



GREEN CLOAKS

EXPANDED PLANETARY LORE

— TETRARCH —



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The Planet Tetrarch: an overview

Tetrarch

Pronunciation: TET-raark

Name of the people: Tetrarchii (sing. and pl.) (tet-RAARK-ee)

A desert planet between Marazion V and Zennor, this planet is sparsely populated and mainly serves as a refuelling point between the two planets, as well as supplying high-quality silicon for use in electronics. The living on Tetrarch is hard, dry and hot, and so the Tetrarchii have learned to make the most of what they have: scrap, and lots of it. When it was first discovered in 4868, Tetrarch's natural resource – silica-rich sand – was largely ignored; instead it was used as a junkyard, with surrounding colonies dumping what they didn't need or want on the planet and in its orbit. A couple of colonies made quite a tidy living out of scrap-running to and from Tetrarch, and gradually people began to inhabit it and sell the scrap on to those who would buy it. It took barely a decade for investors to see the golden opportunity in the sand beneath their feet, as the neighbouring colonies – particularly Marazion V – needed a nearby source of silicon, and the mines and factories were quickly built. However, the colony's infrastructure is still in development, and as such beyond the work in mines and factories inhabitants have few resources and no luxuries, and they eke out a life among the dust, sand and exposure of the planet's deserts.

Although much of the landscape has been cleared of the scrap dumped in the early days of the colonies, in some of the more arid deserts the skeletons of old ships, vehicles and machines can still be seen littering the barren places. Not a people to let things go to waste, the Tetrarchii use these to build what they need, from shelter and appliances to vehicles and tools. They see use in something that others would consider beyond use. They have built a few sprawling towns across the landscape, which exist almost solely to slake thirst and entertain. Lack of water on the planet means that fluids are usually imported, and it is easier for a traveller to obtain a cup of Ardheimian mead on Tetrarch than a cup of water. They are also likely to find in these towns a good number of gambling dens, pawn shops, bars, and places of questionable virtue.

The Tetrarchii favour practical clothing that leaves none of the body exposed. The planet can be exceedingly hot by day, and freezing at night, and when a sandstorm picks up it can choke. Full head coverings such as tagelmusts are common, often accompanied by protective goggles to keep the sand out of the eyes. The lower parts of the legs and arms are usually wrapped to keep sand out of trousers, shirts and boots, and hard-wearing materials such as leather are preferred – this, of course, is recycled from the scrapyards. To inhabitants of neighbouring colonies, the Tetrarchii look unkempt and dirty: many of them prefer to shave their hair completely or grow it into dreadlocks to avoid having to maintain it in their environment, and their clothing is scrappy, recycled and worn.

As survival is uncertain on this planet, the Tetrarchii follow the rule of safety in numbers: being alone in the desert is an almost certain road to death. As such, they often live in small yet close-knit communes, which may or may not share blood-ties, where children are raised by all, everyday chores and work are shared by those who can undertake it, and skills are taught freely. Despite the hardships of life on this inhospitable planet, the Tetrarchii are generally a happy people, thankful for each day they are still alive, openly expressing joy and celebrating every juncture of life. After all, they've got people they can rely on, an open sky above them, and plenty of land to make their own. Rites of passage, such as namings, coming of age, and wisenings, are marked with a Gathering, and fires burn on those nights that can be seen for miles around.

The naturally hot environment has led to the immigration of tae'go to the colony, and it is almost certain that Tetrarch has the largest population of this species in the cluster. The tae'go live on friendly terms with the human Tetrarchii, and some communities have the two species co-existing, sharing life in the communes. The immigration of the tae'go has improved life for the humans there, as they have shared with them skills that have enabled them to find food and water even in the harshest desert climate.

Few Tetrarchii join the military, though with recent events the numbers are increasing. Some see it as a way to explore a wider world beyond the scrapyards, others send their wages back to their commune so they can improve their lives. As its population is so small, Tetrarch does not have its own military, so recruits join up on a neighbouring colony and are sent where needed.

Inspiration for characterisation: *Mad Max*, Tatooine (*Star Wars*), *Tank Girl*, the American Wild West, Burning Man, Nevada desert, *Dune* by Frank Herbert, *Firefly*.

1. Timeline

4868: The planet Tetrarch is discovered. Expeditionary forces are sent to its moons to study the planet and assess if it is colonisable or suitable for terraforming. Mined resources are discovered on its moons.

4869: After a year of study, Tetrarch is deemed unsuitable for major human occupation and begins its life as a scrapyard, with surrounding colonies dumping what they don't need or want on the planet and in its orbit. Although at first only hazardous material is dumped, regulations brought in on other planets to preserve their natural environments force more general waste and irreparably broken machines to be transported to Tetrarch.

4872: Kop Nevus, the first known settlement on Tetrarch is formed by an independent exploration team.

4874: Initial land surveys carried out from Kop Nevus reveal large surface mineral deposits, primarily silica.

4877: Mining companies flock to Tetrarch, eager to stake their claim on the planet in anticipation of silica and other mineral deposits similar to those on Marazion V. Regular tectonic activity significantly limits suitable mining areas, so construction begins far away from fault lines. The first permanent settlements appear around mines, built up from and carved into the rock or hidden in caverns under the surface.

4879: Silica Solutions, a Marazion V funded refining company, attains dominance as the main exporter of silica from Tetrarch and begins constructing sprawling raised silica harvesting factories in the desert regions, moving massive amounts of scrap into unclaimed territories. Trade with Marazion V booms.

4882: Scrap running overtakes mineral mining as the second most profitable industry after silica mining, with surrounding colonies sending ships full of junk to dump and salvage valuables already dumped on the surface. People who have begun living on Tetrarch by using this scrap protest but are ignored.

4915: Crime syndicates led by Shane Green from Delmont travel to Tetrarch and attempt to gain control of the desert world, an endeavour prevented by the formation of the Dupois-Martinez mining corporation, who quickly purge them from the planet.

4973: The first tae'go are spotted on Tetrarch, raiding small settlements for food and supplies. Many Tetrarchii believe them to be a native reptile and avoid settling near their nests.

4986–4991: The Kolvaran Plate, the largest tectonic plate on the planet, begins rapidly cracking due to a combination of over-mining the thin crust and a pressure build-up in the mantle. The largest and longest earthquakes on record occur, destroying many surface and underground settlements and creating hundreds of volcanic rift zones, some of which will still be erupting thousands of years later. Tetrarch is deemed unsuitable for major mining operations, and many mineral mines are abandoned. The Sea of Shards is formed.

5012: The core planets in the Segovax cluster band together to resist the One Bakkar push and the crippling loss of supplies from Terra. Tetrarch keeps communication, trade and resistance alive in the area alongside the other core planets. No planet can fully survive on its own and resources are transported between systems to keep all the planets alive, with

trade routes protected by the first combined military of these planets: the "Green Cloaks". Due to their limited number of battle-ready ships and lack of a standing army, Tetrarch forms shipyards to repair and refuel battleships.

