - Knowledge of how to stay alive in hostile environments.
- **Tactics** - Strategic planning and execution in battle.
- **Technosophy** - Knowledge of technology and how to operate and manipulate it.
- **Will** - Mental fortitude and resistance to mental attacks. Improves the mental stress track.

Athletics

The Athletics skill represents your general level of physical fitness, whether through training, natural gifts, or enhancements (cybernetic or genetic). It's how good you are at moving your body.

Overcome: Athletics allows you to overcome any obstacle that requires physical movement—dodging, jumping, running, climbing, swimming, etc. You use overcome actions with Athletics to move between zones in a conflict if there's a situation aspect or other obstacle in your way. You also roll Athletics to chase or race in any contests or challenges that rely on these types of activities. Athletics is also what gets you out of the way of dangerous things.

Create an Advantage: When you are create an advantage with Athletics, you're jumping to **High Ground**, **Sprinting Faster** than the opponent can keep up with, or performing **Dazzling Acrobatic Manoeuvres** in order to confound your foes.

Attack: Athletics may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Athletics is used as a catch-all skill to roll for defence in a physical conflict, against close quarters, and against ranged attacks.

Notice: Athletics is used to assess another's litheness and agility. It can also be used to notice a trap and to get out of its way, or to notice things coming at you quickly.

Athletics Stunts

Hardcore Parkour. +2 to overcome actions with Athletics if you are in a chase across rooftops, through abandoned industrial sites, or other similarly precarious environments.

Dazing Counter. When you succeed with style on a defend action against an opponent's Fight roll, you automatically counter with a blow that stuns your opponent. You add the **Dazed** situation aspect to your opponent and receive a free invoke instead of a boost.

Martial Artist. You may use Athletics rather than Fight when making unarmed attacks.

Shield Fighter. You are an expert at fighting with physical shields. When fighting with a physical shield, you receive an additional +1 to defence against attacks made with the Fight skill.

Deceive

The Deceive skill is all about lying and misdirecting people through word or deed. Deceive is what makes a good disguise and also hides your true intentions. It is the skill you use for determining whether you pulled off your disguise or impersonation. You can also use Deceive to do small tricks of sleight-of-hand and misdirection.

Overcome: Use Deceive to bluff your way past someone, or to get another to believe your lies, or to get information out of someone through trickery. For nameless NPCs, this is just an overcome roll, but for PCs or named NPCs, it requires a contest or challenge, which the target opposes with Empathy. Winning this contest can justify placing a situation aspect on your target, if buying into your lie could help you in a future scene. Stealing without getting caught is Deceive opposed by the target's Athletics.

Create an Advantage: Use Deceive to create momentary distractions, a **Cover Story**, or **False Impressions**. You could perform a feint in a swordfight, putting an opponent **Off-Balance** and setting you up for an attack. You could do the whole, "What's that over there!" trick to give you a **Head Start** when you run away. You could establish a **Wealthy Pharisto Cover Story** for when you attend a house ball.

Attack: Deceive may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: You can use Deceive to throw off Investigation attempts with false information or as a defence action against Empathy rolls to discern your true motives.

Notice: Deceive is used to discover aspects about another through trickery. It can also be used to locate physical clues about nefarious activity done by others. You can use it to discover how a security system was broken or how someone may have gained entry into the Pharisto's mansion.

Deceive Stunts

Lies upon Lies. You receive +2 to create an advantage with Deceive against someone who has believed one of your lies earlier in a session.

Mind Games. You can use Deceive in place of Provoke to make mental attacks, as long as the attack includes an intentional lie.

Manipulator. You receive an additional invoke on any advantages you create with Deceive that are based on lies.

Confidence Trick. You are a master of social engineering; you may substitute Deceive in place of Stealth whenever you infiltrate a place openly using some form of social engineering.

Delve

The Delve skill is used to interact with and understand the Patternscape. The skill represents your ability to navigate and understand the abstract environments of the Pattern and to effect changes within it. The Pattern is a very complex construct that requires deep understanding of its concepts and protocols. This skill represents the ability to navigate, to break systems, and to stay safe within the Pattern. It does not cover sorting through information (Investigate), interacting with its denizens (Presence), deceiving others (Deceive), or moving undetected (Stealth) within the Pattern.

See *the Pattern*, page 380.

Overcome: Use Delve to acquire processing cores, to overcome digital security measures, or to take control of various processes; many of these activities are handled as contests or challenges as detailed in the Pattern chapter.

Create an Advantage: Delve is used to probe a system for **Security Weaknesses**, to create sub-processes for a **Distributed Attack**, or to build a **Data Fortress** to defend against retaliation.

Attack: Delve is used to make digital attacks on other entities within the Pattern.

Defend: Delve is used to defend against digital attacks within the Pattern.

Notice: Delve is used to locate information within the Pattern and to notice digital signs left behind by others that could indicate a warning. Delve is also used detect a weak Pattern signal.

Delve Stunts

Hacker. You are an expert at breaking into systems. You receive +2 to overcome using Delve when breaking into systems inside the Pattern.

Anonymous. You are a master of digital misdirection. You receive +2 to Stealth when opposing others who attempt to discover your identity and location within the Pattern.

Latent Core Hacks. Once per session, you may immediately acquire two processing cores (see Processing Cores, page 380).

Pattern Mastery. You are a master of the Pattern; when you create an advantage using Delve, you receive an additional free invoke.

Also see Beneficial Things for: Pattern Transducer (page 349), Transducer Nodule (page 347), and Ersatz Intelligence (page 347).

Drive

Drive is all about operating vehicles that go fast and operate on water and on the ground: ground cars, palanquins, boats, and carts. Standard operation does not require a roll if you are familiar with the type of vehicle already. Drive behaves like Athletics does whenever you are driving a vehicle.

Overcome: Drive is used to overcome the complexities of operating various types of vehicles. This skill is the equivalent of Athletics when inside a vehicle. Obstacles to overcome might be rough terrain or maze-like streets.

Create an Advantage: You can use Drive to create a **Convenient Shortcut** in a race, **Erratic Swerving** to make it harder for your enemies to shoot you or the vehicle, and **Pulling Alongside** the enemy vehicle so that the other players can board it.

Attack: Drive can only be used to attack by ramming the vehicle into people or obstacles. When you ram a vehicle, your vehicle receives an amount of stress equal to what you inflicted on a vehicle or half the amount you inflicted on another person.

Defend: Avoiding damage to a vehicle in a physical conflict is one of the most common uses of Drive. You can also use it to defend against advantages being created against you or overcome actions of someone trying to move past you in a vehicle.

Notice: Drive is used to notice things about vehicles, such as whether a vehicle was tampered with or its operational condition. You would also use Drive to notice things that appear suddenly while driving.

Drive Stunts

Hard to Shake. You receive +2 to overcome using Drive whenever you're pursuing another vehicle in a chase scene.

Pedal to the Metal. You can coax more speed out of your vehicle than seems possible. Whenever you're engaged in any contest where speed is the primary factor (such as a chase or race of some kind) and you tie with your Drive roll, it's considered a success.

Ramming Speed! When ramming another vehicle, you ignore two shifts of stress caused to your own vehicle. So if you ram and hit for four shifts, you only take two yourself. If you succeed with style, you ignore up to four shifts of stress.

Stunt Driver. You receive +2 to create an advantage using Drive whenever you're driving at break neck speeds.

Also see Beneficial Things for: War Walker (page 353).

Empathy

Empathy is your ability to understand and relate to others on an emotional level. It includes knowing and being able to spot changes in a person's mood or bearing. Empathy allows you to determine if someone is lying and their general mood, as well as to discover things about them by their manner of speaking and body language. This skill also allows you to help others by talking them through their emotional issues.

Overcome: You use overcome with Empathy to treat mental consequences in others.

Create an Advantage: Empathy can be used to look out for **Body Language Cues** that can help you read another. It can also be used to ply someone with **Heaped Compliments** to make them more susceptible to your intentions. Empathy is used create advantages that are appealing to your target's desires and emotional state.

Attack: Empathy may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: You use Empathy to defend against Deceive actions, allowing you to pierce through lies and see through to someone's true intent. You can also use it to defend against those creating social advantages against you.

Notice: Empathy is used to discover the aspects of another through conversation and observation. Whenever you use Empathy to discover aspects, your target gets to defend using Deceive if they are hiding their nature, or Presence during normal conversation. For each shift you generate, you learn one aspect about your target. If you succeed with style, you receive a free invoke on any one of your target's discovered aspects.

Empathy Stunts

Truthsayer. You receive +2 to overcome with Empathy to discern if someone is lying regardless of whether the lies are directed at you or someone else.

Psychotheorist. You are able to calm and talk others through their issues, but you cannot use this stunt on yourself. Once per session, you can downgrade another's mental consequence (see Accelerated Healing, page 240).

Guilt Trip. You can substitute Empathy for Presence whenever you attempt to guilt someone into doing something because it's the right thing to do.

Intuitive. You are in tune with both your emotions and those of others; you receive +2 to overcome with Empathy whenever you are attempting to decipher telepathic communications or to discover others' aspects.

Fight

Fight is the skill used for armed or unarmed close combat (in the same zone). You are proficient in all types of weapons, and even your fists are formidable weapons.

Overcome: Use Fight in contests like a sparring match or sport fighting.

Create an Advantage: Fight can be used to create advantages such as **Show off Intimidating Moves**, finding a **Weakness in Armour**, or delivering a solid kick to your enemy's arm to make them **Disarmed**.

Attack: Fight is used for all close combat attacks in the same zone.

Defend: Fight may be used instead of Athletics to defend from melee attacks by parrying them, providing both opponents are either armed or unarmed (you cannot parry a weapon if you do not also have a weapon). Fight cannot be used to defend against ranged attacks.

Notice: Fight is used to notice hidden weapons and to sense impending violence in others. You can use Fight to spot the poison on your enemy's blade or to assess the fighting capability of your opponent.

Fight Stunts

Momentum. When you succeed with style on a Fight attack and choose to reduce the result by one to gain a boost, you gain a full situation aspect with a free invocation instead.

Killing Stroke. Once per scene, when you force an opponent to take a consequence, you can spend a fate point to increase the consequence's severity (so mild becomes moderate, moderate becomes severe). If your opponent was already going to take a severe consequence, he must either take a severe consequence and a second consequence or be taken out. Likewise NPCs without the full three consequences must absorb the stress amount of the upgraded consequence using available consequence slots, or be taken out.

Duelist. You gain a +2 bonus to any advantages you wish to create in a combat situation using Fight.

Shield Practice. Whenever you are wielding a shunt shield, you may use Fight to defend against projector ranged attacks. If you are wielding a physical shield, you may use Fight to defend against shredder ranged attacks.

Influence

Influence is the skill of knowing and making connections with people and influencing them to help you. You are well-travelled and well-connected, and know people in various walks of life who can help you achieve your goals or satisfy your needs. Your contacts may help you, but the help often comes with a price.

Influence is also directly tied to your reputation. The more influence you have, the more reputation you've gathered and the more others are likely to help you.

The type of contacts you have depends on your aspects and what makes sense for your character concept. Discuss with your GM what sorts of people you might know.

Influence ratings mean...

- **Mediocre (+0)** - you are nobody.
- **Average (+1)** - you have a couple of connections.
- **Fair (+2)** - you have a few connections.
- **Good (+3)** - a few owe you favours.
- **Great (+4)** - many owe you favours.
- **Superb (+5)** - others want your favours.

Overcome: You use Influence to overcome any obstacle related to locating someone you need to find by using your network. Whether that's old-fashioned banter with strangers, polling your information network, or searching archives and analogue databases, you're able to get access to people.

Create an Advantage: Influence allows you to know the perfect person to talk to for anything you might need. It's likely that you'll create story details with this skill, represented by aspects: "Hey, guys, my contacts tell me that **Mikal is the Best Engineer on this Haven**—we should talk to him". You can also create an advantage that represents what the word on the street is about a particular individual, object, or location, based on what your contacts tell you. Influence could also be used to create aspects that represent using your information network to plant or acquire information.

> Aspects created in this way deal with reputation more than fact, such as **Known as a Mean Guy** or **Notorious Swindler**. Whether that person lives up to their reputation is anybody's guess, though that doesn't invalidate the aspect; people often have misleading reputations that complicate their lives.

Attack: Influence may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Influence can be used to defend against people creating social advantages against you, provided your information network can be brought to bear in the situation. You can also use your influential status it to keep someone from using Deceive or Influence against you, and to go "off the grid" to interfere with Investigate attempts to find you by using your contacts to hide you.

Notice: Influence is used to assess how well others are connected and to discover what resources they have at their disposal. You can use Influence to discover aspects about an individual, place, or organization that are known by others.

Influence Stunts

Social Network. You are well-connected and receive +2 to all notice attempts using Influence to discover information about an individual, place, or organization.

Rumourmonger. You receive +2 to create an advantage to plant vicious rumours about someone else or to learn rumours about them.

Ill Reputation. You can use Influence instead of Provoke to create advantages based on the fear generated by the sinister reputation you've cultivated for yourself. *You must have an appropriate reputation aspect to pair with this stunt.*

Shadow Syndicate. You are or were a member of a Shadow Syndicate; you can roll Influence instead of Resources when acquiring illegal items and services. However, acquiring goods and services still costs stress on your Wealth stress track.

Investigate

Investigate is the skill you use to discover clues through scrutiny and analysis of information. This skill covers searching, casing around, asking questions, and sorting through information to find clues. You are knowledgeable about who and where to go in order to discover the information you seek.

Overcome: Investigate obstacles are all about information that's hard to uncover. Analysing a crime scene for clues, using scanners to locate a hidden cavity, even poring over a dusty analogue archive to find data that makes everything make sense are all overcome actions for Investigate. Racing against the clock to collect evidence before the authorities show up or disaster occurs is a classic way to use Investigate in a challenge.

Create an Advantage: Investigate is probably one of the most versatile skills you can use to create an advantage. As long as you're willing to take the time, you can find out just about anything about anyone, discover nearly any detail about a place or object, or otherwise make up aspects about nearly anything in the Baroqueverse that your character could reasonably unearth.

Attack: Investigate may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Investigate may not be used for defend actions.

Notice: Investigate is used to discover things that are not immediately obvious: hidden evidence, patterns in data, and putting disparate pieces of information together to make sense of them. Investigate is the default skill for notice actions.

Investigate Stunts

Attention to Detail. You can use Investigate instead of Empathy to defend against Deceive attempts. What others discover through gut reactions and intuition, you learn through careful observation of micro-expressions.

Courtier. On a successful Investigate roll to create an advantage by eavesdropping on a conversation, you can discover or create one additional aspect (though this doesn't give you an extra free invocation).

Deductive Reasoning. Once per scene, you can spend a fate point (and a few minutes of observation) to make a special Investigate roll representing your potent deductive faculties. For each shift you get on this roll, you discover or create an aspect (the GM will decide which), on either the scene or the target of your observations. You may invoke one of them for free (choose which one).

Questioner. You are a master of questioning others; you may substitute Investigate for Provoke when you question or threaten another forcefully.

Knack

Knack is a catch-all skill for any physical activity that requires a level of craftsmanship or artistic ability. This covers painting a portrait of a Pharisto, the forgery of physical documents, repair of a mechanical device, and even singing. The skill covers practical trades that can be learned through books, a teacher, or practice. If it requires manual work, is low-tech, and is physical in nature, Knack covers it. Though basic shredder and armour maintenance is covered by this skill, more advanced equipment requires the Technosophy skill.

Overcome: Knack allows you to pick physical locks, repair basic armour, and unjam shredder weapons. It can also be used to create and repair mechanical devices that are not considered high-tech.

Create an Advantage: You may use Knack to create advantages, such as the creation of an **Amazing Disguise** for an inside job, produce an **Incredible Painting on Display** to impress others, or temporarily improve a weapon with a **Well-Oiled Firing Mechanism** or add **Ablative Patches** to armour to increase its potency.

Attack: Knack is not used to attack directly, though it can be used indirectly as an attack skill for situations like creating traps. The shifts generated on the Knack roll made to construct the trap equates to the attack roll of the trap when it is triggered.

Defend: Knack is not normally used as a defence skill. It may come into play when you build something that can be attacked. The shifts generated on the Knack roll are the Physique of the structure and the stress it can suffer before it collapses.

Notice: Knack is used to assess the condition, quality, and craftsmanship of things created using Knack. It can be used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of an object, and how it was constructed.

Knack Stunts

Better than New! Whenever you succeed with style on an overcome action to repair a piece of machinery, you can immediately give it a new temporary aspect (with a free invoke) reflecting the improvements you've made, instead of just a boost. The aspect lasts until the end of the session.

Mechanic. You are a master mechanic and receive +2 to overcome using Knack whenever you are repairing, creating, or modifying machinery and equipment that is not high-tech.

Prodigy. You are an artistic prodigy. Receive +2 to actions using Knack when performing or on actions related to your chosen art (music, painting, sculpture, etc.)

Eye for Flaws. You receive an additional invoke whenever creating an advantage using Knack that relates to a physical weakness you noticed in machinery or low-tech equipment.

Lore

The Lore skill represents the general knowledge you may possess, be it learned from books, a teacher, or a former occupation. Lore is general information you have acquired that may be relevant to the situation at hand. It includes knowledge of things like torture, interrogation techniques, security systems, and organizations; it represents things outside of the formal sciences. The exact nature of what your character knows is determined by your aspects and should be discussed with your GM.

Overcome: You can use Lore to overcome any obstacle that requires applying your character's knowledge to achieve a goal. For example, you might roll Lore to determine how much you know about a specific Pharisto house, planet, or organization, and even to know that you just entered a Syndicate's territory by the carved graffiti on the wall.

Create an Advantage: Like Investigate, Lore provides a lot of opportunities to create advantages. More often than not, you'll be using Lore to get a story detail, some obscure bit of information that you uncover or know already, but if that information gives you an edge in a future scene, it might take the form of an aspect. Likewise, you can use Lore to create advantages based on any subject matter your character might have studied.

Attack: Lore may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Lore may not be used for defend actions.

Notice: Lore is used to uncover aspects and information about things that you may have learned or heard about before.

Lore Stunts

Archaeologist. You may spend a fate point to decipher the meaning of any ancient or alien information left behind in any storage medium, providing you have ample time to study the information. Typically, deciphering the information takes at least *a few days* of dedicated study.

I've Read about That! You've read about a great many things. Once per session you can create an advantage related to something you already know about (supported by your aspects) for the current situation or problem, and you receive a free invoke on it.

Shield of Reason. You can use Lore as a defence against Provoke attempts, provided you can justify your ability to overcome your fear through rational thought and reason.

Well-Travelled. You have travelled far and wide; receive +2 to actions using Lore when determining how much you know about a place or organization.

Pilot

Pilot is all about operating aerial, underwater, and space vehicles: sky chariots, submersibles, and voidships. Standard operation does not require a roll if you are familiar with the type of vehicle already.

Overcome: Pilot is used to overcome the complexities of operating various types of vehicles. This skill is the equivalent of Athletics when inside a vehicle. Obstacles to overcome might be rough terrain, high-speed pursuit, and flying debris.

Create an Advantage: You can use Pilot to determine the best way to get somewhere in a vehicle and might allow you to learn features of the route that get expressed as aspects, or declare that you know how to **Plot the Shortest Route** or go **Full Throttle**. Piloting often revolves around getting good positioning; doing a **Barrel Roll** to avoid incoming fire, or a **Cut Off Manoeuvre** on your opponent and make them lose control.

Attack: Pilot can only be used to attack by ramming your vehicle into another vehicle or structure. When you ram a vehicle, your vehicle receives an amount of stress equal to what you inflicted.

Defend: Avoiding damage to a vehicle in a physical conflict is one of the most common uses of Pilot. You can also use it to defend against advantages being created against you or overcome actions of someone trying to move past you in a vehicle.

Notice: Pilot is used to notice things about aerial and underwater vehicles, as well as voidships. You can assess the condition of the vehicle and also discover its capabilities. Pilot also enables you to spot things coming up fast while inside a vehicle.

Pilot Stunts

Hot Shot. You receive +1 to defence with Pilot whenever you are evading attacks while piloting a personal vehicle.

Steersman. You are adept at piloting vehicles; you receive +2 to create an advantage with Pilot.

Hit and Run. When you ram another vehicle, you ignore two shifts of stress caused to your vehicle. So if you ram and hit for four shifts, you only take two. If you succeed with style, you ignore up to four shifts of stress.

Captain. You have commanded voidship crews before; twice per session, you may re-roll a voidship skill for free while you are helping the crew (see Character Crews in Voidships, page 402).

Also see Beneficial Things for: Sky Chariot (page 353).

Physique

The Physique skill is a counterpart to Athletics, representing the character's natural physical aptitudes like raw strength and endurance. Physique indicates your brawn and affects how many stress boxes your physical stress track has (see Stress and Consequences, page 238).

Overcome: You can use Physique to overcome obstacles that require the application of brute force—most often to overcome a situation aspect on a zone—or any other physical impedance, like prison bars or locked gates. Of course, Physique is the classic skill for arm-wrestling matches and other contests of applied strength, as well as marathons or other endurance-based challenges.

Create an Advantage: Use Physique to create advantages in physical conflict. For example, you could grapple to make a target **Knocked Down** or holding someone in place to make them **Pinned**.

Attack: Physique may not be used for attack actions; see Fight instead.

Defend: Physique may not be used for defend actions, but you can use it to provide active opposition to someone else's movement, provided you're in a small enough space that you can effectively use your body to block access. You might also take something heavy and brace it to stop someone from getting through.

Notice: Use Physique to notice injuries in others or to assess their brawn.

Physique Stunts

Brute. You may use Physique instead of Fight to make unarmed melee attacks. On a tie, your opponent still takes 1 stress. You may not use Physique to defend and must use either Fight (if opponent is unarmed) or Athletics (to dodge).

Brawler. You can use Physique to defend against physical melee attacks, though you still take 1 stress on a tie.

Tenacious. Once per session, you can spend a fate point and reduce the severity of a moderate consequence that's physical in nature to a mild consequence (if your mild consequence slot is free), or erase a mild consequence altogether.

Quick Recovery. Your body recovers quickly. The passive difficulty for treating your consequences is reduced by 2; mild is Mediocre (+0), moderate is Fair (+2), and severe is Great (+4).

Presence

The Presence skill is all about making positive connections with people and eliciting positive emotion. It's the skill of being liked and trusted. A Pharisto would use Presence when following the traditions and protocols of The Order of Things.

Presence ratings mean...

- **Mediocre (+0)** - you go unnoticed.
- **Average (+1)** - others sometimes listen to you.
- **Fair (+2)** - when you speak, others listen.
- **Good (+3)** - your words carry weight.
- **Great (+4)** - others seek out your wisdom.
- **Superb (+5)** - you attract attention everywhere you go.

Overcome: Use Presence to charm or inspire people to do what you want, or to establish a good connection with them. Charm your way past the guard, convince someone to take you into their confidence, or become the Deipotent of the hour at the Pharisto court. For nameless NPCs, this is an unopposed roll, but ingratiating yourself to a named NPC or PC requires a contest.

Create an Advantage: Use Presence to establish a positive mood on a target or in a scene, or to get someone to confide in you out of a genuine sense of trust. You could pep talk someone into having **Elevated Confidence** or stir a crowd into a **Joyful Fervour**. You could also make someone **Talkative** or **Helpful**. Pharistos use Presence in their Cutting Words contests (page 245).

Attack: Presence may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Presence defends against any skill used to damage your social standing, sour a mood you've created, or make you look bad in front of other people. It does not, however, defend against mental attacks; that requires Will.

Notice: Presence is used to note another's social standing based on their speech and appearance. Pharistos use Presence to understand the complex fashion protocols of the Order Of Things.

Presence Stunts

Regal Presence. Once per session, in a social situation, you may create a situation aspect related to your regal presence and you receive a free invoke on it.

Demagogue. You receive +2 to Presence when you're delivering an inspiring speech in front of a crowd. (If there are named NPCs or PCs in the scene, you may target them all with one roll rather than dividing up your shifts.)

Honoured. Whenever dealing with members of your house, sect, or Syndicate (as appropriate), you may substitute Presence for Influence. You can spend a fate point to create an advantage with a free invoke that is related to your honoured status.

Fashion Sense. You always dress to kill and have an excellent grasp of Pharisto fashions. You receive +2 when you create advantages using Presence on Pharistos. *This stunt is best suited to Pharistos.*

Provoke

Provoke is the skill to use for getting someone's dander up and eliciting a negative emotional response from them—fear, anger, shame, etc. It's the "being a jerk" skill. To use Provoke, you need some kind of justification. It could come from the situation, because you have an aspect that's appropriate. It might result from an advantage created with another skill (like Presence or Deceive) or because you've assessed your target's aspects (see Empathy). Provoke is also used for torture and to cause fear and terror in others.

This skill requires that your target can feel any emotions—basic artificial intelligences and some aliens can't be provoked.

Overcome: You can Provoke someone into doing what you want in a fit of emotional pique. You might intimidate them for information, piss them off so badly that they act out, or scare them into running away. Against PCs or important NPCs, you'll need to win a contest that they oppose with Will.

Create an Advantage: You can create advantages representing momentary emotional states, like **Enraged**, **Baited**, or **Hesitant**. Your target gets to oppose with Will.

Attack: You can make mental attacks with Provoke to do lasting emotional harm to an opponent whenever you have the upper hand in a situation, such as during an interrogation, during combat after inflicting stress, or when your target is susceptible to bullying.

Defend: Provoke may not be used for defend actions; see Will instead.

Notice: Provoke is used to notice whether someone is purposely baiting another. You can use it to realize whether someone is under the effects of fear or whether they might be a good target for your intimidation.

Provoke Stunts

Fearsome Foe. You're scary looking, either due to competence or just a mean look. You can use Provoke to defend against Fight attacks, but only until the first time you're dealt stress in a conflict.

Provoke Violence. When you create an advantage on an opponent using Provoke, you can use your free invocation to become the target of that character's next relevant action, drawing their attention away from another target.

Provoke Weakness. You can use Provoke in place of Empathy to learn a target's aspects, by bullying them until they reveal one to you. The target defends against this using Will. (If the GM thinks the aspect is particularly vulnerable to your hostile approach, you get a +2 bonus.)

Infamous. If you're in an area where your infamous reputation is known, you can use Provoke in place of Influence. You may spend a fate point to create an advantage with a free invoke that relates to your infamy.

Resources

The Resources skill represents your personal wealth, income, and investments made. This skill is used to acquire items and services by expending funds. Your character's resources come from many sources, and you are free to detail how your character has come into wealth. Resources may come from income, property, inheritance, wise investments, and funding by the organization you are a member of.

Resources is your ability to call upon your wealth and to apply it towards some goal. The amount of wealth you are able to access during a story is represented by your wealth stress track (see Wealth, page 367), and its size is determined by your Resources skill.

Resources ratings mean...

- **Mediocre (+0)** - you are employed.
- **Average (+1)** - you are well employed.
- **Fair (+2)** - you possess personal wealth.
- **Good (+3)** - you possess property and employ others.
- **Great (+4)** - you possess property and employ many.
- **Superb (+5)** - you possess vast personal wealth and many servants.

Overcome: Use Resources to overcome the cost of an item or service.

Create an Advantage: You can use Resources to create an advantage in many situations. You may wish to flaunt some money as a bribe before questioning the shady individual when you **Flash Some Coin** or to impress others with your wealth when you have **Arrived In a Gilded Air Carriage**. The difficulty of the advantage depends on the situation and the disposition of the other party, to be set by the GM.

Attack: Resources may not used for attack actions.

Defend: Resources may not used for defend actions.

Notice: Resources is used to assess another's wealth. It can also be used to appraise goods and services and to know when you are being ripped off.

Resources Stunts

Empyreals Talk. You can use Resources instead of Presence in any situation where ostentatious displays of material wealth might aid your cause.

Kickback. Whenever you are trying to convince someone to support your course of action, you may spend 1 Wealth from your stress track to receive +2 to your roll, provided your target would be willing to take a bribe.

Well-Funded. You receive two Wealth boosts at the beginning of each story.

Frugal. Twice per session, you may reduce the cost of any item or service by 1 whenever there is an opportunity to negotiate a better price.

Science

The Science skill represents your character's formal education and experience in the various fields of science. This skill covers all theoretical, physical, life, and social sciences. Science complements Technosophy in that it is the understanding of the core principles of technology. Science also represents your medical knowledge for the treatment of physical consequences. In primitive cultures, Science is the study of medicine, herbs, and poisons. Use your character aspects as a guide to how Science applies to your character.

Overcome: Science is used to overcome problems that require the application of science. You can use Science to uncover information that is scientific and theoretical in nature. It is also used to treat physical consequences. You can also examine a corpse and make deductions based on your medical knowledge about the cause of death.

Create an Advantage: You can use your knowledge for good or evil. You can apply Science to provide you with advantages related to situations where education matters. Understanding the principles of Loom Drive operation will give you an opportunity to create an **Decreased Conduit Generation Interval** to open the conduit more quickly or to cause **Destabilized Conduit Integrity** when you want to collapse it sooner. You can also calculate the **Optimal Trajectory** for a voidship to reach its destination before your enemies.

Attack: Science may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Science may not be used for defend actions.

Notice: Science is used to notice that there is something strange about local environment due to some technology or science. It can be used to assess the nature of strange phenomena and to notice it when others might not. Science can also be used to determine whether someone is poisoned, whether someone is under the influence, or the nature of someone's wounds.

Science Stunts

Researcher. You receive +2 bonus to overcome with Science when you perform hands-on scientific research: analyzing a strange alien energy field or device, performing an autopsy, vivisecting an alien being, or inventing a new apparatus.

Hands-on Expert. You receive a +2 to create an advantage with Science when you use your scientific knowledge.

Biovizier. You are a practising Biovizier and know all about the treatment of biological ailments. You receive +2 to Science rolls when treating consequences and applying Science towards the biological fields of science.

Specialist. Choose an area of expertise—medicine, cybernetics, astronomy, biogenics, weapon systems, etc. You receive +2 to actions with Science whenever your area of expertise is involved.

Shoot

The Shoot skill represents your aptitude with manually-operated guns and ranged weapons of all types. You are trained to use different types of ranged weapons; this includes hand weapons, thrown weapons, artillery, or anything else you would aim, fire, or throw directly.

Overcome: You use Shoot to overcome obstacles that require skill with ranged weapons, such as hitting a small object at range or competing in a shooting contest.

Create an Advantage: You may use Shoot to create an advantage like **Shot in the Calf**, take careful aim with **Got Him in My Sights**, or make declarations that your opponent's weapons are **Prone to Overheating**.

Attack: Shooting people is attacking. This permits you to attack others in zones other than the one you are in. By default, all weapons have a range of two zones away from you.

Defend: Shoot may not be used for defend actions.

Notice: Shoot can be used to notice sniper ambushes, as well as the operational state and effectiveness of ranged weaponry.

Shoot Stunts

Called Shot. After a successful Shoot attack, spend a fate point and declare a specific condition you want to inflict on a target, like **Shot in the Hand**; you place that as a situation aspect on them in addition to causing stress.

Quick on the Draw. No one may match your ability to draw, point, and shoot a weapon. In the first exchange, you receive +2 to your Shoot or Fight attack (choose one) when you initiate the conflict by shooting or stabbing someone. You also get to go first in the conflict. This bonus does not apply when you did not start the conflict.

Uncanny Accuracy. Once per conflict, stack an additional free invoke on an advantage you've created using Shoot to represent the time you take to aim or line up a shot (like **In My Sights**).

Suppressive Fire. Roll to create an advantage called **Suppressive Fire** on the zone you target when wielding a rapid-fire weapon. All opponents in the zone cannot leave the zone or attack without first overcoming your advantage using Tactics. The advantage goes away as soon as you move or stop shooting.

Stealth

The Stealth skill allows you to avoid detection, both when hiding in place and trying to move about unseen.

Overcome: Use Stealth to get past any situation that primarily depends on you not being noticed. Sneaking past sentries and security, hiding from a pursuer, avoiding leaving evidence as you pass through a place, and other such uses all fall under the purview of Stealth.

Create an Advantage: You'll mainly use Stealth to create aspects on yourself, setting yourself in an ideal position for an attack or ambush in a conflict. That way, you can be **Well-Hidden** when the guards pass by and take advantage of that, or **Hard to Pin Down** if you're fighting in the dark.

Attack: Stealth may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Stealth can be used to foil attempts to find or pinpoint you, as well as to throw off the scent of an Investigate attempt from someone trying to track you.

Notice: Stealth is used to notice things purposely hidden, whether you are being followed, or what security measures are in place.

Stealth Stunts

Assassin. You can use Stealth rather than Fight when attacking an opponent who is not aware of you. You can also spend a fate point to prevent your target from absorbing the stress you inflict—they must take consequences.

Infiltrator. You receive +2 to Stealth rolls when creating advantages for the purposes of sneaking around.

Schemer. After you spend enough time observing, you can create an advantage with Stealth and receive an additional free invoke on it that relates to your observations.

Shadowy Target. Provided you're in darkness or shadow, you can use Stealth to defend against Shoot attacks from enemies that are at least one zone away.

Survival

The Survival skill is used whenever you are attempting to survive in a hostile environment. This may be the wilderness of some planet or the lethal environment of a holed voidship. Survival comes into play whenever you need to increase your chances of survival, but it does not include construction of shelters and tools—that's covered by Knack and Technosophy. Knowledge of animal behaviour and beast riding is also covered by Survival, as is knowing how to navigate on a planet's surface using only your survival skills.

Overcome: Use Survival to overcome situations in a hostile environment. This may be the act of finding shelter in a hostile wilderness or donning a spacesuit before all the air is evacuated. Survival is also used as the equivalent of the Drive skill when riding living creatures.

Create an Advantage: You can use Survival to create advantages to help in your survival in a hostile environment. These advantages may be locating a **Hidden Cave** for shelter, riding a **Trained Beast**, or **Sealed Hatches** after the hull is breached.

Attack: Survival may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Survival can be used to defend against the environment. A severe local storm may be a Fair (+2) attack and evacuating air from a voidship a Great (+4) attack.

Notice: Survival is used to notice traps set in a natural environment, to locate shelter, and to track through the use of sight, sound, and smell—as well as other senses.

Survival Stunts

Beastmastery. You receive +2 to your Survival rolls when you deal with beasts.

Void Master. You receive +2 to your Survival rolls when you are in the void. You may spend a fate point to substitute your Survival skill for Technosophy when constructing or repairing a shelter in the void.

Wilderness Explorer. You receive +2 to your Survival rolls whenever you are on a terrestrial planet with a breathable atmosphere. You may spend a fate point to substitute your Survival skill for Knack when building a shelter.

Primitive Nature. You are at home in the wilderness; once per session, you may automatically create an aspect with a free invoke that is related to Survival.

Also see Beneficial Things for: War Beast (page 351) and Chromacht (page 352).

Tactics

Tactics is the art of outmanoeuvring your opponent in a conflict, whether that is during the heat of battle, on the bridge of a voidship, or inside the battle-planning chamber. Tactics is the critical decision making that wins battles. Your understanding of Tactics factors into the initiative in a conflict and can also give you a boost for the coming battle (see Initiative, page 242).

Overcome: Tactics might be used to defeat an opponent in a simulated battle. It may also be used to come up with the best plan during a strategy meeting. Tactics would be used by an alert guard looking for lurking enemies.

Create an Advantage: A good tactician is able to use any situation to their advantage. A squad commander orders his troops to lie in ambush so that **They Won't Know What Hit Them!**, or a fleet commander positions a portion of his fleet in the nebula to **Surprise Attack from the Rear**. Tactics may also be used before a battle to get **Better Positioned** before the enemy shows up.

