RPJ Sci-Fi

The Empire of Alexander – A Science Fiction World in RPJ

Picture an awesome illustration here.

Jay Slater

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I. Introduction

Hello, and welcome to the second RPJ project, RPJ Science Fiction!

You may recognize elements from Warhammer 40k, BattleTech, and innumerable other science fiction settings I liked enough to ~~rip off~~ take inspiration from. I owe those settings and their creators a debt of gratitude.

A Brief History of RPJ

One cold Rochester day[1], during my freshman year at that august institution, the University of Rochester, I turned to my roommate and said something to the effect of, “You know what would be funny? A tabletop RPG that only uses coins.”

From that offhanded remark came about two years[2] of off-and-on writing, which produced two rulebooks: RPJ Core and RPJ Fantasy. During my junior year of college, I was fortunate enough to live with people geeky enough to find the concept of a coin-based gaming system interesting enough to playtest for me. So transpired the first epic campaign of RPJ Fantasy, as the players destroyed their foes, their allies, much of the surrounding landscape, and in one memorable instance, a small portion of reality itself.

Though it was a success from the standpoint of creating interesting stories, it (being my first real foray into game design) was a failure when it came to providing a simple framework applicable to a broad variety of situations[3]. I felt I wouldn't be able to give RPJ Fantasy a good second pass right away, being so invested in it, and it happened that I'd also just read the WH40K Roleplay: Rogue Trader rulebook. A space opera setting was practically destiny.

Anyway, that was a while ago, and the product you see before you is the culmination of all of that intermittent, not-very-hard work.

A Note on Language

The *galliki glossa*[4] of the Empire of Alexander[5] is something descended from Koine Greek, which Wikipedia claims was spoken from about 300BC to 300AD. I've attempted to follow some pseudo-Greek rules when using obviously Greek-sounding terms, but since I actually don't know any Greek I owe speakers of that language an apology.

1 I don't remember if it was actually a cold day in Rochester when RPJ was originally conceived, but the odds are in my favor if I say it was.
2 As I add this footnote in 2018, it's now been about ten years since I started.
3 I suspect my previous parenthetical statement had something to do with it.
4 Or lingua franca, if you are so inclined.
5 That is, the major player in our galaxy. It makes more sense if you read the second section first. I could rearrange them, but then this wouldn't be an introduction anymore.

Probably the most consistent of the things I did were plurals in -oi[1]. This captures part of the feel of ancient Greek without requiring any actual knowledge of the grammar. Doubtless you find this all crushingly boring, and doubtless you won't pay too much attention to it[2], but RPJ is in part an exercise in raw ego, and in any event, you get what you pay for.

A Note on Units of Measure

This rulebook uses the SI system of measure in rules text. The Empire of Alexander uses ancient Greek customary units, which you may substitute if you're feeling adventurous:

Distance

- 1 kilometer = 3 *stadia* = 1200 *paces* ≃ 1200 yards
- 1 *stadion* = 400 *paces* ≃ 330 meters ≃ 400 yards
- 1 *pace* = 2 *cubits* = 3 *podes*[3] = 12 *palms* ≃ 1 yard ≃ 0.8 meters
- 1 *cubit* ≃ 18 inches ≃ 40 centimeters
- 1 *pous* ≃ 12 inches
- 1 *palm* ≃ 3 inches ≃ 6.5 centimeters

Weight

- 1 *talent* = 60 *minae* ≃ 30 kilograms ≃ 65 pounds
- 1 *mina* = 100 *drachma* ≃ 500 grams ≃ 1 pound
- 1 *drachma* ≃ 5 grams ≃ 0.25 ounces

For weights larger than a few hundred kilograms, the Empire uses the Gallic measures (kilograms and tonnes).

Other Stuff

This is an RPJ game, so any division is rounded down unless otherwise specified[4].

RPJ Optional Core Mechanics

RPJ Sci-Fi requires the following Optional Core Mechanics[5].

- RPJ Dice
- RPJ Character Points
- RPJ Skills
- RPJ Gifts, Faults, and Quirks
- RPJ Health

1 Exceptions include the Imperial Tagmata (sing. Tagma), and the Imperial Themata (sing. Thema).
2 Honestly, chances are I won't either .
3 Pous is the singular of podes.
4 The actual rule I follow is, "Division is rounded in the way that the player wishes it wasn't." I'm hiding that in a footnote for obvious reasons.
5 At present, 'everything in the RPJ Core rulebook'.

- RPJ Characters
- RPJ Gridless Combat
- RPJ Immobilization
- GCS Damage Scales
- GCS Fire and Movement
- GCS Mass Combat
- RPJ Cinematic Combat

The Section Wherein I Express Gratitude[1]

In other RPJ books, I've used this section to snark at various people I have outright stolen ideas from. This time around, I think I'll instead use it to offer real thanks to various people to whom I've pitched the vaguest shadows of ideas, for whom I've waited to flesh those ideas out, and from whom I have outright stolen those now-useful ideas. To be more concise, I mean the friends who deigned to waste one evening a week on a system as poorly put together as this, the promise of improvement just around a corner that seems never to draw any closer. Without any further delay or self-deprecation, I introduce to you RPJ Sci-Fi's first-ever party.

Navarch J.R. Pierpont Astorios
Commissar Pierson Dawes, 491st Orela Division, 67th Tagma
Electra Makri, Divisional Psion of the 491st Orela Division, 67th Tagma
Davik Althos, Artificer of the Temple of Hephaestus
Io, Machine Empath of the Temple of Hephaestus of Homeworld

1 This is that section.

II. A Brief History of the World

The Empire of Alexander the Great

Starting in 335 BC, Alexander III of Macedon launched a war of conquest that would bring the whole of the known world under his control.

In 323 BC, following Alexander's death, a brutal war between his successors put Alexander IV on the throne, with Perdiccas his regent. Further successful campaigns sealed their place atop the Empire of Alexander, and Alexander IV would come to demonstrate that he lacked none of his father's drive or martial zeal. By the time of the birth of Christ, in the 21st year of the reign of Autokrator Philip V, the Alexandrian Empire stretched from the Western Ocean and the isles of Albion to the Eastern Ocean, across the lands of the Qing and the former territories of the Chrysanthemum Throne.

A century later, Autokrator[1] Alexander VIII decreed that great ships be built to carry his armies across the seas, to whatever lands might lay beyond them. The Maya, the Inca, and the Aztec fell before the bronze-tipped pike of His Imperial Splendor's armies, and the plains people of the north soon followed.

To The Heavens

The natural philosophers of the Empire were not idle. Their work regarded as idle tomfoolery by the Imperial bureaucracy, they nevertheless pushed back the boundaries of possibility. Three centuries after the world came under the hand of the Autokrator they unlocked the power of steam, and two centuries later harnessed the very force of lightning. It was not long before man slipped the bonds of earth and took to the skies.

Finally, in the reign of Autokrator Alexander XLI, the akademeikoi discovered the secret to reaching beyond the bounds of Earth's atmosphere. The Autokrator declared a war of conquest against what might be found there. It was discovered that there was little but the nigh-infinite bounty of the orbital system of the Sun, and for a time the Empire knew greater prosperity than ever before.

To The Stars

A millennium passed as riches from the heavens filled the Imperial treasury, borne to the Homeworld by vessels of staggering size even as the Empire's people flooded from Earth to the colonies on the Sun's other worlds. But the wealth of the solar system was not limitless. The natural philosophers of the Empire once again came to the aid of their Autokrator, and in the reign of Autokrator Alexander LXXIII presented him two gifts.

The first was the rejuvenat drug, a cocktail of pharmaceutical wonders which doubled the human lifespan. Suddenly soldiers could serve in combat for forty years instead of ten or twenty, with all the benefits of youth and experience alike.

1 auto-KRAH-tor, if you were wondering.

The second was a voidship of incredible size, the first starship, whose engines permitted it to tear the very fabric of space and time and slip from star to star in mere weeks. The Autokrator declared a war of conquest against whatever might lie beyond the Empire's bounds.

There was much to be found: dozens of peoples and countless thousands of inhabited worlds, none of them possessed of the Empire's jump drive. For hundreds of years, war raged. The Empire of Alexander had already fought its own internal wars, crushing rebellions and threats to the Throne, and the Autokrator's troops were to a man veterans of countless battles; there could be no doubting the final result.

Four thousand years after Alexander brought the world together, the overwhelming majority of the inhabited galaxy flew the Imperial banner, the golden, sixteen-rayed Macedonian star which stood for the Autokrator's authority across six millennia. Millions of worlds and uncountable billions of beings swore their allegiance to the Homeworld Throne.

The Modern Age

Millennia passed, and as great powers are wont to do, the Empire of Alexander stagnated. The Imperial bureaucracy, once a model of efficiency, grew in sloth and redundancy. The governors of the 8,410 Imperial Themata squabbled pettily among themselves, wasting their strength both political and martial against one another. The Autokrator's army, the stalwart Tagmata, the mighty Kataphraktoi, and the invincible Navy, declined in fearsomeness as the bureaucracy and the Themata hoarded their wealth and looted the Imperial treasury to fund their meaningless struggles.

Worse, the foul Tarki of the D'van Empire, who had never completely yielded to the strength of the Empire, bided their time and built an army of their own. They saw the cracks growing in the glorious facade of the Empire, and launched their war for freedom. They were successful beyond their wildest dreams. The house of cards that was the Empire fell apart at the slightest touch, and inspired by their success, other peoples of the galaxy banded together to rise against the Throne.

The threat to the very foundations of the Empire shocked it from its deepening slumber, and Autokrator Nikolaus XXIX traveled to the front lines to lead his men in the First War of Reconquest. He was successful in stemming the tides for a time, but it would take three further wars in three subsequent centuries before something akin to stability returned to the galaxy.

Today, Autokrator Basil XXXVIII rules from the Homeworld Throne. The Empire is but a shadow of its former glory, sapped of strength by a swollen and malicious bureaucracy, a thousand petty infights, and the constant threat of renewed attacks from the alien peoples of the galaxy. It is something less than half the size it was at its zenith.

The Tarki are ascendant. Every year more worlds fall into their thrall, and it cannot be long before they surpass the Empire in strength. The worlds not aligned with the two great powers are a constantly shifting web of alliances and governments, wracked by revolt and torn apart by the fickle will of the people.

Among all this there are the human Navarchoi, owners of the massive jump ships which carry the lifeblood of trade to the whole of the galaxy. Even in the twilight years of the Alexandrian Empire, no other power can afford such an extravagance as interstellar trade, and that one fact has kept the Empire from failing altogether.

It is a dangerous life, if a rewarding one: the threat of piracy is ever-present, skirmishes between the powers of the galaxy great and minor are without end, and the Imperial bureaucracy has little trust for those who carry on their business with aliens; but at the fringes of the Empire, for a man with ambition, there is boundless opportunity.

III. Characters

A party in RPJ Science Fiction ordinarily[1] consists of a single Navarch and his cadre of trusted[2] friends and advisers[3]. They ply the space lanes, filling their coffers with the wealth of thousands of worlds and their memories with dozens of adventures[4].

In general, follow the rules in the RPJ Core rulebook's RPJ Characters Optional Core Mechanic to create your character.

Quick Reference Guide

Here's an outline of the process for quick reference, using your character sheet as a guide and providing cross-references to the relevant rules. Where the relevant rules are in RPJ Core, the reference will be an index entry or table of contents heading. Where the relevant rules are in this rulebook, the reference will be a page number.

First, ask your gamemaster how many Character Points to start with. A 60-Character Point start is recommended for new characters. 110 or 160 Character Points may be used for experienced or epic-strength characters respectively. Consult the Character Points Optional Core Mechanic in the RPJ Core rulebook.

Generate your attributes per the rules in the RPJ Core rulebook, filling them in on the second page of your character sheet. Consult the Generating Attributes section of the RPJ Core rulebook.

Next, choose a character class, assigning skills to free class skill slots, class skill slots, and anti-class skill slots as desired, filling them in at the top of the first page of your character sheet. The class list is in this chapter, starting on 14. The rules are in the RPJ Characters Optional Core Mechanic in RPJ Core, under the heading Character Classes.

Add gifts, faults, and quirks to your character as desired. For general rules on traits, consult the RPJ Gifts, Faults, and Quirks Optional Core Mechanic in the RPJ Core rulebook. For rules on adding traits to your character, see the Traits section in the RPJ Characters Optional Core Mechanic. For a list of traits in RPJ Sci-Fi, consult the chapter called Traits, on page 33.

Use your remaining Character Points to purchase levels in skills, entering the levels purchased on the second page of your character sheet. For general rules on skills, see the RPJ Skills Optional Core Mechanic in RPJ Core. For rules on adding skills to your character, consult the Skills section in the RPJ Characters Optional Core Mechanic. For the list of RPJ Sci-Fi skills, see the Skills chapter, starting on page 44.

1 Other combinations are possible, but rather than write about them I'll let you work it out yourself, in the interests of keeping this rulebook slimmer than *RPJ Fantasy*.
2 'Trusted' is the ideal, at least.
3 For more detail, I refer you to *Warhammer 40000 Roleplay: Rogue Trader*, because I am totally stealing their idea here.
4 If you have a good gamemaster and commit to a long campaign, at least. I'll also use this space to remark that veterans of *RPJ Fantasy* can expect a greater number of footnotes (“Is that even *possible*?” I hear you cry), as I intend to limit my editorializing to the bottom of the page as much as possible.

Determine your starting Prosperity score and obtain any equipment you wish to start with. See the Prosperity section on page 31, as well as the Items chapter, starting on page 51, and enter the relevant information on the third page of your character sheet.

Determine your Influence scores. See Influence on page 32.

Fill in your combat-related information on the first page of your character sheet. For information on damage saves, see the RPJ Core rulebook on Damage Saves, under the RPJ Health Optional Core Mechanic.

For actions and defenses, see RPJ Core's RPJ Gridless Combat System chapter. The index entries for 'actions' and 'defense value' are under the Gridless Combat System heading. The latter covers melee defenses. For ranged defense, look under the Fire and Movement heading for 'ranged defense value'. Consult Chapter XI on page 146 for RPJ Sci-Fi's extensions to the Gridless Combat System.

For weapons, follow the 'attack modifier' index entry under the Gridless Combat System index heading. In RPJ Sci-Fi, almost all weapons share a linked attribute with their linked skill: melee weapons and specialist ranged weapons are Strength-linked, and non-specialist ranged weapons are Dexterity-linked. The item entry in the Items chapter will note any exceptions.

To calculate your combat rating, found on the second page of your character sheet, consult page 147.

To fill in the Psi page of your character sheet, consult Chapter IX, which starts on page 129.

After creating your characters, provided that at least one player has created a character with the Navarch class, your whole party will collaborate to design your jump ship. The jump ship construction rules begin on page 106.

Names

The Empire of Alexander is xenophobic by almost any definition of the word, but 'xeno' ceased to include 'non-Greek humans' many millennia ago. As such, human names run the gamut of possibilities: Andrastos of Parnassus, Shoda Nobuyoki, Ejaife Okafor, and Bob Johnson are all perfectly reasonable names for a modern subject of the Homeworld Throne.

In Chapter XII, page 165, you can find further information on the major people groups in the Empire, along with roles they tend to play in Imperial society. Obviously, tendencies are do not apply to everyone, and you are free to borrow from or ignore the information in that section at your leisure.

If you are playing an alien character, Chapter XII has more information on the major alien species of the galaxy, starting on page 168.

Implementation Details

In RPJ Sci-Fi, all classes receive one **free class skill slot**. Place one skill from your class skills list into the free class skill slot at no cost. It may be raised using the discount cost table. Some classes additionally add one or more extra free class skill slots.

As a class feature, some classes automatically grant discount cost status for some skills. Those skills do not gain any benefit when placed into class skill slots. When placed into anti-class skill slots, they use the normal cost table rather than the penalty cost table.

Classes

Your character class is the combination of your career and your track inside that career. Together, they determine the list of class skills you can choose from, and provide a typical background for a character of your class.

Don't feel bound by the list of classes, the list of tracks per class, or especially the typical background information. If there's a sort of character you'd like to play which isn't adequately represented by a track-class combination, feel free to propose a modified track, a new track altogether, or even a new class to your gamemaster[1].

1 Gamemasters: it's very unlikely that such a proposal will be balanced any worse than the official careers and tracks, so don't be shy in allowing players to roll their own.

Navarch

You are one of the Navarchoi, the fifty million jump ship owners who fuel the engine of interstellar trade. It is a job of great weight: the fates of millions of lives, those of your jump ship's crew and the traders embarked in your hangar bays, and billions of drachmas rest in your hands.

You are by necessity a generalist, skilled at many things but excelling at none: it is your job to be the face of your ship in every situation, and you cannot afford to let poor performances reflect on it.

Class Feature: Famous Face

In most star systems, the arrival of a jump ship is big news. As such, *you* can be big news, too, if you so desire. When arriving in a star system, you may share your portrait with the local media. If you do, nearly everyone will know who you are, and may be more pleasantly disposed toward you.

Track: Merchant Scion

Some families have owned trading ships for centuries, passing them from generation to generation as heirlooms. They are well-established in the Imperial upper class, and their family names are known throughout the whole of the Empire.

You are one of these favored sons or daughters, receiving from your parents the title to the family vessel and the trade secrets they have amassed over hundreds of years.

Class Skills

Armor Use	Inspire
Barter	Knowledge (Jump Ships, Trade, Astral Cartography)
Carouse	Melee Weapons
Command	Navigation (Jump)
Games	Perceive
Hand Weapons	Wordcraft
Insight	

Other Features

-20 Character Points
4d6+10 Prosperity
140 Ship Points
+2 Influence: Imperial Ministry of Trade

Track: Founding Father

Every trading dynasty must begin somewhere. You are a successful trader or businessman in your own right, with interests on dozens or hundreds of worlds and a fleet of freighters and other ships unmatched by your competitors, but you have grown tired of the planetary life and its limited charm.

You decided to purchase a jump ship, and to do so you liquidated your holdings, traveled to one of the shipyard worlds of the Empire, and made your acquisition: a newly-stripped retired military jump ship, ready for you to to fit out and take to the stars.

Class Skills

See Merchant Scion

Other Features

-20 Character Points
4d6+45 Prosperity
105 Ship Points

Kataphraktos Veteran

You are a veteran of the Kataphraktoi, the power-armored fist of the Autokrator. For twenty years or more you have served the Empire on the field of battle, shuttled from world to world to bring long wars to quick ends.

You are specialized in the use of power armor and heavy weapons, and are an imposing presence at your Navarch's side. On the battlefield you are capable of raining death upon your foes in quantities unmatched by any other single infantryman.

Class Feature: Intimidating Presence

There is no such thing as a small-framed Kataphraktos. When attempting to intimidate someone[1], roll at a +2 bonus.

Track: Household Guard

You served in the Imperial Household Guard division, the elite of the elite, those honored few chosen to go into battle alongside the Autokrator himself. Living in the palace on Homeworld, you trained your skills to a level unmatched by any other human.

After a twenty-year tour, your obligation to the Autokrator came to an end. You decided to seek your own fortune, rather than returning to his service, and you have found your way into the service of a Navarch's.

Upon your retirement, you did not have the savings to purchase your new-model power armor. You are still one of the most dangerous men in the galaxy with weapons of all sorts.

Class Skills

Barter	Plasmasheath Weapons
Disguise	Power Armor Use
Gunnery (Aircraft, Vehicle)	Power Armor Weapons
Hand Weapons	Reaction
Intimidate	Specialist Weapons
Knowledge (Imperial Military, Kataphraktoi)	Unarmed Combat
Melee Weapons	

Other Features

-10 Character Points
5 + 1d6 Prosperity
+1 Influence: Imperial Ministry of Internal Affairs

1 Or when someone nearby is trying to intimidate someone, or possibly when not trying to intimidate anyone at all.

Track: Retired Campaigner

You served in the regular Kataphraktoi for your entire career, electing to remain on the battlefield instead of accepting promotion to the commanding ranks.

Upon your retirement after thirty-five years of service to the Empire, you purchased your power armor with your saved earnings and went into business for yourself as a mercenary. Few but Navarchoi can afford your price.

Class Skills

Athleticism	Manipulate Technology
Armor Use	Medicine
Barter	Melee Weapons
Gunnery (Ground Vehicle)	Plasmasheath Weapons
Hand Weapons	Power Armor Use
Intimidate	Power Armor Weapons
Knowledge (Imperial Military, Kataphraktoi)	

Other Features

-10 Character Points
Start with an Old-Model Armor or Juggernaut Armor, including equipment of up to Uncommon rarity (see page 83)
2 Prosperity

Amplified Psion

You are a psion trained in the use of a psi-amplifier, permitting you to reach heights of power far above those attainable by unaugmented humans. Having studied the arts both telepathic and martial, you are equally capable of reading a man's deepest secrets with little more than a glance, or eviscerating a Kataphraktos with a blade formed from nothing but the power of your mind.

Your talent permits you to fill a number of roles in a Navarch's retinue. Your telepathic abilities make you indispensable in the negotiating room, while your more aggressive skills make you a valuable ally on the battlefield.

Class Feature: Disciplined Mind

Through long, arduous training and plenty of experience, you have developed a familiarity with some of your psionic abilities. Pick a psi skill. Once per day, halve the psi stamina loss incurred when using a psi ability linked to that psi skill.

Track: Tagma Training

You displayed psionic talent at a young age, but were unable to afford the cost of a private tutor. Eventually, for the safety of those around you, the local Imperial authorities sent you to Homeworld to be trained.

You were assigned to one of the Tagmata, where you learned the ways of warfare from a very young age. Through years of providing psionic support to the commander you were attached to, you are possessed of great martial skill as well as great offensive psionic power.

Class Skills

Armor Use	Perceive
Athleticism	Plasmasheath Weapons
Command	Psi Attack
Disguise	Psi Defense
Gunnery (Aircraft, Vehicle)	Psychokinesis
Hand Weapons	Specialist Weapons
Intimidate	Unarmed Combat
Knowledge (Imperial Military, Psi)	Wordcraft
Melee Weapons	

Other Features

-10 Character Points
Start with up to 8 Prosperity of armor and weapons in addition to your normal starting equipment
1 Prosperity
+1 Influence: Imperial Ministry of War

Track: Apprenticeship

You manifested psionic talent at a young age, and your parents purchased the services of a tutor for you. You spent years developing your talent, and found that many of the starfaring class were willing to pay well for your abilities.

Class Skills

Alien Cultures	Perceive
Carouse	Perform
Games	Psi Attack
Hand Weapons	Psi Defense
Insight	Psychokinesis
Inspire	Telepathy
Knowledge (Psi, Imperial Upper Class)	Wordcraft

Other Features

-10 Character Points
Start with an Imperial-Pattern Psi Amplifier (see page 99)
4 Prosperity

Patrikios

You are a member of the Imperial nobility, with all the influence and wealth such a position entails. Traveling the galaxy is something of an adventure, a way to escape the daily routine of your pampered life at home, and the pressure you can bring to bear on planetary governors and other uncooperative Imperial officials makes you a natural part of a Navarch's retinue.

You are not a specialist, but you have influence enough with the Empire to make yourself useful to a Navarch, and you have had plenty of time to develop into an enthusiastic amateur at a number of unusual pursuits.

Class Feature: Air of Authority

As a nobleman or noblewoman, you have a particular knack for telling people what to do. When directing someone of lower station to do something for you, roll at +2.

Track: Imperial Courtier

An attendant to the Imperial court, you were one of few people to have personal access to the Emperor himself. Some scandal or personal difference, however, resulted in your departure, and you left Homeworld in search of your fortune.

The everyday routine of court life prevented you from making too deep a study into your hobbies, and the primary positive you bring to a Navarch's crew is your still-substantial weight with the Imperial Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Class Skills

Alien Cultures	Medicine
Carouse	Melee Weapons
Command	Navigation (Planetary)
Disguise	Perform
Games	Pilot (Aircraft, Vehicle, Voidship)
Hand Weapons	Reaction
Inspire	Survival
Knowledge (Any)	Wordcraft
Manipulate Technology	

Other Features

20 + 2d6 Prosperity
+1 free class skill slot
+3 Influence: Imperial Ministry of Internal Affairs

Track: Thema Noble

A member of the lesser Imperial nobility, you are charged with the administration of part of one of the Themata. Though there are hundreds of thousands of others exactly like you, you are nevertheless part of a galaxy of trillions, and carry a fair amount of influence with you. Particularly in your home thema, you are apt to be treated like the royalty you are.

Your fief, more provincial than Homeworld, required little of your attention, and you have had time to become a very dangerous amateur in a number of fields.

Class Skills

Alien Cultures	Medicine
Carouse	Melee Weapons
Command	Navigation (Planetary, Sublight)
Disguise	Perceive
Games	Perform
Hand Weapons	Pilot (Aircraft, Vehicle, Voidship)
Inspire	Specialist Weapons
Knowledge (Any)	Survival
Logistics	Wordcraft
Manipulate Technology	

Other Features

Start with the Locate Contact gift
+2 free class skill slots
15 + 2d6 Prosperity

Tagma Veteran

You are a veteran of the Imperial Tagmata, the regular army of the Autokrator, trained in the use of dozens of weapons and proofed in the fires of battle on hundreds of worlds. Reaching retirement or honorable discharge made you an exemplar of the toughest of all humanity has to offer, capable of facing down all the nightmares of the galaxy without a trace of fear.

You are capable in the arts of war, but more than that you have gained a measure of caution and craftiness rarely found in veterans of the Imperial Kataphraktoi; after all, you had to survive on your wits alone.

Class Feature: Leader of Men

No officer survives long in the Tagmata without a particular kind of personal magnetism. Soldiers and security forces feel drawn to you. Once per day, when in contact with armed locals, make a Command check against TN19+. For each degree of success, gain followers with a total Combat Rating of 15 or less. Such followers move on your turn in combat and do what you direct them to.

Track: Line Officer

You entered the Tagmata like everyone else: your performance in your thema's military distinguished you enough to be noticed by the Imperial Army's recruiters. You were taken to Homeworld and put through training which would have killed a lesser man, and throughout you demonstrated your knack for leadership. You were made an officer, and led your men with courage and distinction through your forty years of service.

You retired, and eventually found your way to a Navarch's side. You are certainly a dangerous fighter, but your real use is your capacity as a leader of men. As Navarchoi grow in wealth they grow as targets, and who better to command their defense than a commander of the finest human soldiers in the galaxy?

Class Skills

Armor Use	Manipulate Technology
Athleticism	Melee Weapons
Command	Pilot (Aircraft)
Gunnery (Vehicle)	Plasmasheath Weapon
Hand Weapons	Reaction
Insight	Repair (Item)
Inspire	Specialist Weapons
Knowledge (Tagmata, Themata, Imperial Military)	Unarmed Combat
Logistics	Wordcraft

Other Features

Armor Use and Melee Weapons are free class skills
3 Prosperity
+3 Influence: Imperial Ministry of War

Track: Special Operations Officer

You proved too skilled in combat to waste on the front line: your path led you to your Tagma's special operations directorate. You were a commando of the first degree, capable of sneaking into a well-fortified location, eliminating your target, be it person or thing, and escaping without leaving any trace of your presence.

Your value to a Navarch is clear: while a Kataphraktos veteran might be a great axe, you are a poisoned dagger.

Class Skills

Alien Cultures	Medicine
Armor Use	Melee Weapons
Athleticism	Navigation (Planetary)
Command	Perceive
Concealment	Pilot (Vehicle)
Disguise	Reaction
Grappling	Repair (Vehicle)
Gunnery (Vehicle)	Specialist Weapons
Hand Weapons	Survival
Intimidate	Unarmed Combat
Knowledge (Tagmata, Imperial Military, Weapons Systems)	

Other Features

Armor Use and Hand Weapons are free class skills
3 Prosperity

Scoundrel

You are an independent operator, a traveler between the stars in search of his own fortunes. Perhaps an owner of a small trading vessel, a gun for hire, or a general doer of what needs done, you attracted the eye of a Navarch in some manner, and have been part of his retinue ever since.

Class Feature: Never Tell Me the Odds

If your Luck is less than 5, increase it to 5. Otherwise, increase your Luck by 1.

Once per session, for a single non-psi skill or attribute check, you may replace the relevant effective skill or attribute level with your effective Luck.

Track: Acolyte of Hermes

Eventually you tired of your small-time adventures around the galaxy, and found yourself entering the Temple of Hermes, serving as one strand of the vast web of the Imperial information-gathering network. Superficially your life now appears much the same, but your seemingly-random wanderings are in fact quite directed, as the priests of Hermes send you toward locales on which the Empire desires greater knowledge.

Class Skills

Barter	Knowledge (Temple of Hermes, Empire, Aliens)
Carouse	Manipulate Technology
Concealment	Medicine
Disguise	Melee Weapons
Games	Navigation (Jump, Planetary, Sublight)
Gunnery (Vehicle)	Perceive
Hand Weapons	Pilot (Vehicle, Voidship)
Insight	Repair (Vehicle, Voidship)
Intimidate	Survival
Jury-Rig	Wordcraft

Other Features

+1 free class skill slot
3 Prosperity
+2 Influence: Imperial Ministry of Internal Affairs

Track: Smuggler

You are an independent trader with a history of operating on the frontiers of both the galaxy and Imperial law. Illegal cargoes do not faze you; you have a way of sneaking them into ports with even the tightest of security. Your talents—evading customs officials, knowing who to bribe and how to do it, disguising yourself to fool facial scanners, and in general things which might uncharitably be described as 'skulking'—make you useful to a Navarch.

Class Skills

Alien Cultures	Knowledge (Any)
Athleticism	Manipulate Technology
Barter	Navigation (Sublight)
Disguise	Perceive
Games	Pilot (Aircraft, Vehicle, Voidship)
Grappling	Plasmasheath Weapons
Gunnery (Vehicle, Voidship)	Repair (Item, Vehicle, Voidship)
Hand Weapons	Specialist Weapons
Insight	Survival
Jury-Rig	Wordcraft

Other Features

-10 Character Points
Add +2 to skill checks for skills at level 0
Start with a small civilian voidship: either a small craft of your choice, or a large voidship with no larger than one Voidship Primary Hull module and no more than two Voidship Secondary Hull modules
2 Prosperity

Mechanikos

You are an acolyte of Hephaestus, adept in the workings of the machinery that reaped humanity's harvest of stars.

You are certainly a critical part of a Navarch's crew; without your expertise, the ship would simply fall apart, and your ability with machinery has a way of opening doors both literal and figurative away from your ship.

Class Feature: Engineered Weaponry

At your discretion, you may use weapons linked to the Specialist Weapons skill with your Hand Weapons skill and Dexterity bonus.

Track: Machine Empath

You showed an affinity for vehicles at a very young age, and were taken to the Temple of Hephaestus, where your brain was cybernetically enhanced. The process left you crippled, but able in other ways: a large amount of technology human and otherwise is designed with you in mind, and with your mind you may control it.

Track Feature: Machine Sense

You are so attuned to your machine control implants that you have a near-instinctual sense for the presence of modern machinery. As an action, you can detect any machinery wired for remote control at a distance of 10 meters.

For larger distances, roll Manipulate Technology at TN20+. For every degree of success, add 10 meters of range.

Class Skills

Barter	Navigation (Jump, Planetary, Sublight)
Command	Perceive
Games	Perform
Gunnery (Aircraft, Vehicle, Voidship)	Pilot (Aircraft, Vehicle, Voidship)
Hand Weapons	Repair (Aircraft, Vehicle, Voidship)
Intimidate	Wordcraft
Jury-Rig	
Knowledge (Temple of Hephaestus, Imperial Technology, Vehicles)	

Other Features

Start with the Machine Control Implants gift
Start with 1 minor technological wonder
Add Athleticism is an anti-class skill (do not add character points)
Add Manipulate Technology is a free class skill
3 Prosperity

Track: Artificer

You are an inventor and a fabricator, the favored child of some temple of Hephaestus who showed a startling aptitude for machinery from the very first. You were coddled, trained to the best of your masters' ability, and then sent to the First Temple of Hephaestus on Homeworld to complete your studies.

Now, you are one of the few true artisans in the galaxy. You are not simply a mechanic; though you are capable of accomplishing such tasks, your true talents lie in the ability to comprehend the principles on which devices operate, and incorporate those principles into new designs.

Class Skills

Alien Cultures	Manipulate Technology
Barter	Perceive
Craft Technological Wonder	Pilot (Vehicle, Voidship)
Gunnery (Vehicle)	Plasmasheath Weapons
Hand Weapons	Repair (Item)
Insight	Repair (Vehicle)
Inspire	Specialist Weapons
Knowledge (Imperial Technology, Alien Technology)	Wordcraft

Other Features

Start with an Artificer's Tools technological wonder
5 Prosperity

Bondsman

Some mishap befell you in the past, and you owed a debt you could not repay. You decided to sell yourself into temporary indentured servitude to balance the ledger. To become a bondsman or bondswoman by choice, a person must have some skill worth selling, and your skills are extremely valuable.

It is not an uncommon choice in the Empire; nor, for someone of your talents, is it a bad life. The one who owns your contract pays for your living expenses, and what money you did not put toward your obligation is waiting for you.

Your Navarch may or may not own your contract; it is common for navarchoi to pay for learned men or those with extensive connections, but it is also common for navarchoi to hire bondsmen from others.

Class Feature: Temporary Contract

The owner of your contract does not have exclusive right to your time; you are free to sell it to another on a temporary basis. Once per inhabited star system visited, you may offer your services by temporary contract, gaining 5 Prosperity in exchange for two weeks of work[1].

Track: Akademeikos

Your contract is owned by a university or some other great institute of knowledge. You are an expert not on one topic but on nearly all of them; you are able to hold forth with authority on almost anything a Navarch could desire advice about.

Class Skills

Disguise	Medicine
Barter	Melee Weapons
Games	Navigation (Jump)
Hand Weapons	Navigation (Planetary)
Inspire	Navigation (Sublight)
Jury-Rig	Perceive
Knowledge	Pilot (Aircraft, Vehicle)
Manipulate Technology	Wordcraft

Other Features

Start with the Scholar of Everything gift
Make all Knowledge and Common Knowledge checks at +2
3 Prosperity

1 And perhaps a quick side adventure.

Track: Priest of Hermes

Your contract is owned by the Temple of Hermes on Homeworld. You are master of thousands of spies stretching across a large part of the galaxy. There are few mysteries you are unable to tease apart, supposing you have help from one of your contacts.

You travel with a Navarch not only because the pay is good, but also because the Ministry of Internal Affairs is always curious about the dealings of traders...

Class Skills

Barter	Manipulate Technology
Carouse	Medicine
Command	Melee Weapons
Disguise	Navigation (Planetary)
Hand Weapons	Perceive
Insight	Perform
Inspire	Pilot (Aircraft)
Intimidate	Pilot (Voidship)
Jury-Rig	Reaction
Knowledge (Temple of Hermes, Empire, Aliens)	Wordcraft

Other Features

Start with the Locate Contact gift
3 Prosperity
+2 Influence: Imperial Ministry of Internal Affairs
+2 Influence: Temple of Hermes

Traits

Traits are a method of rounding out your character; some things cannot be adequately described by skills and attributes, and those are traits. You can select any combination of gifts, faults, and quirks[1], within reason[2].

Add any traits granted by your class to your character sheet, then select any further desired traits from the list in Chapter IV. See the RPJ Core rulebook for detailed instructions.

Skills

Skills are the lifeblood of RPJ Sci-Fi characters. Whereas your class and your traits define who your character is, your skills define what your character can do.

Select skills from the skill list starting on page V. You must spend Character Points to increase their level; you can find detailed instructions in the RPJ Core rulebook.

Prosperity

As a Navarch and his retinue, you have a level of wealth it is difficult to quantify. Billions of drachmas pour in and out of your coffers daily or even hourly, feeding the engines of trade. RPJ Sci-Fi elects to abstract this colossal wealth to a more manageable number: your Prosperity score.

Your Prosperity score is exactly what it sounds like: a single number that sums up the amount of easily accessible money and near-liquid assets you have. After the game starts, you can use it to obtain equipment, supplies, and other items of interest.

Although Prosperity is a feature of your character, it is frequently used as a whole party. See Chapter VI for more.

Starting Equipment

In the Empire of Alexander, the artificers, artisans, and akademeikoi have crafted true wonders of technology. Over the course of your travels, you have come across some of them. You have two options.

Start with Ubiquitous or Plentiful equipment whose total cost is less than or equal to your Prosperity and no greater than 10. Do not make an acquisition check or spend Prosperity to acquire starting equipment.

Alternately, start with one Ubiquitous weapon and one Ubiquitous piece of armor, and two other pieces of Ubiquitous equipment of your choice.

1 A quirk may be adequately described as any trait which is neither obviously good or obviously bad. Which one it turns out to be in the end usually depends on the deviousness of your gamemaster.
2 Some traits may be logically mutually exclusive, and loading up on faults to grant more character points is a good way to earn your gamemaster's ire and, worse, his attention.

Navarchoi

As a Navarch, you start with (or will shortly obtain) a jump ship, along with all the resources that implies. You may assume your party has access to at least the following: servants, luxurious quarters aboard, crew enough to man your jump ship, unarmed shuttlecraft and pilots therefore, and a small security force of thirty to forty mooks. See Freebies on page 108 for more.

Influence

While Prosperity is an important currency, influence is perhaps even more important. While Prosperity determines what you can afford, influence determines what you can buy in the first place. Getting more to the root of things, influence determines both you can do and what you can get away with.

Influence measures how well-known and well-liked you are with a certain person, organization, or government. Influence with, say, a planetary governor is easier to obtain than influence with one of the Ministries of the Empire.

On that note, who can you gain influence with? The first and easiest answer is the people you do things for. If you help a planetary governor fix a major problem, you might gain 1 or 2 influence with him. If you help the local Orthodox church recover a relic, you might gain a similar amount of influence with its prelate. Next, organizations and institutions. Help enough planetary governors and enough prelates, and you might gain influence with the local thema and the local bishopric; the themarch and the bishop may then give you new tasks and more chances at influence.

Governments are a little harder. In the Empire, there's generally no way to readily earn influence with the Autokrator and his court. Your access to the Imperial government comes through its Ministries: War, Trade, and Internal Affairs. Fight on the Empire's side, and you'll gain influence with the Ministry of War. Keep the trade routes open and the trade flowing, especially to areas in need of succor, and the Ministry of Trade will notice you. Report on or cut down rebellious or disloyal themarchoi, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs will come knocking.

What can you do with influence? Once you have 3 influence with someone, they'll open their markets to you. Once you have 6 influence, they'll be willing to lend you their resources to help you along your way. If you reach 10 influence, they'll move heaven and earth to aid you. That being said, influence gains are logarithmic. Getting to 3 influence is fairly straightforward. Getting to 6 is hard. Getting to 10 is nearly impossible.

If multiple party members have influence with the same individual, organization, or government, use the highest influence score.

IV. Traits

Traits fall into three categories: Gifts, which cost character points; Faults, which grant extra character points; and Quirks, which neither cost nor grant character points.

Gifts

Agile

-4 Character Points

You are quick on your feet and always ready to dive away from a gun barrel swinging in your direction.

+1 to ranged defense value.

Alert

-4 Character Points

Your head is always on a swivel, and it's very difficult to get the jump on you.

+1 to initiative rolls. When surprised in combat, take a turn at the end of the surprise round.

Attractive

-2 Character Points

You have a pleasing set of features.

+1 to interpersonal skill checks against your same species.

Combat Mobility

-6 Character Points
Requires Dexterity >= 5

Cautious Movement costs two actions, rather than your whole turn.

Hand-to-Hand Master

-4 Character Points

Your skill in hand-to-hand combat is nearly unmatched.

After a successful melee attack, you may make an additional melee attack at a penalty of -2 without using an Attack action. Subsequent additional attacks may be made in the same way, increasing the penalty by -2 after each success. You may only use this feature once per turn.

You may choose whether your unarmed attacks deal lethal or nonlethal damage. Increase the damage dealt by your unarmed attacks by 2.

Influential

-4 Character Points

You are well-known in certain circles, and therefore more able to penetrate bureaucracies Imperial or other than most.

Gain +2 Influence with an organization or faction of your choice. You may take this gift multiple times.

Locate Contact

-4 Character Points

You have access to a network of contacts around the galaxy, and local guides or informants are only rarely outside your grasp.

Roll 4d6 against TN12+ to meet an NPC with local information. Reduce the difficulty on large worlds with frequent jump ship visits, or if you desire only information about the planet as a whole. Increase the difficulty for backwater worlds, or if you desire information about something more specific than a certain city or region.

Lucky

-5 Character Points

The cards, coins, and dice just always seem to fall your way.

Receive an extra Lucky Break per session. When rerolling with Lucky Breaks, choose between the original roll and reroll.

Machine Control Implants

-7 Character Points

Your history with the Temple of Hephaestus led to your selection to receive machine control cybernetics. You can control a great deal of technology, human and otherwise, with your mind. All you need to do is plug in.

+6 to Manipulate Technology rolls, except when crafting.
+3 to piloting and vehicle gunnery rolls in human craft equipped with machine control receivers.

Strong Natural Psion

-6 Character Points

Your natural psionic talents surpass the norm for your species.

Add a +1 psi power bonus. Amplified psions apply this bonus before the psi amplifier multiplier.

Extremely Strong Natural Psion

-6 Character Points
Requires Strong Natural Psion

Among your species, you are one of the best psions in the galaxy.

Add an additional +2 psi power bonus. Amplified psions apply this bonus before the psi amplifier multiplier.

