

TERRAFORMER

SHAPE YOUR WORLD



RELIC HUNTING

BY LEE HAMMOCK



#11



Requires the use of the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

RELIC HUNTING

Relics of Eos

While Eos is full of alien creatures, strange ruins, and forgotten cities, nothing fuels the human imagination like the relics found across the planet. “Relic” has become the catch-all term for any functioning alien technology found on Eos. Most relics are found in the ruins scattered across the planet. These devices are all that remain of the vast technological and scientific advancements achieved by the former residents of the planet. They are few and far between. Due to their power and rarity, relics are some of the most valuable items on the planet.

Dawning Star University researchers estimate that, in any given year, fewer than ten relics are recovered across the entirety of Eos. Of these, it is estimated that 50% end up in the hands of private collectors, 30% go to the Republic and its various research institutions, and the remaining 20% are claimed by the EFL. Common thought suggests that the Republic obtains relatively few because of the many laws and regulations on relic hunting, while private collectors and the EFL are not nearly so constrained. As a practical matter, private collectors tend to pay much more than the Republic or the EFL. The combined value of the relics uncovered each year cannot really be estimated due to the lack of any reliable market information on them. It is a substantial sum to be sure. Relics do not have a set Purchase DC due to their rarity and power, but they are never sold for less than a small fortune.

It is widely rumored that the largest collection of relics on Eos is

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⚙ ABOUT DAWNING STAR

Dawning Star was the first full-scale science fiction campaign setting built on d20 Modern and powered by the Future ruleset from Wizards of the Coast. The critically-acclaimed setting was nominated for an ENnie for Best d20 Game. You can learn more and download free material by visiting www.dawningstar.com.

⚙ ABOUT TERRAFORMER

The Terraformer line of products from Blue Devil Games presents new material designed for Dawning Star but usable in most science-fiction campaigns. Each entry will offer a new prestige class, xenomorph, talent tree, feat, weapon, etc. and advice on using it into your campaign and using it to “shape your world.”

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⚙ ABOUT LEE HAMMOCK

Lead writer and game designer on the Dawning Star line, Lee has been affectionately called the “Hemmingway of RPGs” for the quality of his writing and prolific body of work. Lee has worked for numerous publishers, and is the writer on the main story in the HALO Graphic Novel from Marvel Comics.

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possessed by Maximilian Dagos. He is known to fund dozens of teams of relic hunters each year. Dagos's collection of relics is said to be kept on his ship, *The Last Resort*, in orbit above Eos, but they are occasionally loaned out to his agents for use in the field. Most other private collectors keep their finds in storage or put them on display in their residences, rarely using them as anything other than trophies. The relics possessed by the Republic are kept under lock and key, only accessible by scientists trying to unlock their secrets and never used for anything other than research. The EFL conducts research on their less useful relics but readily uses those relics with immediate applications in the field until they are no longer functional, at which point they are turned over to researchers.

A number of criminal groups in both the EFL and the Republic have managed to get their hands on relics. In many cases, these are simply relic hunters who find a relic with a less-than-reputable application and give up hunting for a life of crime. These groups tend to be short lived, rarely planning far beyond their first heist and usually relying too much on their relic only to have it fail at an inopportune moment. Still these groups can cause massive property damage, and both the Republic and the EFL have passed laws governing relic use within their territory. It is common for relic hunters to avoid all government entanglements and sell directly to private collectors.

Types of Relics

The types of relics found on Eos vary dramatically, from simple gadgets that seem to be little more than kitchen appliances to devices that ignore all known laws of physics. Most are small and easily portable with few large devices surviving the long years since they were last used. Relics are usually found deep within the ruins of Eos where they are protected from the elements. Unfortunately these areas are also often home to spitter spiders and worse, making relic retrieval a very dangerous profession. Darkling sightings are common around the most relic-rich ruins.

Most of the relics found on Eos are designed to be used by creatures of roughly human size, though not always of the same shape. While many relics can be used by humans well enough, some were obviously designed for species that had different body structures. Some of the more advanced relics can alter their shape according to the need of the user, but these are exceedingly rare. Most relics have a hardness of 20-50 and 10-50 hit points.

Relics are generally constructed of very resilient materials, including megatanium, making them very difficult to break. Despite this hard outer casing, years of exposure to the elements have made the interior of the relics fragile. Consequently, while it may be difficult to break a relic in half, a hard shake might stop it from working. As a result, relics are treated carefully and carried around in special padded boxes. There is more than one story of a relic hunter snuffed out when he dropped a relic that promptly detonated. In addition to such explosive dangers, relics have also

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been known to get stuck while active, making them impossible to turn off until the item's power runs out. Unfortunately this can be a very long time, but this is usually not the case. Most relics have enough power to activate less than twenty times or remain active for only a few minutes at a time, but this can vary dramatically.

While some relics have military applications, most were designed for far less dangerous activities. Most are simple labor-saving devices such as communicators, construction tools, medical devices, or entertainment devices. Only a quarter of the devices discovered seem to have been designed with military use in mind. Some non-military devices, such as a Star Confederation cutting tool, have been repurposed by humans as weapons. Humans have a habit of using relics for other than their intended function because they misunderstand the relic's design or willfully disregard it.

Relics range from Progress Level 7 to 9, though very few are Progress Level 9. While the more advanced relics are usually more powerful, they are also more difficult to repair, recharge, and study, making them less valuable in some ways. The most valuable relics in the eyes of the Republic are those that can easily be understood and learned from, while the EFL tends to go after more powerful, though less decipherable relics.

Most relics rely on nanites, genetic manipulation, force fields, energy control, or gravity manipulation with very few relics relying on Red Truth. Relics that do access Red Truth are seen as dangerous by the humans of Eos due to their negative side effects, even if these side effects are not well understood. Most experienced relic hunters have learned to avoid places where things look a little red, but still each year a handful of relic hunters lose their minds forever from the influence of Red Truth. This has led to a handful of relic hunters learning to use the Red Truth to their own ends through psionics, but not more than a dozen humans have learned how to do so. In general, the scientific communities of the Republic and the EFL know that Red Truth is some sort of strange mind-affecting energy field, but have no clue as to its real origin.

While most relics are of Star Confederation origin, a small number of vaasi relics have been found as well. These are more organic and bulbous in appearance than Star Confederation relics. They are designed to be used by the vaasi, which often makes it uncomfortable for humans to use these relics. Vaasi relics are nearly always weapons or other combat-related devices. They are slightly more powerful and involve fewer safety measures or attention to collateral damage than Star Confederation ones. For more information on vaasi relics see the relic construction rules below.

Relic Hunters

The Dawning Star Republic's Department of Science estimates there are over three hundred active groups of relic hunters on Eos as of 2152, most of which operate outside of Republic territory. Only a quarter of these groups are licensed by the Republic, a requirement to operate or sell relics legally. Instead, most are little more than treasure hunters or

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mercenaries looking to make a quick fortune by selling to private collectors. Such groups are not above murder in order to claim a find, and the Republic Rangers work constantly to hunt down such undesirables.

Most relic hunters are from military, security, or exploration backgrounds. Few have actual scientific training and instead hire outsiders or ignore the need for such skills, a tactic that rarely works well. Relic hunters are often attracted to the business by dreams of quick riches with little work, though very few ever reach that goal. The mortality rate among relic hunters is much higher than the success rate, and it is the unprepared relic hunter who is most likely to die. Those relic hunters who do have some manner of scientific background might be archaeologists, engineers, or terraformers who have left their drab former lives for something more exciting. A growing number of xenotechnologists are coming out of new programs at Dawning Star University and are specially trained to deal with alien technology. The drastic differences in history, point of view, and methods between the more militant relic hunters and the more scientific can often lead to heated disagreement within relic hunting groups, and more than a handful wipe themselves out each year after using violence to solve their disputes. The towns that relic hunters frequent, such as Hapeville, often feel like boomtowns of the American West on Old Earth. There is an undercurrent of violence, and most disputes are solved with firearms. These disputes are most common among the smaller and less established relic hunter groups, while older, more experienced groups spend their time working instead of fighting.

While most relic hunters are rather rough sorts, not all are. They run the gamut from little more than drunk ditch-diggers to advanced scientific operations employing dozens of agents with the latest vehicles and sensor equipment. The more successful relic hunters are the more organized ones. Most relic hunter groups don't last more than a few years before disbanding due to frustration. The more successful teams are usually funded by a large corporation or government entity, with the top two backers being Maximillian Dagos and joint ventures between the Republic Department of Science and Dawning Star University. These larger groups are the ones that most often have their paperwork all properly taken care of, but this does not mean they always follow the letter of the law.

Both the Republic and the EFL occasionally task specially trained units of their military forces with relic recovery duties. In the Republic this is handled by the 15th Special Forces Group, commonly known as the Reclaimers; in the EFL this is carried out by the EFLSF team out of Roger's Point known as the Gravediggers. It is not uncommon for both groups to go after the same relics when rumors of particularly dangerous or valuable items surface, leading to quiet but extensive combat operations as neither group wants to get caught with its fingers in the wrong pies. When plausible deniability is impossible using official forces, both the EFL and the Republic have been known to hire independent relic hunters, but only those who are known to be loyal and trustworthy (at least until the situation gets too desperate).