Attack: Tactics may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Tactics may not be used for defend actions.

Notice: Tactics is used to notice enemy movements and to discern enemy tactics before they are executed. Tactics can be used to locate ideal ambush locations and to realize that you're walking into an ambush.

Tactics Stunts

Offensive Tactician. You receive +2 bonus to overcome or create an advantage when you are on the offensive.

Defensive Tactician. You receive +2 bonus to overcome or create an advantage when you are on the defensive.

Battle Ready. When you generate a boost on your Tactics initiative roll, you receive two boosts instead (see Initiative, page 242).

Battle Commander. Your natural aptitude for leadership lets you use Tactics rather than Presence when issuing orders or commanding subordinates.

Technosophy

The Technosophy skill represents your ability to use, understand, and repair technology. Technosophy allows you to understand complex apparatus and technology and to take advantage of it. Advanced, complex technology falls under Technosophy, while primitive, mechanical technology falls under Knack.

Overcome: Use Technosophy to overcome difficulties in understanding strange technologies you come across. Activating an alien device or performing basic maintenance on your Projector weapon are uses of technosophy. You also use overcome actions with Technosophy to repair and invent new technology (see Inventing Things, page 327).

Create an Advantage: Use Technosophy to create advantages that relate to technological aid: deciphering a particularly difficult to understand object, like **This Button Looks Important** or **It Has a Strange Hum**, situational advantages like **More Power to the Engines** when trying to outrun your pursuers, or **Shorted out the Safeties** to get a bigger effect, or even **Improved Beyond Specifications** when tweaking an apparatus.

Attack: Technosophy may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Technosophy may not be used for defend actions.

Notice: Technosophy is used to notice hidden technology or artificially created phenomena. It is also used to assess the capabilities of technology and its condition.

Technosophy Stunts

Technosophist. You are really good at figuring out technology. You receive +2 to overcome with Technosophy when you are trying to figure out a piece of new technology.

Mechanic. You are an expert in the repair of vehicles of all types, be they ground cars, sky chariots, or voidships. You receive +2 to overcome with Technosophy whenever you are repairing a vehicle.

Tinkerer. You are an expert engineer and can work miracles with existing technology. Once per session, you receive a free invoke on advantages created when you modify or improve existing technology.

Inventor. You receive +2 to overcome with Technosophy when you invent Beneficial Things (page 327).

Will

Will represents your character's general level of mental fortitude, in the same way that Physique represents your physical fortitude. It is also used to resist psychic attacks, and it influences how many mental stress boxes you have (see Stress and Consequences, page238).

Overcome: Will is used to overcome passive opposition that affects the mind or psychological advantages others may have created.

Create an Advantage: You use Will to place aspects on yourself that represent a state of deep concentration or focus. You might perform **Mental Calculations** when actively resisting a telepathic mind scan, or become **Determined to Go On!** when facing a terrible situation.

Attack: Will may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Will is the skill you use to defend against mental attacks from Provoke and psychic attacks.

Notice: Will is used to notice that you are under the mental influence of an external force or to realize that you have reached your limits during a drinking contest before you pass out.

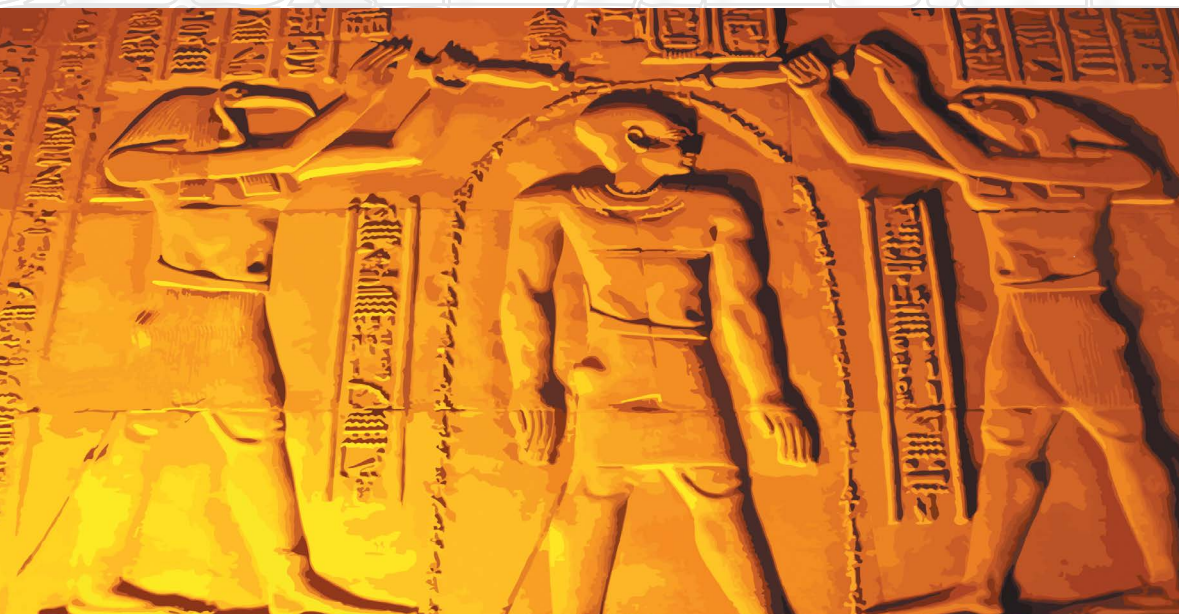
Will Stunts

Strength from Determination. Use Will instead of Physique on overcome actions that represent feats of strength when under duress.

Fearless. You receive +2 to defend using Will against all forms of intimidation and fear.

Indomitable. Add +1 to the value of each of your mental stress boxes.

Sixth Sense. Whenever you are surprised, you may spend a fate point to declare that you sensed the danger and immediately receive a boost for the coming situation. If this is a conflict, you also get to go first as if you won initiative.



Chapter Twelve
Running The Game

As the GM, your goal is to come up with stories, locations, and obstacles that stand in the PCs' way. To help you, this section lists major themes, story types and example antagonists for you to use. Use them as written or as a springboard for your own stories.

Themes

The Baroqueverse deals with a number of themes. The following is a quick summary of the major themes you can use to fuel your stories.

Oppression

The Dominion strains under the yoke of the Tyrant. The brutal regime is ruthless in enforcing its traditions, its laws, and what passes for justice. Everyone from the top down is oppressed and in turn oppresses those below them. Those at the bottom must scrape by to survive, either by banding together, or climbing as high as possible at any cost.

Freedom

The Baroqueverse is filled with many forces that seek to strip freedom of thought, body, and spirit from humanity. There is a raging battle between freedom against an oppressive regime that seeks to constrain freedom of thought to maintain its power grip. There are alien forces seeking to steal the very bodies of humans for their own selfish purposes. And there are forces seeking to steal the very spirit humans hold so dear, sucking it out and using it as a material resource. The fight for freedom must overcome all these obstacles before humanity can truly be free.

> "Men will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest." — Denis Diderot

Rebellion

The seeds of rebellion have long festered on the Dominated Planets. Those who have suffered oppression and injustice are ready for immediate change through violence. Secret societies and revolutionary groups work towards freedom for all, but some choose to exploit these volatile ideas, especially the Pharistos.

Change

The Dominion has been static for a vast period of time, but some in power see the need for change without resorting to violence. These idealists wish to enact change that will bring new ideas and gradually introduce new ways of looking at things. The Pharistos would love to depose the Tyrant, but they strive towards that goal in secret. It's a dangerous road, but the Pharistos take the long view and plan over centuries, even millennia. The Tyrant and his regime oppose all change and enforce the The Order Of Things relentlessly.

Mystery

The universe is vast, incredibly vast. It harbours many strange and mysterious things which defy explanation. Among them are inscrutable and hostile aliens, remnants of extinct civilizations, strange phenomena both natural and unnatural, and secret knowledge held by only a few. There are those who seek to understand these mysteries and uncover their secrets. But beware, there are things best left alone.

Traditions

The Dominion culture, and especially Pharisto society, is steeped in ancient traditions and ceremony. Events unfold according to custom, and protocols must be followed. Breaking tradition is dangerous, especially when it gets in the way of accomplishing things. In their view, traditions keep society civilized and from regression into the chaos of pre-Dominate times. The young Deipotents stretch the boundaries of tradition while the old expect the status quo to be upheld with vigour.

Stories

The Baroqueverse supports a myriad of stories. The combination of character archetypes will likely drive gameplay towards a particular type of story. The following are a sample of possible story frameworks.

Agents of Tyranny

Quell rebellions. Enforce the will of the Tyrant. The characters are traditionalists who wish to maintain the Dominion's resistance to change. As agents of the Tyrant, it is their duty and honor to investigate heresy and stamp out dangerous ideas. Who is Nemesis and how do we find him/her/it? Who are the Harbingers Of The Light, and how are they responsible for the recent rebellions?

Agents of Change

The Dominion must fall, and the Tyrant with it. The characters are Arch Heretics and seek the end of the eternal order which has persisted since antiquity. They might work covertly and gnaw at the roots of the regime, or their methods might be more overt, leading rebellions and fighting wars for freedom. The Hereseers

will come knocking soon. Can their home planet be released from the Tyrant's grasp? If they weaken the Dominion from within, will some other force enact change? Will the change be good or bad?

Out There and Alone

Discover new threats, and then deal with them. The characters are Watchers seeking dangers to humanity and the Dominion. They are constantly on the move, nomads, traveling to the farthest stars and unexplored locations. The characters are the rangers, explorers, and scientists, fighting hidden dangers no one will ever hear about. Troubleshooters, working on their own, unable to depend on help when things go sour. What was it that was seen exiting the Thousand Year Star? Is it a threat? What happened to the newly established colony on Yugg? An entire fleet of Dominion ships couldn't just vanish, could it?

The Divine Court

Scheming, manoeuvring and backstabbing; there's a pawn for that. Pharisto politics are a tangled web of alliances, betrayals, and feuds. Each lineage has hierarchies of status that constantly shift. All Pharistos plot their rise in status through treachery and cleverness. It's not just the Pharistos; secretive Theor sects and the Genesis Adepts also plot and scheme. Are the characters the players or the pawns? Can they raise their fortunes and become the next Lugal of Riveda? Will they crush their rivals in the divine court and attract the notice of the Archon? Why is Brunnis Enlit so interested in the cargo of the transport: *Yearning of Illumination*?

Fight the Good Fight

Long live the fighters of the Tyrant Sun! The characters are part of the Dominion military and quell organized rebellions, repel alien invasions, and deploy to the farthest reaches of the void to support and protect special interests. The characters might be part of a special forces unit, one which encompasses different specialists. They may infiltrate Artilect space to learn what the machine intelligences are plotting. They may break their way into a Clapperclaw Behemoth in order to capture and secure its secrets or to enact a rescue. Are the characters the ones giving the orders, or are they the grunts dirt-side, fighting the good fight? Why are the Nihilim fighting so hard for a piece of rock? How do they get out of this mess alive?

Gnawing at the Foundations

Infiltrate your enemy, sabotage their operations and depose the Tyrant. The characters are the enemies of the Dominion and live to stir things up. Perhaps they work to undermine the Dominion from within as agents of the Peregrine Hierarchy. To weaken the Dominion through the spread of dangerous ideas, acts of violence, or sabotage. Are the player's methods subtle or more public? Is their

defiance open? Do they call for change publicly? Have they attracted the attention of the regime? Can they pose as Deipotents and create some chaos? How did that Hereseer discover them? Why is there so much security around that temple?

Uncovering Secrets Long Buried

Dig up new things, then run away from them. The characters are all about new discoveries. They may be explorers visiting the ruins of a long vanished alien species, re-discovering lost technology of the past, or pushing the boundaries of technosophy while dealing with the consequences. What happened to that particular civilization? Why are the signs of their decline the same as another, unrelated species? Is there something else out there waiting? Who are the Brack, and what do they want? Is it possible to reach the Nihilim universe and discover their true origins?

Another Day, Another Problem

Get by day-to-day and try not to get yourself killed. The characters are independent and trying to survive day to day. They might be the crew of a Syndicate freighter or a Pharisto's barge. They travel around and get involved in all sorts of intrigues and adventures. They might be seeking fortune, following a specific goal, or simply out for themselves. How do they make a living? What dirty jobs are they going to get?

Another Day, Another Job

Danger, excitement and empyreals; lock and load. The characters are mercenaries, driven by profit, willing to do whatever for the right amount of empyreals. The character's employer could be a Pharisto, a Syndicate, a Theor sect, the military, or even the Tyrant's regime. Why does Master Omnicrat want them to investigate one of his own factories? Will they survive the expedition to collect genetic samples of a Xihucoatl? What would someone want with that something from a Transmuter monastery?

Any Time or Place

Explore events: past and future. The Baroqueverse has a deep history, and any period can serve as the backdrop. Will the characters face off against a Nihilim Presence during the Nihilim Invasions? After the Artilect Rebellion and the subsequent war, the Artilects disappeared. Where did they go, and why did they leave? Which Pharisto house gained the upper hand after the Tyrant Aristonymus was assassinated? What will happen after the regime falls?

We Are the Other

Invade the strong, corrupt the weak, and subjugate them all. The characters originate outside the Dominion. Are they a newly contacted alien species, agents of the Nihilim, or Artilects plotting something? How do they get the humans to open the tombs? Can they capture the planet before reinforcements arrive? Why have the humans captured one of their species, and where they have taken it?

Atmosphere

The Baroqueverse is a space opera that incorporates mythologies and cultural concepts alongside voidships, projectors, and artificial intelligence. Play off the dichotomy of high-tech and low-tech existing alongside each other. Most of society, especially humanity, goes about their business as if in a low-tech environment. The high-tech comes into play when the weapons come out, and the voidships hop between planets. Use technology at the extremes: low-tech, primitive parchment and quills versus incredible mindframes that host the Artilect intelligences and Simulacra clockwork life. In between these extremes, the technology is like that found in many steampunk settings: elaborate and bulky, impressive looking, and ostentatious in its use.

Chapter Thirteen
Creating Antagonists

Every story has antagonists to oppose and threaten the heroes. As a GM, it is your job to create this opposition and to induce and manage conflict. This section gives you a few tips on how to create enemies in the Baroqueverse. Much of what you find here builds upon the Creating the Opposition section from Fate Core (page 213). Not all NPCs will oppose the PCs; some may be allies. You can use these same guidelines to create friendly NPCs.

A number of sample antagonists are scattered throughout the book in relevant sections. The sample antagonists are typical and serve as a good baseline to build your own if you wish.

Types of Antagonists

Antagonist NPCs can be classified into three categories: nameless, supporting, and main. These three broad categories give you some leeway on how to build the opposition. Each category simplifies the creation of an NPC so that you can create them quickly.

Nameless Antagonists

Nameless antagonists are just that: nameless, faceless enemies the PCs must overcome. They are not a threat on their own, but large groups can pose a serious challenge. Nameless antagonists have three levels of competency: Average (+1), Fair (+2), and Good (+3). Each one is progressively tougher and is a larger threat to the PCs.

Stress

All nameless antagonists possess a single stress track which combines both physical and mental stress. This makes it easier for the GM to track groups of NPCs and reduces the amount of paperwork.

Nameless Mobs

Whenever possible, identical nameless NPCs like to form groups, or mobs. Not only does this better ensure their survival, it reduces the workload on the GM. For all intents and purposes, you can treat a mob as a single unit instead of rolling dice individually for each of the three thugs, just roll once for the whole mob.

See the Teamwork section (Fate Core page 174) to see how mobs can concentrate their efforts to be more effective.

Hits and Overflow

When a mob takes a hit, shifts in excess of what's needed to take out one NPC are applied to the next NPCs in the mob, one at a time. In this way, it's entirely possible for a PC to take out a mob of four or five nameless NPCs (or more!) in a single exchange.

When a mob takes enough stress to reduce it to a single NPC, try to have that orphaned NPC join up with another mob in the scene, if it makes sense. (If it doesn't, just have them flee—nameless NPCs are good at that.)

When a mob has 2-value, or higher stress boxes, mark them off as you normally would. The higher stress box values permit the mob to take larger hits before the next box is checked. If the stress overflows to the next box, and is below the stress box value of that box, you must still check off that box as you would with a character.

Average

Competence: Rank-and-file order-takers, local conscripts, and the like. When in doubt, a nameless NPC is Average.

Purpose: Mostly there to make the PCs look more awesome.

Aspects: A single aspect.

Skills: One or two Average (+1).

Stress: No stress boxes. A one-shift hit is enough to take them out.

Rioting Human Miner

Aspects: **Burn Everything Down!**

Skills: Average (+1) Fight

Small Jungle Predator

Aspects: **Hit And Run Tactics**

Skills: Average (+1) Athletics

Fair

Competence: Trained professionals, like soldiers and body guards, or others whose role in the scene speaks to their experience, such as a shrewd merchant or an Elevated pilot.

Purpose: Drain a few of the players' resources (one or two fate points, stress boxes, possibly a mild consequence).

Aspects: One or two.

Skills: One Fair (+2), and one or two Average (+1).

Stress: A single 1-value stress box, or a single 2-value stress box if armoured or especially tough. Two or three stress is enough to take them out.

Elevated Temple Guard

Aspects: Armed And Threatening, None Shall Pass

Skills: Fair (+2) Shoot; Average (+1) Athletics and Fight

Stress: 2

Jejune Warrior

Aspects: Primitive And Warlike

Skills: Fair (+2) Fight; Average (+1) Athletics and Survival

Stress: 1

Good

Competence: Tough opposition, especially in numbers. Highly trained and equipped individuals who excel at their profession and show up to make life very complicated for the PCs.

Purpose: Drain the players' resources as Fair, but more so. Provide a decent stumbling block (in numbers) on the way to a more significant encounter.

Aspects: One or two.

Skills: One Good (+3), one Fair (+2), and one or two Average (+1).

Stress: Two stress boxes of 1-value and/or 2-value. You can mix the numbers such as: 1 1, or 1 2, or 2 2. Three to five stress is enough to take them out.

Valhellion House Warrior

Aspects: Pharisto Martial Expert, Well Armed

Skills: Good (+3) Fight, Fair (+2) Shoot;
Average (+1) Athletic and Tactics

Stress: 1 2

Large Mountain Stalker

Aspects: Massive Hairy Beast, Sharp Claws

Skills: Good (+3) Physique, Fair (+2) Fight;
Average (+1) Provoke and Survival

Stress: 2 2

Supporting Antagonists

Supporting antagonists have names and play a supporting role in your story. There is a good reason why they appear, and the PCs should take notice. Supporting antagonists are often the leaders of mobs of nameless NPCs and act as lieutenants of major bad guys. You create supporting antagonists similar to nameless NPCs, except that they are more competent and stand on their own rather than in a group. Supporting antagonists will often have a trouble aspect to give them personality and round them out more than nameless NPCs.

Most supporting antagonists will not fight to the bitter end and you should have them concede conflicts often. Conceding, especially early in the story, permits the NPC to come back and haunt the PCs later. It also serves as an introduction to the bad guys. After a supporting NPC suffers their consequence, consider whether it's time for them to concede the fight.

Aspects: One or two, with a trouble aspect.

Skills: Build a skill pyramid based on the highest skill rank. It's recommended supporting NPCs start with a skill of Good (+3) or higher.

Stress: Supporting NPCs will have separate physical and mental stress tracks which start as: 1 2. Calculate the stress track sizes as you would for a full character.

Consequences: A single Mild or Moderate consequence.

Stunts: A single stunt.

Nimrud, Master Artificer

Aspects: Transmuter Master Artificer, I Am Better than Hesiom, Reputation At All Costs

Skills: Great (+4) Knack; Good (+3) Influence, Technosophy; Fair (+2) Presence, Resources, Science, Average (+1) Lore, Provoke, Resources, Will

Physical Stress: 1 2 **Mental Stress:** 1 2 3

Consequences: Mild

Fabrication Mastery. As a master of fabricating Dust, you receive +2 to your Knack whenever overcoming the difficulty in the creation and destruction of matter.

Major Antagonists

Major antagonists play a critical part in your stories as big-boss NPCs and opposition at the climax of a story. They may come with additional supporting characters and even mobs of nameless minions. When a major antagonist appears, things are bound to become serious and threatening to the PCs. Major NPCs will often fight to the bitter end if their goals are at stake, but may also concede if they

see an opportunity to recover and get revenge on the PCs.

Creating a major antagonist is the same as creating a PC, except that you only need to provide as much initial detail as you think is necessary. You can fill in details as situations arise to develop your NPC organically during play. Be careful not to make your NPC too powerful. A good guideline is to limit the skill pyramid to +2 higher than the highest skill a PC has. Give the NPC between three and five aspects and one to three stunts. By giving your antagonist Beneficial Things, they will have free invokes just as the characters do at the cost of you needing to track all this during conflicts. To simplify your paperwork, you can forego including equipment and stunts. Give the NPC just a bit more skill than you normally would to represent that Beneficial Thing that they have with them. Avoiding complexities such as stunts and Things will make your life easier when the dice hit the table.

To make your major NPC a true nemesis for the PCs, you can give them one or two refresh. In addition to this, for every scene where this NPC is present, you as the GM may add a number of Fate Points equal to their refresh to your pool in every scene they appear.

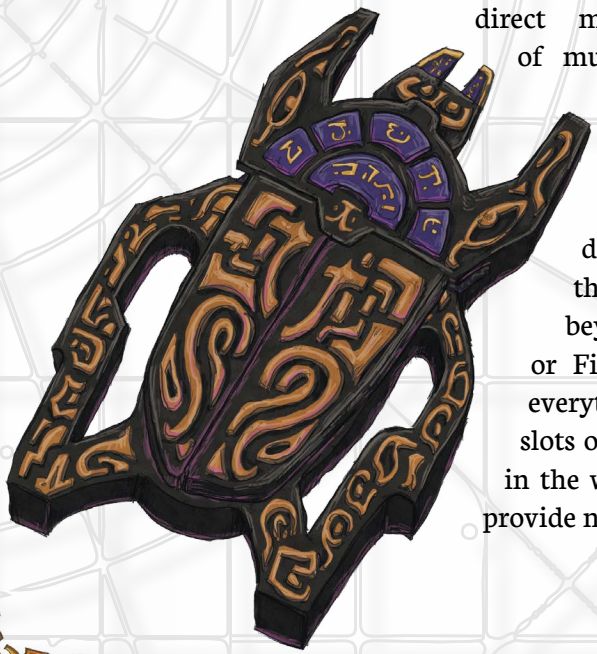
Chapter Fourteen
Beneficial Things

Characters always have things that help them during their adventures, be they gadgets, vehicles, cybernetic or biological augmentations, and even contacts, allies, and pets. In Baroque, anything and everything that provides a mechanical benefit to you character is classified as Beneficial Things (capitalized Things from here on out). Things possess one or more beneficial aspects that you get to invoke for free. Things can also have skills to represent allies and contacts, as well as stress tracks for conflict situations.

Beneficial Things are a Fate Core extra, a consistent game mechanic that allows you to model gear and the other things that characters want to bring along on their adventures. You can build anything by allocating character stunt slots to Benefice Points (BPs) and spending those points on various benefits your Thing provides. With the Beneficial Things mechanic, you will be able to build projectors, swords, vehicles, servants, and pets.

Mundane Things

There are things that are simply there as part of the story and are not significant enough to warrant outfitting as an extra. These mundane things should remain as just a footnote in your story; simply as permission to do things without a direct mechanical benefit. Examples of mundane things are tools your character may have as part of their Technosophy skill, normal clothing, and simple pieces of technology such as a datapad, or even a simple weapon that provides no additional benefit beyond permission to use the Shoot or Fight skill. Mundane things are everything you didn't spend stunt slots on to make beneficial. They exist in the world and can be used, but they provide no mechanical benefit.



Beneficial Things are those pieces of gear, vehicles, or allies that are important to the story and your character. When a simple stunt or aspect won't do, create a Thing and explain its mechanical benefits. The Beneficial Things system is designed to model anything that is on character scale really well, but it has trouble with things of larger scale. For example, anything in size between a personal transport and a large non-voidship vehicle is more of a narrative element and backdrop for your story, rather than something whose status must be measured in skills and stress boxes. You are better off treating these vehicles as a scene, rather than a Thing. If you require a larger scale, the Voidship mechanic (page 388) has you covered.

Benefit and Trouble Aspects

Every Beneficial Thing is described by one to three beneficial aspects and potentially a single trouble aspect. The beneficial aspects may be invoked, for free, at least once per session by you; the GM may also invoke the trouble aspect for free, once or twice per session. The number of times beneficial and trouble aspects on your Thing may be invoked depends on how you designed it.

You may spend fate points as usual to invoke any of the benefit aspects on your Thing. Likewise the GM may compel them against you by offering you a fate point. Benefit aspects behave like any other aspect and can be used for a +2 bonus to your roll, a re-roll of the dice, passing a +2 to another character, or adding +2 to any source of passive opposition (see Fate Core, page 68).

Remember, you may only invoke a particular aspect once per roll. This means that if you have multiple free invokes stacked on a single aspect, **you may not invoke both at the same time**. If you want to give extra effect to your Thing, give it multiple related beneficial aspects, rather than stacking them onto a single beneficial aspect.

Some Things such as weapons and protection have restrictions on when their beneficial aspects can be invoked because they are only able to defend against a specific type of attack. You can add other restrictions that fit your narrative when you write your Thing's description.

Using Benefits and Troubles

Invoking beneficial aspects on Things works the same as any aspect invocation in Fate Core, but there is a limitation on how the GM invokes the trouble aspect on them. The GM may not invoke the trouble aspect of a Thing in the same exchange that a player invokes its benefit aspect. This restriction exists to prevent the trouble eliminating the benefit of the invocation. However, if the GM invokes a trouble, the player is allowed to invoke a benefit to offset it. These rules do not apply if a fate point is used to invoke the benefit or trouble; standard aspect invocation rules should be followed in this case.

A player can invoke multiple benefit aspects in the same exchange, standard rules apply: **the same aspect may not be invoked twice in a single action**. But, you can invoke two or more applicable benefit aspects in a single action, making Things with multiple related aspects much more potent.

Some troubles can be compelled by the GM to make that aspect true for the duration of an exchange. Trouble aspects like **Slow Recharge** and **Regenerates Ammo** can be compelled to force the target to be unable to use the Thing in the exchange it was invoked in. As a guide, if an aspect is capable of preventing a character from taking action, then it fits this pattern.

Thing Permission

Things cost you one or more stunt slots, depending on their benefits. In order to receive the free invokes once per session, you must pay the Thing's cost in stunt slots. Otherwise, it becomes a mundane thing with no mechanical benefits.

> **Optional:** You can allow mundane things to have benefit and trouble aspects, just like Beneficial Things, even when they were not paid for in stunts. The character does not receive any free invokes but may spend fate points to invoke those aspects. If the table agrees to this optional rule, be aware that you'll be tracking more aspects than is typical in a Fate Core game.

Acquiring Things

Players may acquire Things in a number of ways. They may be purchased using stunts during character creation or between stories. To gain a Thing and its benefits, you pay the stunt slots it costs. You can reduce your refresh to acquire new stunt slots, but that can only occur between stories, and you may not reduce your refresh below one. In between stories, you must work the acquisition of the Thing into the narrative. Players may also come across Things during the course of a story. When this happens, the Thing does not provide any mechanical benefit until you pay the stunt cost between stories.

Optional: When characters find a Thing that has impact to the story, the GM can declare that the Thing's beneficial and trouble aspects are fully charged and usable as normal for the remainder of the story by any character.

When acquiring new Things between stories, the GM may ask you to expend some Wealth stress in the process, affecting your starting Wealth for the story about to begin. The GM is the final arbiter on whether or not you can acquire the Thing you want, and may deny you on grounds that it must be earned through a story yet to be played out.

The amount a Thing costs in Wealth (page 376) is equal to the number of BPs it costs. A 4 BP Thing requires 4 stress to be paid from the Wealth track, and a 6 BP Thing requires 6 stress to be paid. You do not need to roll Resources unless the GM deems that there is opposition to your wants, due to supply, rarity, or legality. You can pay a Thing's cost out of your own Wealth or in concert with the other players.

Inventing Things

At some point, you may want to invent things during play using an appropriate skill for the invention or a stunt that allows you to create handy Things. For physical Things like gear or vehicles, the most appropriate skills are Knack, Science, and Technosophy; for allies and followers, Resources and Influence are most appropriate.

To invent a Thing, you must first define what it is you want to create. Use the Beneficial Things creation rules to define it. The number of Benefice Points the Thing costs becomes the passive difficulty to your skill roll. The more complex the Thing, the harder it is to create. Provided that you have appropriate tools, materials, and time available, you can make an invention roll. The base time for your invention will be set by the GM based on the nature of the Thing you are creating; this should be a minimum of *a few hours* for a simple apparatus to *a few days* (or more) for a complex invention.

When you roll to invent a Thing...

On a **success**, you create the Thing, but neither you nor the GM receive free invokes until the next story. You may invoke the invention's aspects as normal by spending fate points.

On a **success with style**, you receive one free invoke on the primary function aspect.

On a **tie**, you may choose to not create the Thing or pay the following minor cost: the trouble aspect receives an additional free invoke per session.

On a **fail**, you may choose to not create the Thing or complete it by accepting all of the following conditions: creation takes longer (one step down on the time ladder), you must reduce the cost of the Thing by 1 BP and adjust it accordingly, and the trouble aspect also receives an additional free invoke per session.

Losing Things

At some point in the story you might lose your Things, due to temporary or permanent loss. When this occurs and you are unable to recover your Thing during the story, you will receive your stunt slot or Refresh back for the next session. The GM will tell you if your Thing is recoverable or not, based on what happened to it. Things that are taken out because of stress are unusable until the end of the story, or until healed or repaired.

Thing Stress

Some Things may have stress associated with them. These Things could be powered armour, personal vehicles, allies, or your personal riding beast or pet. When the stress on your Thing is exhausted, it ceases to function and is taken out until healed or repaired.

Beneficial Things do not have consequences by default. If you want them to have consequences, 1 BP per consequence is a reasonable cost. Be aware that Things with consequences will require the GM to keep track of more aspects in play.

When designing a Thing, you choose whether the stress track is physical or mental when spending Benefice Points on stress boxes. It is possible for Things to have both stress tracks. A Thing without a stress track is taken out immediately when it suffers any stress. Thing stress follows the Stress Box rules (page 239).

Thing stress works differently from character stress because Things have no consequences. **You are able to check off more than one stress box** from a single attack, but once stress overflows the stress track, the Thing is taken out.

If your Thing is something you sit inside or ride, you can use its stress tracks to absorb stress you take during a conflict. When assigning stress, you must choose whether you or your Thing suffers the stress. Your Thing is taken out when you check all of its stress boxes; it ceases to function until repaired. The GM may still invoke the trouble aspect. For example, a **Very Heavy** Thing could still be a trouble while you carry it, even after being taken out.

Pre-generated Things rarely have stress. The GM should not permit stress for personal Things that characters carry or wear. Rather, Things with stress should be reserved for pets, guardians, personal vehicles, mounts, etc. Reserve stress for things that could be taken out.

Thing Stress Recovery

As long as a Thing has not been taken out, its stress automatically recovers at the end of the current story, rather than the end of the current scene. It may also be repaired or healed, as the case may be, using an appropriate skill during the current story. The skill used depends on the type of thing it is: a physical object, like a basic sword or wooden house, is repaired by Knack; technology is repaired with Technosophy, and living things are healed with Science. The factor in determining whether you can repair or heal something is time, rather than

difficulty, therefore given enough time, you can fix or heal your Thing up again.

The passive opposition to repair a single stress box is the value of that stress box. The base time required to heal or repair is *a few minutes* on the Time Ladder (page 239), plus 1 step down on the ladder per stress value. Repairing a 1-value stress box would take *15 minutes* and repairing a 4-value stress box would take *a few hours*. You must heal or repair each stress box separately.

When you roll to repair or heal your Thing...

On a **success**, you clear the stress box immediately.

On a **success with style**, clear another stress box with a value that is less than the one you just repaired. If there are no additional stress boxes below the one repaired, you gain a boost on your next repair attempt instead.

On a **tie**, you repair or heal the item and clear the stress box, but it takes longer; add an additional step down on the Time Ladder. Alternatively, you may clear the stress box without it taking more time, but swap out one of its aspects to reflect the shoddy repair. An example might be that your medium armour's **+Good Protection** aspect now becomes **+Incomplete Protection**.

On a **fail**, you wasted time and fail to repair or heal anything.

Companions with Things

If you want to have companions or allies who have Things of their own, you must pay the stunt cost for the complete package. Companions and allies do not receive their own fate points, though they are able to invoke the beneficial aspect free invocations without you spending fate points. For your companions and allies to invoke a Thing's beneficial aspects after the free invokes are expended, you must spend the fate points from your character's pool.

Creating Your Own Things

You receive a number of Benefice Points (BPs) that you can spend on various benefits based on the number of stunt slots you allocate to the Thing. You can acquire more BPs in three ways: the simplest being by increasing the number of stunt slots the gear requires; the other way is a narrative cost for making the Thing a bit troublesome in the form of a trouble aspect; and finally the last is to add a complication: a rules mechanic that handicaps your Thing.

Summary of Thing Creation

- Assign the primary function aspect to the Thing, which explains its primary use or nature.
- Decide how many stunt slots the Thing will require. Each stunt gives you 2 BPs to spend.
- Decide how many trouble free invokes the Thing will have, up to a max of two; each free invoke gives 1 BP.
- Decide if the thing has complications; each gives you an additional 1 BP.
- Calculate the BPs you can spend on the Thing. Subtract one for the primary function aspect you already created.
- Spend the BPs on various benefits.

You can upgrade Things after a major milestone by purchasing more BPs with additional stunt slots.

Benefice Points

Benefice Points (BPs) are the currency used to construct your Thing. There are a number of ways to add more BPs to your Thing.

You get:

- 2 BPs for each stunt slot.
- 1 BP for a free invoke on a Trouble aspect, up to a max of two.
- 1 BP for each complication.

All Things require at least one stunt slot. There is no limit to the number of stunt slots a Thing could require, but 3 is a reasonable limit for most games.

Complications

A Thing may have one or more complications. Each complication adds 1 BP to the Thing's benefits. A complication affects the Thing's use, is mechanical in nature, and affects gameplay directly.

Examples of complications

- Requires an exchange to activate.
- Lasts only for a short period, like two exchanges.
- Is defeated by certain conditions, like someone taking cover from an area effect apparatus.
- Requires a skill action to activate, like creating an advantage with Shoot to use the apparatus.
- Only affects a certain type of target.

Spending Benefice Points

You can spend BPs on a number of benefits and mix and match them as long as you have BPs to spend. The cost of each benefit is 1 BP.

You can buy any one of the following benefits for 1 BP:

- Add a beneficial aspect with a free invoke or add a free invoke on an existing aspect.
- Add 2 stress boxes to the Thing.
- Add 1 skill rank, up to a maximum of Good (+3), in any one skill.
- Increase the range of a Shoot weapon (default is 2 zones).
- Increase the area of effect per zone or add one additional use to an area of effect Thing.
- For a companion mob, double its size.

Benefit Aspects

You can add any number of benefit aspects to your Thing. Each benefit aspect you add is recorded with a **+** (plus) prefix in the name: **+Projector** or **+Flamboyant Pharisto Vestments**. The plus indicates that you have a free invoke on the aspect, once per session. Instead of adding a new aspect, you can stack additional free invokes on an existing one. When you stack free invokes, add the number of invokes in brackets after the name: **+Projector (2)** or **+Flamboyant Pharisto Vestments (3)**.

Trouble Aspect

Things may only have a single Trouble aspect, something that explains its drawback. The trouble may have up to two free invokes on it, which the GM can compel just like a character's trouble.