Psi-Resistant

-6 Character Points

Through some quirk of genetics (or as a natural feature of your species), you are highly resistant to psi powers.

When targeted by a psi power, you must make a Psi Resistance roll at twice your Willpower bonus.

Quick Draw

-3 Character Points

Always ready to spring into action, you're usually the first to pull the trigger when a fight rolls around.

In the first round in combat in which you have a turn, you go first. In subsequent rounds, your turn is in initiative order.

Reflex Shot

-5 Character Points

Lighting reflexes permit you to bring a weapon to bear even in the face of a charging foe.

In combat, when an entity moves adjacent to you and you are wielding a ranged weapon, you may spend your free attack to make a ranged attack against him at no penalty. The range is 0. This attack does not provoke free attacks.

Rich

-6 Character Points

Whether through inheritance, business acumen, or larceny, you have a great deal of money.

Gain 20 Prosperity.

Filthy Rich

-6 Character Points
Requires Rich

You're among the richest non-Navarchoi in the galaxy.

Gain 20 additional Prosperity.

Riposte

-5 Character Points

Proper positioning after evading an attack permits you to make a rapid counterattack.

When a melee attack misses you, you may use your free attack to make a melee attack against your attacker.

Scholar of Everything

-4 Character Points

A lifetime of study and no small degree of natural tendency have made you an expert on anything anyone cares to ask you. Really. Try me, you say.

Make all your Knowledge rolls at +4. Your Knowledge specialty is (Everything).

Tough

-5 Character Points

After years of taking hits, you've learned to take them better than usual.

Gain an additional base damage save at TN14+ minus your Constitution score.

Trademark Weapon

-3 Character Points

You have used some weapon or another for so long that it has become an old friend, a familiar extension of your body, and you are highly effective with it. Other weapons like it pale in comparison.

The first time you select this trait, you may designate one weapon as a Trademark Weapon and add one Trademark Weapon perk to it. Every additional time you select this trait, you may add one additional Trademark Weapon perk. See the Trademark Weapons section in the Chapter VI (Items) for further details on Trademark Weapon perks.

Faults

Though Gifts are all but uniformly good, Faults are anything but uniformly evil. Cluelessness or a fondness for overcomplicated plans aren't exactly moral failings. Being blind or missing an arm may disadvantage a character, but neither is a personality flaw.

A number of the things labeled Faults here are more accurately described as challenges or quirks, and calling them faults in a real-world, non-mechanical sense could offend in a way I don't mean to. For the purposes of this rulebook, use the following definition of Fault: any character trait which makes your character's life more difficult, and therefore deserves recompense in the form of extra character points.

Addiction

+6 Character Points

You have a problem: drugs.

Pick (or design, with gamemaster approval) a hard drug, including effects and side effects. Without a steady supply of it, you go to pieces. If you haven't had a dose of your drug of choice in the last day, roll twice for all your skill checks and take the worse result.

Blofeld Complex

+2 Character Points

You never learned the virtue of simplicity. Whenever you make a plan, it must be absurdly overcomplicated.

Bloodthirsty

+3 Character Points

You thirst for the deaths of your enemies. Once engaged in combat, you are incapable of stopping until the field is cleared of foes.

Clueless

+2 Character Points

You've managed to remain remarkably uninformed about the state of the galaxy.

Roll all Knowledge and Common Knowledge checks at -2.

Cybernetics Allergy

+1 Character Point

Your allergy to cybernetics prevents you from replacing parts lost to the general wear and tear of your adventurous existence.

Blind

+6 Character Points

You cannot see.

Your melee and ranged attacks and defenses are made at a -6 penalty. You may not make Perceive checks requiring sight, but roll Perceive checks involving hearing at +1.

Deaf

+3 Character Points

You cannot hear.

You may not make Perceive checks requiring hearing, but roll Perceive checks involving sight at +1.

Crippled

+1 Character Point

You may not spend more than one Move action per combat round. Out of combat, you hobble rather than walk.

One Arm

+1 Character Points

You are missing an arm. Beyond the everyday difficulties which this imposes, you are also unable to use two-handed weapons or operate machinery designed for use with two hands.

Enemy

+3 Character Points

You've done something to seriously upset someone. Your enemy will work to impede your progress whenever he crosses your path, which happens, given the size of the galaxy, surprisingly often.

You may work with your gamemaster to design your enemy.

Nemesis

+4 Character Points
Requires Enemy

Repeated and flagrant offenses[1] against some party have left them with a grudge against you the likes of which has rarely been seen. Your nemesis will actively seek you out and attempt to foil your plans.

Glory Hound

+3 Character Points

What is best in life? To be known for feats of valor on the field of combat!

No more than once per session, your gamemaster may require you to make a Willpower bonus check against TN16+ to keep yourself from picking a fight.

Kleptomaniac

+4 Character Points

It isn't for the money, but you have an inescapable compulsion toward thievery.

You must steal something, or attempt to do so, at least once per session[2]. If you do not, you get jittery.

Morbidly Obese

+3 Character Points

You have grown as a result of your wealth, but unfortunately the growth has mainly been in circumference.

You may not spend more than one Move action per combat round, run for very long out of combat, or fit into tight spaces.

Phobic

+4 Character Points

You have one or more crippling fears.

Ugly

+2 Character Points

'Frightening' only begins to describe your visage.

1 It's possible that your characters might not realize what their nemeses are on about, but that comes with the territory of being rich and famous.
2 Kind gamemasters may make exceptions in cases where there is little or nothing to steal.

No more than once per session, when you attempt an interpersonal interaction of some kind, your gamemaster may require you to make a Charisma bonus roll against TN16+. If you fail, the interpersonal interaction is a critical failure.

Under Obligation

+X Character Points

You have some obligation to a person not among your current associates. This may cause friction when their interests collide.

Discuss the particulars of the obligation with your gamemaster, who decides how much it's worth. If you owe a bank a few hundred thousand drachmas, you might only get 1 character point. If you joined your crew because you were hired to assassinate your Navarch, you might get up to 6.

Unlucky

+8 Character Points

Somehow, you've earned the universe's disfavor.

You receive one fewer Lucky Break each session, and make Lucky Break rerolls at an extra -2 penalty.

Vengeful

+X Character Points

Even the slightest slight gets under your skin.

Discuss with your gamemaster the degree of your vengefulness. If you're prone to holding grudges, you might get 1 character point. If you'd pursue a man who cut in line across the galaxy to hold him to account, you might get 4.

Quirks

Bionics

You may not take the Cybernetics Allergy fault and this quirk.

Some past injury could not be healed, and some part of your body has been replaced with a cybernetic part.

Cybernetics are not generally straight upgrades over your original parts. A cybernetic hand might have a stronger grip than a human hand, but be worse at fine manipulation. A cybernetic eye might see into the infrared spectrum at the cost of blurriness in the visual spectrum.

When taking this quirk, pick a benefit and a drawback to your cybernetic part, and get your gamemaster's approval. He is free to charge you character points if your drawback is too small, or refund you character points if your drawback outweighs your benefit.

Alien Species

By taking one of the following traits, you can make your character a member of an alien species. Consider the ramifications carefully before you do.

First, the Empire is not particularly welcoming to aliens, and neither is the average human. From the Imperial point of view, the other species of the galaxy, who would have been trapped in their own solar systems were it not for the human jump drive, are in large part ingrates rebelling against the benevolent guidance of the Autokrator.

There are exceptions. Saifthei and athati inhabit worlds which are completely useless to the Empire, and are happy to accept the Vergina Sun's dominion to colonize such places in Imperial territory. Saifthei are excellent scientists and navigators, and athati some of the more productive builders and traders in the Empire; that, combined with their willingness to become and remain Imperial subjects, mean that they are viewed much more favorably by the Empire than the average alien.

The Tarki and the arachni, on the other hand, are viewed much less favorably than the Empire. The Tarki were the first species to rebel against the Empire, and the arachni were never fully conquered. Autokrators past and present have neither forgiven nor forgotten. Traits for these species are not provided; they do not willingly serve Imperial subjects, and loyal Imperial subjects would not take them in.

The Empire views the remaining major alien species—the Handed, the kraken, the krrkt'kxhfrr, and the yashcheritsy—more or less neutrally, extending and withdrawing its favor as local events and recent history dictate. The Handed are technologists beyond anything the Empire can offer, but wary of accepting Imperial trade on the grounds that it is usually a backdoor for Imperial authority. The kraken can settled worlds the Empire cannot, but ordinarily refuse to become subjects of the Autokrator. The krrkt'kxhfrr are soldiers and mercenaries par excellence, but do not form lasting attachments, which often leads to accusations of treason from the Empire. The yashcheritsy share the Orthodox religion with many subjects of the Empire, but also frequently raid Imperial border systems.

You can read a little bit more about each species of alien in the traits below, and much more in the Aliens section, starting on page 168.

Athat

Athati are radially symmetric aliens with a silicon biochemistry, native to a high-gravity, high-temperature world. They have three legs spaced evenly around a central stalk, three eyes, one halfway between each pair of legs, and three arms beneath each eye. Their mouths are on the underside of the central stalk. The average athat weighs about 60 kilograms and stands one and a half meters tall.

They require massive, heated palanquins to survive in human-livable environments; the smallest are roughly the size of a groundcar sedan. When traveling, they ordinarily secure heated quarters so that they can stretch their legs.

They tend to have a cheerful outlook on life and an easygoing manner, and extend what hospitality they can to people who cross their paths. The nature of their biochemistry means that they are slower to think and slower to talk than humans, but they are nevertheless not to be underestimated.

When playing an athat character, increase your Charisma and Constitution by 1 each, and decrease your Dexterity by 2. You receive a +1 bonus on Barter checks. You receive an Athat Palanquin vehicle for free, and will generally be confined to it. When making Pilot (Vehicle) checks for your palanquin, if your effective skill level is less than 4, use 4 instead.

Saifth

Saifthei, notable for their surprising anatomical similarity to humans and their unique boron-based biochemistry, are the least populous of the major alien species. Their biochemistry limits them to worlds with borane-heavy reducing atmospheres and large quantities of formamide. In human-breathable atmospheres, they use bulky environment suits. There are only around 120 such worlds known in the whole of the galaxy, all of which are populated by the saifthei; their population is something less than one-half trillion.

They stand about 150 to 160 centimeters tall, and are slender and slightly built, tipping the scales at 30 to 40 kilograms. Still, a saifth standing still might be mistaken for a particularly small human. In motion, they are unmistakably alien. They lack human-like wrists and ankles, replacing them with two joints which share the work between them; a saifth walking across the room looks like a human with broken arms and legs. They are moderately powerful psions.

Despite their minuscule numbers, they loom large in the human consciousness. Many choose to wander the stars in search of new experiences and new knowledge. Others explore the furthest boundaries of natural philosophy. In any case, humans tend to find a certain romance in their pursuits.

When playing a saifth character, increase your Intelligence and Dexterity by 2 each, and decrease your Strength and Constitution by 2 each. You receive a +1 bonus on Craft Technological Wonder and Jury-Rig checks. Your racial psi bonus is +5. You may communicate telepathically with other psions you can see.

Handed

The Handed are sentient gilled fish, and the strongest natural psions in the known universe. They owe their sentience and technological advancement entirely to their psionic talent: they use telepathy to communicate and psychokinesis in place of hands. This last trait explains the name they chose for their kind when first meeting humans. Their ability to manipulate objects separates them from the other species present on their homeworld.

In appearance, they are sleek, bottlenosed predators, brilliantly colored in the human visible spectrum. They reach up to two meters from nose to tail, and weigh up to 100 kilograms. Outside of water, they travel in large, hovering fish tanks. Though they use telepathy to communicate among themselves, they prefer small psi-tech translation devices affixed to the outsides of their tanks when dealing with others as a courtesy to non-psions.

At the edges of the Empire, they compete with humans for watery worlds, but can coexist peacefully on Imperial-held planets, as long as the humans stay on the surface of the oceans or on land and the Handed are left to govern themselves according to their own laws and traditions. They are engineers and merchants of great talent, selling their advanced technology to whoever can pay for it.

When playing a Handed character, increase your Charisma by 3, decrease your Strength by 2, and decrease your Intelligence by 1. You receive a +1 bonus on Barter and Manipulate Technology checks. Your racial psi bonus is +10. You may communicate telepathically with other psions you can see, and may psychokinetically manipulate objects you can see up to a weight of 10 kilograms. You receive a Handed Hover-Tank vehicle for free. When making Pilot (Vehicle) checks for your tank, if your effective level is less than 4, use 4 instead.

Kraken

The kraken resemble nothing so much as Homeworld jellyfish. They are translucent creatures, comprising a large bell-shaped head and up to two dozen tentacles, who float in atmospheres of human-average density. A large gas bag is attached to their bell, which aids them in maintaining buoyancy. In addition, they are weak psions: they use psychokinesis to assist in flotation, both supporting themselves and trimming to a certain altitude. They themselves are blind, but play host to symbiotic, birdlike creatures with overdeveloped eyes, using telepathy to see through them.

Kraken are long-lived creatures, with lifespans measured in millennia. To humans, they appear easygoing and even passive, an artifact of the perspective gained from their longer lives.

Kraken are capable of living nearly anywhere with atmosphere, and are tolerant of a wide variety of conditions. Some of their largest colonies are in the upper reaches of gas giant atmospheres, where few other species care to settle. In vacuum, where they are unable to float, they walk on their tentacles; they can only do so in light gravity.

The Empire has few official dealings with the kraken. Kraken colonies are near-ubiquitous within and without the Empire; they generally consent to pay taxes to whoever is in charge, but refuse to accept outside governance.

When playing a kraken character, increase your Charisma and Willpower by 1, and decrease your Constitution by 1. You can use psychokinesis to float yourself, and telepathy to communicate with your symbiotic eye creatures. Your racial psi bonus is 4.

Krrkt'kxhfrr

Krrkt'kxhfrr are black, tripedal, bug-like aliens, with mantis-like limbs, triangular heads, and two large compound eyes. They have two anterior legs and one posterior leg, arranged in a triangle, and large, iridescent, translucent wings which fold across their backs. They are incapable of flight, but can use their wings to jump and glide, and can cling to inclined or vertical surfaces with their foot-claws.

Their four forelimbs, two per side, feature ridged cutting surfaces, more than capable of decapitating a human at a single swipe, but unlike the arachni, the krrkt'kxhfrr ceased to rely on their natural fearsomeness many years ago. Krrkt'kxhfrr are feared mercenaries, owing to their mobility, their fondness for advanced weaponry, and their disinclination toward forming lasting attachments.

Their homeworld is lost to memory, but they are a common sight throughout Imperial territory and outside of it.

When playing a krrkt'kxhfrr character, increase your Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution by 1 each, but decrease your Charisma by 3 and your Intelligence by 3. You may not raise Charisma or Intelligence skills to a base level greater than 4. You have two extra base damage saves at TN14+ minus your Constitution. Your unarmed attacks deal -2 damage. You may jump up to 60 meters by using your wings.

Yashcherit

In appearance, yashcheritsy are the quintessential lizard-men from outer space. They are humanoid in form, bipedal with two arms and two legs where you would expect to find them, but they have thick, treelike tails, scales rather than skin, and saurian heads. They are most often green in color, but range from black to yellow.

Missionaries from the Imperial Orthodox Church met with more success among the yashcheritsy than any of the other alien peoples of the galaxy, and now nearly every yashcherit is a professing member of that religion. As such, the Empire allows the yashcheritsy a great deal of self-determination, a policy which not infrequently causes trouble for the worlds on the border between yashcherit space and the Empire.

Orthodox yashcheritsy use an incense native to their homeworld which served in their earlier pagan rites; unfortunately, when sufficiently concentrated, it riles up the yashcheritsy who come in contact with it. Yashcheritsy so impaired may raid Imperial border worlds in a fit of martial fervor, declare one of themselves the true Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, or kick off some other large-scale, quixotic pursuit.

When playing a yashcherit character, increase your Constitution by 1 and decrease your Willpower by 1.

Other

The alien species above are the most commonly-found species in the galaxy, except the two from that list who are all but constantly in conflict with the Empire. You may also play those species, or indeed an alien species of nearly any description at all; the galaxy is enormous, and there are always exceptions. I will not provide guidelines for how to do so, beyond to say that if you want to, you should sit down with your gamemaster and come up with some appropriate benefits and drawbacks.

V. Skills

Common Knowledge

Characters do not simply pop into existence: each and every one has a story beginning well before the start of a campaign, and all the experience and knowledge gained therefrom.

They are able to draw on this knowledge and experience. While the Knowledge skill represents intensive study or special experience, Common Knowledge is that knowledge which a character might have plausibly accrued over the course of his life. Players may ask to make a Common Knowledge check, an effective Intelligence roll, regarding anything they can convince the gamemaster that their character has a reason to know.

Unlike Knowledge, however, Common Knowledge requires that the players take the initiative.

Critical Successes and Failures

Whenever the raw result of a 4d6 roll for a skill or attribute check is greater than or equal to 21, the roll is a critical success. Whenever the result of such a roll is less than or equal to 7, the roll is a critical failure.

Strength

Armor Use

Use of armor, handheld force-screen generators, and other personal protective combat equipment.

Armor Use is used to calculate your absorb melee defense value in the Gridless Combat System.

Grappling

The ability to wrestle successfully with enemies.

Grappling is used as the grappling skill for the Gridless Combat System.

Melee Weapons

Use of ordinary, unpowered melee weapons, as well as vibroweapons.

Plasmasheath Weapons

Plasmasheath weapons are tricky to use effectively. They can cut nearly anything, but require both strength and precision to guide the plasma through the target.

You may not use Plasmasheath Weapons at level 0.

Power Armor Use

Use of power armor, including maneuvering in enclosed spaces.

You may not use Power Armor Use at level 0.

Power Armor Weapons

Use of weapons mounted or carried by power armor. You may use the weapon's linked skill in place of Power Armor Weapons at a -2 penalty.

You may not use Power Armor Weapons at level 0.

Psychokinesis

Moving objects with your mind.

You may roll Psychokinesis against TN18+ to move objects weighing half a kilogram or less at one meter per second or less.

See Chapter IX for more information on psi.

You may not use Psychokinesis at level 0.

Specialist Weapons

The ability to use a variety of specialist weapons, such as grenade launchers, heavy machine guns, rocket launchers, and explosives of all sorts.

Dexterity

Athleticism

Athleticism represents a character's capacity for physical feats—how fast he can run, how high he can jump, how far he can throw things, and the like.

TN18+ corresponds to a two-meter long jump, a one-meter vertical jump, a five-minute kilometer, or a 15- second 100-meter sprint. (In other words, a slightly above-average athlete.) TN26+ represents the top end of human achievement.

For non-human characters, Athleticism is indexed to the character's species' athleticism; a krrkt'kxhfrr with Athleticism at level 2 can jump much further than a human with Athleticism at level 2.

Concealment

Concealment represents a character's ability to hide, as well as to carry out actions without being seen and to move silently.

Roll Concealment, applying modifiers based on the surroundings, which in ordinary circumstances should fall between -4 and +4.

If actively searching for a hidden entity, roll your Perceive. If you roll greater than or equal to the hidden entity's Concealment roll, you find the entity.

You may passively find a hidden entity if your passive Perceive is greater than or equal to the hidden entity's Concealment roll.

Hand Weapons

The use of standard infantry arms, such as pistols, rifles, and light machine guns.

See the GCS Fire and Movement rules in RPJ Core for more information on how to use weapons.

Gunnery
The use of weapons mounted on vehicles. Pick a specialty from Aircraft, Vehicle, and Voidship.

Weapons on a voidcraft operating in atmosphere use Gunnery (Aircraft).

See Chapter XI (GCS Implementation Details) for more information on vehicular combat.

Pilot
The ability to operate vehicles of various sorts. Pick a specialty from Aircraft, Vehicle, and Voidship.

Voidcraft operating in atmosphere use Piloting (Aircraft).

Operating a vehicle in ordinary conditions does not require a roll. Driving fast, flying a semi-automated aircraft in difficult weather, or maneuvering a voidcraft in tense conditions does.

Reaction
Reaction represents a character's ability to respond quickly to the world around him.

Your Reaction is used to calculate your GCS Fire and Movement ranged defense value, and to calculate your GCS dodge melee defense value. Your passive Reaction determines your character's ability to respond to unexpected events.

Unarmed Combat
Skill at hand to hand combat.

Wrestling is covered by Grappling.

Charisma

Barter
Gaining an advantage in dealings with merchants and salesmen. Also, the ability to evaluate prices over a large region of space and work out how best to move a jump ship for maximum profit.

See the section on Acquisitions on page 55 for information on how to barter. See the section on Happenings Aboard on page 110 for how to route a jump ship for trade purposes.

Command
The knack for directing groups of soldiers in combat, and for clearly and concisely communicating orders to subordinates.

In small-scale combat, once per round as an action, you may roll Command against TN16+ and add the degree of success to an adjacent character's special attack roll (Aimed Fire or Suppressive Fire).

In mass combat, you may roll Command to aid your side. See the GCS Mass Combat rules in the RPJ Core rulebook for more information.

Carouse

The skills, and also physical characteristics, required to engage in activities which fall under the broad category 'carousing', including a resistance to intoxicants and a measure of personal charm.

Roll Carouse opposed to drink the target under the table. You may also roll Carouse to convince people to do questionable things, like engage in misdemeanors or take bribes. It is opposed by Insight.

Disguise

The ability to disguise yourself, to create a believable life story, and to make documents which will pass inspection by even the most attentive eye.

When crafting an identity or disguise, roll your Disguise plus an appropriate modifier. A disguise whipped together in thirty seconds with a hat and Groucho glasses might get a -6 to -8. A +6 to +8 would be appropriate given a document printer and access to other forging tools.

To see through a disguise or identify forged documents, roll your Perceive against the Disguise roll. You may also passively spot disguises if your passive Perceive is greater than or equal to the Disguise roll.

Games

The ability to play and the knowledge of games, whether they be of strategy, chance, physical endurance, or all of the above.

Insight

The ability to understand a person, read their motives, and determine their truthfulness.

You may glean potentially useful information by rolling Insight against Wordcraft, Carouse, or Disguise (if interacting with a disguised person).

Otherwise, roll Insight against a Target Number appropriate to the control the target has over his emotions.

Inspire

The ability to urge your allies to greater heights of achievement.

In combat, use your turn to encourage an adjacent ally. Once per day, out of combat, encourage an ally as a free action. Roll Inspire against TN18+, then add the degree of success to the ally's next roll.

Perform

The ability to entertain others through some performance-oriented talent.

Telepathy

Reading the thoughts and emotions of others.

Roll Telepathy against TN18+ to read the conscious thoughts or obvious emotions of a willing target, or to plant a thought or emotion in a willing target's mind.

See Chapter IX (Psi) for more on using psi powers.

You may not use Telepathy at level 0.

Wordcraft

The ability to convince others of your point of view, or to lie through your teeth to them.

Pick a specialty: Class or Demagoguery. Roll it at +2. Roll the other at no penalty. When making a roll, specify Class or Demagoguery; some targets will be more affected by the one than the other.

Wordcraft (Class) or Wordcraft (Demagoguery) may also be used to adopt a standard of behavior befitting society's upper crust or the hoi polloi, respectively.

Wordcraft of either flavor is opposed by Insight.

Intelligence

Alien Cultures

The understanding of aliens and their mindsets, which permits you to gain insight into their motives. Additionally, the ability to speak one or more alien languages.

Rolling Alien Cultures when dealing with aliens will provide you guidance on how to improve their disposition toward you. You may pick one alien language to speak at skill levels 3, 6, and 9. The only languages humans can speak without technological assistance are saefthifa and yashcheritskiy.

Craft Technological Wonder

The ability to create devices of one's own invention and to understand and assimilate the operating principles of unfamiliar devices.

To learn more about building and creating devices, see the Crafting section in Chapter VI (Items).

You may not use Craft Technological Wonder at level 0.

Knowledge

Deep, scholarly learning, with a focus in one field. Pick a specialty. Rolls about that field are made at +2. All others are made at no bonus or penalty. Gamemasters are encouraged to make Knowledge checks on their players' behalf; they can't be expected to know what they know.

You may not use Knowledge at level 0. (Use Common Knowledge instead.)

Logistics

The science of organizing and efficiently moving men and matériel.

Skill in logistics makes it easier to fit large vessels in a jump ship's hangars. Total the party's base Logistics levels, divide by three, and add that many bonus Equivalent Volume Units to your jump ship's hangar capacity.

Party members with Logistics also tend to make improvements to the efficiency of the jump ship's crew. A successful Logistics roll can shave minutes off of the responses to common time-sensitive tasks like scrambling a shuttle to the surface of a planet or mobilizing a damage control team, up to one-third of the total time required.

Medicine

The ability to diagnose and treat a variety of wounds and illnesses.

In combat, roll Medicine to lend an incapacitated character a helping hand.

Out of combat, if you have appropriate medical supplies, take two hours and roll Medicine against TN20+ to treat a character who has been incapacitated, removing the incapacitation penalties and restoring one base damage save.

Medicine may also be used to speed a character's recovery from damage. See page 146.

Navigation

Pick a specialty from Jump, Sublight, or Planetary.

Navigation (Jump) is the science of finding quick routes through the shifting interstellar terrain of jump space. Navigation (Sublight) is the ability to plot quick, effective courses in normal space. See the sections on voidship travel in Chapter VIII (Jump Ships) for more information on using these skills.

Navigation (Planetary) is the ability to determine one's location on a planet with limited aid. To find your way from the middle of nowhere back to civilization of some sort, roll it against about TN18+. To orienteer across difficult terrain with the help of a map and compass, roll against about TN21+. To navigate from memory alone, roll against TN23+ or more.

Psi Attack

Using psi as an offensive weapon.

Roll Psi Attack against TN18+ to give a target a mild headache.

See Chapter IX (Psi) for more on using psi powers.

You may not use Psi Attack at level 0.

Willpower

Intimidate

The ability to use fear as your ally in extracting information or concessions from others.

Roll it against Insight.

Jury-Rig

The ability to construct technological devices from components at hand to achieve a certain purpose.

To create a device with Jury-Rig, roll it against an appropriate Target Number. Start with TN19+. Reduce the Target Number if you have access to tools and time. Increase the Target Number for off-the-cuff creations. Increase the Target Number if the operating principle is unfamiliar to you, or if you have not previously observed some device do the same task or a similar one.

Devices created with Jury-Rig are temporary in nature, and apt to fail if used more than once. On the second use, roll 4d6 against TN12+. The device works on success. Increase the Target Number by 1 and roll again for each subsequent use.

Manipulate Technology

The ability to take a piece of technology and cause it to operate in a desired fashion, as well as the ability to craft devices from plans, or devices operating on a known principle.

Perceive

The ability to investigate a strange environment and learn of it without attracting too much attention, as well as the ability to notice things about one's surroundings.

Perceive may be rolled to oppose several skills, such as Concealment and Disguise. It may also be rolled to search an area, track a target, or notice something out of place about a particular scene.

Psi Defense

Bolstering yourself and your allies against psionic attack, and preventing physical harm from coming to you.

You may not use Psi Defense at level 0.

Repair

The ability to fix broken things. Pick a specialty from Item, Vehicle, or Voidship. Repair (Vehicle) may be used at no penalty to repair both ground vehicles and aircraft.

To repair an item or vehicle, roll the appropriate Repair specialty against TN18+, plus 1 per rarity step above Ubiquitous: +1 for Plentiful, +2 for Common, +3 for Uncommon, and so on. Repairing an item takes one hour per rarity step: 1 hour for Ubiquitous, 2 for Plentiful, 3 for Common, and so on. Repairing a vehicle takes four times as long.

On a successful Repair (Item) or Repair (Vehicle) check, the item or vehicle gains back any crossed-off damage saves, and otherwise returns to normal functionality.

To repair a voidship module, roll Repair (Voidship) against TN24+ for jump engines and capacitors, TN22+ for sublight engines, shields, and primary weapons, TN20+ for secondary batteries, point defense weapons, sensors, fire directors, and thrusters, and TN18+ for all other modules.

Repairing a module with a TN24+ difficulty takes 72 hours. Reduce the time taken by 6 hours per difference of 1 in difficulty. For instance, a TN20+ repair differs from a TN24+ repair by 4 difficulty, and takes 24 hours less than the baseline 72 hours.

Survival

The ability to survive in a wide variety of environments without outside support.

VI. Items

Technology in the Empire

One of the quirks of the Empire is that it has never really developed mass production. Most high-technology worlds have a handful of factories[1], usually owned by artisans who independently developed the idea of the assembly line. In general, though, technological items are built in large workshops by artisans and their apprentices in relatively small quantities, on the order of 100,000 units at a time or less.

This means that there is very little standardized equipment in the galaxy, or at least very little standardized modern equipment. With the exception of Imperial-pattern gear, which is, for all the Empire's martial success, very much designed to be manufactured by even the least-skilled artisan and therefore often shoddily built, almost everything your character will wear, carry, and shoot is custom-manufactured.

Because of this, technology is a highly sought-after trade good. Carrying a load of automated harvesting robots (or a load of high-quality plasma rifles) from an industrial star system to an agricultural one will yield dramatic profits, as the locals in the latter system literally reap the rewards of improved farming efficiency (or figuratively reap the rewards of self-governance). Any given world's artisans provide only a subset of the technological goods its upper class desires. Trade fills the gaps.

Put another way, though the Empire is a high-technology state, the individual member worlds of the Empire are not necessarily high-technology themselves. Many look downright primitive compared to the jump ships which occasionally visit; some look primitive by any objective standard.

Lost Technology

The Empire's best days are behind it. Few serious historians, even Imperial historians, would disagree. This applies not only to its territorial extent, but even the state of its technology. With no central repository of technological developments and no organized mass production, inventions frequently die with their inventors. As the Empire's borders contracted, many workshops were lost. Many more were lost to rebellions, as new independent states formed along the Empire's eastern border. Still others were located on new colonies lost in the endless shuffle of paperwork which permeates the Imperial bureaucracy.

As a rule, modern Imperial technology is bulky and blocky, more so than technology from a millennia earlier. Older technology is usually sleeker and smaller, and may operate on principles unknown to modern natural philosophy. (A device falling into this last category is known by the name technological wonder[2].)

1 Because factories are awesome locations for battle scenes.
2 It sounds more science fiction-y than 'magic item'.

Acquisitions

While your Prosperity score is a useful number in and of itself[1], its more interesting function is to permit you to purchase all manner of wonderful gadgets. Such transactions have three steps: finding a supplier, making the Prosperity check, and taking the inevitable temporary Prosperity penalty.

Currency

The base unit of Imperial currency is the drachma, a small silver coin (or, in some of the Themata, banknote) which represents a laborer's daily wage. It is divided into 100 lepta (singular lepton). 100 drachmae make one mina, and 60 minae make one talent.

Observant readers may have noticed that the drachma, mina, and talent are also units of weight. In the ancient past, the units of currency referred to the value of a given weight of silver. In the modern era, the units of currency and units of weight share names, but are otherwise unrelated.

Of course, as a Navarch, member of a Navarch's retinue, or other starfaring adventurer, you do not deal in such piddling quantities. Your wealth is abstracted as Prosperity.

Current and Maximum Prosperity

Your maximum Prosperity[2] is the number to the right of the slash on your character sheet next to the word 'prosperity'. It represents the sum total of your assets, liquid and illiquid, as well as your capacity to generate money over time. It changes very rarely, and usually trends upward slowly over time.

Your current Prosperity is the number to the left of that same slash. It represents your liquidity, or more generally, your ability to bring your assets to bear on problems requiring the application of money. Your current Prosperity starts at your maximum Prosperity. It decreases when you make expenditures. It recovers passively at a rate of 10% of your maximum Prosperity per month, rounded up, and may be increased more quickly (up to your maximum Prosperity; any excess is lost) by acting to do so in some appropriate fashion.

> *Basilus has 10 maximum Prosperity and 10 current Prosperity. He spends 7 Prosperity points, so his current Prosperity is now 3. Every month, his current Prosperity recovers by 1 (10% of his maximum Prosperity). After two months, it's now 5.*
>
> *He joins a planetary governor's retinue as a mercenary for another two months, recovering 2 more current Prosperity over time (for a total of 7) and 4 current Prosperity as pay for his work. His current Prosperity sums to 11, but he loses the excess. His current Prosperity is now equal to his maximum Prosperity at 10.*

1 For instance, the conversion factor between Prosperity score and Olympic-sized swimming pools filled with one-lepton coins might be fixed at about one to four...

2 Maximum Prosperity and Prosperity sans adjective ordinarily refer to the same thing, while current Prosperity is always referred to as such. When the distinction between maximum Prosperity and current Prosperity is important, as in this section, the rulebook makes an effort to explicitly say both 'maximum' and 'current'.

In special circumstances, you may be allowed to increase your current Prosperity above your maximum Prosperity by roleplay. Liquidating assets, cashing out investments, and calling in debts all allow you to stretch your finances to make purchases greater than your ordinary maximum Prosperity. After doing so, your current Prosperity is reduced to 0 and recovers at half speed.

You may increase your maximum Prosperity by jump ship trading and by roleplay: developing business interests, making investments, and so on.

Sharing Prosperity

You may pool your wealth with other characters to make purchases. Use the sum of your current Prosperities in this case.

You may also gift characters your Prosperity on a semi-permanent basis. To gift, for instance, 10 Prosperity, decrease your own maximum and current Prosperity by 10, and increase the recipient's maximum and current Prosperity by 10.

> *Andrastos' employer entrusts him with 20 Prosperity to outfit a unit of soldiers. The employer reduces both his maximum and current Prosperity by 20, while Andrastos increases his maximum and current Prosperity by 20.*

You may take back gifted Prosperity at any time. The amount you gifted is immediately removed from the recipient's maximum Prosperity and returns to you. You may, but are not required to, take back current Prosperity up to the amount you gifted (though you can't leave the recipient with a current Prosperity of less than 0).

> *Basilus has 15 current Prosperity and 20 maximum Prosperity, all of which come from his employer. His employer elects to take back 7 maximum Prosperity, but doesn't take any available Prosperity. Basilus' current Prosperity is still 15, but his maximum is only 13. He can keep what he has, but after spending it, he can only recover current Prosperity up to 13. He spends 5 Prosperity, and how has 10 current and 13 maximum Prosperity.*
>
> *Basilus' employer takes back the remaining 13 maximum Prosperity he loaned Basilus, as well as Basilus' 10 current Prosperity. The employer could only have taken all 13 current Prosperity if Basilus had 13 to give.*

Suppliers

In the Empire of Alexander and, for that matter, the rest of the galaxy, finding someone to supply you with your various and sundry equipment is possibly the hardest part of the acquisition process. For all but the most common items[1], it will be necessary to seek out an artisan specializing in the thing you're looking for.

1 Rarity is discussed a bit later, but you may consider personal equipment with a rarity of Ubiquitous or Plentiful common enough to find without an artisan. Personal equipment of greater rarity, or vehicles and voidcraft of any description, require an artisan.

Everything else will require some measure of roleplay to find a producer, arrange for the necessary production run, and pay for the raw materials and labor (although gamemasters are encouraged to allow parties to present payment through deeds as opposed to cash).

Acquisition Checks

Each item you can acquire has an associated Prosperity cost. If your Prosperity score plus 4d6 exceeds the item's Prosperity cost, then the acquisition is successful, and you may take ownership of your new toys.

Rarity	Personal Equipment	Vehicles	Voidcraft
Ubiquitous	1	4	8
Plentiful	4	8	14
Common	8	14	22
Uncommon	14	22	36
Rare	22	36	50
Relic	36	50	65

To determine the Target Number to acquire an item, start with the cost from the table above which corresponds to the item's listed rarity. Apply any extra Prosperity costs or discounts from the item's listing.

> *Andrastos wants to buy a few plasma rifles to equip a squad of soldiers. Plasma rifles are Uncommon. The Prosperity cost is 14, and plasma rifles have no extra Prosperity costs or discounts.*

This is the cost for one item of average quality. For personal equipment, to increase the number of items acquired, add 2 to the cost for up to 10 items, 4 for up to 100 items, 6 for up to 1,000 items, and so on, increasing the penalty by 2 for every order of magnitude. Use 3 for vehicles and 4 for voidcraft per order of magnitude.

> *Andrastos wants 10 plasma rifles, so he increases the cost by 2, for 16.*

You may increase the quality of items acquired. For each increase in quality, improve some mechanical feature of the item by 1[1]. For personal equipment, add 2 to the cost for each increase in quality. Use 3 for vehicles and 4 for voidcraft per increase in quality. You may not increase the quality of an item more than three times.

You may also acquire shoddily-built items at a discount. For each decrease in quality, decrease some mechanical feature of the item by 1. Reduce the cost by 1 for each decrease in quality. You may not do so more than three times.

1 For instance, subtract 1 from the range penalty at a single range on a ranged weapon (or add 1 to the range bonus), add 1 to the damage of a weapon, or add 1 to a single damage save on a piece of armor.

You may both increase and decrease the quality of an item. The total number of increases and decreases may not exceed 3.

> *Andrastos agrees to buy shoddy products for the price break. He decreases the quality twice, reducing each rifle's damage by 2, to reduce the difficulty of Prosperity cost by 2. Now it's 14 again.*

The difficulty of the acquisition check is the Prosperity cost plus TN14+.

> *The difficulty of the Prosperity check is 14 (the final cost) plus TN14+. The difficulty is therefore TN28+. Andrastos has 20 Prosperity to play with. He rolls 15 on 4d6 and adds it to his current Prosperity score for a total of 35, more than enough to pass the check.*

You may combine acquisitions of items of similar type and rarity when purchasing more than one item. For items with different rarities, use the base Prosperity cost corresponding to the rarest item.

Vehicles and voidcraft are very difficult to acquire at all, much less in quantity, which is reflected in part in their greater Prosperity costs and quantity modifiers. They should also be more difficult to acquire from a roleplay standpoint. Obtaining enough void-dock time at a shipyard to put a small fleet into service is an enormous endeavor, a suitable reward for a few sessions of effort.

Bartering

When making an acquisition, you may make a Barter check against your supplier's Barter. For each degree of success, reduce the total Prosperity cost of the acquisition by 1, to a minimum of 0.

Prosperity Cost And Recovery

Whether you succeed or fail a Prosperity check, your current Prosperity is decreased by the Prosperity cost of the attempted acquisition.

> *Andrastos' current Prosperity is decreased by 14 (the final cost of his acquisition) for a new total of 6. Every month, he'll passively recover 2 Prosperity (10% of the starting 20).*

Technological Wonders

Technological wonders are mechanisms which seem to defy the known laws which govern the universe. Sometimes, they are recent developments, crafted by master artisans and natural philosophers. Other times, they are lost technology, created in the mists of the past, still functioning but no longer understood.

Such wonders run the gamut of design and purpose. One might be a small golden rod; when inserted into a keyhole, it flows to fit the pins and turn the lock. Another might be a handheld screen the size of a skepsis tablet. No matter where it is in the galaxy, it always shows a video image of the same location, a crowded street on an anonymous planet. Still another might be a ring ten kilometers across, orbiting far from the star in an uninhabited system; anything traveling through it is instantly transported halfway across the Empire.

Technological wonders cannot be purchased on the open market. They must be built, found, or stolen. It is technically possible to buy directly from a previous owner, but finding someone who owns a technological wonder is hard, and finding someone willing to sell is all but impossible.

Artificer's Tools

By way of example, artificer's tools are the most common sort of wonder. Most artificers, as they finish their apprenticeships, build a set for themselves. In terms of function, a set of artificer's tools is a universal toolkit. It takes the form of a box, case, or container of some kind, whose contents change based on the manipulation of some set of external controls. It can produce any tool which fits within its inside volume. It requires no input of power, but any power tools taken from it require power from an outside source. All tools taken from an artificer's toolset must be placed back inside before the container may be closed and the controls manipulated.

An artificer's toolset cannot simply produce arbitrary arrangements of matter. The controls can be manipulated to change the shape of a screwdriver's tip, but cannot be manipulated to produce a figurine of a cat, for instance. Such changes require modification to the toolset's underlying matrix, and require time and effort.

Crafting

To craft an ordinary item, you must first gather appropriate materials. Materials have a rarity one level below the item's rarity. When acquiring materials for more than one item, increase the Prosperity cost for each order of magnitude of quantity as usual.

Once you have gathered materials, you must find an appropriate artisan's workshop, where you can access the machinery required to build the item. Roll Manipulate Technology against TN16+, plus two for every rarity level above Ubiquitous. If you fail, the materials are not consumed, but you must wait 4d6 days before trying again.

For one item, crafting takes 4d6 days, assuming an 8-hour shift, or 2d6 days for work around the clock. For every additional order of magnitude of quantity, crafting takes an additional 4d6 days (or 2d6 days for around-the-clock work).

Wonders

To craft a technological wonder, you must first determine a difficulty. For a very basic artistic wonder with no practical function, like a speaker which plays orchestral music that never repeats or a painting which shows a different vista every day, the difficulty should be approximately 4. For a useful but small-scale wonder, like a set of artificer's tools, the difficulty should be around 8. For a large-scale wonder, like the gate in an an above example, the difficulty should be around 12.

Materials for a technological wonder are always at least Uncommon. For wonders with practical application, the materials are Rare. Wonders are never mass-produced, so you need only acquire materials in a quantity of one.

Once you have gathered materials, you must carry out construction in a workshop which belongs to you; someone else's workshop is not acceptable. To assemble materials into a wonder, roll Craft Technological Wonder at TN14+ plus the wonder's difficulty. If you fail, the materials are consumed. If attempting to build the same wonder in the future, the difficulty is reduced by 2 for each failure, to represent the lessons you learned during previous attempts.

