

System Data: Dixon's Star¹

Spectral Type: F6

Color: Yellow-White

Number of Planets: 2

Habitable Planets: Laco (Dixon II)

Trade Routes

- Truane's Star – Distance: 5 light years
- Prenglar – Distance: 5 light years

Dixon's Star Description

A yellow-white, main sequence star, Dixon's Star has two worlds – the Jovian planet called Arla (Dixon I) and Laco (Dixon II).

Arla (Dixon I). Type: Jovian Planet. Orbital Radius: 0.58 AU, Period: 0.3 GST years, Satellites: planetary rings, 42 small moons, 2 large moons. This is a large gas giant is the first planet in the Dixon's Star system and has attracted a variety of space miners and gas refiners. Auric Mining & Construction (AuriCon), a medium-size independent corporation, is one of the companies competing here. Typically corporate security ships "keep the peace" but during Laco's War there were several clashes between Pan Galactic, Streel and other ships.

Laco (Dixon II). A small, terrestrial world with a breathable atmosphere, Laco is described further on.

Asteroids and Comets. Dixon's Star does not have an asteroid belt, but like any star system, it has its share of flying rocks the size of small moons and comets. The lack of an asteroid belt makes it harder for space miners, so any "rock" that's found with a significant amount of mineable minerals is very valuable indeed.

One such asteroid is Plutarch which orbits Dixon's star at about a distance of 3.5 AU. Unfortunately,

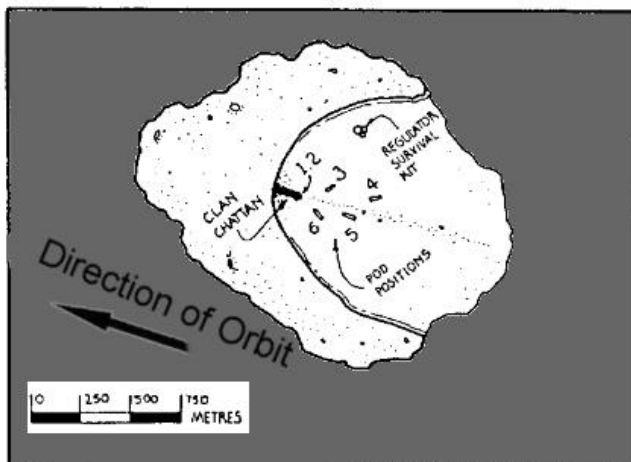
Plutarch's orbit was not properly charted, which led to the unfortunate incident when the UPRS Clan Chattan, an East Indianman freighter, crashed into it while decelerating out of the Void.²

Most asteroids in the system do not have names, but rather an alpha-numeric designation such as DSA-22P-04, which is the official name for Plutarch. The "DS" stands for Dixon's Star, the "A" is for asteroid (comets receive a "C" designation), "22P" is for the year 22 PF and "04" is that it was the fourth asteroid successfully charted for that year.

Some other major asteroids in the system include: Lamprias, a minor planetoid that crosses Laco's track as it follows its own highly elliptical orbit from 2.5 to 8 AUs;



Plutarch (DSA-22P-04)



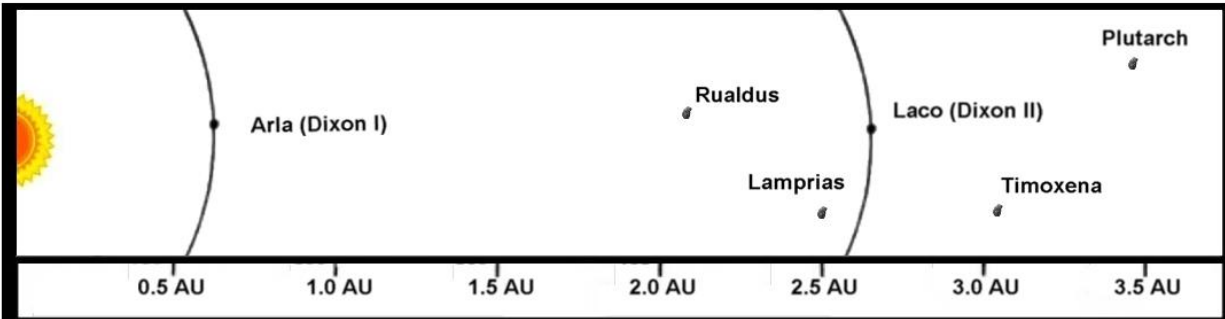
¹ This system and planetary brief is highly based on the story "Digging in the Dust of Laco," by Tom Verreault (jedion357) in Frontier Explorer issue 2. Other information was derived from David "Zeb" Cook's story, "Encounters," from Polyhedron magazine, issue 9; a modified history based on Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space, Vol. 1, by Kim Eastland, the author's own contributions and other discussion threads on starfrontiers.us.

² Brunton, Mike. "On the Rocks," Imagine magazine, September 1984.

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Timoxena, an asteroid rich in platinum that Streel claimed that orbits at about 3.1 AU; and Rualdus, another minor planetoid at 2.2 AU which the Pan-Galactic Corporation laid claim to in 44 PF but has since mined out all the valuable ore.

Dixon's Star System Display



Brief System History

The Dixon's Star system was discovered by a Human exploration ship under the command of Kenyatta Dixon some 220 years prior to the formation of the United Planetary Federation (UPF). Its one terrestrial world, Laco, was only sparsely populated until one hundred years afterwards due to its extremely harsh conditions. Many in the Frontier consider Laco to be a mere outpost world, a pit stop along the Prenglar/Truane's Star travel route.³

During the Sathar War, refugees fled from Truane's Star, reach Dixon's Star on their way to Prenglar but instead became trapped on Laco. The system was the site of many skirmishes between Sathar raiders and relief missions to the refugees.

After the war, most of the surviving refugees left either to return home. As Truane's Star rebuilt itself and Streel became a mega-corporation, the star route through Dixon's Star became more and more heavily traveled, leading to further growth on Laco.

As of 50 FY:

Pirates have operated throughout the system, forcing the UPF Spacefleet, Star Law and the militias from Truane's Star and Prenglar to conduct regular escort patrols. Known pirate groups include the Star Devil and Lucky Devil; their criminal activities have attracted Star Law's attention.

Exacerbating the pirate situation, the outbreak of fighting between Pan-Galactic and Streel corporation security forces – known as Laco's War – has made layovers at Dixon's Star even more unpleasant. Most freighters and star liners, especially those chartered by PGC and Streel, tend to stick close to the neutral forces, and avoid stopping at Laco or its rudimentary space station.



Since the system lacks a militia, corporate security forces from the mega-corporations and smaller companies barely keep the peace, especially when PGC and Streel ships clash in the system.

³ Rose, Richard (Shadow Shack). "Planetary Brief: Dixon's Star, Laco," Star Frontiersman Magazine #10, pp. 45-46.

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As of 111 FY:

Decades after the Second Sathar War and the end of Laco's War, Dixon's Star remains an important way station along the only properly charted star route connecting the heart of the United Planetary Federation to the Rim Coalition. Laco was organized sufficiently to have a seat on the UPF Council of Worlds and fields a very small militia fleet of a half dozen fighters supported by other aging vessels that are relics of the mid-70s FY.

After years of lobbying by the mega-corporations and the governments of Truane's Star and the Rim Coalition, the Spacefleet has near continuous presence in the system consisting of a small assault carrier with four fighters and a frigate.



Illustration from Imagine magazine, September 1984

Planetary Brief

Laco

Moons: One – Saucer

Atmosphere: 56% nitrogen, 24% oxygen, 1% argon, 16% carbon dioxide

Climate: Desert/Garden

Gravity: 1.4

Orbit Range: 2.58 AU

Diameter: 16,154 kilometers

Inclination: 2 degrees

Length of Day: 59 hours, 52 minutes GST

Length of Year: 75.5 local days (about 2.93 Laco years equals one GST year)

Average Surface Temp: 39 degrees Celsius, Minimum: -10 C, Maximum: 74 C

Native Life: No sentient native life

Population: 50 FY: Outpost (disputed), Approx. 10,000; 79% Human, 12% Yazarian, 5% Dralasite, 4% Vrusk

111 FY: Moderate, Approx. 200,000; 68% Human, 10% Yazarian, 9% Vrusk, 8% Dralasite, 5% Other (Gorlian, Ul-mor, Saurian, Humma, Ifshnit, Osakar, S'sessu)

Trade: 50 FY: Officially, mining, unofficially antiquity smuggling

.111 FY: Industrial



Planet Description:

A dry, wind-swept planet, Laco is extremely inhospitable. Inhabitants often contend with great dust storms during the long, dry days. The minimal amount of animal life lives around the edges of small shallow polar seas. Poor in resources, the only feature of interest is a huge deserted alien city built long past by a race known as the Tetrarchs.

Laco's axis is nearly perpendicular to its orbit; the surface receives an equal amount of sunlight year round (and lots of it thanks to a slow rotation). The planet doesn't have extreme seasons – though it is considered “High Heat” when it approaches its closest orbit to Dixon's Star and “Low Heat” when it is at its farthest point.

Its polar regions are cooler and offer colonists a more congenial lifestyle. Aside from the two polar seas, the world's typical landscape is sand and rock separated by mountain ranges and smaller outcroppings of rock.