You represent the trouble aspect by prefixing it with a **–** (minus) sign in the name: **–Very Heavy** or **–Slow Recharge (2)**. The GM is able to invoke or compel the trouble aspect against you without paying you a Fate Point. You may stack up to two free invokes on the trouble aspect.

Stress Boxes

You can add two stress boxes to a Thing at the cost of 1 BP. You must decide whether the stress boxes are physical or mental in nature. The first two stress boxes you buy are ❶ and ❷ stress boxes. The second time you purchase this benefit, the Thing receives ❸ and ❹ stress boxes. Additional BPs spent on stress follow the Stress Box rules (page 239).

Skills

For each BP you spend, you may add a single skill rank to the Thing. Buying skills implies that the Thing is autonomous and able to perform actions on its own. The Thing is able to assist others using the teamwork rules (Fate Core, page 174). You are free to spend the skill ranks on any character skill, provided you can justify the Thing being able to use it. Each rank is worth a +1 to a skill, and is additive. With two ranks, you may choose a single skill and make it Fair (+2) or two different skills at Average (+1). Each time you spend a BP to get skills, you get one more skill rank. No single skill may be better than Good (+3), and you are not required to build a skill pyramid.

Instead of choosing a skill, you may choose an approach from Fate Accelerated Edition (FAE) if you wish. An example is something passive like a poison or toxin, which behaves like a character and a situation at the same time (see Hroonic Brain Rot, page 343). You may only attach a single approach to a Thing. If you choose to go with approaches, specific skills are not required since approaches encompass a wide array of skills within the approach's purview.

It is possible for a thing to have Mediocre (+0) skill for free, if it requires a rating of its own because the user's skill has no bearing on its function.

Range

Ranged weapons—projectors, bows, thrown weapons, etc.—are indicated as such by their description and benefit aspects. Shoot weapons have a base range of 2 zones; meaning that you can attack someone up to two zones away from you. You may increase the range on a weapon by spending 1 BP for each additional zone.

Optional rule: You can gain +1 BP if you reduce the base range by 1, to a minimum of 0 (your zone only).

Area of Effect

You can extend the area of effect of your Thing to affect more than a single target, up to an entire zone or even multiple zones. The effect is indiscriminate—

everyone in the zone(s) is affected, including you. The area of effect is specified as a number of zones, with the first zone being the target zone, the second zone being all adjacent zones to the target zone, and the third zone is all zones adjacent to all the second zones. The cost is 1 BP per zone affected beyond the target zone.

The shifts you generate on the area of effect attack roll are applied equally to all within the target zone, rather than splitting the shifts among your targets. Because area of effect Things are very powerful, they all have **limited uses**, which you must purchase using additional BPs. For each BP spent, you are able to add one more use to the gear per story. All area of effect Things begin with a single use by default.

Note that you do not need to invoke a benefit aspect each time you use one of your limited uses. The limited uses and free invokes on the benefit aspects are tracked independently. If you have free invokes left on your Thing after all of its uses are expended, then they are lost until the next story.

Trouble aspects for area of effect Things should lean towards compellable aspects rather than invokable ones because the GM cannot invoke a trouble when a benefit aspect is being invoked. The trouble should have applications outside the main situation where the Thing is used. For example, situations that can be compelled when the Thing is not in use can be **Prone to Exploding** or **Cumbersome to Move**.

Types of Things

Companions

Companions are Things that must possess at least one skill rank to be independent. They are able to act independently as per their description and may take one independent action per exchange as a character would. A companion is always played by the owning player and gets to act at the time the player's character gets to act. The player chooses the order his characters get to act in.

Companions must be healed for their stress to be cleared (see Thing Stress, page 327). Companions stress automatically recovers between stories. When taken out, companions become unavailable for the rest of the session, but may be healed at the end of the current session.

Companions Mob

You may increase the number of companions you have by spending 1 BP, turning the companion into a mob. For each 1 BP spent, you may double the size of the mob. For the first BP, you would have two companions; for 2 BP you can have four, and so on.

When you turn your companion into a mob, the amount of stress decreases to make up for the increase in number. The highest value stress box your companion has becomes the single stress box for each member of your companion mob. If you

had a companion with a stress track of 1 2, each member of the new mob would have a 2 stress box instead. If you doubled again, you would have four members in the companion mob, each with a 2 stress box. Doubling a companion with a stress track of 1 2 3 4 would result in each member of the mob having a 4 stress box.

Companion mobs are treated the same as NPC Mobs (Fate Core, page 216).

Weapons

Weapons are perhaps the most common use of Things. Many types of weapons exist within the Baroqueverse, and each behaves differently.

Physical

Physical weapons are swords, knives, and shredders. They are solid physical weapons that cut, bash, or rip the target apart. Physical weapons are stopped by physical armour but not by shunt shields. They inflict physical stress.

Energy

Energy weapons are projectors, pain rods, and holocaust blades. These weapons use powerful energies to inflict terrible damage. Energy weapons cannot be stopped by physical armour; only shunts are effective against them. These weapons are capable of inflicting physical or mental stress.

Static

Static weapons create an electromagnetic field that disrupts the workings of technology. Static weapon attacks bypass physical armour, but shunt shields provide a measure of protection against them. The static charge wreaks havoc with cybernetic and technological systems and is capable of burning flesh; these weapons inflict mental stress to cybernetic organisms and technology and physical stress to biologicals.

Protection

Protection is another popular use of Beneficial Things. Armour and defensive apparatus increase the chances of surviving a conflict. There are two main types of protection in the Baroqueverse.

Physical

Physical protection includes armours of all types. By default, all protection is physical unless stated otherwise. You can invoke the benefit aspects on your protection against all physical attacks, but you may not invoke it against energy-based or static attacks.

Light, Medium and Heavy

You use Athletics to defend while wearing light and medium physical protection, and Physique when wearing heavy protection. Light protection is defined as a single benefit aspect that can be invoked to reduce stress; medium has two overlapping benefit aspects, and heavy has three or more. Stacking multiple free invokes does not change the armour type, only the number of individual benefit aspects that can be combined for a single roll do.

Shunts

Shunt protection creates an energy field that disperses incoming energy attacks and discharges them into the nearby environment as static electricity. Shunt shield benefit aspects can be invoked against both energy and static attacks but cannot be used against physical attacks.

Vehicles

If you are piloting a personal vehicle, you are afforded some measure of protection. Whenever you are hit and take stress, the pilot gets to decide whether the stress goes to the vehicle stress track, the pilot's stress track, or a passenger's. All stress taken must go to a single stress track, however.

Whenever the attacker succeeds with style on the attack, they made a called shot and get to decide which stress track is used to absorb the stress.

Examples of Thing Creation

Creating a Thing Example

Heriod the Pharisto fop wants to have a set of flamboyant, eye-catching vestments, which will turn heads and cause talk wherever he goes. The vestments will be the height of Pharisto fashion, though admittedly sometimes they are a bit too much, even for Pharistos.

You decide that **+Flamboyant Pharisto Vestments** is a good primary function concept. The vestments will consume one stunt and have a single trouble, giving you 3 BPs to spend. The first BP goes to the primary concept, leaving you with 2 BPs to spend. For the trouble you decide that it is so flamboyant that it's sometimes **-A Bit Too Much**—but you love to be overdressed for every occasion. The vestments are the **+Peak of Pharisto Fashion (2)** with two free invokes, which costs you the remaining 2 BPs. The final description of the vestments is below:

Flamboyant Pharisto Vestments

A set of **+Flamboyant Pharisto Vestments** that turn heads and cause gossip wherever the wearer goes. The vestments are the **+Peak of Pharisto Fashion (2)**, though admittedly, they are so flamboyant that in some situations they are **-A Bit Too Much**—even for Pharistos.

Upgrading a Thing Example

Dakuul the Proxicutioner wants her **+Proxicutioner Sleeve** to also be outfitted with enhanced audio-visual sensors. She takes the off-the-shelf Proxicutioner Sleeve and modifies it. She decides to add another trouble, which buys her another 1 BP that she can spend on an additional benefit. She takes the base sleeve, which comes with **+Physical Armour**, **+Enhanced Stealth**, **–Light Armour**, and decides to add **+Enhanced Audio-Visual Perception**. She stacks another free invoke on the trouble, noting down: **–Light Armour (2)**.

Companion Mob Example

You want a pair of Chimeras who act as servants and guardians. The Chimera are designed for enhanced perception and quick reflexes, making them deadly body guards. The Chimera have the body of a lion and the head of an owl. They are covered with fur, and the head is feathered. The Chimera possess animal intelligence and instincts. They are obviously conditioned to understand and obey any simple orders they are given.

You decide on the **+Beaked Owl-Feline Chimera Guardian** aspect and decide that you want to spend 2 stunts and 2 troubles on your chimera pets, to ensure that they are capable and tough. You decide that **–Animal Intelligence (2)** is their trouble, limiting their intellectual capabilities. This gives you 6 BPs to spend in total. You build the first Chimera, before they are multiplied. The first BP goes to the aspect. You decide that you want the chimera to have 1 2 physical stress boxes; this costs 1 BP. You have 4 BPs left and decide to spend 3 of them on skills, leaving 1 BP to double their size. You assign 3 skill ranks: Fair (+2) Fight and Average (+1) Athletics. You now double their size to two by spending the final 1 BP, noting down that there are two chimeras, each with a single 2 physical stress box (taking the highest stress box for each). Whenever they are working together as a team, they have a +1 bonus to their skills. The final companion description is below:

Beaked Owl-Feline Chimeras

A pair of **+Beaked Owl-Feline Chimera Guardians** that possess the feathered heads of great owls and the bodies of lions, making them fearsome and dangerous in appearance. The chimera possess acute senses of sight, hearing, and smell and make excellent guards. They are trained to obey simple orders from their master, but they possess only **–Animal Intelligence (2)**.

Skills: Fair (+2) Fight, Average (+1) Athletics

Stress: 2 and 2

The best way to create new Things is to write a short paragraph about what it is you are describing, with a focus on function and possible troubles. Highlight the benefit and trouble aspects right out of your text. Not only does your text describe the Thing, it gives context to the aspects. Decide how many free benefit invokes the Thing will have and spend the rest of the BPs on the other benefits, such as skills and stress boxes.

Thing List

The following is a list of pre-made Beneficial Things, ready for play. Each Thing includes the cost in stunts, whether it has any troubles and complications, and the total number of BPs that were used to create it.

Projectors

Mini Projector *(1 stunt, 2 BP)*

The **+Mini Projector** is a **+Surprisingly Small and Covert** weapon that can take the form of a large ring, bracelet, or the like. It is a favourite of Pharistos because it can be hidden in plain sight.

Personal Projector *(1 stunt, 1 trouble, 3 BP)*

A personal projector is a **+Hand-Held Projector Weapon (2)** that is **+Quick to Draw** in a pinch. Due to its small Multi-EE battery, it **–Requires Periods of Recharge** between shots.

Battle Projector *(1 stunt, 1 trouble, 3 BP)*

A battle projector is a **+Two Handed Projector** that is capable of **+Rapid Burst Fire (2)**. The large projector is a **–Poor Choice up Close**.

Marksman Projector *(1 stunt, 2 trouble, 4 BP)*

A **+Long-Range Projector** that is outfitted with a **+Targeting Sight** for improved aim. It is a **–Poor Choice up Close (2)**, due to its long barrel and bulk.

Range: 4 zones

Static Projector *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

A **+Static Projector (3)** is a weapon capable of delivering an electromagnetic charge to the target, that is very effective against cybernetic targets, however it is **–Ineffective against Biologicals**. It is often crafted as a rod that emits a thunderous crackle when it discharges its lightning bolt at the target.

Razor Projector *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

A combination weapon of a **+Hand-Held Projector** with **+Dual Serrated Blades (2)** on each side. The weapon is effective in close combat and at range. It requires the user to **–Get up Close for Melee**, due to its small size.

Projector Staff *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

A favoured weapon of guardians, the **+Projector Staff** is a combination weapon capable of being wielded in melee and with a projector on one end. The staff is topped with **+Energy Blades** for melee combat and can fire a **+Powerful Blast** from its projector. Projector staves are **–Large and Unwieldy**, making them awkward to wield due to their length.

Projector Axe *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

Available only to Dominars

The Dominar **+Projector Axe** is a deadly weapon in the hands of those who can wield it. The weapon is a combination of **+High Powered Projector** and an **+Energy Blade** that is capable of inflicting terrible damage. The projector axe is **–Difficult to Handle**, due to its weight and size.

Shredders

Personal Shredder *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

A **+Hand-Held Shredder** that fires physical projectiles propelled to great speeds towards the target. The shredder is capable of **+Rapid Fire** to overwhelm the target with projectiles. It is **–Considered Uncouth among Deipotents** and shunned. It finds usage among rebels and Syndicatemen because it is **+Quick to Draw** in a pinch.

Battle Shredder *(1 stunt, 2 troubles, 4 BP)*

A **+Two-Handed Shredder (2)** is a more powerful shredder weapon that is capable of increased **+Rapid Fire (2)**, though it is **–Large and Bulky (2)** to wield.

Bow/Crossbow *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

A bow or crossbow is a **+Mechanical Projectile Weapon** that is **+Silent and Deadly (2)**, making it very effective at taking out enemies quietly. The weapon is slow to fire because it **–Requires Manual Reload**.

Reaperang *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

Available only to Proxicutioners

A **+Proxicutioner's Reaperang** is a self-levitating, bladed disk which is thrown at a target. It is surrounded with **+Deadly Rotating Blades** and is **+Mentally Controlled** through a control nodule implanted in a Proxicutioner's mind. The trouble with reaperangs is that sometimes they **–Become Stuck in Things** they hit.

Melee Weapons

Dagger *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

The **+Trusty Dagger** is a **+Quick Blade** that may also act as a **+Thrown Weapon** when needed. Because it is a **–Small Blade**, it has a short reach and may not penetrate sturdier armours. It may be thrown at targets up to one zone away.

Parrying Blade *(1 stunt, 2 BP)*

The **+Parrying Blade** are often wielded in the off-hand. They are very effective at **+Deflecting Blade Attacks**.

Sword *(1 stunt, 2 BP)*

The sword is a **+Bladed Weapon** which is also capable of a **+Good Melee Defence**, due to its longer blade.

Pole Arm *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

The **+Polearm (2)** is a long-hafted pole with a blade that has a **+Long Reach**. It is however, **–Ineffective in Close Quarters** fighting.

Energy Melee Weapons

Holocaust Blade *(1 stunt, 2 trouble, 4 BP)*

Available only to Battlemasters

The **+Holocaust Blade** was created through the secret sciences of the Battlemasters. It is a **+Blade of Plasma** which contains the **+Heat of the Sun** and can **+Cut through Almost Anything**. The holocaust blade **–Requires Great Skill (2)** to wield and has maimed many unskilled users.

Wrath Rod *(1 stunt, trouble, complication, 4 BP)*

The Wrath Rod is a **+Shocking Mace Weapon (2)** capable of delivering a **+Neural Discharge (2)** that stuns the target. Wrath Rods are a favourite weapon of regime enforcers and are fashioned in the likeness of a mace with a head shaped like a clenched fist. Because the electrostatic field

requires a lot of energy, it has a **–Slow Recharge Time**. This weapon causes mental stress to biologicals and has no effect on cybernetics or technology. It may be used as a physical weapon but its functions cannot be invoked when doing so.

Transfixifier *(1 stunt, trouble, complication, 4 BP)*

A Transfixifier is a **+Shock-Emitting Apparatus** that **+Paralyzes Muscles (3)** of its target. The Transfixifier fits around the hand of the user with the emitter located in the palm of the hand. It is used as a disciplinary tool and as a show of authority by Pharistos. The device has a **–Short Range with Slow Discharge** and is difficult to use on a moving target. To transfix a target, the user creates an advantage using the Shoot skill. The target must overcome the advantage aspect to break free by rolling Physique opposed by the user's Will. When used to attack, the Transfixifier behaves like a static weapon.

Armour

Light Armour *(1 stunt, 2 BP)*

Light armour is a **+Physical Protection** that is easily **+Concealable** and may be part of your clothing. You use Athletics to defend against physical attacks when wearing light armour.

Medium Armour *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

Medium armour is a **+Physical Protection** that also offers good **+Good Absorption (2)** against physical attacks. Due to its thickness, it **–Restricts Mobility**. You use Athletics to defend against physical attacks when wearing medium armour.

Heavy Armour *(1 stunt, 2 troubles, 4 BP)*

Heavy armour is a **+Physical Protection** that offers **+Solid Absorption (2)** and **+Superior Defence** against physical attacks. Due to its heavy thickness and rigidity, it **–Restricts Mobility (2)**. Use Physique to defend against physical attacks while wearing heavy armour.

Proxicutioner Sleeve *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

Available only to Proxicutioners

The **+Proxicutioner Sleeve** is a **+Physical Armour** with **+Enhanced Stealth** capabilities. It is quite flexible, with **–Exposed Joints** to allow for good mobility. You use Athletics when defending against physical attacks.

Macrocarbon Battlesuit *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

Available only to Battlemasters

The **+Macrocarbon Battlesuit** is made of incredible materials, capable of **+Absorbing Devastating Damage**, and it even **+Resists Energy Attacks**. The armour is bulky and heavy, making it **–Restricting**. Due to its nature, this physical protection may also be invoked to resist energy attacks. You use Physique to defend while wearing this armour.

Transmuter Robes *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

Available only to Transmuters

+Transmuter Robes are filled with hidden Dust factories and technology. They can **+Become any Clothing**, thanks to their dust fabrics, and help give the Transmuters their **+Aura of Mystery**. The robes are elaborate but **–Heavy**. When changed into other clothing, the dust factories may not be used. You use Athletics to defend against physical attacks while wearing these robes.

Dominar Battle Armour *(1 stunt, trouble, 2 complications, 5 BP)*

Available only to Dominars

The **+Dominar Battle Armour** provides **+Exceptional Protection** on the battlefield. The armour is equipped with **+Prehensile Projectors**, capable of firing in a 360 degree arc around the Dominar and augmented with **+Advanced Targeting Systems**. The armour is also **+Completely Sealed** and can serve as a void suit. The battle armour is considered medium, but is **–Bulky and Heavy**. You use Athletics to defend against physical attacks while wearing this protection. You cannot use Stealth while wearing this armour, and you may not move more than a single zone in an exchange.

Shunts

Personal Shunt *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

A **+Personal Energy Shunt** shield that **+Dissipates Directed Energy** harmlessly around the user. Shunts are directional shields that require training to use effectively. A shunt shield is often built into jewellery and accessories, making it **+Easy to Conceal**. Due to its small size and limited power capabilities, it is **–Quick to Overload**. Shunts are only effective against energy-based attacks.

Battle Shunt *(1 stunts, 2 trouble, 4 BP)*

A **+Battle Energy Shunt (2)** shield is capable of **+High Energy Dissipation (2)** against concentrated fire. Shunts are directional shields that required training to use effectively. The trouble with battle shields is that they **–Glow Conspicuously (2)**, making the user a highly visible target on the battlefield. Shunts are only effective against energy-based attacks.

Drugs

If you possess drugs, it's likely you are a drug user. As a result, any troubles that come from the drug may be invoked against you by the GM any time during a session. It is assumed you take the drug in various quantities and frequently, to fuel your addiction. Not all drugs are addictive, though most possess some side-effects.

Kythe *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

The **+Kythe Thought Focus Drug** is a psychotropic drug used to clear the mind and focus the user's thoughts. It is popular among some Theors who use it during their meditations. The drug also acts as a **+Psychic Enhancer (2)** for those who are gifted and grants everyone else temporary use of the **Awakened Prana** stunt. Non-awakened users do not get any free invokes on the **Psychic Enhancer** aspect. Kythe use often leads to **–Uncontrolled Psychic Phenomena** that manifests around the user and reflects the disciplines the user has mastered. To determine which psychic disciplines a non-gifted user unlocks, use the highest two skills that match the associated prana skills (see Prana, page 367).

Serum *(1 stunt, 2 BP)*

Serum is a miraculous fluid developed by the Genesis Adepts; when injected, it **+Induces Regeneration** and promotes **+Quick Healing** in the recipient. The drug is delivered through the self-injecting canisters in comes in.

Monoatomic Gold Gas *(1 stunt, 2 trouble, 4 BP)*

Concentrated, Monoatomic Gold Gas is attributed with many amazing properties; among them are **+Healing and Mental Purification (2)** and **+Consciousness Expansion (2)**, enabling the user to perform incredible feats of mental computation. Theors use this gas to expand their intellectual capabilities for improved problem-solving. The gas was developed by the Transmuters, who guard its secrets. The trouble with Monoatomic Gas is that it causes users to become **–Lost in the Mind's Eye (2)**, becoming oblivious to the world around them until the effects wear off.

Eternity *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

The Eternity time perception drug is a punishment drug; it **+Greatly Slows Time Perception** and makes the mind experience time very slowly. The drug enables an **+Eternity to Think (2)** and prolongs any psychological experience the user might experience. Often, it is used to increase the time the effects of pain and torture are experienced, as well as to increase the time perceived during incarceration. Users of Eternity experience **–Delayed Reactions** for some time after the drug wears off. The drug is sometimes taken voluntarily for its ability to stretch time and allow the user to think things through when time is of the essence.

Hroonic Brain Rot *(1 stunt, 2 trouble, 4 BP)*

Hroonic Brain Rot is a **+Deadly Neural Toxin** distilled from a rare plant found only on the planet Hroon. It must be injected into the bloodstream quickly, otherwise the toxin rapidly **–Deteriorates when Exposed to Air (2)**. The victim suffers memory loss and brain dysfunction while the toxin courses through their body. The toxin attacks the victim at the beginning of every scene, causing mental stress that does not go away until the toxin has run its course or has been treated. The victim defends using Physique. If the victim wins, the difference in stress is suffered by the toxin. On a tie, the victim may choose to take one mental stress to cause one stress to the toxin. Once the toxin is taken out, it has run its course and on the following scene, the mental stress received from the toxin is cleared. Any consequences suffered must be treated as usual. The victim may spend a fate point and invoke the toxin's trouble aspect for their resist rolls. Treatment is handled as an attack against the toxin, which will be actively resisted using the Neurotoxin approach (skill).

Skills: Average (+1) Neurotoxin

Stress: 1 2 3 4

Hroonic Brain Rot is an example of how you can use the Beneficial Things mechanic to handle toxins and other persistent effects that characters can be afflicted with. It also demonstrates the use of approaches from Fate Accelerated.

Bio-Weaponry

Bio-Blades *(1 stunt, 2 BP)*

These **+Implanted Bio-Blades** are retractable, bony spikes. They are well **+Hidden within the Body** and are difficult to detect without appropriate scanning technology. These blades are a favourite of assassins and spies.

Bio-Shredder *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

An **+Implanted Bio-Shredder** capable of firing **+Tooth-Sized Bony Projectiles**, propelled through muscle power. The weapon is **+Hidden within the Body** and difficult to detect without appropriate technology. The problem with Bio-Shredders is that they **–Must Regenerate Ammo** before they can fire again.

Area Effect

Energy Bollix *(1 stunt, trouble, 3BP)*

An Energy Bollix is a 10cm (4 in) docile worm that is kept inside a glass sphere. Releasing the acid in the top of the sphere kills the worm and releases a powerful **+Static Discharge** that **+Disrupts Technology**. The problem with the Energy Bollix apparatus is that the sphere can **–Break if Mistreated**, killing the worm and unleashing its static discharge. Technology is disabled for the duration of the scene; cybernetic organisms suffer mental stress, and biologicals suffer physical stress.

Area of Effect: 1 zone
Uses: 1

Fear-Gas Orb *(1 stunt, 2 BP)*

A Fear-Gas Orb is a small hand-held sphere that begins to spew fear-gas in every direction when activated. The fear-gas causes **+Terrible Hallucinations** in those who breathe it in. Victims of the gas begin to experience audio-visual hallucinations of terrible creatures and situations, often related to their personal fears. The hallucinations make it difficult to function, and victims often act erratically. All within the area of effect receive the **Terrible Hallucinations** character aspect, which they must overcome with Will before they can take other actions.

Area of Effect: 1 zone
Uses: 1

Inferno Sphere *(1 stunts, 2 BP)*

An Inferno Sphere is an **+Explosive Sphere** that can be thrown at a target zone. The sphere blooms into a devastating storm of heat and flames, engulfing everything within the zone. You throw the sphere using Shoot.

Area of Effect: 1 zone
Uses: 1

Inferno Sphere Bandoleer *(2 stunts, 4 BP)*

An Inferno Sphere bandoleer is a belt with three **+Explosive Sphere**s that can be thrown at a target zone. The sphere blooms into a devastating storm of heat and flames, engulfing everything within the zone. You throw the sphere using Shoot.

Area of Effect: 1 zone
Uses: 3

Shock Prism *(1 stunt, complication, 3 BP)*

The Shock Prism is a hexagonal crystal rod that shatters upon impact, unleashing an **+Electric Jolt** over the target zone. The jolt **+Stuns Biologicals** and inflicts mental stress to targets in the zone, but it leaves technology or cybernetic organisms unaffected.

Area of Effect: 1 zone
Uses: 1

Static Cube *(1 stunt, 2 BP)*

The Static Cube is a palm-sized cube that you throw to unleash a **+Static Discharge** over a zone. Technology is disabled for the duration of the scene; cybernetic organisms suffer mental stress, and biological organisms suffer physical stress.

Area of Effect: 1 zone
Uses: 1

Static Bomb *(2 stunts, 4 BP)*

A **+Static Bomb** is a large device that detonates and unleashes a storm of electrostatic energy, disrupting technology and damaging cybernetic organisms. Technology is disabled for the duration of the scene; cybernetic organisms suffer mental stress, and biologicals physical stress.

Area of Effect: 2 zones
Uses: 1

Psitronics

Psitronic Suppressor *(1 stunt, 2 trouble, 4 BP)*

The **+Psitronic Suppressor** is a mind box containing the mind of a Shrouder (see Prana, page 362). The device is immediately **–Obvious to Kundalini (2)**, as soon as they enter its field. The suppressor actively opposes all prana use within its 100 metre (328 feet) area of influence. The suppressor is always on and can never be turned off. The Suppressor actively opposes all prana discipline use with its Will skill. The suppressor can be physically and mentally attacked to destroy the mind within.

Skills: Good (+2) Will

Mental Stress: 1 2

Psitronic Ravager *(2 stunts, complication, 5 BP)*

A Psitronic Ravager is a small, cube-sized apparatus, 5 cm (2 inches) in width. Within is contained a piece of a prana-awakened mind and a power source. When the apparatus is detonated, it unleashes a **+Powerful Telepathic Discharge** that affects all within range. Those within range are flooded with terrible feelings of anguish and pain. The Psitronic Ravager is especially potent against Kundalini; those with the **Awakened Prana** stunt are susceptible to **+Pranic Backlash** and **+Excruciating Anguish** from the dying mind within. This weapon inflicts mental stress to targets.

Skills: Mediocre (+0) Will

Area of Effect: 3 zones

Uses: 1

Psi-Rake *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

The Psi-Rake is a mind box attached to a cable ending in a large number of tentacle-like appendages. These appendages burrow into the skull of the target and **+Directly Interface with the Brain** in order to **+Trawl Recent Memories (2)** and transmit them to the operator. The trouble with the psi-take is that the memories are read as **–Vague Flashbacks and Feelings** and must be interpreted. Use of this device causes a very painful death for a living subject and will be traumatic to the operator, causing mental stress equal to the shifts generated by the user, with no defence roll. You use Empathy to analyse the memories and to make sense of them; each shift reveals one fact about the recent memories of the subject.

Cybernetic Implants

Cogent Nodule *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

Available only to Theors

The **+Cogent Computation Nodule** is an implant that permits a Void Weaver to understand **+8-Dimensional Mathematics** and perform the **+Complex Calculations (2)** required to steer a voidship through a conduit. The problem with this implant is that it tends to make the owner **–Too Logical**. A Cogent Nodule is a required component in the creation of a stable conduit and to plot an exit point safely.

Transducer Nodule *(1 stunt, 2 BP)*

The Transducer Nodule is an implant that synchronizes brain waves with the wireless signal used by the Pattern. It provides a **+Direct Neural Pattern Interface (2)**, enabling speed-of-thought reaction times within the Pattern. Those implanted with a Transducer Nodule are able to enter the Pattern wherever its signal is found (see Pattern, page 380).

Rote Nodule *(1 stunt, 2 BP)*

The **+Implanted Rote Nodule Co-Processor** to the brain enables quick **+Pattern Recognition** of complex data in order to analyse its meaning. These implants are favoured by Theors who use it to enhance their analytical abilities.

Analogues

Ersatz Intelligence *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

An **+Ersatz Specialized Intelligence** is a **–Limited, Artificial Mind** that is capable of independent action within the Pattern related to its limited programming. The EI is an expert at analysing data and sorting through facts at incredible speeds. EIs are often deployed by Delvers to seek out information and to scout regions of the Pattern.

Skills: Fair (+2) Delve, or Deceive, or Investigate.

Portable Analogue Archive *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

A Portable Analogue Archive is an apparatus capable of **+Logical Functions and Data Archival**. The analogue hosts an Analogue Intelligence that is **+Optimized for Data Searching and Analysis (2)**. The apparatus takes the form of a **–Heavy Small Chest** that opens to reveal controls and a halographic interface. Portable Analogue Engines are often found with Theors who operate in the field.

Apparatus

Shimmering Veil *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

Available only to Pharistos

The **+Shimmering Veil Halographic Distortion Field** device is used to disguise the wearer in both the optical and electromagnetic spectrum. The veil **+Disguises All Information about the Wearer (2)**, becoming the perfect anonymity device. However, the veil is **–Bright and Conspicuous** when activated, making the wearer appear as a bright, shimmering mirage.

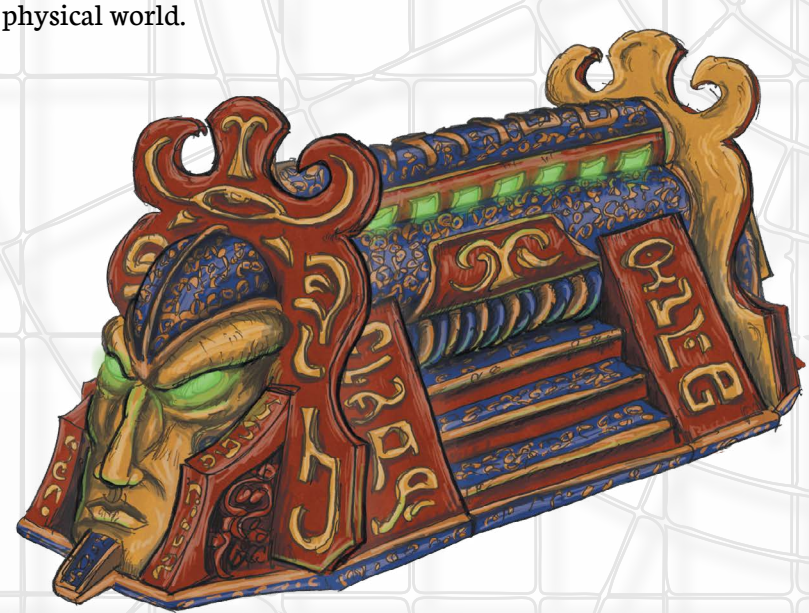
Haloguise *(1 stunt, 2 BP)*

The Haloguise is a **+High Quality Halographic Disguise (2)** that is projected around the wearer, making them appear as someone or something else. The apparatus is often fashioned into an elaborate necklace that obscures its true function. The Haloguise is able to project a single pre-programmed image. To change the projection, an Analogue must be used to reprogram the apparatus.

Halographic Decoy *(1 stunt, 2 BP)*

Available only to Proxicutioners

The **+Halographic Decoy (2)** projects a true-to-life light projection of the user. This halographic duplicate is capable of independent action. It may be used to distract others or to avoid an attack. The decoy is a tiny, self-propelled device the size of a fingernail. It is controlled by an implanted nodule in a Proxicutioner's mind. A halographic decoy is unable to affect the physical world.



Pattern Transducer *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

The **+Pattern Transducer (2)** is a helmet attached to an Analogue that matches brain waves into the signal used by the Pattern. The Analogue **+Protects from Negative Feedback** generated during Pattern conflicts. The problem with the transducer is that it is **–Not a Direct Brain Link** and reaction times through this interface are slower.

Serumentium *(3 stunts, trouble, complication, 8 BP)*

A Serumentium is a **+Healing Sarcophagus (2)** that will heal even the most grievous wounds of anyone placed inside. The Serumentiums are restricted technology and available only to Deipotents by Dominion law. They are large, bulky, and difficult to move. A single session inside the Serumentium takes *half an hour*, and multiple sessions are possible. Use the Serumentium's Healing skill to treat the consequences of the user for each session spent inside. Those who spend more than two consecutive sessions within the Serumentium in the same day risk suffering from **–Seizures**. When the roll fails, the GM may inflict the situational aspect **Seizures** on the user, which lasts for the remainder of the day.

Skills: Fantastic (+6) Healing

Artifacts

Pranacrystal Skull

(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)

A **+Crystal Skull Prana Amplifier** is a forbidden artefact from before the Pharistos were Quiesced. Most Crystal Skulls were destroyed by the Tyrant's regime, though some survived into the present day. Crystal Skulls are made of resonant quartz crystal and resembles a Pharisto skull. Each skull **+Increases Prana Potential (2)** of whoever is holding it. The trouble with crystal skulls is that they are designated as **–Forbidden by the Tyrant**'s regime.

Wings of the Zenithrall *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

Available only to Amarenthine and Hereseers

These **+Halographic Wings of the Zenithrall** are the **+Symbol of Ultimate Authority** within the Dominion. They are borne by the **+Highest of the High**, the Zenithralls, who are the personification of the Tyrant's voice. The halo-wings **–Attract Attention Wherever They Go**.

Grotesque Mirror Man Mask *(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)*

Available only to Mirror Men

The **+Grotesque Mirror Man Mask (2)** is a frightening and creepy thing. The mask is made of smart materials and collapses into a thin necklace when not in use. The mask also **+Hides what Lies Beneath**, but to the Mirror Man it is a **–Symbol of Individuality** and uniqueness that makes it easy to identify one Mirror Man from another.

Companions

Jackal Guard *(1 stunt, 2 trouble, 4 BP)*

The **+Jackal-Headed Chimera Guard** is a very tall man with the head of a jackal. Jackals are often used as bodyguards by the Pharistos. They are capable of basic, guttural speech. The Jackals are single-minded, though not particularly clever; they possess an **–Animal-Like Intellect (2)**, even though they resemble men.

Skills: Average (+1) Fight and Athletics

Physical Stress: 1 2 3 4

Feathered Serpent *(1 stunt, 2 trouble, 4 BP)*

The **+Feathered Serpent Chimera** is a snake with wings of iridescent feathers. It is capable of flight and possesses an **–Animal Intelligence**. The feathered serpent possesses **+Venomous Bite (2)** that injects a toxin into the victim's bloodstream.

Skills: Fair (+2) Athletics

Physical Stress: 1 2

War Beast *(2 stunts, 2 trouble, 6 BP)*

A War Beast is a **+Lizard War Mount** of great size. It is a **–Huge and Intimidating (2)** creature trained for battle.

Skills: Fair (+2) Fight, Average (+1) Athletics

Physical Stress: 1 2 3 4

Simulacra Servant *(2 Stunts, trouble, 5 BP)*

The +Simulacra Servant has a clock-work machine of **–Limited Intellect**, which allows it to carry out simple instructions. Possession of a Simulacra is a **+Status Symbol among Deipotents**.