On success, you have worked out how to build the item correctly. Crafting takes 8d6 days; work cannot be accelerated.

Item List

This is a non-exhaustive list, but the items listed here are those most commonly found in Imperial space or available to Imperial traders.

Weapons

Weapon Linked Attributes

By default, every weapon's linked attribute is its skill's linked attribute. For instance, weapons using the Melee Weapons skill are Strength-linked, because Melee Weapons is a Strength skill.

A few weapons break this rule; their item entries note if this is the case.

Ranged Weapon Modifiers

Ranged weapons give an optimum range and a range penalty. When firing a weapon at a target outside its optimum range, apply the range penalty to your attack modifier once for each region to the target beyond the weapon's optimum range.

> *Andrastos is in GCS Region 1. His target is in GCS Region 4. His weapon has an optimum range of 0-1 and a range penalty of -2.*
>
> *To determine the range to his target, Andrastos counts the regions on the way: Region 2, Region 3, and Region 4. The range is 3, which exceeds his weapon's optimum range by 2. He therefore applies the range penalty twice: -4.*

Weapon Traits

Some weapons have special features or qualities, which are described below.

Rapid Fire

Suppressive Fire attacks do not use extra ammunition.

Slow Fire/Very Slow Fire

You may make at most 2/1 attacks with this weapon per round.

Strong Recoil/Very Strong Recoil

The weapon has strong recoil. -1/-2 to all attack rolls unless fired from a bipod, weapon mount, or braced position.

Overheats

Making Suppressive Fire attacks on two consecutive turns overheats the weapon. It must cool down before being used again, and may not be fired on the following turn.

Prone to Jamming/Extremely Prone to Jamming

On an attack roll, if the dice show 11/12 or less, the weapon jams. The user must spend 1 action to clear the jam.

Bipod

The weapon has a deployable bipod. Deploy it (or stow it) by spending 1 action. When firing from a bipod, add +1 to attack rolls. You may not move while the bipod is deployed.

Tripod

The weapon is tripod-mounted. It may not be fired unless mounted, either on a vehicle or on the tripod. Deploying the tripod and weapon takes two full turns. Two characters (a loader and gunner, for instance) may each spend one full turn to deploy a tripod-mounted weapon in one round.

Crew-Served

The weapon is crew-served. In addition to the gunner who is carrying the weapon, it requires a loader adjacent to the weapon. Without a loader adjacent to the weapon, the weapon may not be fired.

Accurate/Extremely Accurate

Whether by nature or by construction, the weapon is highly accurate.

For ranged weapons, add +1/+2 to Aimed Fire attack rolls.

For melee weapons, add +1/+2 to all attack rolls.

Unwieldy

The weapon is large and unwieldy. When attacking targets with normal-scale damage saves, roll at -4. When attacking targets with mega-damage saves, roll at no penalty.

Secondary Anti-Vehicle Use

Though primarily an anti-personnel weapon, the weapon has a secondary anti-vehicle capability. When attacking targets with mega-damage saves, do -4 mega-damage.

Anti-Air

This weapon may be used to attack airborne targets at no penalty.

Piercing

When using the weapon to make a melee attack against a target with mega-damage saves, spend two actions and make your attack roll at -2 to deal mega-damage, reducing the weapon's listed damage by 4.

Shieldbreaker

The weapon ignores technologically-generated personal shields.

Cleaving

The weapon is large and easy to swing. When making melee attacks, you may use one attack roll to hit two targets in the same adjacency group, considering each target's melee defense value separately.

Area Weapon

The weapon has explosive effect and hits an entire adjacency group. When making ranged attacks, target an adjacency group, making one attack roll and considering each target's ranged defense value separately.

Indirect Fire

The weapon fires in a high arc, and can be used to fire around cover. When making ranged attacks, halve the target's cover bonus.

Powered Weapon

This melee weapon consumes power cells in ordinary operation. It tracks ammunition. Whenever it is used to make a melee attack, empty its magazine by 1. When its magazine is empty, the weapon must be reloaded.

In their trait listing, powered weapons give an unpowered damage in parentheses. Powered Weapon (-1) indicates that a weapon does -1 damage when unpowered. Powered Weapon (1) indicates that a weapon does 1 damage when unpowered.

Two-Hand

This weapon requires both hands free to use.

Specialist Weapon

The weapon uses the Specialist Weapons skill, and its linked attribute is Strength.

Finesse Weapon

This melee weapon's linked attribute is Dexterity.

Hand and a Half

This melee weapon can be used with one hand with the listed statistics, or with two hands to add 1 to damage.

Trademark Weapons

Congratulations! If you are reading this, you may have taken the Trademark Weapon gift. The remainder of this section details the various perks available to you.

Trademark Bonuses

A trademark weapon is defined by its trademark bonuses. You may select one of these traits each time you take the Trademark Weapon gift. You may take Boring Stat Bonuses up to three times. All other traits may only be taken once.

Boring Stat Bonuses

+1 to hit with your trademark weapon
-1 to hit with other ranged or melee weapons
OR
Add 1 to damage with your trademark weapon
Reduce damage by 1 with other ranged or melee weapons

Sometimes a special weapon just fits your hand better, allowing you to swing harder or shoot straighter.

When taking Boring Stat Bonuses on a ranged trademark weapon, for example, the penalties apply only to other ranged weapons. Taking Boring Stat Bonuses on a melee trademark weapon applies penalties only to other melee weapons.

Explosive Shells

Add 1 to damage
-1 to hit
Slug weapons only

Explosive shells pepper a target with shrapnel.

When making a ranged attack with a trademark weapon with Explosive Shells, you may attack two adjacent targets with one attack roll.

Unstable Plasma

Add 1 to damage
Weapon gains the *Prone to Jamming* trait
Plasma and plasmasheath weapons only

Unstable plasmas burn hotter than the usual sort emitted by plasma weapons, but may clog plasma chambers.

Focus Crystal

+1 to hit
Weapon gains the *Very Slow Fire* trait
Laser weapons only

Installing a focus crystal in a laser weapon decreases its rate of fire, but increases its accuracy in all situations.

Scatter Shot

Reduce damage by 1
-2 to hit

All ranged weapons have some means of firing a scattering burst: flechettes for slug weapons, adjusted barrels for a plasma weapon, or a scatter-crystal for laser weapons.

When making a ranged attack with a trademark weapon with Scatter Shot, you may attack two adjacent targets with one attack roll.

Hip Fire
Pistols only

Between its carefully-sculpted grip and your familiarity with it, your sidearm is very much like an extension of your own arm.

When wielding a pistol with Hip Fire and a melee weapon, ranged attacks with the pistol do not provoke free attacks from adjacent entities.

Sharp Edge
+1 damage against armor
Edged weapons only

A particularly fine cutting edge used to be a handicap when facing armored opponents. With modern technology, the opposite is true.

Overbalanced
-1 to hit
Weapon gains the *Cleaving* trait
Melee weapons only

With its balance shifted well forward, this weapon is made to swing not just at a target but through it.

Add a Weapon Trait
Add one weapon trait from the weapon traits list on page 57 to the weapon.

Ranged Weapons

Plasma Weapons

Plasma weapons operate by packetizing and then plasmifying a working gas provided in the magazine. They are capable of very high rates of fire, and are almost always multi-barreled to take advantage of the maximum possible capacity of the plasma expansion chamber; most plasma weapons are capable of draining a power cell in a single sustained burst. Due to the interplay between the plasma packets and the barrel containment systems, they are notable for their relative inaccuracy at range, which at its longest is shorter than laser weapons.

Plasma Pistol
Rarity: Plentiful
Damage: -1
Optimum Range: 0-1
Range Penalty: -4
Ammunition Type: Plasma Power Cell
Actions Per Magazine: 5
Reload Time: 1
Rapid Fire

The plasma pistol is a six-barreled weapon, with the rotating cylinder located forward of the grip. On pulling the trigger, the barrels spin up and a storm of plasma bolts erupts from them.

Plasma Rifle

Rarity: Common
Damage: 1
Optimum Range: 0-2
Range Penalty: -4
Ammunition Type: Plasma Power Cell
Actions Per Magazine: 4
Reload Time: 1
Rapid Fire, Two-Hand

Plasma rifles are ordinarily eight-barreled weapons. To avoid excessive gyroscopic action, the rotating cylinder is a fifteen-centimeter section between the rear grip and the forward handguard. Forward of the handguard, there is only one barrel, wrapped in a heavy heat-sink shield.

Light Support Plasma Gun

Rarity: Uncommon
Damage: 2
Optimum Range: 0-3
Range Penalty: -3
Ammunition Type: Plasma Reservoir
Actions Per Magazine: 5
Reload Time: 2
Bipod, Rapid Fire, Strong Recoil, Two-Hand

Broadly similar to a plasma rifle, a light support plasma gun is somewhat scaled up in construction, and uses a plasma reservoir instead of a plasma cell, a much larger plasma power pack which supports sustained fire.

Plasma Lance

Rarity: Uncommon
Damage: -1 (mega)
Optimum Range: 0-2
Range Penalty: -6
Ammunition Type: Plasma Reservoir
Actions Per Magazine: 1
Reload Time: 1
Two-Hand, Unwieldy

A plasma lance is a shoulder-fired anti-vehicle weapon, padding and a counterweight to rest on the shoulder tipped by a meter and a half of plasma-focusing barrel. By plasma weapon standards, it is relatively accurate, and by anti-vehicle weapon standards, it loads and fires quickly. It pays for this by limited usefulness against heavier armor.

When firing at vehicles, optimum range is 0-4.

Plasma Stream Cannon

Rarity: Rare
Damage: 4
Optimum Range: 0
Range Penalty: -6
Ammunition Type: Plasma Reservoir
Actions Per Magazine: 2
Reload Time: 2
Secondary Anti-Vehicle Capability, Specialist Weapon, Two-Hand

Plasma stream cannons were developed some two millennia ago from a principle observed in damaged plasma weapons. When the packetization mechanism in a plasma weapon partially fails, it projects a great deal of plasma in a loosely-contained stream. The plasma stream is extremely short-ranged, but highly destructive.

Plasma Repeater Cannon

Rarity: Relic
Damage: 4
Optimum Range: 0-5
Range Penalty: -3
Ammunition Type: Plasma Cell Belt
Actions Per Magazine: 6
Reload Time: 1
Anti-Air, Crew-Served, Rapid Fire, Specialist Weapon, Tripod, Two-Hand

Plasma repeater cannons are heavyweight, largely immobile support weapons, fed by a belt of rifle-size plasma cells. Unlike plasma rifles and support guns, their entire barrel assemblies rotate for heat reasons. Four to six barrels are common, firing much larger plasma packets than handheld weapons. A single shot from a single barrel drains a single cell on the belt; a loader is required to ensure that the belt feeds correctly, and to continue feeding

Laser Weapons

Laser weapons are simply that, firing high-energy solid-state lasers with a good degree of accuracy. Their rate of fire is not as high as that of plasma weapons: most laser weapons are semi-automatic, the time required to pull the trigger serving to recharge the weapon's internal capacitors. They are notable for eating through power cells rather faster than might be preferred.

Laser Pistol

Rarity: Common
Damage: 0
Optimum Range: 0-2
Range Penalty: -3
Ammunition Type: Power Cell
Actions Per Magazine: 3
Reload Time: 1
Accurate

Laser pistols follow a general form: a hefty grip and receiver assembly, containing the bulky power cell and laser pumping apparatus, and a long, slender barrel holding the focusing arrays. Owing to their greater accuracy over plasma pistols, laser pistols are frequently customized for their intended users, featuring shaped grips and personalized sights.

Laser Rifle

Rarity: Uncommon
Damage: 2
Optimum Range: 1-4
Range Penalty: -3
Ammunition Type: Power Cell
Actions Per Magazine: 3
Reload Time: 1
Accurate, Two-Hand

Laser rifles build on the pattern established by laser pistols: bulky between the grip and handguard, slender and skeletal elsewhere.

Laser Designated Marksman Rifle

Rarity: Uncommon
Damage: 3
Optimum Range: 2-10
Range Penalty: -3
Ammunition Type: Power Cell
Actions Per Magazine: 2
Reload Time: 1
Extremely Accurate, Two-Hand

Laser marksman rifles were a natural development from laser rifles, given their inherent accuracy. The marksman rifle adds special, magnified sights, and gyroscopic aiming systems built into the body of the weapon to hold it on target even at extreme ranges.

Multilaser

Rarity: Rare
Damage: 4
Optimum Range: 1-10
Range Penalty: -3
Ammunition Type: Fusion Battery
Actions Per Magazine: 4
Reload Time: 1
Anti-Air, Accurate, Crew-Served, Overheats, Specialist Weapon, Tripod, Two-Hand

A multilaser is a heavy support weapon, a number of heavy laser rifles arranged in a circular configuration. The assembly does not spin, but rather, the rifles fire one by one to overcome their inherently low rate of rifle. Even so, multilasers are frequently plagued with heat troubles.

Slug Weapons

Slug weapons are the oldest weapon in the human arsenal; even monomolecular melee weapons date to after the invention of the personal shield. They operate on one of two simple principles, using either electromagnetic force or chemical propellants to send a solid projectile downrange. They are reliable and fast-firing, and a single magazine of slug ammunition will almost always last longer than a power cell in an energy weapon. They are also capable of firing specialized payloads, if the barrel bore is large enough.

Slug Pistol

Rarity: Ubiquitous
Damage: 1
Optimum Range: 0-2
Range Penalty: -3
Ammunition Type: Slug Pistol Magazine
Actions Per Magazine: 4
Reload Time: 1
Strong Recoil

Slug pistols have been in Imperial arsenals since well before the first voidships left Homeworld's surface, and have seen steady, incremental improvements ever since. They come in two flavors: revolving cylinder weapons, usually firing large, heavy slugs, and semiautomatic weapons, magazine-fed with a higher rate of sustained fire.

Slug Rifle

Rarity: Plentiful
Damage: 2
Optimum Range: 0-4
Range Penalty: -4
Ammunition Type: Slug Rifle Magazine
Actions Per Magazine: 4
Reload Time: 1
Prone to Jamming, Two-Hand

Slug rifles are just as old as their smaller brothers, and have seen similar developments over the years. Nowadays, almost all of them are magazine-fed, firing small-caliber, high-velocity bullets at moderate rates of fire. They offer a middle ground between rapid-firing plasma weapons and precise laser weapons, and are available in quantity almost anywhere.

Marksman Rifle

Rarity: Common
Damage: 3
Optimum Range: 3-10
Range Penalty: -2
Ammunition Type: Marksman Rifle Magazine
Actions Per Magazine: 3
Reload Time: 1
Accurate, Bipod, Two-Hand, Very Slow Fire, Strong Recoil

Larger-caliber slug rifles still have a place in arsenals around the galaxy, especially those with a high degree of inherent accuracy. They frequently bear large telescopic sights, along with gas compensators to reduce the effect of their substantial recoil.

Light Machine Gun

Rarity: Plentiful
Damage: 2
Optimum Range: 1-5
Range Penalty: -3
Ammunition Type: Machine Gun Box
Actions Per Magazine: 5
Reload Time: 2
Bipod, Prone to Jamming, Rapid Fire, Strong Recoil, Two-Hand

The chatter of an automatic rifle is a common sound on the battlefield; such weapons are some of the heaviest frequently carried by individual infantrymen. Fed by large belt-in-box magazine, they are capable of laying down a withering hail of fire.

Scattergun

Rarity: Plentiful
Damage: -2 (2 against base damage saves)
Optimum Range: 0-1 (+2 to hit)
Range Penalty: -4
Ammunition Type: Scattergun Shells
Action Per Magazine: 2
Reload Time: 2
Slow Fire, Two-Hand

Scatterguns are large-bore weapons which dispense with rifled barrels. Originally used for sporting purposes, they were adopted into military service for the purposes of clearing rooms and firing specialty payloads.

Their canonical ammunition load is buckshot, large, heavy lead pellets which do grievous damage to flesh. When scoring a hit with a scattergun loaded with buckshot, roll 4d6 after applying damage to the target. If the roll is 15 or more, apply damage again.

They may also be loaded with large, fin-stabilized slugs. When firing slugs, remove the to-hit bonus and do not roll for repeated damage. Increase the optimum range to 0-2 and the damage to 3 against all damage saves.

These two ammunition types are just the beginning. Scatterguns may fire incendiary rounds, small-diameter shot suitable for blowing out door handles, beanbags or stun rounds for crowd control, and many other types besides. Work with your gamemaster to determine appropriate statistics for such ammunition.

Autocannon

Rarity: Common
Damage: 6
Optimum Range: 3-10
Range Penalty: -4
Ammunition Type: Autocannon Belt
Actions Per Magazine: 3
Reload Time: 2
Anti-Air, Crew-Served, Rapid Fire, Secondary Anti-Vehicle Use, Strong Recoil, Tripod, Two-Hand

Autocannon are large, crew-served support weapons, frequently mounted on vehicles. They are notable for their explosive shells and their moderate anti-vehicle effectiveness.

When fired at an air target, an autocannon deals -2 mega-damage.

Stun Weapons

Stun weapons are a relatively recent development. The obstacle encountered by the Empire's artisans was that an effective stun weapon must stun any sentient it is pointed at, and the galaxy's bewildering variety of sentient creatures precludes universal solutions.

Eventually, human artisans stopped trying to come up with a clever solution, and as humans are wont to do, came up with a brute-force solution instead. Modern stun weapons are really a half-dozen weapons in one, firing a half-dozen invisible beams of various energies and radiations.

They are clunky but effective weapons at their purpose, rendering the major species of the galaxy unconscious or some reasonable facsimile thereof. When used against more esoteric species, they may be accidentally lethal.

When firing at any of the major sentient species[1], stun weapons do the listed damage. When firing at other species, stun weapons do 1d6-3 damage. On 6, the damage is lethal. On 1, reroll and double the result.

Stun Pistol

Rarity: Plentiful
Damage: -1 (nonlethal)
Optimum Range: 0-1
Range Penalty: -6
Ammunition Type: Power Cell
Actions Per Magazine: 2
Reload Time: 1

A stun pistol is a large, boxy weapon, with a vertical handgrip centered underneath it.

Stun Rifle

Rarity: Common
Damage: 0 (nonlethal)
Optimum Range: 1-3
Range Penalty: -4
Ammunition Type: Power Cell
Actions Per Magazine: 3
Reload Time: 1
Two-Hand

Stun rifles are similarly large and boxy, but somewhat superior to stun pistols ergonomically. The larger size gives artisans more room to work.

1 Humans, athati, saifthei, the Handed, Tarki, kraken, krrkt'kxhfrr, yashcheritsy, and arachni.

Stun Cannon

Rarity: Uncommon
Damage: 2 (nonlethal)
Optimum Range: 1-4
Range Penalty: -4
Ammunition Type: Fusion Battery
Actions Per Magazine: 4
Reload Time: 2
Crew-Served, Slow Fire, Strong Recoil, Tripod, Two-Hand

Humans tend to have the mindset that if large is good, larger is better. Stun cannons are one example. Large, crew-served weapons, they are the quintessential crowd control weapons in the arsenals of governors cursed with unruly populations. Nothing cuts through a crowd quicker yet carries so little risk of inciting outright revolution.

Grenades

Grenades: every combatant's favorite tool for flushing people out of cover.

Grenades target an area rather than a particular individual. To throw a grenade, roll Athleticism against TN18+ for a target at range 0. Increase the difficulty by 3 per range beyond 0. Each entity in the targeted adjacency group may make an effective Dexterity check at TN18+ plus the degree of success on your Athleticism check; on success, they do not take damage.

> *Basilus throws a fragmentation grenade at two rebel soldiers at range 0. His effective Athleticism is 7, and he rolls a total of 24. He succeeds by 6, for 3 degrees of success, and the grenade lands true.*
>
> *Each rebel soldier may attempt to dodge. The difficulty is TN18+ plus 3, Basilus' degree of success, for a final TN21+. The first soldier has an effective Dexterity of 8, and rolls a total of 23. He dives out of the way. The second soldier has an effective Dexterity of 3, and rolls a total of 17. He trips as he attempts to dive, and takes the grenade's listed damage.*

To score a direct hit, required to deal damage with anti-vehicle grenades and demolition charges, roll Athleticism against an appropriate defensive skill or Target Number. For vehicles, the defensive skill is Pilot (Vehicle). For power armor, the defensive skill is Power Armor Use. For ordinary humans, the defensive skill is Reaction.

To score a direct hit on anything else, roll against TN19+ at range 0, increasing the difficulty by 3 per range beyond 0.

Fragmentation Grenade

Rarity: Plentiful
Damage: 4

The traditionalist's choice, fragmentation grenades explode in a shower of metal shards extremely deleterious to lightly-armored targets.

Anti-Vehicle Grenade

Rarity: Uncommon
Damage: 1 (mega)

Anti-vehicle grenades are weighted to fly in a particular direction. On impact, explosives form a copper plate into a penetrator.

An anti-vehicle grenade must score a direct hit to deal damage.

Tanglefoot Grenade

Rarity: Common
Damage: -

Tanglefoot grenades contain a large quantity of adhesive tangle webbing under high pressure. On impact, the casing breaks and the webbing expands to cover an area around the grenade, trapping anyone unlucky enough to be caught in its radius.

If you are hit by the tanglefoot grenade, you are immobilized by physical restraints. (See RPJ Immobilization in the RPJ Core rulebook.)

If you throw a tanglefoot grenade at cover or at an adjacency group in cover, any entity entering that cover is immobilized.

The tangle webbing dissolves after one hour.

Flashbang Grenade

Rarity: Plentiful
Damage: -

Flashbang grenades are simple pyrotechnic charges, optimized to generate sound and light.

If you are hit by a flashbang grenade, reduce your defense values and attack rolls by 4 until the end of your next turn.

Demolition Charge

Rarity: Common
Damage: 4 (mega)

A large explosive charge contained in a satchel, a demolition charge[1] is a useful tool to bring down a building wall, blow a track off of a tank, or obliterate a despotic governor's statue.

Demolition charges do 0 normal-scale damage on anything but a direct hit. For each range above 0, decrease your Athleticism roll by 4 instead of 3 when throwing a demolition charge.

1 … is only a grenade if you *really* squint at it, but it doesn't fit anywhere else, and throwing satchel charges is such a cliche-in-a-good-way that I'm pretty sure I use it in an example later, so it's good to have it near the rules for throwing other explosives.

Other Weapons

The categories of weapon described above make up most of the arsenals in the Empire, but the galaxy has been at war or very close to it for many years, and the result is a bewildering variety of weaponry available to those who know where to look.

ELIPC Gun

Rarity: Rare
Damage: 6
Optimum Range: 0-1 (max. 2)
Range Penalty: -6
Ammunition Type: Fusion Battery
Actions Per Magazine: 1
Reload Time: 2
Secondary Anti-Vehicle Use, Specialist Weapon, Two-Hand, Very Slow Fire

ELIPC, pronounced 'ellipse', stands for electrolaser-induced plasma channel. An ELIPC gun uses an electron laser to plasmify the air between it and its target, then sends a massive electrical discharge through the conductive plasma channel. More succinctly, an ELIPC gun is a lightning cannon.

It only functions in atmosphere; in vacuum, there's nothing to turn into the required plasma channel.

Rocket Launcher

Rarity: Uncommon
Damage: 2 (mega)
Optimum Range: 1-3
Range Penalty: -4
Ammunition Type: Unguided Rocket
Actions Per Magazine: 1
Reload Time: 2
Specialist Weapon, Strong Recoil, Two-Hand, Unwieldy

Rocket launchers cover several families of weapon, all of which expel a self-propelled, anti-vehicle or explosive projectile over short to medium ranges. In general, they are fired from atop the shoulder, and require attention to backblast zones and minimum arming ranges.

Firing from the traditional kneeling position counts as braced for the purposes of the Strong Recoil trait.

Guided Missile Launcher

Rarity: Relic
Damage: *
Optimum Range: *
Range Penalty: *
Ammunition Type: *
Actions Per Magazine: 1
Reload Time: 1 turn
Specialist Weapon, Two-Hand, Unwieldy, Very Strong Recoil

The elder brother of the rocket launcher, the guided missile launcher takes a substantially similar projectile and adds a guidance package. The guidance package and specialized warhead mean that guided missiles cannot productively be fired at the wrong type of target.

Explosive penetrator missiles target tanks, vehicles, and power armor, doing 2 mega-damage with a minimum range of 2. Explosive penetrator missiles use a laser guidance system. Make your attack roll at +4. On hit, roll 4d6 against TN12+. On failure, the missile loses lock and fails to deal damage.

Anti-aircraft missiles target air vehicles. Target an aircraft above the battlefield. An aircraft is above the battlefield either when making an attack run, or when in the air battlefield region which contains the ground battlefield. Anti-aircraft missiles use infrared guidance. Make your attack roll at +4. On hit, roll 4d6 against TN12+. On failure, the missile loses lock and fails to deal damage.

Firing from the traditional kneeling position counts as braced for the purposes of the Very Strong Recoil trait.

RAMP Grenade Launcher

Rarity: Relic
Damage: 2
Optimum Range: 0-2
Range Penalty: -4
Ammunition Type: Grenade Clip
Actions Per Magazine: 3
Reload Time: 1 turn
Area Weapon, Indirect Fire, Secondary Anti-Vehicle Use, Specialist Weapon, Strong Recoil, Two-Hand

Rocket-assisted multi-purpose grenade launchers fire small, rocket-assisted projectiles, featuring a primary explosively-formed penetrator and a secondary fragmentation belt. The grenade diameter is too small to threaten heavily-armored vehicles, but against lightweight vehicles or infantry, they are deadly.

Primitive Ranged Weapons

Rarity: Ubiquitous

The galaxy is full of less-advanced ranged weapon technology: bows, crossbows, blowguns, throwing stars, javelins, and more.

Bows and crossbows have long optimum ranges, 0-3 with a -3 range penalty in RPJ terms, but deal limited damage (-3). They are Dexterity-based.

Thrown weapons have short optimum ranges, 0 or 0-1 with a -5 range penalty, and deal -4 damage. They are Strength-based. Add the user's Strength bonus to the damage dealt.

Melee Weapons

Looking back through the mists of the Empire's long history, it is undeniable that the Empire itself was founded upon the might of the spear, not of the bow. Even in the modern era, close-combat weapons have their place. Few foes dare to face down a charge by sword-carrying kataphraktoi.

Swords

There is as much diversity in Imperial swords as there is in the Empire itself[1]. To keep these lists concise[2], each type of melee weapon has one entry for 'sword', which represents an average arming sword or knightly sword: a one-handed weapon, with a sharp point for stabbing and two sharp edges for slashing, with a blade about 75 centimeters long. Other large, obligate-one-hand swords like cutlasses, scimitars, tsurugi, and sabers share the same statistics. So do shorter, cut-and-thrust weapons like the Greek xiphos or the Italic gladius.

To determine the vital statistics for other categories of sword, use these descriptions as a guide.

Stabbing smallswords, rapiers, and dueling swords have the *Finesse Weapon* trait (they are Dexterity-linked, not Strength-linked) and the *Accurate* trait. Additionally, subtract 1 from the listed damage.

Hand-and-a-half swords and small two-handed swords are a narrow category. The katana is the canonical example: a blade not much longer than a one-handed sword, and a grip sufficient to fit two hands with very little extra room. These weapons have the *Hand and a Half* weapon trait.

Greatswords, such as the claymore, longsword, and zweihander, are differentiated from other swords by their much larger overall sizes and their long grips. The pommel of a greatsword usually comes to about the shoulder of its wielder, and the grip is usually large enough to fit two hands with a hand's worth of space between them. Add 2 to the listed damage and reduce attack rolls by 1.

Other Melee Weapons

The list below is obviously incomplete. For melee weapons not listed, either copy an existing melee weapon, or use the rules for sword types.

Improvised and Unarmed Weapons

Rifle Stocks and Pistol Butts

Damage: -4

Ordinarily, ranged weapons are heavy and made from hard materials. In a pinch, these characteristics mean that they can be used to beat, hammer, crush, and otherwise bludgeon.

1 Which is lots. Your traitorous thoughts have been noted, citizen!

2 Or, put another way, so I don't have to write a half-dozen identical entries for every category of weapon.

When making a melee attack with a ranged weapon, use Hand Weapons at -2 or Unarmed Combat at no penalty. The linked attribute is Strength in both cases. Add your Strength bonus to the damage dealt.

Brass Knuckles

Rarity: Plentiful
Damage: *

A favorite of interplanetary crime syndicates around the galaxy, brass knuckles consist of loops for four fingers[1] and a solid metal strip for punching things. Brass knuckles concentrate the force applied and increase the hardness of the surface applying it.

When making unarmed attacks with brass knuckles, increase the damage dealt by 1. Brass knuckles use the Unarmed Combat skill and are Dexterity-linked.

Coshes, Blackjacks, and Saps

Rarity: Plentiful
Damage: -2

Thieves and other sneaky sorts frequently have cause to render people unconscious without the noise and bulk of a stun weapon. Enter the cosh (and its relatives): cloth-covered bulbs of lead or some other heavy metal on the end of short sticks. They are simple weapons, and effective, but hard to use.

To deal lethal damage with a cosh, use Melee Weapons. When dealing lethal damage, it is Strength-linked.

To deal nonlethal damage with a cosh, use Unarmed Combat. When dealing nonlethal damage, it is Dexterity-linked.

If you sneak up on your target and attack outside of combat with a cosh, increase its damage by 4 and hit automatically. It ignores armor and hits base damage saves, unless the target is wearing head protection which reaches the top of the neck.

Primitive Weapons

'Primitive' is a misleading adjective for melee weapons which simply do not take advantage of advances in the last few millennia of human warfare. They may be very finely crafted and almost as effective as higher-technology weapons; they are merely no longer state of the art.

Knife

Rarity: Ubiquitous
Damage: -2
Shieldbreaker

Commonly carried by soldiers, nobles, spies, and commoners alike, combat knives and daggers have been popular on the battlefield and in courtly halls since the dawn of recorded history.

1 Brass knuckles are primarily a human weapon, but they aren't hard to make, and artisans will gladly whip up a set for any number of fingers.

Sword

Rarity: Common
Damage: -1
Shieldbreaker

Swords, the noblest of weapons, come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes.

Spear

Rarity: Plentiful
Damage: -1
Shieldbreaker

Spears won Homeworld for the Empire, and remain in use to this day. Unpowered spears are primarily ceremonial weapons in the modern era, but still see some use on the Imperial frontier.

The *dory* is the standard spear used by soldiers in single combat. It is about 2.5 meters in length, and has the *Hand and a Half* weapon trait.

The *sarissa,* a 5-meter spear, is more common in massed formations. It has the *Two-Hand* weapon trait. To use in smaller fights, the latter requires more finesse and open ground. Roll attacks with sarissae at -1 in cover and -1 when in an adjacency group with more than one other entity. The two penalties stack.

Bladed Polearms

Rarity: Plentiful
Damage: 0
Cleaving, Shieldbreaker, Two-Hand

Bladed polearms of various sorts, such as the guandao from Homeworld's Far East, the glaive from Europa, and the rhomphaia from the Greek homelands, are common ceremonial weapons in human space.

Club

Rarity: Ubiquitous[1]
Damage: -3
Shieldbreaker

Perhaps the simplest weapon of all time, a club is any largish, heavy object which can be grasped and swung. Add your Strength bonus to its damage. Roll 1d6 on hit. On 1-2, the damage is nonlethal.

Mace

Rarity: Plentiful
Damage: -2
Shieldbreaker

Essentially a flanged, metal club, a mace is nevertheless a slightly more effective weapon than a club. Add your Strength bonus to its damage. Against primitive armor, increase the damage by 1.

1 Clubs have a rarity of Ubiquitous only because there isn't any less rare rarity. In acquisitions terms, they're pretty much free.

Bayonet
Rarity: Plentiful
Damage: -3
Shieldbreaker

Most rifles have attachment lugs for a bayonet, a blade which can be slung underneath the barrel. Bayonet training is usually part of ranged weapon training, and although bayonets are less effective than dedicated melee weapons, they also do not require special expertise.

Make melee attacks with bayonets using Hand Weapons. Bayonets are Dexterity-linked.

Monomolecular Weapons

Monomolecular weapons rapidly displaced traditionally-built melee weapons in the arsenals of the wealthy and powerful on their invention ten centuries ago, owing to their superior sharpness, durability, and cutting power.

Their name refers to the width of the cutting edge; the advent of advanced alloys and permanent stasis fields permitted such fine edges to be produced and to maintain their sharpness through use. They remain relatively expensive, owing to the difficult forging process and the cost of fixing a stasis field to each blade.

Monoknife
Rarity: Common
Damage: 1
Shieldbreaker

Monoknives and monodaggers are frequently found on the belts of the patrikioi, elaborately decorated but nevertheless wickedly sharp.

Monosword
Rarity: Uncommon
Damage: 2
Shieldbreaker

No noble's ceremonial attire is complete without a finely-crafted monosword, a weapon typically

Vibro-Weapons

While monomolecular weapons remain the choice of the wealthy, vibro-weapons provide similar effectiveness at a much lower cost. Built in the same manner as traditional melee weapons, vibro-weapons add microserrated edges and tiny, high-frequency vibration generators. This allows vibroweapons to cut into armor and flesh more quickly and more deeply than unpowered weapons.

When activated, they hum quietly.

Vibroknife

Rarity: Plentiful
Damage: 1
Ammunition Type: Power Cell
Actions Per Magazine: 8
Reload Time: 1
Powered Weapon (-2)

A better weapon than an ordinary knife, the vibroknife is part of the standard-issue infantry kit of the Imperial Tagmata.

Vibrosword

Rarity: Common
Damage: 2
Ammunition Type: Power Cell
Actions Per Magazine: 6
Reload Time: 1
Powered Weapon (0)

Equivalent to a monosword while its power cell holds out, a vibrosword is a cheaper, just-as-effective alternative.

Vibropike

Rarity: Common
Damage: 1
Ammunition Type: Power Cell
Actions Per Magazine: 5
Reload Time: 1
Piercing, Powered Weapon (-1), Shieldbreaker, Two-Hand

A vibro-spearhead atop a four-meter pole, a vibropike is still an effective martial weapon. The fine tip allows it to puncture shields and vehicle armor if properly wielded.

Roll attacks with vibropikes at -1 in cover and -1 when in an adjacency group with more than one other entity. The two penalties stack.

Vibroglaive

Rarity: Common
Damage: 2
Ammunition Type: Power Cell
Actions Per Magazine: 5
Reload Time: 1
Cleaving, Powered Weapon (-1), Two-Hand

Glaives, polearm weapons with long, knife-like heads, were obvious candidates for conversion to vibro-weapons, owing to the simplicity of their blade structure.

Plasmasheath Weapons

Plasmasheath weapons are the pinnacle of Imperial close-combat technology. When powered, a plasmasheath weapon is, as the name suggests, sheathed in magnetically-contained plasma. They have unparalleled cutting ability, and can even be used against vehicles, but drain plasma power cells at high speed.

When active, plasmasheath weapons appear to be wreathed in shifting, light blue flame. When deactivated, the relatively fragile plasmasheath mechanisms reduce their effectiveness as weapons to somewhat below that of vibroweapons.

Plasmasheath Sword

Rarity: Uncommon
Damage: 3
Ammunition Type: Plasma Power Cell
Actions Per Magazine: 3
Reload Time: 1
Piercing, Powered Weapon (-1)

The archetypal plasmasheath weapon, plasmasheath swords are frequently carried by Imperial kataphraktoi.

Plasmasheath Rhomphaia

Rarity: Relic
Damage: 4
Ammunition Type: Plasma Power Cell
Actions Per Magazine: 2
Reload Time: 1
Cleaving, Piercing, Powered Weapon (0)

A rhomphaia is a polearm comprising a relatively short shaft with a long, curved blade.

Plasmasheath Pike

Rarity: Rare
Damage: 2
Ammunition Type: Plasma Power Cell
Actions Per Magazine: 4
Reload Time: 1
Piercing, Powered Weapon (-1), Shieldbreaker

A pike with a plasmasheath head is a useful weapon for penetrating defenses. Unlike other plasmasheath weapons, its area of impact is small enough to penetrate personal shields.

Roll attacks with plasmasheath pikes at -1 in cover and -1 when in an adjacency group with more than one other entity. The two penalties stack.

Ammunition and Magazines

In general, you do not need to make acquisition checks for ammunition. When you acquire a weapon, you also acquire a supply of ammunition; you acquire replacement ammunition in the downtime between adventures.

If you wish to stockpile extra ammunition[1] or acquire ammunition without acquiring a matching weapon, you can use the rarities below to determine the acquisition check difficulty. Acquiring an ammunition item separate from a weapon at quantity 1 yields a quantity of ammunition roughly sufficient for one front-line soldier to fight for one year, accounting for rotation in and out of the line of battle. For specialist ammunition, the absolute quantity may be as low as a few hundred reloads. For ammunition for rapid-firing or suppressive weapons, the quantity may be as high as tens of thousands.

Sharing Ammunition

Weapons which list the same ammunition type may share ammunition. For example, if you carry a laser pistol and a vibrosword and aren't specially prepared for combat, you carry a total of eight power cells —four each for the pistol and the sword.

Plasma Power Cells

Plasma power cells contain not just high-density batteries, but also a high-pressure gas capsule. A plasma weapon's internal mechanisms are specially calibrated to the argon-xenon mix contained in plasma power cells.

Plasma Power Cell
Rarity: Ubiquitous

Plasma Reservoir
Rarity: Plentiful

Plasma Cell Belt
Rarity: Plentiful

Power Cells

Power Cell
Rarity: Ubiquitous

Fusion Battery
Rarity: Common

Slug Magazines

Slug Pistol Magazine
Rarity: Ubiquitous

Slug Rifle Magazine
Rarity: Ubiquitous

1 Such stockpiling has no mechanical effect, but I won't stop you if you're really into the idea.

Scattergun Shells
Rarity: Plentiful

Machine Gun Box
Rarity: Plentiful

Autocannon Belt
Rarity: Common

Explosives

Unguided Rocket
Rarity: Plentiful

Penetrator Missile
Rarity: Uncommon

Anti-Air Missile
Rarity: Uncommon

Grenade Clip
Rarity: Uncommon

Other

Primitive Ammunition
Rarity: Ubiquitous

Armor

Flak Armor
Rarity: Ubiquitous
Damage Saves: 12+

A flak vest or its equivalent is the standard level of protection for paramilitary forces around the galaxy. It will rarely protect against more than one hit from a modern weapon, but it is better than nothing.

Ceramic Armor
Rarity: Plentiful
Damage Saves: 10+/12+

Improving on flak vests, ceramic armor comprises overlapping plates covering the torso, with lighter protection for the arms and legs.

Imperial-Pattern Light Armor
Rarity: Common
Damage Saves: 10+/12+/12+

The lightest armor used by Imperial line troops, Imperial-pattern light armor includes a helmet, flak vest with ceramic inserts, and arm and leg protection.

Mono-Mesh Armor

Rarity: Common (+2 Prosperity cost)
Damage Saves: 8+/8+
+1 Dodge

Made from layered monowire weave, mono-mesh armor is the last word in armor protection readily available to civilians. Lightweight, flexible, and strong, its only downside is limited durability in the face of continued attacks.

Mono-mesh armor can be worn under clothing with no obvious tell.

Duelist's Armor

Rarity: Uncommon
Damage Saves: 10+/10+/10+
Reduce incoming melee damage by 2
Increase incoming ranged damage by 2

Popular among gadabout nobility and professional swordsmen, duelist's armor is specially constructed to turn aside blows from melee weapons of all sorts, at the cost of brittleness when targeted by ranged weaponry.

Imperial-Pattern Combat Armor

Rarity: Rare
Damage Saves: 8+/8+/10+/12+
+2 Absorb
-4 Dodge

Imperial-pattern combat armor is a collection of heavy plates mounted to a wearable frame. Moving quickly in combat armor is next to impossible, but the protection provided more than makes up for it.

When wearing combat armor, taking a Move action uses all but one of your actions.

Carapace Armor

Rarity: Rare
Damage Saves: 8+/10+/10+
Reduce incoming damage by 2

Carapace armor is a fully-enclosed, non-powered armor suit, ceramic plates over an internal spall liner.

Energized Armor

Rarity: Relic
Damage Saves: 12+/12+/12+/12+

Energized armor is power armor in a different sense: the armor itself projects a low-intensity personal shield, which softens blows to it and protects its integrity.

Energized armor is notoriously finicky, however, and requires careful tuning in the moment to reach its full effectiveness. When entering combat wearing energized armor, roll Manipulate Technology against TN19+. For each degree of success, reduce the Target Number of all of the energized armor's damage saves by 1.

Energized armor is powered by standard power cells. Each power cell lasts 5 minutes or 5 combat rounds. Replacing power cells takes 5 seconds or 1 combat action.

Shields

This section covers physical shields. Technological shields are described in the Gadgets section on page 91. Physical shields may only be used with one-hand weapons.

Riot Shield

Rarity: Plentiful
Damage Saves: 14+/14+/14+
Reduce incoming melee damage by 2
+2 Absorb

A tall shield of ballistic plastic or lightweight metal, a riot shield is designed to protect its bearer from melee attacks. It has little purpose against ranged weaponry.

Ballistic Shield

Rarity: Common

A ballistic shield is not armor in the strictest sense; rather, it is a piece of metal behind which a combatant can advance in relative safety from ranged attacks.

