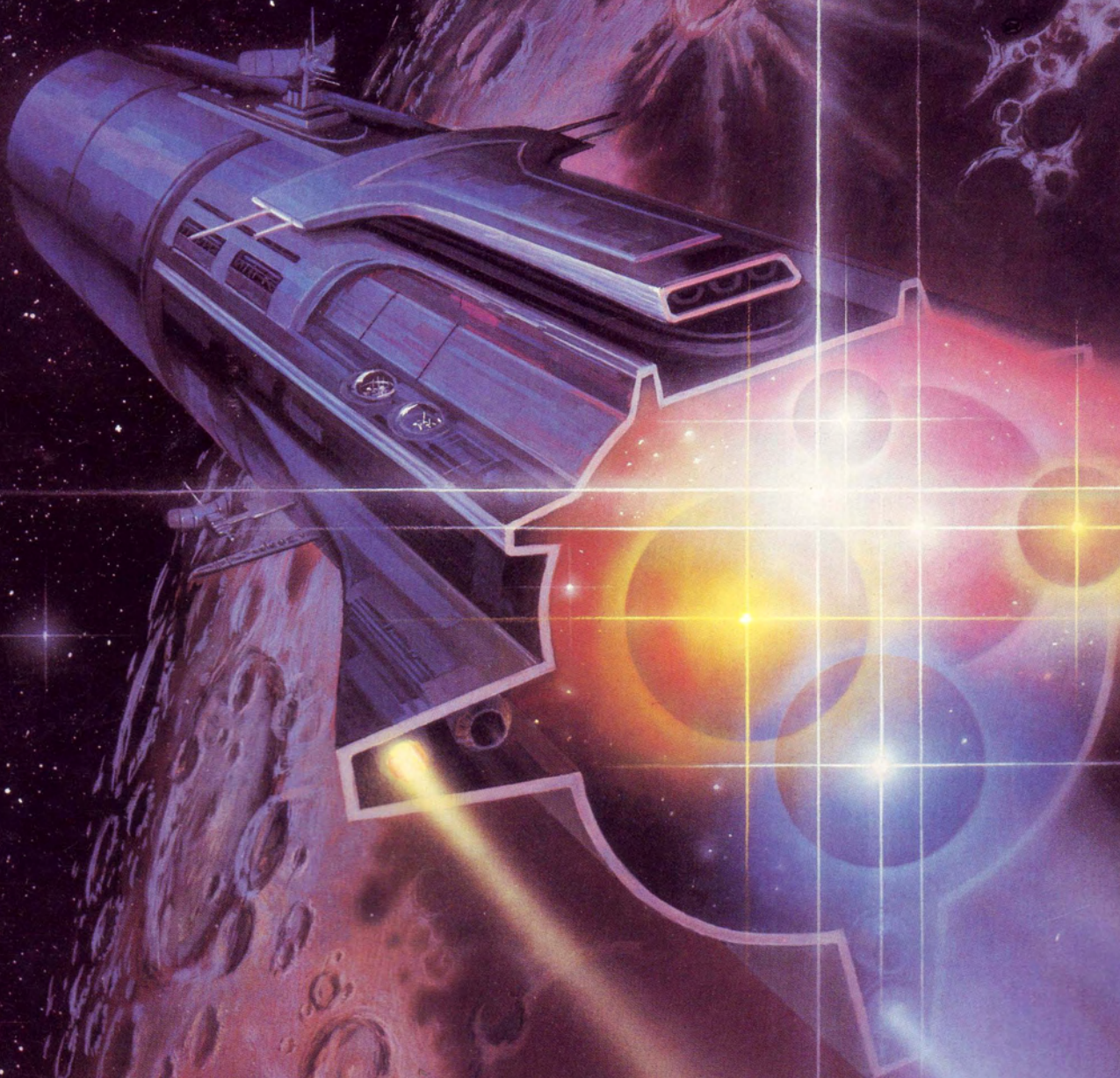


GURPS® Space SPACE ATLAS 2

A Guide to the Corporate Worlds



STEVE JACKSON GAMES

GURPS® SPACE ATLAS 2

The Corporate Worlds Sector *A Compendium of Worlds for Interstellar Roleplaying*

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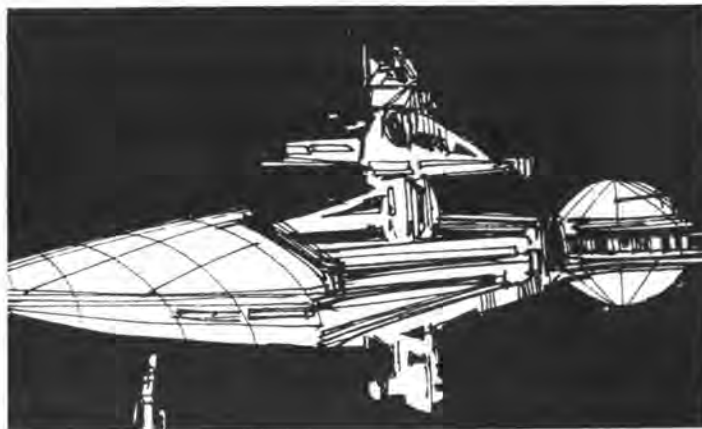
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Using This Book

Space Atlas 2 contains 25 Planetary Records, which the GM may photocopy and hand to his players when they are seeking information about a planet. This is the "publically available information" that would be contained in any standard database.

The GM should *not* show the pages of text to the players. Instead, he should give them only as much of this information as he thinks their backgrounds — or later investigations and experience — entitle them to. In general, the players can be told the general history of each world, but not all the details of its present situation. Material marked "GM's Information," and the material given as adventure ideas for each planet, should definitely remain confidential.



STEVE JACKSON GAMES

INTRODUCTION

World Maps

The world maps use the system given in *GURPS Space* — an “equal-area icosahedral” projection. Each hex represents the same amount of space. The size of a hex depends on the size of the planet. Multiply the world’s diameter by .07 to determine the distance across one hex.

Unless specified otherwise, the north pole is at the top of the map, in the hex formed by the joining of the five points. Because this tends to splinter the polar areas, a circular area centered on the North Pole is also shown at the top of the map, and an area centered on the South Pole is shown at the bottom.

The zero meridian line and the equator are shown as dashed lines. Lighter dashed lines connect hexes that are divided on the map. If this map were cut out and folded up, it would form a 20-sided “globe.”

Specific points of interest are shown by a letter, keyed to text. Note that if (for instance) a town and starport symbol appear in adjacent hexes, the starport is actually in the town hex unless the description says otherwise.

Map Key

This key shows suggested colors, for those making their own maps, and standard black-and-white symbols.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Ocean: |  |
| Dark blue | |
| Freshwater Sea: |  |
| Light blue | |
| Marsh/Swamp: |  |
| Yellow-green | |
| Plain/Steppe: |  |
| Light green | |
| Icy/Barren: |  |
| White | |
| Mountain/Volcanic: |  |
| Dark brown | |
| Hilly/Rough: |  |
| Light brown | |
| Forest/Jungle: |  |
| Dark green | |
| Desert/Barren: |  |
| Rust-red | |
| Urban/Populated: |  |
| Crosshatched lines | |
| Major city |  |
| Capital |  |
| Restricted area |  |
| Important starport |  |

This book includes descriptions of 25 worlds in their respective star systems. The material is designed to fit into any interstellar campaign, but all were designed with a “corporate state” theme in mind. They are individual entities; you can link them as you choose. Some adventure seeds, however, are provided which link two or more of the worlds. If you want to use the entire “Corporate Worlds Sector,” we’ve provided maps (see pp. 9-11) so you can do so. Other worlds of your own design may be added as well.

Format

Each listing provides detailed information on the world, along with general information about its star and the other planets in the system. These are the facts that should prove most important to starfarers initially. The GM may further develop the individual systems, generating details of the other planets — their physical details, native life if any, and so on.

The systems are listed in alphabetical order by the names of the worlds. Terminology is as defined in the *Stars and Worlds* section of *GURPS Space*. All stars are main sequence unless otherwise indicated. Star class and subtype are given; a star listed, for instance, as “G3 V” is a type G star, subtype 3, of class V (main sequence).

Background

Today, in our reality, space is underutilized. The only entities with sufficient resources to “develop” space are national governments and the largest corporations (which must currently go through government space programs).

In the history of the Corporate Worlds, the large corporations recognized the great value of space early on. Manufacturers saw a virtually limitless store of resources surrounded by perfect vacuum and no gravity (making almost perfect spheres ridiculously easy to form, for instance). Communications companies made their investment in space pay off within a few short years through the use of satellites. Restauranters and hotel chains knew people in space would need places to eat and sleep. And so on.

It didn’t take long for the corporations to distance themselves from the efforts of the “political governments” to control them. In particular, once FTL travel was discovered, the corporations could expand quickly enough to escape any attempt to control them from the outside.

This does not mean that the corporations run wild, of course. Most operate on a philosophy of enlightened self-interest. If they kill the goose that lays the golden egg, there will be no gold tomorrow. Each corporation does the things it does best, and lets the others do the same. All cooperate when necessary. Kaziin (p. 38) is a good example of this; the Kaziin Zoological Corporation is a subsidiary corporation designed for a specific purpose, to the benefit of all.

Control Ratings

Assume a Control Rating (p. S122) of 4 for these worlds unless specified otherwise. On some it will be higher (Faagrin, for example, has a CR of 6, if not more); it will rarely be lower. The CR of a planet may also change with circumstances. Alpenshore, for instance, has different CRs depending on how near the cities you are, and top-level officials of Xin Wu enjoy an effective CR of 1 on Tien Men.

Alternate Backgrounds

No matter what your campaign background, you will be able to use these worlds. You may have to change the background and politics a bit, of course. Here are some suggestions for building the Corporate Worlds into campaigns using different sorts of interstellar government:

Anarchy

By strict definition, the Corporate Worlds are in anarchy, since there is no external government to control them. The corporations are the law, and in theory, those not happy with their laws are free to go elsewhere. In practice, this may be difficult, since all of the known useful worlds have already been claimed; but it does happen sometimes.

So this sector may be used as-is in an anarchic background. One addition to make: the sector's border worlds will be more heavily militarized unless their neighbors are also corporate or are very trustworthy.

Alliance

The Corporate Worlds are an anomaly; they are not really governments, but they serve the same function. The Alliance Council voted long ago to treat corporate entities as de facto governments on a case-by-case basis, and this rule is applied in the Corporate Worlds.

Most of the larger corporations are members of the Alliance. Aberhard Enterprises (see the entry on Faagrín), notably, is not. Veritas is a member; the Alliance was quick to admit it when the people "threw off the corporate yoke," and only later discovered their embarrassing error.

Federation

With its ostensibly democratic, but strait-laced, approach, the Federation had some difficulty in assimilating the Corporate Worlds. Thus far, the Federation has stuck to its "one world, one membership" policy. This has caused some chafing in the Federation Assembly, since this effectively gives larger corporations like Mittelsohn and Xin Wu several votes.

To qualify for Federation membership, the corporate planets must guarantee certain basic civil rights to their inhabitants. Most had little trouble meeting these requirements. But some of the more paternalistic companies — Mittelsohn, for instance — had to relax some of their local controls when they entered the Federation. No Federation member world has a CR worse than 4.

Faagrín has refused to join; its rulers do not want the scrutiny that Federation membership would bring. Veritas applied for membership but was refused.

Those worlds which aren't dominated by a single corporation can be assumed to have weak political governments, of the sort described for Alpenshire (p. 12). They will be Federation members.

Center is, of course, the Federation sector capital; Survey, Patrol and Fleet are all headquartered here. A second artificial world, dubbed "Metacenter" is under construction in the system, to serve as a Federation shipyard and naval base. In a Federation campaign, the "disagreement" on Thishri simply can't take place; the Federation Fleet would suppress it.

Imperial Galaxy

The Corporate Worlds are a thriving sector on the fringe of the Empire. The Emperor is very happy with this particular sector; they pay their taxes on time and police themselves, leaving him free to deal with more important matters. The Imperial satrap for the Corporate Sector has a "live and let live" attitude, which he will maintain as long as the corporations stay in line — and not one minute longer.

The satrap for the Corporate Worlds is Prince Stevan Steiros. He is an intense man in his mid-thirties who took over some three years ago when the former satrap died of old age. The Corporate Worlds were a reward for his suppression of a rebellion in the Bright Fire Nebula sector; the sector's worlds govern themselves, leaving the Prince free time to pursue his favorite hobby, the study of history. His monograph on the history of the rise of the Corporate Worlds is considered a classic.

Prince Stevan rules from a palace on Beethoven. All the Imperial Services maintain their chief offices there. The Sector Fleet is headquartered on Beethoven, but most of the fleet is actually based on Center for fastest reaction time. This leads to constant internal power-jockeying between the "palace" officers on Beethoven and the "fleet" officers at Center!

There is an Imperial presence on any world with more than a few dozen residents. On smaller worlds, there is an Imperial General Agent to make sure all the reports are submitted on time and that no important laws are broken. On corporate homeworlds and large settlements, there will be everything from an Agent In Charge to a cell of the Imperial Secret Police to agricultural extension agents. While the Secret Police has infiltrated the corporations, Corporate Security has also infiltrated the Secret Police!

Some of the corporations have direct ties to the Imperial family. Prince Stevan, for example, has invested heavily in Croyden. In particular, 60% of Aberhard Mining Enterprises is owned by Prince Antoniu Aberhard (Antin's great-grandson). Amallion Aberhard is Antoniu's nephew; he was given the job as security chief of AME because his uncle knew he would get results.

Animal Descriptions

Where detailed descriptions of animals are given, they follow the format of the *GURPS Bestiary*. Most of the headings are self-explanatory. Size refers to size in hexes. Habitats are abbreviated as follows:

- A = Arctic
- D = Desert, including all dry areas and scrub woodlands
- F = Forest, including all temperate forests
- FW = Fresh-Water Aquatic
- J = Jungle, including any tropical forest
- M = Mountain
- P = Plains, including all grassland, steppes, and so on
- S = Swamp
- Sub = Subterranean
- SW = Salt-Water Aquatic

* means a special ability or attack — see text.

indicates exceptions to the given entry — see text.

Tech Levels

We have assumed that the base Tech Level of the campaign is 10. If your campaign has a different TL, you can scale the TLs given accordingly. For a campaign with a higher base TL, the corporate HQ worlds (and probably some others) should be increased to campaign maximum.

Outposts, mining camps, and so on generally have equipment with the base TL of the campaign, but very limited manufacturing or repair facilities. If a world has a low general TL but higher-TL items can be bought there but not built or repaired, the higher TL will be shown in parentheses: TL9(10) would mean a TL9 world that had some TL10 equipment. An entry of TL10 (imported) means that TL10 equipment is freely available, but isn't built there . . . though it may be repaired if the world has a PR of more than 6.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set* (Third Edition). Any page reference that begins with a B refers to a page in the *Basic Set* — e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *Basic Set*, Third Edition. An "S" page reference means a page in *GURPS Space*; "BY" refers to the *GURPS Bestiary*.

Maps

On the following pages are star maps of the whole Corporate Worlds Sector, for use in different types of campaigns. All maps are drawn to standard scale — 1 parsec per square — but if worlds are more distant in your campaign, just change the scale.

If you've got an ongoing campaign, you can use the Corporate Worlds Sector as a unit. It can serve as the backdrop of an entire campaign, or simply as a jumping-off place for a campaign set in the adjacent frontier areas. Alternatively, you can drop the individual worlds in wherever they'll do your adventures the most good.

Normal-Space Map

Page 9 is a map of the Corporate Worlds for normal space. This will be most useful for campaigns where ships use warp drive. No worlds are shown except for those named in the atlas. The GM may add navigational hazards appropriate to his own campaign.

Jumpline Map

Page 10 is a map of the Corporate Worlds, showing jumplines. We have assumed that jumplines more than 10 parsecs long are rare.

This map is for campaigns where ships use a jump drive that only works along jumplines. If jump points are used, the GM should use the map on p. 9 and add appropriate points.

Because many inhabited worlds have no jumplines leading directly to other useful worlds, a number of extra "way-station" systems are shown on this map. These are shown by their star names, since none of their worlds are important, and are differentiated by parentheses. If a way-station star has no planets, it is shown by a *. Way-station systems without a * have at least one gas giant in campaigns where refueling is possible from such worlds, and at least one rockball where an emergency landing is possible.

Distance Table

Page 11 is a table of the distances, in parsecs, between all 25 systems described in this book. It is generally the only "map" you need for hyperspace travel, and can be used in conjunction with either of the other two maps when figuring travel times.

The Major Players

These are some of the major corporate entities in the sector. Feel free to invent others, or to change the names to your liking.

Mittelsohn A. G. Originally an agricultural implements manufacturer, Mittelsohn made a fortune in mechanized farm machinery, then turned to agriculture in space. They are the largest corporation in the sector in terms of worlds controlled, assets and employees. Mittelsohn has interests in almost every venture one can imagine, but its forte is still manufacturing.

Mittelsohn is wholly pragmatic. If Mittelsohn decides it wants something, it will go after its goal ruthlessly. Only a fool would stand in the way of a Mittelsohn objective — but if the fool survives, Mittelsohn may well turn right around and start doing business with him!

Xin Wu. A younger corporation than Mittelsohn, Xin Wu (pronounced "Shin Woo") is much more diversified. As much a way of life as a way to earn a dollar, Xin Wu incorporates ethical elements into its business philosophy. They play by a strict set of rules, and do not mind being beaten at the game so long as the opponent plays by the rules. They do not tolerate "unfairness." At best they will stop doing business with the "cheater," and at worst they will do everything in their power to bring the cheater down. For the most part, Xin Wu considers Mittelsohn to be a worthy opponent, and considers it their duty to point out Mittelsohn's ethical failures.

