

BATTLETECH™

TOURING THE STARS



HEROTITUS



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INTRODUCTION

We began on Terra, a lonely, blue-green speck in the vastness of the void. It has been more than a millennium since mankind ventured to the stars beyond home, and while it has been a tumultuous history—at the very least—we have discovered, explored, and conquered worlds that our ancestors could only dream about. Humanity now occupies more than two thousand worlds stretched across a vast range of interstellar space known as the Inner Sphere.

For humanity as a whole, Terra, at the heart of it all, will forever be known as “Home.” But for the far greater majority of us, “home” is a very different speck amidst the infinite black. Our homes are many, varied, beautiful, and filled with rich histories—each unique to itself.

In the grand scale of interstellar history, it often becomes so easy to forget this, to see planets and solar systems as dots on an abstracted map. But, at the core of the matter, each of those dots is a place where men, women, and children live, work, love, and survive. Join us on a special tour of the Sphere, as we explore the richness of these worlds like never before!

—Professor Bertram Habeas, *Touring the Stars: One World at a Time*, Free Republic Press



Welcome to *Touring the Stars*, a campaign supplement designed to offer players the opportunity to learn about the worlds of the Inner Sphere, Periphery, and beyond.

The background information contained in the **Atlas** section gives players a world's geography, history, notable events, and other tools needed to create an unlimited number of *BattleTech* games, while the **A Time of War** section offers plot seeds and details for the planet's more notable events. These plot seeds can be used as stand-alone games, woven into an existing game or become part of a larger ongoing campaign.

The **Rules Annex** section explains planetary **Atlas** information for use in gameplay, as well as optional terrain tables, weather, and flora/fauna rules. Terrain tables can be used as a random chart to determine gameplay maps, or simply as a guide to provide ideas on the types of terrain found on the world. This section also contains a list of other rules that can be used to enhance your game experience. All players should agree whether or not to use any or all of these features before play.

Note: The last four pages of this PDF are sized for 11" x 17" paper. Please keep this in mind when printing out the document.

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Special Thanks: I want to thank Ray Arrastia for conceiving the mini-PDF lines. He's often under-appreciated, but I don't know what we'd do without him or what BT would even look like. Congratulations for his appointment as Assistant Line Developer! Sincere thanks to Joshua Perian for letting me write about Herotitus, especially since I waited a long time to ask if he had room in the schedule for it. Most of this is based on a fiction piece that will hopefully see the light of day via BattleCorps or another outlet. Finally, thanks to the fans who keep BT alive and vibrant. I hope you like reading this as much as I liked creating it. (For those curious about the Freitas concept for alien life, please see <http://www.xenology.info/Papers/Xenobiology.htm>.)

STAR LEAGUE ERA



CLAN INVASION ERA



JIHAD ERA



SUCCESSION WARS ERA



CIVIL WAR ERA



DARK AGE ERA



ATLAS

HEROTITUS

Star Type (Recharge Time): G3IV (184 hours)
Position in System: 2
Time to Jump Point: 8.52 days
Number of Satellites: 0
Surface Gravity: 0.98
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temp: 36°C
Surface Water: 72 percent
Recharging Station: Nadir
HPG Class: B
Highest Native Life: Mammals
Population: 16,631,000 (3067), 29,450,000 (3145)
Socio-Industrial Levels: C-C-B-D-B
Landmasses (Capital City): Baccali, Marpessa
(Fundament), Pomona, Weissholz



Herotitus by all appearances was a gem for its discoverers: several large continents, abundant plant and animal life, huge oceans, abundant fresh water, and long, stable seasons thanks to the elliptical orbit, lack of a natural satellite, and absence of axial tilt. However, the world's appearance was deceptive. Herotitus is a Freitas World, one of very few ever discovered. Life on Herotitus evolved based on different protein structures than life on Terra, making it incompatible with human life, as theorized by xenologist Dr. Robert Freitas prior to interstellar travel. But, while the world's flora and fauna could not eat the new arrivals and vice versa, the native life was both territorially hostile toward and absent of fear for humans. Despite these obstacles, the Taurian Concordat and Magistracy of Canopus joined forces to colonize the world.

Herotitus is a calm, relatively young world. Terrestrial life evolved after the breakup of the world's ancient supercontinent. Thus, the life on each continent is unique compared to the other continents. Overcoming the native life was the first aim of the colonists, that they might replace it with life exploitable for agricultural purposes. Their solution was extermination. Due to native life being carbon based, this destruction still fed the soil. However, incompatibility does not prevent native life from being dangerous. Native life evolved various defensive features that affect Terran life differently than native competitors. The parochial mentality of the colonists also played a factor when they realized the native terrestrial fauna was hermaphroditic. This violated their concept of the natural order, making it palatable to wipe out the world's native animals. This single-mindedness overrode any drive to study the native life for exploitation. It would be centuries before this error was remedied. The colonists' efforts were stopped by the outbreak of the Reunification War.