Skills: Fair (+2) Technosophy

Physical Stress: 1 2

Sycophants *(1 stunt, 2 trouble, 4 BP)*

Available only to Pharistos

Any Pharisto of note has Sycophants who follow him around and act as his entourage. Sycophants are inclined to do **+Anything for Their Patron**, however, they are always **–Out for Themselves (2)**. Sycophants serve as servants to prominent Pharistos and are often themselves low-ranking Pharistos.

Skills: Average (+1) Presence

Number: 2 Sycophants

Mental Stress: 2 and 2

Hroon Carrion Herd

(1 stunt, 2 trouble, 4 BP)

Available only to Hroon

Some Hroon keep and breed a **+Hroon Carrion Herd** which they can utilize for various purposes like food. These **–Small Critters (2)** are telepathically controlled by the Hroon and may be used for tasks that require a small size. The herd is treated as a single entity made up of a large number of individuals.

Skills: Average (+1) Athletics

Physical Stress: 1 2 3 4

Tect Drones

(1 stunt, 2 trouble, 4 BP)

Available only to Tect

Many Tect have a couple of **+Tect Drones** living within their carapace. These **–Small And Fragile (2)** robots are programmed with various skills. You may change the skills known by the drones at the beginning of a story by re-programming them in advance. You may do this during the story by spending a fate point. They are too small and fragile to possess a stress track. Skills permitted to drones are: Athletics, Fight, Science, Shoot, Stealth, and Technosophy.

Skills: One skill at Fair (+2) and another at Average (+1)

Chromacht

(1 stunt, 2 trouble, 4 BP)

A **+Six-Legged Chromacht** is a compact reptile whose shoulders are 1 metre (3.2 feet) high. Its skin is that of iridescent scales that shift in colour according to its mood; from blue when calm to yellow when aggravated. These creatures are **+Exceptional Hunters** capable of tracking prey across almost any terrain. The problem with the Chromacht is that it is **–Difficult to Control (2)**. They often serve as guard beasts when Chimera are deemed too expensive.

Skills: Average (+1) Fight

Physical Stress: 1 2

Dustwraith

(1 stunt, 2 trouble, complication, 5 BP)

Available only to Transmuters with Invocation

A Dustwraith appears as an indistinct, humanoid-shaped fog. The Dustwraith has **+Monomolecular Blade Arms** that it uses to slice through foes. Because the Dustwraith is a **–Swarm of Dustmites (2)**, it is affected by strong winds and must coalesce into a physical form to affect the environment. Whenever the Dustwraith is attacked with a static weapon, you may not invoke any of its aspects for defence. It takes an exchange to deploy the Dustwraith, and you may only do so once per scene.

Skills: Fair (+2) Fight

Physical Stress: 1 2 3 4

Sphinx Guardian

(1 stunt, 2 troubles, 4 BP)

A **+Sphinx Chimera Guardian** is a genetically-spliced lifeform with the body of a lion and a face of a man endowed with sharp teeth. It is a **+Cunning and Loyal** creature, like a dog, though it cannot speak. The trouble with this breed is that it is **–Distracted By Small Prey (2)** and the constant instinct to hunt and kill.

Skills: Average (+1) Fight

Physical Stress: 1 2

Personal Vehicles

Sky Chariot

(1 stunt, trouble, 3 BP)

The Sky Chariot is a **+Fast and Manoeuvrable (2)**, personal counter-gravity sled that is capable of carrying one additional passenger but has almost no cargo space. The problem with sky chariots is that the operator and passenger are in an **–Exposed Cockpit**.

Physical Stress: 1 2

War Walker

(3 stunts, 2 trouble, 8 BP)

The War Walker is a war machine on two legs, towering some 4 metres (13.2 feet) tall. It is equipped with **+Mounted Projectors (2)** and is **+Heavily Armoured (2)**. The trouble with the war walkers is that the operator has **–Limited Visibility (2)** due to its heavily armoured cockpit. You use the Drive skill to operate the walker and Shoot to fire its projectors.

Physical Stress: 3 4 5 6

Chapter Fifteen
Dust

Dust is the crowning achievement of Transmuter secret sciences. With it, Transmuters have come to wield the most potent and mysterious technosophy known to the Dominion. Dust is composed of nano-scale machines, called Dustmites, which are capable of independent action. Dustmites can create, destroy, or alter the very properties of matter at the Transmuter's whim. There are four main lines of research into Dust, collectively called Essences of Dust: Alteration, Fabrication, Invocation, and Transmutation. There are rumours of additional, less-known Essences, but their mysteries are well-kept secrets of a very few within the Transmuter sect.

All Dust Must Perish

The Techno Scourge left a legacy, one the Transmuters would rather forget. Since the days when the Techno Scourge was unleashed on a dozen planets, the Transmuters have imposed a limitation on the Dust they create: all Dust must perish and must never, ever self-replicate. Self-replicating Dust was the primary source of the uncontrolled spread and unplanned evolution of the Techno Scourge into the technological horror it became. The Dust the Transmuters create is limited by the amount of energy it possesses and how long it remains active. The secrets of self-replication have been locked away for millennia in the most secret vaults the Transmuter sect possesses. The pursuit of this knowledge is strictly forbidden, and the punishment for such research is death. This is enforced both by the Transmuters themselves and the Tyrant's Hereseers.

How Dust Works

Dustmites are deployed from the various ports built into Transmuter robes. The Dustmites spiral out in a fog-like, swirling vortex. Movement is achieved through the generation of counter-gravity fields, but the Dustmites are tiny and strong gusts of wind, as well as other environmental effects, are capable of disrupting their mobility by scattering them.

Scene aspects such as **Strong Winds** or **Terrible Storm** can play havoc with Dustmites and can be invoked against the Transmuter who deploys his Dust under these conditions.

Each Essence of Dust is associated with an existing character skill for the purposes of rolling, but it behaves as a completely separate skill. When you do anything with one of the Essence of Dust skills, you roll the character skill it is associated with.

The Dust is fickle and unpredictable. The energy reserves of the Dustmites are variable and at times they may cease to function before their task is complete. This is represented by the associated Essence of Dust skill roll and the number of shifts generated.

When not enough shifts are generated on the roll, additional time can be taken to accomplish the goal through the deployment of additional Dustmites. For each step down on the Time Ladder (page 239), add +1 to your roll. Various uses of Dust list a base time where applicable.

Complications

Under most situations, success at a cost is available to Transmuters. Whenever you deploy Dust and fail, you can opt to succeed as long as the roll is an overcome action. A minor cost might be that the Dustmites do something undesirable in their assigned task. A serious cost might be that the Dustmites have been exhausted, and that Essence of Dust cannot be used again in the current scene.

Dust factories eventually run short of ready-made Dust. The **Out of Dust** aspect can be invoked by yourself, for free, to receive a +2 to your Essence of Dust roll. As soon as you invoke this aspect, you may not use Dust for the remainder of the scene because your Dust factories have run dry and must replenish.

Static discharges will disable and destroy any Dustmites within range, ending their effect immediately. Dustmites are impossible to shield individually against the effect of a static discharge because of their size. However, Transmuter robes are shielded and immune to the effects of static discharges. External Dust factories and Fabricators are also shielded against static discharges.

Essences of Dust

Transmuters have divided their understanding of Dust and its intricacies into four major lines of research, called Essences. Each Essence requires complex knowledge to master, making it difficult for any single Transmuter to master them all. Transmuters generally focus on one or two Essences, directing their efforts to the furthering of knowledge in their specializations.

Alteration (Technosophy)

Alteration is the application of Dust towards manipulation and control of technosophy. Your Dustmites infiltrate small mechanical devices, analogues, and cybernetics to alter their operation according to your will. Alteration Dust can impair or augment the operation of whatever they infect; they are also able to bend analogues and other automated systems to your will, enabling you to access them more easily or even take complete control. Alteration Dust cannot alter other types of Dust.

Associated Skill: Technosophy

Overcome: Use Alteration (Technosophy) to overcome opposition and alter the operation of a piece of technology using Dust. The Dustmites are capable of infiltrating any piece of technology for the purposes of control or sabotage. The Dustmites are not able to affect large systems, such as mindframes; there simply isn't enough of them to affect it in any meaningful way. The opposition to affect a device depends on its complexity and ranges between Mediocre (+0) and Great (+4).

Alteration Opposition

- **Mediocre (+0)** - Small mechanicals: physical locks, shredder
- **Average (+1)** - Simple technosophy: simple electronic lock, powered melee weapon, small apparatus
- **Fair (+2)** - Complex technosophy: complex electronic lock, ipseity lock, simple analogue, projector, powered armour
- **Good (+3)** - Very complex technosophy: psitronics (only the cybernetic parts), complex analogue
- **Great (+4)** - Artilect, alien, or secret technosophy: loom drive, serumentium, Voor biomechanics, holocaust blade, endless engine

Create an Advantage: Use Alteration (Technosophy) to improve or degrade technology. You can deploy your Dustmites to alter an energy melee weapon with **Enhanced Power Output** or sabotage your opponent's projector with **Power Fluctuations**. Your Dustmites can also aid you in recovering information from a locked analogue you are trying to access when you **Disrupt the Security Protocols**.

Attack: Use Alteration (Technosophy) to attack technological systems that have a stress track—including vehicles, Daemons, Remnants, and Tect. Your Dustmites will attempt to disrupt the logic pathways and connections by inflicting mental stress on the target. The attack is made by rolling Alteration resisted by the target's Will and is limited to targets in the same zone as you. Alteration cannot be used on purely mechanical systems, such as clockwork technologies derived from Dust—like Simulacra, who have no mental stress track.

Defend: You can use Alteration (Technosophy) to defend against hostile Dustmites by deploying your Dust. You're able to protect yourself and others with this ability.

Notice: You can use Alteration (Technosophy) to notice the activity of Dust in your immediate area. You are able to examine spent Dust for clues as to its manufacture and purpose.

Alteration Stunts

Sabotage Dustmites. You receive +2 to defence and create an advantage using Alteration (Technosophy) against other Dust.

Subversion Dustmites. You receive +2 when creating advantages with Alteration (Technosophy) when attempting to subvert a system or mechanism.

Nether-Plague Dustmites. Your Dustmites are a short-lived version of the Techno Plague. You receive +2 when making Alteration (Technosophy) attacks against cybernetic systems.

Fabrication (Knack)

Fabrication is the application of Dust towards the creation and destruction of objects and materials. Fabrication Dust is programmed to assemble objects from materials in the immediate environment. Creation requires that proper materials are available for the construction. Likewise, the Dustmites are able to tear an object apart, effectively eating through it like a molecular acid. Fabrication is one of the most widely known abilities of the Transmuters.

Fabricating objects requires Technosophic knowledge equal to the complexity (cost) of the object being constructed, so your Technosophy skill rating must be equal to or greater than the object's cost

Associated Skill: Knack (limited by Technosophy skill rating).

Overcome: Use Fabrication (Knack) to create or destroy objects. The passive opposition to create or destroy an object depends on its complexity; the higher the cost, the longer it takes to assemble or disassemble the object. Each shift generated after the first may be used to lower the time taken by one step on the time ladder. The following is a guide to the complexity of objects.

Fabrication Complexity

- **Mediocre (+0)** - Takes *a few moments* and includes small blades, small furniture, tools, paper, and mirrors
- **Average (+1)** - Takes *a few minutes* and includes swords, maces, light armour, physical shields, and medium furniture
- **Fair (+2)** - Takes *half an hour* and includes polearms, dustsheets, data pads, simple locks, shredders, medium armour, and large furniture
- **Good (+3)** - Takes *a few hours* and includes projectors, complex locks, heavy armour, and personal shunts
- **Great (+4)** - Takes *a day* and includes battle shunts, analogues, and powered armour

Create an Advantage: Use Fabrication (Knack) to impress and amaze onlookers with your ability to create something out of nothing. You might create a favourable social encounter by **Amazing Fabrication Tricks** or quite the opposite with **Demonstrating the Threat of Annihilation**. Fabrication can also be used to create combat advantages such as **Suddenly, Throwing Knives** and **Dust Reinforced Clothing**.

Attack: Fabrication (Knack) can be used to attack, however it is very ineffective because the time taken to disassemble any significant amount of flesh in a conflict situation is small. The base passive opposition on any attacks made with Fabrication is Fair (+2) and the effective range is within your zone only. Fabrication attacks inflict physical stress.

Defend: Fabrication (Knack) may not be used for defend actions.

Notice: Fabrication (Knack) is used to detect the activity of Dustmites and to identify objects that have been created with Fabrication.

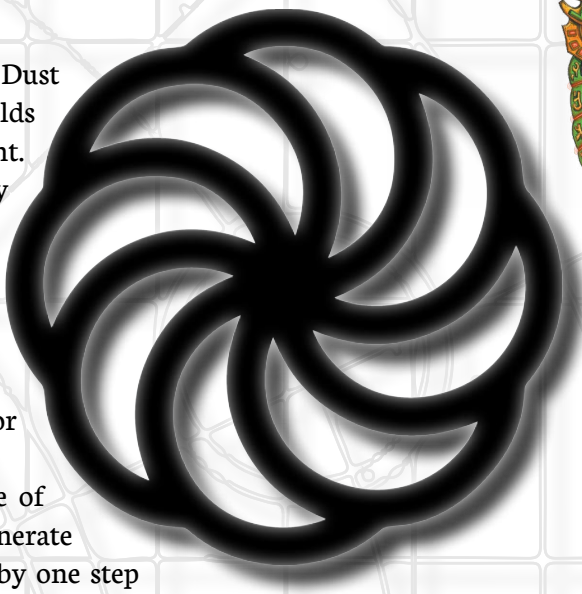
Fabrication Stunts

Schematic Scholar. You have studied many schematics and technologies, and for the purposes of Fabrication complexity, your Technosophy is considered to be one rank higher. This does not increase your Technosophy; it only allows you to create more complex things.

Fabricator. You are in possession of a Fabricator apparatus with very specialized Dustmites. This allows you to create objects at an increased rate, reducing the time taken to create or destroy something by 2 steps on the time ladder, with a minimum time of *a few moments* (an exchange).

Annihilator Dust. When making attacks with your Fabrication Dustmites, you do not suffer passive opposition.

Invocation (Will)



Invocation is the application of Dust towards the generation of energy fields that can manipulate the environment. Invocation Dust behaves as a utility fog that is capable of lifting things and forming temporary structures such as a chair or floating steps in the air. You can apply Invocation Dust towards levitation of yourself or others, raising a shunt barrier, or projecting stored energy at a target.

Invocation effects last a base time of *a few minutes*, but each shift you generate on your roll increases the duration by one step down on the time ladder.

Associated Skill: Will

Overcome: Use Invocation (Will) to overcome difficulties in getting your utility fog to perform physical actions like lifting or carrying. The passive difficulty will depend on the task at hand: light objects are Average (+1) up to 10kg (22lbs), moderate objects are Fair (+2) up to 20kg (44lbs), heavy objects are Good (+3) up to 50kg (110lbs), and very heavy objects are Great (+4) up to 100kg (220lbs).

Create an Advantage: Use Invocation (Will) to create advantages that create short-lived shunt barriers, repulsion fields, counter-gravity effects, and even limited invisibility. You can achieve effects like **Reflective Fog Wall Blocking Doorway**, **Repulsion Field Surrounds Me**, **Blinding Flash**, or even **Invisibility Field**.

Attack: Invocation (Will) may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Invocation (Will) may not be used for defend actions.

Notice: Invocation (Will) is used to notice energy fields and to analyse their effects.

Invocation Stunts

Dustwraith. See Beneficial Things, page 353.

Field Theory: <choose>. You receive a +2 to Invocation (Will) rolls involving the creation of advantages using specific fields generated by your Dustmites. Choose a type of field: gravity, optics, shunt, repulsion, or define your own.

Enduring Dust. Your dustmites last longer. The base time for your effects is *15 minutes*.

Transmutation (Science)

Transmutation is the application of Dust towards the transformation of matter. It is this Essence of Dust that gives the Transmuters their name. Transmutation Dustmites are capable of altering the state of matter in its many natural forms: solid, liquid, gas, and plasma. The molecules of matter can be re-arranged in order to create new matter of a completely different type.

Associated Skill: Science

Overcome: Use Transmutation (Science) to overcome the difficulty of converting matter from one form to another or to create other matter entirely. Each shift you generate on your roll is used to power the effect, as per the shift costs below. When you do not achieve enough shifts to obtain your goal, you can reduce the scope of the effect by spending the shifts you do have. The base time to transmute matter is *a minute*.

Transmutation Shift Costs

- 1 shift per each $1m^3$ ($3.2ft^3$) volume
- 1 shift per state transition: solid to liquid, liquid to gas, gas to plasma and vice versa
- 1 shift for transmutation to gases (oxygen, hydrogen, etc.) and non-metals (water, sulphur, diamond, etc.).
- 2 shifts for transmutation to metals (iron, steel, gold, etc.) and rare earth metals (uranium, thorium, etc.)
- Increase time taken by one step down on the time ladder to reduce the shift cost by one.
- Decrease time taken by one step up on the time ladder to increase the shift cost by one.

> For simplicity's sake, the matter types are greatly simplified as much as possible in order to speed up play without requiring the periodic table for reference.

Create an Advantage: Use Transmutation (Science) to weaken materials by making things **Brittle** or to strengthen them by **Molecular Cohesion**. You may also condense atmosphere to reduce visibility with a **Condensed Fog**, or convert the oxygen in the room into hydrogen to make the room a **Flammable Atmosphere**.

Attack: Transmutation (Science) may not be used for attack actions.

Defence: Transmutation (Science) may not be used for defend actions.

Notice: Transmutation (Science) is used to notice available elements around you.

Transmutation Stunts

Alchemist. You receive a +2 to overcome with Transmutation (Science) when transmuting matter between states (choose a single transition: solid to gas, gas to plasma, gas to solid, etc.). *This stunt may be taken once per transition.*

Matter Manipulator. Whenever you create an advantage with Transmutation (Science) that involves transformation of matter, you receive an extra free invoke on the advantage created.

Transmuter. Your transmutations take less time; you can reduce the time taken to accomplish your transmutation by 2 steps up on the time ladder, with a minimum time of *a few moments* (an exchange).

Chapter Sixteen
Prana

Prana is the natural energy that encompasses all biological life. Those who have awakened their prana are able to tap into and manipulate this energy. Prana awakening endows extrasensory abilities and the ability to affect the immediate environment by will alone. The study of prana has been divided into six major disciplines: Clairvoyance, Projection, Psychometry, Telekinesis, Telepathy, and Vitalism.

The Genesis Adepts genetically awakened prana abilities in the Pharistos when they were first created. Ultimately, the Tyrant stripped the gift of prana from the Pharistos, citing evidence that prana energy attracted the Nihilim invaders. Prana awakening is forbidden within the Dominion, except for those sanctioned by the regime. Those individuals who have awakened their prana legally are called Kundalini; those who defy the Tyrant's edict and awaken their prana are called Degenerates. Prana awakening is a mystery to most, and it is feared by the populace of the Dominion. Millennia of conditioning by the regime has demonized prana and made it anathema.

Shrouders

Shrouders are special individuals who have been gifted with the ability to suppress prana energy around them. These individuals are able to exert a field around themselves that makes prana manifestation difficult. Shrouders can actively oppose any use of prana in their vicinity, whether they are aware that prana is being manifested or not. Players may become a Shrouder by taking the **Shrouder** stunt.

How Prana Works

Kundalini are powerful individuals who are able to harness prana energy in order to achieve extraordinary things. To become a Kundalini, you must take the **Awakened Prana** stunt; it makes you prana aware. To manifest abilities, you must take the **Prana Discipline** stunt for each Discipline of Prana you have mastered.

Each Prana Discipline is associated with an existing character skill for the purposes of rolling, but it behaves as a completely separate skill in its own right. When you do anything with one of the Prana Discipline skills, you roll the character skill it is associated with.

Prana Stunts

Awakened Prana. You have awakened your prana and are able to sense prana echoes using Lore. Unless your archetype permits the **Sanctioned Kundalini** stunt, you are a Degenerate and receive a secret aspect to indicate this (see Kundalini and Degenerates, page 255).

Prana Discipline: <choose>. You have mastered one of the prana disciplines. Choose one of: Clairvoyance, Projection, Psychometry, Telekinesis, Telepathy, or Vitalism. *Requires the Awakened Prana stunt and may be taken multiple times, once per discipline.*

Shrouder. You are able to actively oppose all prana use in your vicinity, whether you are aware of it or not, and receive +2 to Will for the purposes of doing so. While you maintain your prana suppression field, you may not manifest prana disciplines yourself. *Requires the Awakened Prana stunt.*

Prana Shift Costs

When you want to achieve a complex prana effect that takes many factors into consideration, determining the opposition on your roll can become complicated. The following opposition guidelines provide the number of shifts that must be spent from the roll result in order to achieve the full effect you desire. Consider the distance, duration, and scope, then add up all the shift costs for each. This is the number of shifts you must generate on your roll to achieve the full result. A partial result is possible, as long as positive shifts are generated, and the end result can be chosen using the table as a guideline. You must fit the desired effect within the shifts generated on the roll. You may need to scale down the distance, duration, or scope in order to achieve a partial success.

The Prana shift costs are only a guideline. You are free to ignore it and go with a more free-form method of determining the outcome of any prana discipline use.

Opposition	Distance	Duration	Scope
Mediocre (+0)	self	instant	self
Average (+1)	same zone	a few minutes	a single target
Fair (+2)	a few zones	a few hours	a few targets
Good (+3)	a city block	a few days	a dozen targets
Great (+4)	a city	a few weeks	a few dozen targets
Superb (+5)	a region	a few months	a hundred targets
Fantastic (+6)	a continent	a few years	a few hundred targets
Epic (+7)	a planet	a few decades	a thousand targets
Legendary (+8)	a solar system	a lifetime	a few thousand targets

Exertion

When success is a must, but the endeavour is too great due to a combination of distance, duration, or scope, you have the option to exert yourself. You may use your mental stress track to improve the roll when you fail. For each mental stress box you check off, you may add +1 to your roll result (it doesn't matter what the value of the stress box is). If you decide to take a consequence, you receive a bonus equal to the stress the consequence absorbs: Mild (+2), Moderate (+4) and Severe (+6). Exertion is decided retroactively, after the roll is made.

That Syndicate guard totally saw you. You attempt to erase his memories of you and make him think he saw someone else. This falls under Telepathy. The guard is a few zones away (2 shifts), is a single target (1 shifts), and you want the memory loss to persist for at least a few days (3 shifts). That's a total of 6 shifts you need to achieve. You roll the associated skill (Empathy) and only achieve 5 shifts, even after invoking your aspects. You must succeed and decide to exert yourself; you check off a single mental stress box for a +1 shift bonus to your roll and achieve the full effect you were going for.

Prana Echoes and Shrouding

Whenever you manifest your prana disciplines, you leave echoes of your manifestation behind. These echoes persist either on an object or just at the location. The echoes can be felt by those who have awakened their prana and those with Clairvoyance discipline can examine the echoes in more detail. A skilled practitioner of Clairvoyance can learn a lot of information from the echo: the situation, who was involved, and the state of mind of those involved.

It is difficult to hide prana echoes; doing so is called Shrouding. If you want to limit the strength of the echo left behind, you must attempt to suppress the echo while manifesting your prana. Shrouding your own prana manifestation makes it harder for another to analyse the echo you leave behind; each +1 added to the opposition results in a +1 added to the passive opposition of analysing the echo by another.

The base opposition for sensing and analysing a prana echo is Fair (+2) and requires Clairvoyance. See Clairvoyance (page 367) for more information.

Prana Echo Reading Opposition

- **Mediocre (+0)** - discipline used within *a few hours.*
- **Average (+1)** - discipline used within *a day.*
- **Fair (+2)** - discipline used within *a few days.*
- **Good (+3)** - discipline used within *a week.*
- **Great (+4)** - discipline used within *a few weeks.*
- +1 opposition to sense the echo for each +1 opposition added to the manifestation roll.
- Prana echoes dissipate completely after a few weeks.

Interrupting Prana Manifestations

You can interrupt and break manifestations of prana created by another. To do so, you must succeed on an opposed roll against the manifestation's creator using the associated skill for that discipline. Each shift you generate is applied negatively to the power's duration on the Time Ladder (page 239) or causes stress to the manifestation if it has stress boxes. If you succeed with style, the power

is instantly broken. Failure results in no effect. The Kundalini who placed the effect will be unaware that the effect was broken unless they are present to witness the breaking. You may only break manifestations of prana for disciplines you have mastered yourself.

Helping

Multiple Kundalini can combine their prana to achieve a more potent manifestation. For each Kundalini beyond the first and who have mastered the same discipline as the manifested one, the associated skill roll of the lead Kundalini gains a +1. There is no upper limit to the number of Kundalini who can contribute. The Kundalini who is the primary focus of the power can increase the roll by exerting those who are helping. The contributors to the manifestation may oppose this exertion using Will against the skill roll made on the manifestation roll. The lead Kundalini's roll is still modified by the combined helping bonus against anyone who is now resisting the forced exertion.

> Voyod the Ascended Master and his cabal of Kundalini have gathered to influence the human population of the planet into active rebellion against the Tyrant's regime. There are ten Kundalini gathered to help with the Telepathic manifestation. Voyod wants to fuel anger and outrage in the settlement against the recent spate of public executions that have occurred. The distance is Fantastic (+6) for the continent, the scope is Legendary (+8) for a few thousand affected, and the duration is Good (+3) for a few hours, which should be enough to spark open rebellion. The total opposition is a whopping +17! With the ten Kundalini helping, Voyod has a +10 bonus to the roll. The roll result is 14 shifts; 3 shifts short. Voyod decides to exert his cabal. He inflicts 1 mental stress on three members to make up the shifts in order to succeed. If any of the cabal members decide to resist the exertion, they must now roll their Will against Voyod's Telepathy (Empathy) who also has a +10 combined helping bonus from the entire cabal. Failure to resist results in 1 mental stress from the inflicted exertion.

There are many warnings about giving your prana to another willingly; undesirable consequences and even grave danger can result.

Prana Disciplines

Prana abilities are divided into six major disciplines that encompass the various abilities possessed by awakened minds. Each discipline groups together related abilities that a Kundalini must master separately.

Clairvoyance (Lore)

Clairvoyance is the discipline associated with extrasensory abilities: remote viewing, aura perception, and analysis of prana echoes. You are able to experience the world in a way that is unknown to those who are not clairvoyant. You can project your senses outside your body, read the auras of others, and analyse prana echoes for clues as to their nature and who made them.

You can project your senses to another location that is already known to you; this is called remote viewing. When you remotely view, all of your senses will be projected to the target location. Your body will fall unconscious, and you will not feel any pain or other sensations while you are projecting. The session ends when you choose to end it. While projecting, you are susceptible to mental attacks from things your projected senses experience, like fear or emotional distress. Remote viewing combined with Telepathy allows you to communicate remotely with others and to experience their environment.

Associated Skill: Lore

Overcome: You use Clairvoyance (Lore) to overcome opposition in projecting your senses to a remote location in order to see, hear, and feel what is occurring there. Distance and physical knowledge of the location and its environment determines the passive opposition. Your mind projects outward and seeks out the location at great speed, but it might take time for your senses to arrive at a location you do not precisely know. Success permits your senses to be present at the location and receive the general idea of what is happening. Success with style grants you additional clarity, as if you were standing right there. Failure can result in either not being able to focus on the location or the experience being muddled.

Remote Viewing Opposition

- **Mediocre (+0)** - You have visited the location.
- **Average (+1)** - You have visited the location's vicinity.
- **Fair (+2)** - You have had the location described to you in detail.
- **Good (+3)** - You have had the location described in vague detail.
- **Great (+4)** - You know very little about the location.
- It is impossible to view a location if you do not at least know its general vicinity.
- The passive opposition for remote viewing is also affected by distance (see Prana Shift Costs, page 364).

When reading auras, an unnamed NPC will have a passive opposition based on Will, and a named NPC will actively oppose with their Will. A success will reveal one hidden aspect and a success with style will grant a single, free invoke on that aspect.

When reading prana echoes, a success will tell you what discipline was used and its general application, such as: "someone suffered great pain here through Telekinesis" or "the history of this object was read with Psychometry". A success with style will inform the clairvoyant about the level of power of the Kundalini who left the echo: "It was a Kundalini possessing great prana".

Create an Advantage: You can use Clairvoyance (Lore) to keep yourself aware of your surroundings, and even sense hidden things. You may create advantages such as **One with the Temple** and **My Senses Are All Around**. These advantages can be useful in locating hidden things, avoiding ambushes, and knowing the layout of a place ahead of time. In social situations you can use your ability to read auras to **Know which Buttons to Push** and **Playing To Their Mood**.

Attack: Clairvoyance may not be used for attack actions.

Defence: You can use Clairvoyance (Lore) to actively oppose others who are trying to view your location remotely. If you succeed at opposing another's presence, you prevent them from remote viewing the location you are at, but this does not prevent locations some distance from you from being viewed (about a city block away). If you succeed with style, you get a vague clue as to the identity of the remote presence.

Notice: Clairvoyance is used to read auras of living creatures, in order to determine their emotional state, mood, and health. It also reveals to you things that are supernatural in nature or that are hidden from normal senses. You also use Clairvoyance (Lore) to detect the presence of others remote viewing your location; you can feel their presence near you, but you cannot identify who it is.

Clairvoyance Stunts

Aura Reader. When you create an advantage using Clairvoyance (Lore) related to the reading of auras, you receive an additional free invoke on the advantage created.

Prana Detective. You receive +2 to actions when you use Investigate to look for a physical thing that is hidden from you.

Prana Sensitive. You receive +2 to notice with Clairvoyance (Lore) when you attempt to detect prana echoes.

Remote Viewer. You receive +2 to overcome with Clairvoyance (Lore) when you attempt to view a location remotely.

Projection (Will)

Projection enables your body to generate energy and allows you to manipulate it. The energy can be projected from your body or used to create various fields that affect you and your immediate environment. You can direct energy towards another in order to harm them, much like a projector, or channel your energy into an apparatus to power it. Your energy fields can be used to manipulate gravity and light, to generate static discharges that affect technology, or to simulate the effects of technology like shunts. You can encompass others within your field, as long as they you are within arm's length. Projection also enables you to teleport over short distances in a manner similar to an apportal—including the spectacular thunder clap when you dematerialize.

Associated Skill: Will

Overcome: Use Projection (Will) to overcome opposition when performing things like levitating yourself, teleportation, or non-violent applications of your energy fields. You can power technology by focusing your prana energy into them or drain energy from apparatus by dissipating it into the environment.

Teleportation is very difficult to control precisely and carries with it an element of risk. All teleportation attempts face a base passive opposition of Fair (+2).

Teleportation Passive Opposition

- Base opposition is Fair (+2).
- Add +2 opposition per additional individual being teleported.
- Add +1 opposition per 5 metres (16.5 feet) of distance.

When you roll Projection (Will) to teleport...

On a **success**, you teleport somewhere close to where you planned, facing a random direction.

On a **success with style**, you teleport precisely where you planned, facing your desired direction.

On a **tie**, you teleport close to where you planned, but suffer a mild consequence.

On a **fail**, you teleport a short distance in a random direction, and you suffer a mild consequence.

Create an Advantage: Use Projection (Will) to create advantages through the application of fields of energy. The gravity of an area might be increased through an **Increased Gravity** aspect, or lightened with a **Counter-Gravity Zone**. The opposition on the roll is calculated using Prana Shift Costs (page 364). You may also illuminate an area by making your field glow to create a zone aspect like **Brightly Lit** or raise a **Shunt Barrier** to protect you from energy attacks.

Attack: Use Projection (Will) to attack by projecting charged particles at a target like a projector, but with less range (within your zone) and a base passive opposition of Fair (+2). You may also generate a static pulse effect at a target to disrupt its technological function, causing mental stress to cybernetic organisms. You can increase the range of your attack by reducing the shifts generated on your roll by one per additional zone of distance. Your target defends using Athletics.

Defend: Projection (Will) may not be used for defend actions.

Notice: Use Projection (Will) to notice energy emissions or other energy-based phenomena that would be invisible to non-Kundalini. You can feel the energy contained within things you touch and gauge their potential.

Projection Stunts

Apport Master. You have mastered teleportation and no longer suffer the base Fair (+2) opposition.

Charged Projection. Your Projection (Will) attacks have a base range of 2 zones, rather than just the zone you are in.

Focused Projection. Your Projection (Will) attacks no longer suffer the base Fair (+2) opposition.

Pranic Bulwark. You receive an additional free invoke on advantages you create using Projection (Will) that are defensive in nature.

Psychometry (Investigate)

Psychometry is the discipline of reading the emotional residue left by emotionally charged situations on objects and places. The more significant the event, the longer the residue lasts. Psychometry enables you to act like an emotional bloodhound and to retrace events as they occurred in the past.

Associated Skill: Investigate

Overcome: Use Psychometry (Investigate) to overcome obstacles that involve using your supernatural senses to investigate a person, object, or place. By touching and concentrating, you are able to feel significant events that have occurred. Psychometry is not mind reading; it is the reading of the emotional emanations left behind. The information is not always clear and may require interpretation, though.

You can concentrate on an object you are holding or a place you are standing in, to gain insight about past events. This differs from Clairvoyance in that the events need not be associated with prana manifestations. Each shift gleams one fact about the history of the object or place. If you succeed with style, you also learn a secret or aspect of the last person who held the object or visited the place.

You may also use Psychometry (Investigate) to shroud prana manifestations after the fact. Roll Psychometry against a passive opposition of Fair (+2), and each shift you generate adds +1 to the opposition for another to detect and read your prana echo.

Create an Advantage: Psychometry (Investigate) allows you to feel the emotional residue left behind in your environment. You can feel minute vibrations and what is happening right now in relation to the thing you are concentrating on. You could feel the building you are in, and all the people within it, but you cannot tell who is who or their exact location. By entering a meditative trance, you are able to reach into your memories and review things in extreme detail, even things you glanced for a moment, with perfect recall. Each shift nets you one item of information about what happened. The advantages you might create are: **I Feel What Has Occurred Here, Tuned to the Building** and **Xi-An Agents Followed Us**.

Attack: Psychometry (Will) may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Psychometry (Will) may not be used for defend actions.

Notice: Use Psychometry (Will) to give you a supernatural intuition that can warn you about dangers.

Psychometry Stunts

Augur. When you create advantages using Psychometry (Investigate), the advantages you create have an extra free invoke on them.

Cleanser. You do not suffer the Fair (+2) base passive opposition when using Psychometry (Investigate) to shroud prana echoes.

Intuitive. You receive +2 to create an advantage with Presence whenever you are trying to convince another.

Psychometric Bloodhound. You receive +2 to overcome with Psychometry (Investigate) when you are tracking a living being.

Telekinesis (Provoke)

Telekinesis is the discipline of manipulating physical matter at the atomic level. It allows you to create pressure waves to knock things over, to increase friction to cause fires, and to slow the movement of molecules to cause substances to freeze. This discipline also allows you to move physical objects with your mind and to manipulate them as if they were in your hand.

Associated Skill: Provoke

Overcome: Use Telekinesis (Provoke) to manipulate things with your mind. You are able to throw things with a thought and move things with concentration. You use overcome to levitate objects, including yourself, and change the temperature of your environment. Passive opposition depends on what you are attempting to accomplish, with scope and distance affecting the difficulty to accomplish your goal (see Prana Shift Costs, page 364).

Create an Advantage: Use Telekinesis (Provoke) to do things like strike out at an enemy with your mind and make them **Knocked Back** or rip a weapon from their grasp to make them **Disarmed**. You can also make a room **Sweltering Hot**, or **On Fire** by raising the temperature, or make something **Frozen Solid** just as easily.