Desert plant life grows abundantly closer to the polar regions, but becomes virtually nonexistent near the equator except in some mountain crevices. Despite the wide separation of the poles, animal and plant life appear to have evolved similarly – possibly indicating that the planet's climate used to be far less harsh, allowing for easier migration.

In fact, the planet is dotted with numerous giant river canyons, indicating that the planet had a lush environment eons ago. Many of these ravines are now devoid of water, but some contain small lakes and ponds that no longer drain out to sea. A few canyons still have active streams still running down their length.

Canyons are typically riddled with caves and cavern complexes radiating out from the course. Some have slot canyons instead of caves radiating away from the main rift course where water is more common. The slot canyons provide niches for wildlife to survive. The caves and slot canyons offer travelers a degree of protection from dust storms and dust devils.

The polar seas – Innara in the north and Heston to the south pole – are home to many of Laco's native life. The shorelines are often choked with an algae-like plant while eels lurk in the depths. Near the seas and stretching out to the equator are low lying depressions and vast salt flats that compete with the deserts. The salt flats offer naturally smooth, emergency landing fields.

The low plains act as a buffer between the seas and the desert, offer only sparse clumps of short grass mats with deep roots running dozens of meters deep to tap the aquifers. Dust storms and dust devils are common occurrences on the plains. Technically this region is also a desert but the name “plains” stuck with the locals and it persists.

Laco's hilly regions around the poles provide greater opportunity for the deep-rooted mat grass to colonize hollows and depressions. The hills also offer some protection from the planet's severe weather.

The planet's only moon is called Saucer, because it is roughly saucer shaped. About one-fifth the size of Laco, Saucer is riddled with old mines from the Tetrarch Societies era.

Due to the planet's somewhat thin atmosphere, a number of meteorites strike the ground, rather than



Artwork originally from Polyhedron Issue 9

burning up. Some of these meteorites are actually the remains of ships destroyed during the Sathar War and the ongoing Corporate War.

Other Laco's oddities include the planet's fluctuating magnetic field, suddenly appearing dust devils or sand storms, creatures with purported psionic powers and even reports of the dead walking.

Settlement History

Discovered soon after first contact with the Yazarians, Laco's rather unpleasant environment deterred any initial settlement or exploration. It remained a mere outpost world until the Tetrarch ruins were found. Then it attracted great curiosity from archeologists, other scientists and fortune seekers.

The Laco Development Corporation was organized in 77 PF to promote colonization of the planet with offices at Point Glass, the world's major community in the south and Laconia, the major settlement in the north. At first, both settlements rivaled each other for influence, though Point Glass would become the star system's de facto capital.

Point Glass has the only public star port capable of handling hull size five ships and can conduct overhauls. Located along the banks of the Heston Sea, it is surrounded by some of Laco's largest woods and farms. Two major fresh water lakes, streams and springs abound in this area, but dust storms whipped up in the Southern Desert occasionally blanket the area for days.

Some 600 kilometers northeast of Point Glass are the outskirts of the vast ruins of a Tetrarch Societies' city. Called Diocletian, for lack of a better name, this former mega-city covered thousands of square kilometers, some of which have sunken into the salt flats or are buried by deserts sands. These ruins have been the site of several major conflicts, especially the Battle of the Ruins during the First Sathar War and skirmishes between Pan Galactic and Streel corporate forces during Laco's War.

During the Sathar War, hundreds of thousands of refugees fled from Truane's Star, seeking temporary shelter at Laco. Before many of them could continue on to the Prenglar system, a Sathar attack fleet blocked their escape route. As the Sathar landed ground forces, the refugees sought shelter in Diocletian, where they dug in as the worms sent down ground forces that included a number of cybernetic attack monsters.

The "Battle of the Ruins" lasted for 203 days GST. Tens of thousands of Frontier colonists died of thirst and starvation until the Pan-Galactic Corporation was able to mount a series of relief and evacuation missions while a portion of Morgaine's fleet fought off Sathar attacks.



After the defeat of the Sathar in space, Frontier forces wanted to wipe out the worms with an orbital bombardment. However, the enemy's close proximity to the ancient alien ruins and the refugees necessitated sending in ground troops for a conventional land battle.

The Pan Galactic Corporation (PGC) supplied weapons and equipment for the scratch-built Frontier army, but the Royal Guard of Clarion, with its organized and highly-trained soldiers, was the first unit on the ground. Even as follow-on troops arrived on Laco, the Royal Guard destroyed the Sathar, ending the Battle of the Ruins.

Once Laco was secure, the Royal Guard moved on to Truane's Star for the mopping up operations there. PGC-controlled units took up garrison duty on Laco allowing the mega-corporation to insinuate itself into the shattered colony and solidify its control of the Tetrarch ruins. Despite PGC's promises to rebuild without favor to its own interests, detractors noted that the mega-corporation plowed most of its money into efforts that did just that.

After the Battle of Two Fleets at Prenglar, signaling the end of the Sathar War, the vast majority of refugees returned to Truane's Star, leaving behind refugee camps that were soon swept aside by the deserts. It is rumored that the Sathar left behind large caches of weapons.

Laco subsided to pre-war outpost population levels. It is reported, however, that a number of small refugee groups disappeared into the planet's deserts, forming scavenger bands. Others contend that

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these “scavs” are beings – mostly human but there are some Yazarian groups – who survived the Blue Plague that swept the Frontier in the years 17-27 FY. Scarred and shunned by city dwellers, the scavs wear clothing that hides their faces.

Becoming well-armed, scavs travel the deserts and live off the land in a nomadic style. Their exact population is unknown. Official estimates place them at only a few hundred by 111 FY, but some other controversial reports say they number in the thousands.⁴ Most bands keep to themselves though there are reports of some attack lone homesteads or travelers.

The original Laco Development Corporation (LDC), which had devastated during the war, was reorganized under new leadership by 8 FY, but it was no longer the supreme company on the planet as the PGC's influence grew in the south. Eventually, the LDC moved its headquarters from Point Glass to Laconia, though it still operates facilities and owns property in the southern hemisphere.

By 10 FY, the Pan Galactic Corporation set-up a mostly robotic industrial complex at Point Glass and mining operations while organizing the Laco Artifact Research and Development Team. Surveyors quickly searched the rest of the planet and identified at least four other Tetrarch sites, including one that's been nicknamed Giza, after an ancient Egyptian city on long-lost Earth. The other sites include one at Dixon's Peak, the Eye of Ra and a small ruined settlement near Laconia.



Laco's Giza has four distinctive pyramids, which the PGC soon adopted as part of its corporate logo in 11 FY just as the Blue Plague broke out. Streel Corporation, which had a small presence on Laco, established a research and development center at Point Glass, mirroring the activities of PGC's artifact research team. The Cassidine Development Corporation also founded its own facilities in town by 12 FY.

The first outbreak of the Blue Plague struck Point Glass by 13 FY. Early efforts to quarantine the disease failed as it spread to other colonial enclaves from the north and south. Hundreds died, causing the Laco's population to plunge while the new UPF struggled with how to control this health menace. Exploration of the Tetrarch ruins ground to a near halt.



Merco attack craft flying near Lake Yilaah at the outskirts of the Tetrarch ruins. Credits: “Scout Patrol remix” by jrmalone at Deviant Art, used as the cover of Star Frontiersman magazine, issue 2.

When the UPF imposed a travel ban between worlds except for military and humanitarian shipments, Laco's citizens were virtually cut off from the rest of the Frontier for nearly a decade. The colonists found new and enterprising ways to achieve a level of self-sufficiency. For example, Laconian braided fig wine became a popular local staple that was exported to the rest of the Frontier when interstellar trade was restored by 25 FY.

For a number of years, Streel and CDC archaeological teams charged that PGC security forces harassed them, preventing them from accessing the better Tetrarch sites. Streel gained favor with a large number of Laco residents as it provided aid and economic opportunities that the PGC had largely failed to give.

Bankrupted by the disruption caused by the Blue Plague, the Laco Development Corporation underwent another reorganization and was purchased by an unnamed corporate entity.

Tensions continued to rise in the south between the Pan Galactic Corporation, Streel and Cassidine. The PGC

openly accused Streel of looting alien technology. Both Streel and CDC countered that Pan Gal security had falsely imprisoned their researchers. They also claimed that some of their Lacosian personnel had

⁴ “Musings on Laco,” Tom Verreault (jedion357), <http://www.starfrontiers.us/node/9617>

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gone missing.

Streel brought in mercenary units from Merco to protect its corporate interests on Laco at its main facility, Base Headrow. Not to be outdone, PGC brought in soldiers of fortune from its corporate ally, Galactic Task Force, Inc. (GTF). The CDC simply beefed up their normal security forces, but chose to pull back from territories claimed by the PGC and Streel, setting up shop at Cassidine Station at the fringe of the Southern Desert.

It remains unclear as to what exactly happened but in 50 FY both the PGC and Streel facilities were bombed, with tremendous loss of life. The forces of Merco and GTF began fighting in and around Point Glass and the Tetrarch Ruins as reprisal after bloody reprisal added to the death toll. The Frontier's first Corporate War had begun.

Although outgunned, Star Law persuaded the corporate militaries to withdraw from Point Glass, which became neutral ground for all parties. The UPF has empowered the Inter-Mega-Corporation Commission to broker a truce, but it has had little success.