5036: The first major One Bakkar invasion fleet to target Tetrarch is wiped out by a strong atmospheric storm.

5066: Tetrarch begins constructing smaller space vessels to bolster the TSA fleet's numbers.

5125: The second major One Bakkar invasion fleet to target Tetrarch is crippled by a particularly strong electrical storm.

5171: Tetrarch's moons no longer produce enough minerals to sustain their mining cost and most of these companies shut down. Many workers are forced to move to the planet's surface.

5172: MAVAE (Marazion V Aerospace) attempts to replicate Dupois-Martinez's previous control of the planet, claiming they should control it due to the number of their scrapped ships on the surface.

5185: Mascen slaves are brought in by MAVAE in an attempt to restart the mining industry and win favour with other planets.

5193: The tae'go reveal themselves to the Tetrarchii, offering their assistance in return for absolute secrecy of their presence on Tetrarch.

5199: After years of sabotage and political pleas to the Terran Sovereignty, the Tetrarchii succeed in blocking MAVAE from taking ownership of the planet. The United Peoples of Tetrarch (UPot) is formed to be a unified voice for the world and is recognised by the Terran Sovereignty as the planet's official governing body.

5209: The third major One Bakkar invasion fleet successfully lands dropships on the planet. It takes only three months for the Tetrarchii to push the invading forces back by limiting their access to vital resources and letting the planet's hostile environment finish them off.

5210: Ardheim gifts a carrier ship's worth of mead to Tetrarch to congratulate them on their successful defence without a standing army. The Tetrarchii choose to save this gift for off-world visitors, rather than having them dip into their limited water supplies.

5392: The fourth major One Bakkar invasion fleet is more prepared, and a small force of elite troops are sent to destroy Tetrarch's main shipyards. The forces are wiped out. For a long time after, it is suspected that the forces landed too close to the nest of a rare native species, which swiftly eradicated them in a series of violent assaults. This would later be revealed to the rest of the Terran Sovereignty as the work of the tae'go.

5577: The Terran Sovereignty breaks the One Bakkar blockade to the Segovax cluster, which becomes the new front line in Terran space.

5612: After a botched attempt to deposit a decommissioned capital ship onto the planet almost wipes out life in the northern hemisphere, the Iron Band is established by the UPoT. This safe zone stretches 500km north and south of the equator as a location for the de-orbiting of especially large scrap items.

5700: The tae'go are officially revealed to the Terran Sovereignty. The friendly communal relations that were developed with humans on Tetrarch are recognised as being instrumental in their decision to come out of hiding.

5829: Appeals by the UPoT to the Terran Sovereignty result in a multitude of scholarship places being provided to citizens of the planet, allowing chosen Tetrarchii to become students at high-level establishments such as those on Cantiacorum.

5845: The myr'na, having recently made contact with the Terran Sovereignty, begin making pilgrimages to Tetrarch, attracted by its remote nature and vast, empty landscapes.

5951: Popularised by the myr'na pilgrims, other species began visiting Tetrarch recreationally. This sudden tourism boom causes a rapid change in the planet's most densely populated areas, especially in the cities of Solutocco and Kop Nevus. Large numbers of gambling dens, pawn shops, bars and other places of questionable virtue spring up to cater to the planet's influx of tourists eager for a taste of the danger and adventure the planet offers.

6015: Tetrarchii soldiers are deployed for the first time in large numbers away from their home planet, integrating into the regiments currently serving on Zennor to help bolster forces.

2. Colonisation

Initial discovery

4868–4872

Discovered in 4868, expeditionary forces did not initially land on Tetrarch, fearing the harsh storms made the way impassable for their ships. It took a year of remote study after landing on Tetrarch's largest moon, Nascent, to determine that the planet was suitable for minor colonisation, but would require too great an extent of terraforming to ever become a major human settlement. Tetrarch was then largely ignored by the expeditionary force as they searched for more suitable planets to colonise. It became a planetary junkyard, with successful surrounding colonies dumping what they didn't need or want on the planet and in its orbit.

Some smaller exploration parties set out from other planets to make a home for themselves on Tetrarch, salvaging old spaceships and technology to sell. However, many who made it past the atmospheric storms found the hot, arid environment too harsh to live in and impossible to escape from. It was only in 4872 that one team of lucky explorers discovered what would later be known as Tetrarch's Embrace, a distinct chain of mountains that they used to coordinate supply drops with off-world benefactors. Following out an abandoned carrier-class spaceship that had been dumped in the protected salt flat, this team built the first known settlement on the planet, Kop Nevus, which still stands today as the most famous salvage trading port on the planet and the central interplanetary point of contact.

Mining boom

4877–4973

Silica Solutions, a Marazion V funded silica refinement company, swiftly gained dominance as the major exporter of silica on Tetrarch. They were the first to see the potential in the sand and other companies struggled to compete with them. Their sprawling factories sat on high stilts, allowing the deserts to naturally move under them to refresh the supply of silica-rich sand. A significant amount of scrap was cleared by the company and sent elsewhere on the planet to be melted down and exported, or dumped in a less obstructive place. Trade in scrap increased drastically, drawing more settlers to the planet.

With colonisation well underway, Tetrarch became the focus of other industrial interests. Initial probes made by mining companies revealed a mass of untapped mineral wealth, especially in the form of bauxite, or aluminium ore, and in gem deposits. Infrastructure projects across the planet were accelerated to try and claim as much land as possible, with prefabricated cities springing up to accommodate the flood of workers from across the system.

With this spike in population came those wanting to control it. Crime syndicates from Delmont were quick to try and replicate their methods of territorial-industrial control on the desert world, but the mining companies prevented this. The two most powerful companies united to form the Dupois-Martinez Corporation, purging the crime syndicates from the planet. Tetrarch became unified for the first time as an industrial asset, its people nothing more than fuel for the mining machine.

Kolvaran disaster

4986–4991

The extent of the mining that occurred during the boom was immense. The lack of any serious restrictions allowed corporations to dig across enormous areas and to depths unheard of on other planets. Hints of an impending disaster were prevalent for decades before it occurred, but the reports of rising temperatures and minor seismic activity in the deepest mines were disregarded. The Kolvaran disaster began in 4986, when major tectonic activity unlike anything seen before in the system was detected in the centre of the Kolvaran tectonic plate, one of the largest and thinnest on the planet. Hundreds of kilometres of tunnels and caverns hollowed out over nearly a century of unregulated mining collapsed into each other from the edge outwards in a wave of devastation. Extensive surface subsidence wiped out nearly every mining community in the greater area, killing thousands. The pressure of the planet's mantle took advantage of the weakened upper crust and exploded upwards, splitting the plate in half and allowing massive quantities of magma to flow upwards, melting the sand above. In less than a week, the vast majority of Tetrarch's mining industry vanished beneath a sea of glass.

