

UNCHARTED TERRITORY

DINOSAURS AND PSIONICS:

THE PROTO-PSYKERS

BY: FRED BUSH

ILLUSTRATED BY: TIM BURGARD, NOEL MURPHY & V. SHANE

Dinosaur Planet: Broncosaurus Rex is a science fiction world combining dinosaurs, the wild west, space travel and the Civil War. Published by Goodman Games, it incorporates an unusual perspective on dinosaurs as intelligent, strategic, tool-using creatures. This article, which is all new material exclusive to Gaming Frontiers, expands upon the protoceratoms, distant cousins of the triceratoms and one of the most intelligent species on the "dinosaur planet" of Cretasus. For more information, check out www.broncosaurusrex.com.

In the world of Dinosaur Planet: Broncosaurus Rex, the basic principles of psionics were theorized by Jack Campbell, the Confederate polymath machinist who also developed, along with Dean, the interstellar drive responsible for Confederate space expansion. Campbell's catalog of psychic powers was one of his many theories which remained unproven until long after his death. In fact, for years after coming face-to-face with psychic creatures on the so-called Dinosaur Planet of Cretasus, humans didn't realize what was going on right under their minds.

It's well known that dinosaur cries and rumblings travel for miles, and can even cross from valley to valley on occasion. Thus it went unnoticed for some time that raptor tribes from across the planet might display deep knowledge of new Confederate military tactics the instant they were developed; or that protoceratoms linguists who had never before been in contact with humans would greet explorers in perfect Common. Scientists scoffed at stories of tyrannosaur "tyrant kings" striking their foes dead with a curse from miles away. Few believed Professor Calhoun Carey when he claimed to have had a heart-to-heart mental conversation with a wise old pteranodon; the chair of Grant University publicly suggested that the whole experience was caused not by psychic powers, but psychoactive powers, notably some bad mushrooms.

Cretasus dinosaurs are clever, sneaky, and often very dangerous. The planet itself remains largely unexplored and unmapped, and the perpetual skirmishing between the Union and the Confederacy makes it difficult for researchers to undertake a

leisurely and thorough study of dinosaurs in their natural habitats. All of these factors contributed to the belated discovery of strange powers among the dinosaurs.

A bizarre incident involving the alien Scray finally revealed the existence of these strange powers. Hunters discovered a small group of the enigmatic aliens beset by an entire tribe of protoceratoms. The usually peaceful dinos were stamping, hooting, and throwing themselves at the Scray in a berserk fury. Despite the terrible Scray beam weapons and powerful shield technology, most of the aliens had been torn to pieces by the time the hunters arrived. The hunters managed to destroy the maddened protoceratoms, and the grateful surviving Scray gave the hunters several strange weapons. Lab analysis on one of these devices revealed that the cerebrospinal fluid of live protoceratoms was an important facet in the weapons manufacture: the Scray had been a scavenging party, seeking the raw materials to construct more of these weapons. Unluckily for them, the protoceratoms realized what they were doing and took their revenge for the violation of their kindred.

Once the psychic potential of the protoceratoms mind was established, experiments on captured protoceratoms began in earnest, and still continue. Cretasus' protoceratoms are, as far as paleontologists and biologists can tell, altered versions of Earth protoceratoms. Professor Carey has suggested that the protoceratoms may have been modified by the Scray precisely to produce the fluid necessary to power their psionic weapons, becoming a sort of living refinery of psychic energy. While the Confederacy has banned experimentation on the brains of live protoceratoms, there are rumors of a heavily guarded lead-shielded cavern just south of Fort Lincoln where the Union carries out tests involving protoceratoms, schizophrenics and quartz crystals. "The Jangled Night", where every citizen in Fort Lincoln awoke screaming in the throes of nightmare, is proof that the Union hasn't yet figured out how to master psionic powers, but they keep trying.