The following groups are examples of some of the types of relic

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hunters operating in the wilds of Eos.

15th Special Forces Group (The Reclaimers)

The premiere relic hunting team in the employ of the Dawning Star Republic, the Reclaimers conduct both overt and covert operations. Most of their missions involve investigating leads with the hope of finding unclaimed relics, while braving ruins, hostile xenomorphs, and harsh weather. The Reclaimers' less well known missions involve forcibly reclaiming relics deemed too dangerous to remain in the hands of others, be they in the hands of private citizens or groups like the EFL. These operations are carried out under the strictest secrecy and usually blamed on some third party (often the EFLSF). The Reclaimers receive backup from other units of the EDF in the field, in addition to often working hand-in-hand with the Department of Science and the Republic Rangers. All three groups regularly share information about possible relic locations and recent discoveries.

The Reclaimers are a platoon of 34 soldiers: four squads of eight soldiers, CO Captain Miles Ober (Fast Hero 3/Charismatic Hero 3/Field Officer 2), and Platoon Sergeant Roxanne Tii (Tough Hero 4/Soldier 2). Each squad includes one commanding lieutenant, an explosives expert, a linguistics expert, a xenotechnology expert, an archaeologist, an engineer, and two security officers. All members of the Reclaimers are highly trained combatants, and all have served in the EDF for at least four years prior to their assignment. Most of the technical experts are graduates of Dawning Star University as well. Unlike most relic hunter groups, the Reclaimers have two velin in their ranks, the only two members who have not served with the EDF for the requisite time. These two members, Gartuk (Velin Hunter 3/Velin Guardian 2) and Tellomi (Dedicated Hero 3/Explorer 2) of the White Sky tribe, are members as a show of good faith to the Velin Tribal Council. They have provided invaluable assistance in the field with their knowledge of indigenous plants and animals. Gartuk and Tellmoi are full members and have taken part in every facet of their operations, including repossession of dangerous relics. The two velin believe that some humans are not wise enough to use the tools of the ancients correctly.

The Reclaimers are based in EDF Headquarters outside Dawning Star City, though there is currently a push for the platoon to get its own base of operations closer to the ruins of Northern Dawnhome where it usually operates. The Reclaimers make ready use of EDF vehicles in the field, particularly Dromedary Air Cargo units and scout bikes. The Reclaimers are armed with a selection of the latest EDF weapons, including a limited number of energy weapons in each squad.

Dr. Patterson's Boys

An example of the middle range of relic hunters, Dr. Patterson's Boys fall between the bands of raiding thugs and the massive government and corporate teams that are both far more common. Dr. Patterson's Boys are run by Talia Patterson (Smart Hero 3/Field Scientist 2/Relic Hunter 3), a graduate of Dawning Star University and former scientific advisor to

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Patricia Rogers. Why exactly Dr. Patterson left the service of the EFL is not publicly known, but it seems to have been a relatively amicable split. Indeed the EFL often uses Dr. Patterson's Boys as contractors when dealing with alien ruins, and some relic hunters whisper that the group is nothing more than a covert operation of the EFL designed to provide plausible deniability. Whatever the truth is, Dr. Patterson's Boys have licenses for operation in the Republic and have had no legal issues in their operations in Republic territory. There have been some rumors about Dr. Patterson selling her finds in Republic territory to private collectors before allowing them to be properly cataloged by the Department of Science, but these have yet to be substantiated.

Membership fluctuates between ten and twenty members, but the core eight are always present. Dr. Patterson serves as the leader and lead scientist of the group, with Dr. Phineas Troup (Smart Hero 3/Engineer 4), a fellow Dawning Star University graduate, and Ijin Thomas (Smart Hero 3/Relic Hunter 3), a long time relic hunter, serving as her scientific assistants. Sarah Dorral (Strong Hero 3/Soldier 4) is the head of security for the group and is assisted by Roger Peel (Fast Hero 3/Gunslinger 2) and Dawson Tane (Fast Hero 4/Gunhand 2), both of whom are former EDF soldiers turned mercenaries. Becca Oppen (Charismatic Hero 3/Barter Jack 3) serves as the group's broker and contacts expert, while transportation is handled by former air runner Elly Brias (Fast Hero 3/Air Runner 2). Dr. Patterson hires thugs and laborers as needed from the EFL and Republic, whichever is more convenient at the time. While the full-time members of the group earn salaries, the hired hands receive a share of profits, an arrangement that Dr. Patterson regularly uses to rook her hired hands out of any money at all. Because of this practice, Dr. Patterson is earning a bad reputation among relic hunters and is having an increasingly difficult time finding willing workers.

Dr. Patterson's boys have no official base, though most of its members have a home in Steel End. When in the field they operate out of an old Dromedary air cargo unit that has seen better days. Dr. Patterson's Boys did well for the first few years of operation, but have hit a dry spell the past two years and are beginning to run low on funds. Because of this morale is starting to go flag, the Dromedary is starting to suffer from maintenance problems, and Dr. Patterson is getting desperate. If things don't change soon, Dr. Patterson's Boys may be willing to go from being relic hunters to petty thieves.

Squad Alpha Twelve (The Gravediggers)

Based out of Roger's Point, the Gravediggers are the preeminent official relic hunting team of the EFL. While the EFL may have other covert relic hunting teams in its employ that are larger or more effective, the Gravediggers are the largest and most successful of all the relic hunters actually acknowledged by them. This does not mean that all the missions carried out by the Gravediggers are overt operations—only that the EFL admits to their existence and to some of their less controversial operations. Many in the relic hunting and espionage communities believe that the Gravediggers are meant to serve as a diversion from other more

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sensitive relic hunting operations due to the attention directed at them by the EFL.

Most operations carried out by the Gravediggers involve the recovery of relics from situations where violence is expected. Much of the time this means going into xenomorph-inhabited ruins, but in the past it has also meant attacking other relic hunters. The missions that involve ruin exploration are usually public operations, while attacks on other relic hunters are kept secret. When the EFL wants to go head-to-head with the Republic in recovering a specific relic, the Gravediggers are usually the agents they send unless they are looking for an extremely high level of deniability. Unfortunately such levels of deniability often mean a loss of control over the situation, so instead the Gravediggers are sent in even if they are more likely to lead back to the EFL.

The Gravediggers are made up of two teams, one specializing in publicly acknowledged operations and one that is involved in secret operations. The public team, known as Squad 1, is commonly used as a distraction or in operations where secrecy is not an issue. The membership of Squad 1, also known as the Camera Hogs, is not kept secret and they nearly always operate openly in uniforms with all insignia displayed. Squad 1 is involved in stereotypical relic hunting operations, and its twenty members are highly skilled in survival, combat, and alien technology. Squad 1 is made up of soldiers from other EFLSF squads, rogue terraformers, scientists, and a number of former Republic relic hunters on the run. Gravediggers Squad 1 is run by Octavia Long (Charismatic Hero 5/Soldier 3/Field Officer 1), a long time EFL officer who has served in a number of EFLSF squads. She is said to be the EFLSF's foremost expert on combating xenomorphs.

Gravediggers Squad 2, on the other hand, is made up of twenty individuals whose identities are concealed from the public; they never wear any sort of EFL uniform or insignia. Instead they usually disguise themselves as independent relic hunters or bandits, affording the EFL plausible deniability as to their actions. Squad 2, commonly known as the Blacksheets, is sent on missions that involve stealing relics from other factions, usually private collectors or other relic hunters. Squad 2 is rarely sent after the relics claimed by the Republic directly, fearing that doing so would lead to all out war, but Squad 2 and the Reclaimers regularly come into conflict in the field when they both go after the same target. These battles are carried out with both teams operating under cover and are usually explained away as battles between relic hunters or bandits. Squad 2 is led by Duncan Li (Fast Hero 3/Infiltrator 5), formerly one of the most prosperous criminals in Dawning Star City before being caught in an extensive extortion scheme three years ago. Duncan fled to Roger's Point and quickly earned a place in the EFLSF due to his leadership skills and utter ruthlessness.

The Gravediggers operate across Eos, but can usually be found in the northern reaches of Dawnhome close to Roger's Point. Only Squad 2 operates in Republic territory, and even then they stick close to the border. In recent months the Gravediggers have begun to expand their operations to other settlements in the EFL and have set up satellite bases



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in every EFL member city. It is suspected that the EFL intends to start up new EFLSF teams in the near future trained specifically for relic hunting and that they will be trained through these new bases by the Gravediggers.

The Red Dogs

The Red Dogs are the sort of relic hunters that are all too common on Eos, but not due to their longevity or cunning. No, the Red Dogs are one of the dozens of fly-by-night relic hunting operations that crop up each year and disband or are killed off by the next. Fueled by enthusiasm and greed, the Red Dogs hope to find a relic, sell it to some private buyer, and live the rest of their days in ease from the profits. The fact that none of the participants know much about science, the relic market, or alien ruins does little to dissuade them.