When carrying a ballistic shield, attacks against you are made as though you were in cover with a +3 quality and a flanking distance of 1[1].

When carrying a ballistic shield, you may not move more than 1 region per turn, and may only use a one-handed weapon.

Phalangite Shield

Rarity: Uncommon
Damage Saves: 10+/10+
+1 Absorb

Phalangite shields date to the days of Alexander I himself. Such a shield is scale-shaped, suspended from the neck and stabilized by the weak-side arm, protecting one side of its bearer's body.

You may use a phalangite shield with a two-handed weapon, rolling your attacks at -1.

1 If you are carrying a ballistic shield and in actual cover, you must choose either your ballistic shield's cover statistics, or the cover's statistics. You may not use both, nor may you mix and match.

Energized Shield

Rarity: Relic
Damage Saves: 12+/12+/12+

Like energized armor, an energized shield uses micro-emitters to project a personal shield, which decreases the force of blows taken by the energized shield.

When entering combat with an energized shield, roll Manipulate Technology against TN19+. For each degree of success, reduce the Target Number of all of the energized shield's damage saves by 1.

Power Armor

Kataphraktoi. To historians and scholars of ancient Homeworld warfare, the name calls to mind the thunder of hooves and images of near-invincible, heavily-armored cavalrymen riding armored horses. To modern minds, the sound is similar but the picture is different: the thunder of massive power-armored figures running across the battlefield.

A suit of kataphraktos armor, or less specifically power armor, fully encloses the wearer, provides environmental support, integrated weapons and targeting systems, and, of course, significantly improved protection over anything available to ordinary infantrymen.

Design

A given model of power armor has an amount of **internal capacity**, space for auxiliary equipment and weapons mounts. A particular suit of power armor takes a model and fills its internal capacity with **components**. Each component has a capacity requirement and a location, one of Arms, Back, Helmet, and Auxiliary. A power armor may mount two Arms components, two Back components, one Helmet component, and as many Auxiliary components as desired.

Power armor comes fully fit out, and may only be modified by a skilled artisan. When purchasing or building power armor, choose a model from the list below and components which fit into it. You or your artisan build the armor to that specification.

Acquiring Power Armor

Once you have located an artisan, you do not need to make an acquisition check to acquire power armor, but you do have to spend current Prosperity. To pay an artisan to build a power armor chassis, reduce your current Prosperity by the chassis model's listed Prosperity cost.

To complete assembly of a power armor, you must acquire the desired weapons separately, along with any nonstandard power armor components. Standard power armor components come with the chassis for free and have no listed rarity. Nonstandard components have a rarity listed.

Once the chassis is paid for and the components and weapons acquired, the artisan can begin work. Crafting power armor requires a successful Craft Technological Wonder check against TN19+. On critical failure, choose one weapon or component at random; that weapon or component is lost. On success, after 8d6 days, the power armor is complete.

Donning Power Armor

Getting into or out of power armor is a complex process. To start with, the kataphraktos must put on an interface suit, a form-fitting garment festooned with control and data ports, which connects the him to the armor's telemetry system. Next, he plugs a skepsis tablet into a port on the outside of the armor, spooling up the micro-reactors which make the armor powered.

As the reactors warm up, he opens the armor. Most power armors open clamshell-style on the back. With the armor open, he connects cables from the power armor to the ports on his interface suit, then steps inside. He then triggers the closing sequences. The cables retract to take up slack, the armor clamshells closed, and the power armor comes online.

The process takes about ten minutes. An assistant can help by rolling Manipulate Technology against TN20+. For each degree of success, reduce the time taken by one minute.

Power Armor Out of Combat

Though a force multiplier in combat, power armor is inconvenient outside of it. Most power armors carry sufficient reactor fuel for four hours of high-intensity use, or twelve hours of standing around guarding a palace.

Refueling requires high-density reactor fuel pellets. A civilian power plant is unlikely to have the right stuff; a unit of Imperial Kataphraktoi, a jump ship, or a large military base likely will.

Defeating Power Armor

When a power armor loses its last damage save, it has taken critical damage and shuts down. The character controlling the power armor must pass an effective Strength check against TN18+ to force his way out of the deactivated armor.

Repairing Power Armor

Repairing power armor takes two days for each crossed-out damage save. A technician can speed the work by rolling Repair (Item) against TN20+, reducing the total time taken by one day for each degree of success.

Miscellaneous Combat Rules

For the *Strong Recoil* and *Very Strong Recoil* weapons traits, a power armor which does not move on its turn is assumed to be in a braced position.

A character controlling power armor receives two actions per combat turn.

Power Armor Models

Kataphraktos-Pattern Armor

Prosperity Cost: 30
Internal Capacity: 10
Damage Saves: 10+/10+/10+ (mega)

The basic Imperial-model power armor, a standard for five hundred years, represents a good balance between durability and equipment capacity.

Guard-Pattern Armor

Prosperity Cost: 36
Internal Capacity: 12
Damage Saves: 8+/9+/10+ (mega)

Guard-pattern power armor is the sort used by members of the Imperial Household Guard and Companion Kataphraktoi. By using newer technology, it improves on the standard Kataphraktos-pattern both in durability and loadout capacity.

Old-Model Armor

Prosperity Cost: 20
Internal Capacity: 8
Damage Saves: 10+/12+/12+ (mega)

The prior Imperial standard, old-model armor is not so much obsolete as obsolescent, rendered superfluous by the newer designs above.

Juggernaut Armor

Prosperity Cost: 24
Internal Capacity: 6
Damage Saves (inner layer): 12+/12+ (mega)
Damage Saves (outer layer): 8+/8+ (mega)

Juggernaut armor was popular long ago, during the first two Imperial Wars of Reconquest, but fell out of favor in the time since. Large and heavy even by the standard of power armor, juggernaut armor answered the tactical question posed by the Tarki and arachni, both species fond of closing to melee range.

Juggernaut armor may not mount the Enhanced Leg Servos component. It has no slots for Arms components, but has two built-in Melee Weapons Mount components.

Note that juggernaut armor's damage saves come in two layers.

Stealth Armor

Prosperity Cost: 40
Internal Capacity: 5
Damage Saves: 8+/12+ (mega)

Recently, artisans on high-technology worlds have begun to experiment with active stealth coatings for power armor, fitting them to smaller suits with an eye toward producing battlefield commandos.

When wearing stealth armor, increase your ranged defense value by 1. Once per power armor fuel load, you may overcharge your armor, becoming invisible for five minute or five combat rounds. You may be targeted by attacks while invisible at a -6 penalty. The penalty is reduced to -3 in combat rounds when you have made attacks.

'Stealth' is relative to other power armors. A stealth-armored character stomping down a palace hallway, even if invisible, is hardly undetectable.

Maneuver Armor

Prosperity Cost: 30
Internal Capacity: 8
Damage Saves: 12+/12+/12+ (mega)

Maneuver armor represents a relatively new line of thinking in Imperial martial circles, at odds with much of the prior art in Imperial study of war: moving targets are harder to hit. Maneuver armor is lightweight, but features overpowered arm and leg actuators. As such, it is significantly more agile than most other power armor, at the cost of decreased combat durability.

When wearing maneuver armor, increase your ranged defense value by 2 if you moved on your most recent turn.

Power Armor Components

Ranged Weapons Mount

Category: Arms
Internal Capacity: 0

Your power armor is equipped with a forearm mount for ranged weapons.

It may mount any ranged weapon from the personal equipment list. Fire it using the Power Armor Weapons skill, or with the weapon's linked skill and attribute at -2.

Melee Weapons Mount

Category: Arms
Internal Capacity: 0

Your power armor is equipped with a manipulator mount for a specific melee weapon. The manipulator may also be used without the weapon as a makeshift hand, but it is not designed for this purpose, and it is a poor substitute for a better manipulator. Roll at -3 for any task requiring fine motor skills.

It may mount any melee weapon from the personal equipment list. Wield it using the Power Armor Weapons skill, or with the weapon's linked skill and attribute at -1.

Coarse Manipulators

Rarity: Common
Category: Arms
Internal Capacity: 2

Your power armor is equipped with heavy manipulators fine enough to wield large melee weapons or ranged weapons, and capable of somewhat adequately performing the role of hands. Roll at -2 for any task requiring fine motor skills.

Coarse Manipulators may carry any ranged weapon fired using the Specialist Weapons skill. Fire it using the Power Armor Weapons skill, or with Specialist Weapons at -2.

Coarse Manipulators may also carry any plasmasheath weapon. Wield it using the Power Armor Weapons skill, or with Plasmasheath Weapons at -2.

Fine Manipulators

Rarity: Uncommon
Category: Arms
Internal Capacity: 3

Your power armor is equipped with fine manipulators, large mechanical hands controlled by a sensor-glove inside the armor's arm. They are sufficiently dexterous to use in place of human hands for all but the finest tasks.

One Fine Manipulator may carry any melee weapon, or any ranged weapon which uses the Hand Weapons skill. Wield it using the weapon's linked skill and attribute, or with Power Armor Weapons at -1.

Power Claw

Rarity: Rare
Category: Arms
Internal Capacity: 3
Damage: 0 (mega)

A power claw is a hand of sorts, two downward-curved cutting blades with an opposable 'thumb' blade which rises between them. Overdriven actuators allow it to cut into vehicles and, for that matter, other power armor; in Imperial military use, it is often known as a can opener.

The overdriven actuators require a certain measure of resistance. A power claw may be used against targets with normal damage saves with predictably gory results, but doing so may cause the actuators to jam. Roll a d6. On 1 or 2, the actuators jam and the power claw may not be used again until reset by a successful Repair (Item) check against TN20+.

Personal Shield Generator

Rarity: Rare
Category: Auxiliary
Internal Capacity: 1
Damage Saves (Shield): 12+/12+/12+ (normal)

A personal shield generator mounted to power armor provides extra protection against hand weaponry.

Heavy Shield Generator

Rarity: Rare
Category: Back
Internal Capacity: 2
Damage Saves (Shield): 12+/12+/12+ (mega)

A carefully miniaturized, vehicle-class shield generator can dramatically improve the combat resilience of a power armor.

Shoulder Rocket Pack

Category: Back
Internal Capacity: 2

A rocket pack mounted to the shoulder of a power armor, though not reloadable in combat, provides an extra anti-vehicle punch without taking up an arm.

The Shoulder Rocket Pack component has the same statistics as the Rocket Launcher weapon, with the following exceptions: it may be fired using Power Armor Weapons, or Specialist Weapons at -2; its actions per magazine value is 3; its reload time is 10 minutes.

Shoulder Missile Launcher

Rarity: Relic
Category: Back
Internal Capacity: 2

A shoulder-mounted missile launcher gives a power-armored soldier the ability to effectively target vehicles and aircraft.

The Shoulder Missile Launcher component has the same statistics as the Guided Missile Launcher weapon, with the following exceptions: it may be fired using Power Armor Weapons at +4, or Specialist Weapons at +2; its actions per magazine value is 2; its reload time is 10 minutes.

Shoulder Railgun

Rarity: Relic (+4 Prosperity cost)
Category: Back
Internal Capacity: 3
Damage: 2 (mega)
Optimum Range: 1-10
Range Penalty: -2
Ammunition Type: Autocannon Belt
Actions Per Magazine: 2
Reload Time: 1
Anti-Air, Accurate, Slow Fire, Strong Recoil, Unwieldy

The last word in power armor anti-vehicle weapons, a shoulder-mount railgun is an accurate, highly-damaging weapon equally at home punching through vehicle armor or knocking strafing aircraft out of the sky. It is, however, an extremely difficult weapon to find on the market.

Fire it using Power Armor Weapons.

Vacuum Rebreather

Category: Auxiliary
Internal Capacity: 1

Power armors have filtration systems by default, but are not vacuum-capable. A small air tank, carbon dioxide scrubbers, and some extra sealing make the suit's internal environment vacuum-safe.

Comm Relay

Category: Back
Internal Capacity: 1

Like in-ear comm-beads, the communication systems built into a power armor are not ordinarily able to raise vessels in orbit. Adding a larger, back-mounted communications pack serves to extend the power armor's comm range to orbit, and additionally to relay other ground-based communications systems with line of sight to the power armor.

Jump Pack

Rarity: Common
Category: Back
Internal Capacity: 3

Perhaps the biggest disadvantage to power armor is that it is slow. Jump packs aim to solve that problem. Synthesizing fuel from reactor byproducts, a jump pack can launch its power armor high into the air as well as cushion its descent on a frequent basis.

Once per five minutes or five combat rounds, jump to any point within 120 meters. If jumping in combat, spend a Move action.

When landing adjacent to other entities, the other entities must roll their effective Dexterity against TN18+. On failure, an entity takes 0 normal-scale damage.

Enhanced Leg Servos

Rarity: Uncommon
Category: Auxiliary
Internal Capacity: 2

High-strength leg actuators permit a power armor to move at increased speed.

Gain one extra Move action.

Enhanced Arm Servos

Rarity: Uncommon
Category: Auxiliary
Internal Capacity: 1

High-precision arm servos increase the accuracy of weapons carried in a power armor's manipulators.

Roll attacks with arm-mounted weapons at +1.

Translocation Field Generator

Rarity: Relic
Category: Auxiliary
Internal Capacity: 3

The Translocation Field Generator component functions like the Translocation Field Generator gadget, described on page 91. Rather than triggering on base damage saves, it triggers on the innermost layer of power armor saves.

Enhanced Optic Arrays

Category: Helmet
Internal Capacity: 0

Enhanced helmet optic arrays allow a power-armored soldier to zoom in on parts of the battlefield and see in low-light or no-light conditions.

Roll Perceive checks at +1. You can see up to 120 meters in low light and up to 60 meters in darkness.

Thermal Viewer

Rarity: Plentiful
Category: Helmet
Internal Capacity: 1

Thermal viewing systems permit a power-armored soldier to see in the dark, and to see through walls, to a limited degree. Bulky cooling systems occupy extra helmet space.

You can see through walls up to 60 meters away, and see in the dark up to 120 meters.

Targeting Arrays

Rarity: Uncommon
Category: Helmet
Internal Capacity: 1

Enhanced sensors and a motion-predicting skepsis engine allow ranged weapons to be fired with greater accuracy by making minute adjustments to a power armor's arm servos without the soldier's conscious input. This can, unfortunately, interfere with melee weapons.

Roll ranged attacks at +1. Roll melee attacks at -1.

Combat Sensors

Rarity: Rare
Category: Helmet
Internal Capacity: 0

Sensors mounted around a power armor's helmet can detect ranged weapons pointed in the armor's direction, providing the soldier with a visible indication and allowing him to take evasive action.

Add 1 to your ranged defense value.

Extra Armor

Category: Any
Internal Capacity: 1

Extra armor may be added to a power armor to fill any unused internal capacity. For each Extra Armor component, either add a new damage save to your power armor at TN12+, or reduce an existing damage save's Target Number by 1.

Gadgets

Translocation Field Generator

Rarity: Relic

A device about the size of a large paperback, humming quietly with contained energy.

When an attack would cause you to fail any base damage save or cross off your last base damage save, ignore the damage. The translocation field generator activates, teleporting you to a random location within 500 meters. The destination is guaranteed to be large enough for you to fit.

Personal Shield Generator

Rarity: Rare
Damage Saves (Shield): 12+/12+/12+

A fist-sized silver sphere with blue etching on its exterior.

A favorite of Imperial VIPs, personal shield generators project a field of force around themselves, protecting whatever is inside from ranged attacks. The field is invisible, but its edges shimmer in the same manner as the air above a candle.

Backpack-sized shield generators with the same statistics are Uncommon.

Shadow Cloak

Rarity: Uncommon

A two-meter by one-meter roll of fabric, black as the blackest night.

A shadow cloak absorbs light and blocks thermal radiation. Covering someone with a shadow cloak with no ventilation will kill them by overheating in fairly short order.

Active Stealth Cloak

Rarity: Relic

A two-meter by one-meter roll of fabric which shimmers in the slightest light.

An active stealth cloak, when powered on, displays on one side the scene from the other. If well-placed, it permits a few human-sized characters to hunker down behind it, invisible from the opposite side.

Make Concealment checks at +5.

Photovisor

Rarity: Common

A pair of lenses designed to be held up to the eyes, a photovisor is a combination tool: zooming cameras for far viewing, and low-light amplification. Straps hold it in place when it is serving the latter purpose.

See up to 120 meters in low light and 60 meters in darkness.

Thermal Viewer

Rarity: Uncommon

Similar in form to a photovisor, a thermal viewer is somewhat bulkier.

See up to 120 meters in darkness, or through walls at up to 60 meters.

Filtration Mask

Rarity: Ubiquitous

A breathing mask to cover the nose and mouth, connected by hoses to a satchel-sized filter unit carried on a shoulder strap.

Many worlds in the Empire have atmospheres which are non-toxic but not human-friendly. A filtration mask filters out harmful gases and, if necessary, provides a supply of oxygen.

Gyro Glove

Rarity: Rare

An oversize, segmented metal glove, similar in appearance to a power armor glove.

Gyro gloves use internal gyroscopes and stabilizers to allow humans to manipulate heavy loads with one hand.

Wearing a gyro glove allows you to wield a two-handed weapon one-handed, attacking at a -1 penalty.

Servo-Suit

Rarity: Common

A network of metal tubes, actuators, and servos in the rough shape of a human body.

Servo-suits are utility exoskeletons, amplifying the strength of the wearer. When wearing a servo-suit, add 10 to your effective Strength.

Donning a servo-suit takes 10 minutes. Its internal batteries last 1 hour. It can be powered externally by direct connection to an appropriate power supply.

Survival Suit

Rarity: Plentiful

A somewhat baggy garment with a transparent bubble helmet.

A survival suit permits humans to survive almost anywhere there is more than one tenth Homeworld atmospheric pressure, no matter the toxicity. The internal heaters in a survival suit are sufficient by themselves to handle the coldest of cold planets. A backpack refrigeration unit, included with the suit, is required for hot planets.

Comm Bead

Rarity: Ubiquitous

Comm beads are ear-sized networked radios. On their own, they have a communication range of up to 25 kilometers. Most human-inhabited worlds are equipped with relays and piggyback systems, however, which allow a person with a comm bead to contact anyone connected to the planetary network, as far up as high orbit on the far side of the world.

Comm Pack

Rarity: Common

On primitive worlds, or in situations where use of the planetary network is impossible, backpack comm packs link comm beads to more distant radio systems. A comm pack has a straight-line range of around 2,000 kilometers, sufficient to reach medium orbit over most worlds (provided the desired recipient is above the horizon). Planetary range is limited by ionospheric reflection effects, atmospheric scattering, and, to a degree, line of sight, and rarely exceeds a few hundred kilometers.

A comm pack must be set up before use, which takes one minute or one combat round. When set up, a comm pack is a suitable relay point for nearby comm beads.

A comm pack may also be used to eavesdrop on comm transmissions when the originating transmitter is within its own range of the comm pack. (For instance, to eavesdrop on a comm bead, the comm bead must be no further than 25 kilometers from the comm pack.) Roll Manipulate Technology against TN18+ for unsecured, unencrypted transmissions. Increase the difficulty when such hardening technologies are employed.

Medical Kit

Rarity: Ubiquitous

A satchel or messenger bag, filled with diagnostic and medical supplies.

The humble medical kit has saved more lives among the Imperial soldiery than any other piece of technology. When rolling to lend a helping hand, reduce the difficulty by 2. On failure, the target is stabilized. When rolling to remove incapacitation penalties, reduce the time required by one hour.

Single-Use Trauma Pack

Rarity: Plentiful

A satchel or messenger bag, containing a small skepsis engine, tubes and vials connected to a number of internal mechanisms, and an armband from which syringes and tubes sprout.

Of course, medics are not always on hand. Imperial artisans heard this feedback from the front, put pen to paper, and developed an automated solution. A single-use trauma pack, when connected to a wounded or dying human, quickly diagnoses the cause of injury, ignores it, and pumps the casualty so full of stimulants he temporarily forgets to kick the bucket.

Expend a single-use trauma pack to automatically succeed on a helping hand check. The target regains all his base damage saves and attacks and defends at no penalty. After 30 minutes, the stimulants wear off, and the target is incapacitated again.

Navigation Engine

Rarity: Uncommon

A tablet, twenty-five centimeters tall and fifteen across, with a display screen on the front.

General-purpose skepsis engines lack the computing power to handle the calculations required for jump navigation. Special-purpose engines provide extra oomph, supplementing the human computers in a jump ship's navigation department.

Make all Navigation checks at +2.

Voidsuit

Rarity: Ubiquitous

An inner pressure suit and a reinforced oversuit, plus a bubble helmet and backpack carbon dioxide scrubber.

The humble voidsuit belongs in every spacefaring adventurer's closet. Without it, surviving in vacuum is impossible.

Donning a voidsuit takes five minutes. You can reduce the time taken by rolling your effective Dexterity against TN18+. For each degree of success, reduce the time taken by one minute, to a minimum of one minute.

Hand Scanner

Rarity: Uncommon

A box, fifteen centimeters long by seven across, with a screen on top surrounded by a number of adjustment knobs, a pistol grip on the bottom, and an array of antennas in front.

Handheld deep radar units lack the range of their voidship-borne counterparts, of course, but can do many of the same things.

A hand scanner can detect lifesigns and power signatures within 60 meters. When within 10 meters of an object, it can indicate the composition of that object. When held against a wall or other solid surface, it can provide an outline of any rooms, voids, or other hollows up to 10 meters from the sensor head.

Fiddle with the knobs and roll Manipulate Technology against TN19+ to increase a hand scanner's range. For each degree of success, all of its features increase in range by 5 meters.

Psi Damper

Rarity: Relic (+4 Prosperity cost)

A small box, about the size of a pack of playing cards, featureless except for an activation switch and a status light.

Psi dampers were invented by artisans under contract to the Imperial Tagmata, while the Empire was engaged in a war of conquest over a little-known and since-exterminated alien species. These aliens were very strong psions, nearly on par with the Empire's own amplified psions; this caused trouble for the line infantry, and the psi damper was the result.

Psi dampers make psi use inside their 10-meter radius nearly impossible. Increase the difficulty of all psi ability checks for psi abilities originating or targeting an entity inside a psi damper's bubble by 20. When an ongoing psi ability enters a psi damper's bubble, the psion must pass a TN24+ check with the psi ability's linked psi skill.

Psi dampers are very nearly lost technology. Only a handful of artisans still know how to make them.

Psi Translator

Rarity: Rare

A small box, about the size of a coffee mug, with a speaker on one side, along with an activation switch and status light.

An active psi translator appears to a telepath to be a sentient mind; telepathic communications directed to the psi translator are converted to audible speech in a language chosen at the time the translator was constructed, and vice versa.

Psi translators are Rare in most of the galaxy, but Common to the Handed, who invented the technology in the first place.

Jump Pack

Rarity: Uncommon

A full-size metal backpack with large, downward-facing nozzles. Smaller reaction control nozzles sprout in clusters from its top corners.

A jump pack is a multiple-use combat mobility system. On activation, its main engines fire briefly to launch its wearer high into the air, then fire again just before touchdown to cushion the landing. The wearer aims by shifting his body weight; the reaction control system detects the change in weight distribution and fires its thrusters accordingly.

Jump to any point within 120 meters. A Jump Pack contains enough fuel for three jumps. Refueling requires specialty rocket fuel, available on board a jump ship or at a spaceport.

Flight Pack

Rarity: Rare

A slim, sleek metal backpack.

High-thrust, high-altitude hover engines are rare in the modern Empire. Finding them in sufficient size and quantity to lift a human is much easier than finding them in sufficient size and quantity to lift, say, a shuttle or air transport.

With a flight pack, you may fly. When flying, you may not use cover, your ranged defense value is increased by 5, and your movement speed is doubled. The flight pack's internal batteries last for three minutes or three combat rounds, and take 10 minutes to recharge when connected to a power grid.

Third Arm

Rarity: Relic

A two-meter articulated arm, composed of twenty ten-centimeter segments which interlock like a spine, which ends in a three-pronged claw and is connected to a harness.

Third arms are wonderful tools for mechanics and artificers who need to hold an item and work on it with both hands, or anchor themselves to a surface far off the ground.

With the Machine Control Implants gift, you can control a third arm as if it were a part of your body. Without it, roll Manipulate Technology. The difficulty to simply hold an item in front of you is TN18+. The difficulty to grab an anchor point and maneuver yourself into position in front of some other point is TN20+. The difficulty to do fine manipulation is TN24+.

Grappling Gun

Rarity: Common

A thirty-centimeter tube with a pistol grip, or a 150-centimeter tube designed to be fired from the shoulder. In both cases, a grappling hook protrudes from the business end.

Grappling guns used a compressed air charge to fire a weighted, multi-pronged hook designed to snag on protruding architecture well enough to support human climbing.

The pistol version has a range of 30 meters. The shoulder-fired version has a range of 120 meters. When firing, make a Hand Weapons or Specialist Weapons check (shooter's choice) against TN19+. On success, the hook catches. On failure, it fails to catch. Increase or reduce the difficulty for particularly smooth or particularly knobbly targets.

Shimmying across a largely horizontal line requires no skill check. Climbing a vertical line with a surface against which you can brace your feet requires an Athleticism check against TN16+. Succeeding on this check allows you to climb at 10 meters per minute. Increase the distance climbed by 2 meters per minute for every degree of success.

If there is no surface against which to brace your feet, the difficulty is TN18+, your climbing speed is 5 meters per minute, and each degree of success increases your climbing speed by 1 meter per minute.

Skepsis Tablet

Rarity: Plentiful

A display screen and *skepsis michanismos*[1] tied together, and themselves connected over radio to whatever networks are available nearby.

Skepsis tablets can be connected to other computer systems, using either a standard Imperial connector or jumper wires. In the latter case, roll Manipulate Technology or Jury-Rig at TN18+ to establish the connection.

Skepsis tablets have about the same comm range as comm beads. They must be within 25 kilometers of a compatible network to connect. Comm packs can relay skepsis tablet connections.

Grav Generator

Rarity: Rare

A suitcase-sized metal enclosure, with a control panel and display screen on one side.

A grav generator creates a localized gravitational field, operating on a similar principle to hover engines. Larger versions are a necessity in voidship construction. The portable form factor is much less common.

Activate a grav generator by passing a Manipulate Technology check against TN20+. A grav generator cannot be activated if it is moving relative to the local gravitational field. An activated grav generator cannot be moved relative to the surface on which it is resting, but can move inside the local gravitational field. When you activate a grav generator, you select its field direction and strength, and therefore the definition of 'down' and perceived gravitational acceleration (between 0 and 5 Homeworld-standard gravities) inside its field radius.

When a grav generator is activated, any local gravitational field within a 30-meter radius is replaced by the grav generator's field. The grav generator's field also serves as an inertial compensation field: accelerating or decelerating the field imposes no force on objects inside the field. Objects can pass freely in and out of the field.

1 'Skepsis' being (possibly) the participle 'thinking', and 'michanismos' being 'machine'.

Force Curtain

Rarity: Rare

Two collapsible metal poles, 50 centimeters long when fully collapsed and up to 5 meters long when fully extended. One pole has a small skepsis engine and display unit at its center.

A force curtain is a portable airlock. Extend the two poles to a desired length, fix one to each side of a hole or gap in some surface, and activate the force curtain, and an invisible, airtight field which shimmers blue at its edges appears between the two poles.

The field has normal-scale damage saves of 8+/8+/8+/8+. When the field loses its last damage save, it blinks out.

Bag of Parts

A satchel full of electric and electronic components is a crucial part of any off-the-cuff engineer's kit.

A bag of parts contains up to five abstractly-represented parts, which can be expended to provide bonuses on Jury-Rig checks, Repair checks, and Manipulate Technology checks where the task at hand is to operate broken or damaged machinery.

Parts in a bag of parts have a rarity. The bonus depends on the rarity: +1 for each rarity step. Expending a Ubiquitous part adds a +1 bonus to a check. A Plentiful part provides a +2 bonus. A Relic part provides a +6 bonus.

To obtain parts, you must disassemble technological items, taking one hour to do so per rarity step and gaining one part of the same rarity as the disassembled item at the end of the process. To disassemble vehicles, double the time and the number of parts gained. You may assume you have access to a ready supply of Ubiquitous items to disassemble, although doing so may bother the rest of your party.

You may pull the occasional small item of very limited to no mechanical use out of your bag of parts without expending a part. Some examples: a single power cell, a spark module for lighting a furnace, a handheld illuminator bulb, or a tiny motor. You may do so no more than 1 plus your Luck bonus times per session.

Analog Adventuring Gear

Ropes, tents, packs, canteens, rations, manual climbing equipment, handheld illuminators, and the like can be readily found from merchants, especially when orbiting a terrestrial world. You may assume that they are always available somewhere in a jump ship's bazaars, and are always Ubiquitous in rarity.

Psi Amplifiers

Most psi amplifiers require surgical implants in a psion's temples to function. When acquiring such a psi amplifier, you also acquire a set of implants if you don't already have them. You will have to find a surgeon to put them in place. The implants are standard across all psi amplifiers which require them. Installed implants are obviously visible, breaking the skin in a two-centimeter circle at a psion's temples.

Unless a different description is given, a psi amplifier is a thin, three-quarter circlet of silvery metal, custom-fit to a psion's head. The gap in the ring faces forward; its ends sit over the surgical implants.

Budget Psi Amplifier

Rarity: Common
Minimum Multiplier: 1.25
Maximum Multiplier: 2

A small metal enclosure the size of a deck of cards. On its side, there is an adjustment knob. A pair of adhesive pads attach to a psion's temples, their cables connecting back to the box.

Even human psions without formal training with a psi amplifier find it useful on occasion to have one. Budget psi amplifiers are relatively easy to find, and not ordinarily designed for permanent attachment.

Imperial-Pattern Psi Amplifier

Rarity: Uncommon
Minimum Multiplier: 1.5
Maximum Multiplier: 3

The standard psi amplifier model used by amplified psions in Imperial service, the imperial-pattern amplifier is highly versatile.

High-Gain Psi Amplifier

Rarity: Rare
Minimum Multiplier: 2.5
Maximum Multiplier: 4.25

High-gain psi amplifiers sacrifice low-end performance for an increased high-end power. With a high-gain amplifier, a psion is capable of even more titanic deeds than usual.

High-Range Psi Amplifier

Rarity: Rare
Minimum Multiplier: 1
Maximum Multiplier: 2.75

High-range psi amplifiers have an extremely wide range of amplification, but sacrifice some high-end power in exchange.

Efficient Psi Amplifier

Rarity: Relic
Minimum Multiplier: 1.5
Maximum Multiplier: 3

In terms of raw function, efficient psi amplifiers are no different from the standard Imperial amplifier. Efficient amplifiers, however, include logic circuitry which helps psions be more efficient with their abilities.

When using an efficient psi amplifier, reduce the psi stamina impact of psi ability use by 4 (to a minimum of 1 psi stamina per psi ability).

Low-Profile Psi Amplifier
Rarity: Relic
Minimum Multiplier: 1.5
Maximum Multiplier: 2.5

A set of four implants, with no accompanying circlet, made to be installed at a psion's temples and behind her ears. When installed, the implants are not visible, although they can be felt beneath the skin.

Some amplified psions do not wish to be identified as such. Entirely surgical amplifiers can be found, although they are less efficient.

Other

Drugs

Combat Stims
Rarity: Plentiful

A dose of combat stimulant improves its user's strength and reaction time. Mind the hangover.

For one hour, add +1 to all defense values, +1 to ranged attack rolls, and +1 to melee damage. Gain one temporary damage save at TN14+ minus your effective Constitution.

Alternately, for one hour, ignore the penalties from incapacitation.

After one hour elapses, subtract 3 from all defense values, 3 from ranged attack rolls, and 3 from melee damage for 3 hours. If you chose to ignore incapacitation penalties, those penalties return.

You may take up to three doses of combat stims at once. The benefits last up to three times as long, as does the hangover: three doses means three hours of benefits and nine hours of hangover.

When making acquisitions, combat stims come in packs of 10.

Recreational Drugs
Alcohol in any form, but particularly wine, is readily available anywhere humans live, and requires no Prosperity check to obtain in survivable quantities.

Harder drugs range from easy to find to very hard to find, based mainly on the lawfulness of a given locale. Hard drugs, too, require no Prosperity check, but they may require roleplay to find a supplier.

The harder your drug, the more likely it is to kill you, whether by overdose or by tainted supply. An overdose or a bad dose deals damage against your base damage saves, starting at around -2 damage for mild overdoses or mildly tainted batches and, as the two causes get worse, going up to 2 damage or more.

VII. Vehicles

Vehicles of every description roll, trundle, hover, and fly around the worlds of the Empire. The handful described here are a mere sampling, and you should feel free to create more as you need them.

Ground Vehicles

Wheeled Car

Rarity: Plentiful
Speed: 3
Damage Saves (Internals): 16+/16+ (mega)

Wheeled automobiles represent the majority of the galaxy's vehicles. They come in a wide array of shapes and sizes, from two-person sports cars to trucks capable of carrying several tons of cargo.

Ordinarily, they are unarmored, and therefore extremely vulnerable to weapons fire. Improvised armor made from whatever metal sheeting is on hand adds another mega-damage save at 14+.

Proper armor integrated into the body paneling adds an Armor layer of defense, with mega-damage saves at 12+/12+; such armor or a vehicle equipped with it is of Common rarity.

An Uncommon wheeled car may mount an infantry weapon in a turret, either in an open cargo bed or below breakaway panels.

Athati Palanquin

Athati must travel in large, heated palanquins to survive in atmospheric temperatures comfortable to humans. Around a palanquin, the air is notably warmer. Heat rolls off it in waves.

An athati palanquin's statistics are identical to a wheeled car's statistics, except it has a speed of 1.

A palanquin additionally has two fine manipulators on the ends of short robotic arms. These manipulators can bring items up to the palanquin's windows for inspection, or move them into an airlock to bring them into the palanquin's internal chamber.

Hovercar

Rarity: Common
Speed: 4
Damage Saves (Internals): 18+/18+/18+ (mega)

Hovercars use arrays of hover engines to float two to three feet above ground. They are much faster than wheeled vehicles, owing to their lower rolling friction, but less versatile as well. Hovering cargo vehicles are a rare sight, given the difficulty in building hover engines for chassis of such size.

Hovercars may be customized in the same manner as wheeled cars, increasing the rarities given for wheeled cars by one step.

When a hovercar crosses off a base damage save, roll 4d6 against TN15+. On failure, the hover engines fail, and the car drops to the ground and skids to a halt.

Handed Hover-Tank

When away from water, the Handed travel in hovering oblong fish tanks. Some tanks are just large enough to fit a Handed—about two and a half meters long and one meter in the other dimensions. Others are much larger, sufficient in size for several Handed in tight quarters, or for one to swim in small circles.

Both types share statistics with hovercars, except they have speeds of 2.

A hover-tank does not have exterior manipulators, given the Handed talent for telekinesis. It does have a small airlock, used to bring items into the tank, and usually an external psi translator.

Personnel Carrier

Rarity: Common (+4 Prosperity cost)
Speed: 2
Damage Saves (Internals): 12+/14+/14+ (mega)
Damage Saves (Armor): 12+/12+
Weapons Systems: Light Support Plasma Gun

Many of the Imperial Tagmata are mechanized, and tracked armored personnel carriers are their vehicles of choice. They can carry a dozen passengers safely, albeit in spartan conditions.

Most include a pintle-mounted light support plasma gun, manned by the vehicle commander through his open hatch, for suppression when approaching a target area and unloading.

An Uncommon personnel carrier might mount a vehicle plasma gun (see Weapons Systems below) or a rocket or guided missile launcher.

Rare personnel carriers may be refit to serve another role entirely—self-propelled artillery, perhaps, or air defense.

Tank

Rarity: Uncommon
Speed: 1
Damage Saves (Internals): 10+/12+/14+
Damage Saves (Armor): 8+/10+/12+
Weapons Systems: Vehicle Projectile Cannon, Light Machine Gun (x2)

Heavy armored fighting vehicles are less common in Imperial service than in other military services, the Empire's vast corps of power-armored infantry serving the same purpose. Heavy armor is still useful in certain scenarios, however, and is frequently seen in high-intensity wars around the galaxy.

A Rare tank might include a coaxial multilaser or autocannon as a secondary weapon. A Relic tank might have more damage saves or two primary weapons.

Air Vehicles

Atmospheric Fighter

Rarity: Uncommon
Speed: 3
Maneuver: +3
Damage Saves (Internals): 8+/10+/12+/14+
Weapons Systems: Vehicle Plasma Cannon (Fixed), Aerial Missile Rack (Fixed)

Designed to hunt down and destroy other aircraft, an atmospheric fighter is a sleek machine easily capable of supersonic speeds.

Most atmospheric fighters dispense with vertical takeoff capability in favor of increased performance. Such fighters require fixed bases and long runways to operate. Some fighters can divert engine gases downward to take off vertically, but do so at a performance penalty. Decrease a vertical takeoff fighter's speed by 1.

Rare or Relic fighters might have shield generators, extra missile racks, or better gun armaments.

Atmospheric Transport

Rarity: Common
Speed: 2
Maneuver: +1
Damage Saves (Internals): 12+/12+/14+

Moderately-sized atmospheric transports use rotating engines for vertical takeoffs, and are capable of lifting a few dozen people in cramped conditions, six to eight people in luxurious conditions, or a few tonnes of cargo in a bare cargo bay.

Increasing the rarity may buy you an Armor defense layer, enhanced speed or maneuverability, turreted defensive armament, or a fixed missile rack.

Heavy Lift Quadrotor

Rarity: Uncommon
Speed: 1
Maneuver: 0
Damage Saves (Internals): 12+/12+/12+/14+

Large quadrotor cargo lifters serve to haul heavy cargoes which do not need to go to orbit: hundreds of people, or dozens to hundreds of tonnes of cargo. Their design means they are maneuverable for their size; in an absolute sense, they are not maneuverable at all.

Increasing the rarity may buy you turreted defensive armaments (several turrets per rarity step), armor or shields, or enhanced speed.

Weapon Systems

Vehicle Plasma Cannon

Damage: 0 (mega)
Optimum Range: 0-6
Range Penalty: -4
Actions Per Magazine: 3
Anti-Air

Plasma weapons see less use as primary vehicle weapons owing to their inherent inaccuracy and short range. They are nevertheless useful in an anti-infantry or light anti-vehicle role.

When mounted on an aircraft, a vehicle plasma cannon's optimum range is 0.

Vehicle Laser Cannon

Damage: 1 (mega)
Optimum Range: 3-20
Range Penalty: -2
Actions Per Magazine: 2

Laser weapons, long-ranged and precise, are an excellent fit for the needs of armored fighting vehicles.

When mounted on an aircraft, a vehicle plasma cannon's optimum range is 0-1.

Vehicle Projectile Cannon

Damage: 2 (mega)
Optimum Range: 2-12
Range Penalty: -3
Actions Per Magazine: 1

It's difficult to go wrong with the classics, and large-bore rifled projectile cannon have been competitive tank guns for thousands of years.

Field Howitzer

Damage: 4 (mega)
Optimum Range (direct fire): 4-10
Range Penalty (direct fire): -4
Actions Per Magazine: 1

Artillery is designed to fire from a distance, but in the event that indirect fire is impossible or enemies are approaching its position, an artillery piece can also engage targets directly.

See page 148 for information on indirect fire.

Aerial Missile Rack

Damage: 1 (mega)
Maximum Range: 6
Actions Per Magazine: 4
Reload Time: n/a

Missile hardpoints provide an aircraft (or ground vehicle) with long-range air to air punch.

Anti-aircraft missiles use a combination of midcourse command guidance from the firing platform and infrared terminal guidance. Make your attack roll at +4. On hit, roll 4d6 against TN12+. On failure, the missile loses lock and fails to deal damage.

The maximum range is quoted in air combat regions. See page 151 for more information on aerial battlefields. Halve the maximum range when firing from a ground vehicle.

VIII. Jump Ships and Voidships

Jump Ships

The source of your wealth as a Navarch and company, a jump ship is more than simply a carriage between the stars. It is a massive edifice, tens of kilometers long, with hangar space for many ships of trade and war which themselves stretch more than a kilometer in length. It resembles nothing so much as a flying city, millions or even tens of millions of crew and civilians living permanently aboard, and hundreds of thousands of voidship owners and crew from those vessels docked in the ship's massive bays.

Hermes' Landing: a Brief Tour of an Average Jump Ship

Hermes' Landing was built in the 21st year of the reign of Alexander CVIII, some five hundred years before the present day, and served for two centuries as a transport for elements of the 102nd Fleet of the Imperial Navy in both the Second and Third Wars of Reconquest. After suffering heavy damage in the Twenty-First Battle of New Belfast it was decommissioned and sold as a hulk to Heinrich Benz of Benz Yards at Constantinople. Benz sold his holdings to refit *Hermes' Landing*, and became a Navarch operating on the border between Constantinople and the human territories which rebelled to end the Fourth War of Reconquest. She was passed down through three generations, and now is owned by Karl Benz, great-grandson of Heinrich.

Hermes' Landing is 20 kilometers in overall length. Her main hull is a rough cube of about 10 kilometers on a side. Forward, four spires 10 kilometers in length and 3 kilometers by 3 in the other dimensions contain her hangar bays. She has the capability to dock additional ships in between the hangar spires, but rarely does so. She serves in a dangerous area, and her Navarch prefers to keep his clients safe behind the hull.