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PSIONICS WITHIN PROTCERATOMS SOCIETY

Protoceratoms are usually quite chatty, but on the subject of psionics they refuse to talk, recognizing perhaps that their abilities are a great advantage in the struggle for survival and the less said about them the better. While other dinosaur species have been rumored to possess psionic powers, none of them have such a



systematic integration of psionics into their tribal structure as do the protoceratops, nor do they use their powers so carefully to protect the race. Among other dinosaurs, psionics are the province of the hermit and the outsider; among protoceratops, the tribe as a whole benefits from their talents.

One of the few things protoceratops will say about their powers is that they view psionics as a talent like any other, possessed by the entire species to a greater or lesser degree. They compare it to the ability to stand on two legs (tricky, for a squat, dense quadruped), or keeping a good poker face.

Most protoceratops don't have any useful psionic powers, although they do share an empathetic understanding and emotional link with other protoceratops of their tribe even deeper than that of most humans with their family. Perhaps it is these deep emotional ties which give them the potential to manifest the more startling psychic powers.

Those protoceratops who are naturally gifted with psionic powers, and those who choose to further develop their inborn talents, are venerated within the tribe, revered both as a source of wisdom and a disciplined master of a difficult science. Mastery of psionics is known as the "path of the inner horn," contrasted to the outer, bony shell and horn which is the chief characteristic of other protoceratops. Indeed, the beaks and bony crests of psionic protoceratops are usually noticeably weaker and smaller than those of their brothers. As protoceratops expand their psionic powers, they develop control over their skeletal growth and structure, and often expand their skulls, at the expense of their bony crest and horned

beak. Thus, they are slightly weaker and less dangerous in melee combat than the average protoceratops. Others sculpt their horns into ornate, runic patterns, but this is often viewed as showy and ostentatious.

The best-known way of following the Path of the Inner Horn is the way of root and cave. Protoceratops bring themselves into the deep caves where generations of their ancestors have dwelt, and spend years without leaving the chamber. After months have passed, they grow unable to move, and are said to have sunk roots into the ground. Other protoceratops bring food and water, and also line the cave with reflective stone, which apparently aids in concentration. Finally, the protoceratops experiences an inward revelation, the Radiance, that is expressed in a blinding flash of light that sets the reflective stones aglitter. (These stones sometimes retain psionic energies after the Radiance of a particularly powerful protoceratops.) The psionic, now known as a Luminary, then emerges to reassume a place in society.

A Luminary retains a link to the chamber where she attained Radiance, and her powers are enhanced while she remains within the chamber. Often a Luminary spends much time underground further perfecting her powers and aiding the tribe by observing far places within the chamber of Radiance. Luminaries always sparkle when they use their powers, and someone who is watching carefully will detect a faint, telltale glow over the entire body of the creature when it performs an extraordinary task.

Luminaries often serve as a connecting link between distant tribes, and they are prized for their ability to communicate and share knowledge with other protoceratops hundreds of miles from their tribe. They are also shrewd negotiators, due to their ability to read minds, although they are cagey and never reveal their abilities to an unsuspecting adversary, often staying in the background while other protoceratops do the talking, advising them secretly with telepathic communications.

Luminaries rarely use their powers for combat, since their abilities can do little more than send a foe reeling. Their tribe will usually not permit them to risk themselves in battle, and only if the tribe is threatened with extermination will a Luminary emerge from the caves to do battle. Nevertheless, if a tribe is attacked by a single large dinosaur, sometimes a Luminary will sally forth and attempt to slow down the foe so that the other protoceratops can overwhelm it.

While Luminaries can see quite a long distance, they are unable to penetrate the thick armored walls of military facilities and cave complexes. Alien ruins and spacecraft incorporate psi-dampeners, further limiting their powers. Vehicles with metal walls and even ordinary houses can sometimes defeat their skills. However, there is little that happens on the surface of Cretasus that is not eventually observed by the protoceratops, and they sometimes share this information with triceratops herds or raptor tribes. It is thought that large human hunting parties which return empty-handed are sometimes the victims of protoceratops warning their prey.