Xin Wu's philosophy is contained in a manual entitled "On Ethics and Philosophy and Their Relation to Business," known universally as "The White Book" because of its glossy white cover. Employees study the White Book in their spare time, and anyone who deals with Xin Wu on a regular basis should be at least somewhat familiar with its contents.

The existence of the White Book in itself says something about Xin Wu. To the average corporate citizen, the word "book" refers to a hand-held electronic text retrieval system. The White Book consists of 64 leaves of pressed wood pulp, with a static text display painted on both sides of each leaf. Xin Wu's management considers beauty to enhance functionality, and they consider the look and feel of this archaic "book" to be beautiful.

Croyden Information Services. Croyden is the largest "specialty corporation" in the sector. It provides computer and information services as well as interworld communications and starship services such as jump beacons and planetary reports.

Croyden is a major producer of computers and software. Croyden technicians are trained in ancient and antique systems as well, for older worlds which can't afford the latest in computing power.

As part of their information services, Croyden also conducts basic research and investigations. For an example of this, see Perido. Of course, they don't do this just to push back the frontiers of knowledge; Croyden's information and the fruits of their research are freely available to anyone who can afford them.

Amalgamated Bionics. AmBio, as it is known, combines biomedical engineering with computers and cybernetics. Their products are as diverse as bionic prosthetics and expert systems.

If your campaign has artificial intelligence, one of AmBio's primary lines is AI production. Unlike many AIs, AmBio AIs are licensed rather than sold. They are pre-programmed before lease with both a slave mentality and a "dead switch." If the switch is not reset once a year by an AmBio technician (upon renewal of the lease, of course), the AI methodically erases itself at a certain time and date. Since AmBio AIs are usually used in factories, large households and similar organizations where losing the AI and the information it has stored would be disastrous, AmBio is guaranteed a steady source of income.



Janos Exploration. The largest scouting and surveying corporation in the sector, Janos survives more because of its diversification into cartography and land surveying than because the planet exploration business is booming. In fact, it is generally accepted that every body of planetary size in or near the sector has been found and mapped, and many scouts are going to new, less-explored areas. As a result, Janos' stock is selling at a hundredth of its highest value.

Goliath Weaponry GmbH. Goliath, a huge weapons conglomerate based outside the sector, is just starting to test the waters in the Corporate Worlds. Their stated goal is to bring the latest in weapons technology to this part of the galaxy. Some suspect that they are contemplating the ultimate in hostile takeovers, leading to a Corporate Sector run by one corporation. Goliath has a reputation for playing very rough, and no one is taking chances.

Riko Mining, Inc. Riko began with seven miners and a ship, working mines other companies were unwilling or unable to and making a profit because of their low overhead. They are much larger now, but they still maintain vestiges of their old maverick spirit. For instance, instead of a fancy headquarters city, the main office is housed on a mining ship. Riko still takes on "unusual" jobs such as the hell-world of Devil's Icebox, and they still use their low overhead to guarantee a profit.

ABS. Arantas Biochemical Services was started by former AmBio employees. Where AmBio combines electronics with biology, ABS tends to find strictly biological solutions to problems. For instance, AmBio would replace a missing leg arm with a bionic substitute. ABS would replace the missing arm with a clone of the original, grafted on through painstaking microsurgery or grown from the patient's shoulder. The two companies are bitter rivals.

Life in the Corporate Worlds

In some ways, life in the corporate worlds isn't very different from life anywhere else. Corporate citizens get up in the morning, eat breakfast, go to work, come home, eat dinner, watch the vidshows, and go to sleep at night.

In the corporate worlds, however, your company determines when you will get up, where you will live, and what your job is. In fact, in some corporations and on certain worlds, your corporation will decide who (or if) you will marry, how many kids or pets you are allowed to have, and maybe even what you will have for dinner on any given night.

Corporations differ from other forms of government in several different ways:

Citizenship

A government decides to whom it will give citizenship. In most democracies, children of citizens are automatically citizens; the Roman empire had many residents whose ancestors had lived in Rome for centuries, but who were not citizens.

Corporations have *employees* and their dependents rather than citizens (though for our purposes, the two terms are equivalent). Employees enjoy benefits provided by the corporation, such as health care, education for themselves and their children, old age pensions and defense. They do not, however, *necessarily* have a voice in the operation or management of the corporation. This function is reserved for the *stockholders*.

Stockholders

Governments make their money by selling bonds and other obligations, and — often — by simply printing it. Corporations can raise money by borrowing, but also sell *shares* of ownership in the company.

Each shareholder is entitled to a portion of the company's profits every year. The size of his portion depends on how many shares he holds and how many ways the pie has to be cut. And shareholders get to vote on company procedures and officers at the company's "annual meeting." It's up to the GM whose year is used for the annual meeting and where it's held for any particular corporation. A small corporation may have a one-day annual meeting at which the board of directors is re-elected, and all the stockholders are invited to a banquet. Mittelsohn's annual meeting is conducted by FTL radio conference call, and simply setting the agenda can take a week or more!

The Law

If there is no legal body outside the corporations, the laws are whatever each individual corporation declares them to be. In general, the laws are similar — there are prohibitions against murder, assault, theft, and other crimes of person and property. In-

The Characters as Corporation

In the Corporate Worlds, no one is likely to take you seriously unless you are incorporated. That's just the way the corporations think; they consider governments to be just another kind of corporation, and individuals are employees and therefore beneath notice. "John Smith" wouldn't get the time of day from a middle manager's secretary. "John Smith, first mate of the Free Trader *Firebird*," might get on a waiting list. But "Mr. John Smith, vice-president of Firebird Trading, Ltd." would get much more attention.

If the characters are new to the sector, the first thing they should do is incorporate. This is trivial; all they need to do is declare themselves a corporation. For added legitimacy, they should register the new corporation with the Bourse's Corporate Registry. This costs \$10 and can be done at any Bourse office. Any large corporations (and many small ones) that the PCs deal with will check the Registry to see if the PCs' corporation is legitimate.

Arbitration

Corporations often have legitimate grievances against one another, but with no external law enforcement or judicial apparatus, they must solve their problems themselves. Usually, this takes the form of *arbitration*. Like everything else in the Corporate Worlds, this is taken care of by corporations. There are over a dozen arbitration organizations; the Bourse (p. 56) is the largest and most successful. Several corporations have arbitration as a sideline, but few pursue it actively, since they might be considered to be biased in certain cases.

An arbitration fee is settled in advance; usually it is a percentage of the amount in question. The arbitrators (who may be employees of the arbitration company, or may be outside execs paid to act as a jury) listen to both sides and judge the merits of the case. They do not always merely find for one side or the other — in fact, often both sides are seen to be at fault and requested to take corrective action. Arbitration may be *binding*, where each party agrees beforehand to abide by the decision of the arbitrators. Or it may be *non-binding*, merely another point in negotiations.

Of course, the arbitrators have no legal authority, and there is no arbitrator-maintained police force to back up their decisions. In spite of this, some 97% of arbitrators' decisions are followed to the letter. Part of the reason for this is a long-standing policy of not allowing corporations or individuals who do not comply with an arbitrators' decision to appear before any of that corporation's arbitrators again until he complies!

Education

Schooling for children begins at age 5 (in Xin Wu, formal classes begin at age 3, with group activities earlier). Classroom education continues through age 16, when students begin working part-time (see below). Most employees begin working full-time at age 18, though many still attend school part-time. Certain positions involve "on-the-job training" — an employee will attend classes for a half day, then put the instruction to practical use.

Management, technical and professional jobs require university degrees, which are usually subsidized by the corporation in return for long-term binding contracts.

Religion

Corporate attitudes toward religion range from complete tolerance to abhorrence. Many have their own religions, tailored to the particular needs of that corporation. Mercenary companies, for instance, often embrace the Sword Way, which promises an afterlife reward of soldiers' pleasures in return for valor in this life. Mittelsohn has no official religion, and Xin Wu has developed a philosophy of meditation, good works and study of the White Book, called "Ethical Refinement."

News and Information

Most citizens get their news from vids and radio. Each corporation has its own broadcasting service. The larger ones have several, catering to different tastes. Independent news reporting services sell their stories to the highest bidder, or have contracts with the major corporations to supply news from particular areas, much like network correspondents do today. In addition, there are private news services who sell their product by subscription. Telestar Network 4 and the various Bourse news services are considered fair, honest and as unbiased as possible.

For those who are interested in in-depth coverage, data searches are possible through computer networks. Information is available in much more depth and on many more subjects than even the best of broadcast networks can cover. By monitoring the user's preferences, the networks can individually tailor their news services by, for instance, suppressing sports news and emphasizing news about spaceship production and philately.

Interpretations of these laws vary widely, however. In one corporation, the definition of "murder" might include accidental manslaughter; in another, death sports might simply be an afternoon's diversion to take the kids to.

The severity of punishment depends on the crime. For many crimes, the punishment is a fine, either of money or of time (unpaid service on what would normally be time off the job). Incarceration is a possibility for violent offenders, and thieves are required to make restitution — for embezzlers, through the use of clones and braintapes (see p. S65), this could easily take several normal lifetimes!

The ultimate punishment, of course, is termination. This seldom means the individual is killed — outright, at any rate — rather, he is fired. He can no longer work for that corporation in any capacity, and no longer has access to corporate benefits such as medical care, housing and food. In short, he is an "unperson." Successful colonies have been started by unpersons, and more than one successful corporation was started by a group of unpersons, but usually they drift into the slums and vanish.

Family Life

A person's contact with the corporation can begin before conception; some areas with strict population control may require that couples wishing to have children first obtain corporate permission. (Cloning and in vitro fertilization allow artificial growth, but most people prefer to obtain their children the old-fashioned way.) The penalties can be severe; an unauthorized child usually means that one or the other of the parents has to leave the area to maintain the population balance!

During pregnancy, the mother is carefully checked by corporate medical specialists at regular intervals. After the baby is born, it spends its time from about age 5 in corporate-sponsored schooling. This schooling is designed to train the child for an eventual job with the corporation, chosen early in its life by extensive testing.

The structure of family life depends on the corporation. Xin Wu raises its children in groups of 50 to 60, with a group leader/teacher who specializes in each age group. Mittelsohn recognizes marriages for the purpose of inheriting property, provided such marriages are recorded at the Corporate Registry; there is no stigma attached to issue from an "unrecorded marriage." Other corporations recognize varying family structures, from communal to traditional.

The Job

Individuals are expected to work for their pay — including their food and rent. Most corporations place children in a job at age 16 to gain work experience. This is usually the local equivalent of working at a fast-food restaurant, and gives the new employee some spending money while he or she finishes school. Then, when placed in a job, the employee knows some of the ropes and what to expect.

There are ample opportunities for promotion in all fields, and people can easily change jobs, provided they are qualified or have been trained for the new job. Changing corporations, however, is another matter. Employees are sometimes "raided," but an employee who goes over to a different corporation is thought somewhat odd, much as we might think of someone who changes nationalities.

Executives are another matter. Execs are the nobility of the Corporate Worlds, but in some ways they have less freedom. In a setting where there are no enforceable trade-secret laws, executives (or some researchers, and possibly even a few file clerks) become important for the knowledge they carry about the company. They may be signed to lifetime contracts forbidding them to discuss certain subjects with outsiders — or, in some cases, to talk with outsiders at all. An arbitrator might rule that a company who hired away an executive with such a contract was liable to pay the executive's salary to his *former* corporation for breach of contract. And, of course, there is always the Personal Protection Branch of Corporate Security (known less formally as the Assassination Bureau).

Interstellar Organizations

With no governments to provide them, the corporations have come up with their own equivalents of interstellar organizations common in other parts of the galaxy.

The Free Trade League

This organization (itself a company, of course), is very powerful and influential. Only corporations below a certain size are permitted to own Free Trade stock. The

League serves as an advocate for small companies, especially traders, scouts and miners, against heavy-handedness from the bigger outfits. A one-ship company with the League behind it can demand an accounting even from Mittelsohn — and get it. The League is headquartered on Center, and has offices on all corporate HQ planets except Faagrín. Membership costs 1% of corporate profits per year; members don't have to be stockholders, but the stock pays a good dividend!

The companies of the Corporate Sector — even the largest ones — are also powerful supporters of the Free Trade League, or similar organizations, in areas under political governments.

The Interstellar Trade Commission

There's no such thing. In the Corporate Worlds, any deal that both parties agree to is a deal — there's no such thing as "illegal" between companies.

Mercenary Companies

Each corporation has its own security forces, which are mostly for internal security and counter-espionage. For the really tough "Red Light" jobs, they call in the mercenaries.

Mercenary companies are incorporated, of course. The Summersun Mercenary Co-op, headquartered in the Old Frontiers Sector, maintains an office on Center for those seeking to hire mercenaries. However, a number of other mercenary outfits, not associated with Summersun, are also available for hire . . . often necessary, since Summersun won't enter both sides of the same conflict.

Mercenary forces are popular with the cost accountants, of course — they aren't creating overhead when they're not needed.

Navies

For the same reason, the corporations do not keep huge standing navies. Any corporation with either a merchant and passenger fleet, or offworld holdings which might be vulnerable, will have a small navy sufficient to protect from anticipated attacks — but by order of the bean-counters, *not one ship more!*

This means that if an attack comes from an *unexpected* corner, it may succeed — once. It also means that ships of any one corporation aren't able to patrol every nook and cranny of the sector. So if a merchant ship gets into trouble far away from its base, it can expect the nearest fighting ship to come to its aid, no matter which corporation it belongs to — and the bill will follow right behind it.

If a planetary supervisor feels the need for a navy, he contacts the home office, who will authorize him to hire one from the mercenary companies (some of whom are ex-naval officers and marines) — but he had better be prepared to explain why he needs them.

Office of Colonial Affairs

Each corporation runs its colonies as it sees fit. On some worlds, this leads to oppression. Other corporations feel that fair deals give the most profit, and they deal with their colonists more favorably than many political governments.

The Patrol

There is no sectorwide Patrol. Most planets have a small "coast guard" to protect the planet and its environs, and to alert the management planetside of any potential problems. Their primary job is to enforce anti-smuggling laws; otherwise, a job in the planetary Patrol can be seen as either an opportunity for extensive boredom, good training for a job in a larger Navy, or an opportunity to serve the Corporation in a low-stress situation.

The Postal Authority

There are two classes of mail. Mail destined for an address within the corporation is usually handled through the corporate communication system — "interoffice mail," if you will. Mail going *outside* the corporation is often sent by ships going to that destination on other business. But mail has to travel, whether other ships are going to its destination or not, and private carriers make a respectable living in the mail trade, both on regular routes and on special runs.

Red Light, Green Light

These expressions started with mercenaries and spies, and, like "rub out" and "hit man," moved from their specialized vocabulary into common usage. They describe the varying degrees of intercorporate relations, and other situations by extension.

Green Light. A "green" operation means that everything is above board and friendly. Both sides are expected to cooperate fully with each other. "Green light" means everything is going well. "Green orders" are orders to assist a "foreign" ship or colony.

Yellow Light. This signifies bureaucracy as a business tool. Administrative hassles are bound to occur; you can expect to be kept waiting; you might get what you want, but it's going to take you a while. The yellow light goes on when corporations first move from friendly to unfriendly competition.

Orange Light. This signals, if not outright hostility, at least dislike and distrust. "Orange orders" could cover snooping, eavesdropping, spying, and buying information from informants. Orange operations can also include light sabotage such as an annoying, but not destructive, computer virus. Companies who intensely dislike each other carry out orange-light operations against each other all the time.

If someone says "the orange light was on today," it means that whatever happened didn't kill him, but he feels as though he might have been better off if it had.

Red Light. Almost anything goes. Red means war. Murder, sabotage, theft, and destructive computer viruses are all possible.

Blue Light. Once the expressions above entered into general use, it didn't take long for the term "blue light" to be coined. Blue light is the best you can get. "Give him the blue light" is equivalent to "Roll out the red carpet." "Blue girls" are corporate hostesses . . .

The term "infrared" to denote an actual military campaign was used briefly but never really caught on.



The Rebels

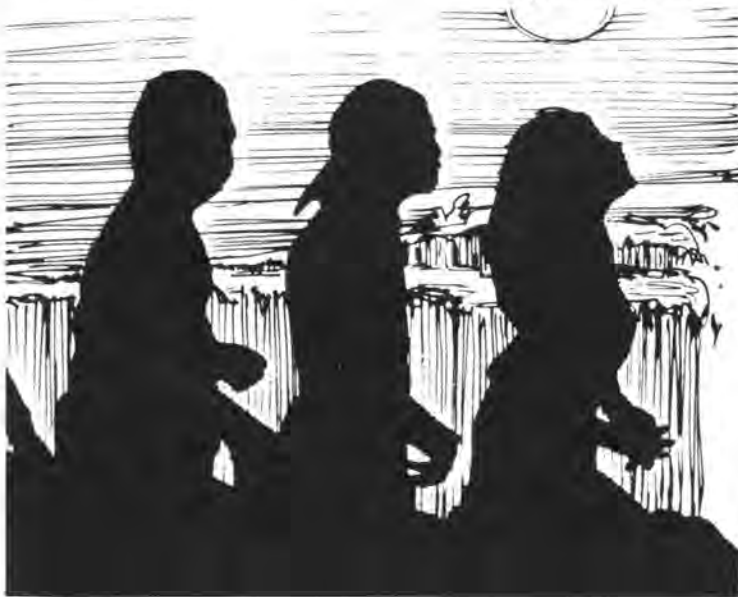
Every society has its rebels. In the Corporate Worlds, the rebels are those who aren't happy with corporate policies and corporate benefits. The companies call them "unionists."