Major Colonial Settlements/Sites:

Laco has seven major settlements with populations over 1,000. These include Laconia, Dixon's Peak, Haven, Castle Station, Point Glass, Davo Bay and Mo's Easy. Corporate communities include Pan Gal City, Base Headrow, Cassidine Station and (later) the Helena Laco North Resort.

Dozens of smaller towns numbering 300 residents or less dot the world. Some places are mere communities of related families numbering less than 50 people. Add to that the numerous individual homesteads and corporate farms and the lack of a centralized government, it has been difficult to properly gauge how many people actually live on the world. The actions of the Pan Galactic Corporation haven't helped census takers either.

During Laco's War, the UPF temporarily classified the planet as having a moderate population due to the large numbers of mercenaries and support personnel present. This population rating would have brought the world additional UPF and Star Law support. However, it is alleged that the PGC, through large political contributions, forced the bureaucrats on Gran Quivera to discount all the mercenaries and the world was reclassified as an Outpost.

Update 111 FY: The PGC continues to try to influence how Laco's population grows. Five years ago the mega corp began purchasing purchase property debt and then foreclosed on the land owners. Many of the evicted residents accepted the PGC's offer of a cash inducement to be relocated off planet. Thus PGC has artificially maintained its control of the planet long past the time that interstellar law would allow for greater self-determination by the local population.

Laconia

Population: 50 FY: 2,500 est.; 111 FY: 32,000

This community borders the shore of Innara, the planet's northern polar sea. Though much smaller than Point Glass, it acts as a rival regional government on the planet. Laconian braided fig wine originated from this region.

Within 100 kilometers from Laconia is a small Tetrarch ruins called Xinonus and a smaller colonist settlement known as Enderom (pop. 140 in 50 FY and 1,200 in 111 FY). For years, colonists claimed that a dangerous and intelligent alien race, the Raith, lurks in the area.

By FY 30 Laconia had its own rudimentary star port and attracted facilities of smaller corporations, such as the headquarters of the Laco Development Corporation (LDC) and the system office for the mining and construction firm AuriCon of Truane's Star. This star port's landing field is little more than packed dirt with mooring blocks; repairs can be expensive (+25 percent of normal).

Three years after the star port opened, in 33 FY veterans of the First Sathar War developed a tri-annual festival to promote tourism to this out-of-the way community on a backwater planet of the



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Frontier by bringing in artists and forming a temporary community for one GST month. The gathering became known as the “Burning Worm” because it ended with lighting a huge effigy of a Sathar.

A decade prior to the outbreak of Laco’s War in the south, an unnamed corporate entity began buying up large tracts of land near the town.

111 FY Update: Several years before the Second Sathar War it was revealed that a subsidiary of StarPlay Enterprises – Helena Resorts – was the buyer. The Helena North Laco Resort is built around an invigorating hot spring, plus offers mud baths, which have reputed medicinal qualities. Attendees can take tours of the Xinonus ruins. Employing 1,500 people and a robotic staff, the resort serves nearly 40,000 guests per GST month. Tourists get free use of a special Laconian exoskeleton, called a “jumping jack” to overcome some of the planet’s high gravitational effects. A complex of buildings occupying 10,000 acres, it features hotels, vast pools, casinos, entertainment and sports venues. Under contract, the Laco Development Corporation built a separate, privately-owned star port to serve the resort.

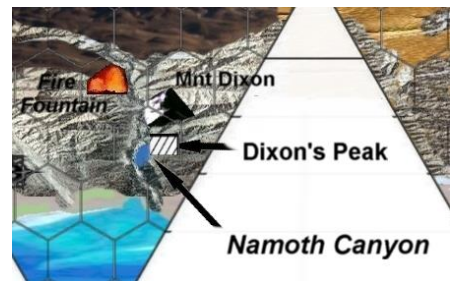
Innara Sea Nature Preserve

111 FY Update: Owned by StarPlay through a subsidiary, this game preserve near Laconia offers live game hunts. Note: environmentalists decry this practice warning against the inevitable extinction of the native mawe and devil eel. It’s almost certain that if the people of Laconia can wrench control of the planet away from PGC they will outlaw the game hunts.

Dixon’s Peak

Population: 50 FY: 1,000; 111 FY: 5,000

Named after the founder of the Dixon’s Star System, this community of 1,000 inhabitants is located in the southern foothills of the Lavaback Mountain Range. It is far enough away from a nearby series of active volcanoes so its residents only contend with an occasional ash cloud. The nearest tourist attractions include Dixon’s Peak, the planet’s tallest mountain; Namoth Canyon, a large chasm with one of the lowest dry spots on the surface of Laco. The canyon is famed for the Fire Fountain, a flaming geyser of hot liquid that ignites upon contact with air.



Haven

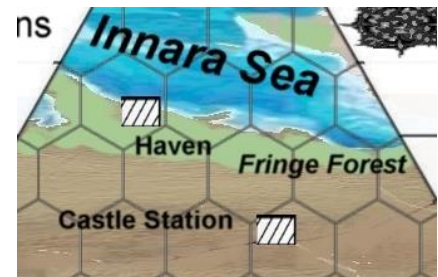
Population: 50 FY: 1,000; 111 FY: 5,000

An agricultural and fishing community in the northern hemisphere, Haven sits along the shores of the Innara Sea, southeast of Laconia.

Castle Station

Population: 50 FY: 1,000; 111 FY: 5,000

An oasis outpost in the Great Northern Plains, Castle Station is southeast of Haven on the tenuous ground route from Laconia to the southern communities. Its main industry includes large gravel, sand and rock quarries, many of which are operated by AuriCon.



Point Glass

Population: 50 FY: 5,000; 111 FY: 50,000

The de facto capital of the planet, though it really doesn’t have a planet-wide government. By 50 FY it had a permanent population of about 5,000 residents, but a transient population that swelled its unofficial total by nearly ten times. The elected leader of the community has started using the self-styled title “governor of Laco” even though much of the planet is not under Point Glass’ jurisdiction.

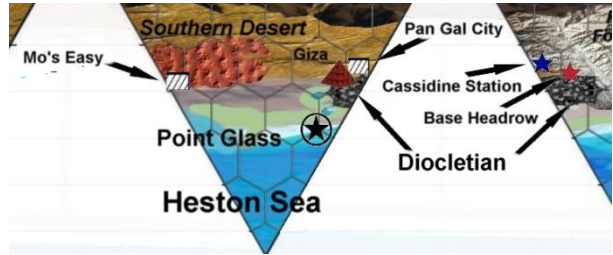
This is where Star Law is based, along diplomatic consulates and the offices of UPF agencies such as the Frontier Office of Survey and Statistics, the Colonial Affairs Committee, the Frontier Trade

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Administration, the UPF Postal Service, the Planetary Survey Administration, plus the Inter-Mega-Corporation Commission.

During Laco's War, Star Law kept an uneasy peace between the warring PGC and Streel personnel who came to town.

Home to the planet's only public, non-mega-corporation controlled star port that can accept hull size five ships, Point Glass's facilities can provide a full overhaul, but it is very expensive. The city also has a thriving black market for buyers of Tetrarch antiquities and practically everything else.



Pan Gal City

Population: 50 FY: 6,000 est.; 111 FY: 20,000 est.

A PGC-created community on the northwestern edge of the Tetrarch ruins, this became the site of the corporation's major operations as it moved out of Point Glass during Laco's War. Some of the facilities at Pan Gal City include the corporation's system office, a robotics factory, warehouses, other offices and The Institute of Archaeology. During Laco's War it saw the brunt of the early fighting and became a heavily fortified encampment.



Gun turrets at Base Headrow.

Base Headrow

Population: 50 FY: 8,000 est.; 111 FY: N/A

Located on the eastern side of the Tetrarch ruined city of Diocletian, this Streel compound was named after a prominent corporate executive and is where the Pale-based mega-corporation stationed its military and corporate forces during Laco's War. It had its own spaceport. (Note, after the war's end, Streel abandoned the base.)

Cassidine Station

Population: 50 FY: 600 est.; 111 FY: N/A

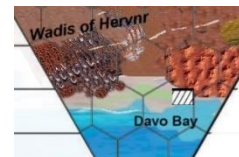
The Cassidine Development Corporation's encampment was in a spring-fed valley in the foothills of the Lavaback Mountains, north of the Tetrarch Diocletian ruins. Through an arrangement with Truane's Star, Capital University of Pale sent researchers here. During Laco's War, the settlement was threatened not only by PGC's and Streel's private armies, but also the Lacasian weather and earthquakes. (Note, by the war's end, the base had been destroyed.)



Davo Bay

Population: 50 FY: 1,000 est.; 111 FY: 5,000

Located along the southern polar sea, Davo Bay residents are engaged in mining the salt and mineral deposits surrounding the bay. It is also known for its salt and mineral baths. (After Laco's War, the PGC began buying property or asserting claim to unclaimed land around the community leading to friction with the local colonists.)



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Mo's Easy

Population: 50 FY: 300 est.; 111 FY: 1,000 est.

Starting as a bar in the middle of nowhere on the route between Point Glass and Davo Bay. It is now a small settlement. Oft called a “wretched hive of scum and villainy,” and has a handful of mooring blocks for the shuttles that land in the salt flat beyond the canyon bluffs. Its notorious black market is suspected of being used by pirates and artifact thieves. The community lies outside of the territory under Point Glass’ nominal control.



An unidentified colonist outside of Mo's Easy.