Humans have also begun to suspect the presence of a Cretasus-wide network of psychic dinosaurs, whose ultimate goal is unknown. This group, whose name translates as "The Circle of Scale and Bone," is supposedly headed by a thousand-year-old protoceratops living deep underground, near the planet's core, who convenes a psychic council at least once a year. The ultimate goals of the Circle are unknown. The raptor shaman who told this story was soon smothered by moths, a bizarre fate which suggests that she might just have been telling the truth.

PSIONIC PROTOCERATOPS

Medium Animal

Hit Dice: 2d10+6 (19 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 20 ft.

AC: 16 front (+6 natural), 13 flank (+3 natural)

Attacks: Beak +4 melee

Damage: Beak 1d6 +2

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Psionics

Special Qualities: Scent

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +11

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 16

Skills: Bluff +8, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +6, Intuit Direction +4, Knowledge (nature, dinosaurs, psionics, geography, history, local, human society) +8, Psicraft +6, Sense Motive +12, Speak Language (1d4 languages), Spot +6, Wilderness Lore +10

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organization: Solitary or pair, sometimes within a tribe of normal protoceratops

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: often Lawful Good

Advancement: By character class (always psion)



Special Qualities:

Telepathy (Su): The protoceratops can communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 feet that has a language.

Use these descriptions of abilities if you don't own the Psionics Handbook (published by Wizards of the Coast):

Creature Empathy (Sp): The protoceratops can detect the surface emotion of any creature it can see within 100 feet.

Mental Link (Sp): Once per day, the protoceratops can establish telepathic communications with a willing participant within 100 feet, and maintain that communications for an hour no matter how far apart the two travel. Once a protoceratops has performed a mental link, it can use its mental link ability to link to that creature again on another day, no matter how far apart the two are, if both are willing.

Mind Strike (Sp): The protoceratops targets one victim within 50 feet and makes an attack roll with a +6 bonus, which becomes the DC for the victim's will save. On a failed saving throw, the victim is stunned for 1d4 rounds.

Light (Sp): As the spell, cast by a 6th level priest.

Use these stats if you own the Psionics Handbook:

Psionics (Sp): At will—my light, empathy, lesser mental link. These abilities are as the powers manifested by a 6th level psion.

Attack/Defense Modes (Sp): At will—Mind Thrust, Empty Mind

Individual protoceratops are quite capable of the discipline it takes to develop their talents. The way of cave and root leads protoceratops to become psions in the schools of clairsentience or telepathy. The head of the Circle of Scale and Bone has mastered the metaconcert ability.

NEW PSIONIC POWERS FOR PROTOCERATOPS

REPTILE MIND

Telepathy (Cha)

Level: Psion 3

Display: Au

Manifestation Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft + 10 ft./level)

Target: One mammal, reptile, or bird

Duration: 10 minutes/level (D)

Saving Throw: Will negates

Power Resistance: Yes

Power Points: 5

Protoceratops use this ability to tap into the primeval reptilian realms of the mind. The subject is engulfed by reptilian thoughts and reverts to ancestral instincts. The subject becomes quadrupedal. Any subject not naturally quadrupedal is now prone, suffering a -4 penalty to melee attack rolls, and is unable to use a lasso. Melee attacks against a prone character have a +4 bonus, and ranged attacks against a prone character have a -4 penalty. Movement rates for non-quadrupeds are cut to a third (crawling). The subject gains the descriptor: Animal.

The subject can choose either to battle the effect or to let animal instincts take over. A subject which gives in to its animal instincts is able to move at normal speed, use natural weapons without penalty, and no longer has an armor class bonus or penalty for being prone. However, the subject loses the ability to manipulate objects with hands, to read and speak, and to understand technological devices. The subject loses its non-psionic buffer, and in addition gets a -4 penalty to Will saves to resist further protoceratops psionics.

A subject which fights the effect can attempt a new saving throw versus the effect as a full-round action every three rounds. Meanwhile, the subject can also attempt normal actions, but all actions which involve speech, a bipedal stance, or the use of hands become one step more time-consuming (talking becomes a partial action instead of a free action, and firing a gun becomes a full-round action instead of a move-equivalent action.) The subject maintains the penalties for being prone.