The Star League might have bypassed Herotitus due to its complete lack of militarization. However, the SLDF established a staging base for troops transiting into the conflict, knowing the locals would not pose a threat after being disarmed. The confiscation of weapons allowed the few remaining patches of forest and grassland to become nature preserves. Subsequent governments tended to maintain these preserves as quaint curiosities.

The sprawling construction on the plains of Marpessa, the southern continent, became Foundation, the capital city. For centuries the SLDF spaceport remained the world's primary site for DropShip traffic. When the war ended, the SLDF disappeared almost overnight. Rumors of a Star League depot left behind against the need to supply a subsequent invasion brought generations of treasure hunters to Herotitus. The primary effect of the SLDF presence was to allow the agrarian society to develop nearly free of outside influence.

The lack of a military allowed various, temporary occupations by Herotitus's neighbors. These were always brief and as a means to support operations elsewhere. For instance, during the Word of Blake Jihad, the Capellan Confederation stationed Warrior House Lu Sann on Herotitus. The Blakists sent their Thirty-fifth Division to eliminate the Capellans, leading to a significant, if one-sided, battle on the continent of Pomona. Mostly, though, Herotitus was allowed to remain independent. This made it a center of trade between the Inner Sphere and its less-trusting Periphery neighbors, as well as a center for mercenary hiring for the Taurian Concordat, the Magistracy of Canopus, and later the Filtvelt Coalition and Fronc Reaches.

The lack of a standing military, though useful in dissuading punitive or longstanding military operations, allowed considerable but rare political fluctuation. For generations, the locals were puritanical and made their

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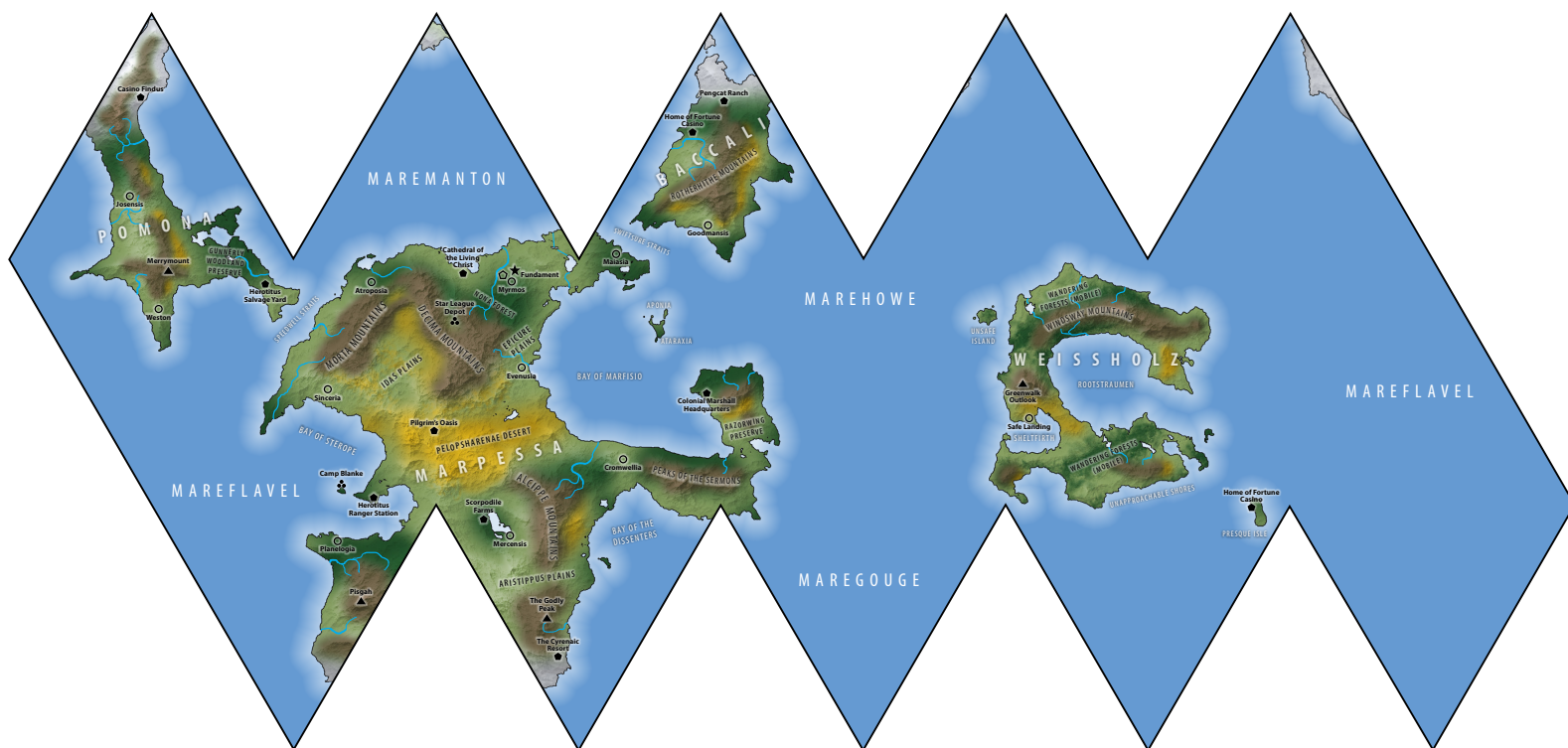
living off the land. Trade was limited to shipping crops off-world in exchange for technological products not manufactured locally. In the late thirtieth century, though, a community of Taurian expatriates called the New Hedons arrived. This group quickly took political control from the peaceful puritans. The New Hedons renamed the capital after their sect, radically transforming it. Brothels, casinos, and other dens of iniquity replaced the markets, museums, and shopping centers that entertained tourists prior to the takeover. The capital resembled a permanent Canopian pleasure circus. Tourist traffic increased exponentially, which led to the rise of organized-crime elements.