Led by Gustav Douglas (Tough Ordinary 3), a former plantation manager from southern Dawnhome, the Red Dogs have little relic-hunting experience. Gustav changed careers after getting fired for embezzling money from the plantation he managed. That night he attempted to drown his sorrows at a Hapeville bar, but ended up overhearing some drunken relic hunters bragging about a recent find instead. He bought drinks for the relic hunters and pumped them for what information he could, learning that they were part of one of the larger relic hunting groups called the Stonewall Company and they had a number of leads on relics in nearby ruins. Gustav ended the evening by deciding that he would try to beat them to these relics and set out the next morning to round up some friends and get underway.

The friends that Gustav recruited were mostly farmhands and laborers with even less knowledge of relic hunting than he. They set out the next day in a pair of stolen Styler Ground Transports and haven't looked back in the six months since. Unfortunately the Red Dogs did not beat the Stonewall Company to any of the relics Gustav heard mentioned and have not had any success in the time since, instead making their way working a series of odd jobs or engaging in petty crime to get by. The group has not prospered by any stretch of the imagination, and instead is continually on the brink of starving. While they still search for relics, the hope of making a quick fortune is beginning to dim, and it is unlikely that the Red Dogs will be together for more than a few months unless they hit it big, though it's more likely they'll be killed first.

Scylla Prentice

A rarity among relic hunters, Scylla Prentice (Smart Hero 3/Field Scientist 8/Relic Hunter 2) works alone. A graduate of Dawning Star University with a degree in terraforming and a long time employee of the Department of Science overseeing remote terraforming stations, Scylla Prentice opted for early retirement three years ago to take up a career as a relic hunter. Unlike most relic hunters who come from security or military backgrounds and see relic hunting as a matter of muscle, Scylla Prentice comes at things from a far more scholarly angle. She tries to minimize the risk to herself through extensive research before she ever

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enters the field. She is an expert in xenotechnology. Scylla Prentice prefers guile and technology over brute force, choosing to investigate ruins that are more known for technological threats rather than those known to be inhabited by hostile xenomorphs. While Scylla Prentice did learn a thing or two about guns in the years she spent running terraforming stations in the middle of nowhere, she knows she's not a skilled combatant and is past her prime to boot.

While Scylla Prentice usually works alone, she has been known bring hired guns and laborers with her for particularly difficult or dangerous hunts, especially when expecting xenomorphs. She treats these hired hands fairly and hires Republic citizens when possible, particularly those with EDF experience. Scylla Prentice only goes into the field once or twice a year, but boasts a 20% recovery rate, far in excess of most teams. When rumors begin to circulate about Scylla Prentice entering the field amateur relic hunters and mercenaries usually scramble to try and get on her list of possible candidates, knowing that in the worst case they'll be well paid and in the best case they'll be rich.

Scylla Prentice makes a habit of operating in areas that others consider picked clean, using the notes and records of other hunters to create extensive reports on the ruins she visits. She is very adept at finding hidden rooms and previously blocked passages that other relic hunters are unable to locate. She usually operates around Dawning Star City and almost always travels by ground due to her crippling fear of flying.

Relic Brokers

While the relic hunters get most of the glory in the relic business, the real money is made by the brokers. Half-scientist, half-fence, these individuals are skilled in discovering how to use a relic, determining its worth, and identifying who to sell it to. They get the relics from the hunters to the buyers, taking a percentage for their efforts. Some relic hunters resent the brokers and the percentage they take, instead trying to cut out the middleman. This rarely goes well as few relic hunters have the skills and contacts to unload a relic. Only the largest, longest established, and best-funded groups can bypass the brokers, and those outfits usually do. Obviously those relic hunters funded directly by buyers, like those that work for Maximillian Dagos, turn their finds directly over to their employer ... most of the time.

Most relic brokers are former archaeologists or scholars; many are graduates or faculty from Dawning Star University. The skills needed to properly examine relics are a rare thing, and the scholarly circles of the University are the best place to develop the contacts needed to offload a relic. Those brokers who are not former academics are usually fences or criminals who have decided to try and move up in the world to bigger ticket items, and they don't get much bigger than relics. Those brokers who come from scholarly circles usually sell to scientists or governments, while those of the criminal persuasion sell to private collectors. Private collectors tend to offer more for relics, but selling to them can involve

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breaking a number of laws since most such collectors wish to keep the Republic and the EFL ignorant of their acquisitions.

Relic brokers can be found only in large settlements (like Dawning Star City or Roger's Point) or settlements that cater to relic hunters in particular (such as Hapeville). In either case they are not easy to find, not wanting to advertise their activities or the large amounts of wealth they likely involve. Relic brokers operate in low-key fashion, working out of their homes or in hidden offices behind locked doors with numerous security systems. Many hire bodyguards, but try to keep them out of sight as much as possible. Relic brokers do most of their business in their own homes or businesses, where they know they are as safe as possible, or in public places to keep everyone on their best behavior. In either case any relic broker in the business for more than a few months knows to cover all the angles and always have a backup plan. While not all relic brokers are vengeful sorts, they do not take to double crosses, and many, particularly those from a criminal background, have a habit of putting sizeable bounties on those who cross them.

Most relic hunters have a specific set of clientele they both buy from and sell to, and it can be very difficult to get into a broker's good graces in either case. Doing so can take months. Any broker of quality isn't going to just take in a relic hunter off the street who claims a find of worth. Instead they will insist on lengthy inspections of the relic by independent sources, something not all relic hunters will agree to since it will remove the relic from their possession for a time, and extensive background checks on the relic hunters themselves. Such processes can take some time, during which the relic hunters are likely to badly want to get rid of the relic since it makes them a target. Once a group of relic hunters earn the trust of a broker, they can usually offload a relic in a number of days.

Becoming a buyer of relics is an even more difficult operation as brokers don't want to get stiffed their fees and don't want any legal entanglements. Most criminal operations are pickier about who they sell to than the legal brokers by necessity of avoiding legal problems. Non-governmental relic buyers like to keep their operations under the radar and so only use brokers they trust. The broker-buyer relationship is a delicate one when it comes to private buyers with each being able to get the other in all manner of legal trouble. Because of this there must be a strong level of trust between the two and buyers or brokers who prove themselves untrustworthy often find few others willing to deal with them. Governmental buyers on the other hand usually operate openly through the better known brokers, having the weight of law on their side.

Most brokers take 10-20% of the money they sell the relic for their services, though this varies according to the relationships the broker has with the buyer and the seller, the type of relic being sold, and the legalities involved. Characters who wish to make contact with a relic broker can either make a Knowledge (streetwise) or a Gather Information check (DC 25) as modified by the table on the following page. Given the high DCs, players will usually want to Take 20 on these checks.

If the character fails the check by 10 or more points, he has instead found a less-than-honorable broker, who will betray the relic hunter at first

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chance and attempt to steal the relic. This could be anything from paying the relic hunter in counterfeit money to attacking the relic hunter when exchanging the relic for payment.

Once the broker is found and a deal struck, finding a buyer for the relic generally takes a couple of weeks. Particularly dangerous or valuable relics can take months to sell if the broker is willing to take the job at all. Small time relic brokers will pay a little to

the relic hunters up front and the bulk when the goods are moved; some may even ask the relic hunters to help in the deal by acting as body guards. Big time brokers will pay the relic hunters upfront for the relic and then sell it at their leisure, handling their own security operations in the process.

Because of the turnaround time, brokers often have relics in their possession, making them tempting targets for thieves or desperate relic hunters. Most brokers have extremely effective security measures protecting relics in their care, with some making use of major banks in Dawning Star City to keep their property safe. While relic brokers do occasionally get robbed, it is generally easier to rob the relic hunters who found the relic than to steal from the broker they sold it to.

These are a few examples of the types of brokers that relic hunters may run into.

Martin the Weasel

A relative newcomer on the relic broker market, Martin the Weasel (Charismatic Hero 3/Swindler 2) is a former smuggler who ran weapons from the Republic to the EFL before being discovered by a group of Republic Rangers. Martin managed to escape custody and flee to Sun City, and luckily his crimes were not severe enough to warrant further pursuit. There he stumbled upon a group of relic hunters at the Sun City Cabana Grill who were trying to offload a relic weapon, an ancient plasma rifle, but had no contacts to do so with. After fast talking his way into the confidence of the relic hunters, Martin used his old smuggling contacts to find a buyer for the weapon and used the profits to set himself up in Sun City as a relic broker. Unfortunately in the last few months he has been largely unsuccessful in finding other clients due to the fact word has gotten around he rooked the first group of relic hunters he worked with out of much of their profits. Martin is quickly becoming the broker of last resort in Sun City and, with his funds running low; he is desperate for a break. He's likely to offer cash up front for any relic brought to him with a minimum of questions asked, but getting much more out of him will be a challenge.