The mining industry on the planet had been crippled seemingly beyond repair. The rule of the Dupois-Martinez Corporation was over. They withdrew their support from the planet, leaving nearly ten thousand people stranded, with the choice of either embracing their situation, of dying from it: Tetrarch's tribal society as it is today was born.

Segovax at war

5012–present

Without a standing army, Tetrarch had to support the war effort in other ways. This came in the form of shipyards being set up in both its orbit and on the surface, behind the shelter of the mountain range known as Tetrarch's Embrace. For the vast fleets of starships, Tetrarch was close enough to the front lines for the transport of damaged vessels to be justifiable. Here, repairs, refuelling and the construction of some smaller vessels occurred. The first Tetrarchii began to join the regiments of the Green Cloaks and were renowned for their hardiness and ability to remain calm in stressful engagements.

Four major attempts to invade the planet were made during the war. Being one of the heartlands of the Sovereign Navy, its fall would be disastrous for the Terran Sovereignty Army. The first two invasion fleets blew through the planet's defences but were wiped out in the atmospheric storms that plagued the planet's upper atmosphere. The third used a different approach, using an armada of smaller dropships to deposit legions of troops on the planet's surface. The Tetrarchii, with the support of TSA equipment, waged a guerrilla war that ground the invading forces away in less than three months. Though Tetrarchii forces were outnumbered at over two hundred to one, the planet once again proved to be the greatest weapon, with its unforgiving environment wiping out thousands of enemy troops. The fourth invasion saw an enemy far more prepared for this environment. A smaller force of the One Bakkar's most elite troops was sent to finally deal a major blow against the shipyards on the planet's surface. This attempt was brought to a swift end almost before it could begin, with the forces wiped out in a series of unrelenting and brutal hit-and-run assaults by a rarely seen species believed to be native to the planet. This would later be revealed to be the work of the tae'go.

United peoples of Tetrarch

5172–5239

With the conflict becoming increasingly bloody, the TSA needed a location to dump its irreparably damaged starships in order to prevent their technology from falling into enemy hands. Tetrarch was the ideal location as it was already used as a galactic dump.

This gave MAVAE (Marazion V Aerospace), the manufacturer of many of these ships, the opportunity to try and replicate the success of the Dupois-Martinez corporation. They claimed the planet was theirs by rights of the amount of scrap on Tetrarch that came from their crafts. The Sovereignty turned a blind eye to this, being indebted to the engineering firm. Mascen slaves were also brought in as an attempt to restart the mining industry.

The various tribes, knowing of the horrors that came with the last corporate rule, unified to resist this second attempt. The tae'go revealed themselves to the Tetrarchii humans, offering their assistance in return for absolute secrecy of their existence to other worlds. The Tetrarchii succeeded in blocking the company's expansion through both sabotage and political pleas to the Terran Sovereignty. Having made themselves known to the galaxy as the rightful holders of the planet, the United Peoples of Tetrarch was formed as the planet's voice and unifying strength.

3. Culture

Identity and Philosophy

The life of a Tetrarchii revolves around the community, with each member equally as important and vital for the survival of the group; everyone and everything is connected in the mind of a Tetrarchii.

Tribes – made up of a mixture of humans and tae'go – live communally, sharing all work and resources. Each individual serves the community in the best way they can, offering their skills and time to its continued survival. In return, they are given what they need from the tribe. There are no quotas or requirements individuals must reach in order to receive resources like food and water, as they are divided fairly by the needs of each person. If the gatherers do not bring in enough food, the burden is divided among the community instead of the individual responsible. Likewise, if gatherers find something considered a delicacy on Tetrarch, they will bring it back to their tribe for it to be shared instead of keeping it to themselves. Every Tetrarchii has a deep understanding of both community and individual, knowing that the effect of a single person upon the greater whole can be immense.

Tetrarchii philosophy is based on practicality and an understanding of what is needed for survival. Things that waste resources are frowned upon, and life in the tribes is built upon the peace and respect required to ensure that hostility, jealousy and greed do not creep in. Differences will be resolved through mediation, an elder of the community often being asked to act in this role. Communal life and the attitude towards marriage and relationships means that there are rarely conflicts between lovers or would-be lovers – there is no sense of ownership of another person in any way. Even objects are not considered to be truly owned by an individual – they may be used by them for a time (whether a few minutes or a lifetime), but they will be used by somebody/something else at some point. This does not mean that Tetrarchii do not value items: a Tetrarchii may treasure an item they are currently using, and use it for a lifetime, but will not find it difficult to part with it when the time is right. Inter-tribal war is a very rare occurrence – it uses valuable resources and limits the survivability of both tribes, regardless of whether they win or lose. Groups and tribes that are openly hostile do not last long, as they lose all support and trade from surrounding communities, depriving them of the resources required for survival.

Tetrarchii have a deep respect for all forms of life, whether they are human, alien, flora or fauna. Although they hunt and eat the animals in their environment, they do so in the understanding that the animals would just as soon hunt and eat them – they have as much need to survive as each other.

Although practicality and survival are topmost in Tetrarchii philosophy, it is joy that pervades everyday life. Nobody is promised tomorrow, especially on Tetrarch, so why waste today being sad or ungrateful? There is no concept of “sin” or “virtue” among Tetrarchii, only what is joyful and what prevents survival. This has led some non-Tetrarchii to view them as hedonists (especially whilst off their homeworld), governed only by a need for happiness and pleasure, but any time spent in a commune on Tetrarch will demonstrate otherwise.

This peaceful attitude means that Tetrarchii are often reticent to join the Terran Sovereignty Army. Tetrarch has not had a military founding, and has no military organisations or training camps. However, the communal outlook of Tetrarchii may encourage some individuals, or even whole tribes, to join the TSA in order to help the wider community of the Terran Sovereignty to survive. Military service also pays well for a Tetrarchii, who will often send all their wages to their tribe.

Rites of Passage and Festivals

The holistic and community-driven outlook finds its way into all aspects of a Tetrarchii's life. At every important moment, they gather. At the birth of a child, others who are child-rearing at the same time will surround the mother and baby, helping with care, food, water and sanitation. Child-rearing is communal, much like caring for the elderly and sick.

Becoming an adult

There are no rites for becoming an adult. The concept of "adulthood" for a Tetrarchii is a vague one, as the concepts of ability, skill and responsibility are held with greater importance. Becoming more skilled and responsible is seen as a never ending path, so a single event to mark "adulthood" is pointless to a Tetrarchii. When a child begins to seek responsibility and has mastered many of the survival skills necessary for a desert planet, the community responds by offering opportunities for them to prove themselves as contributing members of the tribe. They may be given charge of their first scrap run, or given the responsibility of monitoring water. These new duties are always key to the survival of the community, demonstrating the faith that the community now has in the young person.