The New Hedons ruled Herotitus until the mid-3060s, when the Church of the Living Christ began to take control of the world. Their appeal to the local puritans, who had maintained their agrarian lifestyle outside the New Hedon-controlled cities, provided a considerable base of support. This wave of reform propelled Allison Carver into the presidency of Herotitus. However, her administration was short lived, as she was assassinated in December 3070. Her position remained vacant, due partly to the chaos of the Jihad indirectly affecting the political processes on Herotitus. This power vacuum allowed a pirate infestation to seize complete control of New Hedon in the 3080s, and their control spread to the world's other cities. The pirates renamed the capital Bodrum, after their leader, the self-proclaimed Lord Otto Bodrum. Lord Bodrum controlled the largest pirate band and formed a cabal of pirate leaders who carved the capital into small fiefs. Each lieutenant had to pay monthly tribute, such payment often stolen from the locals. When the SLDF spaceport was seriously damaged during infighting, the more modern but smaller spaceport in the suburb

of Myrmos was expanded to handle the traffic. The world became a hotbed for criminal activity, including slavery. The rapid deterioration forced the Fronc Reaches to fortify their mercenary hiring hall into an embassy guarded by the formidable Colonial Marshals.

A series of internecine conflicts between the pirate bands finally allowed the more peaceable elements of Herotitus society to begin to reclaim control. For a brief time, the Colonial Marshals increased their presence and liberated the whole of Myrmos. This placed the local HPG under their control, along with most of the utilities supplying Bodrum. A strange conflict developed, in which a tense peace was held during the day but erupted into battle for control of territory at night. Impending escalation of hostilities led the Marshals to pull out, given the Reaches' policy of not engaging in battles of conquest. The Marshals handed control to mercenaries hired by the new, Marshals-approved mayor of Myrmos. With mercenary aid—hired, some say, by the Fronc Reaches and acting as its surrogates—the mayor rallied Herotitans to his banner. It took several years, but after one final attempt by the pirates to hold Bodrum with a campaign of murder and intimidation, the dam broke. Full-scale conflict engulfed the city. The pirate presence was eliminated, and a plebiscite was held. The people could have chosen to remain independent; however, the likelihood that another power-hungry despot would seize the world led to an overwhelming vote in favor of joining the Fronc Reaches. The capital was renamed Fundament.

Around this time, revelations of the native life were made public when a lost manuscript from the famed ecological explorer Cyrus Blanke was discovered along with his remains. The earlier blanket effort to eliminate native life precluded a proper ecological study.



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Several species were found to offer exploitable traits. This included using hedgedog pelts for body armor (which the pirates relied on, but obtained the pelts through trapping and killing, rather than harvesting after an annual molting), and draining scorpodile-stinger venom for use in manufacturing batteries. Blanke's manuscript cleared up a centuries-long misapprehension. It had long been believed that the oviparous, scaled creatures populating Herotitus were reptilian; however, Blanke discovered that some of these animals, such as the hedgedog, were actually primitive mammals, specifically monotremes. Among his other discoveries was a complete lack of native, land-based arthropods. This ecological niche is filled by numerous species. He also found that birds had evolved on Herotitus, though none of the native species grow larger than Terran butterflies. In one notable example, the hive-colony razorwings pollinate flowers on Marpessa in place of bees. Blanke confirmed that all nonmarine life is hermaphroditic, with both mates conceiving and producing eggs. Only bird species exhibit any communal behavior; other species encounter one another only for mating, after which they separate to lay their eggs and raise their young (depending on species). Another evolutionary feature that aided the extermination effort is a lack of the sense of smell in all native species. While vision and hearing are particularly acute, the lack of olfactory organs enabled humans to rely on placing large numbers of concealed traps without the trappers needing to conceal their own scent. After Blanke's manuscript was published, conservation efforts were renewed. Lucrative business efforts yielded several innovations over the succeeding decades, particularly in the medical community.