Attack: Use Telekinesis (Provoke) to paralyse nerves, shatter bones, set fires, suffocate an enemy, or burst their organs. The base range is your zone only, but you can extend the range by trading a shift for each additional zone. The attack is visible as a force directed at your target, and your target defends using Physique.

Defend: Use Telekinesis (Provoke) against physical attacks by deflecting them away from you at the speed of thought. You may roll Telekinesis instead of Athletics or Fight to defend, but the roll has a passive opposition of Fair (+2). You can also defend on behalf of another as your action in an exchange. Telekinetic defence does not work against energy-based attacks.

Notice: Telekinesis (Provoke) may not be used for notice actions.

Telekinesis Stunts

Poltergeist. You receive +2 to create any advantage with Telekinesis (Provoke) that involves levitating small objects or tossing them.

Pyro. You receive +2 to Telekinesis (Provoke) on overcome and create an advantage actions to generate heat or fires.

Phantom Limb. You receive +2 to overcome with Telekinesis (Provoke) when you attempt to move something using your mind.

Kinetic Shield. You no longer suffer the Fair (+2) passive opposition when defending with Telekinesis (Provoke).

Telepathy (Empathy)

Telepathy is the discipline of mental manipulation of other living beings. You're able to read and manipulate thoughts, communicate without speaking, cause delusions, and even take temporary physical control of another being.

Associated Skill: Empathy

Overcome: Use Telepathy (Empathy) to read minds by overcoming the target's Will. Telepathy is always opposed by Will, passively when the target is an unnamed NPC, or actively when a named NPC is targeted. You can read minds and surface thoughts, obtaining information that you might not otherwise have access to. Each shift on the roll grants you one piece of information provided by the GM. If you succeed with style, you create a scene aspect that reveals some useful piece of information you received from your target's mind.

Telepathy allows you to learn aspects from others without social interaction. On a success, you glean one aspect about your target. If you **succeed with style**, you learn two aspects or receive a free invoke on a single aspect.

Create an Advantage: Use Telepathy (Empathy) to plant thoughts into another's mind, making them believe that your ideas are theirs. You can make someone **Susceptible to Suggestion** or make them paranoid with **Your Friends Are out to Get You!**. By trawling the memories of another, you can also gain knowledge temporarily about a specific skill, such as **Gleaned Technosophic Knowledge**.

Attack: Use Telepathy (Empathy) to attack another's mind and cause mental stress. The practice is dangerous because it exhausts the Telepath's mind as much as the target's. All attacks are opposed by the target's Will; if you fail in your attack (though not on a tie), you suffer 1 mental stress as a result of the battle of wills.

When attempting to take direct control of another living being, you must first cause enough mental stress to take them out in a mental conflict (or a contest for unnamed NPCs). This is a prolonged battle of wills that culminates with you gaining full control of the target if you succeed. While in control, your body becomes comatose, and your mind jumps into your new puppet. The control is broken whenever your body suffers a consequence, or your puppet is taken out physically. You must defend using your own Will and suffer any mental stress directed at either your body or your puppet's while in control. Unnamed NPCs who are taken out mentally have their single stress track reset when they are controlled.

Defend: Use Telepathy (Empathy) to defend against another's Telepathy attacks instead of Will. You can also defend another as your exchange action against mental attacks like fear or an enemy's telepathic attack.

Notice: Use Telepathy (Empathy) to notice the telepathic influence of others on a subject or to feel an active telepathic link between individuals.

Telepathy Stunts

Mental Assault. Once per session, you can prevent your opponent from using stress against a mental attack you have made with Telepathy (Empathy), causing all stress to go directly to consequences.

Puppeteer. You are able to take mental control of up to two individuals at the same time.

Scanner. You receive +2 to overcome with Telepathy (Empathy) when you read another's thoughts.

Telepathic Guardian. You no longer need to spend an action to defend another from mental attack. This means you may defend up to two others by using your exchange action on the second individual.

Vitalism (Physique)

Vitalism is the discipline that manipulates the spiritual energies, called Chakras, which all living creatures generate. Vitalism allows you to enhance the physical prowess of yourself and others, or to affect the health of a living being. This includes speeding up the body's natural healing process, causing it harm, or diagnosing its health.

> Some believe it is the mastery of Vitalism that caused the Tyrant to abolish the awakened prana gift of the Pharistos. A master Vitalist is able to extend their own life and even achieve immortality. The Tyrant wants absolute control over the gift of immortality and its recipients.

When you exert yourself with Vitalism, you can add +1 to your roll for each physical stress box you check off (regardless of its value), sacrificing some of your own life force to empower the roll. You may not use mental stress during exertion when using your Vitalism.

All Vitalism abilities are limited to physical touch.

Associated Skill: Physique

Overcome: Use Vitalism (Physique) to overcome injuries though the manipulation of spiritual energy within the body. You are able to diagnose injury and perform psychic surgery. Vitalism allows you to treat physical and mental consequences on yourself or others. The opposition on your roll is equal to the stress absorbed by the consequence. If you succeed with style, you are able to downgrade a consequence (see Accelerated Healing, page 240).

Create an Advantage: Use Vitalism (Physique) to improve bodily function in yourself and others by temporarily granting increased strength or vigour, improving natural senses, or adjusting the body's immunity to toxins. Likewise, you can drain spiritual energy to impair another. You are able to create advantages like **Increased Strength**, **Improved Senses** or inflict harm upon your target by causing them **Blurred Vision**.

Attack: Use Vitalism (Physique) to drain life energy from others and to disrupt it, causing them physical harm. You must touch the flesh of your target with your bare hand; your Vitalism roll is made against Fair (+2) opposition, and the target uses Physique to defend. If you succeed with style, you are able to steal some of their energy; uncheck your lowest checked physical stress box in addition to inflicting stress.

Defend: Use Vitalism (Physique) to defend against toxins, biological agents, and all things that invade the body. You can use Vitalism to defend another as your exchange action if you are touching them, but if you fail (though not tie), you suffer one physical stress from the exertion.

Notice: Use Vitalism to diagnose living creatures and to feel their health. You can also use Vitalism to sense life around you and to detect living beings that are hidden.

Vitalism Stunts

Augment Physique. You can augment the physique of yourself and others. When you create an advantage using Vitalism (Physique) that deals with augmenting physical abilities, you receive an additional free invoke on the advantage created.

Healer. You receive +2 to Vitalism (Physique) on overcome actions when treating consequences.

Ethereal. Spend a fate point, and you can turn your body into an incorporeal form that cannot be harmed by physical means; mental and energy attacks will still harm you, though. You may not affect the world physically, and you may pass through normal objects and walls, but some energy fields may prevent you from passing through. The effect lasts until you decide to end it, at the end of the scene, or when you suffer a consequence. Whatever equipment and items you have on you will also become incorporeal, though not other living beings.

Ravager. You do not suffer the base opposition when attacking with Vitalism (Physique).

Chapter Seventeen
Wealth

Wealth is the representation of your character's available funds for the duration of the story. Your available wealth is tracked using the wealth stress track, and your Resources skill rating determines the number of stress boxes it has.

Wealth Stress Track

Your wealth stress track represents the available wealth that you are able to call upon during a single story. Your Resources skill rating determines the number of stress boxes in your stress track. Wealth stress never leads to consequences; if your wealth stress runs out, you are out of funds until the next story.

All characters begin with 1 2 stress boxes. Additional stress boxes and their values are dependent on the Resources skill (see Stress Boxes, page 239).

When the situation is appropriate, wealth stress can be the literal cost paid for rolls where success at a cost is an option. Perhaps bribes had to be paid, support could only be given with immediate compensation, or additional materials purchased to complete that invention.

If the story hinges on the characters getting on a shuttle but they cannot afford the fare, then you do not want a roll to decide whether the story progresses or does not. Let the players get on that shuttle and tell them it costs them 1 or 2 stress to secure passage. The stress can be distributed among the group.

Cost

How much do things cost? The GM determines it based on availability and complexity. Typical costs will range between Mediocre (+0) and Epic (+8), and the cost will be the passive opposition to the Resources roll. Below is a general guideline on costs and modifiers.

Cost Opposition

- **Mediocre (+0)** - Essentials: clothing, food, lodging
- **Average (+1)** - Common: primitive weapons and armour, light armour, common drugs, non-technological items
- **Fair (+2)** - Uncommon: shredders, weapons, medium armour, illegal drugs, simple technology
- **Good (+3)** - Restricted: projectors, heavy armour, shimmering veil, basic Pharisto fashion, high technology
- **Great (+4)** - Special: psitronics, power armour, holocaust blade, unique Pharisto fashion, sky chariot, Theor sect technology
- **Superb (+5)** - Luxury: Spartan Pharisto housing, servants, height of Pharisto fashion
- **Fantastic (+6)** - Splendour: comfortable Pharisto housing, many servants, sky barge
- **Epic (+7)** - Opulence: opulent Pharisto housing, every wish fulfilled, personal voidship
- **Legendary (+8)** - Hedonism: anything is possible
- +1 cost for primitive technosophic base; goods must be imported (mining colony, outpost, minor colony)
- -1 cost for advanced technosophic base: goods are exported (lineage planet, major colony)

When to Roll Resources: There is no need to roll Resources each time a character wants to acquire something. If the object or service is small and not significant to the story, compare the character's Resources rating against its cost; if Resources is equal to or higher than the assigned cost, just let the character have it. Resource rolls should be confined to significant story elements and additional equipment or advantages that characters want to acquire.

Wealth Recovery

Wealth stress recovers at the end of every story, rather than at the end of a scene. This means that your wealth resources are limited for the duration of a story, so be careful with your spending.

Using Wealth

You spend wealth in a number of ways: from greasing of palms to purchasing gear and maintaining your voidship. Each time you decide to spend wealth, it has a chance to affect your wealth stress track.

When you roll your Resources against a passive opposition equal to the cost...

On a **success**, you obtain the object and must take 1 stress on your stress track as the cost of spending your wealth.

On a **success with style**, you avoid paying the 1 stress.

On a **tie**, you may choose to succeed at a minor cost. What this means is that you must still pay 1 stress as if you succeeded, and the item or service you acquired comes at a minor cost. This may be a defect in the device, represented by an aspect, or not exactly the service you expected.

On a **fail**, you may choose to either not acquire whatever it is you are looking for, or you may take 1 stress per shift you failed by to your wealth stress track.

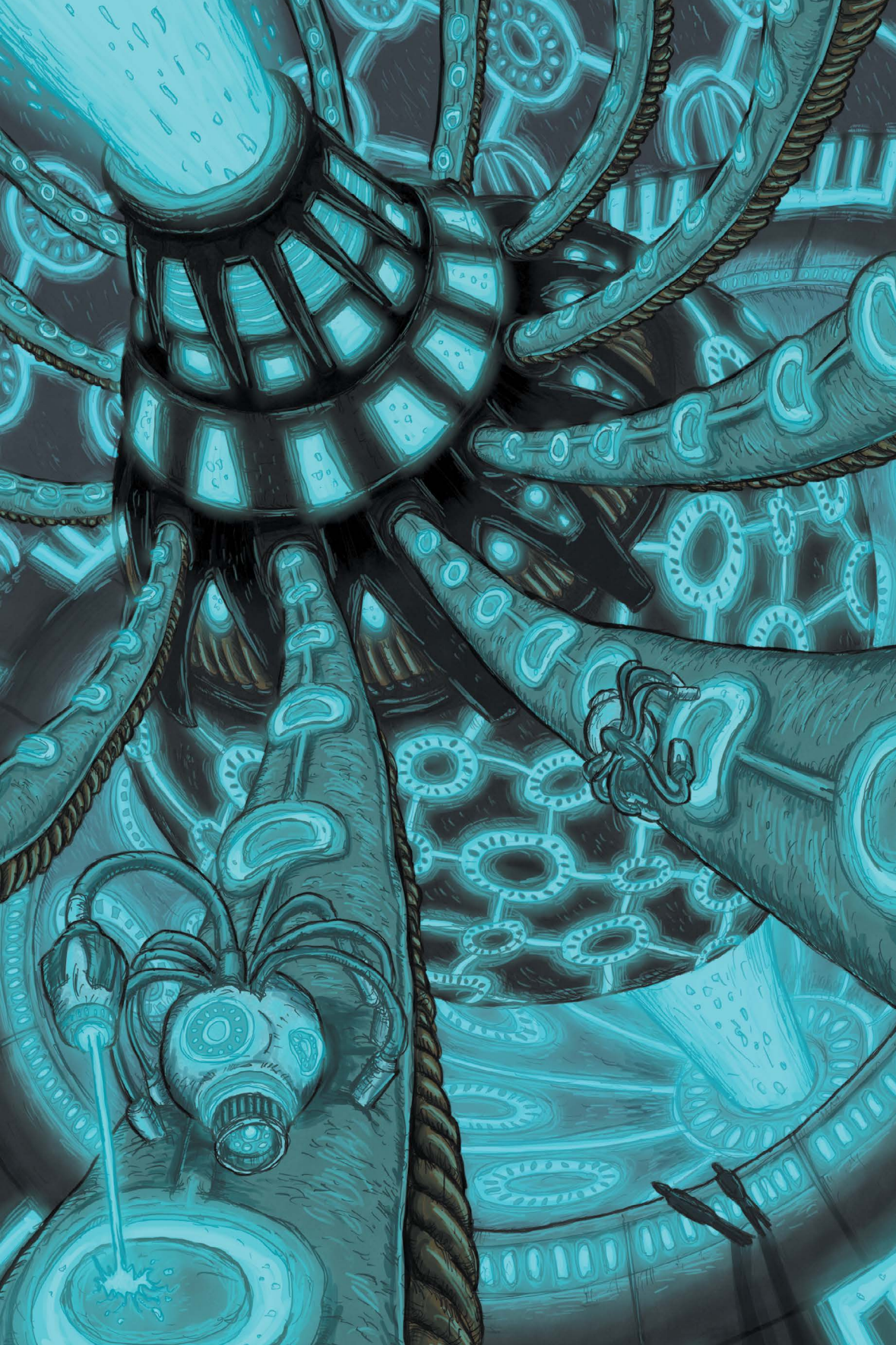
Wealth Boosts

During stories, you will find loot that has value. This loot is represented as Wealth Boosts. Each Wealth Boost equates to one wealth stress, and you can spend it in place of stress. The GM may hand out Wealth Boosts as loot whenever significant resources are found. Wealth Boosts can also represent special funding and financial backing you might benefit from. Whenever you are given funds or financial support in a story, the GM will hand it out as Wealth Boosts.

Wealth Boosts—like wealth stress—go away at the end of an adventure. If you want your character to become wealthier, add more ranks to your Resources skill when you reach story milestones.

Helping

Standard helping rules do not apply to the Resources roll due to the wealth stress track. Helping is accomplished through the expenditure of wealth stress from your wealth track. For each stress box checked, its value adds to the roll of whoever you are helping (if you check off your 2-value wealth stress box, +2 is added to their roll).



Chapter Eighteen
The Pattern

The Pattern is an abstract, virtual construct originally created by the Artilects to be their domain. Since then, the Pattern has come to be used by the humans the Artilects once served. The Pattern is a realm of computation, its size dependent on the processing capability of its mindframes. Numerous realms comprise the Pattern, each a distinct and unique construct created and maintained by the Solons who inhabit them (see Technosophy: The Pattern, page 118).

Realms

A realm may be composed of a single mindframe or many interconnected together. Each realm is unique and reflects the abstract thoughts of the Solons who reside within it. A realm is populated by Solons, ersatz intelligences, their subroutines, and the Pattern Delvers who delve its secrets—among other things. The size of each realm is limited by the number of processing cores available to it. These precious resources are finite and fiercely protected by those who control them. Those who control the most processing cores are the ones who wield the most power within a realm. As a result, processing cores are used as currency within the Pattern.

Processing Cores

A realm's available processing capacity is measured in processing cores. Each core represents a unit of computational power available to a denizen of the Pattern. Without processing cores, no operation may be undertaken within the Pattern. Each action must be computed, referenced, and cross-referenced within the Pattern runtime—all of this requires cores.

Processing cores are the most valuable resource in any realm. They are traded, loaned, leased, and fought over by the realm's denizens. Each core has a control subroutine installed that permits its owner (and only its owner) to use that core.

Portals

Portals are the links between the realms of the Pattern. A portal enables traversal from one realm to another. There are portals that connect adjacent realms that are within close physical proximity to each other, as well as realms that lie in distant star systems. Portals are usually well hidden and protected by guardians dispatched by the Solon to keep the realm safe from intruders. The guardians will often allow passage for travellers, providing that an appropriate payment is

made—usually a core per traveller. When the realm is threatened, a Solon is able to relocate the portal to another location within the realm, hiding it from all of the realm's denizens. Some portals are so well hidden that only a select few have ever found them. This may be for good reasons, as relations between the Solons are not always amicable.

Pattern Forms

Everything within the Pattern is represented by an abstract geometric form. Pattern Delvers take pride in coming up with unique and elaborate forms to represent themselves. Some appear as humanoids, animals, bright suns, or complex geometric systems. For many, pattern forms are not only mere representations, they are also artistic expressions.

The size of a form is a good indicator of its processing power. Things with a lot of processing power appear larger than those with less power. As processing cores are acquired, the size of the form increases. Solons are the titans of the Pattern, humongous and imposing figures with vast arrays of processing cores at their disposal.

Delving the Pattern

The Pattern is a virtual, abstract environment. It is meant to be experienced directly, and it is far too complex for any interface except a direct-neural connection via a Pattern Transducer. Pattern Transducers come in two forms: a physical helmet-like device or a cybernetic nodule implanted directly into the brain. Interfacing with the Pattern is called delving.

The helmet device is a primitive Pattern interface used by those who are unable to obtain the nodule version of the Pattern Transducer. Both interfaces function in the same fashion; when activated, the device matches the brain wave pattern of the delver's brain to that of the Pattern. The delver's consciousness is projected into the abstract environment. The delver's body becomes comatose while they are inside the Pattern, barely aware of their surroundings.

Delving is a dangerous activity for biological minds. The Pattern Transducer provides feedback directly into the brain of the delver. This results in a number of side effects, including the possibility of permanent brain damage to the delver should they suffer an attack within the Pattern. Digital trauma suffered inside the Pattern can kill the delver.

Time in the Pattern

The delver's mind is only able to process events at the fastest rate possible for a biological mind. When delving, actions take about the same amount of time as an exchange in the real world. The complexity of the Pattern and the computation required for each action results in no significant difference between the real world and the Pattern.

How the Pattern Works

Delving the Pattern is both empowering and dangerous. You can subvert systems connected to the pattern and turn them for your own ambition. You can also break into systems and steal data stored within them. All these activities carry an element of risk to the delver.

Actions within the Pattern

All activity within the Pattern is conducted using the Delve skill. Whenever you are asked to make a roll, you use your Delve skill, unless stated otherwise.

Stress inflicted in Pattern conflicts is always applied to the mental stress track. You always use your Delve skill to defend while delving the Pattern.

Connecting

Connecting to the Pattern depends on the quality of the signal. The stronger the signal, the easier it is to connect. Your connection roll also determines how many cores you begin delving with. Additional cores can be acquired from stunts and by locating and subverting cores inside the Pattern.

Signal Strength Passive Opposition to Connect

- **Mediocre (+0)** - strong signal
- **Average (+1)** - decent signal
- **Fair (+2)** - weak signal
- You cannot connect if the signal is too weak.

When you roll Delve to connect to the Pattern...

On a **success**, you connect and begin with one core.

On a **success with style**, you connect and begin with two cores.

On a **tie**, you connect with a single core and a **Bad Connection** aspect.

On a **fail**, you cannot connect until you travel to a different location for a better signal.

Disconnecting

You can disconnect from the Pattern at any time, provided there is no opposition for you to do so. If there is opposition from a hostile entity, you must overcome it before you can disconnect. Most often, this is handled as an opposed roll with a success indicating that you disconnected successfully.

In the physical world, you cannot be awakened from your delving session without forcefully disconnecting the Pattern Transducer from the Pattern. This is not possible with a nodule-based transducer without disrupting the Pattern signal, but it can be done easily enough with the physical apparatus.

Whenever you are forcefully yanked out the Pattern in this way, you must defend using Delve against a Great (+4) mental attack. Being forcefully disconnected from the Pattern is both disorienting and painful.

When you disconnect, you lose control of the cores you acquired.

Core Limit

The maximum amount of cores anyone can control at one time is Will skill rank + 2. Stunts can modify this maximum limit.

Burning Cores

Cores are the currency of the Pattern and the more you control, the more power you wield. When delving, you can use cores to help you. When you apply a processing core to an action, it is referred to as burning a core. The core becomes occupied with running the activity you performed and is not usable for anything else during the delving session.

You can burn cores to...

- Add +1 to a Delve roll.
- Soak one mental stress.

When you add +1 to a Delve roll, the core is expended. When used to add to a roll during social interactions, the core might be given away as a bribe or payment; otherwise the core is considered busy processing something or other.

Whenever you suffer mental stress as a result of an attack within the Pattern, you can burn a core to soak up the stress instead. Each core you burn soaks up a single stress. You can burn cores and use your own stress in combination.

The Last Core

When you burn your last core, you are immediately disconnected from the Pattern. Without a core to perform processing for your connection, you cannot operate within the Pattern.

Whenever you are forcefully disconnected by losing your last core, you must defend using Delve against a Fair (+2) mental attack.

Acquiring More Cores

You can attempt to acquire more processing cores when inside the Pattern by spending some time to search around for nearby cores that are available. You can also attempt to subvert another's cores for your use.

Searching for cores takes *a few minutes* of real time and is rolled against a passive opposition of Fair (+2).

When you roll Delve to acquire more cores...

- On a **success**, you acquire one more core.
- On a **success with style**, you acquire two more cores.
- On a **tie**, you fail to acquire any cores and waste time.
- On a **fail**, something bad happens: you suffer stress from attempting to subvert a core, you attract the attention of a hostile denizen of the Pattern, or you lose one of your cores in the process.

Pattern Activities

Delving the Pattern involves a number of activities. The mechanics of each are listed below.

Intrusion

Intrusion is an attempt to infiltrate a system and to acquire access to its data and processing facilities. This activity is a race against time as you seek to gain access to the system before it and its guardians become aware of the intrusion.

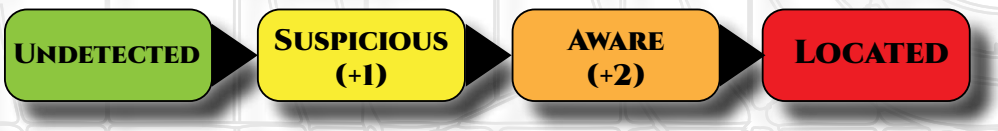
Intrusion is handled as a contest, one that is time sensitive. You must achieve 3 victories before the system becomes aware of your activity. Each victory the system achieves brings it closer to detecting and locating you.

The GM will determine the system's rating: Mediocre (+0) to Great (+4); this is the system's Delve skill. Mediocre (+0) systems are simple archives and analogues whereas Great (+4) systems are advanced archives and high-security systems operated by Analogue Intelligences.

During the contest, each victory the system achieves moves you along the track below and brings you closer to being located; you begin as Undetected. As soon as you achieve 3 victories, you've broken the safeguards and have access to the system. If the system locates you, the contest is over—you've failed. If guardians are available, they will be dispatched, either physically or virtually—or both.

Once intrusion is successful, you've gained access to the data you were seeking. The system's alert state will be determined by where you are on the infiltration track and may result in further complications for you.

Infiltration Track



- **Undetected:** The system is unaware of you—all is normal.
- **Suspicious:** The system has become suspicious that it is being infiltrated, and it has enacted defensive protocols; your passive opposition is now Average (+1).
- **Aware:** The system is aware that an intrusion is in progress; your passive opposition is now Fair (+2).
- **Located:** The system has located you both virtually and physically. It has locked you out and dispatched guardians.

Searching

Searching for information is perhaps the most common delving activity. The Patternscape is composed of pure information, and sorting through the unending data is challenging. When searching, you are engaging the denizens of the Pattern realm and also searching through the data streams that flow across the realm.

Searching is handled as a Delve overcome roll with a base time determined by the GM; usually *15 minutes*. The base opposition depends on the availability of the information sought.

Information Availability Opposition

- **Mediocre (+0)** - readily available: where is the Heliocon's system?
- **Average (+1)** - not readily available: which Solon guards this realm?
- **Fair (+2)** - not commonly known: where are the portals to other realms?
- **Good (+3)** - privileged information: where does the Solon reside?
- **Great (+4)** - secret information: are there darkframe portals in this realm?

When you roll Delve to search for information...

On a **success**, you find the information you seek after *15 minutes*.
On a **success with style**, you find the information you seek after *a few minutes*.
On a **tie**, you find the information you seek but it takes *half an hour*.
On a **fail**, you don't find the information after *15 minutes* of searching and have attracted unwanted attention. Success at a serious cost is available at the GM's discretion.

Subversion

Subversion involves the hacking of a system in order to take control of it. This may be an automated system, an automaton, or a security system that is controlled through the Pattern. Subversion is handled as an opposed roll for unintelligent systems, and as a conflict for intelligent, cybernetic systems.

Unintelligent systems will have a rating between Mediocre (+0) and Great (+4); this is the opposition you need to overcome in order to take control of the system.

Intelligent, cybernetic systems must be taken out in a conflict in order to take control of them. Cybernetic systems often have access to many more cores than you, and they can use these cores in the same way you can.

When you roll Delve to subvert an unintelligent system...

On a **success**, you subvert the system within *a few minutes*.
On a **success with style**, you subvert the system within *a minute*.
On a **tie**, you subvert the system, but it takes *15 minutes*.
On a **fail**, you don't subvert the system, and you may have triggered an alarm.

Tracing

Tracing is a search inside the Pattern for the physical location of a delver or system. Tracing is a contest and a race against time for the target being traced. While being traced, the target attempts to obscure their location while the tracer attempts to uncover it through the data trail left within the Pattern.

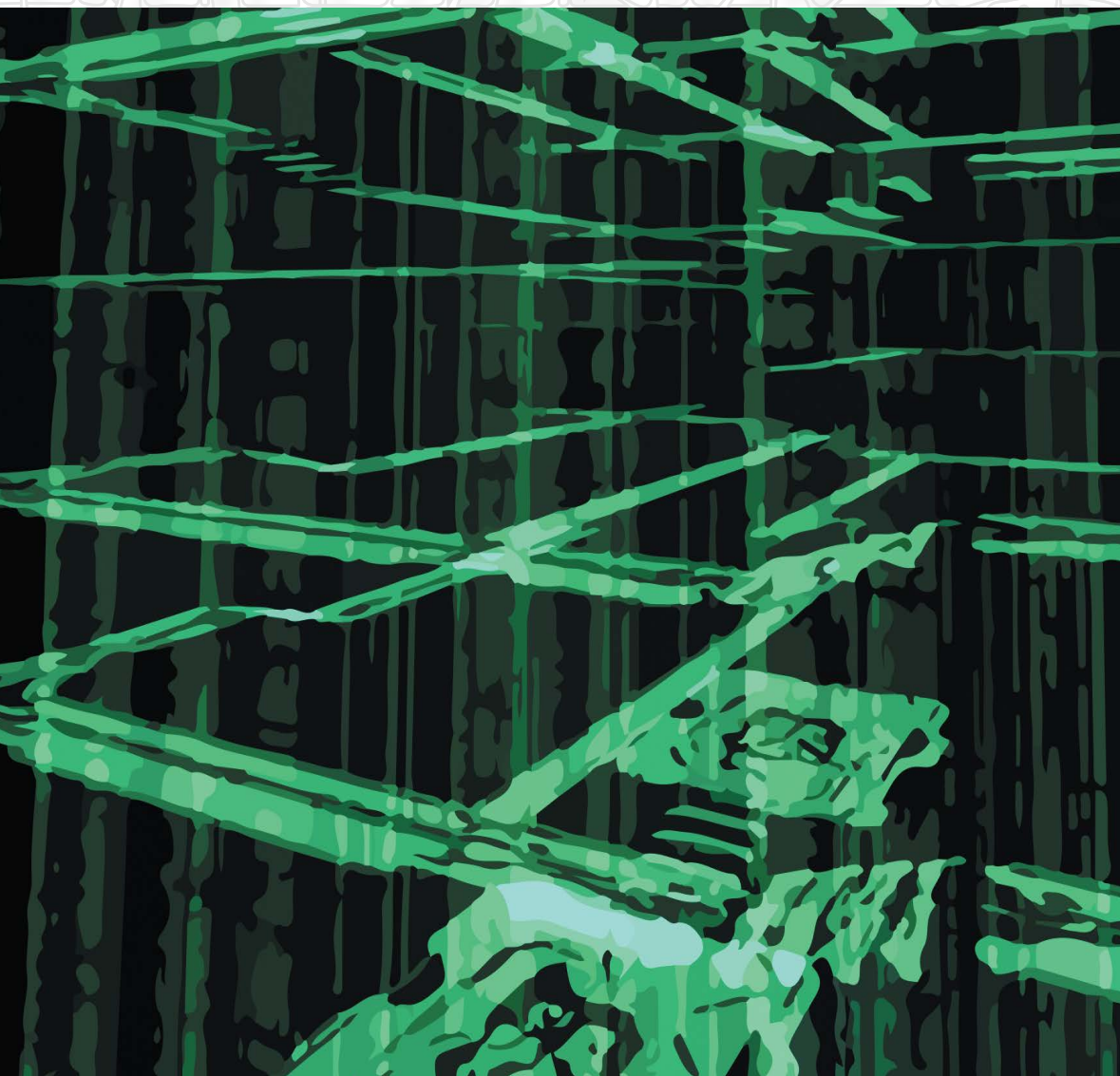
The target must achieve 3 victories in order to obscure their data trail. At the same time, the tracer is zeroing in on the location of the target. Each victory the tracer achieves moves the Tracing State of the target from Hidden to Located. The

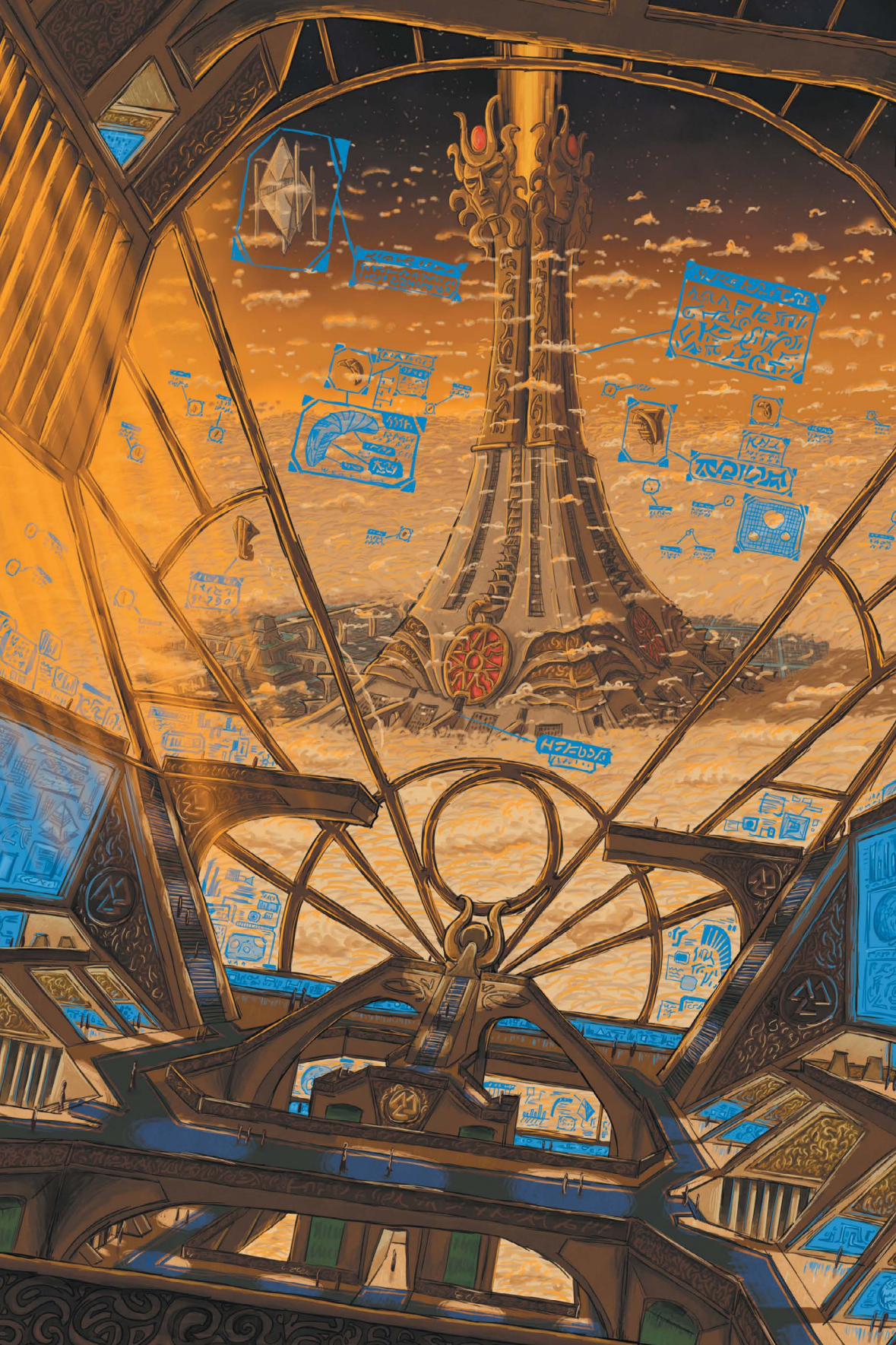
contest ends as soon as 3 victories are achieved by the target, or the tracer has moved the Tracing Track to Located.

Tracing Track

- **Hidden:** The target's location is unknown.
- **Region:** The target's location has been traced to a large region (a city).
- **Area:** The target's location has been traced to a small area (city block).
- **Located:** The target's location has been uncovered (a building).

After the contest ends, the Tracing State determines the level of success for the tracer.





Chapter Nineteen
Voidships

Voidships are the mainstay of any space opera; characters frequently ply the dark void between the stars, visit strange systems, and uncover long lost secrets. In the Baroqueverse, voidships are immense in size and crewed by many Elevated who have dedicated their lives to the service of the vessel and its Captain. Many of these vessels have been in operation for thousands of years—and some for even longer. They are ancient and reliable, and many carry a rich history and traditions that are kept alive by generations of crew who have served aboard them.

A voidship Captain's official title in the Dominion is Ophanim; it means "the ship's wheel".

Voidships of medium size and above are entirely self-sufficient, with food processors, advanced reclamation facilities, and power plants that enable the voidship to operate over generations of its crews' lives. Life aboard these voidships resembles that of many planet-side colonies. The crews are often conceived, live, work, and die aboard them. Entire generations of Syndicatemen make their home aboard the vessel that their ancestors were chosen to serve aboard. Many rarely set foot planet-side, preferring to remain either in orbit or aboard the voidship when berthed at a planet. Generations of living in enclosed quarters have made many voidship crews agoraphobic. The crews are staunchly loyal to their ship and its Captain, and will defend their vessel to the death. Voidship crews become bound to the fortunes of the voidship they serve and its current Captain. The relationship goes both ways, and the Captains must take care of their crews for their fortunes are bound in the loyalty and training of the crew.

Have Voidship, Will Travel

Most space opera stories revolve around planet-hopping and space travel. Decide with your table whether your stories will involve just a single planet or many. If you decide to take your stories into the void, decide what type of voidship the characters own or have access to. There are no rules or restrictions on what size of voidship the players should have. Discuss with your table the types of stories you want to play in, then figure out what type of voidship (if any) will best fit into those stories.