The majority of the space aboard is occupied by the hangar decks, or the jump engines and their dozens of fusion plants apiece. Much of the remainder, slightly less than a tenth of her volume, is occupied by habitation decks for the crew and the civilians who live aboard. The Navarch's palace and the command decks are situated atop the after portion of the ship.

The palace is a marvel of architecture, built in the Arabian Revival style popular at the time of *Hermes' Landing*'s refit. An example of some of the most sumptuously luxurious living quarters ever built, it stretches from the atop the aft hull of the ship almost a kilometer down, waterfalls cascading around it before finally reaching the palace gardens, which themselves have a commanding view of the upper habitation deck. Besides the Navarch's quarters, the palace contains apartments for the Navarch's most trusted friends, each of which dwarfs the space available to anyone living on the habitation decks below.

The bridge deck, atop the palace, is large enough to hold the whole of the several thousand people who make up *Hermes' Landing*'s command staff. The Navarch rarely has reason to interact with more than ten or twenty, those highest members of his crew who relay his orders down dozens of links in the chain of command before they reach the men who execute them.

Hermes' Landing is armed, considering the danger of her area of operation, and is more than a match for most of the hostile destroyers and cruisers she might encounter during her time in the rebellious territories. Dozens of laser and plasma cannons dot her spine, and she is both shielded and armored against warship-grade weapons.

She is not particularly fast through jump space, able to make only 20 light-years per hour, and she spends half her time in normal space charging her jump capacitors. Her owners have made their fortunes turning this into a positive trait; traders who carry general goods rather than planet-specific luxuries do very well when faced with so many stops.

Building Jump Ships

Cost

The most obvious limitation on obtaining a jump ship is money. Of course, it is not necessary to keep track of the costs drachma by drachma, or even in terms of the much more abstract Prosperity score. There is another currency, used solely for purchasing the modules which will turn into your jump ship: the Ship Point.

The Ship Point represents a number of things: not merely the wealth to afford the parts of your ship, but also the connections within the Imperial bureaucracy required to obtain them, the wherewithal to get them from their places of production to the place where your jump ship is being built or refit, and finally enough favor with the yardmaster to obtain his crews for long enough to get your ship together. All of these things take time and effort to obtain. Navarchoi receive a number of ship points at character creation. If there are no Navarchoi in the party at character creation, other members may exchange Prosperity Points for Ship Points on a two-for-one basis.

Things become rather more difficult once your characters enter the galaxy. The basic formula is Prosperity plus time plus effort equals Ship Points. This exchange involves a *permanent* sacrifice of *maximum* Prosperity; any which is spent to be turned into Ship Points is lost. Three maximum Prosperity yields one Ship Point.

There are no hard and fast rules for precisely what quantities go into the equation, and it is difficult to quantify effort in the best of times, but I will provide these rough rules of thumb. A party not seeking Ship Points may nevertheless have the opportunity to spend 10 to 20 Prosperity per year on them. A party actively seeking Ship Points between other adventures may find opportunities for 25 to 40 Ship Points per year. A party seeking Ship Points to the exclusion of everything else can come across enough relevant work to convert Prosperity into up to 75 Ship Points per year.

Wealth is not the only limiting factor. Not just anyone can provide work which yields Ship Points. A planetary governor on a backwater world lacks the influence needed to find you a place in a busy yardmaster's schedule.

Modules

Mechanically, a jump ship comprises a number of **modules**[1].

Start with one or several Jump Ship Hull modules[2]. Each Jump Ship Hull module represents usable internal space, along with the life support systems, crew accommodations and habitation decks, and small-scale power systems required to run the above. Each Hull module provides five slots for other modules, such as jump drives, jump capacitors, sublight engines, weapons, armor, and hangars.

Your jump ship must have at least one Hull module, as well as at least one Sublight Engine module, one Jump Capacitor module, and one Jump Drive module.

Further, your jump ship should probably include one or several Hangar Deck modules, which produce the only resource you'll have to track when constructing and operating your jump ship: **upkeep**.

Upkeep

Upkeep represents the money which is required to operate your jump ship, to maintain it structurally, to pay the crew, and to deal with annoying customs officials when entering new systems. All modules except for Hangar Deck modules consume upkeep. Hangar Deck modules produce upkeep when filled with trading vessels.

If your jump ship's total upkeep is negative—if Hangar Deck modules produce less upkeep than the other modules consume—you must pay current Prosperity Points at the end of each game month equal to the deficit.

In any case, you may make Trade rolls when making trade stops to increase your current and maximum Prosperity. See the Trade section on page 110 for more information.

Freebies

There are some typical internal features and resources you get for free when building a jump ship.

First, you have a gigantic command deck, suited to hold the thousand or two officers required to coordinate all aspects of the jump ship's operation. You also have a karaviarch, a ship's captain, to summarize information from your officer corps, brief you on the your destinations and other items of interest, and run the ship while you're off having adventures.

Second, you have a palace suitably impressive for your station[3]. This includes not just the building or buildings, but the staff to go with it: cleaners, chefs, butlers, valets and lady's maids, gardeners and groundskeepers, and at least one majordomo.

1 This is a concession for rules simplicity. In-universe, jump ships are *not* modular.
2 The Voidship Primary Hull and Voidship Secondary Hull modules are for smaller ships, and will be discussed later.
3 *Morana*, a jump ship which appears in RPJ Sci-Fi fiction, has an Autumn Palace, kept permanently in autumn blaze by an army of servants who remove bare trees and replace them with others just beginning to turn, storing the extras in a bevy of parks and climate-controlled warehouses elsewhere in the ship. When I say impressive, I mean *impressive*. As a Navarch, you're in the one percent of the one percent of the one percent to a few more repetitions. Absurd displays of wealth are par for the course.

Third, you have a small security force of about ten men per Hull module, armed with light weapons and not armored for combat. Their job is to keep the peace in the habitation decks and serve as your honor guard. They aren't soldiers, however, and will balk at being asked to serve in that role.

Finally, you have one unarmed shuttlecraft per Hangar Deck module with two pilots each, as well two non-combat ground vehicles and drivers.

Your staff may turn into recurring NPCs with character sheets of their own, but until they do, their effective skill levels in their various areas of expertise are equal to your jump ship's base crewmember skill level.

In-System Travel

Travel inside a star system is not difficult; voidship sublight engines are powerful, and inertial compensators widespread. Sublight engines are not, however, reaction engines. They resemble reaction engines, glowing when in use and expelling exhaust, but these are byproducts of their actual mechanism of operation, which involves pushing in jump space instead of normal space.

For each level of sublight speed, a voidship's speed increases by 0.5 AU per day.

Void Navigation

A skilled void navigator can increase a ship's sublight speed by correctly accounting for local jump space conditions. Make a Navigation (Void) check against TN18+. For each degree of success, increase the ship's speed by 0.1 AU per day.

Jump Travel

Travel between the stars is a time-consuming process, in part due to the extraordinary power consumption of jump drives.

Mechanically, though, the rules are simple. A jump ship's jump speed in light-years per hour is a function of the number of Jump Engine modules it possesses. Its endurance follows the following rule of thumb: one Jump Capacitor Bank module powers one jump engine for 50 hours in jump space. One Jump Capacitor Bank module not currently being used to power a jump engine recharges in 50 hours.

Jump Navigation

Unlike normal space, jump space has structure to it: shoals which cannot be crossed, and currents and winds which push and pull on ships traveling through them. The quickest course between two points is never a straight line, and in a race between two jump ships separated only by the skill of their navigators, the better-navigated ship will almost always arrive first. When traveling through jump space, players can make **navigation checks** to improve their ship's jump speed.

When a jump ship enters jump space, the gamemaster rolls 1d6 in secret to determine the local conditions. On 1, jump space is becalmed, and the difficulty of navigation checks is TN16+. On 2-4, conditions are average, and the difficulty is TN19+. On 5, stormy conditions prevail, and the difficulty is TN22+. On 6, the ship jumps into a gale, and the difficulty is TN25+.

One player may make a Navigation (Jump) check against the above difficulty. Per degree of success, decrease the ship's travel time by 10%. On failure, increase the ship's travel time by 5%. On critical success, halve the ship's travel time; on critical failure, double it.

Successful navigation checks may result in arriving at a destination with partially-charged jump capacitor banks. In this case, round down to the nearest hour to determine the jump capacitor's remaining capacity. It recharges at a rate of one hour jump time per hour spent charging.

Jump Safety

Safe jump travel carries with it a number of conditions. To safely enter jump space, a ship must be far into the outer system, at least 40 AU from the star. The jump capacitor to be used for the jump must be fully charged.

Unsafe jump travel is possible, though risky. If closer than 40 AU to the star or jumping with a partially charged capacitor, you must make a Navigation (Jump) check. Start at TN14+. If more than 20 AU from the star, add 2 to the difficulty. If less than 20 AU but more than 10 AU distant, add 5. If closer than 10 AU to the star, add 8. Add 4 for a partially charged jump capacitor.

On success, the jump goes smoothly. On failure, roll for internal damage. (See page 113.)

Happenings Aboard

Even the smallest jump ship is as large as a small city, with a total population in the low hundreds of thousands. Many are crew, stoking the vast reactors which power the jump capacitors, maintaining the engines, manning the maneuvering thrusters, or doing other work throughout the enormous bulk of the ship. Many more live aboard as well: the families of the crew, as well as resident businessmen and tradesmen who serve the ship's other residents.

A jump ship's habitation decks are neighborhoods in their own right, comprising housing, entertainments, and even hydroponic farms. Add to this permanent population a large and changing population of merchants, travelers, and crew from the vessels docked in the jump ship's hangar decks, and it becomes clear that, even while a jump ship is traveling or recharging its jump capacitors in deep space, far from any inhabited world, ten thousand stories play out every day within its confines.

These happenings aboard are excellent fodder for adventures, and lend flavor and depth to the only permanent home most player characters have. In a long RPJ Sci-Fi campaign, they should not be neglected.

Trade Rolls

The best course between two notable systems, expressed in terms of the systems a jump ship visits en route, is very rarely the same as the shortest. Since the income a jump ship produces for its owners comes not only from fixed rents, but also from tariffs on trades made aboard, it is in the interest of a Navarch to choose a route that maximizes the opportunity for money to be made.

When traveling, you may opt to make **trade stops** along the way, dropping anchor at an inhabited world and allowing the merchants and traders docked in your jump ship's hangars to do business with the locals. In wealthy, high-density areas, like the swath of prosperous territory between Homeworld and Constantinople, you can always find a suitable world to trade with. In areas of middling density and prosperity, like the regions around Athens and Ephesus, make a Navigation (Jump) check against TN17+. In low-density or poor regions, like Sparta and its surrounds, make a Navigation (Jump) check against TN20+. On success, you find a world to trade with.

A trade stop requires a moderate time investment, taking about two weeks[1]. A character may make a Logistics check against TN18+ to accelerate the process, shortening the time taken by one day per degree of success.

At the end of a trade stop, make a Barter check against TN18+ for prosperous worlds, TN21+ for worlds of middling wealth, or TN24+ for poor worlds. Add your jump ship's Upkeep surplus to the roll. Your party gains 1 Prosperity per degree of success.

Voidships

Though jump ships are a particular class of voidship, the term 'voidship' in everyday use refers to all spacefaring vessels without jump drives of their own, everything from massive superfreighters and battleships to shuttles, fighter wings, and runabouts.

Building Voidships

In general, voidships are constructed from the same modules jump ship are. Voidships impose additional restrictions on how they can be used, however.

First, voidships may not use the Jump Engines, Jump Capacitor Bank, or Hangar Deck modules; in all cases, they're too small to carry such modules in sufficient quantity; nor may they use the Jump Ship Hull module.

Second, when used to construct voidships, modules are classified as primary or secondary. Main weapons batteries (all weapons, excluding the Secondary Battery and Point Defense Battery modules) and defensive modules (Hull Armor and Void-screen Array) are primary. All other modules are secondary.

The basic building blocks of voidships are voidship hull modules: Voidship Primary Hull and Voidship Secondary Hull. A Primary Hull module can hold two primary modules; a Secondary Hull can hold three secondary modules.

A voidship's size in Equivalent Volume Units is its number of Voidship Primary Hull modules its number of Voidship Secondary Hull modules.

1 Depending on the circumstances, it may also call for a one-off adventure.

Upkeep

Ignore the upkeep cost of modules installed on voidships. A voidship simply sitting in a hangar has no monthly upkeep cost. When active, a voidship's monthly upkeep cost in current Prosperity points is its size in Equivalent Volume Units.

Fighters and Small Craft

Many jump ships and voidships carry their own small craft, shuttles, dropships, and tenders for ferrying VIPs, crew, and cargo to and from plants and space stations. Some voidships and jump ships also carry wings of fighters for self-defense.

Building Small Craft

Building fighters and small craft differs from building ordinary voidships. Fighters and small craft are built using a different module list, the small craft module list starting on page 124.

First, select a hull. Each small craft design has only one hull, which controls how many primary and secondary modules it has and how much it costs in Ship Points. Ship Point costs are given per wing; a wing is 72 craft. You can buy a single example of a ship for 1 Ship Point. You can also buy single examples of off-the-rack designs by making an acquisition check as described on page 52. When buying off the rack, your gamemaster designs the ship to approximately your specifications.

Second, select modules. Each module in the small craft module list indicates whether it is a primary module or a secondary module.

Small craft do not have base crewmember skill level. Piloting them is a specialist job, and you must obtain specialists capable of doing so to operate small craft. Use their piloting skill level wherever base crewmember skill is called for.

Upkeep

For fighters and small craft in one-wing quantities, size in Equivalent Volume Units is 1, and monthly upkeep cost in current Prosperity points is 3. For smaller numbers of small craft, size and upkeep are negligible.

Maintenance

Void travel places great stress on a voidship's systems; jump travel doubly so. Any voidship operating independently must make a **maintenance check** each month. Voidships which remain docked in a jump ship or at a space station, landed, or otherwise out of service for the entire month are not operating independently and need not make a maintenance check.

Make a ship skill check: Maintenance+Repair (Voidship). For jump ships, the Target Number is TN18+ plus the number of Hull modules in your jump ship. For voidships, the Target Number is TN18+ plus half the number of Primary and Secondary Hull modules in your voidships. For small craft, the Target Number is TN20+ for a full wing or TN18+ for a single small craft. On success, do nothing.

On failure, add a tally mark to your voidship's sheet under the **deferred maintenance** heading. The gamemaster may erase a deferred maintenance tally to add a -2 penalty to any ship skill check except a maintenance check.

Failed maintenance checks indicate that some part or subsystem has failed, and that spares are not readily available. You may remove deferred maintenance tallies by purchasing and installing spare parts; when sufficient roleplay has occurred, the gamemaster may erase a deferred maintenance tally without adding a penalty.

Internal Damage

In combat, jump ships and voidships (but not fighters or small craft) can take **internal damage** when their defenses are penetrated. Choose a random module, then see page 154 for information on resolving internal damage.

Ship Traits

Ship traits add unique flavor to voidships. You may add up to two gifts to any voidship you design, at the cost of one fault per gift.

If you're feeling particularly adventurous, you may freely add any number of faults without corresponding gifts.

Gifts

Dependable

+1 Maintenance

Even before it was yours, your ship had a reputation for proper functioning and easy repair work.

When the gamemaster erases a deferred maintenance tally, he applies a -1 penalty to a ship skill check instead of -2.

Old Warhorse

+1 base crewmember skill

Your ship has a long and distinguished record of military service. Nobody can work aboard for long without being buoyed by a sense of pride and martial zeal.

Turn Of Speed

+1 speed in combat

Your engineers know your ship so well that, when the need is especially dire, they can push the engines a bit harder and pour on a bit more speed.

Faults

Psionic Feedback

Jump space is widely reported to cause feelings of unease, no matter what Imperial natural philosophy says. On some ships, it goes further. The psionic impact of jump space has seeped into the very bones of your vessel. Sometimes, unease becomes fear; sometimes, vague fears manifest in terrifying reality.

This fault is essentially a license for your gamemaster to tell you creepy jump space horror stories on a more frequent basis than usual. There are some guidelines in the Gamemaster's Guide document. (Note to self: finish the Gamemaster's Guide and release it.)

Rowdy

Some voidships have a reputation for quiet, efficient crews. Yours is not one of them. Drunkenness, fighting, and gambling are the most popular leisure activities aboard, and the hab decks feel more like Deadwood or Tombstone than a modern Imperial city.

Conspiratorial

Some voidships have a reputation for quiet, efficient crews. Yours seems like one at first glance, but look beneath the surface, and you'll find a vast web of secret societies, conspiracies, and plots all competing with one another for dominance in the hab decks.

Unreliable

As fast as your engineers can patch your ship's ailing systems, more break down.

Reduce the difficulty of maintenance checks by 1, but add two deferred maintenance tallies on failure instead of one.

Quirks

External Docking Ports

Add bonus hangar bay space (in Equivalent Volume Units) up to half of your hangar bay space from Hangar Bay modules. If, in combat, your jump ship's shields go down, ships occupying these Equivalent Volume Units may be destroyed.

Jump ships only.

Ship Skills

As will be described later, ships have levels in certain **ship skills**. They furthermore have a **base crewmember skill**. A **ship skill check** rolls one of the ship's skills. Three ship skills are pertinent to our discussion of combat: Fire Control, Offensive Maneuver, and Defensive Maneuver.

To determine the effective level for a ship skill check, take the ship skill level. Then, pick a crewmember to make the roll. Add the ship skill level and the crewmember's effective level in an appropriate skill to determine the **effective ship skill level**. Rules requiring ship skill checks will note the appropriate skill. For instance, Fire Control+Gunnery (Voidship) refers to a ship skill check using the ship's Fire Control skill level and a crewmember's effective Gunnery (Voidship) level.

For opposed rolls, add the opposing ship's effective ship skill level to TN14+.

If no character or NPC has an appropriate skill to determine the effective ship skill level, use the ship's base crewmember skill level.

Skill List

Offensive Maneuver

Offensive Maneuver represents a voidship's effectiveness at offensive combat maneuvering. Thrust to mass ratio, turning rate, and top speed all factor into a ship's ability to close to a desired range and move into a good firing position.

Defensive Maneuver

Defensive Maneuver represents a voidship's ability to evade fire. Turning rates and lateral and reverse accelerations play into it.

Fire Control

Fire Control represents a voidship's ability to direct fire centrally. Central fire direction improves the accuracy of all of a voidship's weapons.

Long-Range Sensors

Long-Range Sensors determines how effective a voidship is at detecting vessels at long ranges, on the order of hundreds of millions of kilometers.

For each level of Long-Range Sensors, your ship's long-range sensor range increases by 2 AU[1]. Long-range sensors indicate a ship's position relative to your own and its rough size, one of small voidship, large voidship, or jump ship.

Divide your ship's sensor range by 5 when looking for small craft.

Double it when looking for jump shocks, the space-time disturbances caused by a voidship entering or leaving jump space.

Short-Range Sensors

Short-Range Sensors determines how effective a voidship is at identifying nearby targets and pulling further information from the sensor returns.

For each level of Short-Range Sensors, your ship's short-range sensor range increases by 200,000 kilometers[2]. Short-range sensors provide a detailed image of the exterior of a voidship.

At half range, you can scan for other features: life signatures, power signatures, weapon and void-screen status, and the like.

1 2 AU is the distance from Homeworld to the furthest point on its orbit. 20 AU is the distance from the sun to Uranus.
2 200,000 kilometers is roughly half the distance from Homeworld to the Moon. 2,000,000 kilometers is about the distance from Jupiter to its moon Callisto.

Maintenance

Maintenance determines how easy a voidship is to keep in flying and fighting trim. Voidships with high Maintenance scores have more internal machine shops, maintenance access panels, and modular systems.

Voidship Module List

On the following pages, a list of modules is provided, along with a brief description and all relevant gameplay information.

Jump Ship Hull

Ship Point Cost: 10
+5 module slots
Grants Hull defense (layer 3)

Hull modules represent the space available within your jump ship's hull. Size is one of the most expensive parts of a jump ship; the necessary bracing against the stresses of jump space and the rigors of travel through normal space requires careful attention from a skilled artisan and the labor of hundreds of thousands of slaves to execute.

Hull damage saves start at 14+/14+/14+. Each time you add a hull module, you may either add a new 14+ damage save to the hull saves list, or reduce the Target Number for one hull damage save by 2.

Voidship Primary Hull

Ship Point Cost: 5
+2 primary module slots
Grants Hull defense (layer 3)

Voidships are ordinarily built around a central core containing the most vital systems and spaces.

A primary module slot may contain any primary module: main weapons batteries (all weapons except for the Secondary Battery and Point Defense Battery modules) and defensive modules (Thickened Hullmetal Plating and Void-Screen Array).

Hull damage saves start at 14+/14+/14+. Each time you add a primary hull module, you may either add a new 14+ damage save to the hull saves list or reduce the Target Number for one hull damage save by 2.

Voidship Secondary Hull

Ship Point Cost: 5
+3 secondary module slots
Grants Hull defense (layer 3)

Around a voidship's central core, voidshipyards build hull galleries to contain secondary systems.

A secondary module slot may contain any secondary module: any module not listed in the Voidship Primary Hull entry.

Hull damage saves start at 14+/14+/14+. Each time you add a secondary hull module, you may reduce the Target Number for one hull damage save by 2.

Primary Engineering Deck

Ship Point Cost: 10
-2 Upkeep
+1 Long-Range Sensors
+2 Short-Range Sensors
+1 Offensive Maneuvers
+1 Defensive Maneuvers
+1 Fire Control
+2 Maintenance
+2 to base crewmember skill level
Limit 1 per ship

Though a jump ship might contain dozens of subsidiary engineering decks, they are controlled from a single locus—the primary engineering deck.

When installed on a jump ship, a Primary Engineering Deck counts as a Jump Engines module and a Jump Capacitor Bank module for the purposes of jump travel.

Secondary Engineering Deck

Ship Point Cost: 5
-1 Upkeep
+2 Maintenance
+1 base crewmember skill level

An army of engineers is necessary to keep a voidship in peak operating condition. Secondary engineering spaces, spread throughout the ship, provide convenient bases for those who operate far from the primary engineering deck.

Hangar Deck

Ship Point Cost: 10
+10 Equivalent Volume Units

A Hangar Deck consists of 16 Equivalent Volume Units, each of which produces 1 Upkeep if filled by trade ships. If you elect to place your own smaller voidships into your jump ship's hangar bays, they will take up Equivalent Volume Units and reduce the Hangar Deck's upkeep production.

Small Craft Hangar

Ship Point Cost: 5

A small craft hangar bay permits a voidship to carry a wing of small craft.

Engines

Ship Point Cost: 10
-1 Upkeep
+1 ship sublight speed

Enormous batteries of sublight engines are necessary to propel void ships, and jump ships especially.

Combat Thrusters

Ship Point Cost: 10
-1 Upkeep
+2 Offensive Maneuvering *or* +2 Defense Maneuvering *or* +1 to each

Thrusters strategically placed around a voidship's hull propel it in unexpected ways during combat.

Atmospheric Landing Thrusters

Ship Point Cost: 5
-1 Upkeep
Ship must be 5 Equivalent Volume Units or smaller

Atmospheric landing thrusters allow ships of sufficiently moderate bulk to set down on most inhabitable planets. The very highest-gravity worlds may be out of reach.

Jump Engines

Ship Point Cost: 10
-1 Upkeep
+20 light-years per hour jump speed

Jump engines are the reason for jump ships. The titanic energies required to punch from this realm into jump space require power plants more suited to a hive city than a voidship and an array of focusing crystals the size of boulders. A thousand navigators work around the clock to plot safe courses through jump space's swirling currents.

Jump ships may travel at no more than 100 light-years per hour.

Jump Capacitor Bank

Ship Point Cost: 10
-1 Upkeep

Each Jump Capacitor Bank module may run a single Jump Engine module for 50 hours on a full charge. A jump capacitor bank, when not powering a jump engine, charges to full power in 50 hours. See the Jump Travel rules on page 109 for further information.

Cargo Hold

Ship Point Cost: 5

Though your quarters aboard ship are large, it would be the height of bad taste to sully their richly-decorated beauty with crates of goods and supplies. A cargo hold provides space to store small voidcraft (such as shuttles), ground vehicles, and bulk supplies where they can be both guarded and out of sight.

As far as personal possessions go, a single cargo hold module should suffice to hold everything you might acquire during a long and storied career, but gamemasters should of course rely on their better judgment if things get too out-of-hand.

You may instead choose to fill a cargo hold with trade goods. To buy trade goods sufficient to fill one cargo hold, make a Barter check against TN14+ for prosperous worlds, TN17+ for middle-wealth worlds, or TN20+ for poor worlds. Spend 10 current Prosperity minus the Barter check's degree of success.

To sell trade goods from one cargo hold, make Barter check against TN14+ for prosperous worlds, TN17+ for middle-wealth worlds, or TN20+ for poor worlds. On success, gain 1 maximum Prosperity. You may not sell trade goods in the same star system you purchased them from.

Artisan's Workshop

Ship Point Cost: 5

An artisan's workshop is a place for an artisan to work, giving you the ability to manufacture your own equipment. Before you may begin, however, you must first lure an artisan aboard, which in turn requires influence enough to convince him that traveling the stars will be more lucrative for him than letting customers come to him.

Every month, an artisan's workshop may be used to produce 10 Upkeep *or* to produce goods with a Prosperity cost of TN24+ or less.

An artisan's workshop may produce goods with Prosperity costs greater than TN24+ by spending longer periods of time. To determine the production time in months, divide the Prosperity cost by 24, rounding up. After that many months, the goods are complete.

Sanatorium

Ship Point Cost: 5
-1 Upkeep

Aboard voidships not equipped with a specialized facility for medical care, such care is performed wherever a temporary sickbay can be set up, typically on top of tables in a crew mess.

A sanatorium, on a jump ship, or sickbay, on a smaller voidship, provides actual hospital beds in sufficient quantity for the ship's population (perhaps twenty on a large voidship, up to one or two hundred on a jump ship of average size), plus an operating room or two and storerooms for specialty medical supplies.

Barracks

Ship Point Cost: 5
-2 Upkeep

Drill space, storage, and quarters for up to 40,000 professional soldiers, a barracks is a fine investment for the security-conscious Navarch.

Manpower and food are essentially free, but equipment is not. You'll have to acquire weapons and armor for your troops.

The Imperial Ministry of War's 998th Tagma is built from troops carried aboard jump ships. If you have sufficient influence in the Empire, you may apply to join the 998th Tagma; if you are accepted, the Empire will pay to equip your soldiers, but you may be called to carry your troops and other Imperial forces into war zones.

Naval Billets

Ship Point Cost: 2
-2 Upkeep
+1 Fire Control
+1 base crewmember skill level

Naval billets are special quarters for combat-trained crew.

Fire Directors

Ship Point Cost: 5
-2 Upkeep
+2 Fire Control
+2 Offensive Maneuver for missiles fired from this ship

Centralized fire control systems dramatically improve a voidship's warfighting capabilities, increasing the accuracy of its weapons.

Deep-Radar Array

Ship Point Cost: 3
-1 Upkeep
+2 Short-Range Sensors

Deep radar is a short-ranged imaging sensor, capable of high-resolution scans of both the outside and inside of nearby objects.

Lordar Array

Ship Point Cost: 3
-1 Upkeep
+2 Long-Range Sensors

Lordar (long-range detection and ranging) is a long-ranged non-imaging sensor. It provides bearing and distance to targets beyond deep radar range, along with a rough idea of target size.

Thickened Hullmetal Plating

Ship Point Cost: 15
-1 Offensive Maneuver
Grants Armor defense (layer 2)

Armor plating is a traditional and reliable method of protecting a voidship from weapons fire. It requires no extra maintenance, but does reduce a ship's combat agility.

The first Thickened Hullmetal Plating module grants damage saves of 8+/8+/11+. For each subsequent module, you may either add a new Armor save at 14+ or reduce an existing Armor save's Target Number by 3.

A jump ship must be able to move; therefore, you may mount at most one fewer Thickened Hullmetal Plating module than you have Engines modules. (Put another way, you may not reduce your speed below 1.)

Void-Screen Array

Ship Point Cost: 5
-2 Upkeep
Grants Shield defense (layer 3)

Void-screens are protective energy barriers which absorb and dissipate incoming weapons fire. They require more maintenance than armor, and have different protective characteristics.

The first Void-Screen Array module grants damage saves of 12+/12+/12+/12+. For each subsequent module, you may either add a new Shield save at 14+ or reduce an existing Shield save's Target Number by 2.

Point-Defense Battery

Ship Point Cost: 5
-1 Upkeep
3 maximum range

Point-defense batteries are clusters of small weapons, or at least weapons which are small on voidship scales. Rapid-firing plasma guns and repeating laser cannon target attacking fighters and incoming missiles.

Point-defense batteries may be used for orbital fire support, dealing 0 mega-damage.

Secondary Battery

Ship Point Cost: 7
Damage: 4 (giga)
Maximum Range: 4
-2 Upkeep

Useful for defense against raiders, menacing unarmed vessels, and indiscriminate orbital bombardments, secondary batteries are a mix of plasma and laser cannon, separate from and independent of a vessel's primary weapons batteries.

Secondary batteries may be used for orbital fire support, dealing 8 mega-damage.

Primary Plasma Cannon Battery

Ship Point Cost: 10
Damage: 2 (giga)
Optimum Range: 0-3
Maximum Range: 6
Accuracy Bonus: +2
-3 Upkeep
+2 giga-damage vs. Armor
+1 giga-damage vs. Hull

Voidship plasma cannon are the elder sibling of the more familiar plasma hand weaponry. Fifty-meter rotary mechanisms drive as many as six barrels, firing a rapid stream of packetized plasma bolts which devastate exposed armor and hull.

Like their smaller siblings, limited accuracy and maximum range are their main drawbacks.

Primary Laser Cannon Battery

Ship Point Cost: 10
Damage: 3 (giga)
Optimum Range: 3-6
Maximum Range: 8
Accuracy Bonus: +3
-3 Upkeep

The long, slender barrels of laser cannon signify their purpose: they are long-range, high-power weapons, which can easily punch through an opposing voidship's defenses before the enemy can bring its weapons to bear at all.

Primary Lightning Cannon Battery

Ship Point Cost: 10
Damage: 5 (giga)
Maximum Range: 4
Accuracy Bonus: -2
-4 Upkeep

Lightning cannon are two-part weapons systems, firing charged particle beams of opposite sign. On hitting a target, the arc between the two beams rips through anything between them.

Lightning cannon are short-ranged, but particularly effective against void-screens and moderately effective against voidship hull to boot. They are also highly inaccurate.

Primary Launcher Battery

Ship Point Cost: 8
Damage: 6 (giga)
Missile Range: 10
Missile Speed: 5
-3 Upkeep
+6 missile Offensive Maneuver

Launcher batteries are arrays of missile tubes, which fire missile barrages at enemy voidships. Each launcher battery has four rounds of ready ammunition, and requires four rounds to reload after exhausting its ready ammunition or to change ammunition types.

The statistics given above are for standard **anti-ship missiles**. Launcher batteries may also fire **torpedoes** and **flak missiles**.

Torpedoes do 8 giga-damage, have a range of 12, speed of 4, and +4 Offensive Maneuver.

Flak missiles have a speed of 6, a range of 8, and do not target ships directly. Instead, flak missiles target a region, placing a barrage marker there when they detonate.

Ion Cannon Battery

Ship Point Cost: 8
Damage: 6 (giga)
Maximum Range: 2
-4 Upkeep
+2 giga-damage to shields

Ion cannons fire charged particle beams which interfere with skepsis engines and electrical wiring. They are devastating to shields, as well.

If a voidship fails a Hull damage save against an ion cannon hit, that ship is disabled instead of destroyed.

Decentralized Fire Control Systems

Ship Point Cost: 5
-2 Upkeep

Local fire control systems improve voidship weapon accuracy, both when firing independently and when receiving fire control solutions from the main fire direction center.

Pick a weapon battery. Add +2 to its accuracy at all ranges. No weapon system may have more than one attached decentralized fire control system.

If the weapon battery is a point-defense battery, reduce the point-defense Target Number by 1 for point-defense batteries.

If the weapon battery is a missile launcher, increase its missile volleys' Offensive Maneuver by 1.

Microjump Capacitor Bank

Ship Point Cost: 5
-2 Upkeep

A jump ship's jump engines may be fired for a tiny fraction of a second to near-instantly transport a jump ship across the field of battle. Doing so causes serious stress to the jump ship's systems, but provides incredible tactical advantages.

Once every six rounds, you may add a bonus of +10 to an Offensive or Defensive Maneuver check, or add 5 to sublight speed for the current round. After using a microjump capacitor bank, make a Maintenance+Repair (Voidship) check against TN24+. On failure, add a deferred maintenance tally.

Microjump capacitor banks may only be installed on jump ships.

Emergency Thrusters

Ship Point Cost: 5
-2 Upkeep

Banks of emergency thrusters installed along a voidship's hull permit it to maneuver unexpectedly or put on a surprise turn of speed to run down a faster opponent.

Once every three rounds, you may add a bonus of +3 to an Offensive or Defensive Maneuver check, or add 2 to sublight speed for one round.

Small Craft Module List

Hulls

Light Fighter Hull

Ship Point Cost: 15
Primary Module Slots: 3
Secondary Module Slots: 2
Damage Saves: 10+/10+/12+/12+/13+/13+ (mega)
+2 sublight speed
+2 Defensive Maneuver

Light fighters are single-seat small craft, fast and agile.

Heavy Fighter Hull

Ship Point Cost: 20
Primary Module Slots: 4
Secondary Module Slots: 3
Damage Saves: 8+/8+/11+/11+/12+/12+ (mega)

Heavy fighters are generally larger and more sturdily-built than small light fighters, capable of carrying voidship-killing torpedoes and absorbing more punishment than you might expect. Frequently, they seat two or three: a pilot, weapons system operator, and gunner, for instance.

Light Noncombat Hull

Ship Point Cost: 10
Primary Module Slots: 1
Secondary Module Slots: 4
Damage Saves: 11+/13+/14+ (mega)

Shuttles, runabouts, and small pleasure craft fall into this category.

Heavy Noncombat Hull

Ship Point Cost: 15
Primary Module Slots: 2
Secondary Module Slots: 5
Damage Saves: 9+/12+/13+ (mega)
-1 sublight speed

Larger craft like dropships and tenders are built on heavy noncombat hulls.

Primary

Plasma Cannon

Damage: 2 (mega)
Maximum Range: 1
Optimum Range: 0
Accuracy Bonus: +2

Plasma cannon remain the standard weapon system for small craft.

In void combat, when fired from a wing of fighters, may target large voidships, dealing -4 giga-damage.

Laser Cannon

Damage: 3 (mega)
Maximum Range: 2
Optimum Range: 1
Accuracy Bonus: +3

Like their larger brethren, small-craft laser cannon suffer slightly at short range in exchange for enhanced accuracy further out.

In void combat, when fired from a wing of fighters, may target large voidships, dealing -3 giga-damage.

Ship-to-Ship Missiles

Damage: 4 (mega)
Missile Range: 6
Missile Speed: 4
Ammunition: 4
+8 Offensive Maneuver

Small anti-ship missiles have the speed and agility require to home on fighter-size targets, but lack the punch or precision guidance required to target larger vessels.

May only target small craft.

Missiles are carried on external hardpoints, and cannot be reloaded in flight. Missile-armed fighters must return to their mothership and remain aboard for one round to reload.

Fighter Torpedo

Damage: 4 (giga)
Missile Range: 3
Missile Speed: 1
Ammunition: 1
+6 Offensive Maneuver

Heavy fighters can carry a single torpedo, an anti-ship missile large enough and heavy enough to cut into voidship hulls.

May only target large voidships.

Fighter torpedoes may only be mounted on heavy fighter hulls. Torpedo-armed fighters must return to their mothership and remain aboard for one round to reload.

Void-Screen

Grants Shields defense (layer 1)

Miniaturized void screen generators frequently overload at the slightest weapons impact, but in doing so they do at least protect the fighter beneath.

The first Void-Screen module grants damage saves of 12+/12+/12+. For each additional Void-Screen module, add a new save at 12+, or reduce an existing save's Target Number by 2.

Armor

Grants Armor defense (layer 2)

Small craft armor usually consists of layers of advanced composite—much lighter than the corresponding plating on larger voidships, but less protective, too.

The first Armor module grants damage saves of 8+/8+. For each additional Void-Screen module, add a new save at 10+, or reduce an existing save's Target Number by 2.

Secondary

Light Armor

Grants Armor defense (layer 2)

Smaller packages of armor can be applied to protect the vital parts of a small voidcraft.

Each Light Armor modules grants a damage save at 10+ or reduces an existing save's Target Number by 2.

Engine

+3 sublight speed
Divide +3 between Offensive Maneuver and Defensive Maneuver

Fighter engines must be lightweight and high efficiency to attain the thrust-to-weight ratios demanded by their application. Further, they have complicated plumbing to direct exhaust to maneuvering vents.

Automated Defensive Armament

+4 Defensive Maneuver vs. fighters

Bulky manned turrets may hit harder, but miniaturized, automated defensive weaponry can still force attacking fighters to break off their runs.

If a single small craft attacks your single small craft, or if a wing of small craft attacks your wing of small craft, and if the attack roll is a critical failure, deal 0 mega-damage to the attacking small craft or wing.

If a single small craft attacks your wing of small craft, and if the attack roll is a failure, deal 0 mega-damage to the attacking small craft.

Repair Drones

Small drones capable of patching damaged hull and mending broken control cables help enhance a fighter's longevity in battle.

Once per combat, regain one crossed-out damage save.

Jammer

+1 Defensive Maneuver

By presenting a poor sensor return to enemy sensors, a jammer-equipped fighter makes itself harder to hit.

Increase the difficulty of point-defense checks made against you by 1.

Targeting Computer

+1 Offensive Maneuver
+1 maximum range to a single weapon system

Cargo Hold

Small craft, especially those built to ferry men and matériel from ground to orbit or from ship to ship, often have small cargo holds. Heavy utility craft might have room enough to lift several vehicles; a light fighter might only have room for an overnight bag or two.

IX. Psi

Psi is a catch-all term for paranormal abilities possessed by certain alien races and, to a degree, humans. A skilled **psion** is capable of incredible feats of power.

Though all humans are natural psions, nearly all are too weak to consciously use their psionic ability. The occasional sense of deja vu, a now-and-again flash of insight into someone's thoughts or motives—these are the limits of the average human's psionic talent.

> *Electra Makri is an amplified psion, formerly of the Imperial Army and recently of Navarch J.R. Pierpont Astorios' retinue, who will be joining us for psi examples.*
>
> *Zhaeifa is a saifth, an alien psion of moderate ability, also of the Navarch's retinue.*

Definitions

There are four terms with specific meanings used in this section.

A **psi skill** is an RPJ skill which controls the use of psi abilities. The four psi skills are Psychokinesis (Strength), Telepathy (Charisma), Psi Attack (Intelligence), and Psi Defense (Willpower). Human characters may not raise psi skills above 3 unless they belong to the Amplified Psion class.

Each psi skill has a number of linked **psi abilities**. Psi abilities are particular expressions of psionic strength which have defined mechanical effects.

Psi power is a measure of a psion's strength with a given psi ability. The more psi power a psion has for a specific psi ability, the more likely it is that she can manage tasks of incredible difficulty.

Lastly, **psi stamina** is a measure of how much a psion can do with her psi powers before wearing out.

Psi Power

Your psi power for a given psi ability is simply your effective level in the ability's linked skill, plus any modifiers from traits, racial bonuses (for non-human characters), and psi amplifiers.

> *Electra's psi power for abilities linked to Psi Defense is 7: her base Psi Defense level of 5, plus her Willpower bonus of 2.*
>
> *Zhaeifa's psi power for abilities linked to Telepathy is 12: her base Telepathy level of 5, plus her Charisma bonus of 2, plus her racial psi power bonus of +5. (Read on for racial psi bonus power rules.)*

Psi Ability Checks

All psi ability checks start at a basic difficulty of TN14+[1]. Add the psi ability's **psi ability cost**. Roll against the final difficulty.

1 The uses described in the Skills chapter are not psi abilities in the mechanical sense; they're mere party tricks whose difficulty is such that nearly any psion can manage them.

Each psi ability describes what you get for a given psi ability cost, and ways to increase the psi ability cost in exchange for stronger or longer-duration effects.

Succeeding on a psi ability check means that you have successfully used the psi ability. Failing a psi ability check simply means the ability **fizzles**, causing no effect.

Psi Amplifiers

Psi amplifiers are psi-tech surgical implants which allow human psions[1] to match more powerful alien psions blow for blow. They come at a high cost, however. The human mind[2] cannot stand up to sustained psi amplifier use without burning out.

A psi amplifier specifies a minimum and maximum multiplier. An amplified psion may choose to use his amplifier before using a psi ability, multiplying his psi power for that ability by any value between the psi amplifier's minimum and maximum multiplier. The final figure is his **amplified psi power**.

> *Electra's psi amplifier has a minimum multiplier of 1.5 and a maximum multiplier of 4. When using her psi amplifier with abilities linked to Psi Defense, she can choose an amplified psi power between 10 (7 multiplied by 1.5, rounded down) and 28 (7 multiplied by 4).*

The very highest-end psi amplifiers provide a maximum multiplier of between 4 and 5. Low-end models might reach 3 to 3.5.

Psi Stamina

Psi stamina measures an amplified psion's ability to utilize his psi talents over the long term. To determine your psi stamina, take the sum of your base skill levels in the four psi skills and multiply by 3. Then, add your base Constitution level. This is your maximum psi stamina.