For the first time in history, Herotitus was part of an interstellar nation. The Fronc Reaches quickly established law and order, hunting down and exterminating the last pirate holdouts. The Reaches' secular government tightly regulates organized religion, so a resurgence of religious rule is unlikely. Only the barest remnants of the pleasure industry and seedy-mercenary presence remained once the criminal ownership was driven out. Instead, cottage industries sprang up, both to levy trade from the newly discovered beneficial traits of the local fauna and to ensure employment for hundreds of thousands of displaced peoples. These refugees came in waves after various conflicts, including the Victoria War and the Pirate Wars of the early 3110s. These new arrivals placed a heavy burden on the new government, though accommodating such peoples during and after the Jihad ensured a smoother transition than might be encountered elsewhere. Peace seemed complete, though punctuated by occasional raids. However, during the Pirate Wars, which went almost unnoticed in the Inner Sphere due to the minor impact there, Herotitus was the site of numerous battles large and small. Any pirate band engaged in a raid was likely to be set on by up to half a dozen competitors, each seeking to wipe out the others. No one ever learned how these pirates tracked their fellows, nor why they were so fixated on wiping each other out. In 3112, the largest such engagement in the Fronc Reaches occurred on Herotitus. Robin's Hoods caught and slaughtered an unidentified

pirate band, only for three other battalion-size pirate groups to drop onto them as they were mopping up. Before the Colonial Marshals could reach Pomona to deal with the pirates, the Hoods had crippled the Long Haulers, while the Hate-Filled and the Abominari fought each other to a standstill. The Marshals arrived in time to see the three surviving groups dust off. The site of the battle became the Herotitus Salvage Yard. This huge scrapyards is a destination for many Periphery mercenary groups seeking spare parts for antiquated BattleMechs.

Most of the pleasure industry was dismantled once the world joined the Reaches, though some tightly regulated casinos remain. Herotitus is home to the largest deployment of Colonial Marshals outside Fronc itself. They are a deterrent to criminal enterprises. Mercenary hiring remains a constant source of commerce on Herotitus, though the Reaches claims 5 percent of every contract signed there. Mercenaries are prohibited from disembarking their materiel, though, unless they wish to see it destroyed with extreme prejudice.

The southern continent of Marpessa remains the most developed, housing the major cities including the capital. The mountains and valleys draw considerable adventurism tourists, while the northern continents of Baccali and Pomona are primarily dedicated to farming and ranching, the native life there being almost unknown. The fourth major continent, Weissholz, is nearly devoid of human habitation. Weissholz is home to the Wandering Forests. The trees on Weissholz are migratory, moving in herds to the northern reaches in spring and returning south in autumn. They never occupy the same location twice in a row, preserving the nutrients for future generations. Animals never evolved on Weissholz, or perhaps the trees opposed such habitation. Whatever the case, the forest migrations are the single biggest

tourist attraction on Herotitus, especially for those wishing to see the beginning of the process. Because the seasons lack firm demarcations, the trees' departure can only be roughly predicted. Wealthy tourists take up temporary residence for weeks just to see the onset of the remarkable event.

Weissholz was the site of the titanic battle during the Jihad. Somehow, the Thirty-fifth Division, the Purity of Blood, lured Warrior House Lu Sann to Weissholz in February 3074. The fighting partially interrupted the Tree Walk that autumn, with the oldest, largest trees irresistibly clearing BattleMechs from the path of advance like juggernauts. Rumors of a Blakist depot have lured thousands of treasure hunters to Weissholz, just as the tales of a hidden SLDF bunker did decades prior, always during the Tree Walk. The hope is that the churning of the migrating trees will reveal the rumored bunker. Interfering with the migration poses its own risks, though, as dozens of such fortune seekers disappear each year.

Native life is now both protected and exploited. Hunters no longer kill their prey. Instead, they try to capture the dangerous creatures. Lives are lost every year in the pursuit of lucrative profits. A cadre of forest rangers guards the native flora and fauna while regulating the hunters. They also track down and dispatch poachers with the full endorsement of the Colonial Marshals, who oversee the rangers.



A TIME OF WAR ADVENTURE SEEDS

TREASURE HUNTERS

Recommended Group Size: 4–8 player characters

Recommended Group Type: Mercenary, Pirates, Military

Recommended Skill Levels: Green–Veteran (Key Skill levels of 1–6)

Herotitus historically offers little to those seeking adventure. Sure, those wishing to throw away their money had the casinos and brothels, but those seeking to make a fortune or found a mercenary command had more than sightseeing in mind. More than one powerful military had a base on Herotitus. It's time to stop reading about *others* striking it rich with such finds.