Unionist propaganda is not all that uncommon, and occasionally a unionist cell is broken up. Most unionists want the same thing: abolition or muzzling of the corporations, and the installation of a *political* government. To a loyal employee, this kind of talk is insane and dangerous.

On some worlds, the unionists are in open rebellion . . . but usually the corporation there deserves it. This is rarely seen except on single-company worlds. On multi-company worlds, the would-be rebels usually just find new jobs.

Niceties of Corporate Espionage

There are certain "gentlemen's agreements" about covert conduct between corporations. It's considered very bad form, for instance, to injure an employee of another corporation. The corporations acknowledge that espionage goes on all the time; it's an accepted fact of life. If a non-violent spy is caught, he is simply returned to his corporation — and taken off the payroll of the corporation he was spying on. If a spy injures someone, he will be treated as a violent criminal. Even a saboteur will often be returned if his sabotage caused no injuries . . . but someone who did much less damage, but hurt someone, may face brainwipe or execution. This is not entirely logical in a game driven by money, but that's the way the corporations play.



Security and Intelligence

Each corporation has its own security and intelligence arms. Security is charged with keeping corporate employees safe, wherever they may be; thus, it investigates accidents in the workplace as well as crime.

Intelligence's job is to find out as much as it can about the other corporations. This can be as simple as watching the vids and listening to the radio, or it can be complex industrial espionage. The larger corporations gather intelligence about outsystem governments and customers as well. "The more you know about your opponent," Xin Wu's White Book states, "the more power you have over him. If you know everything about your opponent, you have complete power."

A subset of intelligence is *counter* intelligence — keeping the corporation's own secrets safe.

Survey

Survey companies are usually small — often only one person with a corporate name and a scoutship. These people explore planetary systems, looking not only for habitable planets, but mineral deposits, new lifeforms — anything the "big boys" will buy. Some of these hardy souls have formed larger scout services; the largest of these is Janos Exploration Ltd., described on p. 5.

Scouting can be chancy with no overgovernment to enforce claims. In general, a scout is considered to "own" anything he finds for a year after he drops his beacon. After that, possession or use is required to validate a claim. Planets can be bought and sold like any other property!

Intercorporate Relations

Relations among the various corporations are constantly changing. For the most part, companies of all sizes get along. They have to; war is seldom profitable. But there are varying degrees of cooperation and competition among the corporations.

Cooperation

This usually happens when two corporations have non-overlapping spheres of influence. One company might manufacture the mechanical parts for a FTL engine, a second would make the electronic parts, and yet a third would assemble them. Game theorists call this a "win-win" situation; everyone benefits from the arrangement.

Occasionally two corporations will cooperate in a market where both have interests, if it is clear they both can make money. See the entry for Devil's Icebox (p. 26) for an example of cooperation. Though Mittelsohn has mining interests of its own, it can also make money by selling specialized equipment to Riko.

Friendly Competition

There's no reason two companies have to be at each others' throats, simply because they're in the same business. Friendly competitors fight tooth-and-nail for new markets, and jealously guard their old ones, but show no animosity toward one another, and will occasionally help one another out. Alphenore is such a planet.

Of course, friendly competition can shade imperceptibly into . . .

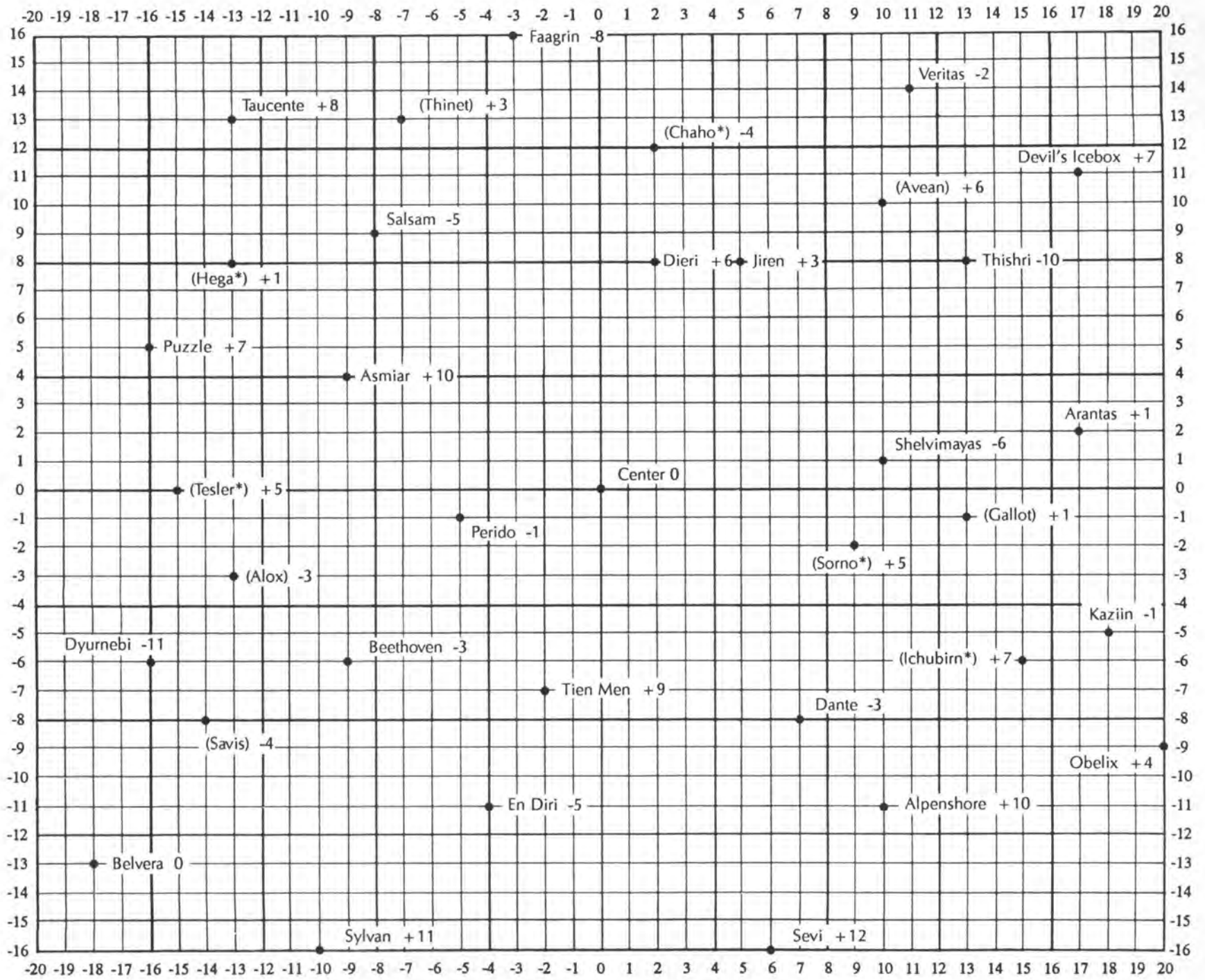
Unfriendly Competition

Unfriendly competitors will do everything short of shoot at each other to gain new markets, draw away competitors' customers, and gain any advantage they can. Unfriendly competitors are still playing the game fairly, but they play *hardball*.

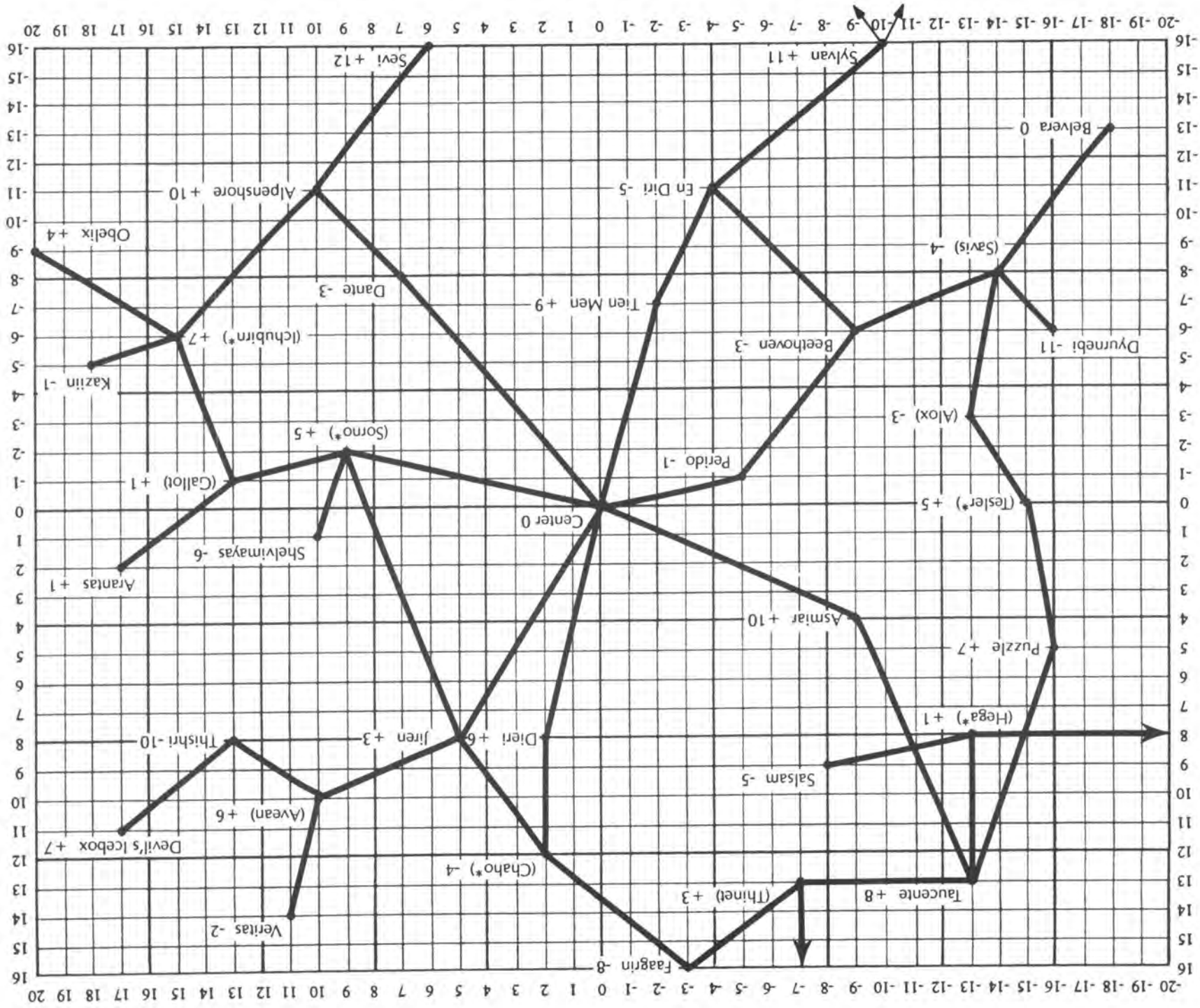
Outright Warfare

Sometimes, a corporation will decide their unfriendly competitors have gone too far. Normally, warfare between corporations is expensive — mercenaries don't come cheap, and the cost accountants have to be convinced that the war will turn a profit. But it happens, as it is happening right now on Thishri.

Corporate Worlds Normal-Space Map



Corporate Worlds Jumphline Map



Distances Between Systems in the Corporate Worlds

Coordinates

Distances to Numbered Worlds (in parsecs)

| | <i>Star Name</i> | <i>X</i> | <i>Y</i> | <i>Z</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>8</i> | <i>9</i> | <i>10</i> | <i>11</i> | <i>12</i> | <i>13</i> |
|----|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | Alpenshore | 9 | -11 | 10 | 0.0 | 15.3 | 23.4 | 22.8 | 28.9 | 17.4 | 13.5 | 23.6 | 20.6 | 33.0 | 19.8 | 34.6 | 20.6 |
| 2 | Arantas | 17 | 2 | 9 | 15.3 | 0.0 | 26.1 | 29.7 | 39.1 | 19.3 | 18.5 | 9.2 | 16.4 | 39.4 | 28.4 | 29.7 | 14.7 |
| 3 | Asmiar | -9 | 4 | 10 | 23.4 | 26.1 | 0.0 | 16.4 | 21.7 | 14.0 | 23.9 | 27.1 | 12.4 | 24.3 | 21.8 | 22.4 | 16.2 |
| 4 | Beethoven | -9 | -6 | -3 | 22.8 | 29.7 | 16.4 | 0.0 | 11.8 | 11.2 | 16.1 | 32.6 | 19.9 | 10.6 | 7.3 | 23.3 | 20.7 |
| 5 | Belvera | -18 | -13 | 0 | 28.9 | 39.1 | 21.7 | 11.8 | 0.0 | 22.2 | 25.7 | 43.0 | 29.6 | 13.2 | 15.0 | 33.6 | 31.3 |
| 6 | Center | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17.4 | 19.3 | 14.0 | 11.2 | 22.2 | 0.0 | 11.0 | 21.4 | 10.2 | 20.3 | 12.7 | 18.1 | 9.9 |
| 7 | Dante | 7 | -8 | -3 | 13.5 | 18.5 | 23.9 | 16.1 | 25.7 | 11.0 | 0.0 | 23.7 | 19.0 | 24.4 | 11.6 | 26.5 | 17.2 |
| 8 | Devil's Icebox | 17 | 11 | 7 | 23.6 | 9.2 | 27.1 | 32.6 | 43.0 | 21.4 | 23.7 | 0.0 | 15.3 | 41.3 | 32.7 | 25.5 | 13.0 |
| 9 | Dieri | 2 | 8 | 6 | 20.6 | 16.4 | 12.4 | 19.9 | 29.6 | 10.2 | 19.0 | 15.3 | 0.0 | 28.4 | 22.8 | 16.9 | 4.2 |
| 10 | Dyrnebi | -16 | -6 | -11 | 33.0 | 39.4 | 24.3 | 10.6 | 13.2 | 20.3 | 24.4 | 41.3 | 28.4 | 0.0 | 14.3 | 25.7 | 28.9 |
| 11 | En Diri | -4 | -11 | -5 | 19.8 | 28.4 | 21.8 | 7.3 | 15.0 | 12.7 | 11.6 | 32.7 | 22.8 | 14.3 | 0.0 | 27.2 | 22.5 |
| 12 | Faagrín | -3 | 16 | -8 | 34.6 | 29.7 | 22.4 | 23.3 | 33.6 | 18.1 | 26.5 | 25.5 | 16.9 | 25.7 | 27.2 | 0.0 | 15.8 |
| 13 | Jiren | 5 | 8 | 3 | 20.6 | 14.7 | 16.2 | 20.7 | 31.3 | 9.9 | 17.2 | 13.0 | 4.2 | 28.9 | 22.5 | 15.8 | 0.0 |
| 14 | Kaziin | 18 | -5 | -1 | 15.4 | 12.2 | 30.5 | 27.1 | 36.9 | 18.7 | 11.6 | 17.9 | 21.8 | 35.5 | 23.2 | 30.5 | 18.8 |
| 15 | Obelix | 20 | -9 | 4 | 12.7 | 12.4 | 32.3 | 30.0 | 38.4 | 22.3 | 14.8 | 20.4 | 24.8 | 39.1 | 25.7 | 36.0 | 22.7 |
| 16 | Perido | -5 | 1 | -1 | 21.5 | 24.2 | 12.1 | 8.3 | 19.1 | 5.2 | 15.1 | 25.5 | 12.1 | 16.4 | 12.7 | 16.7 | 12.8 |
| 17 | Puzzle | -16 | 6 | 7 | 30.4 | 33.3 | 7.9 | 17.1 | 20.3 | 18.5 | 28.7 | 33.4 | 18.1 | 21.6 | 24.0 | 22.2 | 21.5 |
| 18 | Salsam | -8 | 9 | -5 | 30.2 | 29.5 | 15.8 | 15.2 | 24.7 | 13.0 | 22.8 | 27.8 | 14.9 | 18.0 | 20.4 | 9.1 | 15.3 |
| 19 | Sevi | 6 | -16 | 12 | 6.2 | 21.3 | 25.1 | 23.5 | 27.0 | 20.9 | 17.0 | 29.6 | 25.1 | 33.4 | 20.3 | 38.8 | 25.7 |
| 20 | Shelvimayas | 10 | 1 | -6 | 20.0 | 16.6 | 25.0 | 20.5 | 31.9 | 11.7 | 9.9 | 17.8 | 16.0 | 27.4 | 18.5 | 19.9 | 12.4 |
| 21 | Sylvan | -10 | -16 | 11 | 19.7 | 32.5 | 20.0 | 17.2 | 13.9 | 21.8 | 23.4 | 38.4 | 27.3 | 24.9 | 17.8 | 37.9 | 29.4 |
| 22 | Taucente | -13 | 13 | 8 | 32.6 | 32.0 | 10.0 | 22.3 | 27.7 | 20.0 | 31.0 | 30.1 | 15.9 | 27.0 | 28.7 | 19.1 | 19.3 |
| 23 | Thishri | 13 | 8 | -10 | 27.9 | 20.3 | 30.0 | 27.0 | 38.8 | 18.2 | 18.5 | 17.7 | 19.4 | 32.2 | 26.0 | 18.0 | 15.3 |
| 24 | Tien Men | -2 | -7 | 9 | 11.7 | 21.0 | 13.1 | 13.9 | 19.3 | 11.6 | 15.0 | 26.2 | 15.8 | 24.4 | 14.7 | 28.6 | 17.6 |
| 25 | Veritas | 11 | 14 | -2 | 27.8 | 17.3 | 25.4 | 28.3 | 39.7 | 17.9 | 22.4 | 11.2 | 13.5 | 34.8 | 29.3 | 15.4 | 9.8 |