Situation	Mod.
Small Population (10,000 or less)	+10
Very Small Population (1,000 or less)	+20
Settlement known for relic hunter activity	-5
Settlement a center for relic hunter activity	-10
Looking for a relic broker willing to break the law	+5
A very expensive relic (Purchase DC 50+)	+5
An extremely expensive relic (Purchase DC 60+)	+10
Progress Level 8 relic	+5
Progress Level 9 relic	+10
Illegally obtained relic	+5

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Captain Lang

A former Rebuilder, EDF technical officer, and relic hunter, Captain Lang (Smart Hero 3/Rebuilder 6) is a widely respected expert when it comes to relics of a military nature. Now over 80 years old and one of the few surviving crewmembers of the *Dawning Star* who never went into cryogenic sleep, Captain Lang lives in Dawning Star City near the Earth Memorial Park. Captain Lang lives in a large, tastefully decorated loft apartment that is filled with memorabilia from the many adventures he's had during his life. In recent years Captain Lang has been using his contacts in Republic government, the EDF, and relic hunters to get relics in the hands of the Republic with a minimum of questions and fuss. Captain Lang recognizes that sometimes the laws need to be bent for the greater good, he helps those who come upon dangerous or particularly valuable relics under questionable circumstances get the relics in the hands of the Republic without any criminal charges. Captain Lang usually makes his deals in the Earth Memorial Park in public, relying on exposure to keep himself safe, though such deals are often observed by the Dawning Star City Police. Captain Lang always deals fairly, though he has little respect for those who flagrantly break the law or don't have the best interests of the Republic in mind.

Osbeorn Hillsborough

A long time member of the faculty at the Dawning Star University, Osbeorn Hillsborough (Smart Hero 8) is a charismatic but bookish fellow who teaches several of the introductory xenotechnology classes at the University. Through these classes he has made extensive contacts throughout the field of xenotechnology, and many relic hunters with University training remember Professor Hillsborough fondly. Because of this, a large number of his students end up coming back to him for advice or help, and a handful even come back with relics that they are looking to unload. Through such events, Professor Hillsborough has become the primary source of relics obtained by the University and the Department of Science. Professor Hillsborough is an extremely unassuming, trusting man who makes most of these deals in his own living room over tea and biscuits, but has yet to suffer any serious threat or double cross. Now he has developed such a reputation for fairness that others apart from his students seek out his help selling relics.

Selling Relics on Your Own

Some relic hunters wish to bypass the brokers entirely and sell relics directly to the buyers, but this is a difficult process for most. Any relic hunter can sell directly to the Republic or the EFL just by filing the right paperwork, but doing so will get the relic hunter a pittance compared to what they could earn selling to a private collector. Most private relic buyers are extremely rich and avoid letting the public know the details of their relic acquisitions. Due to the dangerous nature of relics and the legal entanglements that dealing with them can involve, most buyers only deal with brokers who have earned their trust, a process that can take years. More than one buyer has ended up buying a relic that exploded shortly

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thereafter or unknowingly purchased a stolen relic, so most only deal with trusted sources now.

Still there are some buyers who are more willing than others to take a chance on an unknown broker or relic hunter, most of whom are the less wealthy buyers who can't afford to deal with the better known brokers. These individuals are willing to take risks other buyers are not, and expect to get a better price because of it. These buyers are usually small scale private collectors or low-ranking government agents and can usually be found in settlements that cater to relic hunters like Hapeville. They rarely have the money to buy relics of high value (Purchase DC 60+) and run small operations with a minimum of overhead.

Relic hunters who wish to bypass the brokers can attempt to find a buyer with a Knowledge (streetwise) or Gather Information check (DC 35) using the same modifiers as those listed previously for finding a broker. If looking for a governmental buyer, the character can instead make a Knowledge (civics) check (DC 10). If the check is successful the relic hunter has found a buyer willing to make the deal. However, going through legal channels often alerts other relic hunters and buyers to the find. This may mean that others may try to obtain the relic by force or cause other problems for the relic hunters, such as brokers who don't appreciate those who try to cut them out of the system.

If the character fails the skill check made to find a buyer by 10 or more points he has instead found a less than honorable buyer, who will betray the relic hunter at first chance and attempt to steal the relic. This could be anything from paying the relic hunter in counterfeit money to attacking the relic hunter when exchanging the relic for payment. Most buyers are very private individuals who prefer not to leave loose ends so their betrayal of the relic hunters is likely to be final and very well planned.

Once the buyer is found the relic hunters must arrange an exchange, which is usually done in a public location through intermediaries or in some other neutral location. Most buyers pay cash in the form of Republic credits, making such payments hard to trace, but some have also been known to pay in goods or future services. The Republic has been known to even dismiss minor criminal charges in exchange for a relic, but nothing more serious than assault can be bought off in such fashion. Most private collectors will buy the relic at its appropriate Purchase DC or close to it, while governmental agencies will instead offer payment based on a Purchase DC of the relic 10 to 20 lower than its actual DC.

The Gravevine

While relic hunters are spread across the world and are a rather secretive, suspicious group, they form a community of their own when they do meet. This community is often argumentative, dysfunctional, and based more on shared stress than comradeship, but it is a community none the less. This normally takes place in bars and libraries in places like Hapeville and Dawning Star City or chat rooms and forums through the Eonet. These communities are partially used to share and trade information, partially used for bragging and chest thumping, and partially

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used as support structures for individuals leading stressful and difficult lives. The community that exists among relic hunters is commonly called the Gravevine, a name coined by a relic hunter who said “it’s like the old grapevine, only a third of the people die every year.”

Usually the professional, skilled relic hunters are the ones that take part in the Gravevine with amateur or new relic hunters not knowing of its existence or facing social pressures when they try to interact with the Gravevine. Such relic hunters are usually referred to as “spitter bait” and ignored or mocked, though some more kindly relic hunters try to give such newcomers advice and help through the Gravevine. For the most part however folks on the Gravevine are so used to seeing people drop out of the community that they don’t move quickly to befriend newcomers so they don’t have to mourn them when they die.

Despite the competitive nature of relic hunters, the flow of information and communication among the Gravevine is surprisingly free. While there is little in the way of specifics shared in terms of possible relic locations, tricks of the trade such as scent traps to lure away spitter spiders or the best ways to put a piton into a ruin wall are common. Also the rumor mill in the Gravevine is very active with conversations about everything from official EFL and Republic relic recovery operations to darklings sightings being common topics. The information on the darklings contained in the forums and chat rooms of the Eonet is arguably the most complete set of information regarding darkling sightings, behavior, and technology on Eos and is likely to be a major tool in fighting the vaasi once their presence is confirmed.

Most relic hunters take part in the Gravevine every few days, either visiting a relic hunter bar or logging on to the Eonet. Most only do so to keep up with friends and the latest gossip, but it is the quickest way to spread information through the relic hunter community. Anytime there is a new relic found or a known relic lost, the news usually shows up first on the Gravevine.

Physical hangouts frequented by relic hunter and thus part of the Gravevine in a settlement can be found with a Knowledge (streetwise) check against the same DC as finding the black market in the community. Finding the Gravevine through the Eonet requires a Computer Use check (DC 10), though getting respect once you do is much more difficult. Once connected to the Gravevine, either in person or remotely, characters can try and collect information. Doing so requires at least one hour and a Gather Information check in a physical location, such as a bar, or a Computer Use check (DC 10) in the case of the Eonet. If this check is successful the character gets a +4 circumstance bonus to one Knowledge check regarding relics, relic hunters, finding a broker or buyer, or xenomorphs. If the character can succeed at a Reputation check (DC 15) while using the Gravevine they receive a +4 bonus to all skill checks involving interacting with the Gravevine.

Relic Hunter Hang Outs

There are a handful of particularly well known hangouts among relic

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hunters, most of which serve as neutral meeting places between hunters and a place to access the Gravevine. Some brokers will deal in such establishments, but others do not trust being surrounded by relic hunters so completely. Buyers are very rarely found in such environments, though their agents are far more common and often are found in relic hunter hangouts keeping an eye on the latest gossip. While non-relic hunters are allowed in such places, they are nearly always viewed as outsiders and not made to feel very welcome.

The Long Hole

Located in Hapeville, the Long Hole is widely said to be the first relic hunter bar and the birth place of the Gravevine. In operation for 26 years, it is one of the oldest buildings in Hapeville and is owned by a retired relic hunter Lex Teep (Tough Hero 4/Relic Hunter 5), a small but wily man who retired after losing most of his left leg to a cave in. Lit by oil lanterns and filled with wood paneling, the bar feels like a mixture of a seedy dive and a gentleman explorer's club of Old Earth. Xenomorph body parts and old, broken relics hang on the walls as reminders of the deeds of patrons past and present, and it is considered a mark of high honor to have something you found hanging on the walls of the Long Hole. The clientele is a mixture of all ranks of relic hunters, from amateur to veteran, but only the best are allowed to drink on the second floor. Lex Teep is the final arbiter of who gets to the second floor and the regular patrons are more than willing to help him enforce his order. Violence or trouble of any sort is frowned upon at the Long Hole and Lex Teep has lots of friends both here and abroad who will make life very difficult for anyone who busts up his bar. Any attempts to access the Gravevine at the Long Hole gain a +4 bonus to any skill checks involved and any bonuses gained from doing so are doubled.