Complications: A few obstacles for players to tackle.

Where Should We Start?: Rumor has it this old local knows the area better than anyone. For a few casino chips, a set of landmarks can be acquired, which will lead to the depot. As soon as the group gets the directions, the old guy wanders off and is accosted by another group of fortune seekers. Looks like a rescue is necessary, if the players are so inclined. Depending on the era, either organized crime or Colonial Marshals will crack down on any fighting, so this has to stay quiet. Either way, at least one other group has the same directions. The race is on!

A Little Healthy Competition: There's never a quiet moment for a treasure hunter on Herotitus. The directions seem legit, but the bounty might have to be shared. Whether following the migrating trees on Weissholz or exploring concrete warrens beneath the capital city (depending on era), the competitors are not going away. Sometimes it's a single large group, other times multiple smaller groups. In either case, everyone wants to find the landmarks first, each one pointing the way to riches. Being first on the scene is not always necessary, as long as you leave with the goods.

I Claim This in the Name of...: The cache is real. It's not as big as hoped, but it's still filled with prime goods. These can be exactly as expected (BattleMechs or other weapons) or completely unexpected (prototype equipment, noncombat materiel, or wildly inventive, such as cryogenically frozen warriors who might not take kindly to being awakened by the seekers). If only those *other guys* hadn't arrived at the same time. They sure don't look like the sharing type....

Tips: This is a perfect chance for the gamemaster to make the adventure into a caper. One or more competing groups start out in the capital, where they get directions from a local. That some other group(s) overhear brings them into conflict with the player group. They race to find various landmarks (especially post-Jihad for the Blakist cache, since the Wandering Forests change the terrain) and get to the cache first, with either outright battles on the way or just missing the other group(s). The final encounter can be a brutal battle or a clever negotiation. It's up to the player group to decide which, but the other group(s) might not be too patient after all that's happened.

GUN RUN (JIHAD ERA THROUGH 3096)

Recommended Group Size: 4 to 8 player characters

Recommended Group Type: Military, Mercenary, Police, Pirate

Recommended Skill Levels: Green–Veteran (Key Skill levels of 1–6)

The pirates who rule Herotitus rely on weapons of all kinds to maintain their hold on power. The pirates running portions of Bodrum use slave labor to produce small arms and ammunition at factories outside the capital, and they have to transport weapons from their outlying factories into the capital. These runs have to be carried out on regular schedules, both to resupply their own stores and to pay tribute to Lord Bodrum. The player group is either hired to complete one such run for a pirate lord or to intercept the run and disrupt the supply.

Complications: A few obstacles for players to tackle.

Wilderness Adventure: The pirate group's factory is hidden deep in the colonist-planted forests outside Bodrum. The roads have been poorly maintained but are patrolled regularly in any case. Getting to and from the factory requires following game trails or blazing new paths. At any moment, criminals of some stripe or other are likely to be encountered, while various transplanted species no longer being overseen by oppressed agriculturists are a constant threat. At least the native monsters can't be found outside their native forests and swamps. Surprise attacks of some kind are all but guaranteed. These can be from rival criminal factions or other groups seeking to disrupt the supply for their own material gain. No one encountered can be trusted... And all this is just to make the pickup?

What Do You Mean We Have to Go in THERE?! The constant harassment from various groups seeking to claim the booty after the pickup forces the pirates to brave one of the native forest preserves. Everyone has heard tales of the horrors that lurk in the native tracts of Herotitus, but those have to be exaggerations, right? The native life might not want to eat the trespassers, but that doesn't mean they look favorably on the intrusion. The player group should expect to encounter some of the native life unique to Herotitus.

City Tour: The pirate group has reached the city. This is the last chance for any potential hijacking of the cargo. In addition to any pursuit, now the boss's competitors in Bodrum have to be evaded.

Tips: Gun Run can be used in multiple ways, with the group either serving or opposing any of the eight primary pirate lords of Bodrum, or even Lord Bodrum himself. The group can be on foot, in vehicles, or in BattleMechs, as can their opposition. It can be a standard quick-turnaround job for unsavory, down-on-their-luck mercs, or a do-or-die attack to prevent the weapons from reaching those who will use them to oppress the locals even more. Perhaps the factory is under attack when the pirates arrive, or maybe a militia group seeks to find the factory and destroy it to liberate its slave labor.

RULES ANNEX

The following section is designed to assist both players and gamemasters with guidelines and reference tables for using Objectives to create games and/or campaign based on the target systems, factories, or cities described herein. The following rules primarily rely on the players' understanding of the core game rules found in *Total Warfare (TW)* and *Tactical Operations (TO)*, but additional references may be made to *Strategic Operations (SO)*.