When you use an amplified psi ability, you must reduce your current psi stamina by your amplified psi power, whether the ability succeeds or fizzles. If you roll a critical success on the psi ability check,

If your psi stamina decreases and ends up below 0, immediately roll your effective Willpower level against TN14+ plus the amount by which your psi stamina is below 0 (a **psi stamina check**). If you fail, you are incapacitated, and your psi stamina will not recover until you receive medical attention. You do not need to make psi stamina checks for unamplified psi ability use.

After at least an hour's rest[3] since last using a psi power, you gain back current psi stamina equal to half of your maximum psi stamina. After two hours, set your current psi stamina to your maximum psi stamina.

1 The other psionic races in the galaxy don't bother; they see the risk being worse than the reward.
2 And body, for that matter.
3 Use your judgment to determine what 'rest' means. Walking through a park evading the planetary governor's secret police may not be physically taxing, but it's hardly restful. On the other hand, a fitful nap in the corner of a shuttlecraft buffeted by flak isn't exactly relaxing, but you can reasonably argue that it's restful.

Electra has 3 levels in Psi Attack, 5 in Psi Defense, 1 in Telepathy, and 4 in Telekinesis, for a total of 13. Multiplied by 3, the subtotal is 39. Her Constitution level is 6. Adding 6 to the subtotal of 39, she finds her total psi stamina: 45.

She wishes to use Psi Shield to protect herself in combat. Psi Shield is linked to the Psi Defense skill. Her psi power for Psi Shield is her effective Psi Defense skill level, 7. Psi Shield's base psi ability cost is 6. She wants to add some of the extra features: two more rounds of protection at +2 cost each, mega-damage saves for +8 cost, and save improvements to 4+/12+/12+, which total +4 cost.

The final psi ability cost for Psi Shield is 20. To determine the difficulty for the psi ability check, she adds 20 to TN14+, for TN34+. Her psi power of 7 won't do. She decides to use her amplifier, setting it for 23 psi power. She rolls 16 on 4d6 and adds 23 for a total of 39, which beats TN34+. She must reduce her psi stamina by 23; her new total is 22.

Later in the fight, having used some other, minor psi powers, her psi stamina is 15. She decides to use Psi Blade, hoping to defeat an approaching battle tank's armor. Psi Blade's base cost is 9, and she takes +8 cost in exchange for mega-damage, for a final cost of 17 and a final difficulty of TN31+. She sets her psi amplifier for 18 psi power and makes her psi ability check, rolling 10, for a total of 28. 28 is less than 31, so the power fizzles.

She subtracts 18 from her psi stamina, leaving her with -3. She must make a psi stamina check. The difficulty is TN17+: TN14+ plus 3, the magnitude of her psi stamina deficit. Her effective Willpower level is 6. Her final roll is 20. For now, she remains in the fight.

Natural Psions

Natural psions, including aliens and unamplified human psions or amplified psions not using their amplifiers, play by a slightly different set of rules.

First, alien psions receive a **psi power bonus** for all psi abilities. A weak nonhuman natural psion, on the same level as the strongest unamplified human psions, should get about +2. A moderately-powerful natural psion, such as a saifth or a kraken, might get between +4 and +6. A powerful natural psion, such as one of the Handed, should get +10 or more.

Second, nonhuman psions may be able to use certain psi abilities in certain circumstances automatically. Kraken hover with psychokinesis, for instance; saifthei can communicate telepathically, and the Handed use psychokinesis in place of hands. The preceding list is non-exhaustive. Generally, any nonhuman psion who uses psi for some regular, well-defined task should be able to do so freely.

Third, natural psions do not track psi stamina. Long-term or high-intensity use of psi may still tire a natural psion. If a natural psion uses psi abilities with psi ability costs greater than his racial psi bonus (or bonus from traits, or 0 if neither applies) in two consecutive combat rounds, or two times in two minutes, he must flip a coin before attempting a psi ability check. On tails, the ability fizzles. On heads, he may make the psi ability check as normal. After fifteen minutes' rest[1], he may use psi powers normally again.

1 See previous footnote on the definition of 'rest'.

Using unamplified psi powers prevents an amplified psion's psi stamina from recovering.

> *Electra's psi stamina is -3, too low to safely use her amplifier. Navarch Astorios tosses her a satchel charge and tells her to drop it on top of the tank.*
>
> *She decides Psi Agility is the right ability for the job. It is linked to the Psychokinesis skill; Electra's effective level is 5, and so is her psi power. Psi Agility's base cost is 8, and it improves her Athleticism, and therefore her ability to throw things, by 1. She decides to throw caution to the wind and add +2 to the cost to increase the Athleticism bonus by 4.*
>
> *She rolls her psi power, 5, against TN24+. After using a Lucky Break, she rolls 19, which is just barely sufficient. With her improved Athleticism, she measures the distance, lets fly with the satchel charge, and drops it right on top of the approaching tank's turret.*
>
> *Because she did not use her psi amplifier, she does not need to reduce her psi stamina or make a psi stamina check, even though her psi stamina is still -3.*

Psi power bonuses do not apply all at once. Up to her maximum psi power bonus, an alien psion (or human with the Strong Natural Psion gift) receives 1 point of her psi power bonus per base level in the psi skill linked to the psi ability she is using.

> *As a saifth, Zhaeifa has a +5 racial psi bonus. Her base Telepathy is 5. When using Telepathy-linked psi abilities, she gets one point of her racial psi bonus for every level of Telepathy. In this case, she gets the full +5.*
>
> *Zhaeifa's base Psychokinesis is only 2. When using Psychokinesis-linked psi abilities, she receives one point of her racial psi bonus for every level of Psychokinesis. In this case, she gets +2.*

Psi Resistance

Some minds in the universe are psi-resistant, capable of detecting and standing up against psionic powers which affect them directly.

If you are a psion yourself, you are entitled to attempt a psi resistance check when targeted by a psi ability, although you are not required to[1]. To make a psi resistance check, roll your effective Willpower level against TN14+ plus the offending psion's Willpower level. If you succeed, the power fizzles.

You may not make a psi resistance roll against, say, a psion attacking you with the Psi Blade ability. You are not the target of the Psi Blade ability, merely a target of the attack. You may resist only psi abilities which target you directly.

Some psi abilities permit anyone to attempt a psi resistance check. If not otherwise stated, such psi resistance checks are made as described above. If a psi ability's text says that a target is entitled to a psi resistance check at a bonus, the target adds that bonus to his effective Willpower level. If a psi ability's text says that a target is entitled to a psi resistance check at an effective Willpower of, for instance, 3, the target adds 3 to his 4d6 roll, irrespective of his actual Willpower.

1 If you were required to, you would have to roll to resist beneficial psi powers, too.

Zhaeifa wishes to use Read Emotions on Electra. Electra, a psion, is allowed to make a psi resistance check. The difficulty is TN14+ plus Zhaeifa's effective Willpower level of 3, for a total of TN17+. Electra rolls her Willpower: 20, enough to block Zhaeifa's attempt to peer into her mind.

Psi Immunity

Some minds in the universe are entirely psi-immune. They are never affected by psi abilities of any sort, whether they are the target or not.

For example, if you are psi-immune and attacked by a character using Psi Blade, the blade simply passes through you with no effect. The same pattern holds: psi powers still take effect around you, but do not affect you.

Psi Abilities

Psi Ability Characteristics

Time in Combat

Psi abilities below list times and durations in seconds and minutes. 5 seconds corresponds to 1 combat action; 1 minute corresponds to 1 combat turn.

Distance in Combat

One GCS Region is 30 meters across. One adjacency group is approximately 10 meters across.

Concentration Time

To use a psi ability, you must concentrate for a certain amount of time. Each psi ability lists the required time. While concentrating, you may not do anything else, including moving or attacking.

If a psi ability does not describe how it may be used more quickly, follow these rules. You may reduce a psi ability's concentration time from 1 minute to 5 seconds by increasing the psi ability cost by 10. You may reduce a psi ability's concentration time from 5 seconds to instant by increasing the psi ability cost by 15.

Psi Damage

Some psi abilities deal **psi damage**. Psi damage ignores all defenses and strikes a character's base damage saves. On failing a damage save against psi damage, a character is rendered unconscious instead of incapacitated. To wake from psi-induced unconsciousness, the character rolls his effective Willpower level against TN24+. Reduce the difficulty by one for each minute spent unconscious.

Insanity

Some psi abilities cause **insanity**, either to the psion in case of failure, or to the psion's target. An insane character cannot communicate intelligibly, and may be at turns passive or violent. Player characters afflicted by insanity are encouraged to ham it up.

Some psionic insanity is temporary, and fades over time. Some psionic insanity is permanent, and may require the ministrations of a skilled psion to heal.

Psychokinesis

Psi Blade

Psi Ability Cost: 7
Concentration Time: 5 seconds
Duration: 3 minutes
Range: self

Call a blade of pure psionic force to your hand. It does a damage of 0.

You may increase the duration at a cost of +1 cost per minute. You may increase the damage by 1 for +3 cost. For +5 cost, Psi Blade ignores the target's outermost layer of defense[1].

For +8 cost, Psi Blade does mega-damage, but its duration is reduced by 2 rounds.

Psi Blade's linked skill is Psychokinesis or Melee Weapons, and its linked attribute is Strength or Dexterity; psion's choice in both cases.

Psi Agility

Psi Ability Cost: 8
Concentration Time: instant
Duration: 2 minutes
Range: self
+1 move action per combat round
+1 dodge
+1 ranged defense value
+1 Athleticism

Use precise applications of psionic force to throw yourself through the air, or move more quickly.

You may increase the duration at a cost of +2 cost per minute. You may increase the bonus to both defenses by 2 for +1 cost. You may increase the bonus to Athleticism by 2 for +1 cost.

You may leap to any point within 30 meters for +2 cost. You may increase the range in increments of 30 meters by increasing the cost by +2 each time.

You may fly by adding +5 cost per minute in flight. When flying, you may not use cover, your ranged defense value is increased by 5, and your movement speed is doubled.

1 This doesn't apply to a character's innermost layer—if all he has is his base damage saves, Psi Blade hits his base damage saves. Targets with defenses do not lose them when they're pierced by Psi Blade; Psi Blade simply ignores them.

You may apply Psi Agility to an ally for +1 cost.

Telekinesis

Psi Ability Cost: 6
Concentration Time: 1 minute
Duration: 1 minute
Range: 120 meters

Manipulate objects with psionic force.

Multiply the target object's mass in kilograms by the desired velocity in meters per second to obtain the target momentum. For instance, a mass of 10 kilograms and a velocity of 1 meter per second yields a target momentum of 10, as does a mass of 1 kilogram and a velocity of 10 meters per second.

You may move objects with a target momentum of up to 10. Add +2 cost to increase your maximum target momentum by 5.

Add +2 cost to move a second object, +2 to increase Telekinesis' range by 120 meters, and +2 to increase its duration by one minute.

Translocate

Psi Ability Cost: 12
Concentration Time: 1 minute
Target: self
Range: 180 meters

Psychokinetic psions can do more than just push objects around. They can also move instantly from place to place. After the concentration time passes, the psion vanishes with a thunderous boom, as air rushes in to fill the vacuum he left, and reappears elsewhere a heartbeat later.

Add +3 to Translocate's cost to reduce the concentration time to 5 seconds, or add +5 to reduce it to instant. Add +5 to its cost to increase its range to any location you can see, or +5 to allow you to translocate to a location within 180 meters which you cannot see.

Add +1 to its cost to bring along an adjacent character, including everything he's carrying, or to bring along 50 kilograms of non-living mass; it must be adjacent to you.

Add -5 to the cost if translocating nothing. In this case, Translocate's only effect is to make a loud thunderclap (provided there is atmosphere).

Heat
Psi Ability Cost: 10
Concentration Time: 5 seconds
Target: 1, or 2-meter area
Duration: 1 minute
Range: 180 meters

Heat and cold are ultimately phenomena of motion, and psychokinetic psions can control them, to a degree. A psion can change the temperature of a roughly human-sized volume of non-living matter by 10 degrees centigrade.

Add +1 to Heat's cost to increase the change in temperature by 2 degrees centigrade. Add -1 to its cost in exchange for increasing its concentration time to 1 minute.

Add +3 to Heat's cost to increase its range to any area within sight. Add -3 to its cost to reduce its range to a touch.

Add +3 to Heat's cost to increase its area to roughly 10 meters across, or one adjacency group in combat. Add +5 to its cost to increase its area to 30 meters across, one combat region. Add +10 to its cost to increase its area to about 180 meters across.

Add +10 to Heat's cost to affect one living target and halve the allowable change in temperature. (If increasing the allowable change, halve that too.) The target may make a psi resistance check with his Willpower bonus plus 4, even if not ordinarily entitled to a psi resistance check.

Telepathy

Read Emotions
Psi Ability Cost: 5
Concentration Time: instant
Target: 1
Range: 10 meters

A telepath can pick up on the emotional state of a nearby creature. This is most useful when the target experiences emotions in a similar manner to the telepath. Among the commonly-known alien species, human psions have a difficult time with kraken, athati, and yashcheritsy.

The telepath discerns the target's emotional state, including his surface emotions and perhaps some subconscious feelings.

If a target is aware you are reading his emotions against his will, add his Willpower bonus to the psi ability cost.

Add +4 to the cost to add 1 minute of duration to Read Emotions. The psion must concentrate closely on the target during Read Emotion's duration, and cannot communicate beyond simple gestures. If he does, Read Emotion ends.

Inflict Emotion

Psi Ability Cost: 7
Concentration Time: instant
Target: 1
Duration: 1 minute
Range: 10 meters

A telepath can instill emotions, too, not just read them.

The telepath creates a mild emotion in the target: unease, goodwill, or the like.

If the target is aware you are reading his emotions against his will, add twice his Willpower bonus to the psi ability cost.

Add +4 to the cost to add 1 minute of duration. You do not need to concentrate closely on the target. Add +4 to the cost to inflict a strong emotion, such as anger, fear, disgust, or happiness. Add an additional +4 to the cost to inflict an unusually strong emotion, like rage, terror, repugnance, or delirious joy.

Add +6 to the cost to increase Inflict Emotion's target size to 10 meters or one adjacency group; add +2 to the cost to increase its range to 120 meters or two combat regions.

Strong emotions may affect the target's combat performance. Unusually strong emotions may cause a target to enter combat or flee against his natural inclination.

Read Mind

Psi Ability Cost: 6
Concentration Time: instant
Target: 1
Range: 10 meters

A telepath does not work with emotions alone. He may also read minds, digging deep into the thoughts of a target.

The telepath discerns the target's current state of mind, gaining a sense for what he's thinking right now and what he's thought in the past 30 seconds.

If the target is aware you are reading his thoughts against his will, add twice his Willpower bonus to the psi ability cost.

Add 1 round of duration by adding +4 to Read Mind's cost. The psion must concentrate closely on the target, and cannot communicate beyond simple gestures. If he does, Read Mind ends.

Add +5 plus the target's effective Willpower level to Read Mind's cost to search through his memories. If you roll a critical failure on the psi ability check, the target goes insane for 4×4d6 minutes. If you roll four-of-a-kind ones, the target goes permanently insane.

Plant Thought

Psi Ability Cost: 10
Concentration Time: instant
Target: 1
Range: 10 meters

Skilled telepaths can reach into a target's mind, tweak just so, and plant a thought or idea there.

The telepath places a surface thought in the target's mind. To the target, it seems as though the thought naturally arose from his inner monologue.

If the target is aware you are attempting to plant a thought in his mind, add his effective Willpower level to the psi ability cost.

You can use Plant Thought to plant ideas deeper into a target's mind. Add +4 to the psi ability cost, then +1 for every 10 seconds it takes you to describe what you want to plant to the gamemaster. There is no limit to what you can plant: a subconscious thought, a deeply-held conviction, a childhood memory.

If you fail on the psi ability check, the target goes insane for 4×4d6 minutes. If you roll a critical failure, the target goes insane for 4×4d6 days. If you roll four-of-a-kind ones, twos, or threes, the target goes permanently insane.

Psi Message

Psi Ability Cost: 10
Concentration Time: 10 minutes
Target: 1
Range: planet-wide

Particularly powerful telepaths can make contact with a willing target from around the far side of a planet, or in some cases even between stars, and communicate briefly with them.

When using this ability, have your gamemaster start a 15-second timer. While the timer is running, you may speak your message, write, diagram, or sketch on a sheet of paper, or otherwise communicate in a manner of your choosing. You may use several methods simultaneously. When the timer expires, you must immediately cease speaking, writing, and communicating. If there are written components to your message, pass them to your target. Your target gets 15 seconds to process your message, and then an additional 15 seconds to respond, communicating in any manner.

Add +8 to the cost to send a message to a familiar mind in the same star system. Add +18 to send a message to a familiar mind anywhere in the galaxy. Add +5 to the cost if the target is known to you but unfamiliar. A passing acquaintance may be considered familiar for this purpose. If the target is entirely unknown to you, add +10 to the cost.

Add +5 to the cost to increase the time you have to communicate your message, the time the recipient has to process the message, and the time the recipient has to answer by 15 seconds each.

Add -5 to the cost if you know approximately where the target is, relative to the distance the message must travel: in a building, you should know the room the target is in; across the galaxy, you should know the target's location to within a few hundred light-years. You must state the target's location when using this modifier. The target only receives the message if you state his location correctly. If you miss, you are aware that message has not been received.

If either you or your target are in jump space, roll your effective Willpower level against TN22+. On success, you can use Psi Message as normal. Otherwise, you go insane for 4×4d6 minutes.

Echoes Of The Future

Psi Ability Cost: 12
Concentration Time: 10 minutes

The future plays out from the present as the vast machinery of time rattles onward, turned from its course only by the pesky machinations of willful sentient minds—this last the preserve of telepaths.

By concentrating intently for the listed concentration time, you may ask the gamemaster about the results of an action you or your allies intend to take in the next hour. The gamemaster considers the action and the impact it will have on your party's fortunes for the hour following it, answering 'positive' or 'negative' as appropriate, or 'irrelevant' if the action is unlikely to change your party's fortunes.

Add +8 to the cost and meditate for an hour to increase the time until the action and the time horizon for positive or negative effects to one day. Add +18 to the cost and meditate for six hours to increase both times to one month.

Add +4 to the cost to add one round of back and forth: in the event of a negative or irrelevant result, you may try again with a different action.

Add +8 to the cost to peer deeper at the result of a single action. The gamemaster explains why the result is what it is.

Psi Sense

Psi Ability Cost: 6
Concentration Time: 5 seconds
Duration: 5 minutes
Range: 10 meters

Reaching out with your mind, you build a picture of the world around you, allowing you to navigate and act even if your mundane senses are impaired.

When active, Psi Sense gives you a mental picture of the area within 10 meters of you, including physical features and obstacles and nearby living creatures, and allows you to understand speech in the same radius, provided you know the language. You gain a rough sense of each creature's disposition toward you: friendly, hostile, or unaware. Psi Sense sees through intervening physical obstacles. A psi damper inside Psi Sense's area of effect is undetectable to you, merely showing up as empty space.

In combat, if you cannot see, you can use Psi Sense to attack creatures inside its radius at no penalty. Perceiving a target with Psi Sense counts as seeing it for the purposes of psi abilities which require you to see the target.

Increase Psi Sense's cost by 3 to increase the range to 30 meters. Increase the range further by increasing Psi Sense's cost by 2 per additional 30 meters. Increase its cost by 5 to decrease its concentration time to instant. Increase its cost by 1 per minute to increase its duration.

Psi Attack

Psi Spike
Psi Ability Cost: 6
Concentration Time: 5 seconds
Target: 1
Range: 60 meters

Hammering another mind with his will, a psion can inflict mental agony on his quarry.

Deal -4 psi damage to a target. A target not otherwise entitled to make a psi resistance check may make a psi resistance check at his Willpower bonus.

Increase the cost by +2 to increase the damage by 1. Increase the cost by +4 to increase the range to 180 meters. Increase the cost by +6 to increase the target area to 10 meters.

Psi Command
Psi Ability Cost: 12
Concentration Time: 5 seconds
Target: 1
Duration: 1 minute
Range: 30 meters

A psion can force a target to take action, sometimes even action against his own interest.

Compel a target to take a relatively uncontroversial action: skipping his turn in combat, perhaps, or letting some questionable paperwork pass without a second look.

A target not otherwise entitled to make a psi resistance check may make a psi resistance check at twice his Willpower bonus. Player characters roll at twice their effective Willpower level[1].

Add +4 to the cost to compel the target to take an action with some practical, negative consequences: moving out of the range of his weapon in combat, or letting some obviously-forged paperwork pass.

Add +8 to the cost to compel the target to take an action actively injurious to himself or his allies, such as shooting one of his compatriots in the back, or ignoring the need for paperwork altogether.

1 I try to avoid such obvious rules patches where I can, but there are two facts here: first, getting mind-controlled is no fun; second, giving players access to the ability to control other players is a recipe for toxicity. If you (or your players) are mature enough to use the privilege sparingly and appropriately, you can ignore the footnoted sentence.

Concussive Blast

Psi Ability Cost: 8
Concentration Time: 5 seconds
Target: 10 meters
Range: 180 meters

A wave of psionic force erupts from a location of a psion's choosing.

Choose an area you can see within range. Targets within the area are removed from their adjacency group and pushed back five meters. Each takes -2 psi damage.

Add +4 to the cost to increase damage by 1. Add +8 to the cost to reduce the concentration time to instant.

Mind War

Psi Ability Cost: 8
Concentration Time: Instant
Target: 1
Duration: *
Range: 180 meters

A psion closes his eyes and locks himself in a battle of wills with an opponent.

Choose a target within range, and engage that target. You may not take other actions while engaged in a mind war. The mind war is represented as a tug of war between Willpower checks. Start the **mind war counter** at -1, plus 1 for every degree of success you attain on the psi ability check[1].

On your turns and your target's turns, you roll your effective Willpower. If your target is not entitled to a psi resistance check, he rolls twice his Willpower bonus. Otherwise, your target rolls his effective Willpower. Subtract his roll from yours, and add the total to the mind war counter.

If the mind war counter reaches 10, you win. The target is incapacitated. If the mind war counter reaches -10, your opponent wins, and *you* are incapacitated.

Add +6 to the cost to reduce your goal by 1.

Pain

Psi Ability Cost: 6
Concentration Time: 5 seconds
Target: 1
Duration: 1 minute
Range: 120 meters

The sensation of pain is very much a matter of the mind, and a psion can inflict it with great skill.

The target is afflicted with severe pain. He can move, but cannot attack.

1 Remember, every success implies at least 1 degree of success. If you just succeed on the psi ability check, the mind war counter starts at 0.

Add +4 to the cost to increase the intensity of the pain further. The target falls to the ground, writhing in agony.

Add +4 to the cost to increase the range to 180 meters. Add +6 to the cost to increase the area to 10 meters.

Psi Defense

Psi Shield

Psi Ability Cost: 6
Concentration Time: 5 seconds
Duration: 1 minute
Range: self
Damage Saves: 10+/12+

A bubble of psionic force surrounds you, deflecting physical attacks of all kinds.

For +2 cost, increase the duration by one minute. For +1 cost, either add a new save at TN12+, or reduce an existing save's Target Number by 2.

For +8 cost, convert Psi Shield's saves to mega-damage saves. For +15 cost, convert its saves to giga-damage saves.

For +1 cost, you may apply Psi Shield to an ally.

Mind Shield

Psi Ability Cost: 7
Concentration Time: 5 seconds
Duration: 1 minute
Range: Self

Bolster yourself against psionic attacks.

Add +3 to your psi resistance checks.

For +2 cost, increase the duration by 1 minute. For +14 cost, you are psi-immune for the duration, but cannot use psi abilities.

Add +1 to the cost to apply Mind Shield to an ally. If that ally is not otherwise entitled to make psi resistance checks, he may make psi resistance checks at his effective Willpower level while Mind Shield is active. If the ally is entitled to make psi resistance checks, he receives a +3 bonus.

Psi Mending

Psi Ability Cost: 5
Concentration Time: 10 minutes
Range: touch

Heal shattered minds, knit wounds together, make broken things whole.

If your target is temporarily insane, cure him.

Add +12 to Psi Mending's cost to cure permanent insanity. You must succeed on a Willpower check against TN20+. If you fail, the ability fizzles, and psionic feedback renders you insane for 4×4d6 minutes.

Add +4 to the cost to restore a single base damage save to your target.

Add +2 to the cost to fix minor damage to an object whose undamaged form you are familiar with.

Hold

Psi Ability Cost: 8
Concentration Time: 5 seconds
Target: 1
Duration: 1 minute
Range: touch

Touching a target, you hold him in place.

The target may neither move nor act for the duration of the ability.

Add +6 to the difficulty to increase the range to 30 meters, or +10 to increase it to 60 meters.

Add +6 to the difficulty to increase its area to 10 meters, or +10 to increase it to 30 meters

Null Field

Psi Ability Cost: 10
Concentration Time: 1 minute
Target: 10 meters
Duration: 1 minute
Range: 180 meters

Fill an area with psi static, rendering psi abilities useless inside it.

Pick an area. All entities in that area are psi-immune for the duration. Additionally, any psions using ongoing psi abilities in the area must pass a psi resistance check or lose their ongoing abilities.

Add +2 to the cost to attach the area to something moving, whether it be a player or object.

Add +2 to the cost to add -1 to targeted psions' psi resistance checks.

Add +6 to the cost to increase the affected area to 30 meters.

Improvised Psi Abilities

Psi is rarely improvisational. The largest part of a psion's training is learning the classical psi abilities, practicing them until they're second nature, and perfecting them over years of further study. That said, psions are capable of improvisation; this section describes how[1].

To design a psi ability, begin with a base psi ability cost of 5.

1 Where possible, the classical psi abilities in the upcoming sections use the rules laid out here to determine costs.

Then, consider its effect. Is it a purely non-combat ability, like Read Emotion? If so, reduce the cost by 1. If it is strictly a combat ability (a weapon, an attack, or a physical defense), increase the cost by 1.

Also, consider the magnitude of its effect, in terms of the degree of difference it makes from the natural order of events. Is it nearly trivial, only a step above the party tricks described in the Skills chapter? If so, reduce the cost by 1. Otherwise, increase the cost as appropriate, up to about 10 for the most dramatic uses of psi.

Next, consider the time required to use it. If it is an instant action, increase the cost by 5. If it takes only a few seconds (or one action in combat), increase the cost by 3. If it takes more than one minute (or one turn in combat), reduce the cost by 1. If it takes ten minutes or more, reduce the cost by 2.

Consider its range. If the psion must be touching her target, reduce the cost by 2. If the psion must be adjacent to her target, reduce the cost by 1. If the ability's range is greater than effective pistol range, 2 GCS Regions or 120 meters, increase the cost by 2. If the range is greater than ordinary combat ranges, increase the cost by 5. Use your judgment for greater ranges. Intercontinental range ought to be nearly impossible, and interplanetary range should be all but impossible. If the ability can affect a target the psion cannot see, increase the cost by 5, in addition to any range-based cost increases.

Consider its area of effect. If the ability affects more than one target, increase the cost by 1. If it affects an area of about 10 meters across, increase its cost by 3. If it affects an area of about 30 meters across, increase its cost by 5. If it affects an area 180 meters across, increase its cost by 8. For larger areas, use your judgment. A few city blocks should be nearly impossible. An entire city should be all but impossible.

Consider its duration. If it lasts for longer than an instant, increase the cost by 1. If it lasts for more than a minute (or one combat round), increase the cost by 2. If it lasts for more than 10 minutes, increase the cost by 3. If it lasts for more than a day, increase its cost by 5. Abilities lasting more than a day should be very hard; abilities lasting more than a week should be all but impossible.

Reusing Improvised Abilities

If a psion develops a psi ability she likes, intensive study and practice over the course of a year will reduce its psi ability cost by one third.

X. Adventuring

Athletics and Acrobatics

I do not recommend that gamemasters adhere too closely to the rules for running, jumping, and the like given here, or that players argue too hard for literal readings thereof. A tabletop roleplaying game is, ultimately, a story, and characters move at the speed of plot.

If you crave more detail than that, or need some rules of thumb to work with, read on.

Speed

Characters run at 120 meters per minute, and walk at half that speed. Add 10 meters per minute to running speed and 5 meters per minute to walking speed per rank of Athleticism.

Light and Dark

In low light conditions, human characters cannot see color, and can only resolve detail up to 30 meters. Beyond that, at best, they can see outlines and perhaps movement. In total darkness, humans cannot see at all.

Resting

There is no mechanical benefit to resting, but the sentient species of the galaxy all require regular sleep, or some analogue thereof. A character may operate without penalty for up to 24 hours without sleep, and for up to 48 hours with regular access to mild stimulants such as caffeine.

Make all skill checks at -1 per 24 hours beyond the no-penalty threshold, rounding up. A character awake for 25 hours without coffee rolls at -1. A character awake for 49 hours with coffee rolls at -1. A character awake for 49 hours without coffee rolls at -2.

Downtime and Training

While traveling between star systems, many characters have little or nothing to do. If that describes you, you may spend your downtime **training** in a particular skill for eight hours per day. If you spend at least one week doing so, gain a +1 bonus to skill checks and attack rolls using that skill. After that week, you may keep the bonus by spending an hour per day in training, or by using the skill in action at least once per 24 hours.

XI. GCS Implementation Details

"True change only comes about by the sword and the spear."
—Navarch Konstantin Varouforos, mercenary

For combat between player characters, NPCs, and mooks of a similar scale, RPJ Sci-Fi uses the Gridless Combat System exactly as laid out in the RPJ Core Rulebook. Skills for unarmed combat, grappling, weapon use, and armor use are described in the Skills section of this rulebook, starting on page 44.

Combat Skills

Roll Dexterity to determine initiative.

Use Armor Use (or Power Armor Use, if wearing power armor) to calculate your absorb melee defense value. You must be wearing armor to use the absorb melee defense.

Use Reaction to calculate your dodge melee defense value as well as your Fire and Movement ranged defense.

Use Unarmed Combat as the unarmed combat skill and Grappling as the grappling skill.

Use Medicine for helping hands and post-incapacitation medical attention.

Recovering Damage Saves

Base damage saves recover at a rate of one per two hours.

If recovering in a hospital or other medical facility, halve the time per save.

You may roll Medicine against TN20+ to reduce the time to full recovery for another character by one hour per degree of success. If the target is recovering in a medical facility, reduce the time by two hours per degree of success.

If you are suffering from incapacitation penalties, base damage saves do not recover on their own. Without treatment, incapacitation penalties are removed after 24 hours. See page 49 for rules on treating incapacitation penalties.

Items, vehicles, and voidships recover damage saves when repaired. See page 50 for rules on repair.

Dual-Wielding

You may carry any two one-handed weapons in your hands. When attacking with only one of them, add no bonus or penalty.

You may attack with two one-handed melee weapons using one action, provided they are linked to the same skill and attribute. Reduce your attack rolls by 1. The damage dealt is 1 greater than the lower of the two weapons' damages.

You may attack with one-handed ranged weapons using one action, provided they are linked to the same skill and attribute. As with melee weapons, when attacking with both, reduce your attack rolls by 1, and deal damage 1 greater than the lower of the two weapons' damages. When determining range penalties, use the shorter-range weapon's optimum range and range penalty.

> *Basilus is dual-wielding a plasma pistol (damage -1) and a laser pistol (damage 0). When attacking with both, he deals 0 damage—1 more than the plasma pistol's base damage. When determining range penalties, he uses the plasma pistol's optimum range, since it is shorter-ranged.*
>
> *When attacking with one or the other, he uses the weapon's listed statistics.*

Combat Rating

Combat rating is a single number which attempts to encapsulate a character's combat potential. It does not account for equipment. To determine your combat rating, add the following numbers together:

- Your STR, CON, and DEX bonuses
- The highest of your base Armor Use, Power Armor Use, and Reaction
- Your base Reaction (if you used it above, add it again)
- The highest of your base Melee Weapons, Plasmasheath Weapons, Power Armor Weapons, and Unarmed Combat
- The highest of your base Hand Weapons, Specialist Weapons, and Power Armor Weapons (if you used it above, add it again)
- The highest of your base Psi Attack, Psi Defense, and Psychokinesis

To calculate combat rating for a mook, add the following numbers together and divide by 2:

- His melee defense value minus 14
- His ranged defense value minus 14
- His melee attack modifier
- His ranged attack modifier

For an NPC who has damage saves but lacks a full character sheet, add the following numbers together:

- His melee defense value minus 14
- His ranged defense value minus 14
- His melee attack modifier
- His ranged attack modifier
- 14 minus his best base damage save

If a mook or partial-sheet NPC doesn't have separate melee and ranged defense values, subtract 14 from its defense value and double the result. If it does not have separate melee and ranged attack modifiers, but can make both melee and ranged attacks, double its attack modifier. If it has more than 2 actions, add 4 combat rating per action above 2.

Power Armor

Power armors, heavy battle-suits with integrated weaponry and protection against most hand weapons, are a frequent sight on battlefields around the Empire. In the Gridless Combat System, they function almost identically to normal humans, with a few exceptions.

First, they receive only two actions.

Second, they receive only half benefit from cover.

Third, they may not use the Cautious Movement action from GCS Fire and Movement.

Fourth, they (in most cases) have mega-damage saves.

Fifth, power armors are extremely heavy, and gamemasters should limit their mobility on, say, the upper floors of buildings, or thin sheets of ice over frozen lakes.

The Power Armor Use skill may be used in place of the Armor Use skill when calculating a character's melee absorb defense.

Indirect Fire

The militaries of the galaxy employ artillery of a variety of sizes and shapes, which can fire indirectly, supporting combat from off of the battlefield.

To call in indirect fire, spend an action, pick a target combat region and make a Command check against TN19+.

If it succeeds, on your next turn, roll 1d6-1 for terrestrial artillery or 1d6-2 for orbital fire support. Add the Command check's degree of success. On 1 or less, the artillery misses the battlefield altogether. On 2, the fire mission lands short, hitting a random adjacency group or piece of cover one region closer to you than the target region. On 3, the fire mission lands long, hitting a random adjacency group or piece of cover one region further from you than the target region. (If there is no region further from you than the target region, the artillery misses the battlefield altogether.)

On 4 or 5, the fire mission hits a random adjacency group or piece of cover in the target region. On 6 or more, the fire mission hits an adjacency group or piece of cover of your choice in the target region.

When indirect fire hits an adjacency group in the open, it does its listed damage to all members of that adjacency group.

When indirect fire hits a piece of cover, it does its listed damage to the cover, and deals 2 normal-scale damage to any entities using the cover.

Vehicular Combat

RPJ Sci-Fi, being a space opera setting, includes a number of different sorts of vehicles and spacecraft. Some vehicles and spacecraft may engage in combat with player characters and NPCs; others may not. The rules below cover two cases: combat between planet-bound vehicles only, or combat including both vehicles and player characters. They do not cover space combat. For space combat rules, see the next chapter.

Entering and Leaving Vehicles

Entering or leaving a vehicle takes two actions.

Damaging Vehicles

Vehicles and spacecraft have damage saves just like characters. Ordinarily, their damage saves are either the mega or giga flavor (as is their damage).

The innermost layer of a vehicle's defense is called Internals. When a vehicle loses its last Internals damage save, it goes out of control and crashes as soon as possible in as spectacular a fashion as the gamemaster can manage.

When a vehicle succeeds on an Internals damage save, cross off the rolled save according to the RPJ Health rules.

Vehicle Movement and Cover

Vehicles do not receive ordinary Gridless Combat System Actions. Rather, a vehicle has a **speed**, which corresponds directly to the number of Move actions the vehicle receives. Vehicles may also have a number of weapons systems. On the vehicle's turn, each weapon system may make one attack.

Vehicles may require multiple crew. The vehicle's **driver** makes all rolls relating to movement. Unless otherwise specified, each weapons system has a **gunner**, who makes all rolls relating to that weapon. A gunner firing a weapon spends one of his personal actions to do so.

Vehicles may not use cover. When moving, ground vehicles may attempt to move into a **hull-down** position. 'Hull-down' refers to a position where only the turret of a turreted vehicle is visible to an enemy over a small rise in the land. The definition here is a bit broader, as any ground vehicle can find a hull-down position. Gamemasters should modify the Target Number of the hull-down roll to fit the terrain—the flatter it is, the harder it is to find a hull-down position. Vehicles without turrets may be unable to attack from a hull-down position.

The driver must succeed on a roll of the appropriate piloting skill against TN20+. Hull-down vehicles are treated as though they are in cover with a quality of +3 and a flanking distance of 2. Hull-down vehicles may not use the reorient action, and remain in the hull-down state until their next move.

Vehicle Attacks and Defenses

To determine the attack modifier for a vehicle attack, total the gunner's related weapon skill level and weapon attribute bonus. Add any bonuses or penalties from the vehicle's weapon. Subtract the sum from the Target Number.

Vehicles may have **fixed** weapons. Attack rolls are made using the driver's related piloting skill, rather than a weapons use skill.

Firing a vehicle's non-fixed weapons **on the move**—that is, firing during a turn in which the vehicle also moved—adds a penalty of -3 to the attack roll. Some vehicle weapons may be **stabilized**, which reduces or eliminates to-hit penalty. The reduction in penalty will be listed with the weapon; for example, *Stabilized (+2)* for a weapon which reduces the penalty to -1. Fixed weapons do not suffer an on-the-move penalty.

A vehicle's defense value is the driver's effective driving skill level plus TN14+.

Reloading Vehicle Weapons

The gunner manning a weapon system reloads it, taking two of his personal actions to do so. Fixed weapon systems have constant ammunition feed systems and do not require reloading.

Air Support

An aircraft (used, under this heading, to mean any non-stationary spacecraft or air vehicle) may make an **attack run** over the battlefield, firing any or all of its weapons. Aircraft weapons must target either vehicles (the driver defends as usual) or adjacency groups.

When targeting an adjacency group with aircraft weapons, make one attack roll, and compare it to the ranged defense value of each entity in the group, including your allies. All entities whose ranged defense values are exceeded by your attack roll take the weapon's listed damage.

After making an attack run, an aircraft must spend some number of turns turning around and returning to the battlefield. On the same turn as he made his attack run, the aircraft pilot must roll the appropriate piloting skill against a Target Number of 24+. On success, he may make another attack run next round. On failure, nothing happens. Next round, the pilot may roll again, reducing the Target Number by 2 each round.

An aircraft making an attack run can be targeted by anti-aircraft weapons at no penalty. (See the Weapons section of the Equipment chapter, starting on page 57, for more on weapon types.) Other ground-based weapons may be used to attack aircraft making attack runs at a -4 penalty. Treat the aircraft as though it were at range 4.

Some aircraft can hover, indicated by a hover speed in their vehicle statistics. When hovering, an aircraft moves around the battlefield in the same manner as a ground vehicle. It may be targeted by any weapon while hovering; its defense value is the pilot's effective piloting skill level plus TN14+.

Air Combat

Combat between air vehicles follows rules very similar to vehicular combat. Fixed and non-fixed aerial weapons behave exactly the same as their ground-based counterparts, combat takes place on a battlefield made of GCS Regions, and movement works nearly the same.

Aerial Battlefields

Air combat battlefields are larger than their ground-based counterparts. An air battle taking place at the same time and in the same place as a ground battle occurs in a different battlefield. The ground battlefield is fully contained in one air combat region. On a six-region air battlefield, the ground combat takes place beneath region 3. Air vehicles may only begin a ground attack run in the same region as the ground combat, and follow the rules laid out in the Vehicular Combat section.

In air combat, adjacency groups with more than one member represent **dogfights** or tight formations..

Aerial Movement and Weaponry

An air vehicle receives a number of Move actions equal to its speed. With each move action, an air vehicle may move from one region to an adjacent region, joining an adjacency group of the pilot's choice, or join a new adjacency group in its current region. A move action does not suffice to leave an adjacency group which includes an enemy.

An air vehicle may attack once with each of its weapons per turn. Like ground vehicle weapons, air vehicle weapons come in fixed and non-fixed flavors. Non-fixed weapons may not be fired by the pilot.

When piloting an air vehicle, in place of attacking on your turn, you may elect to **evade**. Roll your Piloting (Aircraft) and add your vehicle's **maneuver** value. The result is your defense value against fixed and non-fixed weapons until the start of your next turn.

In place of moving on your turn, you may elect to **focus fire** on a target. Roll your Piloting (Aircraft) against the target pilot's Piloting (Aircraft). On success, add +3 to your attack modifier when attacking that target, but add -3 to your aircraft's defense value until the start of your next turn.

When leaving a dogfight, you must spend a move action to **disengage**. Any air vehicle with a maneuver value greater than your vehicle's maneuver value may, at its pilot's discretion, make an attack against you.

Aerial Attacks and Defenses

An air vehicle's defense value against fixed weapons is its maneuver value plus its pilot's effective Pilot (Aircraft) skill level. An air vehicle's defense value against non-fixed weapons is its pilot's effective Pilot (Aircraft) skill level only.

An air vehicle's attack modifier with fixed weapons is its maneuver value plus its pilot's effective Pilot (Aircraft) skill level. An air vehicle's attack modifier with non-fixed weapons is the gunner's effective Gunnery (Aircraft) skill level only.

When firing weapons into a dogfight or tight formation from outside it, choose the target at random from the air vehicles in the adjacency group, friend and foe alike.

Void Combat

The rules for void combat, in the dark between the stars, are not dramatically different from the rules for ground combat. In the interests of expanding my repertoire vis a vis section writing, I will lay out the rules as they would come up in a standard space combat round.