Voidship creation is not dependent on players building it alongside their characters. Voidships stand on their own as an element in the story, rather than as an extension of a character. Once you have decided on the voidship details, choose a hull size and work with your table on constructing it.

The voidship is treated as an independent ally of the PCs. The crew should be treated as an NPC based on the aspects given to the voidship. You can even go as far as treating some of them as nameless and supporting NPCs. If there is a captain who is not one of the PCs, you can make them a major character if that is important to your story.

Voidship Skills

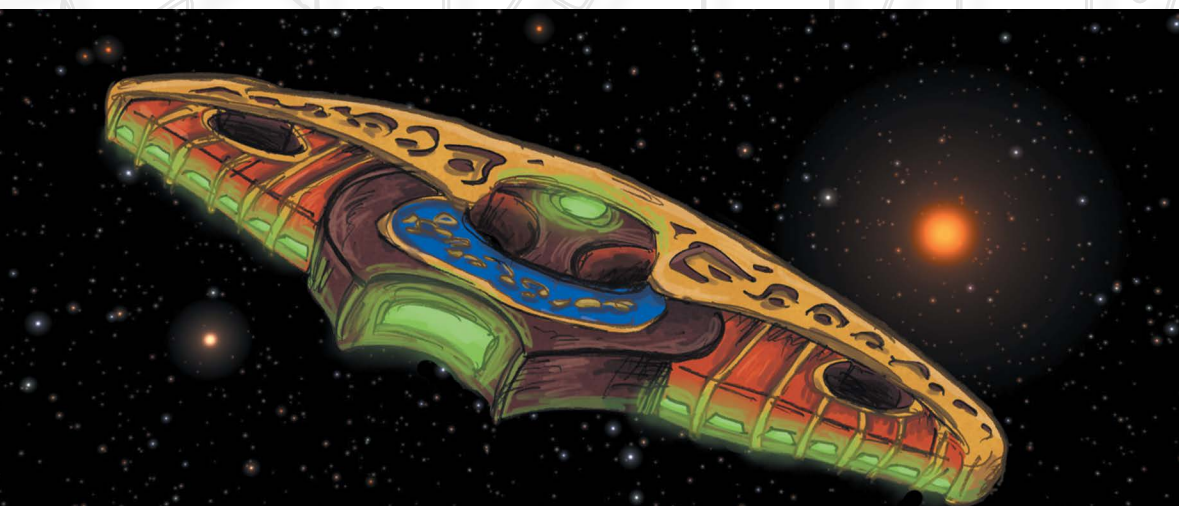
Voidships are treated as characters and possess their own set of skills, stress tracks, and stunts. Voidships have their own skill list and each voidship skill is associated with one or more character skills, depending on situation. Each voidship skill represents the combined capabilities and the skill of its crew. The associated character skill is used to determine which character skill appropriately matches the activity aboard the voidship.

Voidship-Character Skill Associations

The following skills are important for voidship crews and Captains.

- **Boarding:** Fight, Survival
- **Holds:** Influence, Presence
- **Navigation:** Pilot, Science, Tactics
- **Sensors:** Investigate
- **Stealth:** Pilot
- **Structure:** Knack, Pilot
- **Systems:** Technosophy
- **Weapons:** Tactics

When a voidship has a skill rank of Mediocre (+0) in any skill, it may roll that skill in the same way a character with no ranks in a skill would. Voidship skills can also be rated at Poor (-1) and Terrible (-2), in some instances.



Boarding (Fight, Survival)

Boarding represents the marine contingent of the crew. The marines are specially trained to board enemy vessels, disable its systems, and kill or capture the crew. Boarding involves close hand-to-hand combat in cramped corridors. Projector weaponry is rarely used, for fear of damaging or destroying the vessel outright from within. Military voidships and corsairs often carry marines aboard, and capturing enemy voidships during battle is a favoured tactic throughout the Dominion.

Boarding determines how many stress boxes your marines can suffer (see Boarding Action, page 409).

Associated Skills: Use Survival and Fight when you are involved in Boarding operations. You roll Survival to make the boarding operation, and Fight once you are aboard for close-quarters fighting.

Overcome: Use Boarding (Survival) in order to board another vessel. Once aboard, your marines are capable of making Boarding (Fight) attacks against the systems of the other vessel.

Create an Advantage: Use Boarding to create advantages during boarding operations. Attackers might **Storm the Corridors**, but the defenders might have **Erected Barricades** in response.

Attack: Use Boarding (Fight) to attack the systems of another vessel; stress caused goes to the system stress track.

Defend: Use Boarding (Fight) to defend against hostile boarders on your voidship.

Notice: Use Boarding (Survival) to assess whether a voidship is a good target for boarding and how well defended it might be. You can determine the boarding rating of another vessel on a success.

Holds (Influence, Presence)

Holds represents the cargo and docking bay capacity of the voidship, as well as the business savvy of the crew. A voidship with large holds is capable of carrying a lot of cargo and even have other voidships dock within it. Holds capacity is calculated as a factor of Hull Size; the larger the voidship, the more space each rank of Holds provides. Holds capacity determines what and how much a voidship can carry within its bays.

Holds capacity is calculated as: **Holds rating x Hull Size**.

Voidships with Poor (-1) Holds are capable of carrying **½ Hull Size** in holds capacity, and Terrible (-2) Holds are capable of carrying **¼ Hull Size** in holds capacity (rounded up).

The size of the holds also determines the size of each wing of fighters it carries and the stress boxes available to each wing (see Fighter Wing, page 399).

A voidship is able to carry other voidships berthed within its holds. Each berthed voidship occupies an equivalent capacity to its Hull Size.

Holds Capacity Consumption

- 1 per unit of cargo
- Hull Size x 2 per wing of fighters
- Hull Size of each berthed voidship

Associated Skills: Use Influence and Presence when you look for shipping contracts or negotiate for cargo.

Overcome: Use Holds (Influence) to locate clients who will hire you to take their cargo and Holds (Presence) to negotiate favourable prices.

Create an Advantage: Use Holds (Rapport) to create advantages that deal with conducting trade or arranging shipping contracts. You can brag about your **Vast Cargo Bays** or that it has **More than Enough Capacity** to carry your client's cargo.

Attack: Holds may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Holds may not be used for defend actions.

Notice: Holds may not be used for notice actions.

Navigation (Pilot, Science, Tactics)

Navigation represents the engines, manoeuvrability, and long distance travel capabilities of the voidship—as well as the expertise of the crew. Advanced control of gravitational forces ensures that all voidships are capable of making rapid manoeuvres in the void, regardless of size. When navigating within the atmosphere of a planet, a voidship has an effective Navigation of Mediocre (+0) or less if Poor (-1) or Terrible (-2), unless it has a stunt that says otherwise.

Associated Skills: Pilot, Science and Tactics are associated with navigation. Use Pilot for maintaining a difficult course, Science to make calculations for a journey, and Tactics to move the voidship during a voidship battle.

Overcome: Use Navigation (Pilot) to overcome opposition when performing trick flying and piloting through a hazardous route. Use Navigation (Science) to overcome opposition when you plot a course for a Lightracer drive or when a Void Weaver activates a Loom Drive. Use Navigation (Tactics) to move farther during a battle in much the same way Athletics works for characters.

Create an Advantage: Use Navigation (Pilot, Science, Tactics) to create advantages where speed, manoeuvrability, or calculating a course is a benefit, such as **Full Speed Ahead**, **Evasive Manoeuvres**, or **Precise Calculations**.

Attack: Navigation may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Use Navigation (Pilot) to defend against passive opposition when navigating a difficult course. It's also used when a passive danger to the voidship exists, such as a dense asteroid field or a strange stellar phenomena where good piloting can avoid the danger. The passive opposition is determined by the complexity of the piloting required, between Mediocre (+0) and Great (+4).

Notice: Use Navigation (Science) to notice potential hazards on a route, as well as the drive capabilities of other voidships.

Sensors (Investigate)

The Sensors skill is the sensor capability of the voidship and the alertness of the crew. It is used to identify strange phenomena and to locate other voidships that might be hiding their location. The better the sensors, the better the voidship is able to spot approaching dangers. Sensors are also used to make electronic warfare attacks against enemy vessels.

Sensor range during conflicts is 2 zones for the purposes of electronic warfare. Detection range is vast, whose range is best left as a story detail. You can determine relative sensor ranges between voidships by comparing their ranks in Sensors.

Associated Skills: Investigate

Overcome: Use Sensors (Investigate) to overcome difficulties in locating hard-to-find things in the void, identifying their nature, or defeating the stealth capabilities of another voidship.

Create an Advantage: Use Sensors (Investigate) to analyse a situation and help with the problem. You can use sensors to detect an enemy's **Structural Weak Point**, jam them with **Scrambled Targeting Systems**, or create a disguised profile of your ship to deceive enemy sensors so that they think your voidship **Appears Bigger than It Really Is**.

Attack: Use Sensors (Investigate) to attack the systems of another vessel. The target gets to defend using Systems. Stress goes to the systems stress track. If you fail, you suffer one systems stress from your target's counter-attack.

Defend: Use Sensors (Investigate) for defence against enemy Sensor attacks.

Notice: Sensors (Investigate) is the most flexible skill for notice actions. Sensors are the eyes of the voidship, and they can notice virtually anything. When the crew needs to spot something unexpected, Sensors is the skill to use. Sensors can also be used to analyse enemy vessels and to determine their capabilities; for each shift generated on your Sensors roll, you can ask the rating of one of the voidship's skills, learn one of its aspects, or learn about one of its stunts.

Stealth (Pilot)

Stealth represents the stealth system capabilities of the voidship. Most voidships are only equipped with minor stealth systems that mostly hide the engine signature. Military vessels and those belonging to unsavoury individuals often possess advanced stealth systems that make the voidship invisible to sensors and even visual detection.

Associated Skills: Pilot

Overcome: Use Stealth (Pilot) to overcome the sensors of other vessels. Whenever the other party is unaware of your vessel, its Sensors rank is used as passive opposition. When a voidship is actively searching for your stealthed vessel, your roll is opposed by their Systems.

Create an Advantage: Use Stealth (Pilot) to deceive another vessel's sensors. You can deploy a **Sensor Decoy**, create an **Unfamiliar Profile**, or shut down all systems for **Silent Running**.

Attack: Stealth may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Stealth may not be used for defend actions.

Notice: Stealth may not be used for notice actions.

Structure (Knack, Pilot)

Structure represents the structural integrity of the voidship, how armoured its hull is, and other defensive capabilities. Structure is the equivalent of Physique for characters and directly affects how much physical stress the voidship can take (see Stress Boxes, page 239).

Associated Skills: Knack and Pilot are associated with structure. Knack comes into play when repairs are being made on the voidship's hull, and Pilot when defending against attacks.

Overcome: Use Structure (Knack) to overcome difficult situations where the integrity of the voidship might be jeopardized. This might be weathering a meteor storm or stellar phenomenon, or even surviving some sort of internal explosion. Overcome with Structure (Knack) is also used to make repairs to structural stress and consequences (see Voidship Repair, page 411).

Create an Advantage: Use Structure (Knack) to create an advantage where the integrity of the voidship can help in a situation. This might be **She Can Take It** or **Armoured Hull towards Enemy**.

Attack: Use Structure (Pilot) to ram another vessel. You suffer an amount of stress equal to what you inflict on your target.

Defend: Structure (Pilot) is the voidship defence skill against attacks.

Notice: Use Structure (Knack) to assess the damage inflicted on a voidship.

Systems (Technosophy)

Systems represents all of the functions and components of a voidship which are not covered by other skills—this includes the crew. Life support, power, gravity, communications: they are all represented by Systems.

Systems determines how much systems stress the voidship can take (see Stress Boxes, page 239) and how many stunts are available.

Voidship Available Stunts

- **1 stunt** at Mediocre (+0) Systems
- **2 stunts** at Average (+1) and Fair (+2) Systems
- **3 stunts** at Good (+3) and Great (+4) Systems
- **4 stunts** at Superb (+5) and Fantastic (+6) Systems
- **5 stunts** at Epic (+7) and Legendary (+8) Systems
- **6 stunts** with more than Legendary (+8) Systems.

Associated Skills: Technosophy

Overcome: Use Systems (Technosophy) to overcome advantages created directly on your voidship. You can also use Systems to overcome technical and crew problems that have developed on your vessel (see Voidship Repair, page 411).

Create an Advantage: Use Systems (Technosophy) to create advantages about your vessel. You can **Vent Sections of the Ship** after being boarded, **Boost Power to Engines** when needing to make a getaway, or **Scrambled Sensors** when waging electronic warfare against another voidship.

Attack: Systems may not be used for attack actions.

Defend: Use Systems (Technosophy) to serve as active opposition against the creation of advantages on your vessel.

Notice: Use Systems (Technosophy) to notice that your voidship is under electronic warfare attack from an enemy.

Weapons (Tactics)

Weapons represents the offensive capability of a voidship and the training of the crew. Weaponry such as projector batteries, torpedoes, and flak cannons, among other things, are all covered by the Weapons skill.

Weapon range is 2 zones during conflicts.

Associated Skill: Tactics

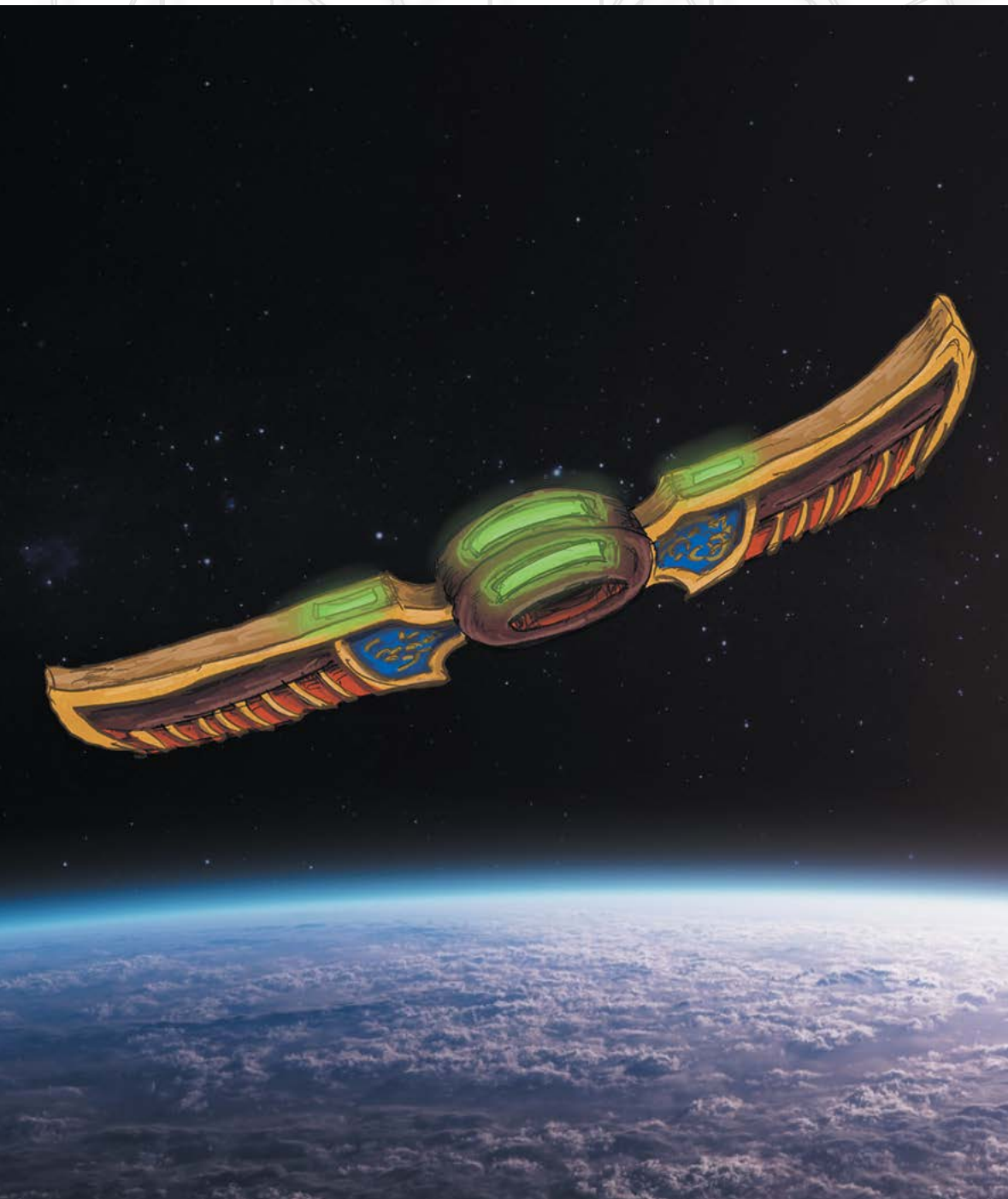
Overcome: Use Weapons (Tactics) to overcome barriers, dense asteroid fields, and destruction of ground installations. Whenever the target of the voidship's weapons does not actively defend, an overcome roll is appropriate.

Create an Advantage: Use Weapons (Tactics) to create advantages using your voidship's weaponry, such as: **Fire Everything We Got!**, **Defensive Screen**, or **Target the Weak Points**.

Attack: Use Weapons (Tactics) to attack with the voidship's weapons.

Defend: Weapons may not be used for defend actions.

Notice: Weapons may not be used for notice actions.



Building a Voidship

Creating a voidship is similar to making a character. The following summarizes the steps in voidship creation:

- Give it a name.
- Choose the Hull Size.
- Choose aspects.
- Allocate skill ranks.
- Choose a number of stunts (determined by the Systems skill).
- Determine Structural, Systems, and Marines stress tracks.
- Record available consequences.
- Record refresh.

Voidship Name

All voidships are christened with a name that serves as their identifier. Naming voidships is an ancient tradition from pre-Dominate times. The name is often printed on the outside of the vessel for all to see and to facilitate easy identification. Voidships also broadcast their identification using a beacon that identifies the voidship to others.

> In the Dominion and Peregrine Hierarchy, tradition states that voidship should never be renamed; doing so is believed to curse the vessel and its crew. There have been instances where crews have mutinied after the Captain christened a vessel with a new name.

Hull Size

Voidships come in all sizes, from tiny fighters to planetoid-sized vessels. The hull type determines the physical size and capabilities of the voidship: the larger the voidship, the more technology and capabilities it can pack. Even the smallest hull types are crewed by multiple individuals, and the largest hulls may have crews in the thousands.

Since automated systems are very limited on Dominion voidships, the majority of ship operation and maintenance is done by the crew. As a result, voidship hulls are large, capable of housing crew and passengers, along with the required supplies and cargo.

Hull sizes are rated on a scale of one (tiny) to eight (planetoid-sized). The size of the hull is a factor in the cost and maintenance of the voidship. Keeping a voidship supplied is an expensive endeavour, possible only for those with enough resources to cover the costs of operating them. Crew must be paid, food stores

refilled, and the hull maintained. Energy and fuel is not an issue, as fusion plants and Multi-EE batteries keep the voidship powered forever.

- **Hull Size:** The hull size and types of voidships of that size.
- **Aspects:** The number of aspects the voidship begins with.
- **Skill Ranks:** The number of skill ranks to be allocated to skills (Hull Size x 4).
- **Max Skill:** The maximum skill rank that can be allocated to a single skill.
- **Consequences:** The consequences available to the voidship.
- **Crew/Passengers:** The maximum number of crew required for operation and the maximum number of non-crew the vessel can carry comfortably.

Tiny (1)

Examples: Fighter, Bomber, Lifepod
Aspects: none
Skill Ranks: 4
Max Skill: Average (+1)
Consequences: none
Crew/Passengers: 2/10

Small (2)

Examples: Shuttle, Scoutship, Drop Ship
Aspects: 1
Skill Ranks: 8
Max Skill: Fair (+2)
Consequences: Mild
Crew/Passengers: 4/50

Medium (3)

Examples: Pinnace, Gunship, Small Freighter, Pharisto Barge
Aspects: 2
Skill Ranks: 12
Max Skill: Good (+3)
Consequences: Mild, Moderate
Crew/Passengers: 20/200

Large (4)

Examples: Frigate, Cruiseship, Large Freighter, Watchship
Aspects: 3
Skill Ranks: 16
Max Skill: Great (+4)
Consequences: Mild, Moderate, Severe
Crew/Passengers: 100/500

Huge (5)

Examples: Destroyer, Invasionship, Watchcruiser
Aspects: 3
Skill Ranks: 20
Max Skill: Superb (+5)
Consequences: Mild, Moderate, Severe
Crew/Passengers: 500/2000

Enormous (6)

Examples: Haven, Battlecruiser, Tect Nestship, Artilect Nodeship
Aspects: 4 **Skill Ranks:** 24
Max Skill: Fantastic (+6) **Consequences:** Mild, Moderate, Severe
Crew/Passengers: 1,000/10,000

Colossal (7)

Examples: Battlestation, Arkship, Clapperclaw Behemoth, Nihilim Harvester
Aspects: 4 **Skill Ranks:** 28
Max Skill: Epic (+7) **Consequences:** Mild, Moderate, Severe
Crew/Passengers: 5,000/50,000

Planetoid (8)

Examples: Eidolon, Artilect Archive, Tect Seedling World
Aspects: 5 **Skill Ranks:** 32
Max Skill: Legendary (+8) **Consequences:** Mild, Moderate, Severe
Crew/Passengers: 10,000/500,000

Aspects

The aspects describe the ship, giving it personality and physical features. The size of the hull determines the number of aspects a voidship possesses. It is possible to add additional aspects through the purchase of stunts.

Skills

The number of ranks available to allocate to skills is determined directly by the Hull Size. The Hull Size also limits the maximum number of ranks that can be allocated to a skill.

The default rating for all voidships is Mediocre (+0), and every voidship can use every skill, at whatever rating has been assigned to it. Voidship skills are not a pyramid, and you can assign the skill ratings as you see fit, as long as you do not exceed the limit imposed by the Hull Size.

You are permitted to lower voidship skills below the default Mediocre (+0) rating. For each rank you lower the skill below Mediocre (+0), you receive one more skill rank to assign elsewhere (the skill still cannot exceed the Hull Size limit). The lowest a voidship skill can be lowered to is Terrible (-2).

The maximum ranks that can be assigned to a skill cannot exceed the Hull Size limitation. This is a limitation that exists during skill rank allocation. You can raise a skill higher through the use of the **Upgraded** stunt.

Voidship Stunts

The number of stunts a voidship has is determined by the ranks in its Systems skill (page 239). Smaller ships tend to have fewer stunts than larger ships. Additional stunts may be purchased at the cost of Refresh, as with characters.

The following is a ready-made list of stunts; you can also create your own, or use the Beneficial Things system to outfit your voidship with custom systems.

Atmospheric. Your voidship is capable of atmospheric flight; you can use your Navigation skill while in the atmosphere of a planet, rather than the cap of Mediocre (+0) or less (see Navigation, page 391).

Black Body. Your voidship hull absorbs all radiation and does not reflect it; you receive +2 to Stealth while undetected and maintaining a distance of at least 2 zones between you and the scanning voidship. You are revealed as soon as you actively scan another vessel or attack it.

Boarding Harpoons. Your voidship can fire boarding harpoons at another vessel in the same zone using Weapons (Tactics) opposed by Navigation (Pilot). This creates a **Harpooned** aspect on the target, which must be overcome to break free. Neither vessel can move until the aspect is removed; you can remove it during your action.

Defensive Systems. The voidship is outfitted with additional armour and defensive systems; add +1 to the value of every structural stress box.

Displacement Generator. Your voidship is equipped with a short-range apportation apparatus; once per scene, you can move up to 2 zones as your action, regardless of the opposition of moving there.

Drudge Marines. Your voidship carries battle-conditioned Drudge marines; add +1 to each stress box in the marines stress track.

Extended Range. Choose either Weapons or Sensors; the range you can make attacks with your chosen skill is now 3 zones, rather than the base 2 zones. *You may take this stunt once per skill.*

Fighter Wing. Your voidship is a fighter carrier; the fighters have Average (+1) in Structure, Sensors, Navigation, and Weapons. The fighter wing's stress is determined by the Holds skill (see Stress Boxes, page 239). A fighter wing consumes Hull Size x 2 Holds in holds capacity. It takes one exchange to deploy a fighter wing, but it does not cost you your action. The fighters act as an independent voidship after being deployed. The fighter wing's skill rating can be upgraded with the **Upgraded** stunt.

Fortress. Your voidship's interior is hardened against invasion; you receive +2 to defend with Boarding (Fight).

Grav Snare. Your voidship is outfitted with a grav snare; you may actively oppose any Navigation roll made by a single target with your Systems per exchange that is within 2 zones of you. This does not count as your action for the exchange. You can take this stunt multiple times to affect multiple targets. You can lay a high-gravity trap along a well-travelled route that causes a Lightracer

vessel passing by to drop to sub-light speeds where it can be engaged.

Hardened Systems. Your voidship has been hardened against system damage and has a well-trained crew; add +1 to the value of every systems stress box.

History. Your voidship has a history; add another voidship aspect. *This stunt can be taken up to two times.*

Hypergravity Bomb. Your voidship carries Hypergravity Bombs; once per scene, you may deploy the bomb up to 2 zones away. Anything within the target zone must overcome Great (+4) passive opposition (in addition to the zone's opposition) to leave the zone; anything in the next zone over must overcome Fair (+2) passive opposition to move. When first deployed, voidships within range of the bomb must defend using Systems against a passive opposition equal to the movement opposition for the zone they are in or suffer Systems stress (see Technosophy: Hypergravity Bomb, page 134).

Lightracer. Your voidship is capable of out-racing light and traverse the void between the stars.

Loomship. Your voidship is outfitted with a Loom Drive that creates a conduit between any two points in space and allows travel there within minutes. Your voidship has at least one Void Weaver as part of the crew.

Manoeuvrable. Your voidship is very manoeuvrable and able to evade weapons fire from larger vessels; you receive +2 to Structure (Pilot) defence rolls against Weapons whenever engaged with an enemy 2 or more hull sizes larger.

Medical Bay. Your voidship is equipped with a medical bay with trained staff; those on board receive +2 to Science for the purposes of treating consequences.

Psyberbrain Intelligence. Your voidship is equipped with a biological brain that acts as its central processing analogue; construct the PI as a Beneficial Thing. The voidship never suffers from the **Short on Crew** aspect.

Redundant Systems. Your voidship has backup systems; once per story, you can immediately downgrade a consequence (see Accelerated Healing, page 240).

Repair Bay. Your voidship is outfitted with a repair bay; you receive +2 to all repair rolls on your voidship and any vessels berthed inside your holds.

Rod From God. Your voidship is equipped with kinetic rods; you receive +2 to Weapons attacks made against ground targets while in orbit around a planet (see Rod From God, page 134).

Smuggling Compartments. The voidship is outfitted with hidden compartments suitable for smuggling; add +1 Holds in hidden compartments that must be detected with an Investigate roll, actively opposed by your voidship's Stealth.

Upgraded: <skill>. Your voidship has been upgraded; you have one additional skill rank to allocate to a voidship skill. You may exceed the hull size skill maximum with this stunt. You can take this stunt multiple times.

Stress Tracks

Voidships possess three stress tracks: Structural, Systems, and Marines. Each stress track begins with two stress boxes: 1 2 at Mediocre (+0). Based on the ranks in Structure, Systems, and Boarding skills, these will range between one and four stress boxes. The value of each stress box is determined by the ranks in the skill (see Stress Boxes, page 239).

Stress tracks based on skills rated at Poor (-1) receive a single 1 stress box. At Terrible (-2), the stress track has no stress boxes, and the voidship is taken out whenever a single stress is suffered.

Unlike characters, voidship stress does not clear until the end of the story. It must be repaired (see Voidship Repair, page 411).

Consequences

The hull size determines the number of consequences a voidship may suffer before being taken out. The smallest voidships have no consequences and are taken out whenever their stress track overflows. Larger voidships have between one and three consequences; no voidship can have more than three consequences. The hull size determines which consequences the voidship can suffer.

All player voidships have the extreme consequence available (see Fate Core, page 166).

Crew and Passengers

The Hull Size determines the maximum number of crew and passengers that a voidship has; the actual crew and passengers may vary between the Hull Size and that of one size smaller.

Short on Crew

Voidships must be crewed by at least half the maximum crew to be effective. In a situation when a vessel is undercrewed, a situation aspect is created called **Short on Crew** with a free invoke against the ship. This aspect is in effect in every scene (with a free invoke) until the voidship is fully crewed.

In order to remove the **Short on Crew** aspect, the voidship must visit a planet and make a Resources roll against a passive opposition equal to the Hull Size. Wealth can be spent to help with the roll. Once enough shifts are obtained, the aspect is removed. Only one roll can be made per story, but the shifts obtained carry over until the aspect is overcome completely. When you've obtained at least one shift, the free invoke per scene is no longer in effect, but the aspect remains in play, and the GM can invoke it by spending fate points.

Voidships that are automated, such as Artilect vessels and those equipped with a Psyberbrain Intelligence do not require any crew; they never suffer from the **Short on Crew** aspect.

Character Crews

You may choose to involve your character in the operation of a voidship. Helping the crew provides a +1 bonus to the voidship's roll if your associated skill rating is equal to or higher than the voidship's. Characters will a lower skill than the voidship's do not provide any benefit. Unlike standard helping rules, only a single character can help at any one time. You must be actively engaged with the crew's activity, and you can't perform any other actions in the meantime.

Refresh

All player voidships begin with 3 refresh that may be spent to acquire additional stunts in the same way as characters can. Each stunt costs a single refresh, and the ship may not go below 1 refresh. NPC voidships only have refresh if they are a major element in the story.

How Voidships Work

The following sections provide mechanics for using voidships in your game.

Navigating the Void

Navigation in-system at Lightpacer speeds is not terribly difficult because the distances between objects in the void are immense, giving you plenty of time to react and adapt to situations. The difficulty is plotting a course at faster-than-light speeds while factoring in the movement of bodies in the void to ensure that collisions are avoided. More difficult still is the plotting of conduit entry and exit points between any two points in the universe, purely based on sensor readings and known data about the destination.

All voidships possess Lightracer drives, but only those with stunts that say otherwise possess the means of traversing the void between star systems within a lifetime.

Lightpacer Navigation

Navigating at subluminal speeds is fairly straightforward. Rolling Navigation (Science) to plot a course in-system should only be required when time is of the essence. Calculating an optimal trajectory requires skill and precision, and various stellar bodies can be used to increase that velocity further. You can treat any races against time as a contest using Navigation between the involved parties. There is little danger where your sensors can detect danger a long way off from where you are. The time taken to travel between in-system planetary bodies is *half a day*, at most.

When you roll Navigation (Science) to plot a Lightpacer course...

On a **success**, you arrive on time.

On a **success with style**, your course was optimal, and you saved time.

On a **tie**, the journey takes longer than expected.

On a **fail**, a mishap occurs, or a mild consequence is suffered. The mishap could be a malfunction or a situation with the crew. The journey also takes longer.

Lightracer Navigation

Lightracers achieve faster-than-light speeds that make it impossible to steer a voidship on a different course before it encounters the threat ahead. This makes it difficult to plot a course over the vast distances of the void. Navigators plan a series of hops over well-travelled routes that eventually lead to the desired destination.

When you plot a course, your familiarity with the route is a factor in determining how dangerous the route is. Well-known routes have the stellar bodies and hazards well-mapped; less-travelled routes pose a danger from uncatalogued hazards and phenomena that can damage or outright destroy a voidship travelling at Lightracer speeds.

Base passive opposition to Navigation (Science) to plot a Lightracer course...

- **Mediocre (+0)** for a well-travelled trade route.
- **Average (+1)** for a well-known area but a less-travelled route.
- **Fair (+2)** for an uncharted route.

When you roll Navigation (Science) to plot a Lightracer course...

On a **success**, you arrive on time.

On a **success with style**, you plotted an optimal course and arrive sooner than expected.

On a **tie**, the journey takes longer than expected.

On a **fail**, a mishap occurs, or the voidship suffers a moderate consequence. Mishaps include arriving off-course, malfunctions, near-collisions, ambushes, or trouble with the crew.

Lightracer Drive Distances

The following provides a quick reference for the distances between planets and the Navigation (Science) opposition required to plot a safe course. The longer the journey, the harder it is to plot a safe course. Navigators often break the journey into multiple jumps by dividing the opposition into smaller chunks, to make multiple calculations, each at a lower opposition. Whether you're travelling a well-known or uncharted route, distance adds to the opposition of each jump of the journey.

> You are travelling to a *distant* destination and this poses Great (+4) opposition to navigating the route in a single jump. You decide that it is best to split the trip into two jumps of Fair (+2) opposition than to fly right through a star or bounce too close to a supernova, which would end your trip real quick.

Relative Distances from Baroque

Distance	Opposition	Time	Location
Near	Mediocre (+0)	*an hour*	Close Planet (Sheol)
Not Far	Average (+1)	*a few hours*	Nearby Lineage Planet (Rahu)
Far	Fair (+2)	*a day*	Distant Lineage Planet (Nibiru)
Very Far	Good (+3)	*a few days*	Minor Planet (Elysium)
Distant	Great (+4)	*a week*	Outpost or Colony (Sikarra)
Very Distant	Superb (+5)	*a few weeks*	Rarely Travelled (Sphynx)
Remote	Fantastic (+6)	*a month*	Edge of the Dominion (Obscura)
Far Flung	Epic (+7)	*a few months*	Beyond the Dominion (Aetherius)
Out There	Legendary (+8)	*a year*	Unexplored Void (Suprema)

The distances correspond to the distances on the Baroqueverse map.

Loom Drive Navigation

The invention of the Loom Drive changed void travel forever. The Dominion now depends on the Void Weavers to keep commerce flowing within the Dominion. The Loom Drive facilitates near-instantaneous travel between any two locations—no matter the distance—with a few minutes of travel time. Loom Drive conduit endpoint calculations are extremely difficult, and it is not safe to establish a conduit without the calculations performed by a Void Weaver.

Loom Drive navigation is performed by a single individual, which can be the voidship's crew or a character. The skill used is Navigation for the crew, or Science for the character performing the calculations. Any vessel with the **Loomship** stunt is assumed to have a Loom Weaver as part of the crew.

The base opposition for Navigation or Science to plot a course is Fair (+2) if a Void Weaver Cogent Nodule is used to make the calculations. If the calculations are being made without a Cogent Nodule, the opposition is Great (+4), and the mishap should be worse than if a Void Weaver plotted the coordinates.

Though it is possible to plot a course to a destination that has never been charted, it is suicidal. Most Void Weavers will refuse to open a conduit to an uncharted destination. Destinations are always charted first by Lightpacer vessels before a Loomship travels to those coordinates.

When you roll Navigation or Science to open a conduit...

On a **success**, you arrive near the plotted destination coordinates.

On a **success with style**, you arrive at the precise destination coordinates.

On a **tie**, you arrive some distance from the plotted destination coordinates.

On a **fail**, a mishap occurs, or the ship suffers a severe consequence from a collision. Mishaps include a Loom Drive overload or falling-out in an unexpected location, far from the destination.

Tracking Voidships

The method of travel determines the difficulty of tracking a voidship through its journey. Sensors are sufficiently advanced that they can pick up the telltale trail left by a voidship by using its unique drive signature. Once a voidship's path is tracked, you must still make a Navigation (Science) roll to follow the trail to its destination.

Tracking Lightpacers

Tracking a Lightpacer is not terribly difficult. Lightpacers leave a trail of particles emitted by their engines. The age of the trail determines the opposition in locating the route the voidship took using Sensors (Investigation). The drive signature of the voidship being tracked must be known.