Players and gamemasters alike should realize that these rules are substantially less rigid than core rules. Players creating tracks and scenarios using the material in this annex are encouraged to accept, modify, or even completely ignore these guidelines if they prove too cumbersome.

USING PLANETARY DATA

The planet in this book was presented with a block of basic planetary data. This data provides key details that players can use to further tailor their gameplay, reflecting the unique features of the world. The following rules identify the core rules that apply, based on the indicated world data.

STAR TYPE, POSITION IN SYSTEM, TIME TO JUMP POINT

These lines are most pertinent to the advanced aerospace aspects of gameplay defined in *Strategic Operations*, and will generally have no impact on games that focus entirely on ground combat.

Star Type identifies the color, size, and stability of the world's primary star, as well as how long an arriving JumpShip requires to charge its K-F drive while in system (when using only its jump sail). Particularly large and/or unstable stars can be prone to odd lighting effects that can affect combat, such as glares and solar flares. Rules for Glare and Solar Flare effects may be found in *Tactical Operations* (see p. 58, TO).

Position in System indicates how many orbital positions away from the star the world orbits; an "orbital position" may be held by other planets or asteroid belts.

The *Time to Jump Point* indicates how many days' worth of travel DropShips accelerating (at 1 G, the same acceleration produced by gravity on Terra) would take to travel from the system's standard zenith or nadir jump points to the world. This transit time includes a midpoint turnover

and 1-G deceleration rate as well, which are standard transit rates to and from most worlds. Longer distances between the world and its local jump point mean longer transit times for incoming vessels and thus more time for local defenders to arrange defenses once they realize there are inbound attackers.

NUMBER OF SATELLITES

This line indicates how many natural satellites (moons) the world has (and their names, if applicable). Many orbital facilities may be found in the Lagrange Points (regions where the gravitational forces between the planet and its moon or moons cancel each other out), and some of these same points (specifically, places near the L1 points) are occasionally used as "pirate points" by daring raiders who wish to radically cut down transit times and local defense preparations. In night combat situations, worlds with one or more moons or rings may produce lighting effects caused by solar reflections off the lunar surfaces (depending, of course, on lunar phases), while worlds without any moons at all may present equally distracting effects. To reflect these possible effects as applicable, see the Full Moon Night, Moonless Night, or Pitch Black rules on p. 58 of *Tactical Operations*.

SURFACE GRAVITY

Surface Gravity has a distinct effect on the performance of virtually all combat units in game play. Values higher than 1.00 reflect worlds where units are significantly heavier than they are under normal Terran gravity, while values lower than 1.00 reflect worlds where units are significantly lighter. The full effects of gravity on combat may be found on p. 55 of *Tactical Operations*.

ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE

This detail describes the relative density and breathability of the local atmosphere, which can have a profound impact on game play if the atmosphere is anything but "Standard (Breathable)." Thin or Thick atmospheres can affect the use of several unit types in gameplay and may even have an impact on weather conditions. Likewise, atmospheres classified as Tainted or Toxic can affect how various combat units function and suffer damage in gameplay. For rules covering Atmospheric Pressure, see pp. 54–55 of *Tactical Operations* for pressure variations, and p. 56 of *Tactical Operations* for Tainted and Toxic Atmosphere effects.



RULES ANNEX

EQUATORIAL TEMPERATURE AND SURFACE WATER

A world's *Equatorial Temperature* helps define whether the world can be broadly classified as hot, warm, or cold by indicating the temperate (in degrees Celsius) it averages at the equator—typically the warmest region on the planet's surface. Temperatures at the north and south pole of most worlds may average as much as 30 degrees colder than at the world's equator, but it is always important to know that local conditions such as weather and terrain can vary these averages somewhat. Nevertheless, the equatorial temperature helps players gauge whether much of the world will likely be arctic, tropical, desert, and so forth. If gameplay falls in regions where temperatures are extreme (below -30°C or above 50°C), Extreme Temperature rules (see p. 62, TO), will apply.

Surface Water reflects the percentage of the world's surface that is covered in water, and essentially defines whether the world might be covered in vast, lifeless wastelands, lush forests or minuscule, rocky islands. Worlds with low Surface Water values (50 percent or less) will rarely see much rainfall or snowfall weather effects, and water or woods features on terrain maps may instead be considered sinkholes, craters, and rough terrain instead to reflect the lack of significant water sources and vegetation. Worlds with higher Surface Water values, meanwhile, will much more likely have active, precipitation-heavy weather patterns and support more water and woods terrain features.

RECHARGING STATION, HPG CLASS, NATIVE LIFE, AND POPULATIONS

These details describe other noteworthy features of a target system that could affect campaigns to greater or lesser degree.

Recharging Stations describes whether a system has any space station capable of recharging a JumpShip's K-F drive (and, if so, at which of the two standard jump points they are located). Recharging stations are often small and fairly unarmed but also act as spaceborne hubs of trade and communication to the local world. Raiders often avoid these stations by taking nonstandard jump points, so their arrival cannot be blown to the locals, but more significant invasions often begin by seizing the local recharge stations instead, to secure effective strategic control over the jump point.