Marriage

Marriage rites are brief and informal, if they occur at all. To the practical Tetrarchii, marriage is an outdated custom that contributes little to survival and everyday life. Communal living means that even when Tetrarchii choose to love another person above others, they may not necessarily live exclusively together. They may refer to their exclusive partners as a mate or partner, and having many partners is common; it is an accepted part of Tetrarchii life to enjoy one's relationships and love for others freely. Just like with other areas of their life, Tetrarchii acknowledge that not everything is permanent and many things come to pass, and the ending of a relationship is not a dramatic event, nor one to break friendships and other ties in the community; it is merely accepted. Their relationships reflect their excellent communication skills and a deep respect for others, which they have been raised to cultivate.

Becoming an elder

If a Tetrarchii is lucky enough to survive into old age and reach a point where they are no longer able to contribute physically to the tribe's survival, they will indicate this in a simple, quiet action: the next time they are asked to go on a hunt or a scavenge, they will reply: "my heart has joined the thousand". This phrase is universally known among Tetrarchii, to whom it represents all those that have gone before them, numerous as the grains of sand in the desert. For Tetrarchii, "a thousand" is a number used to mean "innumerable" or "too many to count". Somebody speaking this phrase indicates that they accept they too will soon join the innumerable, and that they must acknowledge so by slowing down and contributing in a different way. Such elders are respected for their wisdom and skill, and are often given the duty of teaching children and passing on their knowledge. They will also be turned to when mediation or peacekeeping is required.

Death rites

Only funerary rites are cause for a large gathering and celebration of the tribe. In the case of a very long life, it is common for other tribes to travel great distances to attend the funerary rites, as Tetrarchii will often spend time with other tribes throughout their lives in order to learn new skills. In most cases, Tetrarchii undergo sky burial – the practice of leaving the

body exposed on a high peak or ledge away from the settlement and allowing it to be picked clean by wildlife and the weather. The bones left behind by these sky burials are often collected once they are clean and transformed into something useful or beautiful. It is quite common to see jewellery made of the bones of a Tetrarchii's beloved dead upon their person. They may also be used to create everyday objects such as combs, eating utensils, bowls, musical instruments, small gaming sets like knucklebones, dice, sewing needles and more.

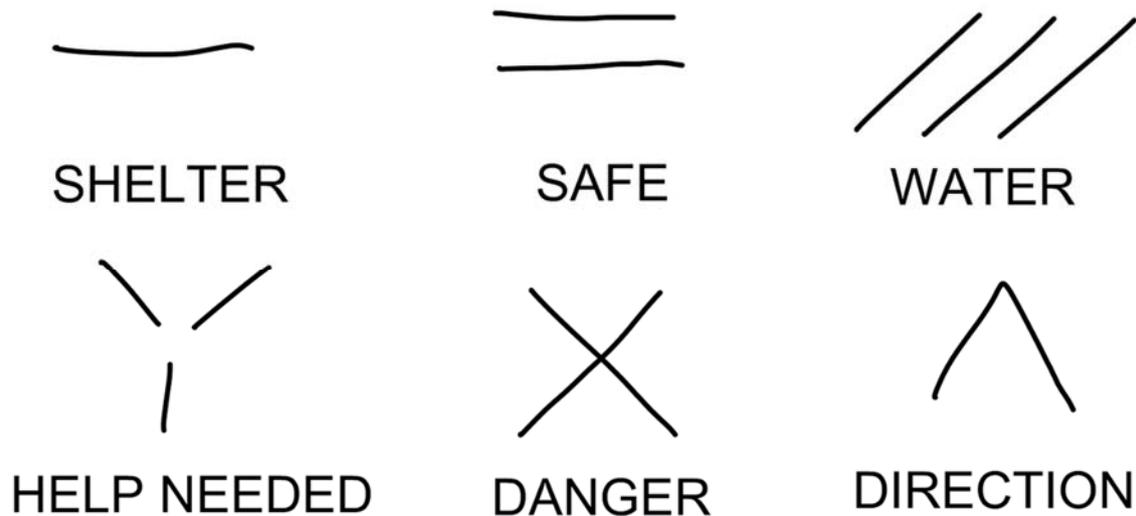
A key part of the pre-burial phase of a funeral is known as "The Taking". After death, the deceased's belongings will be left as they are, and each person who knew them will take something from them that they need. Over the course of a few days, the deceased's belongings will be gone, scattered among their tribe members and those they knew from other tribes, put into continued use beyond their death. In this way, what might appear to those of other planets as an everyday, mundane object will, to a Tetrarchii, not only be useful but also a treasured possession – the fork they eat with might have been crafted and used by a beloved tribe member long-passed; the broken hand-mirror used to signal across the salt flats may have once belonged to their mother.

The Gathering

Once a year, the tribes of a region (a "region" is defined by each individual based on how far they can/are willing to travel to attend) will gather and renew friendships, discuss skill trade and resource trade, share stories, information and successes, and celebrate. This is called "the Gathering" and may last for up to three weeks, with the host tribe being one that is able to offer enough space for all the tribes to set up temporary camps in the area. This is also the time when a hunt for the biggest, most dangerous beasts will take place, as the tribes have access to the most experienced hunters between them. Different regions will hold the Gathering at the same time. The Gathering is usually marked by great fires and dances at night, and it is common for young people to meet new mates by Gathering fires. Such liaisons often lead to young people travelling to spend time in their mate's tribe at the end of the Gathering. They may return to their original tribe, or remain with their mate's tribe. Informally, any large meeting of Tetrarchii, such as for funerary rites, is often called a Gathering, and some tribes refer to their regular meetings as Gatherings.

Language, Writing and Naming

Tetrarchii do not have their own spoken language or full writing system, all using the Terran standard and occasionally the language of their tribe's initial settlers in younger communities. They have a simple writing system designed around coded glyphs that are used to indicate important features of the landscape or act as warnings. These are carved into rocks or drawn in chalk, and signify things such as where water is close to the surface, nearby dangerous animal nests and distances between towns. There are a few symbols universally recognised by all Tetrarchii, but most tribes have their own variations for additional information.



Standard tally marks are used to indicate distance, where one mark represents 500 paces.

Much of Tetrarchii learning and communication is oral – writing implements and paper are scant on the planet. Children will be taught to write using the sand or soft, chalky rocks on hard rock faces, but the general level of written communication of a Tetrarchii is poor in comparison to that of people from other planets. Tetrarchii children are also taught from a young age how to communicate over great distances using systems such as light reflection and dit-dash.

Naming conventions are varied, but often inspired by the landscape. Many tribes will give children names that speak of qualities they would wish upon the children – Hope, Courage, Liberty, for example. Others may create names from syllables that sound “right”. Still others might be named after a creature of the night desert. Tribes usually give themselves names also, with many junker groups in the wasteland taking the name of the scrapped ship they shelter in. Other groups might name themselves for a specialised skill they have, while still others might take their name from their founding tribe member.