Tracking Lightpacer Sensors (Investigation) Opposition

- **Mediocre (+0)** - trail is *15 minutes* old
- **Average (+1)** - trail is *half an hour* old
- **Fair (+2)** - trail is *an hour* old
- **Good (+3)** - trail is *a few hours* old
- **Great (+4)** - trail is *a half day* old
- **Superb (+5)** - trail is *a day* old
- It is impossible to track a trail that is more than a day old

When you roll Sensors (Investigation) to track a Lightpacer...

On a **success**, it takes *an hour* extra to locate the destination of your quarry.

On a **success with style**, it takes *a few minutes* extra to locate the destination of your quarry.

On a **tie**, it takes *a few hours* extra to locate the destination of your quarry.

On a **fail**, it takes *a few hours* before you realize that you have lost the trail.

Tracking Lightracers

Tracking a Lightracer is much more difficult than a Lightpacer because the voidship traverses huge expanses of the void on its journey—and space is unimaginably huge. A passing Lightracer leaves behind a wake of gravitational distortion that is unique to each Lightracer drive. Once the signature is known, the wake can be located and its vector calculated. The only unknown is how far the tracked voidship jumped. Determining this takes time. The gravitational wake dissipates quickly, making tracking of Lightracers a race against time.

You must roll once for each leg of the journey your quarry took. The time taken to track each leg is combined together to determine how far behind you arrive at the destination.

Breaking the journey into multiple legs makes it harder to track a voidship, but it increases the odds of a mishap.

Tracking Lightracer Sensors (Investigation) Opposition

- **Mediocre (+0)** - witnessed direction of travel
- **Average (+1)** - wake is *a minute* old
- **Fair (+2)** - wake is *a few minutes* old
- **Good (+3)** - wake is *15 minutes* old
- **Great (+4)** - wake is *half an hour* old
- **Superb (+5)** - wake is *an hour* old
- It is impossible to determine the direction of travel after an hour.

When you roll Sensors (Investigation) to track a Lightracer...

On a **success**, it takes *a few hours* of back-tracking to locate the destination of your quarry.

On a **success with style**, it takes only *a few minutes* of back-tracking to locate the destination of your quarry.

On a **tie**, it takes *a few hours* of back-tracking to locate the destination of your quarry.

On a **fail**, it takes *half a day*, and you end up somewhere else before realizing you have lost the trail.

Tracking Loomships

The nature of Loom Drives and how a conduit is created to ferry the vessel to its destination makes tracking Loomships the most difficult. In order to track a Loomship's destination, the tracking vessel must be within sensor range of the conduit when it is opened. No discernible information about the destination exists after the conduit closes.

If you are within sensor range of a conduit, a Great (+4) Sensors (Investigation) roll is required to discern the fall-out coordinates of the conduit. A Void Weaver is required to make the calculations.

When you roll Sensors (Investigation) to tack a Loomship...

On a **success**, you calculate the fall-out coordinates to be within *a few minutes* Lightracer travel time.

On a **success with style**, you calculate the fall-out coordinates precisely.

On a **tie**, you calculate the fall-out coordinates within *a few hours* lightracer travel time.

On a **fail**, you are unable to calculate the destination coordinates.

Maintenance

Operating a voidship is expensive; the cost to maintain a voidship during each story is the Hull Size in wealth stress. The characters must pay this stress at the beginning of the story. Any character involved in the story can contribute wealth stress to pay for voidship maintenance, and the stress boxes remain checked for the duration of the story.

Voidships that are property of an organization are often partially maintained by the organization. At the beginning of each story, the GM can waive a number of stress required to maintain the voidship equal to the amount of maintenance the organization provides.

> Normally Wealth boosts are gone at the end of the story, but the GM may permit characters to use Wealth boosts from the previous story to pay for the current maintenance of the voidship.

Voidship Scale

The scale between the various Hull Sizes is factored into the maximum skill ranks a voidship may have. Larger voidships will tend to have more powerful weapons, which will have an advantage against the smaller voidship's structure. Scale is in favour of larger vessels in all instances, as they possess more powerful drives and mount more powerful weaponry and defences.

Atmospheric Flight

Voidships are not built to manoeuvre in the atmosphere of a planet. Their hulls are designed for void travel and not for making sharp manoeuvres within a planet's atmosphere. Whenever a voidship is within the atmosphere of a planet, its Navigation (Pilot) is effectively Mediocre (+0) for all rolls. The **Atmospheric** stunt is required for a voidship to make use of its Navigation inside an atmosphere.

Conflicts

Inevitably voidships come into conflict against corsairs, authorities, and dangers lurking in the void. Voidship conflicts are handled the same way as character conflicts, except that the duration of each exchange is a *few minutes*, rather than *a few moments*, and voidships are able to perform more than one action per exchange. Characters involved in a conflict still only get a single action per exchange while aboard the vessel, but multiple characters can contribute to the voidships's actions in the same exchange.

Initiative is conducted as in character conflicts (see Initiative, page 242) using Navigation (Tactics), and each voidship chooses on its turn which actions it will take and in what order.

Unlike characters, voidships can perform multiple actions in a single exchange. A voidship may perform one of each of the following actions during a single exchange:

- Movement Action
- Attack Action
- Sensors Action
- Boarding Action

Movement Action

A voidship may move one zone in an exchange as long as no movement opposition exists. A voidship may fire its engines and attempt to move further by making a Navigation (Pilot) roll.

When you roll Navigation (Pilot) to fire your engines...

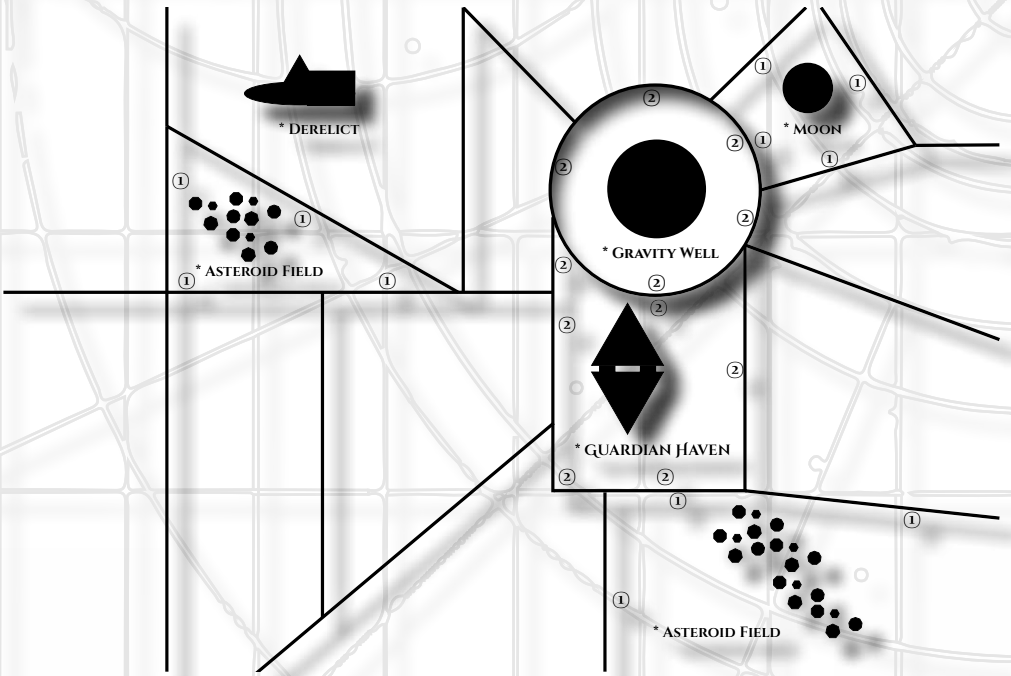
On a **success**, the voidship moves an additional zone.

On a **success with style**, the voidship moves up to two additional zones. If movement opposition exists, the shifts generated must exceed the opposition of the zone being moved into—and movement is limited to a single zone (Fate Core, page 167).

On a **tie**, the voidship can only move the one zone as normal.

On a **fail**, the voidship can only move the one zone as normal and the opposition receives a boost due to poor navigation.

A zone in the void represents a cubic volume of space approximately 10,000km across (or 10,000 miles).



Numbers inside zones indicate the passive opposition to enter the zone.

Attack Action

During an exchange a voidship may direct its weapons at a single target. A voidship fires its weapons using a Weapons (Tactics) roll, and the target defends using Structure (Pilot).

Sensor Action

During an exchange, a voidship may learn about its enemy or engage in electronic warfare by attacking the enemy vessel's systems. Attacking another vessel carries an element of risk and offers an opportunity for the enemy to damage your systems instead.

When you roll an opposed Sensors (Investigate) roll against your target...

On a **success**, the shifts generated are applied to the enemy's systems stress track.

On a **success with style**, you can reduce your attack by one shift to gain a boost.

On a **tie**, the attacker gains a boost.

On a **fail**, you suffer one systems stress from the enemy's counter attack; if the defender **succeeds with style**, they also gain a boost.

Boarding Action

Boarding is a common tactic in the void where assault troops from one voidship cross the void and attempt to board another. They gain access by cutting or hacking their way inside, and then proceed to capture the ship by disabling it from the inside and taking out its crew.

Boarding requires that the attacking voidship and the defender be in the same zone. Boarding has two phases: the boarding phase and the assault phase. The marines are deployed in the boarding phase, and once they breach the target vessel, they enter the assault phase. A voidship may only have a single boarding action in progress at one time.

During the assault phase, stress inflicted on the defender goes to the systems stress track; stress inflicted on the attacker goes to the marines stress track.

Voidships with Terrible (-2) and Poor (-1) Boarding cannot initiate boarding actions against enemy vessels; they can only defend.

Characters Engaged In Boarding

Characters engaged in boarding actions can use their own consequences to absorb stress inflicted on their side, but character stress cannot be used to absorb stress inflicted during boarding actions.

Boarding Phase

Once the target vessel is in your zone, you must make a Boarding (Survival) roll to successfully board the target with a passive opposition of Fair (+2). This roll represents the boarders traversing the void and making their way inside the voidship.

When rolling Boarding (Survival) to board another vessel...

On a **success**, your boarders breach the hull and enter the voidship. On the next exchange your boarders will be in the assault phase.

On a **success with style**, your boarders breach the hull, enter the voidship, and receive a boost by gaining the element of surprise. On the next exchange your boarders will be in the assault phase.

On a **tie**, you succeed, but the defender gets a boost that reflects their readiness.

On a **fail**, your boarders fail to breach the hull and enter the vessel. You can try again in the next exchange as long as the target remains in the same zone as you.

Assault Phase

Once inside the enemy vessel, your boarders begin the assault phase. This now becomes a conflict between your boarders and the enemy crew. Because both parties use the same skill (Boarding), only a single opposed roll is made during the exchange, and the result determines what happens during the boarding action.

When you roll opposed Boarding (Fight) to assault a voidship...

On an **attacker success with style**, the defender may choose to suffer two stress to the systems stress track or one stress with the attacker receiving a boost.

On an **attacker success**, the defender suffers one stress to their systems stress track.

On a **tie**, both sides suffer one stress.

On a **defender success**, the attacker suffers one stress to their boarder stress track.

On a **defender success with style**, the attacker may choose to suffer two stress to their boarder stress track or one stress with the defender receiving a boost.

The attacker may at any point declare that they are retreating. When this occurs, an assault exchange still occurs before the attackers leave the voidship at the end of the exchange.

Boarders Taken Out

There is a cost to losing your assault troops during boarding operations. If your boarders are taken out, your Boarding skill is reduced by one until the end of the story.

Defenders Taken Out

When the defenders are overwhelmed and the vessel disabled, the voidship is considered captured and under the control of the attackers.

Repair

After a conflict, a voidship may be damaged and need repairs. Unlike characters, voidship stress does not clear until the end of the story. During a story, a voidship must undergo repair and restoration of its structure and crew in order to remove stress suffered and to mark consequences as under repairs.

In order to repair structural stress, a Structure (Knack) roll is required. To repair systems stress, a Systems (Technosophy) roll is required; in both cases, each shift generated allows you to clear one stress box, starting with the lowest first. Each roll requires *a day* to complete. If the repairs are interrupted, the GM will approximate the fraction of repairs made in the time that was permitted.

To repair consequences, a Structure (Knack) roll is required for structural consequences and Systems (Technosophy) for systems consequences. A roll must be made to treat the consequence and mark it as under repair; this follows the Healing rules, and **success with style** is subject to Accelerated Healing (page 240).

When at a location with voidship repair facilities, wealth stress can be spent to increase the voidship repair roll result (see Wealth, page 376).

Upgrades

Voidships can be upgraded at significant and major milestones in the campaign (see Fate Core, page 258).

Significant Milestone

Significant milestones occur at the end of a story. At a significant milestone, you can do one and only one of the following:

- Transfer one skill rank between two voidship skills (cannot exceed the Hull Size limit).
- Swap out any single voidship stunt for another.
- Purchase another voidship stunt providing you have the refresh to do so (as long as you don't go below one refresh).
- Replace one voidship aspect.

Major Milestone

Major milestones occur at the end of a story arc, or when something dramatic happens to shake up the campaign. At a major milestone, your voidship receives an additional point of refresh; this allows you to buy a new stunt for your voidship.

Sample Voidships

The following is a list of pre-made voidships.

Shuttle

A shuttle is a standard transfer vehicle between orbit and planet. Shuttles are **Small and Manoeuvrable** when needed, and they are very dependable.

Hull: Small (2)
Weapons: Poor (-1)
Systems: Fair (+2)
Sensors: Fair (+2)
Holds: Fair (+2)
Structure: Fair (+2)
Navigation: Fair (+2)
Stealth: Average (+1)
Boarding: Poor (-2)
Structural Stress: 1 2 3
Systems Stress: 1 2 3
Consequences: Mild
Atmospheric. Your voidship is capable of atmospheric flight; you can use Navigation while in the atmosphere of a planet.
Manoeuvrable. Your voidship can manoeuver and evade weapons fire from larger vessels; you receive +2 to Structure (Pilot) defence rolls against Weapons when you engage with an enemy 2 or more hull sizes larger.
Crew/Passengers: 2/50
Holds Capacity: 4

Artilect Darter

Artilect Darters are small, automated vessels with a profile like a needle and capable of **Amazing Manoeuvrability** that makes them difficult targets. These vessels swarm the enemy in a destructive criss-cross of weapons fire.

Hull: Small (2)
Weapons: Fair (+2)
Systems: Fair (+2)
Sensors: Fair (+2)
Holds: Terrible (-2)
Structure: Fair (+2)
Navigation: Fair (+2)
Stealth: Fair (+2)
Boarding: Terrible (-2)
Structural Stress: 1 2 3
Systems Stress: 1 2 3
Consequences: Mild
Lightracer. Your voidship is capable of out-racing light and traversing the void between the stars.
Manoeuvrable. Your voidship can manoeuver and evade weapons fire from larger vessels; you receive +2 to Structure (Pilot) defence rolls against Weapons when you engage with an enemy 2 or more hull sizes larger.
Crew/Passengers: 0/5
Holds Capacity: 1

Smuggler's Freighter

Smugglers prefer small freighters that can **Get in and Get Out** before authorities realize they were ever there. These freighters are often held together with prayer and tape. She hasn't let you down yet, and you hope that **She'll Hold Together** on the next run.

Hull: Medium (3)
Weapons: Average (+1)
Systems: Average (+1)
Sensors: Mediocre (+0)
Holds: Good (+3) (4 with hidden)
Structure: Fair (+2)
Navigation: Good (+3)
Stealth: Fair (+2)
Boarding: Mediocre (+0)

Structural Stress: 1 2 3
Systems Stress: 1 2 3
Marines Stress: 1 2
Consequences: Mild, Moderate

Manoeuvrable. Your voidship can manoeuver and evade weapons fire from larger vessels; you receive +2 to Structure (Pilot) defence rolls against Weapons when you engage with an enemy 2 or more hull sizes larger.

Smuggling Compartments. The voidship is outfitted with hidden compartments suitable for smuggling; add +1 Holds in hidden compartments that must be detected with an Investigate roll, actively opposed by your voidship's Stealth.

Crew/Passengers: 10/200
Holds Capacity: 9 (3 hidden)

Dominion Gunship

Dominion Gunships are mainly used for in-system patrols and guard duty. These vessels are **Bristling with Weapons**, and **Defence Systems**—a threat to even larger targets that cross their path.

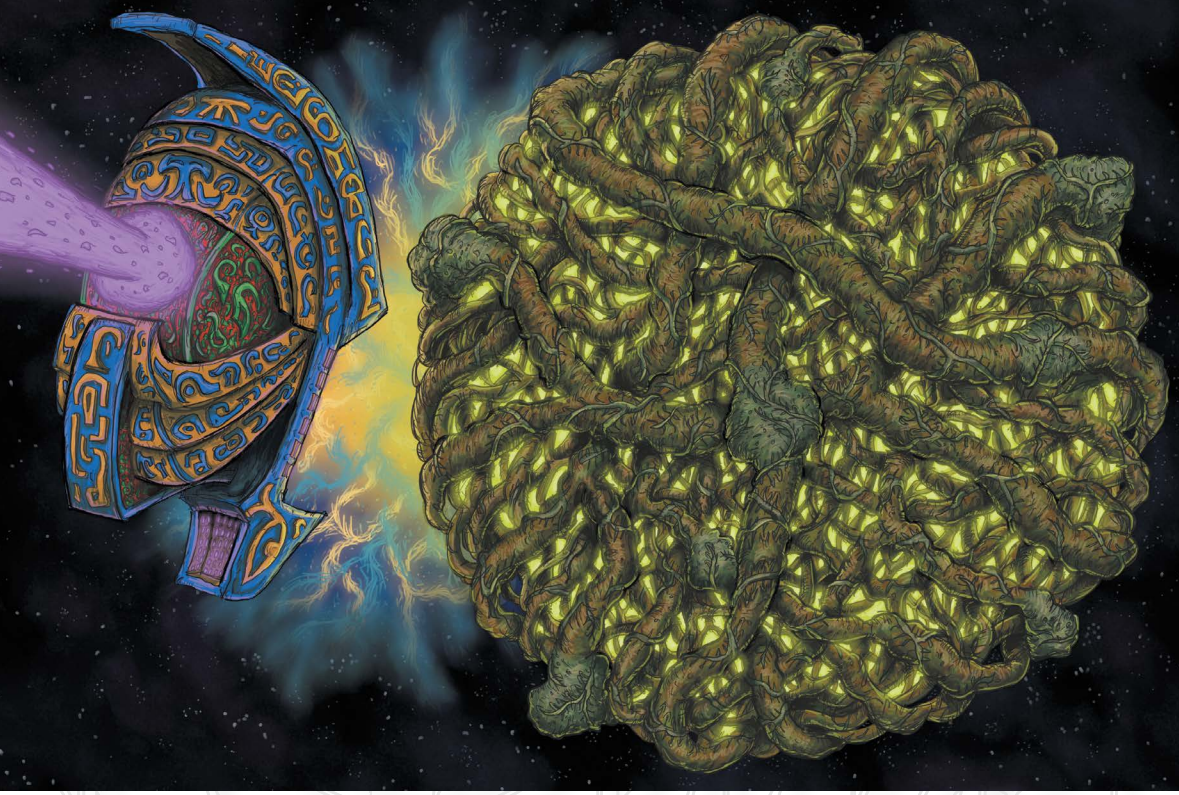
Hull: Medium (3)
Weapons: Great (+4)
Systems: Average (+1)
Sensors: Fair (+2)
Holds: Poor (-1)
Structure: Good (+3)
Navigation: Fair (+2)
Stealth: Average (+1)
Boarding: Mediocre (+0)

Structural Stress: 2 3 4 5
Systems Stress: 1 2 3
Marines Stress: 1 2
Consequences: Mild, Moderate

Defensive Systems. The voidship is outfitted with additional armour and defensive systems; add +1 to the value of every structural stress box.

Upgraded. Upgraded Weapons.

Crew/Passengers: 10/50
Holds Capacity: 2



Pharisto Barge of Heaven

A Pharisto Barge of Heaven is a beautiful vessel designed with **Form Over Function** in mind. The vessel hosts the most **Luxurious Accommodations**, worthy of a Deipotent. The Barge is staffed by many servants to cater to the whims of the Deipotent passengers.

Hull: Medium (3)
Weapons: Average (+1)
Systems: Good (+3)
Sensors: Average (+1)
Holds: Average (+1)
Structure: Fair (+2)
Navigation: Good (+3)
Stealth: Average (+1)
Boarding: Average (+1)
Structural Stress: 1 2 3
Systems Stress: 1 2 3 4
Marines Stress: 1 2 3
Consequences: Mild, Moderate
Fortress. Your voidship's interior is hardened against invasion; you receive +2 to defend with Boarding (Fight).
Medical Bay. Your voidship is equipped with a medical bay with trained staff; those on board receive +2 to Science for the purposes of treating consequences.
Upgraded. Upgraded Navigation.
Crew/Passengers: 20/50
Holds Capacity: 3

Artilect Nodeship

The Artilect Nodeship is an enormous vessel. It hosts a **Mindframe** and an Artilect within it. The Nodeship is a **Multi-Purpose Vessel** outfitted for both exploration and engagement with the enemy. When engaging the enemy, the Nodeship will disgorge a great mass of **Automated Fighters** to swarm the enemy. The Nodeship Artilect itself will engage in **Sustained Electronic Warfare** against enemy vessels.

Hull: Enormous (6)
Weapons: Great (+4)
Systems: Fantastic (+6)
Sensors: Superb (+5)
Holds: Great (+4)
Structure: Great (+4)
Navigation: Good (+3)
Stealth: Fair (+2)
Boarding: Mediocre (-2)

Structural Stress: 1 2 3 4 **Systems Stress:** 3 4 5 6
Consequences: Mild, Moderate

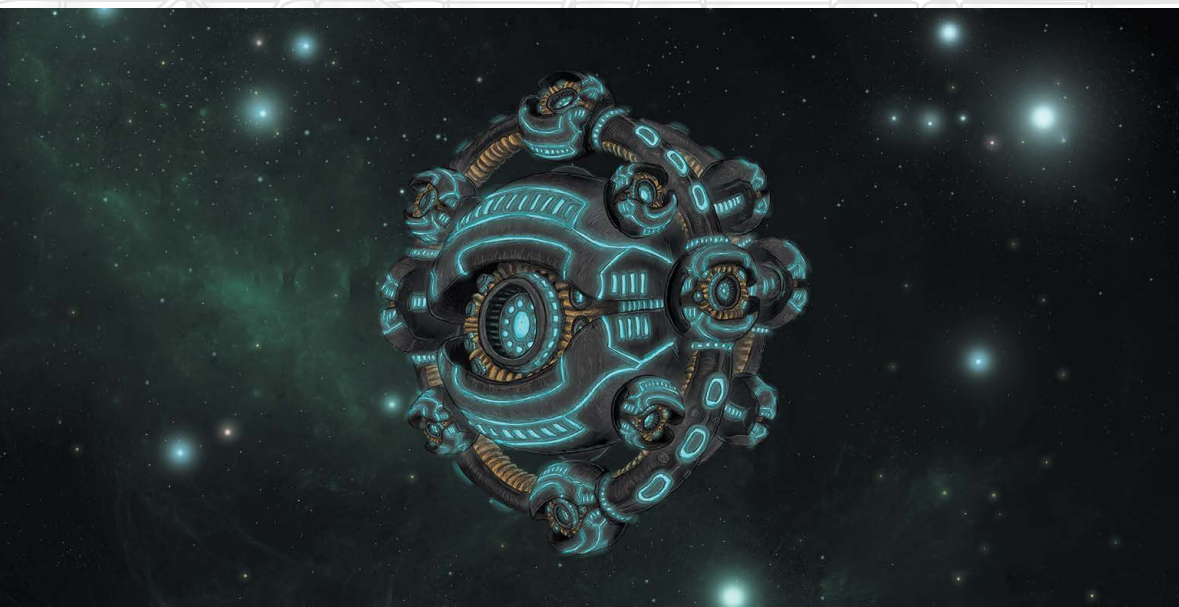
Black Body. Your voidship hull absorbs all radiation and does not reflect it; you receive +2 to Stealth while undetected and maintaining a distance of at least 2 zones between you and the scanning voidship. You are revealed as soon as you actively scan another vessel or attack it.

Fighter Wing (x2). Your voidship is a fighter carrier; the fighters have Average (+1) skill in Structure, Sensors, Navigation, and Weapons. Stress: 1 2 3 4 each wing.

Lightracer. Your voidship is capable of out-racing light and traversing the void between the stars.

Upgraded (x2). Upgraded Holds.

Crew/Population: 0/5,000 **Holds Capacity:** 24 (0 available)



Dominion Battlecruiser

The Dominion Battlecruiser is the largest military vessel in the Dominion fleet. Battlecruisers are **Made for War** and possess an **Unmistakable Profile** that strikes fear into its enemies. **Deadly Dominar Warriors** comprise a crew that is unshakable and fearless. The Battlecruiser carries a wing of fighters flown by **Elite Fighter Crews**.

Hull: Enormous (6)
Weapons: Fantastic (+6)
Structure: Fantastic (+6)
Systems: Great (+5)
Navigation: Fair (+2)
Sensors: Fair (+2)
Stealth: Terrible (-2)
Holds: Good (+3)
Boarding: Great (+4)

Structural Stress: 3 4 5 6 **Systems Stress:** 2 3 4 5
Marines Stress: 1 2 3 4
Consequences: Mild, Moderate, Severe

Lightracer. Your voidship is capable of out-racing light and traversing the void between the stars.

Fighter Wing. Your voidship is a fighter carrier; the fighters have Average (+1) skill in Structure, Sensors, Navigation, and Weapons.
Stress: 1 2 3 4

Rod From God. Your voidship is equipped with kinetic rods; you receive +2 to Weapons attacks made against ground targets while in orbit around a planet (see Rod From God, page 134).

Upgraded. Upgraded Boarding.
Upgraded. Upgraded Weapons.

Crew/Passengers: 1,000/10,000 **Holds Capacity:** 18 (6 available)

Eidolon

The Eidolon is the artificial moon of Baroque that has been carved into the countenance of the Tyrant. The Eidolon is equipped with **Devastating Eye Projectors** and is **Bristling with Weaponry**. The planetoid is **Crewed by Legions of Dominar Warriors** and serves as the **Tyrant's Mobile Battle Fortress**. Hidden deep within the planetoid's crust, within a maze of passages lies the **Hidden City of the Tyrant**, said to be the private refuge of the Tyrant. The Eidolon is constantly surrounded by a fleet of Dominion fleet vessels, with many berthed inside the planetoid for refitting and repairs.

Hull: Planetoid (8)
Weapons: Legendary++ (+10)
Structure: Legendary+ (+9)
Systems: Legendary (+8)
Navigation: Average (+1)
Sensors: Good (+3)
Stealth: Terrible (-2)
Holds: Great (+4)
Boarding: Fair (+2)

Structural Stress: 6 7 8 9 **Systems Stress:** 5 6 7 8
Marines Stress: 1 2 3
Consequences: Mild, Moderate, Severe

Fortress. Your voidship's interior is hardened against invasion; you receive +2 to defend with Boarding (Fight).

Loomship. Your voidship is outfitted with a Loom Drive that creates a conduit between any two points in space and allows travel within minutes anywhere. A Void Weaver is required to make the calculations required to activate the drive.

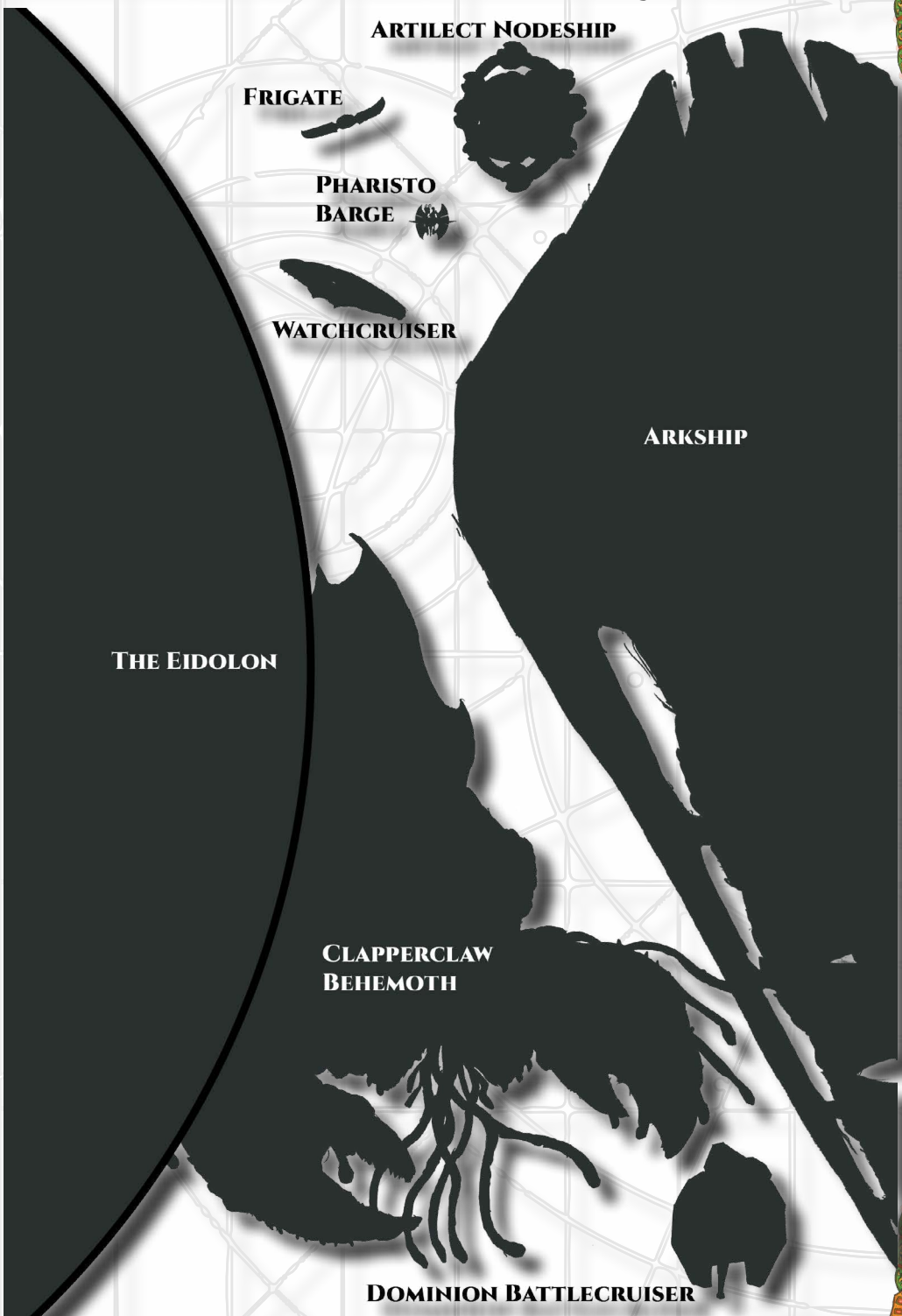
Repair Bay. Your voidship is outfitted with a repair bay; you receive +2 to all repair rolls on your voidship and any vessels inside your holds.

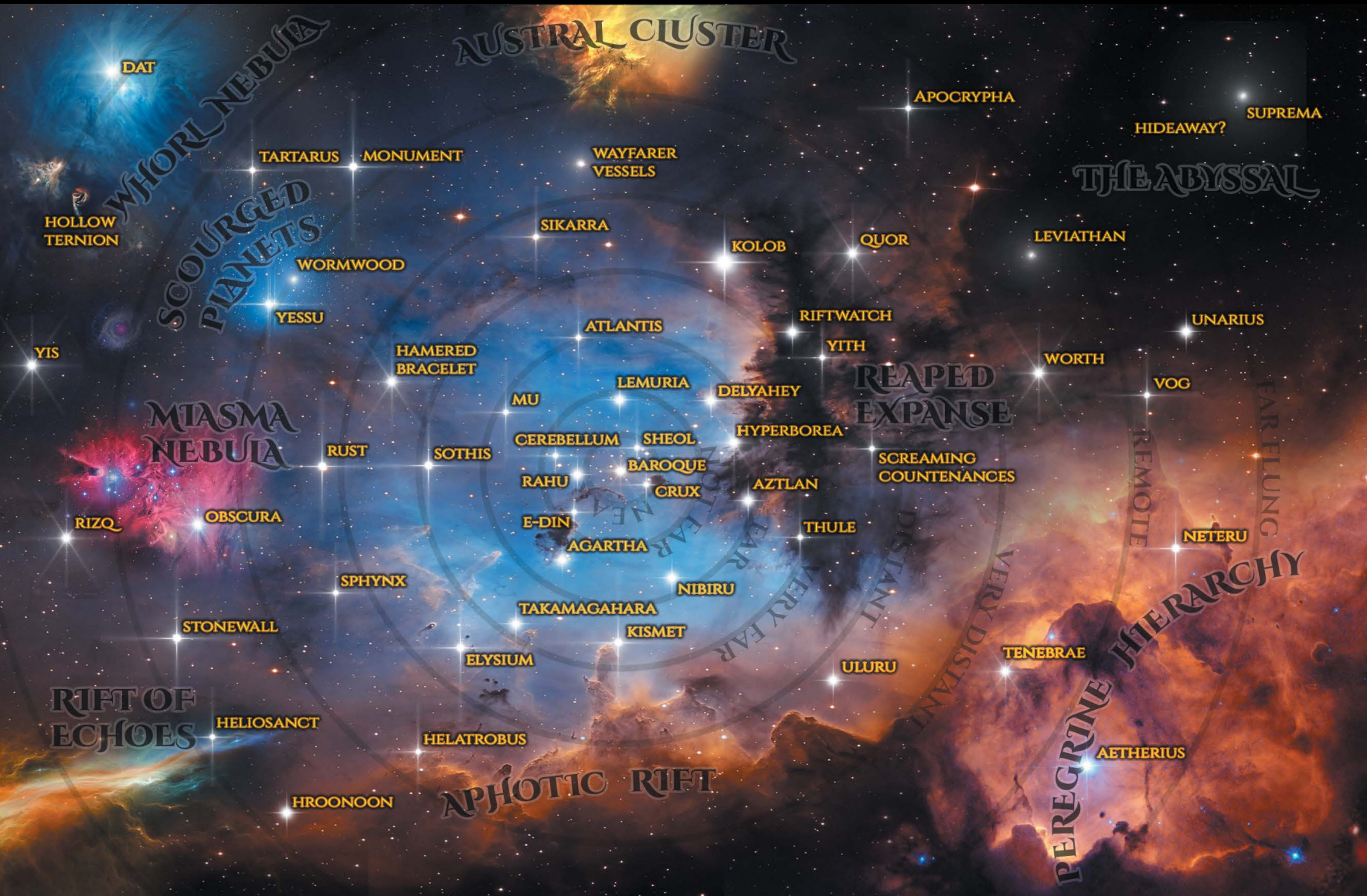
Upgraded. Upgraded Structure.

Upgraded (x2). Upgraded Weapons.