Dawning Star University Coffee Shack

A small, hole in the wall basement tea and coffee bar located on the grounds of Dawning Star University, it serves as the main meeting place for relic hunters who work with the University and the Republic's Department of Science. Run by a young university drop out Cylin Tim (Charismatic Ordinary 3), it serves as a popular hang out for students studying archaeology and xenotechnology. Over time these students have graduated and moved on, but many end up coming back to the Coffee Shack when they have business with the University. The main room of the coffee house is a large open space with lots of tables and chairs made out of various bits of cast off metal, much of it from the *Dawning Star* itself, but Cylin has converted two of her storage rooms to serve as private meeting rooms for her more circumspect visitors. The main primary users of these rooms are relic hunters and the University or Republic agents they come to meet.

Sun City Cabana Grill

Little more than a small wooden hut, the Grill serves fresh fish and offers a selection of umbrellas and lounge chairs. It is easily the most

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unassuming hangout for relic hunters on Eos. Run by a native of Sun City named David Pine (Dedicated Ordinary 2), the Cabana Grill has become a relic hunter hangout by virtue of its excellent food and its impressive ocean view. While a number of non-relic hunters can usually be found enjoying a fish fajita and watching the sunset, there's almost always at least a handful of relic hunters in the crowd. The Cabana Grill serves as a popular public meeting spot for relic hunters and brokers who like dealing in the open since it's on an otherwise desolate beach where it would be very difficult to set up any sort of double cross. This has not stopped a handful of firefights to break out at the Caban Grill much to the consternation of its owner who really wishes all these gun toting crazy people would stop coming to his restaurant, despite the hefty tips they often leave. The Sun City Cabana is located on the northern end of the settlement on a sand peninsula called Sunset Hill and all power is provided by portable solar generators, though lighting is usually provided by torches. Most its clientele walk from Sun City proper or travel by boat to the Sun City Cabana.

Bender Alley

Bender Alley is a small back alley located near the center of Roger's Point that is filled with a handful of antique shops, book stores, and a single bar famed for having a impressive stash of Old Earth Whiskey that can be sampled for a sizeable cost. The streets on the alley collectively are referred to as Bender Alley and make up the primary hangout for relic hunters in Roger's Point. The two book stores on the Alley have their own presses that regularly turn out works of interest to relic hunters, such as xenomorph studies, scientific journals, and new Eotian atlases. While the stores on the Alley attract the business of relic hunters and brokers, most of the actual deal making happens in the Alley itself. The Alley has many nooks, crannies, and dead ends in which deals are made out of sight of most passersby, but close enough that any sort of trouble will make enough noise to draw attention quickly. Because of the rather secretive nature of Bender Alley most visitors come with a number of bodyguards. Violence is rare largely due to the fact everyone in the Alley is armed, so any fight would doubtless lead to several casualties. Patricia Rogers has several agents active in Bender Alley and likes to stay appraised of events there, but rarely interferes except when she feels the city itself is threatened. Bender Alley is best place in Roger's Point to find a relic hunter or a broker, and attempts to access the Gravevine here gain a +2 circumstance bonus to related skill checks to do so.

Laws Regarding Relics

Both the Republic and the EFL have a number of statutes regarding recovery, possession, and ownership of relics since they can pose a serious threat. These laws come into three basic categories: relic hunter license laws, salvage laws, ownership laws, and use laws.

Both the EFL and the Republic have dedicated security forces working to keep abreast of unregistered relics, crimes committed using relics, and

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relic buyers who avoid government scrutiny. In the EFL this is carried out by the Gravediggers and Patricia Rogers person intelligence agents, all of which is done very secretly. Dangerous relics and those who make trouble with them often disappear without a trace. In the Republic these operations are carried out by the Republic Rangers who are much more forthright in their pursuit of such criminals and relics. While their pursuit is open, the Republic prefers to keep the truth of how dangerous some relics are out of the public eye, forcing the Rangers to occasionally cover up rampant nano-swarms or pocket-sized nuclear reactors to avoid panic.

Relic Hunter License Laws

In the Republic, relic hunters must follow certain licensing procedures if they want to be able to legally enter ruins and register relics. The EFL requires no such licenses. To get a relic hunter license from the Republic requires that the applicant be a citizen of the Republic for at least five years, have no official ties to the EFL, no criminal felony convictions, and a generally stable psychological state. The licensing process requires extensive tests and background checks which require at least a week to complete and a filing fee that requires a Wealth check (Purchase DC 10). Most citizens of the Republic can get relic hunter licenses without difficulty, but anyone who applies for a license and fails to get one is flagged in the databases of the Department of Justice as a possible rogue relic hunter. Such individuals are likely to get on the list of the usual suspects whenever a relic goes missing.

Once a person is issued a license they are entered into databases throughout the Republic as a licensed relic hunter and given an identification card denoting their status. This card has a barcode that can be scanned by most Republic governmental agents, including police, allowing forgeries to be quickly detected since they will not be entered in the system. Also the retina, dental records, fingerprints, DNA, and biometrics of the relic hunter are stored for corpse identification purposes, but these are also often used by law enforcement. For those who do not meet the criteria of the Republic relic hunter license, getting a license is nigh impossible. Doing so would require a massive number of contacts in multiple layers of Republic bureaucracy.

Salvage Laws

In both the Republic and the EFL, the basic idea of “finders keepers” generally applies to relics, but in the Republic this applies only to licensed relic hunters. Both the EFL and the Republic consider any unclaimed relic found by a relic hunter to be property of that relic hunter or the company he represents. While both governments consider any relic to be claimed once it is found and thus property of its finder, claim jumpers who seek to steal the finds of other relic hunters are not uncommon, and most relic hunters keep their finds secret until they are safe in civilization. Unlicensed relic hunters who attempt to register a relic with the Republic will have the relic confiscated and the relic hunters forcibly quarantined to make sure they didn't bring back any dangerous infections or other threats from

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wherever they found the relic. Assuming these tests turn up nothing the relic escheats to the Republic. While technically a misdemeanor, these infractions are generally not prosecuted.

Salvage rights, and thus ownership rights, are assigned when the relic is registered with the EFL or the Republic. The EFL and the Republic do not officially recognize each other's rights in such matters, but usually do so unofficially to avoid the extra political entanglements that relic hunters ducking back and forth across the border stealing relics from the other would cause. In the Republic, only licensed relic hunters can register relics, while in the EFL anyone who has not been convicted of a felony by the EFL is allowed to register a relic. Since relic ownership in the eyes of the EFL or Republic is only cemented when a relic is registered, relics that are never registered, such as those gained through illegal means, are considered unclaimed. Thus, the large private collections owned by some relic buyers could be stolen and then registered with the Republic or EFL, which would then recognize the thief as the legitimate owner. This is one more reason that relic buyers tend to spend a lot of effort and money guarding their property.

If during the registration process the relic is found to be a danger to the public safety of the Republic or the EFL or if the relic is one the government thinks would be particularly useful, both governments reserve the right to take possession of the relic immediately. In such cases relic hunters are paid a fee for finding the relic, but it is a fraction of what they could make selling it to a private buyer. Registering a relic takes about a week, during which time the relic is tested by the appropriate government agency and cataloged before being returned to the relic hunter, assuming it is returned at all. The EFL is far less likely to take relics from relic hunters at registration, and usually only does so in the instances of the most dangerous sorts of relics. The EFL prefers to take relics from people who have already proven they can't be trusted with them, and thus often repossesses relics from known troublemakers.

Most private buyers prefer to buy unregistered relics since those are the really valuable ones; the ones that can rewrite physics and treat the Laws of Thermodynamics as suggestions. Some, such as Maximillian Dagos, register their weaker relics on the assumption they will not get taken by the Republic while keeping their stupendous finds in hiding. The Republic suspects many of its wealthier citizens of such deceptions, and a special detachment of the Republic Rangers has been set up to try and catch such individuals in sting operations, but so far has been unsuccessful.

Ownership Laws

In both the Republic and the EFL citizens are allowed to own registered relics, though the guidelines of what is acceptable for private citizens is much stricter in the Republic than in the EFL. The Republic only allows citizens to own relics that have a Restriction Level of Licensed, which includes mostly non-military relics with limited power supply and little ability to produce large scale effects. The EFL on the other hand allows items that have a Restriction level of up to Military to be possessed by citizens,

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which means anything less than a heavy weapon, armored vehicle, virus, combat robot, or other relic can pose a danger to an entire settlement can be kept by a citizen. In both cases as long as a citizen breaks no other laws with a relic they are allowed to keep it. Citizens may sell relics if they wish but to do so they must contact the appropriate government agency to change the registration to the purchasing party. In both the EFL and the Republic the purchaser of a relic must have no felony convictions with the registering government and in the Republic must be a registered citizen for at least five years.