Appearance and Dress

Tetrarchii often wear full head coverings, such as tagelmusts, for protection from the sun, sand, dust and wind. Any clothing they wear is practical and aids in their survival, leaving little to none of their skin exposed. A great number of layers are utilised to allow them to easily transition between the heat of the day and the cold of the shade and the night. Eye protection is ubiquitous, as it keeps sand and UV rays out of the eyes. Apart from this, the clothing of Tetrarchii varies greatly. They use what is available to them, wrapping the lower parts of the legs and arms to keep sand out of trousers, shirts and boots, and recycling what they can from scrapyards and prey. As different tribes have access to different resources, what they wear also differs to reflect this, though hard-wearing materials such as leather are preferred. Those who may travel from the group, such as hunters or traders, often have a roughly unified item of clothing to aid with identification, especially if they could be mistaken as a wild creature to other hunters. Clothing is usually well worn, but also well looked after, as items are fixed frequently to prolong their lifespan.

Unlike a great number of other humans in the Terran Sovereignty, for Tetrarchii clothing and appearance has no relation to status or wealth. Status is not a concept easily understood by Tetrarchii, who are apathetic to authority, taking and sharing responsibility as needed by the whole. To inhabitants of neighbouring colonies, the Tetrarchii look unkempt and dirty; many of them prefer to shave their hair completely or grow it into dreadlocks to avoid having to maintain it in their environment.

However, their clothing does often denote their specialised skills and profession. Hunters will don desert camouflage, covered in hidden bags, nets and other handy items for killing, harvesting and dragging things back home. Salvagers are similar, but have fewer loose clothes and less camouflage, alongside lighter armour that is better suited for climbing. Wayfinders will often try to salvage lenses and scanners from pilot's gear and ship's navigation equipment, creating specialised goggles or helmets to help them traverse the ever-changing dunes.

Tae'go on Tetrarch

The tae'go have played an important role in developing the culture of Tetrarch, and as such their customs do not greatly differ from the other species living there. Despite their differences, tae'go and humans learnt to co-habit the planet very quickly, and have found that their unique skill sets and physical differences complement each other and increase survivability in the harsh environment. Teams of tae'go and humans often form scavenging parties together, taking it in turns to protect each other during their more vulnerable moments.

Originating from a much warmer planet than Terra, tae'go have found it easier to adjust to Tetrarch's environment than other races. Some require very little protection from the sands, though the vast range of appearances of the species mean that most still need to dress similarly to humans in order to protect against UV rays. They are able to withstand the heat of the day for much longer periods than others, but the harsh drop in temperatures at night can be especially deadly for them, making them sluggish and tired, and easy prey for the natural predators on the planet. For those in the know, it's not uncommon to find heated tae'go night shelters hidden beneath the sand in the depths of the deserts, so that unlucky wanderers have bolt holes if they misjudge their journeys or are travelling large distances. The tae'go on Tetrarch have cultivated their survival instincts greatly, barely thinking before burying themselves in the sand to wait out the cold nights, or eating live insects and uncooked carcasses in a pinch.

The human inhabitants of Tetrarch and the tae'go co-exist peacefully and share their lives closely. Most settlements have equal numbers of these two races, and they maximise their natural abilities. Where the tae'go are able to move and work more easily in the height of the midday heat, humans are better suited to nocturnal activity. As such, the two will care for each other in shifts, coming together at liminal times such as dawn and dusk. The close relationship between the two races has led to the tae'go passing on many of their survival skills to the Tetrarchii, who quickly adopted their methods of surviving sun and sand. It is also not unknown for romantic relationships to be formed between members of both races, and these unions, while childless, are given equal respect.

Other Races on Tetrarch

The mascen were first brought to the planet as slave labour in the late 5100s by MAVAE to restart the mining industry. After mascen slavery was outlawed, many remained on the planet by choice, with both big'uns and little'uns finding work in the scrap collecting industry.

Myr'na pilgrims first began visiting the planet in 5845, attracted by its remote nature and vast, empty landscapes. There are very few permanent myr'na inhabitants on Tetrarch, however, as the harsh climate does not suit them. Those that do reside are often warriors, using the planet as a place of exile and reflection.

In their hundreds of years of contact with the Terran Sovereignty, the vrede have shown little interest in the planet, considering it primitive and lacking in potential. To see a vrede on the planet's surface is a rare sight.

4. Civics

Leadership and Politics

There is no true local government on Tetrarch, with disputes usually settled peacefully between the affected parties. Every claim to absolute leadership of the planet in the past has failed, which may have led to strain between different communities were it not for the Tetrarchii's exceptional communication abilities. Each settlement draws from those in their community with the most experience in a field in order to make an informed decision, with the whole group voting to agree on a course of action. Tribes and communities do have leaders, though this is purely for the sake of organisation. The number of leaders depends on the size of the tribe, and they are chosen for their excellent communication, organisation and management of people. They hold no higher standing than anyone else, their votes hold no greater sway, and it is not their role to dictate what should be done; they organise public meetings and votes, inspire those around them and ensure that messages and updates are communicated to everyone in the tribe.

Were it not for Tetrarch's radio and satellite relay system and the population's communication skills, interplanetary politics would be very difficult for the planet. A central organisation known as the United Peoples of Tetrarch is based in Kop Nevus, dedicated to presenting a singular voice to the rest of the Segovax cluster. Representatives from each settlement take it in turns to shoulder the responsibility of running the planet's government, working in groups of individuals from multiple settlements and rotating out when their period of duty is finished. It can be a long journey for some, but is offered to all in order to maintain fair representation and prevent a set planetary leadership from forming. For trade and small decisions, local delegations are deemed capable enough to resolve matters on their own, but large decisions must be made through votes from the entire council. Satellite relay communications are sent to as many settlements as possible for urgent decisions, whilst physical meetings are organised at set points in the year at one of the larger permanent cities when response times are not as important. A rule of trust expects each tribe to have a single voting representative but, with no system to enforce this, many send as many as they can spare, each in the guise of being from a different tribe. Items are discussed and voted on by everyone present. These meetings also allow for statistics about tribes to be taken, such as population, location and resources available to them.

Crime and Punishment

If a community member harms another or steals from them, the fault is also accepted by the community as a failure of the whole; they try to find where they have failed the individual and what can be done to address this failure in the future as opposed to punishing them. Any functioning and contributing member of the community will be cared for and guided back to the right path. Only in extreme circumstances, when an individual actively ignores guidance and refuses to right their wrongs, and any rehabilitation available in the tribe fails, will a community consider exiling a repeat offender. Exile in such a hostile landscape is often tantamount to a death sentence; however, when all other options have been exhausted, the community needs to consider whether the resources being spent on somebody beyond help would be more use elsewhere.

Education

There are few formal centres of learning on the planet, and those that do exist are temporary, holding limited seminars at set points each year to minimise resource expenditure. Other than this, education is almost entirely inter-tribal. Education of children is usually a duty given to the elders of a tribe, who are considered to have more wisdom, skill and knowledge than anybody else through virtue of having survived the longest. Anyone particularly skilled in an area may also be asked to take on students. Practical survival skills will be learned naturally through everyday exposure to them in the tribe.