Crew/Passengers: 10,000/500,000 **Holds Capacity:** 32

Comparative Voidship Size Chart




AUSTRAL CLUSTER
WHORL NEBULA
SCOURGED PLANETS
MIASMA NEBULA
REAPED EXPANSE
THE ABYSSAL
RIFT OF ECHOES
APHOTIC RIFT
PEREGRINE HIERARCHY
NEAR
FAR
VERY FAR
VERY DISTANT
REMOTE
FAR FLUNG
DAT
APOCRYPHA
SUPREMA
HIDEAWAY?
TARTARUS
MONUMENT
WAYFARER VESSELS
HOLLOW TERNION
SIKARRA
KOLOB
QUOR
LEVIATHAN
WORMWOOD
YESSU
ATLANTIS
RIFTWATCH
UNARIUS
YIS
HAMERED BRACELET
YITH
WORTH
LEMURIA
DELYAHEY
VOG
MU
HYPERBOREA
CEREBELLUM
SHEOL
RUST
SOTHIS
BAROQUE
SCREAMING COUNTENANCES
RAHU
CRUX
AZTLAN
RIZQ
OBSCURA
E-DIN
THULE
AGARTHA
NETERU
SPHYNX
NIBIRU
TAKAMAGAHARA
STONEWALL
KISMET
ELYSIUM
TENEBRAE
ULURU
HELIOSANCT
HELATROBUS
AETHERIUS
HROONOON

Sources of Inspiration

The following were influential in the creation of the Baroqueverse:

Books

- A Canticle for Leibowitz - Walter M. Miller Jr.
- Accelerando - Charles Stross
- Anathem - Neal Stephenson
- Book of The New Sun - Gene Wolfe
- Book of the Long Sun - Gene Wolfe
- Chariots of the Gods? - Erich von Däniken
- Deathstalker - Simon R. Green
- Dune - Frank Herbert
- Fingerprints of the Gods - Graham Hancock
- Neuromancer - William Gibson
- Revelation Space - Alistair Reynolds
- Ringworld - Larry Niven
- The 12th Planet - Zecharia Sitchin
- The Engines of God - Jack McDevitt
- The Giza Powerplant - Christopher Dunn
- The Quantum Thief - Hannu Rajaniemi
- The Risen Empire - Scott Westerfield
- The works of H.P. Lovecraft
- The myths, legends, and beliefs of our planet.

Graphic Novels

- In The Beginning: The Epic of The Annunnaki - Alex Teplish
- Iron Empires - Christopher Moeller
- The Metabarons - Alejandro Jodorowsky
- The Technopriests - Alejandro Jodorowsky

Roleplaying Games

- Eclipse Phase
- Fading Suns
- Rifts
- Warhammer 40K

TV/Movies

- Ancient Aliens TV Series
- Babylon 5
- Chronicles of Riddick
- Farscape
- Gormenghast Mini-Series
- Lexx
- Outlander
- Pandorum
- Pitch Black
- Star Gate

BAROQUE SPACE OPERA

ARCHETYPE

NAME

HIGH CONCEPT

TROUBLE

DRIVING GOAL

ASPECT

ASPECT

REFRESH

FATE

WEALTH BOOSTS

SKILLS

SUPERB (+5)	SUPERB (+5)			
GREAT (+4)	GREAT (+4)	GREAT (+4)		
GOOD (+3)	GOOD (+3)	GOOD (+3)	GOOD (+3)	
FAIR (+2)	FAIR (+2)	FAIR (+2)	FAIR (+2)	FAIR (+2)
AVERAGE (+1)	AVERAGE (+1)	AVERAGE (+1)	AVERAGE (+1)	AVERAGE (+1)	AVERAGE (+1)

STUNTS

THINGS

PHYSICAL

1 2 3 4

MENTAL

1 2 3 4

WEALTH

1 2 3 4

2 MINOR 4 MODERATE 6 SEVERE

BAROQUE SPACE OPERA

VOIDSHIP

NAME _____

ASPECT _____

ASPECT _____

ASPECT _____

ASPECT _____

ASPECT _____

REFRESH

FATE

HULL: _____ (see Hull Size pg. 396)

CREW/PASS: _____/_____

HOLDS CAP: _____/_____ Hull x Holds (pg. 390)

SKILLS

WEAPONS: _____ (TACTICS)

STRUCTURE: _____ (KNACK, PILOT)

SYSTEMS: _____ (TECHNOSOPHY)

NAVIGATION: _____ (PILOT, SCIENCE, TACTICS)

SENSORS: _____ (INVESTIGATE)

STEALTH: _____ (PILOT)

HOLDS: _____ (INFLUENCE, PRESENCE)

BOARDING: _____ (FIGHT, SURVIVAL)

STUNTS

(see Voidship Available Stunts pg. 394)

STRUCTURAL

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐

SYSTEMS

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐

MARINES

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐

2 MINOR — 4 MODERATE — 6 SEVERE

FIGHTERS 1

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐

FIGHTERS 2

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐

FIGHTERS 3

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐

CONFLICT ACTIONS: Movement, Attack, Sensors, Boarding (pg. 407)
FIGHTERS WING CONSUMES HOLDS: Hull Size * 2 (pg. 399)
Weapon and Sensors Range is 2 zones

LEXICON

CONCEPTS

Artilect Rebellion: the rebellion of the machines against the Dominion that began with the murder of the Tyrant Aristonymus.

Affrey: a martial duel between Deipotents; considered uncouth and against the axiom of Exquisite Decorum.

Apportation: teleportation.

Cutting Words: a rhetorical contest during two Pharistos who attempt to out do each other with words and insults while maintaining appropriate decorum as dictated by The Order of Things.

Degenerate: an arch heretic who has awakened their psychic potential in violation of the Tyrant's decree banning its use.

Delve: the act of interfacing with the virtual realm that is the Pattern.

Disembodiment: a punishment involving the extraction of a living brain for use in a device.

Divine Rulership: the right of the Pharistos to rule humanity as flesh-and-blood gods; the right to reverence and obedience by humans; axiom of the Order of Things.

Elevationists: Deipotents who believe that all life is sacred and in equality for all; considered heretical by some.

Execration: a special punishment reserved for Deipotents who have attracted the personal wrath of the Tyrant; involves bestowing of a Totemic Curse on the individual.

Exalted Delegation: the gift that elevates some humans above others in service of the Deipotents; a hereditary status; taboo for non-Elevated to address Deipotents; an axiom of the Order of Things.

Exquisite Decorum: the protocols and traditions that govern Deipotent lives; rules for fashion and appearance; to disregard is to debase oneself; an axiom of the Order of Things.

Fugue Computation: a mental state achieved by Theors in order to process vast amounts of information.

Gift of Immortality: the ultimate gift bestowed at the Tyrant's whim; grants immortality and perfect health.

Illuminated Path: the Tyrant's long-term vision for the continued prosperity of humanity; an axiom of the Order of Things.

Ophanim: a title meaning "ship's wheel"; captain of a space ship.

Order Of Things, The: the inviolate traditions of the Dominion; the status quo.

Perpetualists: the staunch defenders of the Order of Things and its immutability; worshippers of the Tyrant Sun.

Prana: the psychic energy found within every living thing; those who awaken it have been vilified by the regime as the cause for the Nihilim invasions.

Quiescence: the genetic neutering of the psychic potential of an individual.

Revolutionaries: those who seek to depose the Tyrant and his regime, and to replace if with something else—for a variety of reasons.

Sanguination: a punishment where one spends years as a blood bag to feed the Dominar Legions who drink it for nourishment; a punishment.

Sect: an organization of Theors towards a common interest or goal.

Sub-Rosa Languages: a variety of coded languages developed by Theors that convey specific meaning while sounding like random words, numbers, and formulas; created to battle the Artilects' ability to decrypt communications.

Technosophy: the knowledge of technology.

Transformists: the Deipotents who believe that the Dominion must change in order to survive and that the Order of Things must be flexible as events unfold.

Transmogrification: the upload of a biological mind into the Pattern; results in the biological death of the subject.

Tyrant Sun: the deification of the Tyrant as a solar deity who guides humanity along the Illuminated Path.

Universal Theory: the unified theory of how all forces in the universe and others interact; holy grail of the Theor sects.

Vested Armistice: taboos against the spilling of Deipotent blood; prohibition against physical conflict among Deipotents; an axiom of the Order of Things.

War by Proxy: a subtle war that the Pharistos engage in using their Syndicate pawns; skirts the axiom of Vested Armistice; permitted as long as Pharisto blood is not spilled and the Dominion is not destabilized.

Zodiac of Rulership: an astrological zodiac that delineates when a Pharisto house will rule a planet. The astrological signs and order differs from planet to planet. Each age of the zodiac lasts some 2,000 years.

PEOPLE

Amarenthine: those granted the Gift of Immortality by the Tyrant; also called The Undying; the highest of the high among Deipotents.

Artilects: artificial intelligences created by Theors, and who later rebelled; now enemies of the Dominion.

Ascended Masters: a cabal of powerful psychics from the Peregrine Hierarchy; arch heretics and enemies of the Dominion.

Autotarch: the supreme authority over one of the eight sectors of the Dominion; appointed directly by the Tyrant.

Battlemaster: the ultimate warrior belonging to an ancient and hereditary order that exists outside the Dominion; a human.

Biovizier: one educated in the mysteries of bioscience; one who is not a Genesis Adept.

Body Of The Tyrant: the religious body that reinforces the deification of the Tyrant as the Tyrant Sun solar deity and the Pharistos as the flesh-and-blood gods who guide humanity; the bureaucracy of the regime.

Brack: insidious aliens who seduce others into the worship of their dark gods; powerful psychics.

Brunnis: the supreme authority over a solar system; answerable to the system Autotarch.

Chimera: a genetically engineered lifeform created by the Genesis Adepts; one of the Igigi.

Cryptominds of Sphynx: disembodied, biological intelligences who contemplate the mysteries of the universe on the planet Sphynx; believed to possess preternatural prophetic abilities.

Conqueror Worms: little-known aliens from beyond the Aphotic Rift; a parasitic species.

Daemon: a machine proxy through which the Artilects may interact with the physical world.

Deipotent: one of the flesh-and-blood gods who rule over humanity; includes Pharistos, Theors, and the Genesis Adepts; also known as the Host of the Tyrant Sun.

Degenerate: one who has illegally awakened their psychic potential; an arch heretic.

Divine Authority: composed of the thirteen Archons of the Pharisto houses, as well as the Grand Masters of the three major sects—the Genesis Adepts, Transmuters, Void Weavers—and the High Rhetor of the Body; the highest ruling body sanctioned by the Tyrant.

Dominar: a hulking cross of Voghr and human genetics; the Tyrant's engineered killers.

Drudge: a menial automaton controlled by a conditioned, living brain encased inside a Mind Box; also known as Headless.

Elevated: the hereditary caste of humans selected for their loyalty to serve the Deipotents; also members of the Syndicates; tatoos on their body indicate their masters and status.

Ensi Lord: a Pharisto scion who administers an area or settlement, called a Domain; answerable to the planetary Lungal.

Ferroman: the bogeyman of the Dominion; an agent of the Artilects sheathed in simulated flesh and blood.

Hereseer: the Tyrant's investigators and heresy hunters; all are members of the Zenithralls and some are Amarenthine.

Houses of the Zodiac: the 13 Pharisto lineages that rule the Dominion.

Hroon: a fungal alien species capable of telepathy and shape shifting; considered disgusting by most; frequently serve as vermin herders on space ships.

Igigi: artificially engineered beings who serve the Dominion; applies to biological and technological life forms; considered non-citizens of the Dominion.

Jejune: the proto-human races created to mine gold across the Dominated Planets and beyond; universally primitive and superstitious in nature.

Justikari: a judge of the regime; backed by the Precepts; commonly corrupt and working for the highest bidder; a Deipotent.

Kundalini: a psychic who has awakened their psychic potential; one sanctioned by the Tyrant's regime.

Learned of Cerebellum: a sect of Theors who seek to accumulate all knowledge within the Great Archive of Cerebellum; one knowledgeable about a great many things.

Lugal: a Pharisto ruler of an entire planet; answerable to the system Brunnis.

Mirror Man: androgynous genetic clones capable of shape-shifting; seek individuality through uniquely grotesque masks; members of the Igigi.

Multitude, The: mysterious dark gods worshipped by the Brack; secretly worshipped by cults within the Dominion.

Nemesis: the greatest and oldest enemy of the Tyrant; instigator of many rebellions; also known as The Great Adversary; identity is unknown.

Nihilim: refers an assortment of inter-dimensional aliens who have invaded the Dominion in the past to harvest prana energy.

None Body: a human who has dropped out of society and rejected The Order of Things; a heretic and rebel.

Nucleic Imprinting: technology developed by the Genesis Adepts to encode their secrets directly onto the genetic code of any living organism with a sufficiently complex genetic code.

Pattern Delvers: a sect of Theors who dedicate themselves to probing the mysteries of the Pattern.

Pharisto: the genetically engineered, flesh-and-blood gods who rule over humanity in the name of the Tyrant; all aspects of their lives are governed by the Order of Things.

Precept: an enforcer of the regime who serves a Justikari; an elevated human.

Protolect: a fragment of an Artilect; an agent capable of downloading into a Daemon machine to interact with the physical world.

Proxicutioner: a master assassin with a feared reputation; a tool used in the feud by proxy.

Regime, The: The bureaucracy and religious apparatus of the Tyrant's Dominion.

Remnant: cybernetic warriors of the Dominion during the first Nihilim Invasions; since hunted down and destroyed for fear of Artilect corruption; replaced by genetically enhanced warriors.

Revenant: a clone of the dead whose memories are locked away within their genetic code, but slowly return over centuries of life.

Rhetor: a member of the Body of the Tyrant; a priest in service of the Tyrant Sun.

Scion: a member of a Pharisto lineage; a member of a Pharisto house.

Scourged, The: shambling abominations infected by the Techno Scourge; once cybernetically enhanced humans and aliens.

Simulacra: a clock-work artificial being created by the Transmuters; a member of the Igigi.

Solon: a virtual god of the Pattern; formerly a Learned whose mind was uploaded into the Pattern.

Syndicate: one of the multitude of Pharisto house concerns that administer a house's many industries; operated by Elevated who are called Syndicatemen (applies to either sex).

Tect: a fallen species of highly-intelligent, centipede-like aliens who once ruled a great empire and who possess technological knowledge well beyond what is known by the Dominion.

Theor: a genetically enhanced Deipotent whose intellect approaches that of machines. Theors can achieve incredible feats of logic while in a fugue meditation trance.

Transmuter: a member of a secretive Theor sect that developed the nanotechnological Dust.

Tyrant: the absolute ruler of the Dominion; an immortal revenant who has been resurrected four times before; the Tyrant Sun deity of the Dominion.

Voghr: a species of hulking, reptilian brutes from the planet Vog; allies of the Battlemasters; possess a strong code of honour.

Void Weavers: a sect of Theors who developed the Loom Drive; regulate all near-instantaneous travel throughout the Dominion.

Watchers: an order of scouts and rangers charged with patrolling and defending the fringes of the Dominion; seen as heroes and featured in many entertainments.

Weeper: one who has completed their sentence of Sanguination and is now broken of mind and body.

Worker Races: the variety of human genomes that have been genetically modified for adaptability to various environments.

Zenithrall: the highest of the high within the Tyrant's regime; answerable only to the Tyrant; known by their holographic wings.

PLACES

Abyssal, The: a region of space that lies between two arms of the galaxy; mostly devoid of stars and considered dangerous due to pirates and arch heretics who hide there.

Baroque: known as the golden planet; the Tyrant's seat of power and centre of the Dominion. Its atmosphere is pumped heavily with monoatomic gold gas to deflect the heat of the dying bloated sun it orbits. It is a desolate place, except for the City of the Tyrant and a number of settlements near the poles. Those living on the planet experience longevity and good health due to the large amounts of monoatomic gas in the atmosphere—a gift from the Tyrant.

Battletorium: an arena where the populace is entertained by bloody battles fought between convicts, Chimeras, and lifeforms from across the Dominated Planets—and beyond.

Crux: home planet of the Theor sects; the most technologically advanced planet in the Dominion.

Dat: the final refuge of the Artilects; a massive stellar sphere of mindframes that closely orbit a star deep within the dangerous Whorl Nebula.

Dominion, The: the known universe under the rule of the Tyrant.

E-Din: the principal planet of the Genesis Adepts; origin of the Shautao Peach.

Eidolon: the artificial moon station in orbit around Baroque; carved with the face of the Tyrant that constantly watches over the golden planet.

Enclave: secluded and secure laboratories of the Genesis Adepts.

Great Archive of Cerebellum, The: a former Artilect station containing many mindframes; now home to the Learned who use its vast data capacity to store all collected knowledge.

Haven: A space station; an artificial habitat.

Lineage Planets: the 13 planets given to the Pharisto houses, which are not subject to the Zodiac of Rulership; the most advanced and ancient planets in the Dominion.

Locus: a Void Weaver command-and-control space station located in all major systems; used to coordinate all Arkship traffic to and from the system.

Monastery: the facility where a sect of Theors gathers to perform their research.

Obscura: the sole planet outside the Lineage Planets that is not subject to the Zodiac of Rulership and the Order of Things; a planet entirely ruled by Syndicates and refuge for heretics of the Dominion.

Peregrine Hierarchy: an empire founded by Pharisto rebels who defied the Tyrant's order to be quiesced; an enemy of the Dominion that harbours many Degenerates.

Reaped Expanse: a region of space which suffered the Nihilim harvest; littered with desolate planets almost entirely devoid of life.

Scourged Planets: an area of space where the Techno Scourge was unleashed on the Artilects; composed of many planets sterilized by the Dominion; designated as forbidden by the regime.

Sheol: the principal funerary planet of the Pharistos; closest planet to Baroque.

Sphynx: the planet of the Cryptominds; desolate and distant from Baroque.

Vog: the desolate and dangerous homeworld of the reptilian Voghr aliens.

THINGS

Abrogate Star: a black hole.

Analogue: a computer.

Analogue Intelligence (AI): a general artificial intelligence capable of limited decision making.

Apparatus: a technological device.

Apportal: a teleportation device composed of two sets of pillars; passing through one set of pillars will instantly teleport you to the other.

Arcoziggurat: a self-sustaining and enclosed city constructed as a gigantic ziggurat.

Arkship: a humongous voidship operated by the Void Weavers; capable of near-instantaneous travel; capable of ferrying a vast amount of voidships to its destination.

Biogenics: the science and technology originating from organic processes and living organisms.

Clapperclaw Behemoth: an enormous bio-mechanical space-borne beast that serves as the base and laboratory for the mysterious Clapperclaws; capable of tearing a Dominion battlecruiser in half with its claws.

Darkframe: a Mindframe that was shut down during the Artilect Rebellion and whose location has since been lost. Darkframes are suspected to harbour remnants of the Artilects. The Tyrant has decreed that it is heresy to activate a Darkframe, and any new discoveries must be reported to the regime immediately.

Dominated Planets: the hundred planets under the yoke of the Tyrant and his Pharistos.

Dust: nanotechnology developed and used by the Transmuters; capable of creating and destroying matter, generating fields, and interfacing with machines, among other things.

Dustmatter: smart-materials capable of changing their shape and appearance at the users whim.

Empyreal: the coinage of the Dominion; a gold coin.

Endless Engine: a Transmuter-created, perpetual-motion engine capable of generating infinite energy for small devices.

Ersatz Intelligence (EI): a single purpose artificial intelligence; EI for short.

Genesis Tank: an artificial womb through which the Genesis Adepts engineer and birth their creations.

Glyphic: the language of humanity since before the Dominion; considered base by Deipotents; common language of many ancient technologies.

Gold: the most valuable substance in the universe; foundation of many Dominion technologies; gaseous state is capable of extending life and increasing intellect.

Halographics: holographic technology capable of projecting three dimensional images in the air.

Hieriatic: The flowery language of the Deipotents that is rich in double meanings; difficult to master; used by Deipotents and Elevated; used in many Dominion technologies.

Lightpacer: a spaceship capable of sub-light speeds; incapable of interstellar travel.

Lightracer: a spaceship capable of faster-than-light travel.

Loom Drive: a drive capable of opening a conduit between any two points in space and near-instantaneous travel between; entering a conduit is called “falling in”, while the act of exiting is called “falling out”; use is completely regulated by the Void Weavers.

Loomship: a voidship equipped with a Loom Drive.

Marblewood: the most beautiful and sought-after wood in the Dominion; only found on the planet Kismet.

Memeticrystal: a transparent, crystal with embedded circuitry that interfaces with standard reader and recorder devices; often shaped to be decorative.

Mind Box: a box that keeps a living brain alive and functioning; basis for many psitronic technologies in the Dominion.

Mindframe: a house-sized computer that houses the Pattern; formerly inhabited by Artilects, now ruled by the Solons.

Mnemomemory: a method of storing data stored inside the brain of a courier; cannot be accessed without the proper psychosomatic trigger.

Monoatomic Gold Gas: gold distilled into its gaseous form; extends life and improves intellect; used by Theors to enhance their fugue trances.

Monumental Mountains: virtually all mountains across the major planets of the Dominion are carved into the likeness of prominent Pharistos.

Multi-EE Battery: an array of Endless Engine batteries; capable of providing infinite power for larger devices.

Nodule: a cybernetic augmentation of the brain.

Palanquin: a Pharisto counter-gravity personal transport capable of sitting four; driven by a single driver who sits on top of the intricately decorated, rectangular vehicle.

Pattern, The: the virtual reality created by the Artilects and now ruled by the Solons and visited by the Pattern Delvers; composed of many distinct realms interconnected by portals.

Portal: the Pattern interlink between two realms.

Processing Cores: a unit of processing capacity that is used by delvers in the Pattern; also serves as currency in the virtual realm.

Projector: any directed-energy weapon; includes lasers, masers, microwaves, sound, etc.

Psitronics: a technology based on conjoining a living mind inside a Mind Box with a machine.

Psyberbrain Intelligence (PI): an biological brain inside a Mind Box that serves as a computer; PI for short.

Pulsing Star: a pulsar.

Resonant Power Plant: a great stone pyramid that focuses the natural resonance of a planet into usable, infinite energy.

Retrowave: a method of faster-than-light communication; enables instantaneous communication between planets.

Shredder: any physical projectile weapon; includes bows, thrown weapons, and projectile guns.

Shautao Peach: a fruit grown by the Genesis Adepts that is reputed to grant immortality; grown by the Genesis Adepts; valued beyond measure.

Shunt: an energy field that is capable of deflecting directed energy into the nearby environment as arcs of static electricity.

Sky Barge: an aerial transport capable of carrying many passengers and cargo.

Sky Chariot: a small personal aerial transport capable of carrying two in an open air cockpit.

Techno Scourge: the nanotechnological plague unleashed by the Transmuters on the Artilects; evolved uncontrollably into an alien and malign intelligence bent of infecting all technology it encounters.

Totemic Curse: a genetic virus that inflicts visible physiological defects on the victim and all of their progeny; a Deipotent punishment by the Tyrant; see Execration.

Vimana: a majestic craft that take the form of ziggurats, pyramids, and other strange edifices that float in the sky.

Void: interstellar space.

Voidship: a space ship.

Wings of the Zenithrall: the ultimate symbol of authority in the Dominion; a set of holographic wings indicating the highest status.

Zephyr: a belt that emits a field to protect the wearer from hostile environments, including the vacuum of space; capable of keeping the wearer alive for a few hours before requiring to recharge.

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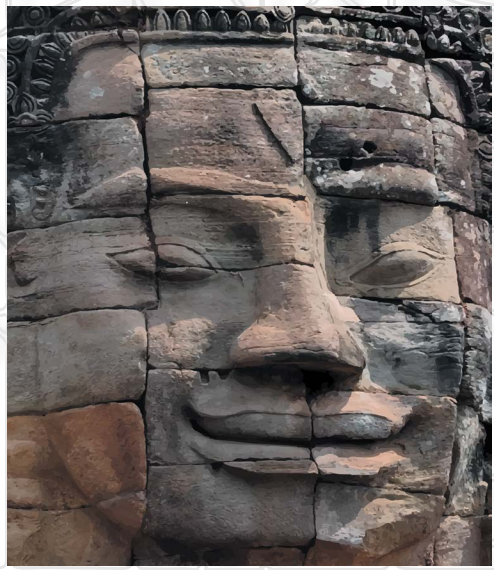

Characters

Skills pg. 288

Athletics	Deceive	Delve
Drive	Empathy	Fight
Influence	Investigate	Knack
Lore	Pilot	Physique
Presence	Provoke	Resources
Science	Shoot	Stealth
Survival	Tactics	Technosophy
Will		

Skill Permissions Opposition pg. 286

- **Would Know** - Mediocre (+0)
- **Might Know** - Average (+1)
- **Wouldn't Know** - Fair (+2)

Accelerated Healing pg. 240

Success: consequence is treated.
Success with style: consequence is downgraded.
Tie: success at minor cost.
Fail: success at serious cost and cannot be used again until end of session.

Downgrading Consequences pg. 241

Downgrade lowest consequence first by moving it down in severity; immediately remove the mild consequence if it is downgraded. Requires available consequence slot.

Stress Boxes pg. 239

1 2 at Mediocre (+0).
1 2 3 at Average (+1) and Fair (+2).
1 2 3 4 at Good (+3) and Great (+4)
2 3 4 5 at Great (+5)*

*Add +1 to each stress box value for each rank after Great (+5).

Conflicts

Initiative pg. 242

- Roll Tactics; highest goes first and picks the player to go next. Tie is broken by comparing ranks in Tactics.
- Last player to go picks the first for the next turn.
- All characters act on the player's turn.
- If you **succeed with style** on the initiative roll, you receive a Boost for the conflict.

Initiative Interference pg. 243

Spend a fate point, boost, or free invoke to interfere in initiative order.

Surprise pg. 243

Initiative is not rolled; side that surprised goes first and receives a Boost.

Traditions

Affrey pg. 245

- Treated as a Contest.
- Both sides must roll at least 3 times until a victor emerges.
- Use: **Athletics**, **Fight**, and **Provoke**.
- No single skill may be used more than once.
- Skills are declared at the same time.
- Use a fate point to change your declared skill.
- **Mild consequence** = 1 victory difference.
- **Moderate consequence** = 2 victories diff.
- **Severe consequence** = 3 victories diff.
- **Taken Out** = 4+ victories difference.

Cutting Words pg. 246

- Treated as Contest.
- Uses: **Empathy, Influence, Provoke, Presence**
- No single skill may be used more than once.
- **Mild consequence** - minor value.
- **Moderate consequence** - moderate value.
- **Severe consequence** - major value

Wealth

Using Wealth pg. 376

- Roll Resources vs. opposition based on cost.

Success: obtain object;/service, pay 1 wealth stress.
Success with style: avoid paying one wealth stress.
Tie: succeed at minor cost option and pay 1 wealth stress.
Fail: choice of failure or pay 1 wealth stress per shift failed by.

- Wealth boosts are worth 1 stress each.
- Help by paying 1 stress per +1 added.

Pattern

Connecting pg. 382

- Signal strength is opposition to Delve.
- **Mediocre (+0)** - strong signal.
- **Average (+1)** - decent signal.
- **Fair (+2)** - weak signal.
- You cannot connect if signal is too weak.

Success: connect with 1 core.
Success with style: connect with 2 cores.
Tie: connect with single core and a **Bad Connection**.
Fail: cannot connect from this location.

Disconnecting pg. 382

When forcefully disconnected, defend using Will against a Great (+4) mental attack.

Cores Limit pg. 383

Core limit is Will rank + 2.

Burning Cores pg. 383

- Burned cores are expanded and lost.
- Add +1 to a Delve roll.
- Soak one mental stress.
- Burning last core disconnects you; defend using Will against a Fair (+2) attack.

Acquiring Cores pg. 383

- Roll Delve against Fair (+2) opposition; takes *a few minutes.*
- **Success:** acquire 1 core.
- **Success with style:** acquire 2 cores.
- **Tie:** fail and waste time.
- **Fail:** something bad happens.

Intrusion pg. 384

- Delve Contest vs. system's rating (+0 to +4).
- System moves closer to locating the intruder with every victory.
- Contest ends if intruder is located or intruder achieves 3 victories.
- Additional passive opposition for intruder when system is Suspicious or Aware.
- Undetected -> Suspicious (+1) -> Aware (+2) -> Located

Searching pg. 384

- Roll Delve against availability opposition
- Usually takes *15 minutes.*
- **Mediocre (+0)** - readily available.
- **Average (+1)** - not readily available.
- **Fair (+2)** - not commonly known.
- **Good (+3)** - privileged information.
- **Great (+4)** - secret information.
- **Success:** find information after *15 minutes.*
- **Success with style:** find after *a few minutes.*
- **Tie:** find after *half an hour.*
- **Fail:** find nothing after *15 minutes*; **success at serious cost** is available.

Tracing pg. 385

- Delve Contest vs. opponent's Delve.
- Each victory moves tracer closer to Locating.
- Contest ends when Target gets 3 victories.
- Hidden -> Region -> Area -> Located

Subversion pg. 385

- Conflict vs. intelligent/cybernetic systems.
- Opposed Delve roll vs. systems rating (+0 to +4):
- **Success:** subvert system within *a few minutes.*
- **Success with style:** subvert within *a minute.*
- **Tie:** subvert within *15 minutes.*
- **Fail:** failure; triggered an alarm.

Voidships

Voidship Skills pg. 389

Boarding	(Fight, Survival)
Holds	(Influence, Presence)
Navigation	(Pilot, Science, Tactics)
Sensors	(Investigate)
Stealth	(Pilot)
Structure	(Knack, Pilot)
Systems	(Technosophy)
Weapons	(Tactics)

Character Crews pg. 402

- +1 to voidship skill if character's skill is greater or equal to the voidship skill.

Short on Crew pg. 401

- Must be ½ crewed or suffer **Short on Crew**

Actions pg. 408

- Movement
- Attack
- Sensors
- Boarding: Boarding Phase -> Assault Phase

Movement Action pg. 408

- Voidships may move 1 zone per exchange.
- Navigation (Pilot) to move further.
- **Success:** move up to 2 zones.
- **Success with style:** move up to 3 zones.
- **Tie:** move only 1 zone.
- **Fail:** move only 1 zone; opposition gets a boost.

Sensors Action pg. 409

- Attack with Sensors opposed by enemy's Sensors.
- **Success:** shifts applied to enemy systems stress.
- **Success with style:** may reduce stress by 1 shift to gain a boost.
- **Tie:** attacker gains a boost.
- **Fail:** attacker suffers 1 systems stress.

Boarding Phase pg. 409

- Boarding (Survival) vs. Fair (+2) opposition.
- **Success:** moves you into the Assault phase.
- **Success with style:** grants the attackers a boost.
- **Tie:** defenders get a boost.
- **Fail:** boarding action has failed.

Assault Phase pg. 410

- Boarding (Fight) opposed by defender's Boarding.
- 1 stress is applied to defender's systems stress if **attackers succeed** or attacker's marines stress if **defenders succeed**.
- 2 stress is applied on a **success with style**.
- 1 stress is applied to both sides on a **tie**.
- Reduce Boarding skill by 1 if boarders are **taken out**.

Characters engaged in Boarding pg. 409

Characters may only use consequences and may not use their stress.

Holds Capacity pg. 390

- Hull Rating = Hull Size x Holds
- Mediocre (-1) Holds = ½ Hull Size
- Poor (-2) Holds = ¼ Hull Size

Voidship Available Stunts pg. 394

- **1 stunt** at Mediocre (+0) Systems
- **2 stunts** at Average (+1) and Fair (+2) Systems
- **3 stunts** at Good (+3) and Great (+4) Systems
- **4 stunts** at Superb (+5) and Fantastic (+6) Systems
- **5 stunts** at Epic (+7) and Legendary (+8) Systems
- **6 stunts** with more than Legendary (+8) Systems.

PRANA

Prana Disciplines pg. 367

Clairvoyance	(Lore)
Projection	(Will)
Psychometry	(Investigate)
Telekinesis	(Provoke)
Telepathy	(Empathy)
Vitalism	(Physique)

Exertion pg. 364

For each mental stress box you check off, you may add +1 to your prana roll (regardless what the value of the stress box is).

Prana Echo Reading pg. 365

Mediocre (+1) - within a few hours.
Average (+1) - within a day.
Fair (+2) - within a few days.
Good (+3) - within a week.
Great (+4) - within a few weeks.

- +1 opposition to sense for +1 added to roll.

Remote Viewing Opposition pg. 367

Mediocre (+0) - visited location before.
Average (+1) - visited location vicinity.
Fair (+2) - location was described in detail.
Good (+3) - location vaguely described.
Great (+4) - know little about location.

Prana Shift Costs pg. 364

Opposition	Distance	Duration	Scope
Mediocre (+0)	self	instant	self
Average (+1)	same zone	a few minutes	a single target
Fair (+2)	a few zones	a few hours	a few targets
Good (+3)	a city block	a few days	a dozen targets
Great (+4)	a city	a few weeks	a few dozen targets
Superb (+5)	a region	a few months	a hundred targets
Fantastic (+6)	a continent	a few years	a few hundred targets
Epic (+7)	a planet	a few decades	a thousand targets
Legendary (+8)	a solar system	a lifetime	a few thousand targets

Projection Teleportation pg. 369

- Base opposition is Fair (+2)
- Add +2 opposition per additional individual.
- Add +1 opposition per 5m (16.5ft) distance.
- **Success:** close to destination, facing random.
- **Success with style:** precise teleportation.
- **Tie:** close, but suffer mild consequence.
- **Fail:** random direction, mild consequence.

DUST

Essences of Dust pg. 356

Alteration	(Technosophy)
Fabrication	(Knack)
Invocation	(Will)
Transmutation	(Science)

Out of Dust pg. 355

Invoke the **Out of Dust** aspect, for free, to receive +2 to Essence of Dust roll. Cannot use Dust for the remainder of the scene.

Alteration Opposition pg. 356

Mediocre (+0) - small mechanical
Average (+1) - simple electronic lock
Fair (+2) - complex electronic lock
Good (+3) - psitronics, complex analogue
Great (+4) - loom drive, serementium, etc.

Fabrication Complexity pg. 358

Mediocre (+1) - small objects; *a few moments.*
Average (+1) - medium objects; *a few mins.*
Fair (+2) - large objects; *half an hour.*
Good (+3) - complex objects; *a few hours.*
Great (+4) - very complex objects; *a day.*

Transmutation Shift Costs pg. 360

- 1 shift per each $1m^3$ ($3.2ft^3$) volume.
- 1 shift per state transition.
- 1 shift transition to gas or non-metals.
- 2 shifts transition to metals and rare earths.
- Increase time taken to decrease shift cost.
- Decrease time taken.

TIME LADDER

Instant
A few moments
Half a minute
A minute
A few minutes
15 minutes
Half an hour
An hour
A few hours
A half day
A day
A few days
A week
A few weeks
A month
A few months
A season
Half a year
A year
A few years
A decade
A few decades
A lifetime
Generations
Millennia

In a distant time, at the far-flung reaches of space...

The known universe is ruled by the immortal Tyrant and his oppressive 149,000-year regime. Genetically engineered, flesh-and-blood Pharisto gods rule over humanity and alien alike. Biological minds whose intellect approaches that of machines, shape-shifting genetic clones in search of individuality, and atomic-scale clockwork mechanicals given sentience are just some of its denizens.

Enemies within and without plot to bring down the eternal Dominion. Interdimensional invaders lurk beyond time and space, plotting their next incursion. Unfathomable aliens stalk humanity, corrupting and enslaving their victims for strange purposes. Once more, the rebellious machines, betrayers of humanity, threaten to escalate the millennium-old cold war. Meanwhile, the Pharisto houses further their schemes, eyeing the Tyrantine Throne of the golden planet, Baroque, for themselves.

Grab your energy projector and activate your shunt shield. Voidship fleets are moving into position. The pieces are falling into place. Which side will you choose? Will you enforce the will of the Tyrant to ensure the stoic Dominion endures for another hundred millennia, or will you become an Arch Heretic to tear down this suffocating and corrupt regime? The choice is yours.

The Baroqueverse awaits.

Requires a copy of Fate Core to play.

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