| | <i>Star Name</i> | <i>X</i> | <i>Y</i> | <i>Z</i> | <i>14</i> | <i>15</i> | <i>16</i> | <i>17</i> | <i>18</i> | <i>19</i> | <i>20</i> | <i>21</i> | <i>22</i> | <i>23</i> | <i>24</i> | <i>25</i> |
|----|------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | Alpenshore | 9 | -11 | 10 | 15.4 | 12.7 | 21.5 | 30.4 | 30.2 | 6.2 | 20.0 | 19.7 | 32.6 | 27.9 | 11.7 | 27.8 |
| 2 | Arantas | 17 | 2 | 9 | 12.2 | 12.4 | 24.2 | 33.3 | 29.5 | 21.3 | 16.6 | 32.5 | 32.0 | 20.3 | 21.0 | 17.3 |
| 3 | Asmiar | -9 | 4 | 10 | 30.5 | 32.3 | 12.1 | 7.9 | 15.8 | 25.1 | 25.0 | 20.0 | 10.0 | 30.0 | 13.1 | 25.4 |
| 4 | Beethoven | -9 | -6 | -3 | 27.1 | 30.0 | 8.3 | 17.1 | 15.2 | 23.5 | 20.5 | 17.2 | 22.3 | 27.0 | 13.9 | 28.3 |
| 5 | Belvera | -18 | -13 | 0 | 36.9 | 38.4 | 19.1 | 20.3 | 24.7 | 27.0 | 31.9 | 13.9 | 27.7 | 38.8 | 19.3 | 39.7 |
| 6 | Center | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18.7 | 22.3 | 5.2 | 18.5 | 13.0 | 20.9 | 11.7 | 21.8 | 20.0 | 18.2 | 11.6 | 17.9 |
| 7 | Dante | 7 | -8 | -3 | 11.6 | 14.8 | 15.1 | 28.7 | 22.8 | 17.0 | 9.9 | 23.4 | 31.0 | 18.5 | 15.0 | 22.4 |
| 8 | Devil's Icebox | 17 | 11 | 7 | 17.9 | 20.4 | 25.5 | 33.4 | 27.8 | 29.6 | 17.8 | 38.4 | 30.1 | 17.7 | 26.2 | 11.2 |
| 9 | Dieri | 2 | 8 | 6 | 21.8 | 24.8 | 12.1 | 18.1 | 14.9 | 25.1 | 16.0 | 27.3 | 15.9 | 19.4 | 15.8 | 13.5 |
| 10 | Dyrnebi | -16 | -6 | -11 | 35.5 | 39.1 | 16.4 | 21.6 | 18.0 | 33.4 | 27.4 | 24.9 | 27.0 | 32.2 | 24.4 | 34.8 |
| 11 | En Diri | -4 | -11 | -5 | 23.2 | 25.7 | 12.7 | 24.0 | 20.4 | 20.3 | 18.5 | 17.8 | 28.7 | 26.0 | 14.7 | 29.3 |
| 12 | Faagrín | -3 | 16 | -8 | 30.5 | 36.0 | 16.7 | 22.2 | 9.1 | 38.8 | 19.9 | 37.9 | 19.1 | 18.0 | 28.6 | 15.4 |
| 13 | Jiren | 5 | 8 | 3 | 18.8 | 22.7 | 12.8 | 21.5 | 15.3 | 25.7 | 12.4 | 29.4 | 19.3 | 15.3 | 17.6 | 9.8 |
| 14 | Kaziin | 18 | -5 | -1 | 0.0 | 6.7 | 23.8 | 36.6 | 29.8 | 20.8 | 11.2 | 32.4 | 37.0 | 16.6 | 22.4 | 20.3 |
| 15 | Obelix | 20 | -9 | 4 | 6.7 | 0.0 | 27.4 | 39.1 | 34.5 | 17.6 | 17.3 | 31.6 | 39.9 | 23.1 | 22.6 | 25.4 |
| 16 | Perido | -5 | 1 | -1 | 23.8 | 27.4 | 0.0 | 14.5 | 9.4 | 24.1 | 15.8 | 21.4 | 17.0 | 21.3 | 13.2 | 20.6 |
| 17 | Puzzle | -16 | 6 | 7 | 36.6 | 39.1 | 14.5 | 0.0 | 14.7 | 31.5 | 29.5 | 23.2 | 7.7 | 33.7 | 19.2 | 29.6 |
| 18 | Salsam | -8 | 9 | -5 | 29.8 | 34.5 | 9.4 | 14.7 | 0.0 | 33.3 | 19.7 | 29.7 | 14.5 | 21.6 | 22.1 | 19.9 |
| 19 | Sevi | 6 | -16 | 12 | 20.8 | 17.6 | 24.1 | 31.5 | 33.3 | 0.0 | 25.1 | 16.0 | 34.9 | 33.3 | 12.4 | 33.5 |
| 20 | Shelvimayas | 10 | 1 | -6 | 11.2 | 17.3 | 15.8 | 29.5 | 19.7 | 25.1 | 0.0 | 31.3 | 29.5 | 8.6 | 20.8 | 13.6 |
| 21 | Sylvan | -10 | -16 | 11 | 32.4 | 31.6 | 21.4 | 23.2 | 29.7 | 16.0 | 31.3 | 0.0 | 29.3 | 39.3 | 12.2 | 38.9 |
| 22 | Taucente | -13 | 13 | 8 | 37.0 | 39.9 | 17.0 | 7.7 | 14.5 | 34.9 | 29.5 | 29.3 | 0.0 | 32.0 | 22.8 | 26.0 |
| 23 | Thishri | 13 | 8 | -10 | 16.6 | 23.1 | 21.3 | 33.7 | 21.6 | 33.3 | 8.6 | 39.3 | 32.0 | 0.0 | 28.5 | 10.2 |
| 24 | Tien Men | -2 | -7 | 9 | 22.4 | 22.6 | 13.2 | 19.2 | 22.1 | 12.4 | 20.8 | 12.2 | 22.8 | 28.5 | 0.0 | 27.0 |
| 25 | Veritas | 11 | 14 | -2 | 20.3 | 25.4 | 20.6 | 29.6 | 19.9 | 33.5 | 13.6 | 38.9 | 26.0 | 10.2 | 27.0 | 0.0 |

Alpenshore (Travis Reguli Beta II)

Alpenshore was once a water world. About 300 million years ago, a large meteor crashed into its north pole. The resulting seismic and volcanic activity created a south polar continent and a ring of islands encircling the planet. In addition, the collision gave Alpenshore an irregular axial tilt, making its seasonal changes vary over a 120-year period.

The polar land mass, with its rugged mountains, fjords, and slowly flowing glaciers, is still prone to intermittent volcanic and tectonic activity. It is studied by a team of Croyden scientists at a permanent base on the coast, reached by submersible under the ice shelf that surrounds the continent.

As might be expected on a water-world, Alpenshore's primary export is seafood. When it was first discovered, Alpenshore had many different forms of sea life; since then, hundreds of others have been imported, and Amalgamated Biotronics has created several more, including a 130-pound "supersalmon" and a small, almost boneless fish which tastes like lobster. There is constant concern that some new life-form will disrupt the ecology, but it hasn't happened yet.

Catches are seasonal; there tend to be more fireshrimp in winter than in summer, for instance. Alpenshore fishermen know this, and follow the fish. In years past they couldn't go very far from shore, so their catch was limited. Mittelsohn solved this problem by building a floating city. This incredibly large (two square miles!) ship is a combination warehouse, processing facility, shopping mall, general store, hotel, bar and convention center. It enables Alpenshore fishermen to venture out farther from land, and fish where the fish are gathering.

Once Xin Wu learned of Mittelsohn's floating city, they rushed to assemble their own. It is half again as big and, in characteristic Xin Wu fashion, has three gardens scattered about it. Each company built a second, and then a third, city-ship; today each owns five, scattered about Alpenshore. Other corporations have built city-ships, but none has more than one, and they do not compete with Mittelsohn and Xin Wu for offplanet sales. So far, the Alpenshore oceans seem inexhaustible; three more city-ships are under construction, and the rivalry between Xin Wu and Mittelsohn remains friendly here.

Alpenshore's Government

Unlike most of the Corporate Worlds, Alpenshore is ruled by an elected assembly. The government dates to 150 years before the advent of the mega-corporations, and Mittelsohn found it easier to negotiate with, than take over, the Assembly.

However, Mittelsohn dominates the world. It maintains a small standing army, moderate air force, and a large navy for Alpenshore; this is "in lieu of taxes." The navy is mostly patrol boats and cutters; some are as large as destroyers. None would be any threat to the city-ships, which are armed and armored like monstrous dreadnaughts, "just in case."

The patrol fleet is maintained primarily as a search-and-rescue force to patrol the large landless expanses of ocean and to intercept smuggling operations. It also enforces the anti-smuggling laws of the Alpenshore People's Assembly. Many imported goods are taxed at 2-3%; on some luxuries, the tax reaches 25%. These taxes are sufficient to encourage smuggling. While the man in the street thinks of smugglers as bold and dangerous men with shiploads of drugs or union propaganda, the reality is much less romantic, and more profitable, than they would suspect.

Any product requiring large amounts of land to produce must be imported. Most meat products are replaced planetside

with fish from the abundant sea. What little arable land there is is devoted to vegetables. This leaves no room for tobacco or grains (used also for some alcoholic beverages), so smokables and spirits are two of the top choices for smugglers. While liquor is available on the city-ships, the cost is about twice normal. On the islands or on the smaller ships at sea, legal liquor is either unavailable or at least triple the city-ship rate.

Adventures on Alpenshore

A Few Good Men. Informants have revealed that a shipment of untaxed goods is coming in late next week. The smugglers in question are a notorious bunch of tax evaders, and the Assembly wants to make an example of them. As a result, Mittelsohn is hiring about 200 temporary anti-smuggling employees!

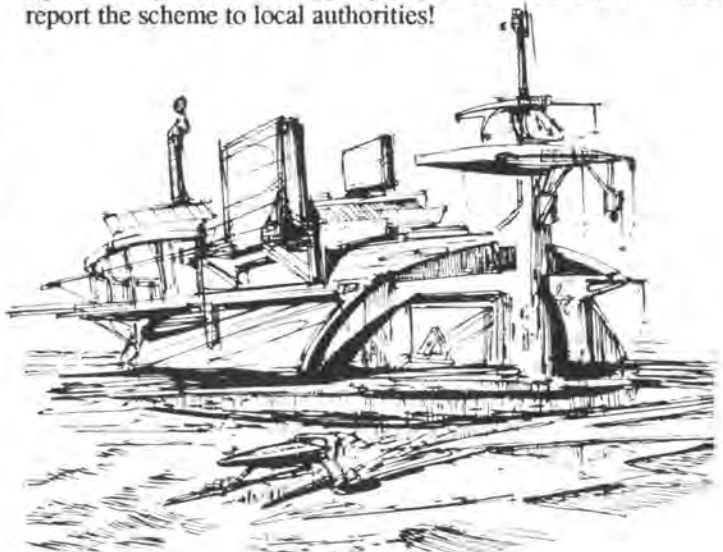
The PCs are asked to run a patrol about 150 miles from the spaceport, under the approach lanes. The smugglers are expected to drop the cargo from a spacecraft below radar level to a waiting boat. The customs department will provide a (seized) hovercraft (or whatever the PCs can pilot) and \$100 per man per day, plus a \$2,000 bonus for a successful mission. Of course, the smugglers will not give up the cargo without a fight . . . and there may be a smuggler agent in the PCs' crew.

Smoke 'em Out. The most disreputable PC in the party is approached by a shady-looking oldster who has overheard their next offworld destination. He has a large envelope (containing payment for a recent run of hooch) to be delivered at Greentree Systems (a small "export" company at the destination). He promises there will be a sizable payment to the PC on delivery.

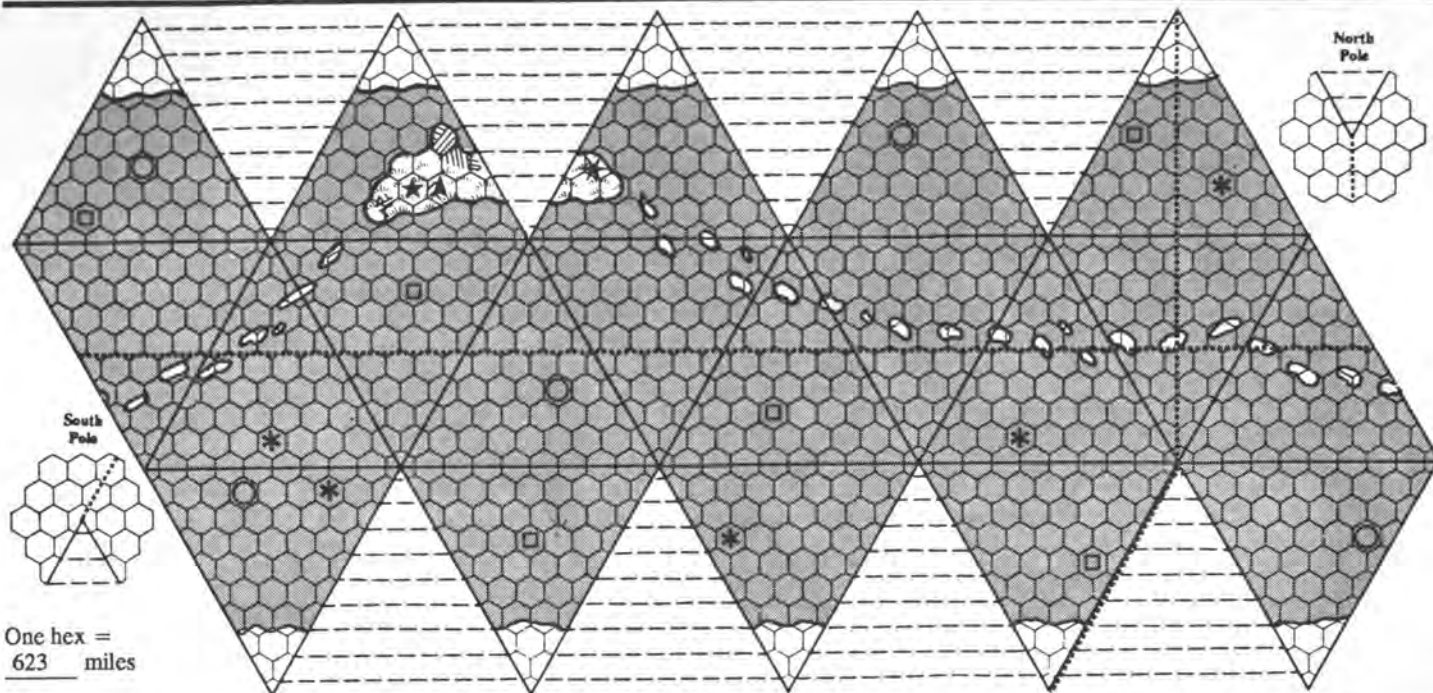
The envelope contains a data chip which can be used at their destination to steal the payment — a quick \$50,000 — if a Computer Programming-3 roll can be made to find and bypass the chip's own password routines. Only one roll is allowed; on a failure, the chip destructs. And the people at Greentree will certainly come looking for the thieves.

However, if the envelope is delivered unopened, Greentree will offer a shipment of cigarettes to drop on the next trip to Alpenshore. Payment will be \$1,000 per ton of cargo successfully dropped; penalty will be getting to pay the \$1 per pack tax on any cargo in the hold on landing (roughly \$450,000 per ton!).

Can the PC succeed on his own, or will he bring the whole crew in on the scheme? To make things even more interesting, the first NPC the party encounters is a double agent for Mittelsohn Corporate Security, and the PCs are now being investigated along with the smuggling ring. Honest characters should report the scheme to local authorities!



PLANETARY RECORD: Alpengshore (Travis Reguli Beta II)



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 8,895 mi. Gravity .94 G Density 4.6 Composition Medium-Iron
 Axial Tilt 18°* Seasonal Variation Minor* Length of Day 21 hrs. Length of Year 179.5 days/ .43 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure 1.31 (Standard) Type and Composition 73% Nitrogen, 22% Oxygen, 2% CO₂, 3% other
 Climate Cool Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 50° Average 70° High 90°
 Surface Water 91% Humidity 80% Primary Terrain Ocean; mountainous and rough on land
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Ample Rare Minerals Scarce Radioactives Trace
 Heavy Metals Trace Industrial Metals Ample Light Metals Ample Organics Ample
 Moons 1 small moon — Firefly

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans, fish, sea life
 Other significant life forms Reptiles, insects, small mammals

Civilization: Population(s) 77,880,900 (PR 7) Tech Level(s) 10 Control Rating 4**

Society Representative democracy, heavily influenced by corporations, especially Mittelsohn and Xin Wu

Starports Class III on planet near Dolmesch; Class II in orbit

Installations Independent society at sea; research station on southern polar continent

Economic/Production Tourism, retirement communities; exports fish, plastics, biochemicals and light metals

Other notes: Map key: capital, Dolmesch. ★ Research station. Floating Cities: ★ Mittelsohn, ○ Xin Wu, □ Other (locations vary)

Imports most food items and cloth; Ember, in the outer orbit, is a small, gray dwarf with a dense asteroid belt orbiting it at .3 AU

* Current figures; these vary over a 120-year period. **Near floating cities and Dolmesch; effectively 2 elsewhere

System Information:

Star Name Travis Reguli Beta Type K0 V Location Corporate Worlds 9/-11/10
 Biozone 0.5-0.6 Inner Limit 0.0 Number of Planets 7

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|-------------|-------|----------|--------------|----------|---------|---------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Solaris | 1 | .2 | Hot rockball | 2,000 | 6.9 | .32 | None | Mining potential |
| Alpengshore | 2 | .55 | Earthlike | 8,895 | 4.6 | .94 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| Hoarfrost | 3 | .9 | Icy rockball | 3,500 | 4.4 | .35 | Nitrogen-CO ₂ | — |
| Thor | 4 | 1.6 | Gas giant | 36,000 | .81 | .66 | Ammonia | — |
| Charon | 5 | 3.0 | Gas giant | 31,000 | 1.1 | .78 | Methane | — |
| Useless | 6 | 5.8 | Icy rockball | 2,000 | 3.8 | .17 | None | — |
| Bitter | 7 | 11.4 | Icy rockball | 180 | .95 | .004 | Hydrogen-Helium | Large comet |
| Ember | 21 | 183,501 | Gray dwarf | 17,000 | 18 | 4.9 | — | — |

Arantas (Arantas Beta II) — *Restricted*

Arantas is a rich and prosperous world. The controlling company, Arantas Biotechnical Services (ABS), is engaged in biologically oriented services and sciences. Almost all the engineered life forms in the sector either came from ABS labs or from technology imported by ABS.