If an individual or group wishes to learn a new skill that their tribe does not currently have, they will seek out a tribe that does. Some skills require resources or time that a tribe cannot expend on someone from a different community who will leave once they are done, so student exchanges are commonplace, ensuring both tribes grow as a result. Skills and knowledge are often used as commodities in trade much like water and scrap material.

Although the money of the Terran Sovereignty has little use among the tribes on Tetrarch, some communities attempt to save up enough money to send one of their members to another planet's university in order to learn vital skills such as advanced medicine, which cannot be so easily developed on the desert planet. Luckily, recent appeals by the United Peoples of Tetrarch to the Terran Sovereignty have resulted in a multitude of scholarship places being provided to citizens of the planet, allowing chosen Tetrarchii to become students at high-level establishments, such as those on Cantiacorum. Some use this to bring updated knowledge back to their planet to spread to the tribes, while others use it as a stepping stone to enter well-paid off-world jobs or progress quickly in the military and send their increased wages home. Despite these scholarships being available for all subjects, it is exceptionally rare for a Tetrarchii to be found studying something like politics or philosophy. What use is there in spending years studying something that will not directly help their tribe survive in the desert?

Technology

Tetrarchii technology is re-used, recycled and upcycled; it is certain that any item of technology was something else before. Engineering skills are highly valued in all communities, as their survival is largely dependent on building and maintaining technology. Tetrarch produces little new technology of its own, as it is all either repaired or built from scrap that is dumped on the planet. The technology level of individual tribes is highly dependent on the scrap they are able to salvage. Some communities, for instance, have medical facilities that are surprisingly well equipped, using med-bay technology they have salvaged from advanced but badly battle-damaged warships.

The most common piece of tech is the dehumidifier. While the design and method of these vary from tribe to tribe, they all have the ability to draw water from what little moisture exists in the air. Wasting of water is avoided at every turn, with all waste fluids being processed to remove any moisture in it. Water is also occasionally imported from off planet during times of extreme shortage.

Another highly prized piece of technology is a satellite communicator. During the mining boom, a network of communication satellites were put into orbit around the planet and towers erected across the surface. Being hundreds of years old, many of these satellites have failed, creating communication black-spots, yet they are still the fastest and safest way to communicate across the planet and the only way to communicate with other planets.

With no absence of sun, solar power is the source of nearly all electrical energy on Tetrarch. Solar panels are one of the most valuable items available to the Tetrarchii, as new ones are only available if they are imported. Any liquid fuels produced on the planet are used primarily for export. Geothermal energy, while very easy to tap into, is used with great trepidation, as all are well aware of the horror caused by the Kolvaran Disaster. Most Tetrarchii are unwilling to face the wrath of the planet when their solar energy harvesting is efficient enough to cover their needs.

The terrain of Tetrarch makes travel difficult but not impossible. The most common form of transport is the iterdon, a large herd-living quadruped that was domesticated in the early days of the planet's founding. These creatures are an ideal way to cross the dunes and sand-covered parts of the planet. Motorised land vehicles are rare on Tetrarch, and those that do exist are usually solar-powered rather than using chemical fuels. However, these vehicles are vital for crossing the more dangerous parts of Tetrarch that even iterdons refuse to go near, such as The Sea of Shards, and are far quicker at crossing sturdier ground such as salt flats. It is not unheard of for some tribes to use solar-powered light aircraft, which are the fastest way for Tetrarchii to travel, although pilots need to be exceptionally careful where they take-off and land. A far more common sight are the enormous land-yachts, flotillas of which can be seen gliding across the seas of dunes on ski-like runners and across the salt flats on sturdy wheels. Every vessel is unique, some cannibalised from the hulls of dropships and others skilfully constructed from the bones of animals.

Cities, Settlements and Nomadic Life

As survival is uncertain on this planet, the Tetrarchii follow the rule of safety in numbers: being alone in the desert is an almost certain road to death. As such, they often live in small yet close-knit communes. The hostile nature of tetrarch, with its scorching hot days, biting cold nights and lethal sandstorms, means a safe place of refuge is vital for survival, and there are no shortage of unique places that many call home.

During the initial founding of Tetrarch, a few small, prefabricated cities were built, though very few of these have survived. The largest of these is the city of Solutocco (sol-uh-OH-co), nestled in the middle of the crescent-shaped chain of mountains called Tetrarch's Embrace. With many of the original buildings being built on and around by settlers, this multi-tiered city hugs the rocky face of the mountains and looks out upon one of the planet's largest salt flats. The city is home to about 12,000 permanent inhabitants and is a hub for trade across the planet. During peak trading times, the number of people in the city may increase to eight times this number.

Kop Nevus was the first recorded settlement on Tetrarch, and it still stands today as the most famous salvage trading port on the planet and the central interplanetary point of contact. It is located near Solutocco, in the centre of the salt flat surrounded by the Embrace, and acts as the planet's primary spaceport with a multitude of landing platforms constructed during the city's initial founding. The slightly smaller city is built from the hulls of many abandoned ships, its small districts named after them. With an estimated 8,000 permanent citizens, it is the second largest settlement on the planet. Most off-world imports arrive here, such as water from comet farming ships and nearby planets, specialist equipment and a wide range of foods.

One of the only still-functioning remnants from the age of Dupois-Martinez's mining industry is a large space station called Platform 0, situated in low orbit north of the Iron Band. With just over 600 permanent citizens and a capacity for ten times that, the Dupois-Martinez Station functions as an important refuelling point, secondary spaceport for large ships that would not survive the trip to the surface and temporary stop when electrical storms plague

the atmosphere. On occasion, off-world delegates will stop here to discuss matters with Tetrarchii representatives instead of journeying to Kop Nevus, not willing to risk the descent to the surface.

Starship hulls are common locations for settlements, with many tribes choosing to adopt their names from them (if they are still legible). Outside of the few surviving prefabricated cities, decommissioned carrier ships are some of the more densely populated areas of Tetrarch, but even they may only be home to a few hundred people.

Due to the hostile environment of the planet, Tetrarchii have learned to take advantage of the protection that can be found beneath the surface, such as natural caves or inside mesas hollowed out over generations. Some tribes also make use of abandoned mining points, with their above-ground structures and subterranean tunnels providing extensive homes. However, such settlements are not without their own dangers. Rocky outcrops and caves are a common location for nests and dens of some of the nastier wildlife that also seek refuge from the heat of the midday sun. Parts of Tetrarch are also susceptible to earthquake activity, limiting the number of underground dwellings that are safe to inhabit.