Devil's Basin

Population: unknown

A rumored community in the southern hemisphere, but it doesn't appear on any official map. More of a legend, it is a purported pirate base.

Government & Law

50 FY: Laco is not a governed world, although it is represented at the UPF Council of Worlds. Star Law and several of the more prominent mega-corps have offices in Point Glass as well as in the orbital station. Gun control laws are non-existent and many natives and visitors wander the streets openly armed and armored.

111 FY Update: Much of the political influence on the planet has coalesced around the PGC-dominated government at Point Glass, but the government of Laconia represents the interests of the colonists in the northern hemisphere. The two sides, for now, quarrel over sharing representation on the UPF Council of Worlds, but both are responsible for funding Dixon's Star's small militia.



“If you don't like the way your compass is pointing, just wait a minute,” is a common Laconian saying. The planet's magnetic poles tend to switch unexpectedly and frequently as these two explorers have discovered.

Artificial Satellites

50 FY: Laco Station is a size 3 docking station orbiting the planet where visitors can get a shuttle ride down to the planet. A squadron of four mostly obsolete UPF Spacefleet fighters offers the only permanent line of defense for the planet and Point Glass.

111 FY Update: Through a joint venture between StarPlay and the Laco Development Corporation, a new rest and recreation station is under construction. The aging Laco Station, though, continues to be the only public station in orbit.

Trade & Industry

50 FY: Although along the trade route from Prenglar to Truane's Star, Laco barely has any industry. The mountain regions host deposits of aluminum, iron, magnesium, and tungsten; but discovered deposits are barely sufficient to support the minimalist industrial activity and certainly not in sufficient quantities to support a civilized world.

The planet's real trade comes in the form of looted antiquities from the Tetrarch Societies' ruins. Many of these artifacts, however, may be fakes and counterfeit reproductions.

111 FY Update: Thanks to investments by the PGC, Laco has a growing robotics industry, which is its lead trade item. However, major secondary industries include quarries and mines, StarPlay's entertainment venues, tourism, specialized agricultural products (i.e. Laconian braided fig wine) and education. Pale's Capital University, Zebulon University and a number of other educational institutions have established facilities on the planet.

Details of Major Geographical Features

Northern Laco

Innara Polar Sea: The vast polar sea near what is commonly referred to as the northern pole (though the planet's magnetic poles tend to shift unexpectedly). The shorelines are often choked with an algae-like plant while eels lurk in the depths. Stretches of salt flats are near its beaches, indicating that the water receded eons ago.

Fringe Forest: The general name given to the woods that cling to a precarious existence within 500 kilometers of the Innara Sea.

Kol Dry Lake: Once a vast inland lake or sea, the surface of this flatland consists of fine-grained sand infused with alkali salts. Its top layer is hard enough to serve as a runway or landing strip for air transports, shuttles and even class three space craft. Other smaller dry lakes are in the region.



Bones' Desert: A small desert named after the bleached white skeletal remains of an unknown early human adventurer who was discovered by later day explorers.

Dread Highland: Rumors abound that this hilly region is home to the Raith, a mysterious insectoid/crustacean race.

Lake Poor: One of the few open bodies of water, the lake's water quality is extremely poor and toxic even to Laco's wildlife. Treat any ingestion of untreated Lake Poor water as a logic affecting poison S20(LOG)/5D; it causes a temporary loss of 20 points of logic for 50 hours. It cannot be treated with Antitox but rather requires a drug known as Alnetnal (50 Credits per dose). The water can be purified through reverse osmosis or distillation equipment and rendered drinkable.

Crest Mountains: A low lying mountain range separating Bone's Desert from the Great Northern Plain.

Great Northern Plains: A mostly dusty and barren region stretching across much of the north with only sparse clumps of short mat-grass that tap into the deep aquifer. Dust storms and dust devils are common.



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Desolat: A hilly to mountainous region between the Innara Sea and Hell's Kitchen. It is marked by numerous canyons, crevasses and fault lines.



Mount Gorgas: Laco's second highest mountain, the top of Mount Gorgas is nearly always covered in snow and ice – which is an extremely rare sight on this planet. Numerous undocumented species are believed to live here and nowhere else.

Lake Murta: A freshwater lake in the Desolat region which is surrounded by vegetation. A few solitary colonists are known to have established homesteads here, but they are cut off from much of civilization.

Lake Phinees: Another freshwater lake in Desolat that is connected to Lake Murta through a series of still trickling river canyons.

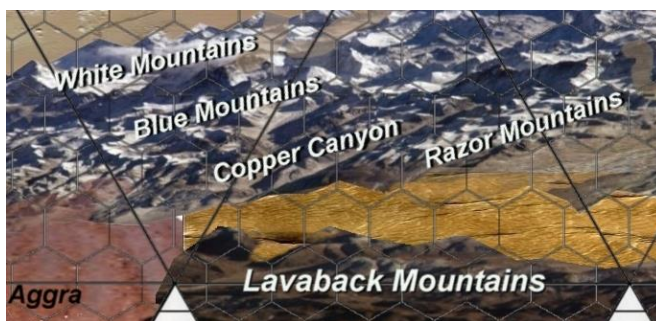
Central Laco

Trial Plains: This desert highland is bounded by the Lost Hills to the north, the White Mountains to the south and southeast, the Scagg Lowlands to the southwest and the Rentz Mountains to the west. Temperatures can reach into the low 60s during the day and plunge below freezing at night.

Lost Hills: A large hilly region that has been shaped by the central fault lines. To the north are the Great Northern Plains and to the south are the Trail Plains.

Rentz Mountains: A range of mountains that separates Hell's Kitchen from the Trial Plains and the Scagg Lowlands.

White Mountains: Part of series of three vast mountain ranges – including the Blue and Razor mountains – in Laco's equatorial region. The white granite peaks are tall enough that water vapor collects as snow and ice during Laco's long, cold nights and glisten in the early sunlight before melting. Small mountain streams feed into small lakes where pockets of life cling to existence. This area is mostly unexplored.



Blue Mountains: With outcroppings of blue granite, the Blue Mountains are a separate mountain range that jams up against the White Mountains. It is a mostly unexplored region with purported areas with streams and lakes.

Copper Canyon: A large canyon separating the Blue Mountains from the Razor Mountains. It is mostly dry though pockets of water can be found along with vegetation. Surveys indicate that copper can be found here, but no mining industries have been established yet.

Razor Mountains: Probably the youngest mountain range on Laco, it's sharp, jagged peaks thrust upward and is the site of many earthquakes and active volcanoes.

Tombstone Range: This old, eroded mountain range runs along the long series of Northern Fault Lines. It is predicted that major earthquakes can occur along here every 100 GST years.

Dry Valley: This desert area lowland separates the Tombstone Range from the Sawtooth Ridges.

Sawtooth Ridges: A low mountain range that is bounded by the Dry Valley to the north and the Central Highlands desert to the south.

Central Highlands: A small desert along the equator. It is separated from the lower Salovao Desert to the south by cliffs that are nearly two kilometers tall.



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Salovao Desert: A vast, dry desert that runs from the Plain of Aggra to the far west all the way to the Dunes of Souf to the far east. To the north it is bounded by the Razor Mountains, the Central Highlands, the Battlement Mountains and the Yhiddi Mountains. Water is extremely scarce.

One Thousand Pillars: Arguably an extension of the Tombstone Range, this is a region of dry buttes and plateaus.

Bragard Mountains: A windswept mountain range that is south of One Thousand Pillars and north of Battlement Mountains.

Battlement Mountains: The last stragglers of the Sathar invasion force were defeated at this then unnamed mountain range toward the end of the First Sathar War. Rumors persist that some Sathar and their cybernetic monsters survive somewhere in this area.

Yhiddi Mountains: Named after one of the first Yazarian explorers to venture onto Laco. Due to the planet's higher gravity, which eliminates the Yazarians' natural gliding ability, the planet is not a favorite stop for this Core Four Race.



Dunes of Souf: While many of Laco's deserts have dunes, the Dunes of Souf and other similar areas have a large number of crescent-shaped (crescentic or transverse) dunes that are generally wider than they are long. These dunes move "quickly" – more than 100 meters per year – as they are shaped by the fierce winds.

Hell's Kitchen: Generally considered to be the hottest and most dangerous place on Laco, this vast region features deserts of reddish sand due to its high iron oxide content. Volcanic vents, tar pits and mud flats are common. Toxic gases can poison foolhardy adventures that get too close to some of these vents. At the center of Hell's Kitchen is a crater called the Eye of Ra.

Eye of Ra: Formed eons ago from a cataclysmic asteroid impact, the Eye of Ra is a crater that's more than 1,000-kilometer across. Although its edges have eroded, the ancient wound to the planet's crust is visible from space. It would have caused a mass extinction sometime in Laco's past. More interesting to archeologists is that there is evidence of a Tetrarch structure at the exact center of the crater. All that remains of the building – which is millions of years younger than the crater – appears to be a circular foundation that is 500-meters in diameter and made of Federanium. The site has been called the "Temple of Ra" though its exact purpose and nature has not been determined.



Southern Laco

Heston Polar Sea: Heston is the major water resource at the south pole. Its salty waters are teeming with all sorts of aquatic life.

Southern Desert: Bound by the Lavaback Mountains to the north, salt flats and woods to the south, the Southern Desert reaches into the old Tetrarch ruined city of Diocletian.