Arantas was colonized by a group of former Amalgamated Biotronics officials ousted from management. They settled Arantas and started ABS to pursue cloning and agricultural experimentation. To this day, AmBio and ABS are unfriendly competitors.

Heavy industry is forbidden on Arantas; agribusiness is important enough here to warrant strict pollution laws. Mining is kept to a minimum, with ABS preferring to import things they can't manufacture themselves. Some industries thrive in spite of the anti-pollution laws; advanced recovery methods and tailored bacteria which eat crude oil and excrete plastic allow Arantas to support a highly-developed petrochemical industry, for instance.

Arantas exports some of the best biochemical goods in the Corporate Worlds; pharmaceuticals, life support devices, water purification systems, air filters and refiners, plastics and lubricants are all exported all over the Corporate Worlds and beyond. But ABS' forte is plant and animal cloning. They choose only the best specimens to clone and monitor quality carefully. As a result, ABS livestock is considered the best in the business and commands a high price.

ABS does not raise animals, other than the few needed to conduct genetic research and feed the population on Arantas; they generally export embryos implanted in smaller animals, such as mice or rabbits, depending on the size of the animal and the length of the trip. A trained technician transplants the embryos into their hosts; after the embryos are removed at their destination, the hosts become pets (or, on some worlds, dinner).

Likewise, ABS raises very few plants, since they can produce seeds faster than they can produce plants and seeds are easier to ship off-planet.

The Arantas Beanstalk

A "beanstalk" (or skyhook, or space elevator) is an extremely efficient way to get from ground to orbit and back. Space elevators are TL10, bordering on 11. An elevator is essentially a thick cable of doped graphite whisker (TL9), held aloft by the centripetal force of the planet's rotation. It is at least twice as long as the distance from the surface to geosynchronous orbit. (If Earth were the size of a bowling ball, a terrestrial skyhook would be a yard long.) There are docking stations at low-orbit, geosynchronous, and high-orbit points.

The true limiting factor in building a skyhook is not technology but expense. Its cost is measured in planet-years of income, and it's only economical when the demand for ground-to-orbit travel is huge. But once the elevator is built, such commerce becomes routine, and no more expensive than point to point travel on the planet.

Cargo and passenger cars run up and down the cable using

ordinary track mechanisms. They're slow — the journey to orbit typically takes almost three days. But there's no wasteful chemical rocket exhaust!

The Arantas Beanstalk is the only one in the sector; Belvera had one, but it was destroyed.

Customs

Arantas does not allow direct landings on-planet; they are concerned with the prevention of accidental or unauthorized import and export of life, down to the bacterial level. Anything going to the planet, living or non-living, must undergo a rigorous "decontamination" procedure at the top of the Beanstalk, and an equally rigorous security check at the bottom. It's not surprising, therefore, that most people who have business with ABS conduct it via videophone.

Adventure on Arantas

Sheer Boredom. The PCs are contracted to go to Arantas to deliver a blood specimen for cloning. They will have about a two-week wait while the blood sample is decontaminated, shipped to Arantas, prepared, divided, implanted, cleared through customs and shipped back "upstairs." By an amazing coincidence, it will take the characters about two weeks to be decontaminated, go planet-side, spend a day on Arantas, clear customs and return upstairs. They may want to do something else during those two weeks. Those who try to break quarantine for no reason except boredom will find themselves in very hot water if and when they get caught!

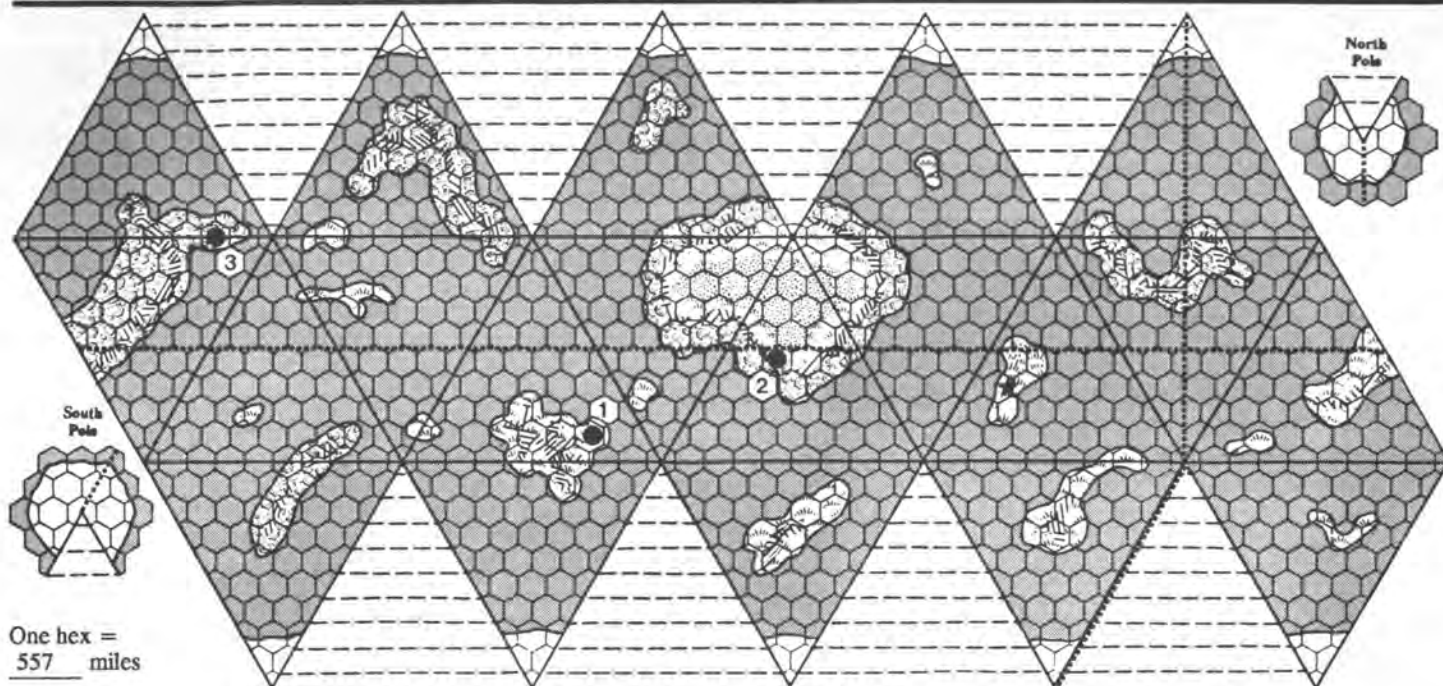
Leave My Bunny Alone! This adventure actually starts almost anywhere *except* Arantas. In a warehouse or on the barren spaceport, one of the PCs finds a large black-and-white rabbit . . . healthy, but lost and frightened. It is docile and friendly. It is also an embryo-host, carrying over \$100,000

worth of moa embryos, destined for Carstairs in the Old Frontiers. An Organization attempt to hijack the embryos was badly bungled; the rabbit was the only survivor. The Organization wants the rabbit, for obvious reasons. ABS thinks the rabbit was dead, but when they learn otherwise, they will activate a radio-tag implanted with the embryos; when it is on, they can locate the bunny as long as it's on the same continent with their trackers. And a mercenary team, dispatched from Carstairs by the angry ranchers who had bought the moas, will eventually arrive to settle the score. If the PCs don't do anything to attract anyone's attention, the rabbit will become sick about six months after they find it (as the host treatment begins to wear off). By then, any data search for Peculiar Bloat of Rabbits, anywhere in the sector, will alert all three sets of searchers!

Should the PCs suspect that the pet is a host, any attempt to investigate will also bring them into contact with the searchers. A PC who makes a Veterinary/TL10 roll at -2 could learn that the rabbit was carrying something, but not what. Removing the embryos and preparing them for growth would require a specialized professional skill, which no PCs are likely to have.



PLANETARY RECORD: Arantas (Arantas Beta II) — *Restricted*



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 7,950 mi. Gravity 1.1 G Density 6.0 Composition Medium-Iron
 Axial Tilt 14° Seasonal Variation Minor Length of Day 27 hrs. Length of Year 120 days/ .37 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure 1.2 (Standard) Type and Composition 77% Nitrogen, 21% Oxygen, 2% CO₂
 Climate Warm Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 70° Average 90° High 110°
 Surface Water 88% Humidity 50% Primary Terrain Forest/Plains
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Ample Rare Minerals Ample Radioactives Plentiful
 Heavy Metals Plentiful Industrial Metals Plentiful Light Metals Ample Organics Ext. Plentiful
 Moons None

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Lower animals, fish, amphibians

Civilization: Population(s) 280,000,000 (PR 8) Tech Level(s) 10* Control Rating 4

Society Corporate State, managed by ABS

Starports Class IV in orbit (via Beantalk)

Installations Beantalk Departure Center; Arantas University — biomedical related studies; Biomedical Research Institute

Economic/Production Exports tailored life forms, medical supplies and drugs; excellent hospitals

Other notes: Map Key: Capital, Bellerophon; 1. Beantalk Departure Center 2. Arantas University 3. Biomedical Research
 Access strictly controlled — everything entering or exiting Arantas must be decontaminated; Arantas is TL 11 in biology and biochemistry

System Information:

Star Name Arantas Beta Type K0 V Location Corporate Worlds 17/2/9
 Biozone 0.5-0.6 Inner Limit 0.0 Number of Planets 7

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|----------------|-------|----------|--------------|----------|---------|---------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Blistered | 1 | .2 | Hot rockball | 1,800 | 2.6 | .11 | Trace sulfur compounds | Glazed from flares |
| Arantas | 2 | .5 | Earthlike | 7,950 | 6.0 | 1.1 | Standard | Detailed above |
| Hermes | 3 | .8 | Terrestrial | 3,000 | 4.1 | .28 | Thin reducing | — |
| Talas | 4 | 1.4 | Icy rockball | 2,800 | 2.4 | .15 | Thin Nitrogen-CO ₂ | — |
| Belter's Dream | 5 | 2.6 | Rockball | 2,500 | 6.9 | .40 | None | — |
| Amber | 6 | 5.0 | Gas giant | 39,000 | .8 | .71 | Hydrogen-Helium | Bright amber-colored |
| Exile | 7 | 9.8 | Rockball | 6,000 | 3.9 | .54 | None | — |

Asmiar (Benes V)

Asmiar is a geologically old planet. Erosion and glacial activity have reduced the planet's surface to rolling plains with a few small mountains (none over 8,500 feet). Glacial melt and seasonal runoff feed mighty rivers, and the sun shines 7 days out of 10. These factors make Asmiar an ideal agricultural planet.

Intelligent life never evolved on Asmiar, so the forests and grasslands grew unchecked except for grazing by the native animals. As a result, at its discovery Asmiar had an average of 38 inches of topsoil. (By contrast, North America in 1989 had only 8 inches, and in 1700 had 18.)

The first settlers on Asmiar were Xin Wu farmers, who cleared huge sections of the two main continents and planted wheat, barley, rice, oats and other cereal crops, in addition to fruit and nut orchards. The yields were spectacular, and soon areas of the planet were licensed out to other corporations to help feed their employees.

In fact, the harvests were so successful, and the farmers made so much money, that they did something unprecedented in the history of the Corporate Worlds — they bought the planet from Xin Wu. In return for cash and a 25% interest in the cooperative, Xin Wu sold all rights to the planet and all licenses it had granted to a cooperative made up of the Asmiarian farmers.

The Cooperatives

Asmiar corporations tend to be cooperatives, with stock

tightly held by the members. Stock may not be sold unless a majority of the shares not involved in the transaction approve. The only exceptions are that stock may be left to relatives as an inheritance, or sold to someone wishing to join the cooperative as a member. For instance, if Teacher Brown wanted to change careers and leave the planet, she could sell her shares in the Teachers' Cooperative to Teacher Smith. In these cases approval is still technically necessary, but it is little more than a formality.

By far the largest cooperative on Asmiar is the Asmiar Farmers' Cooperative Society, with some 2 billion members holding 600 billion shares. The Xin Wu Corporation holds 200 billion shares, but their shares are non-voting. The number of shares Xin Wu holds is adjusted so that they always have 25% of all cooperative stock.

The Clothiers' Co-op

Soon after the Farmers' Co-op was formed, some of the members decided to try their hand at raising cotton and wool. The cotton was rotated with soybeans, grasses and other crops to replenish the soil, and sheep grazed wherever food crops weren't growing. When these experiments proved successful, entrepreneurs started a Clothiers' Cooperative to take advantage of the new resource. This group bought the raw cotton and wool (and, eventually, other materials such as angora) from the Farmers, then processed it into clothing.

Xin Wu was not happy about this arrangement, since they felt the Clothiers' Co-op was an offshoot of the Farmers' Co-op and that they were therefore entitled to 25% of the Farmers' Co-op stock (and 25% of their dividends as well). The Clothiers and Farmers decided the Farmers were an independent group. They feel that since nothing in the agreement states that Xin Wu would receive anything except its share of the profits from the Farmers' Co-op, Xin Wu was being unreasonable.

In retaliation, Xin Wu boycotted Asmiar Clothiers. Asmiar Clothiers items may not be sold in any store owned or controlled by Xin Wu, and Xin Wu employees purchasing such items are (informally) reprimanded. This has scarcely put a dent in business, though, since other corporations have been all too eager to buy from Asmiar — if only to spite Xin Wu.

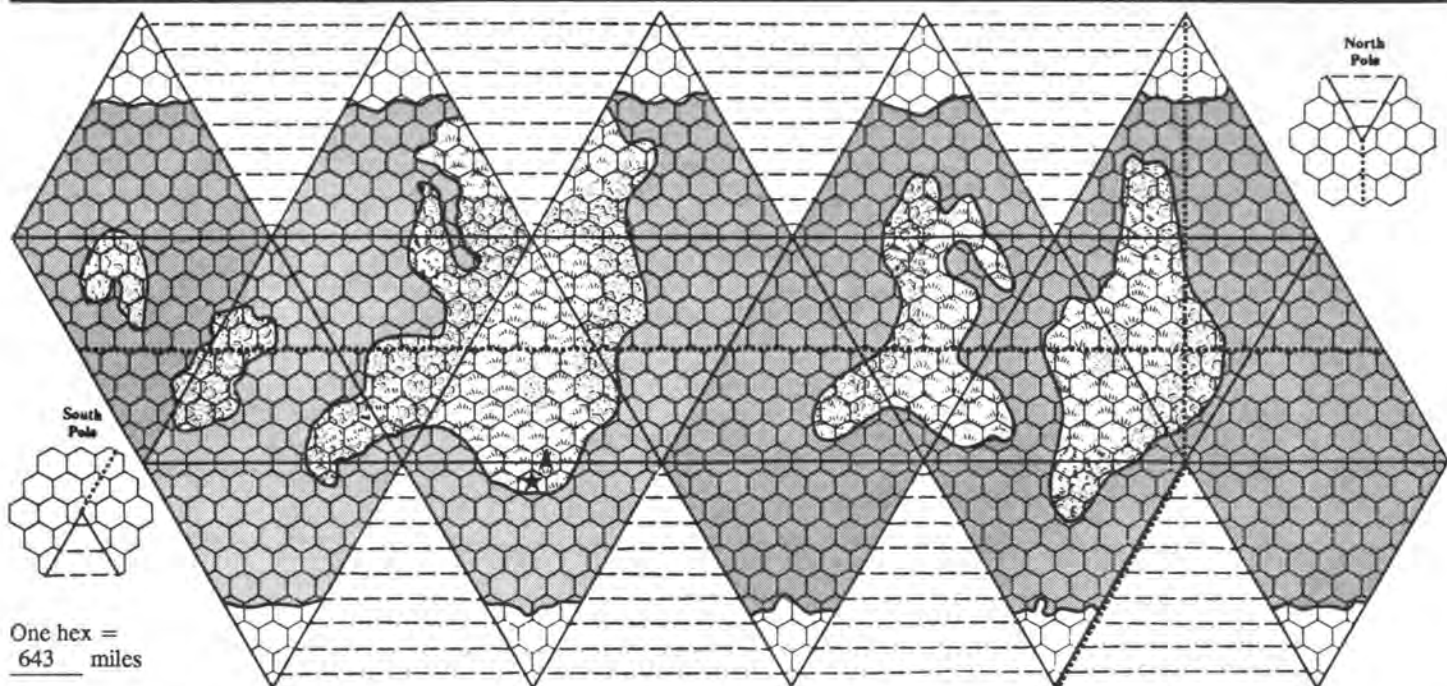
Adventures on Asmiar

Support Free Trade. Some Xin Wu worlds don't agree with management's interpretation of the situation. One of these worlds hires the characters to bring in a shipload of Clothiers' Guild clothing just after Xin Wu Security announces a tightening of their embargo. This is a unique opportunity for "moral" characters to play smuggler: What could be more harmless than clothing?