As well as being found in settled tribes, Tetrarchii often form nomadic groups. They survive as traders (buying/selling/swapping/subcontracting between the settled groups and each other) and as guides, navigating across the unforgiving landscape. They live in tents or in the vehicles they travel on. When caught in a sandstorm, tae'go are quite happy to bury themselves under the sand to rest. Other species must don dust-proof clothing and wait it out – a hellish experience, as the howling storms can take days to pass.

Life for nomadic tribes is even harder than for those in settled communities, as they have a mentality of owning no more than you can carry. As guides they are incredibly secretive of the routes they use for travel, for if they became common knowledge they would no longer have something of value to trade. Knowledge and skills are of great importance to Tetrarch's nomadic tribes, as they weigh nothing yet can still be traded.

Though uncommon, some larger tribes have advanced beyond mere scrap collecting. By repairing and cannibalising the immensely powerful engines of some dumped starships, forges have been made capable of melting down even the most resilient metals. These tribes often have deals with off-planet groups that buy up retired craft and de-orbit them onto the planet, where they are stripped by the Tetrarchii. The recycled metal is then traded back to the off-planet group.

The Tetrarchii have numerous assets in orbit around the planet. As such, some tribes are entirely space-faring, spending their lives travelling through the junk that resides there. Some of these space-farers locate tech and strip it of all delicate and valuable remains before deorbiting the remaining hull. Others travel in massive mobile repair barges that can salvage vessels and attempt to repair them in order to provide spacecraft for the planet. Comets that pass the planet are also routinely captured and the water in them harvested. It is through these tribes that Tetrarch is able to retain its status as a space-faring planet.

The space-faring Tetrarchii consider themselves an extension of the tribes they originated from and take great pride in their planetary heritage. Living in space does not come without its struggles, however: a faulty life-support system or a miscalculated manoeuvre can wipe out a ship in seconds.

There are no official records of population numbers on Tetrarch, but it is estimated that it could range between 10 million and 20 million. Tetrarchii are the people that fly under the radar and fall between the gaps.

5. Ecology and Geography

Geography

The most notable feature of Tetrarch's geography is its plate tectonics. This makes areas of the planet prone to earthquakes, which, with no oceans to dampen them, can last for hours. It is not uncommon for huge rifts to open up in the desert as a result of tectonic activity. Other areas of the planet are highly volcanic. The deserts surrounding these volcanic regions are made of highly fertile black sands pockmarked with lethal acid lakes and geysers. The larger plates hold the largest deserts, making settlements in these areas less prone to the dangers along the fault lines. Many of the oldest tribes can be found in these areas.

Tetrarch's temperature varies from blisteringly hot during the day to bitterly cold at night. Sandstorms are the most common event to occur on the planet, varying from a few minutes to days in length. During these storms, wind speeds of hundreds of kilometres per hour ravage the landscape, sand-blasting anything out in the open and burying what is left under tonnes of sand. In the dune-covered parts of the desert, the entire landscape can shift overnight. The mountain regions do not offer much escape, as the storms can whip up cyclones of dust and sand kilometres high.

Since its colonisation, no rainfall has been recorded on Tetrarch. However, occasionally very dense clouds of fog form from aquifers of water deep underground, which stretch for kilometres and appear out of nowhere half a dozen times a year, slowly drifting on the desert breeze until the sun's heat burns them away. It is these clouds of fog that sustain life on the planet. Despite its life-giving properties, Tetrarchii are wary of this fog, as it brings with it its own dangers: many predators hunt unsuspecting prey as they frolic in the abundance of moisture.

Very rarely, atmospheric electrical storm systems create a field of electromagnetic disruption, ranging from minor static interference on the radio to full-blown blackouts of anything that runs on electricity. The largest of these storms only form once or twice a decade, but when they occur, entering or leaving the affected region of the planet via spacecraft becomes almost impossible. These storms occasionally combine with the fogs, creating an especially deadly weather system.

Landscape

The "Tetra" in Tetrarch's name is a word from an ancient Terran number system meaning "four" and refers to the four most notable environments of the planet: the sands, the salt flats, the volcanoes and its orbit.

Over half of the landscape of Tetrarch is covered in rolling sand dunes with the occasional rocky outcrop. These rocky outcrops provide shelter, but most are avoided by the Tetrarchii as they are often home to the more aggressive creatures attracted to the water that condenses on them and the shade they provide from the blistering sun. The sands in the more earthquake-prone areas have their own dangers, including pockets of lethal quicksand and deep chasms. Although much of the landscape has been cleared of the scrap dumped in the early days of the colonies, in some of the more arid deserts the skeletons of old ships, vehicles and machines can still be seen littering the barren places.

The presence of massive, low-lying salt flats indicates that Tetrarch may have once had a significant amount of surface water. These flats are popular areas on which to build more

permanent settlements, away from the dangers of the shifting dunes and active volcanoes. Furthermore, they are easily accessible by land-yacht.

Other notable environments include areas of intense volcanic activity, characterised by their pitch-black sands and towering volcanoes. These volcanoes are some of the highest points on the planet. The volcanic activity deposits a great deal of ash, and this fertile substance, combined with aquifers, has led to the creation of a few oases, protected and cared for by the Tetrarchii.

Though incredibly rare, Tetrarch has some fleeting surface water, often forming at the bottom of ravines. The discovery of such a water source is a moment of great elation for a tribe, though accessing the water is normally very difficult, as hostile creatures from miles around will be attracted to it as well. Nevertheless, messages will be sent to neighbouring tribes and communes to alert them of the source, and a Gathering often takes place nearby, offering an opportunity for trade.

The **Sea of Shards** is the most visually stunning location on the surface of Tetrarch. Also known as the Lucid Plain or the Sea of Light, this expanse of once heavily mined desert was turned to glass during the Kolvaran Disaster. A thick layer of fractured glass several metres thick stretches from horizon to horizon. On the surface it has been polished smooth by the raging sandstorms, but the chasms and rifts throughout it are full of sharp and jagged shards. When the light shines on it, its glare can be seen from space. It is a mystical place for many Tetrarchii and particularly dangerous to cross.

Tetrarch's Embrace is a chain of mountains and rocky outcrops that stretches in a semi-circular crescent around one of the planet's largest salt flats. This natural wall has halted the advance of the desert sands to the west for millennia and holds Tetrarch's largest permanent settlements (the cities of Solutocco and Kop Nevus). A distinctive formation clearly visible from orbit, the Embrace enabled initial colonisation parties to be easily located on the surface even when atmospheric storms plagued navigation systems.

Stretching 500km north and south of the equator, the **Iron Band** was established by the United Peoples of Tetrarch as a safe zone for the de-orbiting of especially large scrap items. The size of some of the ship hulls dropped onto the planet is colossal, and to see one tearing red-hot through the atmosphere is an astonishing sight. The magnitude of impact of these objects when they hit the ground is comparable to that of a meteorite, so great care is taken to not harm life on the planet. These hulls are carefully brought into an orbit that follows the Iron Band, where they are de-orbited at a very shallow angle. This gives them plenty of time to slow in the atmosphere, ensuring that they strike the planet without causing too much destruction. Upon impacting the planet it is not uncommon for them to scrape a new valley kilometres long into the surface, and as such the equator is covered in long, parallel scars that are visible from space.