RUNESPEAK

Clairsentience (Wis)

Level: Psion 2

Display: Au, Me

Manifestation Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: Carved or written message

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute/level or 1 question/level

Saving Throw: None

Power Resistance: No

Power Points: 2

Lovers of learning, protoceratops maintain vast historical records carved with their beaks on the walls of caves. The protoceratops use the runespeak ability to fully understand the nuances and intentions of a written document by reading the psychic residues left behind by the writer. Runespeak works on protoceratops carvings, as well as handwritten or painted messages of any kind, but not on printed or typewritten matter or on non-linguistic works like sculptures. The psionic is able to understand and analyze the thoughts and intentions of the creator of the document.

It takes one round of concentration to determine the feelings of the writer when they wrote the document (like empathy) and two rounds to read the surface thoughts of the writer (like detect thoughts.) Furthermore, a psionic can use this ability to ask questions relating to the document. This represents the ability to discern stray thought patterns entwined with the writing. The psionic can ask one question per level, and the questions must be related to the message in some form, or there will be no answer. The writer will "answer" to the best of their knowledge, although the GM has the final say on what the writer might or might not know, and the writer is not always correct.

BASK

Psychometabolism (Str)

Level: Psion 1

Display: OI

Manifestation Time: 1 minute

Range: Personal

Target: You (Protoceratops)

Duration: Until interrupted by darkness or movement (D)

Power Points: 1/hour

The protoceratops use this ability to relax in the sunlight and focus their mental strength. This ability can only be used while motionless in direct sunlight or in the chamber where the protoceratops attained Radiance. As long as these conditions are met, the psionic gains a +1 circumstance bonus to the use of all psionic powers, and is considered to have the feat Empower Psionics for all applicable powers, effectively doubling their range. In addition, the psionic heals 2 hit points per full hour of basking. However, the psionic is sluggish and torpid after emerging from basking, and upon emerging is slowed for a number of minutes equal to the number of hours spent basking. All lizard psions can learn this power, even though it's normally limited only to Egoists.