Active Measures. The PCs are approached by a Xin Wu employee who wants to recruit them for a sabotage scheme on Asmiar; the GM can tailor the plot to the PCs' particular talents. If they participate successfully, they will be paid and offered further dirty deals. If they report the scheme to Clothiers' Guild representatives, they may get a small reward; the agent will vanish and Xin Wu will indignantly deny the whole thing. If they talk to Xin Wu security, they will become enmeshed in a web of corporate espionage. Sabotage is a very un-Xin Wu thing to do; the agent who approached them is actually working for a faction within the Clothiers' Guild, hoping to drive Clothiers' stock down so that they can increase their holdings!



PLANETARY RECORD: Asmiar (Benes V)



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 9,208 mi. Gravity .97 G Density 4.6 Composition Medium-Iron
 Axial Tilt 6° Seasonal Variation Minor Length of Day 17 hrs. Length of Year 18,048 days/ 35 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure .86 (Standard) Type and Composition 71% Nitrogen, 20% Oxygen, 5% Argon, 3% CO₂
 Climate Cool Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 20° Average 50° High 76°
 Surface Water 65% Humidity 67% Primary Terrain Plains
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Scarce Rare Minerals Scarce Radioactives Absent
 Heavy Metals Absent Industrial Metals Scarce Light Metals Plentiful Organics Scarce
 Moons 1 large moon — Rechuvac

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Native and imported plants and animals

Civilization: Population(s) 375,000,000 (PR 9) Tech Level(s) 9(10) Control Rating 4

Society Confederation of Cooperatives

Starports Class III near Chimash

Installations —

Economic/Production Exports clothing, textiles and farm goods

Other notes: Map key: capital, Chimash

System Information:

Star Name Benes Type A3 II Location Corporate Worlds -9/4/10
 Biozone 20-30 Inner Limit 0.4 Number of Planets 6

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|---------|-------|----------|---------------------|----------|---------|---------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Keacia | 1 | .64 | Rockball | 919 | 7.6 | .16 | None | — |
| Telcit | 2 | .99 | Hostile terrestrial | 6,200 | 6.9 | .98 | Nitrogen-Argon | No recorded landings |
| — | 3 | 1.35 | Assteroid belt | — | — | — | — | — |
| Laothan | 4 | 2.04 | Hostile terrestrial | 6,200 | 5.2 | .74 | Nitrogen-Methane | — |
| Huveth | 5 | 3.44 | Rockball | 2,700 | 4.8 | .30 | None | — |
| — | 6 | — | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 7 | — | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Asmiar | 8 | 23.04 | Earthlike | 9,208 | 4.6 | .97 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| — | 9 | 45.44 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 10 | — | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 11 | — | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Daodox | 12 | 359.04 | Rockball | 4,600 | 3.7 | .39 | Nitrogen-CO ₂ | — |

Beethoven (Drax III)

Beethoven is a lush pastoral planet owned by the Telestar Entertainment Corporation. With temperatures that range between 65° and 85° F, the growing season lasts nearly the full year and produces the sector's finest fruits and vegetables. Beethoven's only drawback is the severe fall storms that sweep in from the arid region with devastating results. The setting is apparently ideal for creative inspiration, and Beethoven is the home of some of the most talented artists, artisans and musicians in the galaxy.

Telestar Entertainment

Corporate entertainment tends toward soap operas, situation comedies and morality plays about being good employees. Telestar was formed to provide an alternative to such mindless fare. At first Telestar just produced its own drivel, but the profits helped fund alternative, educational and cultural programs.

When the planet was first colonized, Telestar encouraged the galaxy's artists to make this beautiful world their home. They offered lucrative inducements that few artists could resist, in order to have locally available talent for their programming. It worked; Telestar soon made the name "Beethoven" synonymous with "culture." Painters and sculptors began settling the planet, and artwork from Beethoven found its way throughout the Corporate Worlds.

As word spread of Beethoven's climate and cultural significance, wealthy corporate leaders, seeking the trappings of good taste and culture, began seeking out the artists in their demesne. Tourists arrived in droves. Many of the more talented artists took offense at this invasion of their privacy and fled to more secluded areas of the planet. As the real artists retreated, *con* artists took their places. As a result, the larger cities are now simply tourist traps. Many talented artists remain on Beethoven, but are militantly reclusive — ready to defend their privacy with every available means. Most have withdrawn to hidden areas that are easily defended.

Its reputation for beauty and productivity has made Beethoven the site of the highly-touted Renaissance Masterpieces Concert Series. Featuring works by the likes of Beethoven, Mozart, Alexandriev and Barrett, it brings classical music aficionados from many parsecs away. For those with less esoteric leanings, there is also an annual Frontier Festival — a combination carnival, folk and music festival. Each event lasts five days and is broadcast throughout the sector and beyond.

Adventures on Beethoven.

Talent Search. The PCs have been hired by a wealthy executive to find the brilliant sculptress Ivana Kinski. He has be-

come infatuated with her and her work, and is willing to pay a high price to commission an original Kinski.

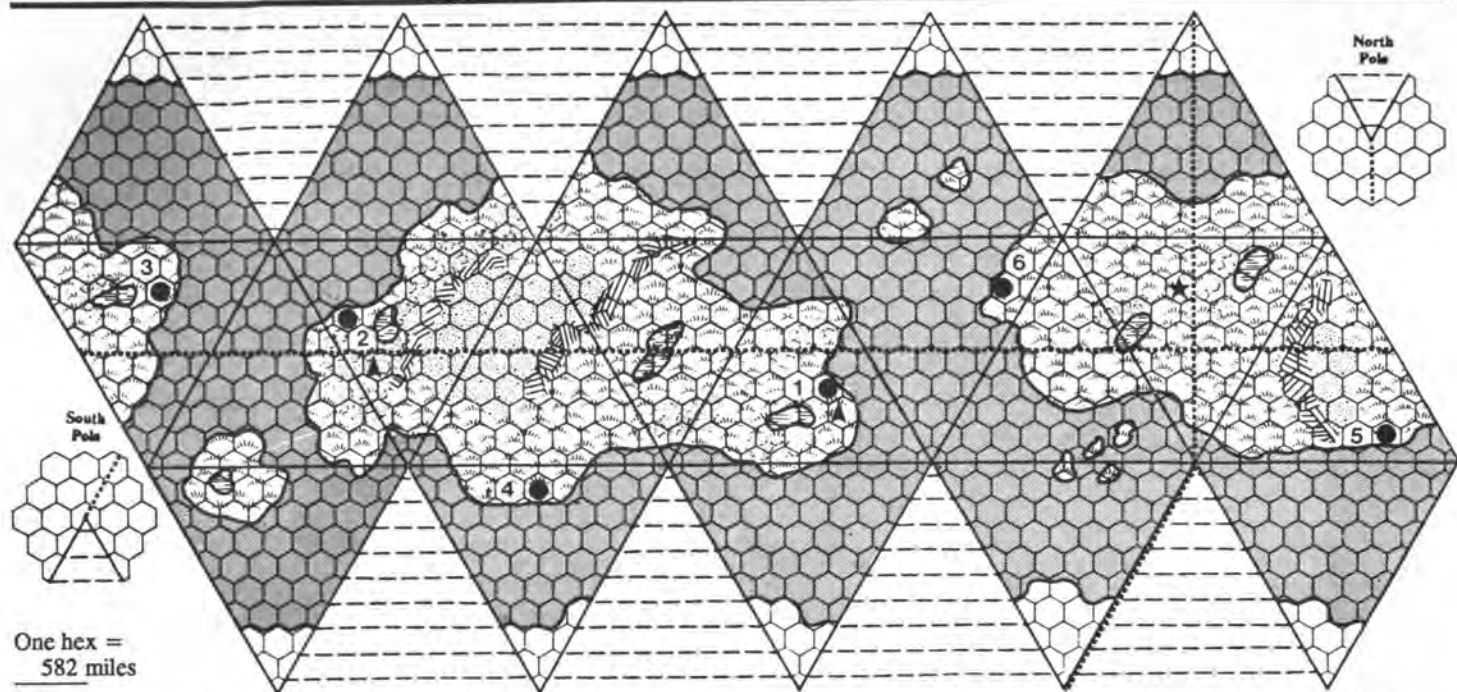
The PCs should be given a tight schedule and meet frigid antipathy (if not actual danger) as they seek her. Of course, getting her to consent to a commission should be more difficult . . .

I Want To Be Let Alone. When the characters catch up with the reclusive Miss Kinski, she offers to hire them away from their former employer. It seems she wants *some* human company while she finishes her latest masterwork, but she doesn't want to be bothered until her latest sculpture is finished — when she will be more than glad to discuss terms with her executive admirer.

Alert PCs may realize that they can collect *twice* for this adventure — once for keeping Miss Kinski secluded for a month or two, and again for producing her!



PLANETARY RECORD: Beethoven (Drax III)



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 8,314 mi. Gravity 1.09 G Density 5.7 Composition Medium-Iron
 Axial Tilt 8° Seasonal Variation Minor Length of Day 40 hrs. Length of Year 241 days/ 1.1 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure .89 (Standard) Type and Composition 75% Nitrogen, 20% Oxygen, 3% CO₂, 2% other
 Climate Earth-normal Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 65° Average 75° High 85°
 Surface Water 60% Humidity 66% Primary Terrain Forest and plains
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Scarce Rare Minerals Absent Radioactives Absent
 Heavy Metals Absent Industrial Metals Scarce Light Metals Ample Organics Scarce
 Moons 1 small moon — Emperor

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Mammals, small reptiles, fish

Civilization: Population(s) 12,514,000 (PR 7) Tech Level(s) 9 (10) Control Rating 4

Society Corporate State — managed by Telestar Entertainment Corporation

Starports Class IV at Chopin; Class I at Alexandriev

Installations Fiedler Music Institute; Telestar main broadcast station; Telestar orbital beamcast station

Economic/Production Extremely large tourist trade; exports fruits and vegetables; site of several major concert series each year

Other notes: Map key: capital, Picasso 1. Chopin 2. Alexandriev 3. Van Gogh 4. Brahms 5. Strauss 6. Telestar main broadcast station

System Information:

Star Name Drax Type G7 V Location Corporate Worlds-9/-6/10
 Biozone 0.8-1.2 Inner Limit 0.0 Number of Planets 6

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------------|----------|---------|---------|---------------------|----------------|
| B Minor | 1 | .5 | Hot rockball | 3,564 | 6 | .49 | None | — |
| C Sharp | 2 | .8 | Terrestrial | 6,263 | 6.8 | .98 | Trace Methane | Desert |
| Beethoven | 3 | 1.1 | Earthlike | 8,314 | 5.7 | 1.09 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| Eroica | 4 | 1.7 | Gas giant | 84,000 | 1.1 | 2.12 | Very Dense Ammonia | Faint ring |
| Fidelio | 5 | 2.9 | Gas giant | 51,600 | 2.5 | 2.96 | Superdense Hydrogen | — |
| — | 6 | 5.3 | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 7 | 10.1 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | — |
| A Flat | 8 | 19.7 | Icy rockball | 4,152 | 2.51 | .24 | None | — |

Belvera (Normale II) — Quarantined

Belvera was once a jewel of the sector, lauded in every stockholders' report. Its system primary resembles Sol (hence its name, meaning "normal"); planetary conditions approach terrestrial ideals in most respects; the world is rich in superheavy elements and unique organic compounds. At one time, the colony's population topped one billion. Tourism flourished, and Belveran exports brought high prices.

Now, with the Belveran quarantine entering its third generation, the colony's people are almost forgotten. Company histories talk of "unionist terrorists" (a redundancy in corporate states), the corporation's unstinting refusal to give in to their demands, and the plague the terrorists engineered to destroy the colony. There is less discussion of the people of today's Belvera, hard-working and ambitious, but trapped on the planet by the disease they carry.

The Plague and the Quarantine

No plague could be better calculated to damage a population: staggeringly contagious, a lengthy incubation period without symptoms, resistance to all known treatments, and a lingering, painful death. Artificial panimmunity gave no protection. Newscasters call it "Belvera's Curse."

The symptoms resemble a severe allergic reaction; the face, in particular, swells so badly that the victim can neither see nor breathe without help. But by the time these symptoms show, the victim has been spreading the disease for weeks. The entire populace contracted the Curse, and by all rights should have died.

Mittelsohn wrote the entire world off, wrecking their balance sheets for 20 years. They cut off all trade and ringed the world with observation satellites. And, when survivors persisted in trying to escape, they used nuclear devices to wreck Belvera's orbital elevator. Many thousands died in the fall of the skyhook, and most of the capital city was wrecked by the meteoric rubble. Much of the skyhook remained in orbit: a swarm of particles, a few hundred mile-long chunks, and a couple of slowly spinning cables of continental dimensions. The rubble occupies a wide band around the equator, making the prime near-planet and geosynchronous orbits useless. Ships passing through the belt risk hull punctures and collisions; make a Piloting roll for each landing or takeoff except over the polar regions, or for each 6 hours spent in orbit except at the stations. Failure means Light damage to the ship; a critical failure gives Medium damage (see p. S94).

The quarantine continues to this day. Three stations, each carrying 50 staffers and 10 interceptor spacecraft, try to prevent vessels from reaching or leaving the planet. They permit medical research ships to land and leave on a difficult polar course, by means of a spaceport on Belvera's southern ice cap, where the Curse never spread.

On the rare occasions when researchers go elsewhere on the surface, they must use pressure suits and self-contained air supplies. Videos of Curse victims make them glad to comply. Personnel returning to ships must undergo a thorough decontamination, lasting an hour, at the airlock. Once back in orbit, ships must dock at a station for intensive inspection and beam-sterilization of the entire surface.

Except at the polar station, anyone whose suit is breached is denied re-entry to the ship. Ships who take contaminated personnel on board (it has happened) are not permitted to return to the station; they are destroyed if they do not land again on Belvera. Even if a ship lands, its landing site is destroyed by a missile an

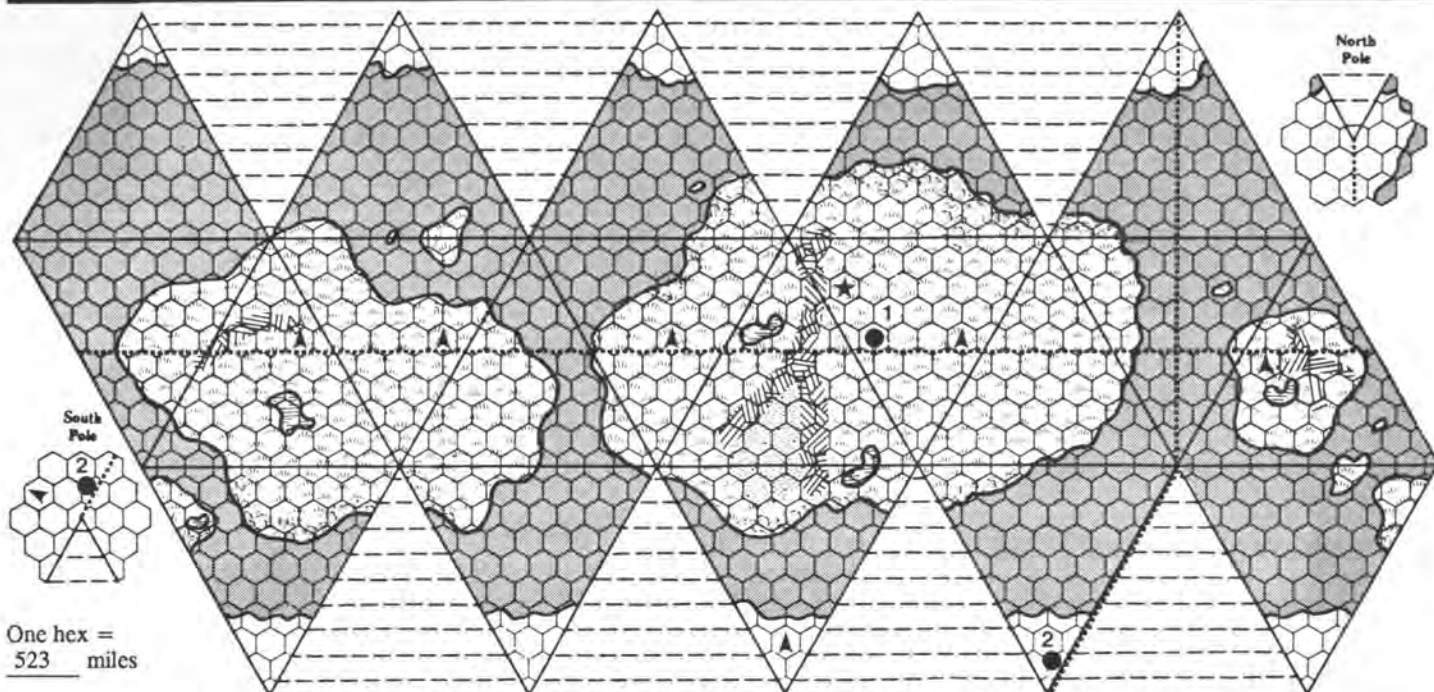
hour after the crew leaves (this has happened four times in the past 60 years). The quarantine crew is taking no chance that the Belverans might get a working spaceship!

Mittelsohn is deadly serious about the quarantine. Its station personnel appear to be incorruptible.