HPG Class defines the presence of a local hyperpulse generator on the planet, indicating its ability to transmit signals to other systems nearby. Such stations are always located on the planetary surface and are largely considered inviolate by all but the most serious attack forces. (Attacking an HPG is still considered a crime against humanity by most civilized realms.) Class A stations reflect major interstellar communications hubs, while Class B stations usually send transmissions in massive bundles less frequently. Although any HPG can send an emergency signal to a nearby system within hours of an attacking force's discovery, many raiders target worlds with Class B stations (or

no stations at all), in the hopes that their arrival will raise the alarm among nearby systems more slowly. Assault forces, meanwhile, may target Class A worlds in an attempt to secure a realm's communications hub and disrupt responses to a border-wide campaign.

Native Life describes (in very basic terms) the highest level of native-born life forms the world has. More life-barren worlds in the Inner Sphere may be host only to microbes or plants, while more evolved planets often host their own species of animal life up to and including mammals. Though this rarely impacts a planetary campaign, it cannot be ignored that many local creatures can pose a threat—or a boon—to raiders and invaders in some circumstances, ranging from being a local source of food in the event of supply shortage, or a hazard to establishing secure perimeters while operating outside of vehicular protection. This detail, however, does not cover introduced species the human population may have imported to the world, so while a target world may be host only to native-born trees, horses originally raised on Terra may yet make an appearance.

Population defines the number of humans estimated to be living on world. Worlds with particularly high populations—those numbering in the billions—are often highly developed, with many major cities. Sparsely populated worlds—with populations in the millions or less—are less likely to have major cities than they are small towns or even tiny outposts and domed arcologies. As a more densely populated world often raises the threat of local armed resistance or merely has more eyes to spot incoming invaders and more voices to raise an alarm, raiders tend to target less populous worlds, while invaders often attempt to secure the greater manpower and infrastructure reflected in high population worlds.

SOCIO-INDUSTRIAL LEVELS

The world's Socio-Industrial Level is a five-letter code used to broadly define the world's level of wealth and development using a series of A–F letter grades. The more A's and B's that appear in this code versus D's and F's will generally denote a world that is more self-sufficient, technologically sophisticated, and resource wealthy than the average. As many of these factors can be used to enhance role-playing aspects of game play, an in-depth explanation of this code structure may be found on pp. 366–373 of *A Time of War*.

LANDMASSES AND CAPITAL CITIES

The major landmasses (continents, regions, and/or island chains) identified on each world are listed, with the planetary capital city listed in parentheses beside the name of the landmass where it is located. Traveling between landmasses often requires the use of high-speed rails (overland), aerospace transit (via DropShips, airships, and other aerospace craft), or seagoing vessels.

OPTIONAL RULES

HEROTITUS FLORA AND FAUNA

The native life on Herotitus is completely incompatible with human life. While many nonnative species have taken over huge swaths of the planet, due to human agricultural efforts, the native species still exist in forest preserves. Native fauna will not leave the borders of native forests, since there is neither prey nor haven in human-controlled areas. The species on Marpessa are the best known, since that continent is the most heavily populated. The following creatures are native to Marpessa and aren't found on the other landmasses. Native fauna on other continents is comparable in that the animals are hermaphroditic and oviparous, sometimes resembling familiar lifeforms but with one or more noteworthy differences, usually of the sort that makes the animal extremely deadly or uniquely adapted to a specific environment. Native flora is also based on this concept. Trees might look like Terran trees but have some strange adaptation. Other trees resemble tentacled beasts. The hydrant trees on Marpessa prevent forest fires, while the Walking Trees on Weissholz have motile roots that allow entire forests to migrate with the seasons.

HEDGEDOG

The hedgedog is a strange creature unlike any other on Herotitus. Its hide is especially prized, not for its appearance but for use as natural body armor. The mottled brown and green hide is a combination of thick scales and interwoven fibrous hairs, like a natural Kevlar reinforced with armor plates. The hedgedog also has defensive spikes that emerge from iris-like pores on the outer scaly surface. The hedgedog has both excellent vision and hearing. Instead of ears, an array of fine wirelike protrusions emerge from shell-like wells on its skull. These protrusions vibrate at a given frequency, allowing the hedgedog to detect sounds

across a huge range of volume and from great ranges. Hedgedog eyes possess multiple lenses, which are nictitated into place for telescopic vision and away for close observation. Otherwise, the hedgedog is very similar to Terran dogs in size, temperament, and intelligence. As with other native life, the hedgedog reproduces via egg-laying, though these monotremes are one of the few species which raise their young from hatchling to young adulthood; because the hedgedog is hermaphroditic, though, each serves as a single parent for its clutch of young. Their hides can be acquired by killing and skinning the animal, or by wandering the forests or swamps after molting season and simply gathering entire hides. Though rare, some hedgedogs have been known to bond with humans, but only in cases in which the person was present at the hatching of the animal, which mistakes the person for its parent. The vocalizations of hedgedogs vary from nearly subsonic vibrations, used as a warning mechanism to threats and family alike, to shrieks resembling human baby cries in times of great distress.