PSIONIC WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

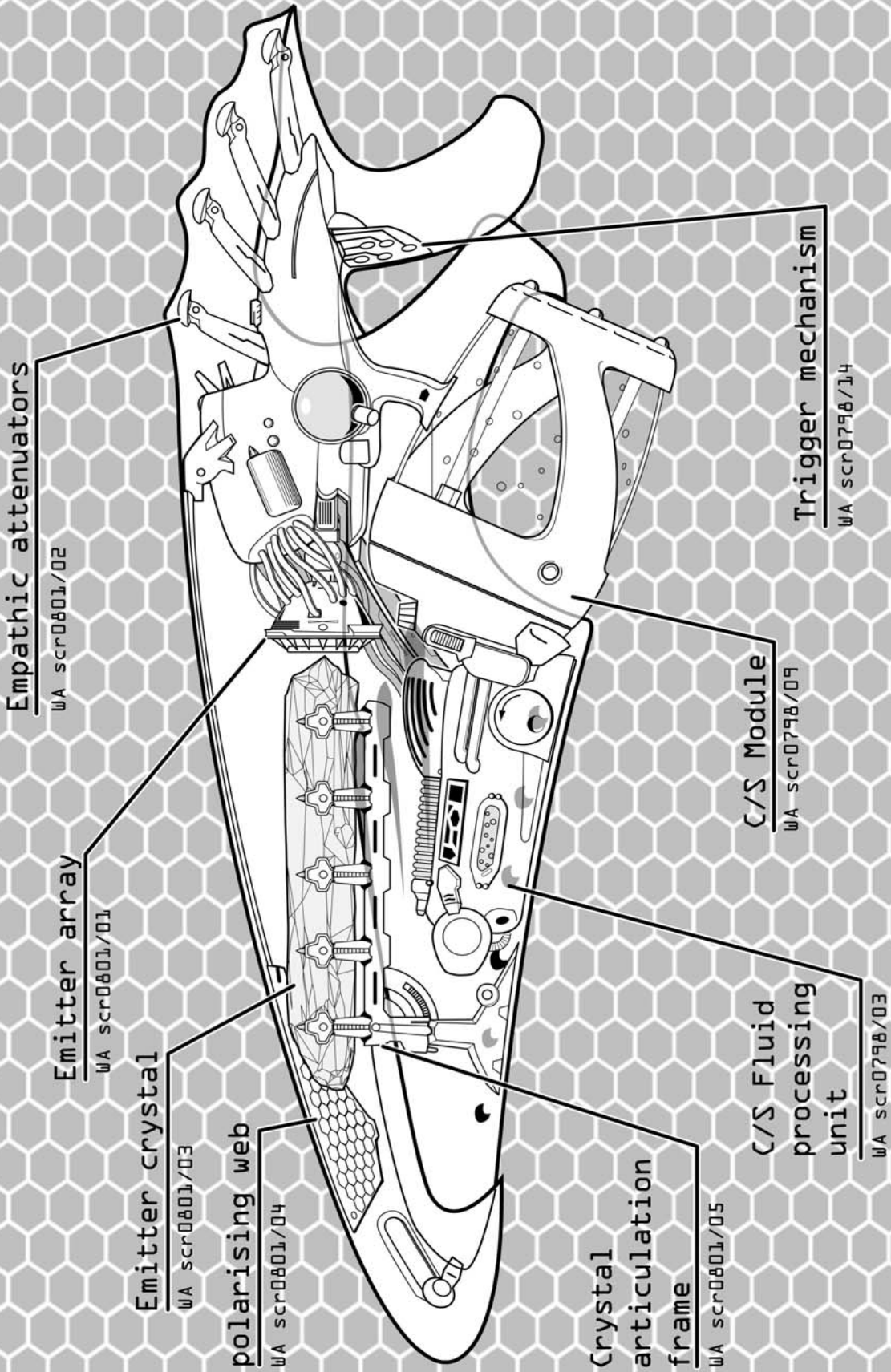
Intense study of the Scray weapons has revealed the characteristics of the Shiverbeam and the Amnesia Rifle. Although these weapons do little physical damage, they both have the ability to stop a charging dino (or Union Ironclad) in its tracks and are nearly priceless. However, they rely on the brain fluid of living organisms to function, which might cause some raised eyebrows were it widely known.

Shiverbeam: The Shiverbeam taps into primal fear reflexes. A C/S module powers it for 20 shots. Like all psionic devices, it's crystalline. It has a smooth black finish that catches the eye. When activated, it emits a high-pitched whine. The Shiverbeam fires an invisible ray, hitting its target with a successful ranged touch attack. The target must make a Will saving throw (DC 18) or be panicked for 2d4 rounds, then shaken for 2d10 minutes, and suffer 1d4 points of temporary Wisdom damage. If the save is made, the target is shaken for 2d4 rounds and suffers 1d2 points of temporary Wisdom damage. A target with psionic powers gets a +4 competence bonus to its save.

Amnesia Rifle: This beam weapon scrambles memory patterns and causes victims to forget who and what they are for a time. A C/S module powers it for 15 shots. Like all psionic devices, it's crystalline. The Amnesia Rifle splits light like a prism. When activated, colored lights play around the rifle's clear quartz-like exterior. The Amnesia Rifle fires an invisible ray, hitting its target with a successful ranged touch attack. The target must make a Will saving throw (DC 18) or be confused for 1d6 rounds, and completely unable to remember who and what they are, although able to defend themselves normally. This amnesia is potentially permanent. The target suffers a -2 circumstance penalty on all actions except saving throws, and cannot use a Knowledge skill. A new save can be attempted once an hour; a successful result means that the target regains all lost memories, although a cruel game master can rule that the target has permanently forgotten some small bit of knowledge. A target who succeeds in the initial save is dazed for one round and slightly discombobulated, suffering a -2 cumulative circumstance penalty to future attacks from the Amnesia Rifle within a 24 hour period. A target with psionic powers gets a +4 competence bonus to its save.