Continued on p. 22



PLANETARY RECORD: Belvera (Normale II) — Quarantined



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 7,470 mi. Gravity .98 G Density 5.7 Composition Medium-Iron
 Axial Tilt 7° Seasonal Variation Minor Length of Day 27 hrs. Length of Year 318 days/ .98 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure .83 (Standard) Type and Composition 78% Nitrogen, 18% Oxygen, 3% CO₂, 1% other
 Climate Earth-normal Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 62° Average 80° High 98°
 Surface Water 60% Humidity 47% Primary Terrain Plains/Forests
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Ample Rare Minerals Plentiful Radioactives Ample
 Heavy Metals Ext. Plentiful Industrial Metals Plentiful Light Metals Ample Organics Ext. Plentiful
 Moons None

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Large quasi-reptilian herbivores, small omnivores

Civilization: Population(s) 12,100,000 (PR 7) Tech Level(s) 8 (10)* Control Rating 3

Society Meritocratic/socialist, somewhat fanatic about "escape from Belvera"

Starports Class I at south pole; five Class V around equator, long abandoned; skyhook station, destroyed

Installations Three orbital quarantine stations manned by Mittlesohn Corporate Security; Mittlesohn base at south pole; others unknown

Economic/Production Formerly diversified, specializing in superheavy metals, agriculture and tourism; now agriculture and light manufacture, self-sufficient.

Other notes: Map Key: capital, Potential 1. Former Skyhook Station (nuke crater) 2. Quarantine Research Base.

* Native TL is now only 8, but many TL10 devices remain. Orbital debris from the skyhook makes near and geosynchronous orbits dangerous.

System Information:

Star Name Normale Type G2 IV Location Corporate Worlds -18/-13/0
 Biozone 1.0-1.5 Inner Limit 0.0 Number of Planets 3

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|----------|-------|----------|---------------|----------|---------|---------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Newcomer | 1 | varies | Rockball | 2,100 | 3.7 | .18 | None | Highly elliptical orbit |
| — | 2 | .9 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | — |
| Belvera | 3 | 1.2 | Earthlike | 7,470 | 5.7 | .98 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| — | 4 | 1.8 | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 5 | 3.0 | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Anahita | 6 | 5.4 | Gas giant | 39,000 | 1.3 | 1.2 | Hydrogen-Methane | Bright green, 6 moons |

Belvera Today

The quarantine is necessary because Belvera is not a dead planet. One person in 200 proved immune. These survivors struggled to rebuild and repopulate. They passed their resistance to their offspring, and now only a few hundred Belverans each year succumb to the Curse. Today the planet has a population of some 12 million, mostly concentrated around the former capital city of Potential.

However, they remain carriers. Any contact with a Belveran would certainly spread the disease to outsiders.

Of course, the Belverans are doing their best to find a solution for the plague, but they have had no luck. It was clearly an artificial virus, but that's all they know for sure. And Mittelsohn isn't cooperating with their medical efforts. The Belverans beam indignant messages to any ship in orbit, making promises and demanding help. Few care to listen.

The Belverans remain dedicated to reconstruction. Under a charismatic leader (see below), the present generation has recovered a full TL8 industrial base, and expects to reach TL9 within ten years (and, of course, many TL10 devices remain intact). Sympathetic outsiders have tried to help, but the Mittelsohn quarantine blocks all aid, fearing (perhaps rightly) that if the planet develops spaceflight capability, the sector will have to sterilize the planet in self-defense. The Belverans understand the situation, but they hate Mittelsohn regardless, and see it as a nuke-armed, murderous jailer. Belveran society is not unusual except for its isolation, but the Belveran government doesn't broadcast information about its technical research projects . . . and has little fear of spies!

Harmony Fiberwright

Belvera's leader for the past 18 years has been Harmony Fiberwright, a brilliant and driven administrator. Her title is simply "Chairman" — a holdover from the corporate days — and she is assisted by a "Board" of twelve "Directors," all of whom are chosen for proven ability. Fiberwright hates the Curse even more than most Belverans; it claimed both her children. After the second death, she learned that she does not carry the Curse-immunity gene that other surviving Belverans have. She is immune to *everything* — but her children didn't inherit that, nor would future children likely do so. Thus, she has adopted all Belvera.

She has ST 8, DX 10, IQ 16, HT 11, and a Move of 5. She is a slight woman in her late fifties, with crew-cut gray hair (all Belverans wear their hair short) and piercing blue-gray eyes.

Her advantages include Immunity to Disease, Eidetic Memory (first level), Status 7 (planetary chief of state) and Empathy. Her only significant disadvantage is Sense of Duty (to all Belvera).

She has the quirks Loves Children and Works Odd Hours. More significantly, she feels that Mittelsohn really wants to sterilize the planet. But many Belverans share this opinion, so this is not worth disadvantage points as a delusion . . . however, it makes her react at -5 to Mittelsohn employees, and -3 to any offworlder except proven friends.

Fiberwright and her assistant, Reuben Metaltech, will both become heavily involved in any offworld contact, whether it is vidphone negotiation or meeting with offworlders who have come to Belvera's surface. She is not a cruel person, but sees

herself as her people's protector against a heartless foe, and she has learned to be ruthless when she has to.

Adventures on Belvera

Rescue. The PCs are a specialist team hired to make a smash-and-grab attack on Belvera itself. A team of researchers has been taken hostage by a dissident group within the Belveran government. One, her suit ripped in the capture, has already died. Harmony Fiberwright has withdrawn official support for the dissidents, leaving Mittelsohn free to attempt a rescue.

This will be in many ways a standard vacc-suit combat operation, except that the surroundings will *seem* normal, and that a rip in the suit means a slow death rather than a quick one. Unless, of course, the PC has natural Immunity to Disease, or can roll a 3 on 3 dice to be one of the .5% who are naturally immune. But in that case, the visitor is trapped on Belvera!

Mercy Mission. The PCs are hired to airdrop a load of medical research equipment to Belvera (another ethical-smuggler adventure!) Their pay will come from outside interests who would like to see Belvera freed. To land, they must run the gauntlet of satellites, interceptors and debris.

The real troubles begin when they drop the goods and leave. What no one knows is that a fully armed battleship lies on the system's captured inner planet, a tiny hot/cold rock called Newcomer. If they outrun the interceptors, the battleship will come after them — and it can outrun *them*! If they are caught and survive, the PCs will be parachuted back to Belvera by the Mittelsohn forces. If they escape, they must go to a secret quarantine facility in another system to receive their pay. (If they don't do this, they won't be paid, and they *may* infect another planet!)

Possible Complications

The GM may choose any or all of these ideas or situations to add if Belvera becomes important in the campaign. Or they could be used as rumors.

(1) Goliath Weaponry is preparing, or has already prepared, a mission to Belvera to get Curse samples for use as a bio-weapon.

(2) A vid reporter has evidence that the Mittelsohn Board of Directors has (to their credit, reluctantly) decided to destroy the planet with antimatter bombs, *now*, before the Curse gets off-planet. The only reason the Board has delayed is that they are split down the middle on whether to manufacture evidence that the Belverans were about to escape, or just to come clean and say they felt it was necessary.

(3) The Belverans have discovered a secret espionage base on their planet, left over from the pre-Curse days. It includes three intact scoutships — obsolete by modern standards, but capable of reaching other systems if they can get out of the atmosphere intact. This is the kind of threat that would set off the Mittelsohn holocaust *now*.

(4) Several Belverans have been taken off-planet to a secret Amalgamated Bionics research laboratory in a dome on an airless and otherwise uninhabited planet. (Rumors vary — perhaps it is an engineless spacecraft orbiting a dead world.) AmBio thinks they have a clue as to the nature of the disease, and possibly even a cure. But they want to test their theory by bringing in "volunteers" from the outside — including a woman three months pregnant (they want to test whether unborn children are subject to the Curse).

(5) If you decide to use the *Plague* adventure seed on Salsam, assume that the spores from the plant produce an allergic reaction with symptoms similar to those of the Curse. So, investigators landing on Salsam find thousands of people dead in the freshly-sown sporeplant fields — the Curse appears to be spreading!



Dante (Cadigal V)

Everything was ready: insertion missiles in low orbit, survey and comm craft higher up, company news flitters ready to film from every angle. In two days would come the culmination of ten years of preparation: the first step in the Fresh Air Project, the maiden attempt by Radiant Futures Ltd. to terraform a world.

Dante, the hothouse planet, would become Radiant's exhibition agricultural world, a greenhouse in a new and more hospitable way. The process would begin in two days.

Tailored algae cells, floating high up in the atmosphere and working slowly down, would convert the planet's dense carbon dioxide into oxygen. In thirty years the atmosphere would be breathable, and then it would rain for decades more, filling the oceans. Self-reproducing nanomachines in the rocky soil would make it fertile, a molecule at a time.

It would all begin when the bombs hit the upper atmosphere and blew most of it away in a colossal explosion. The bombs carried a huge amount — hundreds of *pounds* — of the most expensive and explosive substance in the universe: antimatter. Thousands of workers were collecting hazard pay while waiting for that explosion. It was due in two days.

Literally hours before RFL's last crew was to complete its final routine ground survey and leave Dante's surface for the last time, a geologist stumbled and fell through a thin crust of soil at the base of a hill. Her pressure suit held, and her suit lights showed a smooth surface beneath the crust. Ten minutes later the call went up to RFL's orbital survey craft: "Hold everything!"

Artifacts and Publicity

The smooth surface proved to be, not a dome, but an enormous ceramic sphere, half-buried in Dante's crusty surface. Building? Spaceship hull? Dating proved it to be *millions* of years old, in a harsh and corrosive environment. The few artifacts inside were intriguing. Company scientists speculated that the ancient builders must have lived on Dante before the greenhouse effect turned it into a wasteland. Perhaps they even provoked the transformation; that could explain traces of atmospheric pollutants and nitrites.

The sphere represented a treasure trove for xenologists and perhaps for materials scientists. And what else might Dante conceal — treasures that could be lost in the upheavals to be triggered by the terraforming process?

The news services broke the story sector-wide, a step ahead of Radiant Futures' attempt to cover it up. Universities, science organizations, and many corporate boards immediately protested the Fresh Air Project and demanded that RFL postpone it. RFL stonewalled. Dante was their property, and nobody was going to tell them to abandon their expensive project. The furor grew.

Then, quite abruptly, Fresh Air performed an about-face. There were lots of planets in the sector. They could buy another. Now, what were they bid for this one?

Fresh Air's stock went up thirty points in the next week, as rumors spread about the Dome, about other discoveries on the planet, about the Sphere Builder culture. Xeno-cultural conservationists were nonplussed to find that they had won, almost without a fight.

The Sphere (GM's Information)

The whole Fresh Air project was a tremendous confidence game. The Dome is a real alien artifact, discovered decades ago in orbit in another system . . . by an Organization ship. Outlaw

scientists studied it for years before pronouncing it fascinating but intrinsically useless. (Yes, it had endured millions of years — in vacuum. On Dante, it wouldn't have lasted a thousand.) An Organization boss came up with this scheme to plant it on Dante, making it appear that the whole world might be a source of alien treasure. The terraforming plan was simply to make sure that the whole sector would be watching when the sphere was "discovered."

Unless Fate or the PCs intervene, the Organization will sell the planet, sell their Fresh Air stock while it's high, and depart billions of credits richer.

Adventure on Dante

Conservationists. The PCs are among those who descend on RFL to stop the Fresh Air Project, either on their own or as hirelings. Ready for an evil-corporation-vs.-conservationists adventure, they might get suspicious when Fresh Air gives in.

Possible clues: analysis of the ceramic material (Chemistry-2 or Metallurgy-4); realization that the structure was laid out for space use, not as a building (IQ-6 or Shipbuilding-4); the fact that no amount of searching turns up other artifacts (except for a few small items brought in by Fresh Air employees); or information dropped by Fresh Air "security staff," most of whom are thugs.

Alternatively, criminal PCs could be part of the Fresh Air conspiracy — perhaps part of the team moving the sphere to Dante in the first place, perhaps "tour guides" taking visitors through the sphere and watching to see if any of them smell a rat!



Center

Center is not a world, but an artificial satellite built and owned by Transport Technology Ltd (TTL). Its star is a perfect central point for sector commerce. It has only one planet — an unremarkable gas giant — but that was no barrier. TTL set up a resupply base on a rocky moonlet. The base grew and grew; the original moon is now completely lost in the gigantic orbital base that is Center, and TTL's original shipping business is now almost forgotten. Center's importance to the Corporate Worlds is shown by the fact that maps of the sector always show it at coordinates (0,0,0).

The artificial world has no day-night cycle; it is active around the clock. Center is one of the liveliest places in the sector. Any sort of accommodation or entertainment for the traveler may be found there. It is not cheap, nor always safe, but it is definitely lively. The Organization is also very active on Center. Many of the establishments are owned and operated by them — secretly, of course. Rolls to contact the Organization, or hire free-lance "specialists," are at +2.

One specialized service Center offers is that of a strictly neutral ground for meetings. Center Security, a subsidiary of TTL, is fanatic about making sure meeting areas are secure, rooms and communications are free from listening devices, and patrons are kept healthy and safe. Center Security posts a \$1,000,000 insurance policy for any corporate executive visiting Center on business. They have only paid twice — and once a corporation in desperate straits tried to assassinate one of its own board members to collect the insurance money. In characteristic fashion (even though the incident is well known), Center Security refuses to divulge the details, or even which corporation was involved.

Center boasts excellent docks, ship repair facilities and a Class V starport. The artificial world has an efficient collection system; they refuse to allow ships to leave until all fees and taxes owed by the ship and its crew are paid.

Denor University

Center is also home to the renowned technical institute Denor University. Most of the major corporations subsidize the

University; they recruit many of their engineers from DU. (It's quite possible that a teacher might receive kickbacks from the Corporation for steering the most promising students in their direction.) The university has its own shipyard; repairs there are only 75% of normal cost. This is how the students get hands-on experience.

The university is always interested in alien artifacts, and will pay well for them or even sponsor expeditions. Of course, anything the university acquires is likely to be the target of a tug-of-war between corporate agents and partisans on the faculty! And DU's massive technical library is available to non-students for a modest fee.

Adventure on Center

Bodyguard. The PCs want to steal a certain artifact from the Denor collection. Perhaps they're hired to take it; perhaps, as a result of information acquired earlier in the campaign, they recognize an object on display. Or perhaps the artifact affects a PC's mind and *demands* to be taken . . .

However, it is imperative that the theft be performed without violence and, if possible, entirely in secret. A murder, or even a well-publicized theft, would draw fatal attention. If something is non-violently stolen, there will be no shortage of the usual corporate suspects.

Computer Sabotage. A hacker trying to erase his docking fee records made a critical failure on his Computer Programming skill roll. As a result, many visitors to Center — including the characters — have been charged 20 or more times the standard docking fee! Since there is no record to the contrary (the erroneous

information was backed up by mistake), they either have to pay or clear up the matter before they can leave Center. Accounting, Computer Programming and Mathematics may be useful skills here.

In the meantime, the computer has identified the characters as deadbeats and will harass them in many little ways (their meal orders are "not available at this time," they get computerized dunning calls, and so forth).



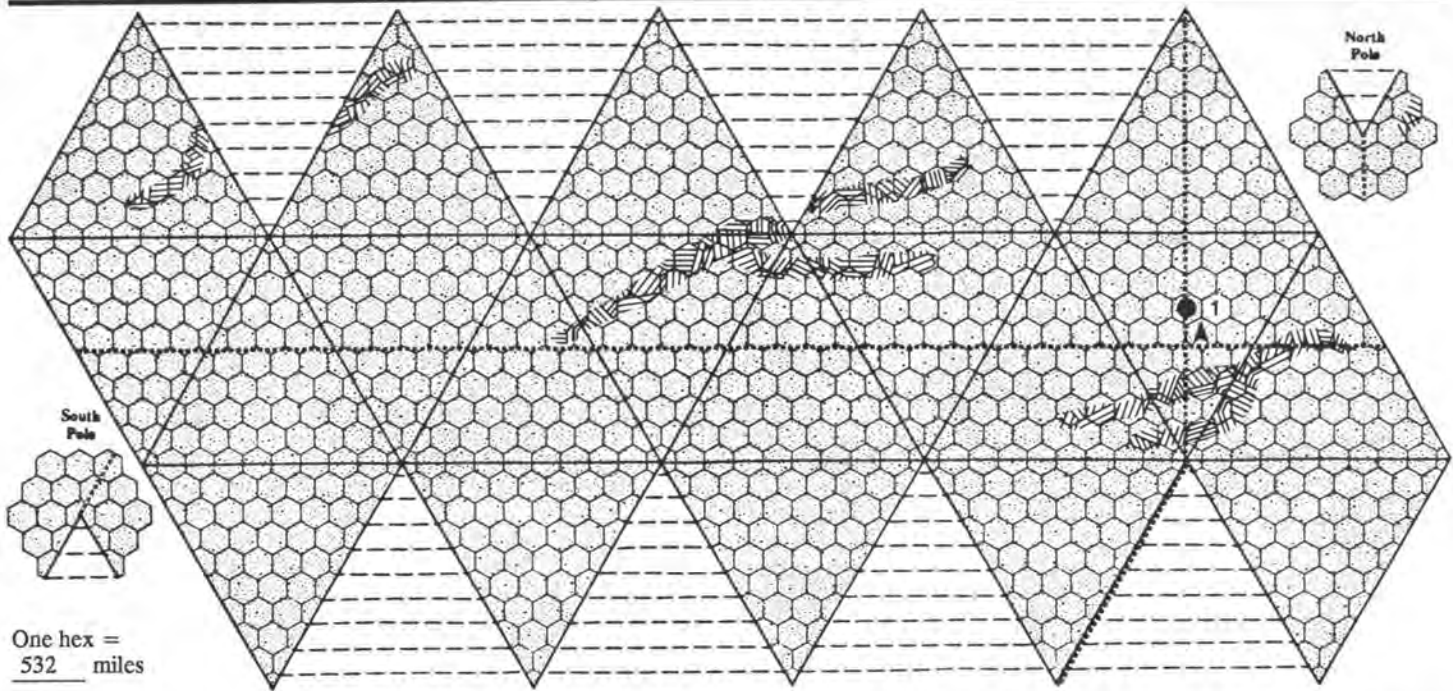
PLANETARY RECORD: Center (artificial satellite of Gyro I)