Use Laws

Registered relics may be used by citizens in both the EFL and the Republic freely as long as they cause no danger to anyone, including the user. Both governments treat accidental deaths by relics as murders regardless of the situation. Any other damages or injuries inflicted by a registered relic are handled as normal for such crimes in the EFL, but in the Republic criminals who use relics are given elevated sentences. Relics used in crimes are always confiscated by the local government, and any crime involving a relic is automatically considered a felony, thus preventing the criminal from ever legally owning a relic again.

Using an unregistered relic in a crime, a far more common occurrence than the use of a registered relic, is a serious crime in both the Republic and the EFL. In the Republic using an unregistered relic is a felony that carries a prison term of at least ten years and a high enough fine to drive most anyone into bankruptcy. In the EFL using an unregistered relic is an instance of reckless endangerment with an aggravating factor and can carry a 20-year prison sentence or even a death sentence, with the death sentence being the far more likely outcome. Both governments are very interested in keeping the use of unregistered relics to an absolute minimum.

Relic Design

This section presents general rules for designing a relic, including flaws to make them more unique. Ultimately, the GM should create relics that function appropriately for his or her campaign.

Items From Other d20 Modern Books as Relics

Due the variety of powers and abilities found in Eotian relics, many of the magic items found in d20 fantasy games can be used as relics in Dawning Star with little modification. Items from PL7 to PL9 from the Future SRD can also generally be used. Note: The table on page 100 of Dawning Star: Operation Quick Launch identifies spells and powers unsuitable for duplication in relics. Additionally, the following guidelines should be followed when creating relics:

1. Scientific Explanation: Relics need to have some sort of scientific explanation for how they accomplish their function. It does not need to be strictly possible but it should be believable. For example a healing item could use nanites or special regenerative drugs, but not a healing ray that

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closes wounds. The results may seem magical, but the process should be grounded in science.

2. Power Source: All relics have some sort of power source, be it an internal battery or a miniature fusion reactor. Again, the specifics need not be strictly possible but must be believable.

3. Psionics: Many psionic powers do not make sense as relics due to the way Red Truth functions and how it is different than other interpretations of psionics. Psionic-based relics should be focused on information or altering the physical world through altering information. (You can download a primer on Red Truth at http://www.dawningstar.com/pdf/RedTruth_Revealed.pdf)

General Properties

Generally speaking, relics have a base hardness equal to their Progress Level x5, so a PL7 item should have a base hardness of 35. Each additional point of hardness increases the Purchase DC of the relic by +1.

Use the table to the right to find a guideline for the base number of hit points of a relic based on its size. Additional hit points increase the Purchase DC of the relic by +1 for every additional 10 hit points. Relic spacecraft, mecha, and other large vehicles should use the appropriate rules instead of these rules for determining hit points, hardness, and other similar qualities.

Relic Size	HPs
Diminutive	1
Tiny	2
Small	4
Medium	8
Large	16
Huge	32
Gargantuan	64
Colossal	128

The base Purchase DC of a relic is the normal purchase DC of a similar normal item + 5 + 10 per Progress level above 6, so a Progress Level 9 item with a normal Purchase DC of 30 has a Purchase DC of 65. If the relic mimics a magical or psionic ability, increase its Purchase DC by the caster level of the item x2. Example: The technological equivalent to the crystal pistol detailed in the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game would have a Purchase DC of 39 (normal Purchase DC of 29 + 2 x caster level 5th). Analogs from d20 books that does not use the Wealth system, have a base Purchase DC equal to 20 + 5 x caster level.

Powered relics normally have enough power for 1 use or 10 minutes of operation, depending on its function. Each doubling of the number of uses or the time it can operate increases the Purchase DC of the relic by +1. So an item with 8 uses would have a purchase DC of +3. If the item relies on other relics for power, such as energy clips, do not adjust its Purchase DC.

Explosive

Relics with this flaw have a chance of exploding every time they are used or sustain damage. This makes them very dangerous to use in any

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situation. Each time the relic is used or takes damage, the chance of explosion is equal to 25% + the amount of damage taken. When a relic explodes, it deals damage of an appropriate type of energy equal to 1d6 points per Progress Level to everything within 10 feet per Progress Level. Thus, a PL9 device that explodes does 9d6 damage to everything within 90 feet. Creatures in the affected area may make a Reflex save (DC 10 + 1 per Progress Level) for half damage. The Purchase DC of relics with this flaw are reduced by -5.

Fragile

The relics' outer casing may be stout, but their inner workings are relatively fragile. Any time they are dropped, jerked violently, or sustains damage (even if this damage does not penetrate its hardness), the chance of breaking is equal to 25% + the amount of damage taken. A broken device stops functioning completely and must be repaired before it can function. The Purchase DC of relics with this flaw are reduced by -5.

Hard To Stop

Once a relic with this flaw is turned on, it is hard to stop. This flaw can only be found in relics that have multiple uses, such as energy weapons or healing kits. Once a relic with this flaw is activated, there is a 25% that the device activates again immediately afterwards, targeting the same target as the previous use if possible. Reactivation should be checked for each round until the device stops working or runs out of power. This means rifles will keep firing; healing devices will keep healing the same subject (even if unnecessary), etc. The Purchase DC of relics with this flaw are reduced by -5.

Long Activation

Some relics take longer than others to turn on, and ones with this flaw take a good long time. Each time this flaw is applied, the length of time required to activate the relic increases: If the relic would normally take a free action to activate, it instead requires a standard action; if relic would normally take a standard action to activate, it instead requires a full-round action; if the relic would normally require a full-round action to activate, it instead requires one minute; if the relic would normally require a minute or more to activate, it requires five times as long to activate. Activating a relic with this flaw provokes an attack of opportunity. The Purchase DC of relics with this flaw are reduced by -2 each time it is applied.

Non-Humanoid Design

A relic with this flaw was designed to be used by Star Confederation races not shaped like humans, .e.g., dosai. Checks and attack rolls using the relic and made by a humanoid character (including all the other PC species of the Helios system) suffer a -4 penalty. This reduces the Purchase DC of the relic by -5.

Unreliable

Relics with this flaw do not always function when they should. If a

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character attempts to activate a relic with this flaw, there is a 25% that the device fails to activate. This is only determined after the full activation time for the relic is spent. This reduces the Purchase DC of the relic by -5. Increasing the chance of failure by 2% decreases the Purchase DC by an additional -1.

Vaasi Design

The relic is a device of vaasi origin. This means it is quasi-organic, and most species will find it distinctly uncomfortable to use. Those who do come into contact with vaasi technology often describe the experience as being similar to touching a corpse. Checks and attack rolls using the relic and made by a non-vaasi character suffer a -4 penalty, and require a Will save (DC 12) or the character becomes nauseated. This reduces the Purchase DC of the relic by -10.

Weak Casing

Many relics have not weathered the long years of being exposed to the elements well and are now vulnerable to damage they would have once resisted. Each time this flaw is applied, the hardness and hit points of the relic are reduced by -5 to a minimum of 1. The Purchase DC of relics with this flaw are reduced by -2 each time it is applied.

Sample Relics

The following relics are examples of the sorts of relics that can be found on Eos and the other planets of the Helios system.

Chembond Grenade

A common firefighting tool of the Star Confederation, this device slows fires and most other chemical reactions by flooding the area with inert particles that easily bond to other molecules. Fires get snuffed out, carbonated drinks go flat, and explosives don't—at least for a time. The effects are temporary, but given sufficient time and power, chembond grenades can restore their internal supply of inert particles. In time these became common household devices used for all manner of dangerous situations, but unfortunately they also make it very difficult to breathe. Most were issued with a breathing apparatus to prevent unfortunate accidents.

When activated, a chembond grenade can be thrown as any other grenade. On the following round it fills a twenty foot radius with inert particles. This immediately puts out all normal fires, renders acids inert, stops common chemical reactions such as internal combustion engines, etc. At the GM's discretion particularly powerful fires or acids may remain active, but a good rule of thumb is reducing all cold, fire, and acid damage by 30 points within the affected area. The particles remain for ten rounds. Any living being in this area must make a Fort save (DC 18) or begin suffocating. They must make a new save each round they are in the affected area, and if they leave the area they must continue to make saves each round until they succeed. Once used, a chembond grenade

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expends 30 charges and takes 30 hours to recharge. Chembond grenades are PL8 items with a Purchase DC of 42 and a restriction of Illegal.

Communication Spheres

Once used as the primary form of faster-than-light communication in the Star Confederation, communication spheres allow fast but very limited communication over vast distances. Communication spheres are fist-sized metallic-blue spheres with a number of grooves on one side to make it possible for beings with a number of different hand structures to hold comfortably, while the other side has a small circular control panel. They come in paired sets. The two spheres are identical except that one has a black circle imprinted on its side and the other a white circle. Each set of communication spheres is a matched set and if one is damaged or destroyed both spheres become useless. Communication spheres weigh two pounds and all have the Fragile flaw.