The Battlefield

Space combat takes place on a battlefield of variable size[1]. A battlefield begins at 10 GCS Regions (maximum effective missile range) and can expand as necessary to accommodate slower ships attempting to follow faster ones. The battlefield will always be as large as the largest distance between ships in the battle.

A space combat region is about 100,000 kilometers across.

Initiative

A ship's speed determines its place in the turn order. Ties are broken by a 4d6 roll[2].

The Void Combat Round

A void combat round represents roughly half an hour of maneuver and fire, with capital ships trading volleys, screening vessels meeting between them, and fighters making their attack runs.

It is composed of a joint movement phase, followed by turns for each ship or fighter wing.

Movement

Movement is handled in reverse initiative order. A ship speed of 1 permits a ship to move from one region to an adjacent region. At the end of the Movement phase, any ship at a distance of 10 or more from the nearest enemy ship may elect to retreat.

Adjacency has no effect in void combat.

The Turn

A turn is composed of four phases: the Morale Actions phase, the Maneuver phase, the Gunnery phase, and the Missiles phase.

Morale Actions

Any player character not making another ship skill check during the turn may make a Morale check, using some skill with a capacity to intimidate or inspire against TN22+ minus the ship's base crewmember skill level.

1 This is not as daunting as it seems. Fear not.
2 That is to say, a higher number wins. In case of a tie on the tiebreaker, continue rolling until one side comes out ahead.

For each successful roll in a given area, one of the following effects may be chosen.

Command

- Add 1 to the ship's base crewmember skill level for the remainder of the turn.
- Other stuff
- And maybe more

Inspire/Intimidate

- Do stuff
- More stuff
- Stuff

Gunnery

- Increase one missile volley's Offensive Maneuvering by 1 during the next Missiles phase.
- Increase the accuracy bonus of one weapon system by 1 during the next Gunnery phase.
- Add 2 to the damage of one point defense or secondary weapon battery during the next Gunnery and/or Missiles phase.

Engineering

- Reverse the effect of one critical hit for the remainder of the combat.
- Increase speed by 1 during the next Movement phase.
- Add 1 to the damage of of one main or secondary weapon system during the next Gunnery phase.
- (TN24+) Restore one crossed-out Armor or Shield damage save.

Maneuvering

- Increase Offensive Maneuver or Defensive Maneuver by 1 during the next Maneuver phase.
- Reduce by 1 the damage of one attack which hits the ship during the next Gunnery or Missiles phase.
- Increase speed by 1 during the next Movement phase.

Maneuver

During the Maneuver phase, a voidship captain may make either an Offensive Maneuver ship skill check or a Defensive Maneuver ship skill check[1].

To make a Defensive Maneuver check, roll your ship's Defensive Maneuver against TN24+. Note the degree of success. This is your ship's **defensive maneuver modifier** until the beginning of your ship's next Maneuver phase. Your ship may not attack with direct-fire weapons during the next Gunnery phase. (You may still launch missiles.) When not under the effect of a Defensive Maneuver check, your ship's offensive maneuver modifier is 0 plus its base crewmember skill level.

1 He is not required to make either.

To make an Offensive Maneuver skill check, you must target an opposing voidship. Roll your ship's Offensive Maneuver against the target ship's Defensive Maneuver. The degree of success is your ship's **offensive maneuver modifier**. When under the effect of an Offensive Maneuver check, add your ship's offensive maneuver modifier to attacks against the targeted ship. When under the effect of an Offensive Maneuver check, your ship's defensive maneuver modifier is -2 plus its base crewmember skill level.

Gunnery

During the Gunnery phase, a ship fires its armaments. For each deck of guns (that is, each weapon module), make a ship attack roll against a desired target. All of a voidship's primary weapons must fire at the same target. A voidship's secondary weapons may fire at a ship not targeted by its primary weapons at a -2 penalty.

Some voidship weapons have an **optimum range** and an **accuracy bonus**. Apply the accuracy bonus only if the target is within the optimum range.

Ship Attack Rolls

A ship's attack modifier is its effective Fire Control+Gunnery (Voidship) level, plus its offensive maneuver modifier (if any).

The Target Number is the target's effective Defensive Maneuvering+Piloting (Voidship) level, plus its defensive maneuver modifier, plus the base TN14+.

The attacking ship rolls 4d6, adding the result to its attack modifier. If the attack roll matches or exceeds the Target Number, the attack hits.

Resolving Damage

Damage is resolved as usual according to the RPJ Health Optional Core Mechanic.

When a voidship succeeds a damage save on its Hull layer, it must roll for internal damage. See page 113 in Chapter VIII for information on how to roll for internal damage.

When a functional voidship module, such as a weapon module or an engine module, takes internal damage, it ceases to function. When a non-functional voidship module, such as a barracks or artisan's workshop, takes internal damage, it is unusable for its intended purpose, and on a 1d6 roll of 1, is opened to vacuum.

When a hangar deck module takes internal damage, choose one voidship at random from those docked within, and apply the damage which hit the jump ship to the docked vessel's armor (if present) or hull (if the vessel is unarmored).

When a hull module takes internal damage, apply the damage again.

Grouping Weapons

Weapons of the same type may be fired together, provided that they have exactly the same statistics. If hit, the target makes a single damage save (at the highest remaining value, if multiple values are possible), crossing out save values to match the number of weapons fired if the save fails.

Targeting Fighters

Primary and secondary weapons may target fighters directly, but must divide the final result of their attack roll in half.

Barrage Fire

In addition to targeting voidships and fighter wings, secondary batteries and missile launchers firing flak missiles may target a GCS Region with barrage fire. Place a barrage marker in the region. This barrage does damage to missiles and fighter wings.

Launching Missiles

Launching missiles does not require an attack roll. For each missile volley launched, place a token on the battlefield next to the launching ship.

Missiles

During the Missiles phase, missile combat is resolved.

Missiles may move at any speed up to their full movement speed. When they reach the GCS Region containing a target, they may make an Offensive Maneuver check against the TN14+ plus the target ship's base Defensive Maneuver level. If the roll succeeds, the volley hits; if it fails, the missiles have spent all their terminal maneuvering fuel without scoring a hit, and are removed from the battlefield.

Missiles have a maximum range. After a missile volley has moved that many regions, it is out of pursuit fuel and is removed from the battlefield.

Point Defense and Barrage Resolution

When a point-defense battery fires on a missile volley, make a **point-defense check** by rolling 4d6. (No attack roll is necessary.) On a roll of 19 or more, the point-defense weapons score, and the missile volley is removed from the battlefield.

Point-defense batteries may fire on fighter wings in range. Roll 4d6. On a roll of 20 or more, the fighter wing suffers mega-damage of -2.

Point-defense batteries fire automatically as soon as a valid target moves to a region within range, and may not be manually fired. Each point-defense battery may fire three times per round.

When a missile volley moves into a region covered by a secondary battery barrage, roll 4d6. On a roll of 20 or more, remove the missile volley from the battlefield.

When a fighter wing moves into a region covered by a secondary battery barrage, roll 4d6. On a roll of 20 or more, the fighter wing suffers a mega-damage of 0.

Fighters In Combat

A wing of fighters is treated as a single ship for the purposes of combat, and has the usual set of combat-relevant ship skills (Fire Control, Offensive Maneuver, and Defensive Maneuver). A fighter wing's damage saves represent the proportion of combat-remaining craft remaining in the wing, as well as their cohesiveness. The damage done by a fighter wing's weapons is reduced by 1 for each damage save it has crossed out.

Individual fighters do mega-damage and have mega-damage saves, but a wing of fighters attacking a voidship with plasma cannons or laser cannons does giga-damage, owing to the effects of point-targeting weak spots and destroying weapons and systems near the surface of the voidship's hull. When a fighter wing attacks a voidship, take the listed mega-damage from the fighters' weapon, subtract 6, and deal that much giga-damage to the target voidship.

A fighter wing may be directly attacked by primary weapons, secondary weapons, point-defense weapons, and other fighter wings. Primary and secondary weapons must halve their attack roll when targeting fighters directly. Point-defense weapons and secondary battery barrages follow the rules in the Point Defense section above. Other fighters attack as usual.

Any number of player characters may elect to join the fighters as pilots. Every player character pilot rolls whenever a roll is required, and the players may select the result they prefer. If the fighter wing is destroyed, each player character must roll 4d6 against TN10+ to eject. Failure to eject may result in a pilot dying or being captured.

XII. The Universe

The Empire of Alexander

The Empire of Alexander is an enormous entity, comprising some five hundred million stars with naturally-habitable planets, and perhaps one hundred million more whose worlds have been either terraformed or colonized despite their unsuitability for humans.

The sheer vastness of the Empire is hard to comprehend. Here are some helpful thought exercises.

- Merely to name all the worlds of the Empire, even in its shrunken, decaying state, would take fifty years.
- The very fastest jump ships take more than a month to cross the Empire, assuming no stops whatsoever. The average jump ship takes more than a year.
- The average world not on a major trade route sees a jump ship no more than twice per year.
- The population of the Empire grows by about one and a half trillion *per hour*.

The Empire occupies the central portion of the Milky Way galaxy, if viewed from the top down. Its de facto territory includes about half of the galaxy. Including several hundred rebellious themata in the galactic east and territory held by nominal Imperial clients in the Near Unorganized Territories to the galactic northeast and the Handed in the galactic west, it swells to cover nearly three quarters of the Milky Way.

As such, even in places not held or claimed by the Empire of Alexander—the D'van Empire, the Arachni homeworlds, and the Far Unorganized Territories—it weighs heavily upon the minds of citizens and subjects alike. Not so very long ago, the Empire was the unchallenged ruler of the galaxy. It could be again; behind its petty, internal struggles, all of the Empire's sources of power remain. Its vast shipyards and fleets still larger, armies uncountable, and martial prowess unchallenged stand ready, waiting for a ruler fit to unify the squabbling Themata and lead the Vergina Sun to glory once again.

Organizing the Empire

The short answer to the question implied by this heading is, "Organizing the Empire is an impossibility." The scale of it is simply too great. You don't need to round off very much to say that, on average, no subject of the Empire has ever met the Autokrator, seen a soldier whose loyalties lie directly with the Autokrator rather than a feudal underling, or interacted with an honest-to-goodness Imperial official.

The secret to the Empire is that it is not an Empire of subject worlds. It is an Empire of 100 exarchates, which are miniature empires of about 85 themata, each of which is an empire of 100 sectors, each of which is a miniature kingdom (by Imperial standards) of about 750 worlds.

Of course, Navarchoi and the kinds of people usually found in their orbits are anything but average. As a Navarch and retinue, a party of player characters may know a number of sector governors personally, and can readily gain access to officials of the themata in their areas of operation.

Communication

Communication between star systems is relatively limited. Some wealthy systems within the Empire and without have jump space comm relays: large space stations with the minimum number of jump engines required to transition into jump space and hold position there. Radio transmissions in jump space travel more quickly, allowing relays to exchange messages in a matter of minutes which would take decades or centuries to reach their destinations in normal space.

Relay communication is not without its difficulties. Relays must regularly return to normal space to recharge their jump capacitors and pick up new local messages, limiting the amount of time they can be transmitting to remote stations. The frequently-questionable reliability of jump engines, along with the difficulties inherent in scheduling jump times precisely over hundreds of thousands of light-years, means that two adjacent relays' time in jump space may only overlap by a few hours, limiting the number of messages which may be transmitted. Last, but by no means least, jump technology is extremely expensive.

As such, no more than about one in one hundred inhabited star systems has a jump relay, and one in ten of those relays is out of service at any given time. Frequently, this number is not sufficient to enable the Autokrator to communicate with outlying regions of his Empire; the network of jump relays often ends up looking like several isolated sub-networks.

To communicate by jump relay, both sides must have one. Between any other pair of worlds, news and communication is carried exclusively by jump ship. Information is therefore a valuable trade good.

Corruption

Perhaps the most important thing to understand about the Empire after its size is that it is stupendously corrupt at nearly every level. For several thousand years, it has been too large for humans to effectively manage. For some time, it coasted on unity of purpose and adherence to founding ideals, but these are now considered old-fashioned thoughts from a more primitive age.

The Autokrator and his exarchoi are generally not in it for themselves first. They are wealthy beyond mortal imagining, but most Autokrators and nearly all exarchoi are loyal to the idea of the Empire, and trying to do the best they can.

Themarchoi are more of a mixed bag. Petty squabbling between adjacent themata is the most common kind of conflict in the galaxy today, and of the more than 8,000 themarchoi in the Empire, not a single one pays Imperial taxes according to the strict definition of the law. Some enrich themselves at the Empire's benefit, or use the money to fund border wars with their fellow themarchoi. Others are more altruistic, seeing themselves as the only thing standing between the residents of their thema and chaos, war, and slavery. In any event, both are skimming from the Imperial pot.

Lower-level bureaucrats are, contrarily, less of a mixed bag. They are almost uniformly corrupt; bribes grease the wheels of government, and because of the vast size of thema and sector bureaucracies, very little is done about it.

The Autokrator and the Bureaucracy

The Imperial Court

From the Imperial City on Homeworld, the Autokrator directs his Empire.

He does not do so in a vacuum. The Imperial court comprises several thousand people: the Autokrator's trusted friends and advisers, visiting exarchoi, and a panoply of nobles with useful skills or knowledge[1].

An average day for the Autokrator begins with morning ablutions, attended by a few dozen servants. It continues with breakfast, an intimate meal only by the standard of those which follow. Some hundred or so of the Autokrator's closest confidants attend, and the rules of court decorum are relaxed so that they might speak freely.

In the morning, the Autokrator meets with representatives from the three Imperial Ministries, receiving briefings on the state of ongoing affairs in his Empire and setting new directions for policy, if necessary. These meetings rarely provide the Autokrator with any new information. Even more rarely do they result in meaningful change to Imperial policy. The bureaucracy moves slowly, and even if it didn't, the Empire is so vast that any change takes years to come into full effect.

The Autokrator's day continues with a large, ritualized midday meal, the largest of the day, and one usually served to the whole court at once, in one of the Imperial Palace's largest dining halls. Several thousand usually attend, between the court and any guests of honor.

In the afternoon, the Autokrator hears from petitioners from around the Empire. In theory, any subject of the Throne has the right to bring a concern to the Autokrator. In practice, there is only time for exarchoi and themarchoi, and the very rare lower-ranking noble.

The evening meal is smaller than the midday meal, but is still a court function whose main purpose is the entertainment of visitors to the court. After the food is served and the actors, jesters, or other performers finish their task, the Autokrator retires to his chambers, where he has a few hours of time to dispose of at his own discretion. Diligent Autokrators may meet further with important members of their government. Less diligent Autokrators may spend it seeking further entertainment.

Occasional hunts or other excursions break up the routine.

Members of the Court

Much of the court has little purpose in the day-to-day functioning of the Empire. Gadabout nobles are perhaps the most common type within the walls of the Imperial Palace after servants; some while away the years occasionally advising the Autokrator on some minute detail of the Empire, others leave Homeworld for years at a time, taking up with navarchoi or other galactic travelers.

Children and other relatives of the Autokrator are also usually present in moderate number. An heir and a few backups help to defray the risk of plots against the Autokrator's life, the thought being that a half-dozen simultaneous murders are a harder task than one regicide. Too many relatives is bad, however,

1 Such as, in many cases, 'toadying', or 'how to be a yes-man'.

leading once again to conspiracy. It is common for Autokrators to grant particularly loyal or particularly troublesome relatives exarchates or high positions in the Church or the Pantheon, where their power is not readily turned against the Throne.

Unlike his subordinates, the Autokrator leaves Homeworld only in the most dire of circumstances.

The Ministries

The Autokrator chooses a direction for the Empire; the Ministries execute his will. Each of the three Ministries makes its official headquarters in the Imperial City, but all possess tens of thousands of square kilometers of holdings elsewhere on Homeworld.

Indeed, much of Homeworld is given over to the business of governing, whether it manifests as endless rows of office buildings or as endless warehouses storing dusty records of ages long gone by.

The Ministry of Trade

The Ministry of Trade has as its ambit the management of the Empire's resources, and the movement of those resources from place to place. It enforces customs laws, collects tariffs, and ensures that supplies reach worlds which need them. This is its stated purpose, at least; in practice, agents of the Ministry of Trade are at best capricious and self-enriching, and at worst legalized pirates. No navarch enjoys a visit from a customs cutter.

The Ministry of Trade has ties to several of the Temples of the Pantheon, in particular to the Lesser Temples of Tyche and Plutus, the goddess of fortune and the god of wealth.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs

The Ministry of Internal Affairs concerns itself with the relationships of the various components of the Empire to one other, and particularly with the loyalty of Imperial subjects to the Throne. In addition to managing the vast bureaucracy of Imperial administrators stretching across the galaxy, the Ministry of Internal Affairs directs the Empire's network of spies.

That network of spies is almost entirely contained within the Temple of Hermes, god of travelers, roads, and thieves. As such, the lines between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Temple of Hermes often blur.

The Ministry of War

The Ministry of War's purpose is obvious. Under its direction, the Imperial Navy, the Kataphraktoi, and the Tagmata carry out the Autokrator's will, fighting his foes both within the Empire and without. The Ministry of War also administrates the call-up of forces belonging to exarchoi and themarchoi when the Autokrator calls upon them to fulfill their feudal obligation.

Each Tagma comprises around ten million fighting men and includes ground and air forces, plus transport spacecraft and landing boats. The Imperial bureaucracy considers one Tagma sufficient force to take an average world, although this assumption is frequently challenged by actual events.

The Exarchates and the Themata

Directly subordinate to the Autokrator are one hundred exarchoi. Each exarch directly manages an even share of the 8,410 Themata, the Empire's primary administrative divisions. Unlike themarchoi, the exarchoi are not regarded as absolute rulers in their exarchates; rather, they are the instrument by which the Autokrator exerts his authority.

The Themata are miniature empires in their own right. A themarch controls a thema, a demesne of around 75,000 worlds, usually further subdivided to ease the administrative burden. The vast majority of themata employ around one hundred sector governors; that many subordinates is difficult but not impossible to manage.

The exarchoi are, as a rule, loyal to the Autokrator. They serve at his pleasure, and are keenly aware of their position as instruments of his authority. Themarchoi, on the other hand, are primarily loyal to themselves, in the case of selfish examples of the type, or to their own themata. In either case, they see the Empire as too far removed from the problems within their domains.

Even a planetary governor leads a life of luxury beyond even a navarch's; the former has the wealth of an entire planet backing him. Imperial nobility at the level of the themarchoi and above are steeped in almost incomprehensible luxury, supported by taxes from tens of thousands to millions of worlds. City-sized palaces, fleets of pleasure craft, private moons, and more are within the realm of possibility.

The Imperial Armed Forces

The Imperial military was crucial to the Empire's historical successes. Unlike many feudal leaders, the Autokrator maintains a demesne sufficiently large to support a vast apparatus of ships, soldiers, and supporting personnel.

The Imperial Navy

Comprising around ten million line-of-battle ships and four times as many escorts and independently-operating frigates, to say nothing of supporting fighters and small craft, the Imperial Navy is by far the largest collection of voidships of any kind which answers to a single master.

The Navy is organized into area commands, one per exarchate, with battlegroups corresponding roughly corresponding to one thema as their subordinates. A battlegroup comprises about 1100 line-of-battle ships, along with the associated escorts and small craft, and is further divided into fleets of anywhere from 10 to 100 line-of-battle ships plus escorts. Fleets are the Navy's unit of maneuver.

The numbers above represent averages. Battlegroups away from Imperial borders or important central worlds are much smaller; they may be as small as one fleet. Battlegroups on the border may be as much as ten times as large. Even a battlegroup of 10,000 ships, however, can only generate one 100-ship fleet per sector in the average thema—one fleet per 75 worlds.

Which raises a more important point: the Imperial Navy possesses about five hundred thousand jump ships, perhaps one-tenth as many as it would take to move the whole Navy at a single stroke. Many fleets are more or less permanently stationed in a single system, owing to the lack of transportation between them. In times of dire emergency, the Empire may contract with privately-owned jump ships to move the Navy where the Navy cannot.

The Tagmata

The Imperial Tagmata are the ordinary ground forces of the Empire. Each Tagma is an independent unit of maneuver, a formation of about twenty million fighting men, along with vehicles, aircraft, landing barges, transport voidships, and supporting personnel, sufficient to conquer and occupy a hostile world. So says the Ministry of War, at any rate; combat experience has suggested time and time again that two or three Tagmata is a safer bet.

There are around 50,000 Tagmata, totaling about one trillion soldiers. Perhaps one quarter are deployed as garrison troops on Imperial holdings. The remainder are on the front lines near-constantly, with short rotations away. Long-term leave is simply nonexistent; when you sign on with a Tagma, you sign on for ten years, and you put in your ten years without interruption.

A Tagma usually has between ten and twenty jump ships, sufficient to carry about one tenth to one fifth of its total manpower at one go. Like the Navy, the Tagmata often contract with private jump ship owners to transport troops in times of need.

The Kataphraktoi

The Imperial Kataphraktoi are the Autokrator's power-armored fist, and are organized into about fifty thousand corps. A corps of kataphraktoi numbers about 10,000 armored infantry and roughly twice that number of supporting, unarmored men, including an air wing, several batteries of artillery, and a supply and logistics group.

An Imperial Kataphraktos Corps is rarely deployed alone; instead, it is usually deployed alongside a Tagma or two, to provide extra breakthrough power. Operating alone or alongside the Tagma's ground vehicles, the kataphraktoi force a hole through the enemy lines; the Tagma's infantry then move in to secure the ground taken.

In Imperial service, kataphraktoi wear a sashimono: a vertical banner on a pole, thirty centimeters wide by a meter tall, held in a socket on their backplates. Borrowed from the armies of the Chrysanthemum Throne, sashimono provide troops on the battlefield with a quick means of recognizing their allies. Each corps' sashimono typically bear the corps insignia.

Unlike the other branches of the Imperial military, kataphraktos units include sufficient jump transport. Each corps has a jump ship, small, lightly protected, and unarmed, as well as armored troop-carrying voidships and landing boats. Kataphraktos units do not, however, have sufficient crew to man their vessels fully while engaged in combat on the ground, and must either borrow naval crew, press local spacers into service, or make do with skeleton crews.

The Household Guard

A special branch of the kataphraktoi, the Household Guard is five double-strength kataphraktos corps, typically composed of Varangian Rus soldiers, responsible for the personal safety of the Autokrator and his family. They guard the Imperial Palace and Imperial City on Homeworld, also serving as the Imperial retinue when the Autokrator or his relatives deign to give combat themselves. Their sashimono bear the Vergina Sun.

Unlike other kataphraktos corps, those corps which make up the Household Guard possess multiple armed and armored jump ships, as well as line-of-battle voidships.

Feudal Armies

The Empire is a feudal state, and the Autokrator's personal armed forces are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to summing the soldiery available to the Empire.

Exarchoi maintain small standing armies of their own, on the order of a tagma or two and a few hundred warships each, but rarely have cause to use them.

Themarchoi have significant military power of their own. The average themarch can bring to bear about twice the weight of military force the Autokrator can station in the average thema—some ten tagmata worth of conventional forces, 2,000 line-of-battle ships, 7,500 escorts, and 200 to 300 jump ships. (Only the Autokrator deploys kataphraktos armor in large numbers.)

For its own local defense, an Imperial world typically has half a tagma to a tagma worth of local militia, poorly trained by the standards of the Imperial Tagmata, but a nontrivial force nevertheless.

The Autokrator can outgun any individual themarch with little trouble, but cannot face them all at once; in the same way, a themarch can easily suppress a rebellious world or two, but not large-scale revolts. This is one of the Empire's key weaknesses—fear or personal loyalty must bind the vassals to the lord, or else the entire edifice crumbles.

Imperial Influence

Even a sector governor usually has some 700 to 1,000 planets under his command; he rarely has the resources to maintain a presence on all of them. Many worlds in the Empire have no representatives of Imperial authority, whether it stems from the Autokrator directly or from one of his direct or indirect vassals.

The first kind of world with permanent Imperial presence is the sector administrative hub. Spread throughout a given sector, administrative hubs serve as bases for the itinerant bureaucrats and tax collectors who make circuits around the nearby worlds, taking taxes, resolving legal disputes, and in general ensuring that the locals remember to whom their loyalty is due. Along with officials from the local thema, a few Imperial bureaucrats, usually being punished for some misdeed, oversee the sector bureaucracy's work.

Sector capitals are the governing seats of sector governors, who direct the administration of sectors. Their primary role is to collect taxes, skim something off the top for themselves, and move the money up the ladder to the local themarch. To ensure that a governor keeps the skimming to a reasonable

amount, the themarch usually stations troops at sector capitals. To ensure that the sector governor and themarch do not come to blows over questions of taxation and corruption, the Empire stations bureaucrats there to ensure the transfer of wealth goes smoothly. An Imperial warship or two and a small Imperial garrison of perhaps a few thousand men are not uncommon sights at a sector capital. Their purpose is less to intervene successfully in any armed spat between a sector governor and his themarch, and more to be a tripwire. In the event of armed conflict in which Imperial troops are killed, the full wrath of the Empire is not far away. Sector governors and themarchoi bear this in mind.

Thema capitals are monuments to a themarch's power, with large garrisons of troops and warships loyal to him, vast palace complexes, and administrative centers extensive enough to manage the hundred-some sectors which make up the average thema. Most themarchoi elect to use their own crests and insignia alongside the Vergina Sun, linking themselves to the Empire and the Autokrator's authority. Either way, a thema capital is almost always festooned in banners, flags, and the like; it is never unclear who runs the world. Large Imperial garrisons are common; a full Imperial Tagma and fleet of line-of-battle ships of the Imperial Navy are the norm for a thema capital.

Exarchoi, as enthusiastic servants of the Autokrator's interests, are less bombastic. Despite their tremendous personal power, their holdings usually fly the Imperial banner and the Imperial banner alone. The exarch's administrative hubs are usually located near the thema capitals the exarch is responsible for; there, his officials collect taxes, ensure that the themarchoi remain loyal to the Autokrator, and see that the Autokrator's policies are carried out to the lower levels of his Empire. An exarch's military power is usually sufficient to put down a few rebellious themarchoi without calling in the Imperial military.

The worlds with the highest level of Imperial presence are, of course, those under the Autokrator's direct authority. His holdings comprise the Empire's best-known worlds along with a few tens of thousands of lesser systems spread throughout its extent. Uniformly, they are the wealthiest of the wealthy, even in otherwise-destitute regions of the Empire, heavily garrisoned by Imperial troops, and all but covered by flags bearing the Vergina Sun.

People to See

Humans

Humans are the most numerous people in the galaxy, natives of Homeworld—Earth—the capital of the Empire of Alexander.

Imperial Culture

The Empire is hard to sum up in one heading, but there are a few elements common to its culture across most of its territory.

First, even on worlds where the last thema bureaucrat left a decade ago, the population knows of and venerates the Autokrator. He is a not a god to the masses, but he is only at a step or two down, a near-mythical figure. His benevolent leadership is assumed to be the root cause of good government;

planetary governors get little credit for good deeds and bear most of the blame for corruption. The size of the Empire and the slow speed at which news travels means that true backwaters might even be swearing fealty to an Autokrator dead for a year; such is the nature of a large interstellar empire.

Second, most people in the Empire are unaware of just how far away the Autokrator is, and just how little he knows about their particular situations. The educated middle class knows of the structure of the Empire—sectors, themata, exarchates—but has little feel for the true isolation of their station. Those living on more central worlds, like thema capitals and exarch's holdings, understand that they are more important than the residents of more remote systems, but even they lack a full understanding of how small a cog they are in the vast machinery of the Empire.

Third, most people in the Empire are all too aware of the creeping rot advancing through its structure. Even a lower-class Imperial subject often sees the corruption common to every level of Imperial government. A local official who reports to the planetary governor may slow the approval of a license or permit without a sufficient bribe; he then passes part of that bribe to his superior, and so on. Imperial subjects without contact with the Empire's higher authorities may think the problem is purely local, and that the Autokrator would do something if he were aware. In truth, he is aware, at least in general terms, and simply powerless to do anything to stop the cycle of graft. Too many rungs in the Imperial ladder are crooked; too few honest bureaucrats remain to run the Empire if the corrupt are thrown out.

People Groups

It is a mistake commonly made by outsiders and provincial thinkers to look at the Empire as a monoculture. As a polity, the Empire's heritage is Greek, but many Homeworld cultures survived and took to the stars under the Autokrator's rule.

The Greek people, first among the Empire's member cultures, are the descendants of Alexander himself, his peers, and his contemporaries. They are thinkers, leaders, and soldiers, and even now, many of the Empire's leading lights claim Greek ancestry.

Varangians, sometimes known as Rus, hail from the steppes and tundra to the north of the Empire's ancestral Greece. They have a mixed reputation: historically, they were raiders, sacking cities along the Empire's northern frontier, and on two occasions even burning the Imperial City, then called Constantinople, itself. In the modern age, they have cleaned up their act somewhat, and the Varangian Guard serves as the Autokrator's personal security force. Varangians have a reputation as soldiers and mercenaries, and indeed is nearly synonymous with the latter term.

The Huns, or Mongols, are also a steppe people, originally from the Far Orient. Many retain their nomadic ways, traveling the galaxy as traders and merchants. Relatively few are navarchoi, but a relatively large number own voidships on a smaller scale.

The Han people, too, are from the Far Orient, though where the Huns come from well inland, the Han people had a stronger presence near the coasts and rivers of the former Middle Kingdom. Through their long history, they have traditionally been scholars and bureaucrats, and are well-represented in Imperial universities on and off Homeworld, and throughout the Empire's bureaucracy.

Europans come from Europa, the large region to the west and northwest of Greece, roughly from the Italic peninsula to the Britannic Isles. Europans vary widely in outlook and talent, but many are inventors, philosophers, and industrialists.

The Empire uses 'Persian' to indicate any person from the Near Orient, including Persians proper as well as Anatolian peoples and those from old Babylon and the Syrian provinces. Along with Arabians, from the peninsula bearing the same name to the south of Syria, Persians are known mainly as merchants, traders, and artists. A large proportion of Persians and Arabians are stronger-than-average psions.

The African peoples were not, with the exception of the Egyptian, Garamantian, and Ghanaian kingdoms, well-organized at the time of their conquest by the Empire; nor were the Americans, again with the exception of the Aztec and Iroquois states. As such, they had no particular technology or societal edge for the Empire to exploit, and were therefore freer than most to pursue any path in the Empire's domain. That freedom has continued to the modern day.

Independents

Since the Empire's slow retreat from its maximum territorial extent began, worlds occupied by Imperial subjects have, at times, suddenly found themselves outside the Empire's borders. Some themarchoi rose to the occasion and simply became petty emperors in their own right. Some themata abandoned by the Empire fractured into smaller states, squabbling among themselves for the right to power.

In the present day, the galactic east is home to a confusing array of independent human governments, from miniature empires of tens of thousands of systems down to tiny confederations of ten or twenty. Their governments run the gamut from Imperial-style absolute monarchy to militaristic diktat to free and open democracy.

Independents close to the Imperial border live in constant fear of conquest; the best way for a themarch or exarch to ingratiate himself with the Autokrator is to retake lost territory. These independents may also resent Imperial traders, who are as often as not the beginning of conquest by other means. Those independents further away from the border still turn a wary eye on the Empire, but are less hostile to trade, given the logistical difficulties involved in invading their territory.

Independent states often sign defensive treaties and other alliances in such a tangled web that a minor war between two small democracies can quickly flare up into the second-largest conflict in the galaxy behind the ongoing border between the Empire and the D'van Tarki.

Religion

Independent or not, almost all humans follow either the Greek Pantheon or the Orthodox Church. Both are recognized Imperial state religions; the Orthodox Patriarch and the High Priest of Zeus wield nearly as much power as the Autokrator himself.

Both religions do good things at the tip of the metaphorical spear: local Orthodox parishes do more charitable work than any other human organization, and the Pantheon's local temples provide the vast majority of free schooling in the Empire.

The Imperial Orthodox Church

Established by a Jewish laborer and teacher called Yeshua in the Empire's Syrian province, and originally led and expanded by two of his followers called Petros and Paulus, the Orthodox Church was, at first, merely tolerated. As it grew, and as occasional autokratoroi came to be Christ-followers, the Imperial bureaucracy decided that tighter control over the Church would be wise. Well before humanity left Homeworld, the Orthodox Church became the Imperial Orthodox Church, with a Patriarch chosen by the church hierarchy but approved by the Autokrator. In general, the bureaucracy leaves the Church to its own devices, interfering only rarely, and only on matters of great importance to the Empire.

In the era of Imperial expansion, Orthodox missionaries were among the vanguard. Except among the yashcheritsy, they met with limited success. Nevertheless, they helped push the idea that Orthodoxy is the most common Imperial faith. The opposite is true, but many outsiders believe it anyway.

The Orthodox Church is hierarchical to a degree exceeding even the Empire. The Patriarch sits atop its structure, presiding over the whole Church from his throne in the Basilica of St. Sophia on Homeworld. Subordinate to him are several hundred lesser patriarchs, directing junior patriarchates of their own. Their subordinates are metropolitans, who lead metropolises comprising archbishoprics; archbishops have bishoprics and bishops as their subordinates, who direct senior priests responsible for vicariates of a few dozen worlds each.

The Orthodox Church presence on an individual world is known as a parish to the Church as a whole, but is simply known as the Orthodox Church to the world's faithful. Much of the foregoing structure then repeats: a world's senior priest usually has subordinate local archbishoprics and bishoprics, which comprise local vicariates, which then comprise individual parish churches centered on a single cathedral or basilica.

The Pantheon

The Greek Pantheon has been a part of Homeworld's culture since before the establishment of the Empire. It centers around worship of the Twelve Olympians, so called because their dwelling is known as Olympus: Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Demeter, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Aphrodite, Hephaestus, Hermes, and Dionysus. Their temples are known collectively as the High Temples. Dozens of lesser gods see veneration as part of the Pantheon, as well; their temples are known as the Lesser Temples.

Unlike the Orthodox Church, the Pantheon has next to no central structure. The High and Lesser Temples of Homeworld all bear the title of Great Temple, and the priests there set the standard dogma for temples around the galaxy, but those local temples do not answer to the Great Temples and are usually almost entirely independent.

Oracles are commonly found among the Temples of the Pantheon, specialized psions whose talents run toward predicting the future. They are known for giving accurate but misleading or hard-to-interpret fortunes, but are nevertheless important to followers of the Pantheon, and frequently consulted before such followers embark on major endeavors.

The Temples of Apollo, Athena, and Hephaestus are known throughout the galaxy for running free schools open to all, important sources of upward mobility for Imperial subjects in particular. The children of laborers who apply themselves to their schooling might find themselves well-equipped to move into the bureaucracy or into technical pursuits.

In addition to their traditional roles, several of the gods took on new spheres of influence as humanity expanded. Poseidon's domain grew to include the void and jump space, and he protects navigators and other spacers. Hephaestus is the god of technological endeavor, and the patron of artificers and mechanikoi. Hermes is the god of merchants, navarchoi, and spies, those who travel and those who trick.

Aliens

Many thousands of sapient species populate the galaxy. Most of them are endemic to one world, or a handful of them at most. A bare few alien species have sufficient population to rival humans, or even register in the average human's perception of the universe. They are listed below.

Arachni

Eight-legged creatures of great size, with a span of up to four meters, the arachni (singular arachnos) are notable for their unusual lifecycle. They are best known during the youth phase of their life, when they take the form described above. During adulthood, they take root, digging their legs underground and activating photosynthetic organs. They grow, treelike, to a height of thirty to forty meters, putting out a canopy of leaves. Insects native to the arachni homeworld transfer pollen from males to females, and the next generation grows from buds at the base of the adult body.

The youth phase is endoskeletal, though its skin is thick and highly resistant to damage. Youths are also highly mobile, capable of running at up to forty kilometers per hour and jumping ten meters vertically. The adult phase does not move, and possesses a thick, bark-like layer of outer skin over its stem.

Adults are non-communicative. Youths speak a complicated sign language. Humans can understand it, but have too few limbs to speak it. Arachni rarely deal peacefully with humans, but when they do, they adopt human names.

The arachni developed spaceflight before humanity, and settled a large area of space by generation ship prior to contact with the Empire. First contact was violent; Imperial scouts cut down several adult-form arachni to build a stockade, and youths proceeded to attack and overrun the fortification. So began two centuries of war.

By the end of it, the arachni had fought the Empire to a standstill, captured jump ships, built their own, grown their territory dramatically, and staged a counter-invasion of Imperial border worlds. Tactically, the Autokrator at the time, Prokopios XXII, decided to offer peace, which the arachni accepted. The situation today, two thousand years later, is much the same. The arachni govern their large territory to the galactic southwest, occasionally engaging in border conflicts with the Empire. Open war has not yet returned, but the hatred the arachni bear for the Empire remains undimmed; Tarki diplomats constantly pressure the arachni leadership to take the fight to the Empire once again.

The Empire knows little of arachni society, but it does know that family ties are important, and that the arachni state makes major decisions by vote; each of the arachni great houses get one representative. They meet on the arachni homeworld, known to humans as Arachnikos.

Technologically, the arachni remain relatively primitive, favoring close-combat weapons and simple ranged weapons. Their great size and strength ensure that even these are dangerous to unaugmented humans.

The Handed

The Handed are two-meter-long, scaled, bottlenose fish, weighing up to about 100 kilograms. Their fin structure is shark-like, with two angled pectoral fins, one sharply-curving dorsal fin, and a vertical tail with strakes fading smoothly into the body. In the human visual spectrum, individuals are brilliantly colored, often in complicated interlocking patterns.

They are among the strongest natural psions in the galaxy, and that talent is responsible for the development of their civilization. Without any physical means of grasping and manipulating objects, they rely on telekinesis to do so.

They communicate telepathically, in a language which is approximately comprehensible to any psion, but heavy on nuance and subtext which an untrained 'speaker' will miss. Handed proper nouns, both place names and given names, tend to be telepathic flashes of sensation as much as words per se. Untrained telepaths find it difficult to accurately reproduce Handed nouns, and there is no standardized method to render them in spoken or written language. The Handed themselves don't bother with accuracy; a Handed who calls herself by the flash of evening sunlight on silvery scales might go by Flash or Sunlight in dealing with those who do not speak her language.

When Imperial explorers reached the Handed homeworld some fifteen centuries ago, the Handed had already widely settled their home star system, which the Handed call the sensation of returning to one's dwelling after a long sojourn elsewhere (or Dwelling, for short). The Imperial explorers were impressed with the efficiency of the Handed's sublight drives, while the Handed were enthralled by the size of the human voidships and, of course, their jump drive. Both sides attempted to negotiate a trade; neither wished to give up their edge, and so the human explorers departed.

Eventually, after several more visits, both sides relented, more interested in the long run in the pursuit of profit than in protecting their secrets. The territory belonging to the Handed expanded quickly, and now they are a major power in the galactic west. They are governed by a ruling council, its members taken from the most powerful corporate entities in its territory.

The Handed and the Empire remain on friendly terms but frequently find themselves at loggerheads on issues of trade and borders. There has never been outright war between them, nor more than the mildest border scuffle, and both find the rapid expansion of the D'van Empire unsettling, but they remain frequent sparring partners in negotiations.

Many water worlds in the Empire have colonies of the Handed. They pay taxes to the Empire but are not Imperial subjects; they do not interfere in Imperial affairs, and the local representatives of the Empire do not interfere in theirs, and both sides are happy.

Handed Technology

The Handed are master engineers and artificers, more advanced than the Empire in many ways. The size of their territory and the secretive nature of their corporate culture prevents them from challenging the galaxy's great powers. Technology designed by the Handed tends to be sleeker, more compact, and more reliable than that built by the Empire, but is harder to find and more expensive.

The Handed are galactic leaders in the field of automata. While the handful of Imperial forge worlds use factory automata, mechanical tool-arms on fixed bases which move according to a program, the Handed have developed independently-moving bipedal automata. Some Handed automata can even operate in groups based on built-in networking; the Handed say rumors of such networked automata developing a form of sentience are laughable falsehoods.

Tarki

In appearance, Tarki are a mad scientist's fever dream: meter-long, slender, scaled bodies with six legs and two arms, which move in a sinuous, twisting fashion; long, many-toothed jaws which can open wide enough to swallow a human whole; two pairs of diaphanous, dragonfly-like wings, which can lift a Tark high into the sky.

Their language comprises chirps, growls, and hisses in various pitches; humans can understand it but cannot speak it. The Tarkish vocal apparatus can produce Greek. In the past, when the Tarki were on better terms with the Empire, they often took human names, and Greek names in particular. Now, they rarely bother, using names in their own language.

The Tarki and their D'van Empire have long been a foe and foil to the Empire of Alexander, but it was not always so. The perfidious Tark is a cliché in the Imperial psyche, and a foe from the start cannot show perfidy. At first contact on the Tarkish homeworld (known to the Empire as Tarkos) two and a half millennia ago, the Tarki presented themselves as enthusiastic partners. For many centuries, they were allies to the Throne and valuable subjects of the Empire. They were bold fighters alongside the Tagmata, and canny administrators within the bureaucracy.