Arguably the most dangerous location on Tetrarch is fondly nicknamed the **Miserlands**. An unstable region littered with smouldering craters, this area has the highest density of active volcanoes on the planet. Lagoons of boiling acid seethe in the pitch-black ground like grotesque sores between towering rock formations, ensuring that very few creatures dare enter the region.

Moons

High above the surface, Tetrarch's orbit is littered with ship debris and unwanted junk, as well as its four moons.

Nascent, the planet's largest moon, was the first point of colonisation whilst the planet's surface was still being studied remotely. It is covered in abandoned mines and has been largely stripped of valuable resources. **Tyke**, the closest moon to the surface and likely Tetrarch's first major orbital object, has been stretched and warped by the planet's tidal forces over millennia, being partially responsible for the dust ring surrounding the planet. Littered with collision craters, many an asteroid has met its end on Tyke's surface, shattered then left to drift around Tetrarch. **Rondure** is early in its life and covered entirely by an ocean of magma, not yet cool enough to form a crust. **Sheelal** is the smallest and furthest from the planet, a captured asteroid with its path forever diverted by Tetrarch's gravity.

Natural Resources

Tetrarch has an abundance of natural resources, the most well-known being its silica-rich sand and scrap metal. The silicon the planet is so famous for is not produced by the Tetrarchii, as the process requires technology more sophisticated than the planet can provide. Instead, the silica-rich sand is excavated and deposited at agreed pick-up points, where it is collected by dropships from mining companies in exchange for supplies and, if the tribe desires, money. The material begins its refinement in orbit, with waste sand ejected into the atmosphere to fall back to the planet. Silica Solutions is the only company since the Kolvaran Disaster to maintain silica-harvesting plants on the surface, which rest on stilts and raised platforms above the dunes, the sands moving like seas below them. The most common buyers of Tetrarchii exports are from Marazion V.

While some traditional mining still occurs, the significant tectonic activity on the planet pushes the mineral wealth of Tetrarch to the surface. Some active volcanoes eject enormous lumps of mineral-rich rock high into the sky. Many tribes have specialised in tracking down these rocks in order to harvest the materials from them, which includes diamond, bauxite and other precious metals like copper, nickel and gold. This material is deposited at such a frequency, and the Tetrarchii have become so adept at getting hold of it, that the planet's exports of these can almost compete with the mines of more technologically advanced worlds.

Fauna and Flora

It's only when the thick clouds of fog silently drift across the desert that Tetrarch truly comes alive. Burrowed plants, normally tough as stone, awake from dormancy, unfurling sponge-like leaves to suck in as much moisture as possible and blow clouds of seeds into the air. The sands simmer with the sounds of thousands of insects and tiny reptiles waking to feast on these seeds and exposed plants. Cat-sized, crab-like creatures emerge, grabbing handfuls of insects with their many spindly arms. Scaly, beaked monsters the size of wolves slink from caves to hunt in packs. Snakes as big as dropships erupt from the ground to swallow iterdons whole.

Or at least, that's what the Elders swear they've seen...

For much of the time, the majority of Tetrarch's ecosystem remains dormant, buried beneath the sands. It's only with the arrival of fog banks that the food chain awakens, from the lowest of plants and herbivores to the most vicious apex carnivores. Glimpsed only through thick fog with petrified eyes, the exact nature of most wildlife on Tetrarch is rumour at best. When the fog passes by or evaporates, it's as if nothing was ever there. As such, Tetrarchii speak in hushed tones of what they have seen in the fog.

Despite this, some species survive the harsh climate of Tetrarch without reliance on the fog banks, and are therefore well-known to the Tetrarchii.

Libellom

(Lib-ell-um) (plr. libellom)

A night-blooming vegetation that absorbs moisture from the air. During the day, they furl up into almost unbreakable rock-like capsules, preventing those who might want to access their water from doing so. Tetrarchii must brave the other nocturnal creatures and the freezing night air if they want to get hold of it, and often cultivate small farms of the plant for easy harvesting.

Bibotum

(Bee-boh-tum) (plr. bibotum)

These fungi appear as tall (2–4 metre) obelisk-like pillars with the texture of pumice stone. The thousands of tiny holes that cover them allow for the absorption of moisture from fog. They can be smashed open to access the water within; doing so kills the fungus but also allows for the dispersion of its spores.

Iterdon

(ih-tuh-don) (plr. iterdon)

Large, leathery-skinned quadrupeds that live in herds. They are the most common form of transport on the planet and were domesticated early in Tetrarch's history. Like many species on Tetrarch, iterdon have the capacity to store large amounts of water. Young iterdons are cared for by the younger members of Tetrarchii tribes, allowing a strong bond to form between them. The loyalty of a well-raised iterdon is fierce and unwavering. Iterdons are omnivorous and are happy to eat whatever is given to them.

Blighter

(plr. blighters)

Blighters are venomous, multi-limbed insectoids the size of dogs that roam in packs. They are one of the few predators that don't just appear in the fog but also actively hunt their territory. Tribes avoid settling near the dwellings of these creatures and utilise a pungent mixture created from the slime that is sometimes found after a fog passes to ward an area from them. It is thought that this slime must be produced by the blighter's natural predator.

Tribes have no choice but to hunt down blighter nests should they spring up nearby, as they pose a very real threat to people.

Choot

(plr. choots)

Choots are large, three-legged, flightless bird-like animals covered in long, coarse hair. Flocks of these creatures travel together, exploring the bottom of chasms and ravines in search of moisture. Their three legs allow them to effortlessly scale near-vertical surfaces and their long hair protects them against the frigid temperatures of the desert nights. They are dim-witted creatures, and the Tetrarchii take great delight in riding them in races.

6. Military

Tetrarch does not have its own military, and no planetary defence force. It currently has no need of one, as all attempts to invade the planet have been met with failure. The Tetrarchii need to do very little to defend themselves: the hostile conditions, sandstorms and wildlife destroy invading armies efficiently enough.

Any Tetrarchii wishing to join the military must journey to the city of Kop Nevus. Every year, a TSA carrier ship lands there to recruit new soldiers and officers, as well as to transport those who have received a scholarship. The opportunities for learning skills such as advanced engineering and medicine are few and far between on the planet, and as these skills are taught in military academies and regimental apprenticeships, many more Tetrarchii have started taking up military service.

Some Tetrarchii wish for more than the hard living conditions on the planet and cannot afford any other way off the planet, or yearn to explore a wider world beyond the scrapyards. Others simply wish to help prevent Tetrarch from being the next major point of invasion if Zennor falls. Unsurprisingly, many sign up just to send their wages back to their communes so they can improve their lives by purchasing off-world goods.

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