Lavaback Mountains: These jagged mountains feature a number of active volcanoes though a number of old river canyons still have fresh water supporting some of Laco's flora and fauna.

Scagg Lowlands: This is a rocky, desert area bounded by the Trial Plains to the north, the White-Blue mountains and the Plain of Aggra to the east, the Southern Desert and Wadis of Hervnr to the south, and the Brokenlands-Rentz Mountains to the west.

Plain of Aggra: A vast plateau, this high desert plain is separated from the Scagg Lowlands and the Southern Desert by 200-400 meter tall cliffs.



Wadis of Hervnr: This desert lowland has numerous oases (wadis). It has been settled by scav bands and rugged colonists who want no part of Point Glass' influence.

Namoth Canyon & Fire Fountain: A large chasm, Namoth Canyon has one of the lowest dry spots on the surface of Laco. It is famed for the Fire Fountain, a

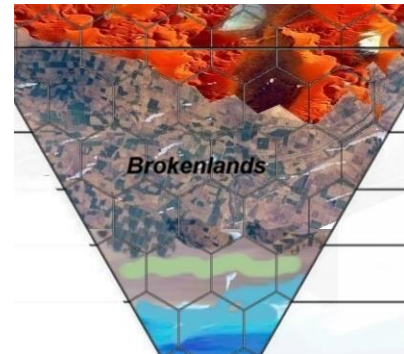
Star Frontiers

flaming geyser of hot liquid that ignites upon contact with air.

Dixon's Peak: Jutting nearly 9 kilometers above sea level, Dixon's Peak is named after Kenyatta Dixon, the discoverer of the star route between Prenglar and Dixon's Star. Like Mount Gorgas in the northern hemisphere, its peak is nearly always covered in ice and snow. The fourth known Tetrarch site is near the top of Dixon's Peak. It appears to have been some type of spire that long since toppled over though only a few scattered remains have been found downslope. What happened to the rest of the building remains a mystery.

Vrik Hills: Named after a Vrusk explorer (HTC Vrr'Rk'Kk). HTC, a Vrusk trade house, once had a mining town here prior to the Sathar War, but it is now abandoned.

Brokenlands: To the south of Hell's Kitchen is a hilly, semi-mountainous land that features various canyons and chasms with pockets of fresh water, vegetation and animal life.



[City of Delusion](#) by [jrmalone](#) at Deviant Art

This artwork was published with Tom Verreault's story, "Digging in the Dust of Laco" in *Frontier Explorer*, issue 2.

Environmental Effects⁵

Gravity and Atmosphere:

With a thinner atmosphere and a gravity rating of 1.4, Laco presents other challenges to colonists, especially those who have not acclimated to its conditions. The atmospheric pressure around the polar seas and the lowlands is typically sufficient for most Frontier beings.

However, in the plains areas and further inland, such as at the ruined Tetrarch city of Diocletian, those who have not been on Laco for at six months will lose 1 Stamina point for every 30 minutes of strenuous activity such as running, climbing, fighting, carrying an encumbering weight load, etc. If a character's STA reaches zero, he will fall unconscious for 1d10 turns. For every turn of rest, he can regain 1 point of STA that has been lost this way.

Natives of Laco (or Kraatar, which has similar conditions) or those who have adjusted to the atmosphere are unaffected this way.

Gravity has major impacts on the Core Four races who evolved on planets closer to a 1 G rating. As per Alpha Dawn's optional rules under the section "Movement: Gravity, Weight and Mass," Laco's 1.4 gravity has the following additional effects:

- Yazarian characters are unable to use their natural gliding ability
- A characters' carrying capacities is reduced by 8 kilograms
- The distance a character can safely jump is reduced by 2 meters
- The damage a character suffers in a fall is increased by 8 points

Colonists raised on Laco may, at the referee's discretion, receive a +5 bonus to Strength, which may slightly increase a character's carrying capacity but this does not negate the impact of the planet's gravity. Planet residents have developed low-cost exoskeleton alternatives known as – "jumping jacks" – to compensate for these effects though it is rumored that the scavs have mystical powers that allow them to move swifter than other colonists.

Temperature and Water Intake:

As a general rule, in the harsh Lacosian deserts characters need 4 liters of water per day to survive. Characters can reduce this requirement by 1 liter by taking 4 salt pills per 60 hours Lacosian day and another 1 liter by only being active at night.

Characters on foot can move their maximum rate but must double their water intake (after taking into account any precautions taken to reduce water consumption). Thus a character moving at maximum speed during daylight without taking salt pills would need 8 liters of water a day to survive. If, however, the character were taking four salt pills per day he could survive on 6 liters of water.



A character moving at maximum speed at night while taking 4 salt pills could survive on 4 liters of water per day. Those who do not have enough water quickly become dehydrated and suffer a -5 percent modifier to all abilities. Dehydrated characters who continue to not get enough water become heat exhausted and suffer an additional -10 penalty (a total of -15 percent) to all abilities.

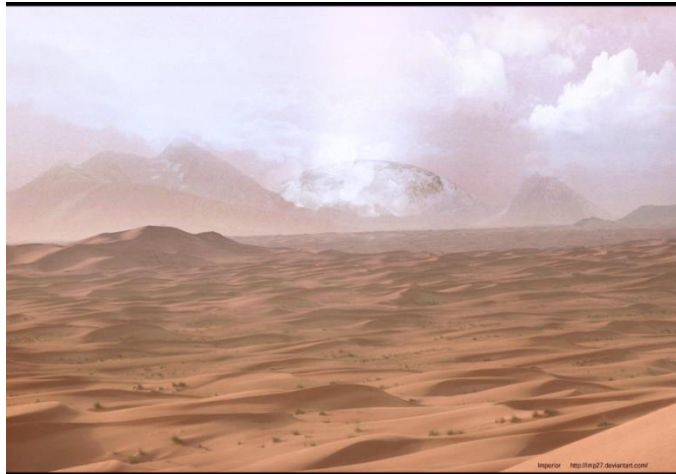
If a heat exhausted character is unable to fill his thirst, he will suffer heat stroke and incur another 15 penalty (a total of -30 percent) to all abilities. Unconsciousness occurs if the character's stamina drops to 0. Even if a character suffering from heat stroke does not become unconscious, it will happen soon without medical help and will be followed by death.

⁵ This section is highly based on Tom Verreault's writings in "Digging in the Dust of Laco" from Frontier Explorer issue 2, which was also based on the original Voltumnus modules. It has been modified.

Many variables go into when dehydration sets in so a referee will simply have to take note of the fact that the PC's are at risk and apply the penalty when he thinks best or require all characters to pass a STA check to avoid dehydration.

Characters will transition from dehydration to more a severe condition in as little as an hour to 1d5 hours depending on shelter, activity level and lack of medical remediation for the conditions. For example if the characters are fleeing form a threat with the sun at its zenith and they are already dehydrated they will likely transition to heat exhaustion in minutes – require STA checks every 10 minutes to check for heat exhaustion.

In most cases the players will realize that they should take steps to fix the problem and such actions should be rewarded.



The Southern Desert near Point Glass. The peaks of the Lavaback Mountains can be seen in the background.

Dust Storms:

In a typical dust storm the wind can blow at up to 120 kilometers per hour. Any character with an environmental skill should make an Intuition check; modify this roll by +10 per level of environmentalist skill; -15 if in a canyon, and +10 possible for having a species of domesticated flute flutterer present (see “Flora and Fauna of Laco”).

If any character makes a successful INT check, the party will be able to improvise shelter and survive the storm without taking damage. If the characters happen to be in an area with rock formations, canyon, or caves the characters can find shelter quickly and avoid taking damage from the storm.

If the characters have no advance warning and are not in one of the hexes listed above, they will take damage from the storm. Have each character roll a Reaction Speed check. If the check is unsuccessful the character takes 4d10 damage from the storm. If successful, the character only takes 2d10 damage.

Dust Devils/Whirlwinds:

When these occur the referee should place a counter on the map and roll for the whirlwind's strength, duration and speed. Strength is 2d10; duration is 3d10 turns; and speed 5-10 m/turn (1d5+5).

The dust devil will move in random directions (use the center grenade bounce table to determine) every turn. If it comes within one square or hex of a character, at any time during its movement, it will do the damage listed above but the character gets a RS check for half damage.

If it enters the square or hex of a character, at any time during its movement, it will do double damage but the character gets a RS check for half.

When the duration is reached (in turns) the dust devil disappears suddenly. The local colonists speak of dust devils that have a mind of their own or frequently turning up during combat. Some even talk of them being possessed and an independent scientist alleged that they are more frequent in proximity to the Tetrarch ruins. The Pan Galactic Corporation adamantly denies this.

It's hard to say what the truth actually is concerning the dust devils on Laco as hard data is sadly lacking.

Tetrarch Societies & Lacosian Ruins

"The Tetrarch Societies are assumed to be a once great galactic authority made up of a collection of races also referred to as the Tetrarch Elders . . . Some suspect that the races [of the Frontier] were slave races of the Tetrarch Elders, left behind...."

— *Nor's Guide to Allied Space*⁶

". . . Laco has ancient temples left behind by a race who have a connection with the Tetrarchs."

— *Temple Raiders*⁷

"It has been speculated that an ancient unknown race of aliens (possibly the group known to xenoarchaeologists as the Tetrarchs) transplanted a small group of S'sessu to Phri'sk, their home world."