Creature Name: Hedgedog

Mass (kg): 35

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
3	4	2	6	5	3	3

Size Class (Modifier): Small (-1)

BAR (M/B/E/X): 6/6/2/3 (Fibrous Armored Hide)

Damage (AP/BD): 1M/1

Move (W/R/S): 8/20/70

Traits: Thick-Skinned

Skills (A/P/T): +3/+5/+3



OPTIONAL RULES

SCORPODILE

The scorpodile is both the largest and most fearsome land animal on Herotitus. No one knows what led to the evolution of its tail stinger; most likely the early colonists wiped out whatever natural enemy the scorpodile once had. The scorpodile possesses similar appearance, size, and powerful bite as crocodilians on other worlds. However, while crocodilians are often susceptible to attack from above, the scorpodile's tail vertebrae are ball socketed, allowing the tail to move side to side for propulsion in water and curl upward for attack against potential threats. The venom is a horrific natural form of thionyl chloride. This substance is both toxic and corrosive, causing a quick and painful death. However, this substance is also useful in batteries, leading some brave souls to trap and milk scorpodiles for the local cottage industry of battery manufacturing. Scorpodiles are ambush attackers, preferring to float in stagnant pools of Herotitan swamps, indistinguishable from a log.

Creature Name: Scorpodile

Mass (kg): 100–1000 (adult)

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
15	15	2	2	2	5	1

Size Class (Modifier): Large (+1)

BAR (M/B/E/X): 2/2/1/1 (Scaled Hide)

Damage (AP/BD): 2M/4

Move (W/R/S): 10/20 (Swimming)

Traits: Armor (+2), Camouflage (+2), Poisonous

Skills (A/P/T): +4/+3/+1

Notes: Poisonous (Injection (via attack); Drug Strength 20; Duration 1/ dose; Base Price 50; Equipment Rating A/D/D. Notes: Poison Resistance not effective; Corrosive; Lethal; Continuous.)

RAZORWING

The razorwing is one of the bird species of Herotitus. Razorwings fill the ecological niche of honeybees (pollinating flowers) and are of similarly small size. Razorwings live in large, communal, hive-like nests, which they defend fiercely. The hives are normally found in an otherwise animal-free zone surrounded by a blanket of flowering plants. Individual razorwings called sentinels fly a patrol route at the extent of the hive's territory, seeking to drive off encroaching creatures. They do this with a slashing attack of their wingtips, which are only a few nanometers across. These ultrafine wingtips slice through flesh and clothing with ease. While this is sufficient to deter native life, the razorwing is deadly to humans. The preening fluid used to hone the wingtip points is inert to native life, but it is both a powerful anesthetic and an incredibly potent anticoagulant. The former property ensures that when someone is sliced, they don't even know it. Thus, humans usually miss the warning attack of the sentinels. However, once the sentinel is bypassed or attacked, the hive attacks the intruder en masse. One slice from a razorwing has been known to bleed for hours, despite its small size and depth. When hundreds or thousands of the birds attack, humans usually die a quick, awful death from exsanguination via wounds that won't stop bleeding. Only high doses of pro-coagulants might save the victim. Of note, though, is that the few persons who have survived high doses experience a permanent change to their blood chemistry. These individuals never suffer strokes or thrombosis, though the severe blood loss can result in permanent brain damage or other organ deterioration.

Creature Name: Razorwing

Mass (kg): 0.005 (adult)

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
0	1	3	3	1	1	1

Size Class (Modifier): Tiny (−4)

BAR (M/B/E/X): 0/0/0/0 (No armor)

Damage (AP/BD): 1M/1

Move (W/R/S): 5/10 (Flight)

Traits: Aggressive, Good Vision (+4), Flight (+1), Poisonous

Skills (A/P/T): +1/+3/+1

Notes: Swarm (10D10), Poisonous (Injection/Contact (via attack); Drug Strength 1 (compounded per dose); Duration 1/dose; Base Price 10; Equipment Rating B/C/C. Notes: Poison Resistance not effective; Causes 1 damage (via blood loss) per dose; Only pro-coagulant injection of equal dosage can stop blood loss. Blood transfusions can delay death, but only dialysis can remove sufficient poison to end blood loss.)

HEROTITUS TERRAIN

The terrain on Herotitus is just as diverse as any found on Terra, so p. 263 of *Total Warfare* is a reasonable representation of most of the world's terrain.