C/S Module: Warm to the touch, these sophisticated storage tanks preserve cerebrospinal fluid from psionic creatures and are used to power Scray psionic weapons. An empty C/S module will preserve any biological sample.

SCRAY "SHIVERBEAM" WEAPON ANALYSIS



ALIEN WEAPONS—RANGED

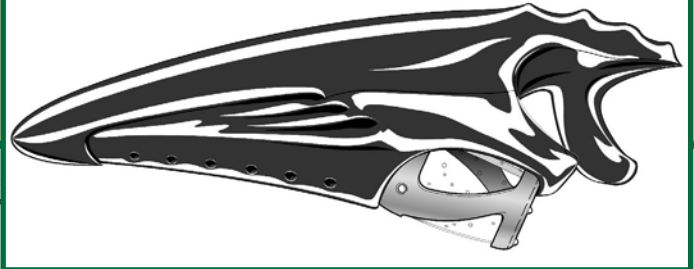
Weapon	Size	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Targeting Range*	Weight	TL*	Type
Shiverbeam	M	3,000	**	**	40 ft.	30 ft.	20 lb.	16	Special
Amnesia Rifle	M	4,000	**	**	100 ft.	70 ft.	15 lb.	16	Special

* Targeting Range and Tech Level are fully explained in the *Dinosaur Planet: Broncosaurus Rex Core Rulebook*.

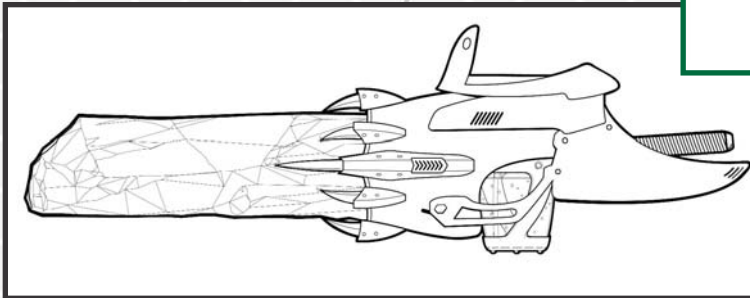
** See description.

EQUIPMENT

Item	Cost	Weight	Tech Level
C/S Module	500	1 lb.	16



SHIVERBEAM



AMNESIA RIFLE

R&D Section 12 /scr-0801

NPCS

CADMON THE SEEKER

Protoceratops Psi(Ego)6

Sz M (animal)

Hit Dice: 2d10 + 6d4 + 32; (58hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 20

AC: 22 (+8 natural, +4 inertial armor) front, 17 (+3 natural, +4 inertial armor) flank

Attacks: Horn +7 (1d8 + 4 + 1 [talons] + 1d4 [psionic fist] + 1d8 subdual [painful touch])

Face/Reach: 5 ft. x 5 Ft / 5 ft.

Special Qualities: Scent, Psionics

Saves: Fort +11 Ref +5 Will +16

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 15

Alignment: LN

Skills: Autohypnosis +10, Bluff +8, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +8, Intuit Direction +4, Knowledge (nature, dinosaurs, psionics, geography, history, local, human society) +8, Psicraft +12, Sense Motive +8, Speak Language (Common, Scray, Protoceratops, Raptor), Spot +10, Wilderness Lore +12

Feats: Inertial Armor, Psionic Fist, Psychoanalyst, Psychic Inquisitor

Power Points: 24

Powers: Ego Whip, Empty Mind, Mind Thrust, Thought Shield, Tower of Iron Will, Mental Barrier, Mind Blast, Burst, Elfsight, Lesser Natural Armor, Talons, Stomp, Spider Climb, Body Adjustment, Painful Touch, Reptile Mind, Displacement.

Cadmon is a rare protoceratops who focuses on physical techniques rather than mental. After his siblings were “harvested” by the Scray, he dedicated himself to learning powerful mental disciplines to stop them, and has developed an impressive group of abilities to help him accomplish his task. Right now he hunts down and kills humans involved in experiments on protoceratops, and stays on the lookout for Scray, who are too dangerous for him to tackle on his own. He usually works with local raptor tribes to stop the Scray.