— *Coming of the S'sessu*⁸

Tetrarch means the "Rule of Four." This description fits the mysterious Tetrarch Societies that died out in the Frontier Sector more than 10,000 years ago. It seems that it was a galactic nation that was ruled by four major races, one of which appeared to have been humanoid, but little else has been accepted as facts by Frontier historians.

What is known is that the Tetrarchs built pyramids. The Lacosian Giza site has a complex of four giant pyramids laid out in square with a significant amount of space between them. Anchored on the outside corner of each pyramid are ruined settlements of small buildings.

Although hotly debated by scientific and historical organizations, many Frontier colonists have never heard of the Tetrarchs. But to many native civilizations, the Tetrarchs have taken on a mystical and even god-like aura. They appear to have been the most technologically advanced society in the galaxy.

The Frontier appears to have been a distant colonial sector of the Tetrarchs. Legends say they were at once great conquerors yet, by all counts, benevolent rulers. However, some archaeologists argue these legends are colored by fear.

Some native Frontier races claim to be the Tetrarch's descendants while others claim to have been created or enslaved by the Tetrarchs at one time. Although no archaeological evidence exists to support such assertions except for elusive references in their culture beginning legends and ancient stories.

The Tetrarchs may have been masters of creating and manipulating life, forming new races and species. Depictions on pre-Frontier temple walls and artifacts show ancient races interacting with what are believed to be the Tetrarchs.



A portion of the vast Tetrarch ruins – Diocletian – near Point Glass, Laco, during a rare rainstorm.

One theory suggests that an apocalypse brought about a dark age that erased the Tetrarchs from history. Laco's Tetrarch ruins are the largest collection of the ancient civilization's buildings in the Frontier.

⁶ http://starfrontiers.wikia.com/wiki/Tetrarchs#cite_note-0. Original source: Ron "Seawolf," <http://www.seawolfsden.net>

⁷ Williams, C.J. "Adventure: Temple Raiders," *Star Frontiersman* #4, 2007, pg. 36-37.

⁸ Cook, David. "The Coming of the S'sessu," *Dragon Magazine*, April 1985.

Flora and Fauna of Laco

Although Laco is fairly well known throughout the Frontier, especially as the site of the first Corporate War, the planet's wildlife is not. Although there has been some cross-contamination since the advent of interstellar trade, most of its native ecosystem has managed to survive.

However, the commercial production of Laconian Braided Fig-date wine – and the artificial irrigation needed for this – has artificially increased the numbers of the native wildlife. Should the agri-business surrounding the production of the wine suffer a setback, with the nearly inevitable reduction in irrigation a holocaust of suffering and death among the native wildlife is assured.

“Laconian Braided Fig wine is one of the most expensive and highly prized alcoholic beverages in the Frontier. Indeed, there is always a surplus of demand, thus raising the price,” said noted connoisseur Jess Carver. “Let us hope that the wine industry never does suffer such a set-back.”

Many Lacosian (Laconian) creatures are blind, but they have highly developed sonic or tremor sensing capabilities. Some zoologists have claimed that they have psychic capabilities. Fish are typically eel like, there is limited avian life, while the dominate terrestrial animals are mammal-like sporting hides with short, thin fur though most appear hairless from the distance. (Note, the words “Lacosian” or “Laconian” are interchangeable, though colonists in the north tend to use “Laconian” while those in the south tend to use “Lacosian.”)⁹

Arbora cincinnus Palma Laconisis

The braided palm tree of Laco is a true marvel of nature. It produces a truly astounding number of fruit. These fruit are an exact cross between a fig and a date.

They are known as (imaginatively) Fig-dates. They contain enough energy to keep a human functioning for days on nothing else. But the most widely known use for them is to make Laconian

wine, also known as Fig wine. These trees grow to a maximum height of 5 meters and produce fruit year around, and in fantastic volume. The herbivorous Stegogsalluses eat nothing else. The Laconian Leophidians feed on the stegogalluses. The trees are the center of the ecosystem in this biodiversity poor system.



Illustration from Star Frontiersman Issue 19.

Mat Grass

Laconian mat grass is truly a marvel as its roots can run dozens of meters deep to tap the aquifers on hills or the plains. Colonists know that where they see mat grass, it is probably a good location to sink a well for drinking water.

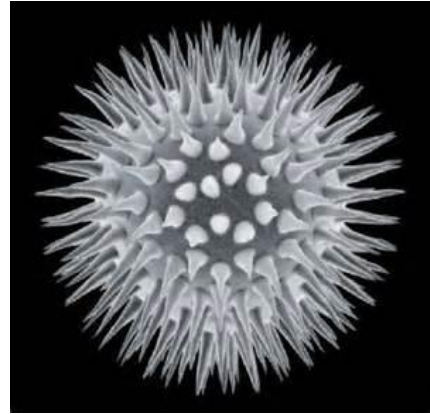
⁹ Most of the flora and fauna listings here come from three sources including: Trussell, Allen, “Frontier Creatures,” Star Frontiersman magazine. Carver, Jess (Parriah). “Flora and Fauna of Laco,” Star Frontiersman magazine, issue 19, pp. 38-40. The third source is Verreault’s Laco brief from Frontier Explorer magazine, issue 2.

Dust Spore

The presence of the dust spore on Laco is universal. Being an airborne infective agent, it normally does not affect healthy individuals but anyone weakened due to severe injuries, disease, radiation illness, or is in a condition of generally compromised health can be afflicted with spore sickness.

Any character below half STA must pass a current STA check once per day or become infected with spore sickness.

Spore sickness is rated as (-10/D10!) meaning that any character with this disease is at -10 to all ability checks for 100 hours with death as the end result without treatment. In addition, all healing from any source is halved while the character is afflicted by spore sickness.



The Lacosian dust spore.

Cave Raptor

Type: Medium Avian

Number: 10 + 2d5

Move: Ground, 5 meters/turn; Flight, 20 meters/turn

IM/RS: 5/50

Stamina: 50

Attack: 40 (Talons or beak)

Damage: 3-7 (1d5+2)

Special Defense: Immune to blinding attacks

Special Attack: Diving attack

The Cave Raptor is about 1.2 meters long with a wingspan of about 2.4 meters. It has dull white feathers covering its body, and has blue-white razor sharp talons, and beak. The avian's beak has nostrils that are exceptionally large. Female cave raptors are larger and more aggressive than the males.

A Cave Raptor that gains surprise can make a devastating diving attack against an opponent. The bird gains a +10 to its attack bonus when making this attack, and if it succeeds it doubles the damage it causes from its claws slashing its prey.

Although blind, these creatures that possess millions of nerve endings throughout their feathers that are sensitive to changes in air density enabling them to navigate in complete darkness exceptionally well. Cave Raptors can sense beings moving at distances within a 40 meter diameter area around the Raptor. Because of their blindness they are immune to all manner of blinding attacks.

These predatory avian have adapted to living beneath the surface of their arid planet, and thrive in the many dark caverns of their world. Cave Raptors are social creatures that gather in large numbers in many of the larger caverns beneath the surface of Laco. They mate for life and go into season once a year. The female Cave Raptor generally lays a clutch of 2-5 eggs which she sits on until the eggs hatch in 4 weeks.

During this time the male Cave Raptor will hunt and provide food for his mate. When the eggs hatch, the two raptors take turns hunting for food for their young. Young Cave Raptors grow to maturity after 12 weeks.

Cave Raptors seem able to sense when their population has grown too large for the area to support them, and at these times they will turn on the old and young and kill off enough of them until their numbers again reach a level that can be supported by the environment. These dead raptors though are not eaten by the other birds and are left for other creatures to consume. Ecologists speculate that this is done to draw new prey into the area to insure the survival of these creatures.

Flute Flutters

Type: Tiny Omnivore Avians (10-15cm)

Number: 10-100

Move: Flying-Fast (90m) Crawling or Climbing Slow (25m)

IM/RS: +7/70

Stamina: 1-10

Attack: --

Damage: --

There are about 60 species of Flute Flutters on Laco that differ largely in coloration and beak structure. They have four bat-like wings with clawed fingers at the wing knuckle and no legs. In flight they appear to be a mass of flapping wings. When predators are in the vicinity they emit shrill fluting cries and fly away as a defense mechanism. They are otherwise harmless but a popular pet.

The colonists of Laco use them as an early warning alarm against the planet's more dangerous of predators.

Easily tamed, some flute flutters have their wings clipped while some are trained to return to the owner. They typically cling on the owner's shoulder and back.

They will detect predators before their owners, though the fluting cry is sure to give the owner's location away. They also sense coming sand storms.

Distinctive species of Flute Flutter:

- **Black Lector Flute Flutterer:** Black coloring with white markings streaking the neck and chest. Detects sand storms 100% of the time. Costs 500 Credits due to rarity.
- **Flute Hawk Flutterer:** Patchy brown coloring (natural camouflage: concealment 40%) and aggressively swarms predators making a sonic attack. Attack 35; Damage 2 pts sonic. Can be trained to attack opponents engaged in melee with its owner but trained Hawk Flutes cost more. Cost: 200 Credits untrained, 350 Credits trained.
- **Mute Red Sparrow Flute Flutterer:** This species is a bred variety. Some have escaped to the wild but they have not fared well. Bred to not deafen their owners they emit a light chirp instead of the typical fluttering cry. They have no sense of impending sand storms but will not give away their owner's position when they detect a predator. They are also quite dull witted. Cost: 125 Credits.