Communication spheres are PL 7 devices. Each sphere contains a quantum particle that has been entangled with its opposite number in the other sphere. Both spin the same direction due to this entanglement, though the spheres can be used to switch this direction, causing the other to immediately switch as well regardless of distance. This allows the user of a communication sphere to communicate instantaneously over vast distances. There are two limitations: Communication spheres immediately lose their entanglement if they pass through a gateway, rendering them useless for interstellar communications; the information passed through the communication sphere is limited in its complexity because the spheres cannot change the direction of their quantum particle's spin faster than a few times each second. This means the communication spheres function in much the same fashion as a telegraph, only over immense distances. Using a communication sphere requires a Computer Use check (DC 10) for each round of operation, assuming the sender and receiver have worked out some system of meaning for the signals sent through the spheres. Communication spheres have an internal power supply of 50 charges and consume one charge per round of active use; they were plugged into larger power supplies when used by the Star Confederation. Communication spheres have a Purchase DC of 60 and a restriction of Licensed.

Disintegrator Cube

The disintegrator cube was once a common waste reclamation device used by well-off families and companies throughout the Star Confederation. This device is almost a perfect cube with each side measuring a little more than one yard. On one side of the cube there is a small control panel comprised of a handful of small buttons and output screens arranged in a circular fashion. The opposite side of the disintegrator cube can be opened by pressing the largest button on the control panel. Opening the hatch reveals the hollow interior and walls covered with a fine grey dust (in fact, a swarm of hibernating nanites). The entire device weighs thirty pounds due to the fact it is mostly hollow.

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The disintegrator cube is a PL 9 device. Activating the disintegrator requires a Computer Use check (DC 10). Once activated the nanites in the disintegrator cube trigger and begin disassembling any matter placed in the cube into its constituent compounds, a process that takes ten minutes. For example, placing a computer into the disintegrator cube yields neat piles of silicon dust, gold dust, plastic, and other compounds used in a computer. It allows any device to be completely salvaged with less than 1% of the mass of the item lost in the conversion. Liquids and gases cannot be broken down with the disintegrator cube. The device will not activate when any movement is detected within its chamber, making it impossible to use on living beings. Objects with a hardness of 50 or higher are immune to the effect of the disintegrator cube. A fully-charged disintegrator cube consumes 100 charges each time it is used and has an internal battery of 1,000 charges. A fully charged, fully functional disintegrator cube has a Purchase DC of 50, though most are not in such good condition. It has a restriction of Illegal.

The Fire Egg

The “fire egg” was a common Star Confederation portable power device used by both civilians and soldiers. About the same size and shape as a watermelon, this laser-fusion generator is able to draw in hydrogen from the surrounding area and fuse it into helium, creating a nigh-infinite supply of energy in a handy, man-portable package. It has ten ports that can be connected to most Star Confederation devices or batteries, producing 1,000 charges of power per round. A single fire egg produces enough power to supply a small city indefinitely.

Unfortunately, fire eggs were not designed to be used indefinitely and begin heating up after an hour of constant use. Fire eggs were originally deployed in groups of three that rotated so no one fire egg would be in use for more than four hours. After eight hours of constant use they become red hot, inflicting 2d6 heat damage per round to any creature touching it. After sixteen hours of constant use, the fire egg has a 25% chance of exploding. The chance increases by 1% each round of constant use thereafter. When a fire egg explodes, it deals 20d6 damage (half fire/half concussion) to everything within a 500-foot radius (Reflex DC 18 for half damage). Fire eggs take eight hours of inactivity to fully cool down. Fire eggs also often have the Explosive (inflicting the above damage instead of the normal damage for the Explosive flaw), Fragile, and Hard to Stop flaws. Fire eggs have a Purchase DC of 65, a restriction of Illegal, and are PL8.

Identipod

Due to the huge populations of the Star Confederation, all kept in close contact regardless of distances due to a variety of advanced technologies, citizens often had trouble keeping track of all the people they knew. To aid in this the identipod became a common social tool among the more socially active members of Star Confederation society. The device is small and designed to be unobtrusive, often taking the form of a watch or piece of jewelry so it can be used to identify people without

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giving away that the user did not remember this person's identity. A small number even considered these devices to be an invasion of privacy and in poor taste.

Regardless of its shape, an identipod must be able to communicate with its wearer. This was usually through audio or text, both of which were in Unispeak. While active the identipod continually scans all sentient beings around it using a variety of sensors. These collect extensive data, including species, height, unique skin markings, facial structure, retina, finger prints, bone structure, etc. This means that within one round of being brought within 30 feet of a creature the identipod can detect if the person is stored in its databank and any relevant information the user recorded about that person, such as name, occupation, etc. The identipod could easily see through many forms of camouflage or holograms and grants the user a +8 bonus on Spot and Search checks to see through disguises. In any situation where the gamemaster feels remembering a person's identity or facts about them would be useful the identipod grants the user a +2 bonus on relevant Charisma and Charisma-based skill checks. Identipods can run for 40 hours on their 8-charge battery and can be recharged by most Star Confederation power sources. Identipods are PL8 devices with a Purchase DC of 49 and a restriction of Restricted.

Inertial Field Projector

This small device, roughly rectangular in shape with its longest side measuring eighteen inches, was a common safety precaution in Star Confederation vehicles and roadways. When activated, the device creates a field of super dense particles in front of itself which acts as a flexible but ultimately unbreachable barrier, negating the blow of any object striking it. This allows the inertial field projector to safely stop nearly any vehicle it is mounted on the front of quickly and safely with minimal discomfort to the passengers. The device can also be deployed without a vehicle, stopping any matter from passing through the barrier.

Inertial field projectors are PL8 devices. They project a transparent field ten feet wide and ten feet tall on one side of the device with large vehicles carrying several synchronized projectors to act in unison. Any object coming in to the contact to the field has its inertia fully canceled as long as its total inertia is not above a certain level. Damage from any physical attack passing through the field is reduced by 50 points. Vehicles have their impact damage reduced by -15d6, but sufficiently fast moving vehicles may be able to overwhelm the field. An inertia field projector consumes ten charges per round of operation and has an internal power supply of 50 charges. It has a Purchase DC of 54 and a restriction of Military.

The Invisible Stick

A covert services weapon developed in the later stages of the war with the Vaasi Empire, the invisible stick gave its wielder the edge by being completely invisible to the wielders' foes. When it is not active, the invisible stick is little more than a metal stick one yard long with a handle and several buttons. When activated via these buttons the invisible stick

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becomes completely invisible to the naked eye and all forms of electromagnetic radiation sensors such as infra-red or ultraviolet sensors. Only the wielder can see the invisible stick by using special goggles that are matched to the stick which calculate the position of the stick at any time by way of a number of transmitters in the stick that continually update the goggles with their position, speed, and orientation. Thus the user sees the invisible stick superimposed over his vision while wearing the goggles but his opponents see nothing. In addition to the light-bending advantage of the invisible stick, when the invisible stick detects an imminent impact with enough force to do damage, the outer casing of the stick recedes from the striking surface, revealing a monofilament wire at the core.

A creature defending against someone wielding this weapon has all bonuses based on the ability to see and react to the attack halved. This includes any Dodge or Dexterity bonuses and bonuses from feats or special actions such as the Expertise feat or using the Full Defense action. An invisible stick consumes one charge per attack and has an internal power pack with 50 charges, though it can be attached to most Star Confederation power sources. The invisible stick is a PL8 device and has a Purchase DC of 46 and a restriction of Military. The invisible stick is considered an exotic melee weapon and thus requires the Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (Invisible Stick) feat to use without penalty.

Weapon	PL	Dmg	Crit	Type	Size	Wgt	Purch	Restr
Invisible Stick	8	2d8	19/x4	Slash	Med	1 lb.	46	Res (+2)

Living Armor

Living armor was a rare and expensive device used in physical therapy in the hospitals of the Star Confederation. Each suit of living armor was a specially engineered creature that bonded with the nervous system of its owner, healing physical damage and helping the wearer relearn how to walk or perform other basic functions. The suit itself required regular injections of nutrients to stay alive but little other care. There was much debate in the Star Confederation as to the morality of creating and using living beings in such fashion, but once the suits were created no one wanted to kill them since they were living beings. In the end only a handful of suits of living armor were made, most of which ended up in the hands of those with permanent injuries that could not be otherwise healed. A few were packed up in stasis pods before the attack on Eos in order to keep them around for future use, remaining alive and functional to the present day. Reviving them properly can be difficult.

It is effectively a suit of living clothes, much like the armor of the haimedians. It lives off the waste of the wearer, but it cannot live off the waste of vaasi, haimedians, coqui, or mechites due to their unusual physiologies. The living armor must be worn or kept in its nutrient storage tank for at least 24 out of every 72 hours to survive. While worn, living armor grants the wearer a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength and a +4 enhancement bonus to Constitution. The wearer also gains fire

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resistance, cold resistance, acid resistance, sonic resistance, and radiation resistance of 3. While wearing a suit of living armor the wearer heals at double the normal rate, including ability damage. While wearing the optional hood piece the wearer gains a +8 enhancement bonus to Fortitude saves against any airborne threats, such as viruses and poisonous gases. Owing to its odd appearance, wearing a full suit of living armor confers a -4 penalty on any Charisma or Charisma-based skill checks. Whenever the wearer of a suit of living armor must make a saving throw against massive damage, the living armor must also make a saving throw with a +6 bonus. If the living armor fails its saving throw, it dies, becoming useless. A suit of living armor is a Progress Level 8 item and has a purchase DC of 52 and a restriction of Licensed. Living armor is considered light armor, though few who used it had the training to use it to its true potential.