He’s not that subtle for a protoceratops; he’ll often ask people straight out if they’re mucking around with dino brains, since his psychic inquisitor feat prevents people from lying to him. He uses his elfsight ability for its darkvision, and his ability to spider climb to surprise his foes. He uses his mind blast ability mind-flayer-style to take out groups of opponents, and stalks single opponents using his displacer-beast-like displacement ability to avoid damage. If necessary, he uses his Body Adjustment to heal himself of 3d6 points of damage. If you don’t have the Psionics Handbook, you can just let Cadmon use his powers one per round, for a total of 25 rounds of powers/used. His feats are always active; his powers can only be activated once a round.

Cadmon is a strapping young protoceratops, much larger than usual. He does not anger easily, but if he does get angry he bears a long grudge. He frequently bumps into people and tramples smaller animals in his eagerness to seek his prey. He speaks with a slight lisp.

UMBA THE PEREGRINE, SEER OF THE WHITE HILLS

Protoceratops Psi(See)8

Sz M (animal)

Hit Dice: 2d10 + 8d4 + 20; (41hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 20

AC: 16 (+6 natural) front, 13 (+3 natural) flank

Attacks: Horn +6 (1d8 + 3)

Face/Reach: 5 ft. x 5 Ft / 5 ft.

Special Qualities: Scent, Psionics

Saves: Fort +12 Ref +6 Will +17

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 19, Wis 20, Cha 19

Alignment: LG

Skills: Bluff +10, Concentration +12, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +10, Intuit Direction +8, Knowledge (nature, dinosaurs, psionics, geography, history, local, human society) +12, Psicraft +15, Sense Motive +12, Speak Language (Common, Raptor, Protoceratops, Allosaur, Tyrannosaur), Spot +15, Wilderness Lore +10

Feats: Inner Strength (x3)

Power Points: 52

Powers: Ego Whip, Empty Mind, Mind Thrust, Thought Shield, Tower of Iron Will, Mental Barrier, Psychic Crush, Detect Psionics, Inking, Catfall, Missive, Telepathic Projection, Float, Know Location, Bask, Object Reading, Psycholuminescence, Sense Link, Augury, Clairaudience/Clairvoyance, Sensitivity to Psychic Impressions, Runespeak, Remote Viewing, Dimensional Slide, *Divination, *Teleport

Umba, seer of the White Hills, went too far in her attempts to master the ability of teleportation and went mad as a result. Unable to control her teleportation, she travels wildly from place to place, at the whim of fate. She never appears in a location that's being observed, but she always appears within 50 feet of a sentient creature. This means she's constantly popping into hidden corners and nooks and crannies, emerging from chimneys and holes in the ground, and rising from bathtubs and small ponds. Umba is slowly losing control of her other abilities as well: her divination ability now kicks in whenever she's asked a direct question, and she whirls around prophesying wherever she goes.

Umba has never teleported offworld, although she's seen most of Cretasus' valleys by this point. She's pretty much given up on living a normal life, and has taken to attempting to rhyme her prophesies, just for the heck of it. She's often ravenously hungry, since there's no telling if she'll be near food after a teleport, and she has learned to take meals (and baths) as they come.

Umba always has a slightly glazed look on her face, and is often mumbling to herself in an obscure dialect. She is quite friendly, and will attempt to talk to any peaceful folk who appear near her. Whether they can make head or tail of her doggerel prophecies is another matter.

Using these rules for other D20 products

Dinosaurs in the Broncosaurus Rex game are much smarter, more organized, and more mysterious than your typical beast. They have similarities to D&D's dragons and pseudodragon, Cthulhoid lizard-beasts, and Deadlands horrors. In general, adding psionics to a physically weak race can allow them to challenge overconfident and physically-powerful PCs in possibly unexpected ways. In science fiction games, it gives non-tool using sentients an "equalizer" against powerful weapons.