If a flutterer is taken off planet the owner must take care to ensure it has a proper diet. They can consume seed and insects not native to Laco but many such food sources on other planets can make a flute flutter quite ill or kill

it. Player characters would do well to buy supplies of seed and dried insects. Cost 10-25 Credits/kilogram with the typical animal requiring 1-2 kilograms per month. An owner can also take precautions by having an environmentalist scan new plants and insects for compatibility or by keeping the flute flutter caged while on other planets. Cages typically cost 5-10 Cr.

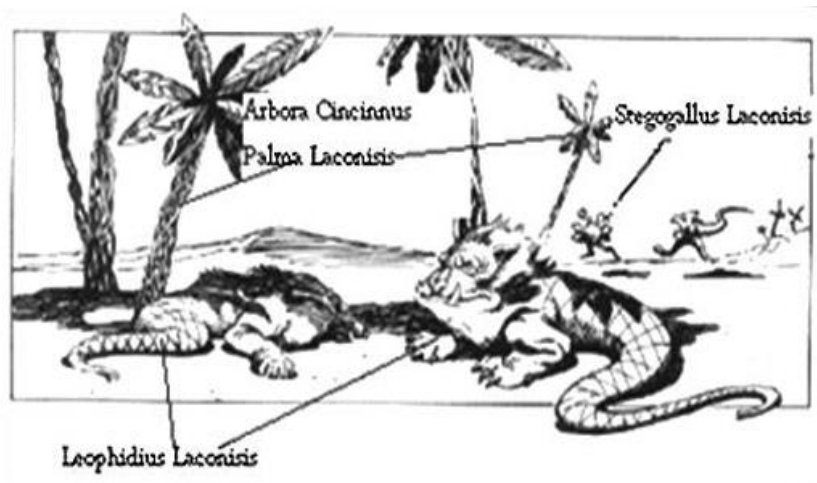


Illustration from Star Frontiersman issue 19.

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Grolm

Type: Large Herbivore

Number: 1-5

Move: Medium (50 meters/turn)

IM/RS: 5/45

Stamina: 65

Attack: 65

Damage: 2d10 Slap (x2); 1d10 bite

Special Defense: Tough Hide (acts as a skinsuit but does not ablate)

Special Attack: Rage (25% chance each turn during combat, gain +20 attack, lasts until death or end of combat)

A grolm is a huge, barrel-chested quadrupedal saurian that lives in Laco's sparse forests. It normally walks on all fours, but can rear-up on its hind legs, using its strong tail to balance. At over 5 meters long, this creature uses its bulk to intimidate predators and other foes, though it will attack if sufficiently threatened or to defend young.

Though a strict vegetarian, the grolm possess sharp canine teeth, and can deliver a savage bite. The tough, scaly hide of the grolm is a deep mottled green, paler on its underside, and often dappled with lighter stripes to break up its profile in the forest



Illustration from Star Frontiersman.

Laconian Leophidian

Type: Medium Carnivore

Number: 1-10

Move: Fast (60 meters per turn)

IM/RS: 6/60

Stamina: 95

Attack: 60

Damage: 3d10 per bite (special)

Special Defense: Camouflage. Coloration blends in to desert background. Hard to spot farther away than 30 meters

Special Attack: Jaw Lock and claw rake. 3d10 more damage, no roll needed, skinsuits halve damage, inertia suits as per standard rules

The Leophidian is a truly strange beast. The taxonomists have not been able to determine if it is an intermediate stage between reptile and mammal, or an entirely new order. Showing traits of both Lions and snakes, it is easy to see why.

A very fast carnivore, it will attack characters on sight. Depending on availability of food, they run alone or in small groups. If they manage to bite successfully, they automatically score a hit with both their claws doing 3d10 damage. Skinsuits and inertia screens work to shield characters from this damage.

Leophidians bear live children, but do not suckle them. The young are ready to run and hunt minutes after birth. They mainly hunt young stegogalluses. They have been known to attack Sand Gremlins, but this is an extremely dangerous undertaking that most adult Leophidians eschew.

Star Frontiers

Laconian Sand Gremlins

Type: Medium Omnivore

Number: 10-100

Move: Fast (60 meters per turn)

IM/RS: 6/60

Stamina: 40

Attack: 35

Damage: 1d10 per bite (special)

Special Defense: Camouflage: Coloration blends in to desert background. Hard to spot farther away than 3 meters and their burrow entrances are hidden. Same rules as below.

Special Attack: The Sand Gremlins of Laco attack in large numbers and do not flee until at least ½ of the pack is killed or disabled. The beast's saliva is poisonous (S2/T4). Sand Gremlin can also surprise characters on a roll of 85 or less. This surprise is decreased by 10 percent per level of an environmentalist character in the game.

These small, vicious omnivores inhabit almost all of Laco. They can be found far from the nearest oasis. They are cantankerous, to say the least. They borrow into the sand, cementing the linings of the tunnel created with their excrement and an enzyme secreted in their saliva to create a surface nearly as hard as ferrocrete. Their burrows are known to run for many kilometers and have numerous hidden and disguised exits.

A party traveling in the desert can suddenly, without warning, be surrounded and engaged in combat. Although they are small, they attack in large numbers and attack all out, reserving nothing.

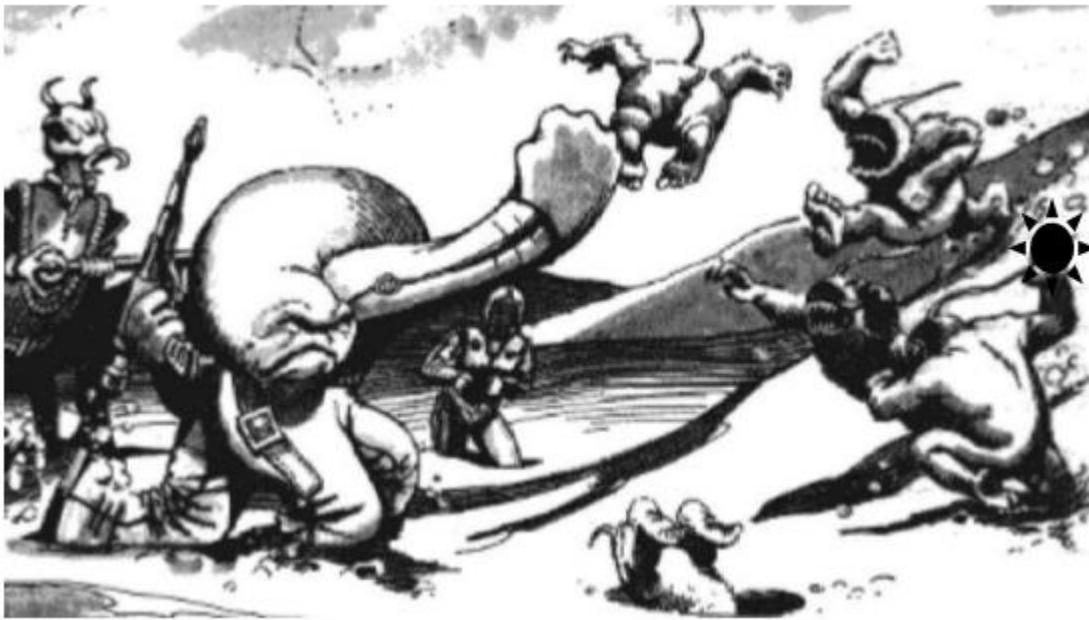


Illustration originally from Alpha Dawn rulebook.

Laconian Stegogalluses

Type: Medium Herbivore

Number: 1-10

Move: Fast (65 meters per turn)

IM/RS: 7/70

Stamina: 60-120

Attack: Special

Damage: 2d10 per animal present

Special Defense: Naturally camouflaged lurker, 60% concealment (counts additional +20% concealment vs. terrestrial animals walking in shallow water for 80%)

Special Attack: They will not attack, but if they are panicked by a predator, and they will consider characters as such, they are prone to flee in random directions. This could result in trampling of the characters. If they are in the path of the fleeing animals, direction rolled randomly by the referee, then there is a 50 percent chance the Stegogalluses PC's will be trampled for 2d10 per animal in the herd

This elusive herbivorous native of Laco will not allow any creature larger than a mouse near them. It has flaps on its back, but the purpose of the unknown. The flaps are apparently useless as wings, manipulator appendages, or for defensive uses. It is theorized that they may be heat regulators being fanned when the animal is too hot, and exposed to direct sunlight when the animal feels too cold.

The Stegogalluses lay clutches of 20 – 30 eggs that hatch in 15 20-hour days. They breed year round. The Sand Gremlins find these eggs especially delicious and will eliminate an entire clutch in moments when they discover one.

Lacosian Eel Fish

Type: tiny herbivore fish (10-15cm)

Number: 5-50

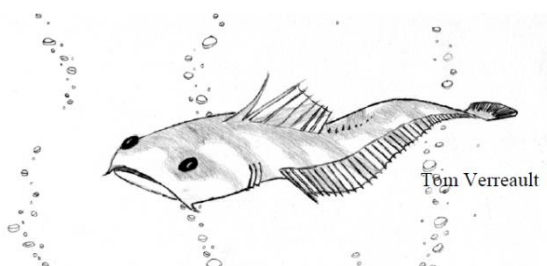
Move: Fast (80m)

IM/RS: +7/65; **Stamina:** 1-10

Attack: --

Damage: --

Special Defense/Attack: Poison barb (S3/T5) + 1 STA.