Their integration into the fabric of the Empire put them in perfect position to observe its decline. When they perceived it had reached its terminal stages, they struck. Almost as one, the Tarki rose to throw off the shackles of the Empire. They were wildly successful, and nearly topped the entire Empire. Only the presence of a daring and ambitious Autokrator, Nikolaus XXIX, on the Throne stopped them. Taking to the front lines, Nikolaus halted the main thrust of the Tarkish advance a mere thousand light-years from Homeworld itself. With the time he and his guard purchased, elements of the Imperial military were able to cut off the Tarkish advance and defeat it in detail.

That victory kept the newly-declared D'van Empire from taking Homeworld and defeating the Empire of Alexander altogether, but the First War of Reconquest never threatened the D'van Empire's core territory in the galactic north. In the modern era, the D'van Tarki are the only peer state to the Empire, clearly second in power but vital and rising where the Empire is moribund and setting.

While the Empire of Alexander is hardly a paragon of multiculturalism, it is friendly to the whole gamut of human experience and begrudgingly accepting of useful aliens. The D'van Empire is much less open. There is room for non-Tarki in its structure, provided they accept Tarkish values and ideals;

otherwise, they are fit only for slavery or enmity. Like the Empire of Alexander, the D'van Empire is a totalitarian state ruled by a single emperor. The D'van Emperor, however, rules a smaller territory and does so more directly. The Empire of Alexander can bring larger armies to bear with the aid of its feudal underlings; the D'van Emperor has larger personal forces than the Autokrator.

Tarkish technology is on par with that of humans.

Krrkt'kxhfrr

Krrkt'kxhfrr are black, tripedal, insectoid aliens. Their legs are arranged two forward and one back, all three ending in grasping claws. Their two pairs of forelimbs are razor-edged and capable of cutting through armor. Their heads are triangular, with bulbous compound eyes on the top corners and a trio of sharp mandibles at the base. Folded across their backs are a pair of translucent wings which seem almost to glow when the light catches them.

The characteristic sound of their language is clicking, buzzing, and chittering. Humans can understand it and approximate it, but cannot speak it with anything like native proficiency. Humans often shorten the name of the species to 'krrkt', which is somewhat easier to pronounce. Krrkt'kxhfrr use names in their own language when dealing with humans.

The krrkt'kxhfrr are something of an enigma. Imperial scouts encountered krrkt'kxhfrr on a half-dozen worlds in a half-dozen nearby star systems starting about two millennia ago, but none of the colonies knew of the others or had technology sufficient to travel between planets, much less stars. Two of them had advanced to early industrial levels of technology; the other four were primitive. Imperial xenoarchaeology being a minuscule part of the already-tiny field of ordinary Imperial archaeology, the Empire never put much time into working out the mystery, and so a mystery it remained.

Krrkt'kxhfrr are not given to forming lasting bonds; they have no concept of family units or, indeed, of many relationships beyond the level humans would call acquaintance. They are, however, perfectly willing to sign a long-term binding contract, which means that they are commonly found playing mercenary in the employ of anyone with silver to pay for it.

Despite their low-technology roots, the krrkt'kxhfrr adapted quickly to the modern battlefield. When employed as mercenaries, they use modern technology with vim and gusto.

Kraken

Kraken are floating, translucent, jellyfish-shaped aliens, who hover in atmosphere by means of large gas bags beneath their bell-shaped heads and, where the gas bag provides insufficient buoyancy, telekinetic assistance. Trailing beneath their bells are up to two dozen tentacles which they use to manipulate their environments. They lack visual or auditory systems themselves, relying on symbiosis with small flying creatures to provide them with sensory input. Their internal organs are contained within a central stalk under their bell, from which their tentacles sprout.

They communicate telepathically, using psionic translators when dealing with humans. The term 'kraken' was chosen by human explorers. The kraken themselves don't see the resemblance, but gamely play along, typically choosing names from Greek myth for themselves when dealing with humans.

They are long-lived creatures with lifespans measured in millennia; the oldest surviving cohort of kraken remembers when humans first appeared on the scene. Even a hotheaded kraken by kraken standards seems to most humans to be laid-back and easygoing to a fault, an artifact of their long lives and the perspective gained therefrom.

Kraken are native to a gas giant humans call Atlantis. Kraken can survive nearly anywhere with a bit of atmosphere. Without atmosphere, they require vacuum suits and cannot float, instead walking slowly on their tentacles.

Kraken colonies are ubiquitous on gas giants around the galaxy, but largely inward-looking. They are happy to pay taxes to the local authorities, but produce so little of economic value that the local authorities tend not to care about a kraken colony one way or another. Even the Tarki leave them more or less alone.

Kraken, when they do befriend the other species of the galaxy, prove to be fascinating creatures. Many have traveled widely and have stories to spare. Most are deep thinkers, thinking being the prime leisure pursuit in a gas-giant kraken colony.

Athati

Athati are natives of a world called Athatos by humans, and were first encountered by humans roughly two millennia ago. Athatos is a large, dense, high-gravity world with a Venus-like atmosphere, orbiting close to a hot sun. As such, surface temperatures routinely exceed five hundred degrees centigrade. Silicon-based biochemistry is much less problematic at that temperature, and the athati are indeed silicon-based. An athat placed in any human-compatible environment, even a hot desert, will almost immediately freeze to death. As such, they travel in automobile-sized palanquins or smaller sedan chairs, both heated to around 450 degrees centigrade, and prefer to secure larger heated quarters for comfort reasons.

An athat is a radially-symmetric one-meter-tall torso, with three legs spaced 120 degrees apart around the torso, three arms offset 60 degrees from the legs, and three eyes above the arms. Looking at an athat from above, the limbs form a six-way symmetry. They are the dull red color of steel at high temperatures.

The athati language is infrasonic to human ears, and communicates information very slowly. Athati frequently talk even among themselves in Greek. Many have Greek given names and no native name.

Athati are known for their personable and hospitable nature, which makes them natural traders and merchants. Many jump ships have permanent athati residents who sell spare parts and durable goods to the itinerant voidship owners who pass through the hangar bays. They are also well-liked by the Empire, at least as far as the Empire likes any alien species well, and commonly become Imperial subjects to colonize worlds in Imperial territory unsuited to humans.

Yashcheritsy

The lizard-like yashcheritsy are two-meter bipeds, built more thickly than humans, with thick tails of about a leg's diameter and scales rather than skin. Their heads are saurian in form, with eyes set on the sides of the skull behind and above a long, toothy snout which houses a forked tongue. They range in color from black to yellow. Most are green. They are cold-blooded.

Their language, yashcheritskiy, is largely hisses and tongue-clicks. Many yashcheritsy have Orthodox Greek names in addition to their native names.

Yashcheritsy were the first aliens contacted by the Empire, three millennia ago; by that time, they had built a burgeoning interstellar civilization based on slower-than-light travel. They traveled in cryo-sleep, an easy technology for a cold-blooded species to develop. Yashcheritsy are only loosely governed at the highest level. Clan warlords control a few dozen to a few hundred worlds each, and only by mutual agreement do they work together.

First contact coincided with the first great missionary push by the Orthodox Church, and a substantial minority of the yashcherit converted. Later missions by the Church came near to finishing the job. Now, a greater percentage of yashcheritsy are Orthodox converts than humans. This ties them closely to the Empire, and as a whole, the yashcheritsy and the Empire enjoy a friendly relationship. The yashcheritsy are technically Imperial subjects, but enjoy a great deal of autonomy. Similarly, they are not required to aid in the defense of the Empire, but frequently send troops to the aid of the Autokrator's forces near their territory in the galactic northwest.

They do not, however, enjoy the same favor with the Empire as the athati or saifthei. Yashcheritsy, when performing Orthodox rites, use a local incense with powerful psychoactive properties. Yashcheritsy exposed to it are given to great acts of fervor and zeal. In the context of an Orthodox religious service, this is not usually harmful. In any other circumstance, it can be very bad. Yashcheritsy under the influence occasionally declare themselves the rightful Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, or more frequently simply declare that the Imperials have grown soft, and the time has come to raid their border worlds.

These border raids can grow from mere annoyances to nearly all-out war in the space of a few months, owing to the importance yashcherit society places upon unity of action and following the crowd. They peter out eventually, usually after facing organized resistance, and the task falls to the yashcherit clan leaders and the local themarchoi to hash out the details of reparations.

Though these raids may be devastating to the worlds in their paths, they constitute only a minor hiccup in relations between the Empire and the yashcherit warlords.

Saifthei

A saifth is a humanoid alien, standing between 150 and 160 centimeters in height. Standing still, saifthei resemble humans, albeit small adults or large children. In motion, the resemblance fades rapidly. Saifthei have double-joined wrists and ankles. The upper wrist moves the three-fingered, one-

thumbed hand up, down, left, and right, while the lower wrist rolls it toward and away from the body. Likewise, the upper ankle moves the foot forward, backward, and side to side, and the lower ankle rotates the foot in and out. A walking saifth's limbs move in all the wrong places at all the wrong times.

Saifth facial structure is similar to that of humans: two eyes, a bony, flat nasal ridge, and a mouth with omnivore's teeth. Their skin is uniformly dark gray in the human visual spectrum, but patterned in infrared. Their eyes are reflectors rather than refractors, crystals at the back of the eye reflect light to a reflector suspended in the middle, which further reflects the light to the retina. Their eyes appear black, and have no pupil or other features. To reduce the intensity of incoming light, individual reflector elements move out of alignment; in bright light, a saifth's eyes glow.

A saifth's most unique feature is his auditory crest, a collection of hearing organs centered on the head from forehead to nape of neck, which are capable of complex articulation and a major part of saifth body language. They are moderately-strong psions, using telepathy to augment communication in their saifthifa, their spoken language. Humans can produce saifthifa at a near-native level; it is the easiest alien tongue for humans to pronounce.

Together with the athati, they are one of two known alien species not based on carbon biochemistry. Instead, their biochemistry is based on boranes, boron compounds highly explosive in oxygen atmospheres. Their homeworld, Aif, which orbits a star of the same name, has a reducing atmosphere high in boranes with a significant quantity of formamide. Only 113 other worlds with similar atmospheres are known to exist in the whole of the galaxy, and all of them are populated by saifthei. Their population, a little under half a trillion, is the smallest of the major alien species.

First contact with the Empire, roughly two millennia ago, was eventful. The first Imperial survey ship to reach Aif was not equipped with sensors sophisticated enough to characterize its atmosphere. A landing party took a shuttle to the surface to conduct further experiments, and a surface party disembarked, whereupon the exhaust from their environment suits almost immediately combusted with the local atmosphere in a series of small explosions. Perceiving it as an attack, they departed immediately, before the locals could make overtures of friendship, or even make their presence known.

Some twenty years later, a different survey ship returned to find a rudimentary space station in orbit, and relations between the Empire and the saifthei formally began.

Environment Suits

A saifth outside of her native atmosphere requires an environmental suit capable both of providing the correct mixture of gases for her to breath, as well as isolating the products of her respiration from the outside air.

She wears a two-layer suit to do this: a nearly form-fitting inner suit, whose mask handles the actual exchange of gases and whose backpack contains the gas generators and compressors required to manage the atmosphere internal to the suit; and a heavy, baggy oversuit, which protects the inner suit and its vulnerable components. The average saifth's suit supports up to a week of time away from an environmental plant suitable to refill her tanks.

Traveling saifthei often build quarters of their own aboard whatever ship they are traveling with. Such quarters contain an environmental plant which produces the exotic atmosphere a saifth requires from readily-available components. The quarters' seals are of critical importance. Leaks are bad for everyone involved.

Society and Outlook

Saifthei are the galaxy's best mathematicians and natural philosophers, but among its worst engineers. An engine designed by a saifth is worth its weight in gold. An engine built by a saifth likely needs an overhaul before it ever moves a spacecraft.

Saifth daily life revolves around a rigidly organized culture: they are loyal to their clan, their parents' clans, their birth world, their species, and only them to themselves. This mindset leaves little room for outsiders, to whom the saifthei appear taciturn and cautious in relationships. Saifthei choose a clan when they come of age, clans being closely tied to professions or areas of expertise. Most saifthei enjoy this structure, working cooperatively within narrowly defined parameters to solve problems.

Few saifthei, however, find the daily drumbeat of their society tolerable for their entire lives, and leave the regimented routine for what they term wanderings. A wandering saifth travels the galaxy at large, with an eye toward bringing back new knowledge or experience for the clan, but also for bettering oneself by discovering an individual identity. Most saifthei encountered by humans are engaged in such wanderings, and are therefore more amenable to contact with outsiders.

Language

Saifthifa's vowel inventory surpasses that of human languages. Nearly every vowel sound which can be produced by a mouth, tongue, and teeth shows up in saifthifa, alongside a mere handful of consonants: s, sh, z, zh, th, voiced-th, f, v, and wh.

Names

Saifth names are extremely complex, and serve as a map to the saifth's position in society and perception of himself.

Consider an example, rendered in the human alphabet for ease of reading:
Zhaeifa dthe-Shia dtho-Thaufwhesh zhave-Feovaifa Zoewhesdthashedth Zaiveuiof.

The name starts with the given name (Zhaeifa, in this case). A saifth's given name comes from her parents.

The next two elements (dthe-Shia and dtho-Thaufwhesh) signify her parents' clans. Both use the particle 'dth', with the rough meaning 'born of', with the feminine suffix -e and the masculine suffix -o.

The fourth element (zhave-Feovaifa) indicates the saifth's chosen clan, using the particle 'zhav', which indicates allegiance. Only saifthei above the age of majority have a clan name.

The fifth element (Zoewhesdthashedth, path-walker) is a special surname chosen by the saifth herself upon the completion of some deed which reveals an aspect of her personality.

The final element (Zaiveuiof) names the star around which the saifth was born.

When playing a saifth character, you can make up most of this as it comes up, or simply ignore everything beyond the given name and chosen surname. The list of sounds in the preceding section give you sufficient information to do so—pick some consonants, add vowels to taste, and you're all set.

Places to Go

There are about 400 billion stars in the galaxy. Selected at random, each one has about a 0.3% chance of hosting an inhabited world. Many more are inhabitable, at least marginally, and even in the Empire's twilight years, it continues to dispatch colonizing expeditions to worlds within its borders.

The map of the galaxy below shows some of the major astrographical features and landmark worlds of the Milky Way.

Planetary Stereotypes

It would be a much longer rulebook if I enumerated every kind of world you might come across in your adventures. Here is a very abbreviated list, covering some of the common cliches you might find around the Empire.

Hive World

By some quirk of history or geography, a hive world's entire population is contained within a single enormous city. Such cities stretch hundreds of kilometers from end to end, and tens of kilometers from top to bottom. Uniformly, hive worlds have been inhabited for a long time, on the order of millennia. Worlds with a shorter history lack the time to develop the many-layered, exclusively urban structure typical to hive worlds.

'Upper class' and 'lower class' take on literal meaning in a hive city. The nearer the top you live, the better-off you are. The lower classes of hive dweller might go decades without seeing natural light of any kind.

Hive cities usually end up being built on the ruins of previous hive cities. Once-grand towers and plazas fall into darkness, eclipsed by new construction to form the undercity, where only the truly desperate or truly despicable dwell. In the undercity, danger lurks around every corner.

Forge World

Only a few thousand forge worlds exist in the whole of the Empire, places where particularly forward-minded artificers have developed factory systems covering entire continents. Massive, largely automated manufacturing complexes dot the surface, filled with rapidly-moving mechanisms which take raw materials, form them into parts, and assemble those parts into devices of many and varied kinds. Forge worlds are universally important trading stops, where raw materials can be sold for high prices and where rare technology can be purchased at steep discounts.

In the factories, there are very few laborers by Imperial standards. They focus on keeping the machinery functional and on supervising its work, but in an average acre of forge world factory, it's entirely possible that a group of explorers might see zero other humans.

Away from the factories, there are manicured cities and countrysides for the upper classes, carefully isolated from the columns of smoke which mark a large factory complex. Despite the wealth concentrated in such places, they nevertheless have a provincial feel to them. Forge world populations are small and low-density, and it's much more common to run across prior acquaintances there than most other places in the galaxy.

Ocean World

The popular conception of ocean worlds is that they are tropical paradises. This is not usually the case.

The most distinctive feature of an ocean world, and its residents' most pressing concern, is its storms. With little or no land to break up cyclones, an ocean world's tropics are constantly wracked by cyclones, with winds of hundreds of kilometers per hour and blinding sheets of rain battering any exposed surfaces.

The typical ocean city is a dome starting a few dozen meters underwater, beneath the breaking waves, stabilized by buoyancy tanks and kilometers-long sea anchors. Submersible landing platforms ferry small craft between the surface and the cities.

Inside the domes, much effort is taken to avoid reminding residents of the relative precariousness of their position, or, put more directly, the fact that they live inside a relatively fragile, eminently sinkable bubble. Only a small handful of compartments inside a city have a view to the outside, and only a few of those are accessible to the public. The rest of it is furnished and landscaped to resemble a surface city, down to parks which look like they're outside on an ordinary terrestrial planet and a day-night cycle provided by overhead sun lamps.

Stock Locations

Governor's Palace

Navarchoi and their companions frequently make stops in governors' palaces. In star systems where jump ships stop only infrequently, planetary governors frequently receive visiting navarchoi. At more popular trading stops, lower officials in the planetary government may play host instead, still using an audience chamber in the governor's palace.

Such palaces are sumptuously appointed, usually decorated with the symbols and insignia of the governor's family, the local themarch, and the Empire. Much of the machinery of planetary government is located either in or near the palace; even dealings with relatively minor planetary officials are likely to result in a visit.

Spaceport City

Most inhabited planets have one or two cities with orbital landing facilities: docks and pads for shuttlecraft, parking areas nearby for larger atmosphere-capable voidships, and extensive support facilities, including repair yards and fuel depots.

Spaceport cities tend to be more technologically advanced than the rest of their worlds, owing both to increased access to trade and to simple proximity to the spacefaring classes.

Other cities on a given world can readily support a few shuttles landing, but are not equipped to handle a large influx of them.

Bazaar

When a jump ship visits a star system, most of the trade takes place in the jump ship's hangar bays. Navarchoi prefer it this way, raking in money from tariffs. The merchants, too, prefer it. Docking large freighters aboard a jump ship, they do not need to worry about entering atmospheres themselves, or hiring transport to the surface.

Smaller, independent traders, however, see an opportunity in this. In small craft and smaller freighters, they descend en masse to the spaceports below, filling bazaar districts with their wares. Bazaars are colorful, rough-and-tumble places, full of shady characters, scam artists, and every now and then, the deal of a lifetime.

Artificer's Workshop

An artificer's workshop is not merely a place for an artificer to build things. It is the sum total of the artificer's training, a monument to her experience, and even a reflection of herself. A workshop is an intensely personal space, built and organized to an artificer's exacting standard. An artificer is only truly at home in her workshop. Other artificers, on the other hand, would have no idea where to begin.

A workshop typically contains a few large, well-lit workbenches, surrounded by huge arrays of machinery whose purpose is only fully known to the workshop's artificer and, in part, her apprentices. Storage is everywhere, containing parts, failed projects, works in progress, and other miscellaneous pieces of technology. Usually, the artificer is the only one who can find a single specific item without a week-long search.

Nearly every world in the Empire has a few artificers. Most are workaday types, building what their worlds demand without a great deal of experimentation are innovation. A few individuals, one in one hundred or more, turn their eyes toward greater things.

Lost Workshop

As the Empire grows and contracts, planets enter and leave its sphere of influence. Cities are built atop aging cities, and whole continents are conquered, abandoned, and retaken. Artificers and their workshops are frequently lost in the shuffle.

A lost workshop may take many forms. It may be an undersea base, a private island, a hollowed-out mountaintop behind a secret door, or a chamber deep in a hive undercity. Almost uniformly, however, lost workshops share three features.

First, advanced security systems. Artificers guard their work jealously, and even long-abandoned workshops still often have functioning machinery designed to repel intruders. It may take the form of automated turrets, cunning traps, or even the occasional combat automaton.

Second, a thick coating of dust. Rediscovered workshops are quickly looted, whether by local governments or by opportunistic explorers. In either case, little to no valuable technology remains. Characters stumbling across a pristine abandoned workshop are likely the first people to have seen its interior in centuries.

Third, a bounty of interesting items. It's relatively rare to find fully-functional items of immediate practical use in a workshop, but oftentimes a number of technological wonders will be present.

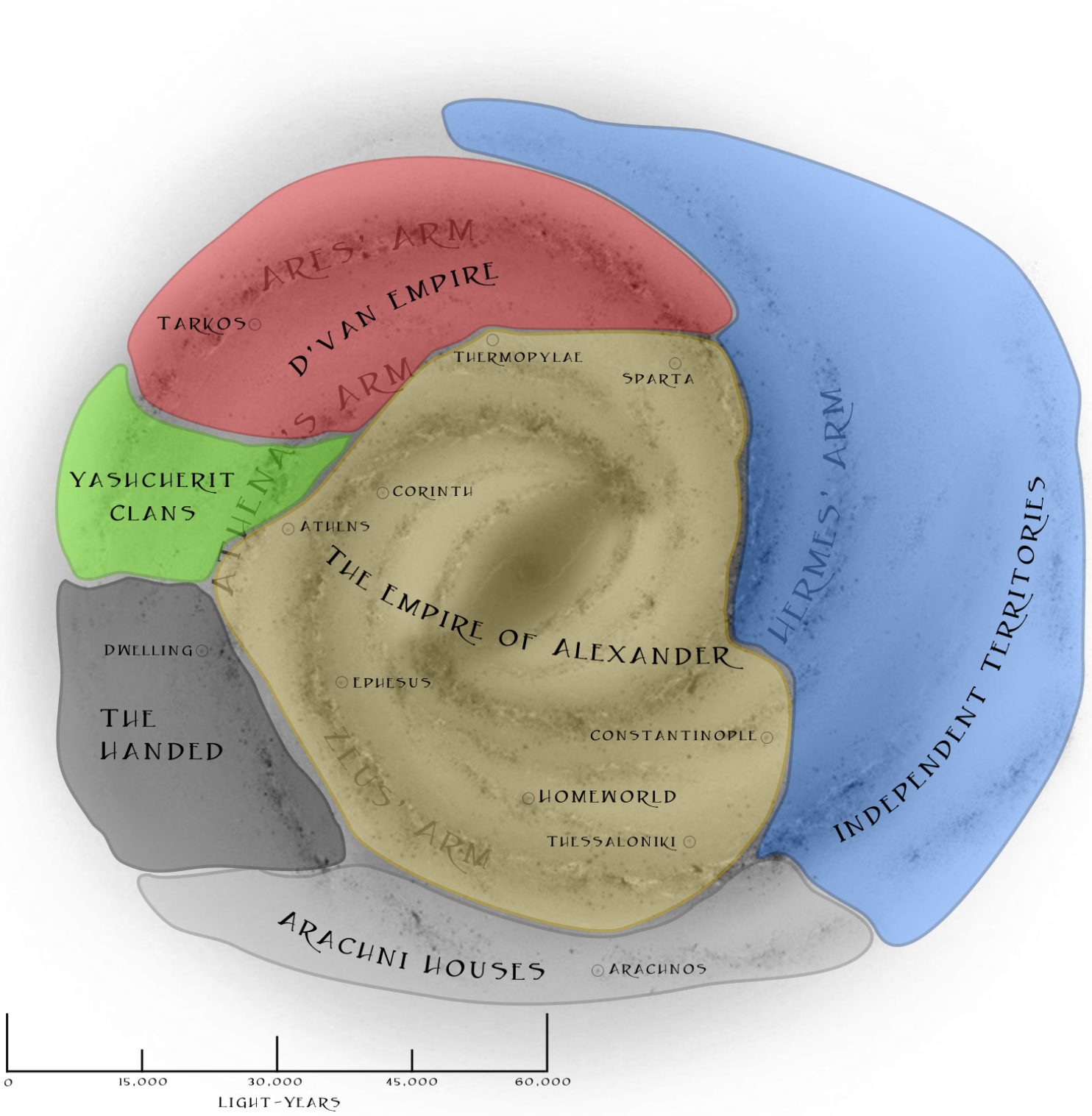
Galactic Landmarks

The Milky Way galaxy comprises a core region, two major arms (Zeus' Arm and Ares' Arm), two minor arms (Athena's Arm and Hermes' Arm), and a few spurs between them (unnamed, except for Orion's Arm, in which Homeworld is located).

The coreward regions of each arm are considered part of the Core. There is no formal boundary, but the first 180 degrees of each arm's spiral is a safe bet, neither too exclusive nor too broad.

By that standard, according to the map below, Sparta is at the coreward end of Ares' Arm, Ephesus is just in the Core at the coreward end of Zeus' Arm, Constantinople is well outside of the Core along Hermes' Arm, and Corinth is well inside the Core portion of Zeus' Arm.

Map


ARES' ARM
D'VAN EMPIRE
TARKOS
THERMOPYLAE
SPARTA
ATHENA'S ARM
YASHCHERIT CLANS
CORINTH
ATHENS
THE EMPIRE OF ALEXANDER
HERMES' ARM
INDEPENDENT TERRITORIES
DWELLING
THE HANDED
EPHESUS
CONSTANTINOPLE
ZEUS' ARM
HOMEWORLD
THESSALONIKI
ARACHNI HOUSES
ARACHNOS
0
15,000
30,000
45,000
60,000
LIGHT-YEARS

Ares' Arm

Perhaps fittingly, the D'van Tarki occupy the majority of the outward sweep of Ares' Arm, which forms the Milky Way's border to the galactic north. The Tarki and the Empire are engaged in open warfare all along the border, in the relatively empty space between Ares' Arm and the Core parts of Zeus' Arm and Athena's Arm. Many of the Imperial Tagmata fight on the border, supported by the Kataphraktoi and the Navy. The combined might of the Empire, between the Autokrator's forces and those provided by the local themarchoi, is sufficient to hold back the D'van tide, but infights and squabbles between the themarchoi prevents the Imperial High Command from making an offensive of its own.

Wracked by war, much of Ares' Arm is desperately poor. Even the well-off star systems look threadbare compared to more prosperous regions of the galaxy.

Sparta

Sparta, a dusty badlands world with a thin but breathable atmosphere, forms the cornerstone of the Imperial defensive line in the galactic north. Its vast arsenals supply small arms to much of the front, and barracks and parade grounds provide accommodation and drill space for those units newly formed and shipping out, or those units badly battered and receiving reinforcements.

Its principal spaceport city and planetary capital is Cynosura. Other cities of note include Eurotas, Therapne, and Limna. The Citadel, one of the largest orbital stations in human possession at several hundred kilometers from end to end, sits in a stationary orbit above Cynosura. Its shipyards are unrivaled in the galactic north.

Its permanent population is only about two and a half billion, but several billion troops are present at any given time.

Thermopylae

Thermopylae is no longer an inhabited planet, in the strictest sense. It has been on the front line of the Imperial conflict with the D'van Tarki for three centuries, the tip of a bulge in the Empire's defensive line. Near-constant war wracks the whole of Thermopylae's star system, from combats between fleets of thousands of warships to ongoing struggles to hold the surface of Thermopylae proper. The D'van Tarki have launched countless attacks, and have reached Thermopylae itself dozens of times, but the stalwart Imperial defense has always managed to push them back.

It is human-inhabitable, and once was a pleasant, earthlike world. It is now a dusty wasteland, covered in ruins, and occupied only by the Imperial military and, on the frequent occasions when landings succeed, D'van attackers.

Zeus' Arm

Swinging out from the Core across the galactic south to the east, Zeus' Arm forms the western and southern borders of the Empire, and is the most peaceful of all of the outlying regions of the Milky Way. Trade flows openly to the west, across the border with the Handed. To the south, the great house of the arachni keep a close eye on Imperial movements and rarely permit much Imperial travel through their space, but at present, fight the Empire no more than is required to maintain the present border.

Owing to the relative lack of conflict, Zeus' Arm is the wealthiest and most prosperous of the Empire's outlying regions.

Thessaloniki

In its golden age, Thessaloniki was the Empire's second system, behind only Homeworld in importance. In the centuries since, it has tarnished somewhat, but remains a crucial trade and mercantile center for the Empire despite its outlying nature. It controls access to the Empire's southern border from Constantinople and points west, and is a common stop for ships plying Zeus' Arm. The swath of space between Ephesus, Homeworld, and Thessaloniki is the most prosperous in the entire Empire. Its population is about five and a half billion.

It is a desert world, with limited moisture and high heat, but a breathable atmosphere. Farming must be carried out underground, and heavily irrigated with carefully-husbanded water extracted from Thessaloniki's ice caps and deep aquifers. Water conservation is a crucial part of life, as is atmospheric water reclamation. Surface temperatures at the equator frequently rise to unlivable levels. The temperate regions, though still sandy wastes, support life more readily.

Its economy revolves almost entirely around providing services to navarchoi and the traders they ferry. Its markets provide a steady supply of customers even to merchants who choose to remain in-system, making it a popular place for merchants to leave one jump ship and join another. Its bars and other entertainments are unrivaled in all of Imperial territory.

It is a major center of the Imperial Orthodox faith, and all of its major cities bear the names of the basilicas around which they are built: Hagia Sophia (the capital), Hagia Ekaterina, and Agios Demetrios.

Athena's Arm

Like Ares' Arm, Athena's Arm is not substantially controlled by the Empire. Its coreward end, nearly due north from the galactic center, dips almost immediately into territory controlled by the D'van Tarki, proceeds through a small slice of Imperial territory in the vicinity of Athens, and then becomes the territory of the Handed and the arachni in the galactic west and south.

The portions of Athena's Arm near the D'van border see frequent battles between the Tarki and the Imperial military. The remainder is relatively peaceful.

Athens

Located in the space midway between Athena's Arm and Zeus' Arm, Athens is nevertheless ordinarily considered part of Athena's Arm.

It is a garden world, a little more than half ocean and pleasant in climate from the equator nearly to its arctic. Its native flora and fauna are extensive, friendly to humans, and known throughout the Empire, if only by reputation, for their tastiness and suitability for human consumption. From orbit, Athens is a blue-green jewel wreathed in white clouds on the day side. The night side sparkles with artificial light, evidence of widespread human habitation, with concentrations in cities but a larger number of rural communities than might be expected for a world of its size. Its population is about nine billion.

Athens is the center of the Empire's efforts in practical studies and natural philosophy. Home to the most elite of the Empire's artificers, it also plays host to the largest Temple of Hephaestus in the galaxy, second in importance only to the High Temple on Homeworld.

Its capital is simply called the Academy. Other major cities include Lacia, Colonos, Piraeus, and Thymotadae.

Hermes' Arm

As Hermes' Arm leaves the Core in the galactic southwest, half becomes Orion's Arm, and the other half keeps the name of Hermes.

It is so named because of its extent. Though narrow and, in places, sparse, Hermes' Arm nevertheless makes nearly a full circuit of the galaxy, petering out in the galactic northwest, outside of Ares' Arm but too thin to constitute a strong border to the galaxy.

It is relatively lightly inhabited, and neither notably prosperous nor notably poor.

Constantinople

Far out along Hermes' Arm, Constantinople is the most remote of the Empire's great worlds. From orbit, it is unappealing browns and grays, and the picture does not improve markedly upon landing. Once, Constantinople was a factory world, building all manner of goods for the eastern half of the Empire, but in the series of rebellions and repressions during the Wars of Reconquest, it changed hands several times. The machinery was destroyed, and the expertise required to repair it was no longer present in the Empire. The air, though breathable, is filled with a choking haze, and the sky is almost never brighter than a dull gray.

Its population of about eight billion is concentrated in kilometers-tall, spire-like hive cities whose outlines dominate the horizon. Now firmly in Imperial hands, it is a center of the study of knowledge for its own sake. The University of Constantinople accepts only the best minds from across the Empire, and is undoubtedly the largest and smartest concentration of human minds in the galaxy.

Beneath the University grounds and the upper levels of the spire-cities, a mammoth underclass scratches out a meager existence salvaging from the seemingly-endless factory complexes.

University Landing is its capital. Arcadia and Theodosia are two other large spire-cities.

Independent States

The further reaches of Hermes' Arm are largely settled by former Imperial citizens who have broken free from the Empire's rule and declared themselves new, independent states. Such states can be found all around the Empire's border, but are almost always isolated. In Hermes' Arm, they are packed together, one bordering several others.

Their governments range from hereditary autocracy, like the Empire they left, to radical democracy, an idea put forth in the halls of the University of Constantinople but never tried on a large scale. They may be rich or poor, large or small, strong and vital or already doddering. Few last long, and the ones that do watch their neighbors like hawks. Showing weakness invites war.

Orion's Arm

Orion's Arm, the short spur off of the coreward regions of Hermes' Arm which fades into Zeus' Arm near Thessaloniki, is the cradle of humanity and the birthplace of the Empire of Alexander. It is a prosperous region, and populated more densely than any other part of the Empire.

Homeworld

Homeworld—Earth—is the home planet of humanity and the cradle of the Empire. Before spreading across the stars, it was tested by spreading across the continents, and many of the administrative systems which serve it in good stead were proved in the fires of five hundred years of war on Homeworld.

It is all but exclusively a preserve for the Autokrator, the bureaucracy, and the grandest noble families of the Empire. The Imperial City, a palace complex covering much of the land once occupied by the old city of Constantinople, is the home of the Autokrator and the Imperial court. Europa and much of Asia are given over to Ministerial headquarters and colossal halls of records.

Homeworld's further extents are filled by estates and properties belonging to the very highest class of Imperial nobility: courtiers to the Autokrator, exarchoi, and the most powerful, loyal, and influential themarchoi. Its population is only about one billion.

Other planets in the Sol system are more heavily populated. Venus was terraformed by orbital carbon sequestration[1]. Its climate now is moderate and pleasant, and much of the Sol system's middle class makes its home there. Ares, called Mars by some Europans, was never fully terraformed, and remains a cold, nearly airless desert. Artisans and artificers build luxury goods and the finest weapons in the galaxy in tunnels and caverns beneath its surface.

The Core

The Core comprises two regions: the galactic center, which is very lightly inhabited due to radiation hazards stemming from the large number of young, active stars, and the Outer Core, which is made up of the innermost parts of the galactic arms, and much more heavily populated. The galactic center is about 30,000 light-years across, while the Outer Core is a ring 60,000 light-years from edge to edge, surrounding the galactic center.

It is not uniformly wealthy, but has never seen war or rebellion outside of the first wave of the D'van invasion. Even poor worlds by Core standards are moderately well-off in absolute terms.

Ephesus

Ephesus is a jungle world, with smallish oceans but a number of large rivers and a rainy climate from tropic to tropic. From orbit it is an almost impossible color of green, so saturated that it seems almost to glow. Its native flora and fauna are boundless, ever encroaching on the limited territory humans have carved out for themselves.

1 Orbital bombardment by a thousand ships for a hundred years turns most of the planetary crust over, forming carbonate rocks which pull the greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere.

It is a center of knowledge, known for the Library of Celsus, so enormous that researchers may find themselves lost for days or weeks in its halls, as well as an important center for music and theater. It features a large Orthodox population, with more followers of the Church than of the Pantheon.

The Library is its main spaceport city. Serapis, Magnesia, and Vedius are its other major cities.

Corinth

Corinth is a temperate world with the usual large variations in climate based on latitude. It is somewhat more than half ocean, most of whose ocean surface area is concentrated in a large sea surrounding three continents. The continents in turn mostly surround an inner sea, connected to the outer ocean by channels between the continents.

Debauchery is its stock in trade. It is the center of worship of Dionysus and Aphrodite, more important to followers of those gods than even Homeworld's temples, a sort of Elysium to the hedonists of the Empire. Drinking establishments and paid companionship can be found almost anywhere on its surface, and at very competitive rates, to boot. Its population is about ten billion.

Its main spaceport is called Dionysia. Solomos, Lechaion, Posidonia (home to a substantial temple to Poseidon, patron of the sea and of the void), and Isthmia are some of its other major cities.

Jump Space

Jump space is not merely empty space. It is more accurately a parallel universe where physics differ from our own. Distances are dramatically compressed, and matter in normal space leaves mere shadows in jump space. Jump space has its own terrain, and to a degree its own weather. Shoals in jump space prevent passage; storms slow progress, or even halt it altogether.

Looking out a window aboard a jump ship, jump space appears as blue-white light, or the nearest analogue given the viewer's ocular apparatus, swirling around wherever the viewer happens to be fixing his gaze. The magnitude of the swirl increases as local jump space conditions grow stormier. Most sentients fully in possession of their sanity find the sight uncomfortable, especially in large doses and as the strength of local jump storms grow. Jump ships' exterior windows generally have shutters or curtains to block the sight.

Jump Madness

Jump space is not merely subjectively unsettling, either. Any psion will tell you that it has an objective, measurable impact on sentient minds exposed to it, putting the sane ill at ease and pushing the damaged still further from sanity. In bad cases, travelers may see things that are not there, hear voices whispering terrible secrets, or go mad altogether. Jump madness is a rare affliction but a serious one. A sentient suffering from it may merely go publicly crazy, gibbering on street corners in the hab decks and pushing others closer to madness.

Sometimes, it is worse. In serious cases, a jump-mad sentient may give in altogether to the voices, becoming something out of nightmares. Jump madness might cause a man to set fires, or a woman to crash an automobile into another, or a sentient to become a murderer. In any case, a jump-mad sentient is stronger, faster, and harder to kill than he was before.

And yet, it can be still worse. Sometimes the sentient herself does not become a creature of nightmares. Sometimes the creatures of *her* nightmares are made manifest, half-psionic half-physical spectral beasts. In such cases, the jump-mad sentient is rarely even aware that she is the cause of the problem.

Jump madness becomes latent when the jump-mad sentient returns to normal space; symptoms return upon the next transition to jump space. A psion can cure jump madness, once identified, by rolling Psi Mending against TN24+, reducing the difficulty by 1 for each hour spent on the task. The psion must be able to touch the jump-mad sentient, and may not move more than 3 meters away for the duration of the task. The psion and target must be in jump space.

Things to Do

With such a tremendously large universe spread out before you, you may find yourself wondering what your place is in it. Here are some ideas.

Aid

For all its might and all its long tradition of rule, the Empire does not rest on solid ground. From the Autokrator himself down to the lowliest planetary governor, every leader has more things to accomplish than he has resources to accomplish them.

You can step in and work for local leaders: fighting their enemies, recovering documents, or planting evidence of conspiracy on their rivals. As you do so, you can gain the trust of local leaders and moving on to work for more powerful, more influential people one run up on the Imperial ladder.

Of course, you can work on behalf of others outside the Empire (at some risk of angering it). The independent states in Hermes' Arm are always looking for an edge on their neighbors and a hedge against Imperial interference, and the friendlier alien powers—the Handed and the yashcheritsy—have their own inscrutable goals to achieve.

Pursuing work for hire yields the best results when staying local, relative to the degree of importance of your employer. A sector governor's tasks mainly take you to places inside his sector. A democratically-elected president in Hermes' Arm may send you to places in her own nation, or to her neighbors. A themarch's tasks might take you thousands of light-years away.

Fight

If you are of a particularly martial bent, you may find employment with the Imperial military, or in the military of some independent state. War is a constant in the galaxy. It's only a matter of finding one.

Where you decide to fight bears on the kind of fighting you'll face. Go to the galactic north, and you'll engage in all-out combat with the best the Tarki have to offer. Go to the south, and you'll find border wars against the arachni and suppress rebellions against the Autokrator. Go to the east, and roll the dice. Independents may fight openly and at large scale, or they may fight more subtle commando actions, sending saboteurs to sap their enemies' strength before the real war breaks out.

Alternately, you may fight on your own behalf. In the far reaches of the galaxy, there is territory to be had for a navarch who fancies himself a prince...

Fighting, too, is a more-or-less local pursuit. Travel too far, and you've left the front.

Trade

Every navarch enters the game with an eye toward profit. The straightest line between owning a jump ship and swimming in a vault full of money is trade. Traveling the stars, you can attract merchants to your hangar decks, charge them for travel, tax them for trading, and even make a little money on the side buying low and selling high.

You may face obstacles along the way. Merchants are notoriously fickle, prone to depart for supposedly greener pastures at the slightest hint of bad luck or bad trading. Customs officials and local governors often want a cut of the riches changing hands over their worlds; the art of bribery is difficult to master. A jump ship laden with merchants is a juicy target for pirates.

Trading is a good way to travel; the two go hand in hand. Rare goods from one part of the galaxy often fetch a high price in other regions, being either novelties or well-known luxuries. A skilled jump ship crew, plotting efficient courses and choosing trading stops carefully, can cross the galaxy at the same time as it enriches itself and its passengers.

Explore

The vastness of space is such that not every star system in the galaxy has yet been visited. A jump ship with time to spare or an expanse of empty space to cross often stops at stars its records indicate have not been visited.

The records are often wrong. Keeping accurate information on hundreds of billions of stars is non-trivial, and disseminating corrections across the galaxy is all but impossible. Exploring jump ships often find inhabitable worlds whose presence does not appear to be known, and even lost human colonies, dispatched centuries ago and forgotten before the colonists even arrived at their destinations. Such places are fertile ground to search for every explorer's dream discovery: a cache of lost technology.

Much Imperial territory has been lost over the years, either to the ravages of time or to the equally-destructive ravages of bureaucracy. Artificers fleeing the scene rarely have time to properly pack their workshops, and the devices to be found within an abandoned workshop fetch a high price on the open market. So also does information about lost colonies or newly-discovered inhabitable worlds.

Almost by definition, exploration involves travel. Finding an artificer or a lost workshop may involve finding several of the artificer's other workshops, assembling clues which point to the target location. Finding lost colonies may involve searching for records or rumors of colony expeditions. In any case, the hunt will often take you thousands of light-years or more.

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