Armor	PL	Type	Equip. Bonus	Prof. Bonus	Max Dex	Armor Penalty	Speed (30 ft)	Wgt	Purch	Restr
Living Armor	8	Tactical	+4	+1	+6	-1	30 ft.	15 lbs.	52	Lic

Stim-Nanite Shot

Found in first aid kits across the Star Confederation, these common healing devices were easy to use and extremely effective. While they were initially used by medical and military agencies, in time they were sold as common household first-aid implements. Looking much like a pen, the stim-nanite shot is little more than a small air injector with one dose of medical nanites, pain relievers, and healing accelerants. The most common version of the stim-nanite shot was a single use device that broke down to its component molecules after used, but medical facilities often had multi-use versions.

Using a stim-nanite shot is a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity. The shot immediately converts up to 1d8+3 points of lethal damage to nonlethal damage and heals 1d8+3 points of nonlethal damage, and it continues to convert three points of lethal damage to nonlethal damage per round for the next ten rounds. At the end of ten rounds, it also restores up to 1d4 points of Dexterity, Constitution, and Strength damage ten rounds after it is used. A stim-nanite shot is a PL8 item and has a purchase DC of 46 and no restrictions.

Warrior Collar

Used by the soldiers of the Star Confederation when in extended combat situations, the warrior collar is designed to keep the wearer at peak performance for extended periods of time. It does this by stimulating the nervous system of the wearer, allowing the user to think clearly and avoid exhaustion without need for drugs. This process is not dangerous unless the warrior collar is used for weeks on end—something that the Star Confederation avoided doing. Warrior collars look like simple metal mesh circlets that are worn around the neck and tightened to be snug but not uncomfortable. Warrior collars are flexible so they do not get in the way

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of movement or breathing. Warrior collars will not function on vaasi, haimedians, coqui, or mechites due to their unusual physiology.

When activated, the warrior collar draws its power from the nervous system and movements of the wearer, allowing it to operate indefinitely. Once the warrior collar is put on it may be activated or deactivated by toggling a concealed switch. When active, the collar confers a +2 bonus to Dexterity and Constitution, reduces any penalties due to exhaustion or fatigue by half, and reduces the time to recover from exhaustion and fatigue conditions to one-quarter the normal time. The wearer may also operate without sleep for up to 72 hours without suffering any penalty. If the warrior collar is used for more than two weeks without a break of at least 24 hours, the wearer suffers 1 point of Constitution damage and an additional point of Constitution damage each day thereafter until the collar is deactivated. Warrior collars are PL8 items with a Purchase DC of 58 and a restriction of Licensed.

Relic Hunter Advanced Class

While many claim the title of relic hunter, few are truly worthy of the honor. Those that do possess a mixture of technological, military, and survival skills that set them apart from the amateurs who simply want to get rich quick. The real relic hunters know that research, planning, and knowing when to give up are the secrets to success.

Select this advanced class if you want to be an expert at finding, recovering, and using advanced alien technology. You may not always be able to fix it, but you sure know how to find it.

The fastest path into this advanced class is from the Smart or Dedicated hero basic classes, though other paths are possible.

Requirements

To become a Relic Hunter, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2

Skills: Knowledge (Technology) 6 ranks, Search 6 ranks, Spot 6 ranks, Survival 6 ranks.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Relic Hunter advanced class.

Hit Die

The Relic Hunter gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Relic Hunter gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Relic Hunter's class skills are as follows.

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Skill Points at Each Level: 8+ Int modifier (7+ Int modifier for nonhumans).

Climb (Str), Computer Use (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Disable Device (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (earth and life sciences) (Int), Knowledge (physical sciences) (Int), Knowledge (technology)(Int), Listen (Wis), Navigate (Int), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), Research (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str).

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Relic Hunter advanced class.

Inspect Xenotech

At 1st level, by spending a move action and inspecting a piece of alien technology, the Relic Hunter may make an Intelligence check (DC 10+ the device's progress level) to determine the abilities of the device. The Relic Hunter enjoys a bonus on the check equal to his class level. If successful, the Relic Hunter knows the basic abilities of the item, such as damage and range increment for weapons or speed for vehicles. If the Relic Hunter has the Smart hero talent Identify Alien Technology he may add both his Relic Hunter and Smart hero levels to the Intelligence check.

Danger Sense

At 1st level, the Relic Hunter gains an eye for situations that are about to turn dangerous. Anytime the Relic Hunter must make a Reflex save he may make a Spot check against the same DC. If the Spot check is successful the Relic Hunter gets a +3 bonus to his Reflex save.

Deactivate Relic

At 2nd level, the Relic Hunter is able to deactivate most relics even if he doesn't know how they work fully. As a full-round action the Relic Hunter may make an Intelligence check (DC 10+ the relic's progress level) with a bonus equal to his Relic Hunter level. If successful the device is deactivated, though the process of deactivation for some devices may take some time. Also this deactivation does not mean the relic is safe just because it is shut down, e.g., shutting down a relic aircraft in mid-air.

Gravevine Insider

At 2nd level, the Relic Hunter has spent enough time working within the Gravevine to receive a +4 bonus to all skill checks related to the Gravevine.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, a Relic Hunter gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Relic Hunter must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Alertness, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Athletic, Blind-Fight, Blood Blister Survivor, Cautious, Dodge, Educated, Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency,

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Gearhead, Guide, Meticulous, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Renown, Studious, Technological Aptitude.

Relic Hunter Reputation

At 4th level, the Relic Hunter has developed a reputation as being a competent relic hunter. Other relic hunters may come seeking his advice or try and hire him for expeditions. The Relic Hunter receives a +4 bonus to Reputation when dealing with relic hunters, brokers, or buyers, including the Gravevine. He also gains a +2 bonus to Charisma and Charisma-based skills when interacting with relic hunters, brokers, or buyers.

Fast Searcher

At 4th level, the Relic Hunter takes half the normal time required when searching, including taking 10 or 20 when making Search checks.

Utilize Xenotech

At 5th level, by spending an action point and ten minutes investigating a piece of alien technology, the Relic Hunter can attempt to figure out how to operate the basic functions of the alien device. This requires an Intelligence check for each device against the DC listed on the table below. The Relic Hunter receives a bonus to this check equal to his Relic Hunter level. If successful, the Relic Hunter can use the basic functions of the device—such as

driving a vehicle or firing a weapon—without the normal penalties associated with using a device of a higher progress level than the Relic Hunter is familiar with. The Relic Hunter still suffers from any other penalties due to not having the proper

Type of Object	DC
Device of same or lower progress level as Smart hero's culture	10
Device 1 progress level above the Smart hero's culture	15
Device 2 progress levels above the Smart hero's culture	20
Device 3+ progress levels above the Smart hero's culture	25
Device has an unusual interface, such as mental controls	+5
Device is particularly complex	+5
For each size category greater than Medium-size	+2

feats to use the item, such as a lack of proficiency with a particular weapon class. The Relic Hunter must know what the device does before using this ability from the Inspect Xenotech class ability, a Knowledge (Technology) skill check, or another source, such as an instruction manual or technical schematic. If the Relic Hunter has the Smart hero talent of the same name he may add both his Relic Hunter and Smart hero levels to the Intelligence check.

Technological Aptitude

At 7th level the Relic Hunter gains the Technological Aptitude feat as a bonus feat regardless of if he meets the prerequisites.

Exotic Technology Training

At 8th level, the Relic Hunter gains one of the following feats as a bonus feat, for which he does not have to meet the prerequisites: Armor

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Proficiency (Powered), Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Exotic Melee Weapons Proficiency, Organic Technology Familiarity (see *Helios Rising*).

Technological Comprehension

At 10th level, the Relic Hunter has gained a wide and varied understanding of alien technology, allowing him to interact with it much more easily than most people. He need no longer spend an action point to use his Inspect Xenotech and Utilize Xenotech abilities. He also gains the ability to spend an action point to completely ignore penalties due to the Progress Level of a single item for one use.

Class Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Def Bonus	Rep Bonus
1	+0	+1	+0	+1	Identify Xenotech, Danger Sense	+0	+1
2	+1	+2	+0	+2	Deactivate Relic, Gravevine Insider	+1	+1
3	+2	+2	+1	+2	Bonus Feat	+1	+1
4	+3	+2	+1	+2	Relic Hunter Reputation, Fast Searcher	+1	+2
5	+3	+3	+1	+3	Utilize Xenotech	+2	+2
6	+4	+3	+2	+3	Bonus Feat	+2	+2
7	+5	+3	+2	+4	Technological Aptitude	+2	+3
8	+6	+4	+2	+4	Exotic Technology Training	+3	+3
9	+6	+4	+3	+4	Bonus Feat	+3	+3
10	+7	+5	+3	+5	Technological Comprehension	+3	+4

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