The Lacosian Eel Fish has poor eye sight but excellent hearing. It feeds on algae in shallow waters. Upon detecting the presence of possible predators the eel fish will burrow into the muddy bottom leaving its poison barb exposed. Unshod individuals walking in the water will step on an eel fish barb based on the number of fish present: 5% for 5 fish or 50% for 50 fish. The barb is painful and does 1 STA damage; the poison acts immediately. The eel fish is otherwise harmless and good eating.

Lacosian Anaconda Eel

Type: medium carnivore fish (1-3m)

Number: 1-5

Move: Medium (60m)

IM/RS: +6/55

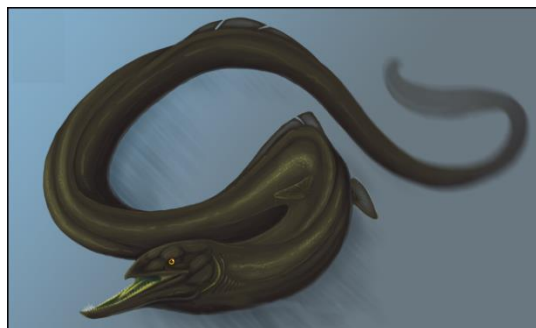
Stamina: 60-120

Attack: 50

Damage: 1-10

Special Defense: Naturally camouflaged lurker
60% concealment (counts additional +20% concealment vs terrestrial animals walking in shallow water)

Special Attack: On a successful bite makes an opposed RS check each turn to grapple (wrap the target in coils and constrict). Each turn the victim fails to break free (STR check versus 65) constriction causes 1d10 STA damage.



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The Lacosian Anaconda Eel looks like a larger version of the eel fish but without the barb. Its diet consists largely of eel fish but it will attack small to medium sized creatures approaching the shore.

Lacosian Devil Eel

Type: large carnivore (2-5m)
Number: 1
Move: Medium (60m)
IM/RS: +6/55
Stamina: 100-150
Attack: 60
Damage: 5d10
Special Attack: Poison (S stun/T5)

The Lacosian Devil Eel looks like a larger version of the anaconda eel but with three fins surrounding the head that ruffle out as they attack. On a successful attack the devil eel injects the victim with its poison which is a powerful neural toxin causing the victim to STA check each turn to resist being stunned. Once a victim has succumbed to the stun effect it will attack another target till all opponents have fallen victim to the stun poison, then it will feed on them.

Lacosian Dust Snake

Type: tiny omnivore (15-25cm)
Number: 1-10
Move: Very Fast (110m)
IM/RS: +8/75
Stamina: 1-10
Attack: 30
Damage: 1d10
Special Defense: Burrow (see below)
Special Attack: Poison bite (S5/T3)

Native to most environments on Laco, the dust snake typically pack hunts using its tremor sense to localize prey and burrow up and attack. A victim must pass a RS check to successfully attack the dust snake before it burrows back underground to attack 1-5 turns latter.

Lacosian Flash Lizard

Type: small herbivore (30cm)
Number: 5-50
Move: Fast (80m)
IM/RS: +7/65
Stamina: 10
Attack: --
Damage: --

A harmless herbivore and the bottom of the food chain, the Flash Lizard is not really a lizard. The greatest threat it poses is to ground cars as it darts onto the road to become road kill and cause handling check for drivers.

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Lacosian Hound

Type: medium carnivore (2m)

Number: 2-20

Move: Medium (60m)

IM/RS: +6/60

Stamina: 75

Attack: 75

Damage: 3d10

Special Attack: Sonic Bark (Damage: 1d10 sonic + stun 1 round, Range PB 5/S 10m, sonic screen nullifies)

Lacosian Hounds are pack hunters with a gray mottled hide. They employ a massed sonic attack before moving to melee. If severely wounded, they will use the sonic attack and attempt to flee.

Lacosian Mawe

Type: large carnivore (2-5m)

Number: 1-3

Move: Medium (60m)

IM/RS: +6/55

Stamina: 100-150

Attack: 60

Damage: 5d10

Special Defense: Stealth 50%

Special Attack: Poison (S stun/T5)

Blind but with an extremely sensitive tremor sense and possibly psychic capabilities – a controversial and disputed claim, the mawe have no olfactory or optical organs. However, they but show acute sensitivity to their surroundings and unerring ability to locate prey – they are never fooled by holo screens or sonic screens. Luckily they are not numerous but they are the apex predator of Laco.

Lhoric

Type: Tiny Energyvore

Number: 1-10

Move: Very Slow (5 meters/turn)

IM/RS: 2/20

Stamina: 10

Attack: 20

Damage: 1 energy point

Special Defense: Energy drain 1d10 SEU per turn; beam attacks heal for 1d10 per hit

Special Attack: Energy beam, 1d10

The Lhoric is a pest found throughout Laco, especially in industrialized areas. Originally a natural solar feeder, the Lhoric has adapted to feed on other energy sources. These tiny, silvery mollusks feed on power cables, SEU clips, power belt packs and backpacks, and so forth. While they can bite, their main defense is to fire a beam of focused energy at its attacker. Their ability to heal from energy attacks, as well as their rapid breeding (like slugs, Lhorics are hermaphroditic, and each mating makes both fertile partners pregnant), makes them difficult to eradicate. Lhorics have made their way off world and can be found throughout the Frontier.

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Raith¹⁰

Type: Medium Carnivore

Number: 1-10 hunting, 50-500 lair.

Move: Medium, 60 meters/turn, Climb 40 meters/turn, Burrows 40 meter/turn

IM/RS: +4/40

Stamina: 30

Attack: 50% pinch/pinch or sting plus weapon

Damage: Pinchers 1d10; Stinger 1d10 + poison (S5/T5)

Special Attack: None

Special Defense: Hard shell, half-damage from inertia weapons as per skeinsuit

Native World: Unknown, arid wastelands/caves and tunnels

Long dismissed as campfire tales or bar yarns spun by exploration teams and miners, law enforcement and colonial governments had ignored the occasional report of Raith often in conjunction with a missing person's report as an unbelievable alibi concocted from the bottom of bottle to cover up homicide.

Recent events on Laco near the settlement of Enderom and the Tetrarch ruins of Xinonus have now lent credence to these long ignored tales of Raith (see the "Raith Lair" adventure in Star Frontiersman magazine, issue 3). Now officials believe that colonists may have had actual encounters with this elusive and dangerous life form. The rescue of two siblings from a Raith Lair and the bodies of Raith recovered has sparked controversy and diverse opinions across the Frontier.

A stocky ten-limbed creature, the body of a Raith is divided into two parts: the upper body area which has a head fused to its chest and the lower body (abdomen), which is subdivided into a broad anterior, and a narrow tail-like posterior.

The upper body contains the head, one arm pair, which have hand-like appendages. The second pair of forearms ends in claws or pincers which can be used to grab and crush opponents. The abdomen also has three pairs of walking legs while its tail ends in a stinger and has poison sacks.

The creature's exoskeleton is thick and durable, providing good protection from predators. The cuticle of the Raith contains fluorescent which have been discovered to glow a vibrant blue-green when exposed to certain wavelengths of ultraviolet light such as that produced by a black light.

Raith exoskeletons are believed to come in a variety of colors varying from white like in the very young to light tans or sand colors to reds, blacks and even blues based on eye witness accounts and the few bodies dissected. Scientists are unsure if this is normal biogenetic variation, the result of adapting to specific environments such as soil color or an indication of different races or species. Raith blood is blue due to the presence of hemocyanin which contains copper.

Raith have two eyes on the top of the head, and usually two to five pairs of eyes along the front corners of their head. Despite the fact that Raith have many eyes, their vision is poor when compared to other species. Nocturnal by nature, they find shelter during the day in the relative cool of underground lairs and cool cave complexes, emerging at night to hunt and feed.

Raith are opportunistic predators. Their large pincers are studded with highly sensitive tactile hairs, so they prefer to lay in wait under sand or in dark places and the moment prey animal touches these, they use their pincers to catch the prey. Raith will hunt this way as individuals or in groups.

Witnesses have also reported seeing Raith at night run down prey often as a group and using weapons, though many people have called such claims into question. However tools recovered from the Raith Lair indicate that they do use spears as weapons.

Depending on the toxicity of their venom and size of their claws, they will then either crush the prey or inject it with neurotoxin venom. Even though Raith possess venom, as a general rule, they will kill their prey with brute force if they can, as opposed to using venom.

¹⁰ The Raith is based on an adventure that first appeared in Star Frontiersman magazine, issue 2. This description was later altered by Laura Mumma (Tchklinx) for a (as yet) unpublished update for Frontier Explorer magazine.

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Many citizens of the UPF who have believed in the existence of the Raith on Laco also consider them to be mindless monsters of the waste-lands. The discovery of the Raith Lair has raised serious questions as to the possibility that the Raith are sapient beings.

Little is actually known about Raith society or intelligence but a thorough investigation led by Star Law with Xeno-anthropologists and Xeno-archeologist has revealed enough information to make the UPF Board of Inquiry concerned that this previously believed fantasy creature may actually be intelligent life form.