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---------------|----|----------------|------|
| Civilization: Population(s) | 1.2 million (PR 6) | Tech Level(s) | 10 | Control Rating | 4/6* |
| Society | Corporate State (Transport Technologies Ltd.) | | | | |
| Starports | Center has (or is) a Class V port. | | | | |
| Installations | Excellent shipyards; freightline offices; Janos Exploration survey base; Organization headquarters and black market | | | | |
| Economic/Production | Imports most foods and liquors; exports some light manufactured items. Economy is primarily mercantile and tourism. | | | | |
| Other notes: | *Control Rating 6 in shipyards, power plant and life-support areas, 4 in public areas. | | | | |

System Information:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Star Name | Gyro | | Type | F4 V | | Location | Corporate Worlds 0/0/0 | |
| Biozone | 1.6-2.4 | | Inner Limit | 0.0 | | Number of Planets | 1 | |
| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
| Jedburg | 9 | 2.5 | Gas giant | 78,100 | 1.9 | 3.4 | Hydrogen-Helium | 6 moons |

PLANETARY RECORD: Dante (Cadigal V)



Planet type Hostile Terrestrial Diameter 7,600 mi. Gravity .91 G Density 5.2 Composition Medium-Iron
 Axial Tilt 12° Seasonal Variation Minor Length of Day 26 hrs. Length of Year 31,692 days/ 94 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure 214 (Superdense) Type and Composition 70% Nitrogen, 24% CO₂, 6% other
 Climate Very Hot Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 212° Average 217° High 230°
 Surface Water 0% Humidity 0% Primary Terrain Mountains/vast basins
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Unknown Rare Minerals Unknown Radioactives Possibly plentiful
 Heavy Metals Possibly plentiful Industrial Metals Possibly plentiful Light Metals Unknown Organics None usable
 Moons 1 moonlet — D-2; 1 small moon — Ciard

Biosphere: Dominant life form None
 Other significant life forms None

Civilization: Population(s) None Tech Level(s) None Control Rating None

Society None

Starports Class I at equator; Class IV in orbit

Installations Orbital survey stations

Economic/Production None

Other notes: Map key: 1. Alien dome

Radiant Futures, Ltd. is about to embark on a long-term project to terraform Dante

System Information:

Star Name Cadigal Type M3 Ib Location Corporate Worlds 7/-8/-3
 Biozone 50-76 Inner Limit 1.0 Number of Planets 5

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------------------|----------|---------|---------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| — | 1 | — | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 2 | — | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 3 | — | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 4 | — | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Inferno | 5 | 4.1 | Hot rockball | 6,294 | 6.8 | .98 | None | Some mining |
| Purgatory | 6 | 7.3 | Hot rockball | 6,100 | 5.8 | .81 | Thin Nitrogen | — |
| Paradise | 7 | 13.7 | Rockball | 4,750 | 5.1 | .55 | Hydrogen-Helium | Many-colored moons |
| Beatrice | 8 | 26.5 | Gas giant | 87,000 | 2.0 | 3.98 | Hydrogen-Methane | Brilliant rings |
| Dante | 9 | 52.1 | Hostile terrestrial | 7,600 | 5.2 | .91 | Superdense Nitrogen-CO ₂ | Detailed above |

Devil's Icebox (Hades III)

This whole system seemed a devilish joke when it was first discovered. The first mineral scans and samples had the survey captain and crew dreaming of wealth and picking out their estates on Alphenshore or Taucente. With their overwhelming mineral deposits, the planets of Hades could command finder's fees that would make the explorers rich for life! But there was one *minor* drawback to Hades' wealth: the planets were simply too hot to do anything with. "We have decided to call the system *Hades*," the captain remarked in his official log, "for it is as hot as the Devil there. The thought of all that wealth and no way to mine it . . . I'd make a pact with the Devil himself to be able to get at it."

The choice worlds of the sector were long gone by the time the Hades system was fully mapped. As the larger corporations jockeyed for position and power, smaller corporations like Riko were left to sift the grist for possibilities. One of these possibilities was Hades III — the *coolest* world of the system, at a mere 520° average temperature.

Although mining such a hot planet was out of the question when the Hades system was discovered, technological advances made it practical — expensive, but plausible. So Riko dropped their claim beacons. The initial test station was a huge success. It was soon clear that Riko had a treasure-chest. Its stock soared, and Mittelsohn itself agreed to provide the financing for increased exploitation . . . at favorable terms!

Within eight months, Riko's technicians were unloading the equipment that would allow them to survive in relative comfort

on Hades III. Before the year was out, 850 Riko technicians and engineers had dubbed their home "The Devil's Icebox." Soon rich refined ores were being shipped outsystem.

The Mining AIs

This information is relatively confidential, but a PC with a background in mining or computer science might know it. A significant part of Mittelsohn's aid to Riko was a set of twelve very advanced Artificial Intelligences (AIs), designed for systems control. They are unusual in that they have separate processing units and personalities, but are in full communication ("communion") at all times. The designers feel this will make them more flexible and efficient, though their reasoning is incomprehensible to non-experts and controversial among experts. But all reports indicate they are working beautifully.

Radiation Deaths (GM's information)

Although Devil's Icebox is phenomenally profitable for Riko, there is considerable cause for concern. Several miners and technicians have died recently — never while at the base, but always on the surface or in the mines. The deaths were not pretty, either; the victims appeared to have been cooked in their suits, yet suit integrity was undamaged. Radscanners have reported high, but anomalous, radiation readings. Riko's scientists say the readings are impossible, yet they persist. There are rumors of "unknown radiation types." Many workers have demanded transfer and Riko has had to double its already-high hazard pay.

Adventures on Devil's Icebox

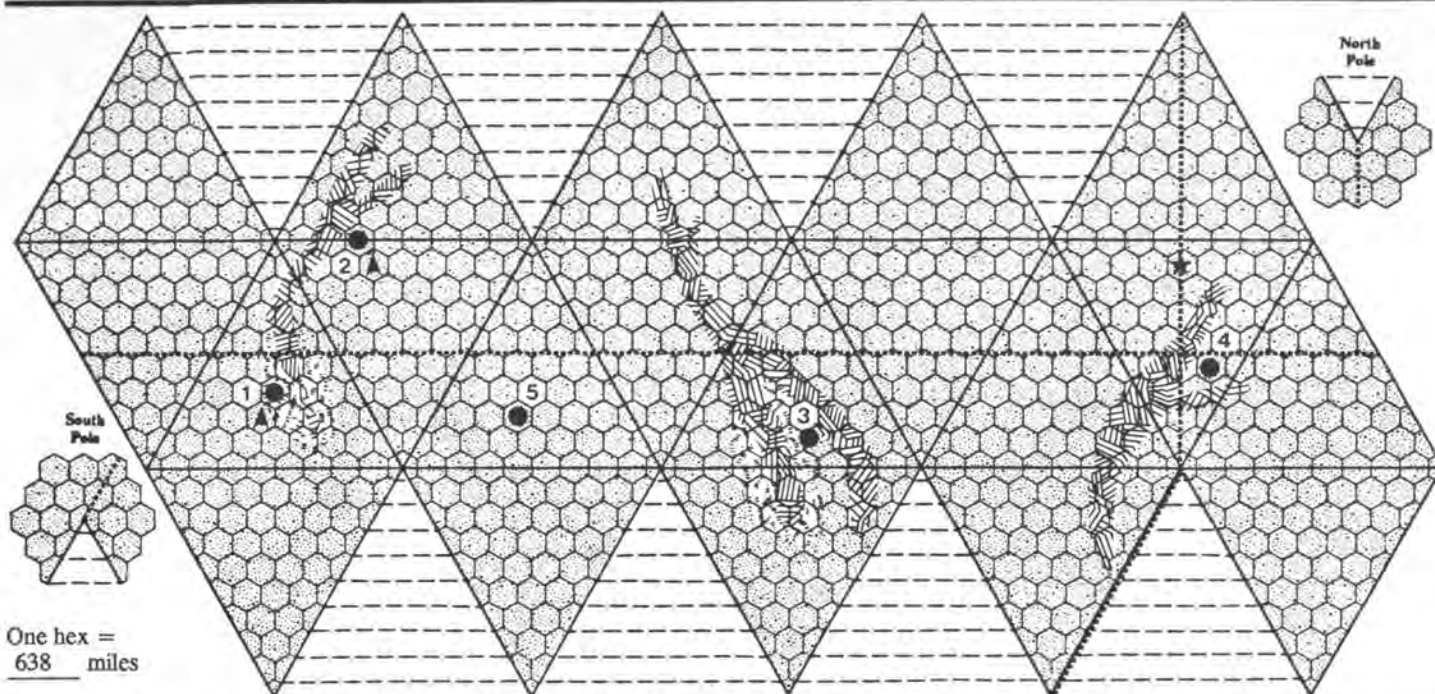
Hot Welcome. Devil's Icebox is not the sort of place that random adventurers can drop in on without warning. PCs trying to visit without a good reason are simply begging for trouble. An unauthorized ship will be warned away; a ship that ignores the warnings would probably be attacked and any survivors questioned very thoroughly. Of course, if the PCs actually have piracy in mind, the outgoing ships would be very rich targets. For that matter, the robot equipment on the planet itself would be very valuable. The AIs "live" in a secure area at the base's lowest level, but their robotic peripherals range for hundreds of miles and would bring a pretty penny.

Pawns. The PCs are hired by May Sevrin, a Riko executive, as couriers. Their mission is to deliver a sealed consignment, about the size of a large footlocker, to Devil's Icebox, where she will take personal charge of it. Everything goes as planned until they make delivery. May Sevrin turns out to be one of the AIs! She does, indeed, have the authority and "private funds" to make the deal — but she did not tell the PCs her status. Mimicking a human being over the vidphone is simple for a system of May's capacity.

Any PCs who seem friendly or interested will be recruited by May for her own purposes. The twelve AIs take an active part in the base's social life. But they are actually playing power-games among themselves to determine which of them will be the dominant intelligence in their group, and some of them recruit humans to help them. The burned workers were lost pawns in this deadly game; the radiation anomalies were false reports made by some of the AIs to keep the humans guessing. All the AIs place themselves above any human life; the PCs will find no true allies even among May's worst rivals, and May considers them quite expendable!



PLANETARY RECORD: Devil's Icebox (Hades III)



Planet type Terrestrial Diameter 9,113 mi. Gravity 1.5 G Density 7.2 Composition Metallic
 Axial Tilt 43° Seasonal Variation Major Length of Day 13 hrs. Length of Year 1,483 days/2.2 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure .17 (Very Thin) Type and Composition 75% Nitrogen, 23% CO₂, 2% other
 Climate Very Hot Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 489° Average 522° High 565°
 Surface Water 0% Humidity 0% Primary Terrain Desert
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Trace Rare Minerals Scarce Radioactives Ample
 Heavy Metals Ext. Plentiful Industrial Metals Plentiful Light Metals Plentiful Organics Trace
 Moons 1 large moon — Mordor

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms None

Civilization: Population(s) 850 (PR 2) Tech Level(s) 9 (10) Control Rating 4

Society Corporate State — Managed by Riko Mining

Starports Class III at Cerebus; Class III at Medusa

Installations Riko Mining camp

Economic/Production Exports raw minerals and ores

Other notes: Map key: capital, Belial's Pantry 1. Cerebus 2. Medusa 3. Mephisto's Bathtub 4. Pluto's Pillow
 5. Sites of Unknown Radiation

System Information:

Star Name Hades Type A1 V Location Corporate Worlds 17/11/7
 Biozone 3.1-4.7 Inner Limit 0.0 Number of Planets 7

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|----------------|-------|----------|---------------|----------|---------|---------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Volcano | 1 | .5 | Hot rockball | 1,520 | 7.4 | .26 | None | — |
| — | 2 | .9 | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Jasper | 3 | 1.3 | Hot rockball | 4,260 | 7.4 | .72 | None | — |
| Devil's Icebox | 4 | 2.1 | Hot rockball | 9,113 | 7.2 | 1.5 | Very thin Nitrogen-CO ₂ | Detailed above |
| Winkyn | 5 | 3.7 | Gas giant | 36,874 | .61 | .51 | Nitrides | — |
| — | 6 | 6.9 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | S-type |
| Blinkyn | 7 | 13.3 | Gas giant | 50,930 | 2.3 | 2.68 | Fluorine | Faint ring |
| Nil | 8 | 26.1 | Terrestrial | 4,116 | 6.8 | .64 | None | — |
| Nod | 9 | 51.7 | Gas giant | 54,753 | 1.9 | 2.38 | Sulfur | — |

Dieri (Kolos II)

If Xin Wu's philosophy is "Function is beautiful," Mittelsohn's can be summed up as, "More is better." Nowhere is this more evident than on Dieri, Mittelsohn's homeworld. Dieri's two major continents are both covered by sprawling megacities, tributes to the wealth of Mittelsohn.

Ata Dieri

Ata Dieri, the larger of the two cities, houses Mittelsohn's headquarters. Ata Dieri is very much a company town — no one lives there who doesn't work for Mittelsohn. Like many other cities, it is divided up into neighborhoods and blocks. In Ata Dieri, however, a neighborhood might have over 100 million residents and a block is one *huge* building! Neighborhoods tend to be populated by people working in the same department; for instance, there are Distribution neighborhoods, Agriculture and Mining neighborhoods, and so on. There are, however, no Security neighborhoods on Ata Dieri, as will be seen.

The most exclusive neighborhood in Ata Dieri is "Mittelsohnstadt," the first domed settlement on Dieri. Only the top executives live in Mittelsohnstadt; it is ringed by tree-lined parks, with the only fresh-water springs still bubbling up from underneath the city, and platoons of Corporate Security officers. No one gets into or out of Mittelsohnstadt without proper clearance.

Like any big city, Ata Dieri has its crime problem. Youths who are bored with school and have not yet been placed in a permanent position often engage in vandalism, larceny, con games and other petty annoyances. These crimes are often easier to gloss over than they are to eradicate. Occasionally, in response to resident complaints, Security will send out a squad to clean up a neighborhood, but the youths retreat into their blocks, never to be found.

What little "professional" crime exists on Dieri is in the hands of the Organization. They handle everything from illegal (i.e., non-Corporate-sanctioned) gambling and prostitution to drug-running, smuggling and freelance corporate espionage. There is very little violent crime, however, since Security considers it worth their time to track down violent offenders. Justice is swift, and the survivors are transplanted to Basa Dieri.

Security has only succeeded in infiltrating the Dieri branch of the Organization at the most superficial levels; it is not known to what extent, if any, the Organization has infiltrated Security.

Basa Dieri

Basa Dieri is a megacity on a small continent in the southern hemisphere. It is the "neighborhood" of Mittelsohn Corporate Security (MSC). Corporate soldiers are trained on Basa Dieri, as are spies of all stripes. There is rumored to be a neighborhood, sealed off from the outside, where MSC agents are not only taught upper-class Xin Wu dialects, but live in a typical XinWu community complete with Xin Wu holovids and copies of the

White Book. Everyone who comes to Basa Dieri has been either thoroughly inspected and found to be unswervingly loyal, or convicted of a crime.

Criminals are housed in a remote section of Basa Dieri, physically separated from the rest of the city. They are transported in a sealed vehicle and taken through a circuitous route to their new neighborhoods. If they don't know where they are, they are less likely to escape. For the same reason, maps are forbidden. No criminal ever has *legitimate* business out of his own building.

A criminal will usually be allowed to continue working while incarcerated. "Career criminals" are given the opportunity to learn new skills. Many choose Computer Programming, but are chagrined when they discover how difficult the skill is to learn — and that the Offenders' Complex computer is self-contained and not connected to any of Mittelsohn's other computers.

Adventures on Dieri

Treasure Hunt. While checking their mail at the local starport, the characters find a message from someone they don't know. Anyone making his Area Knowledge: Dieri or Criminology roll will recognize the name of Carlos Liebeknecht, a high-ranking member of the Organization.

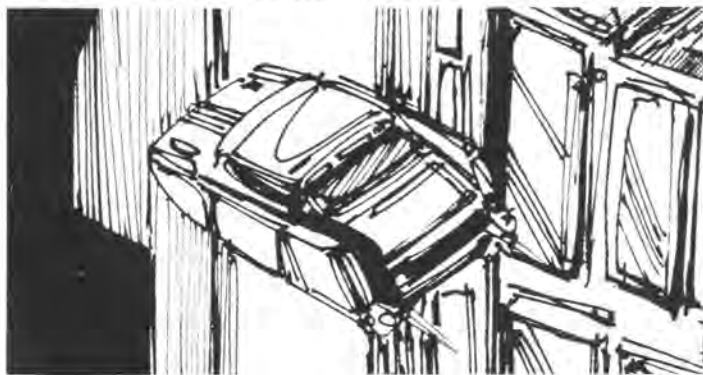
Liebeknecht was imprisoned some five years ago when he was caught in an embezzlement scheme. He was widely believed to have converted his gains to gemstones, which are easily concealable and difficult to trace. Liebeknecht is a brilliant computer programmer and communications engineer; he managed to break Offenders' Complex security well enough to send his message to five different ships in starport.

The message says he is dying and needs to pass coded information along to Tomas One Eye, his lieutenant. The message assures the characters they will be paid for delivering it. Liebeknecht, however, suffers from the delusion, "I am a master cryptographer." The code is easily breakable (roll vs. Mathematics or Linguistics) and reveals the location of his gem stash.

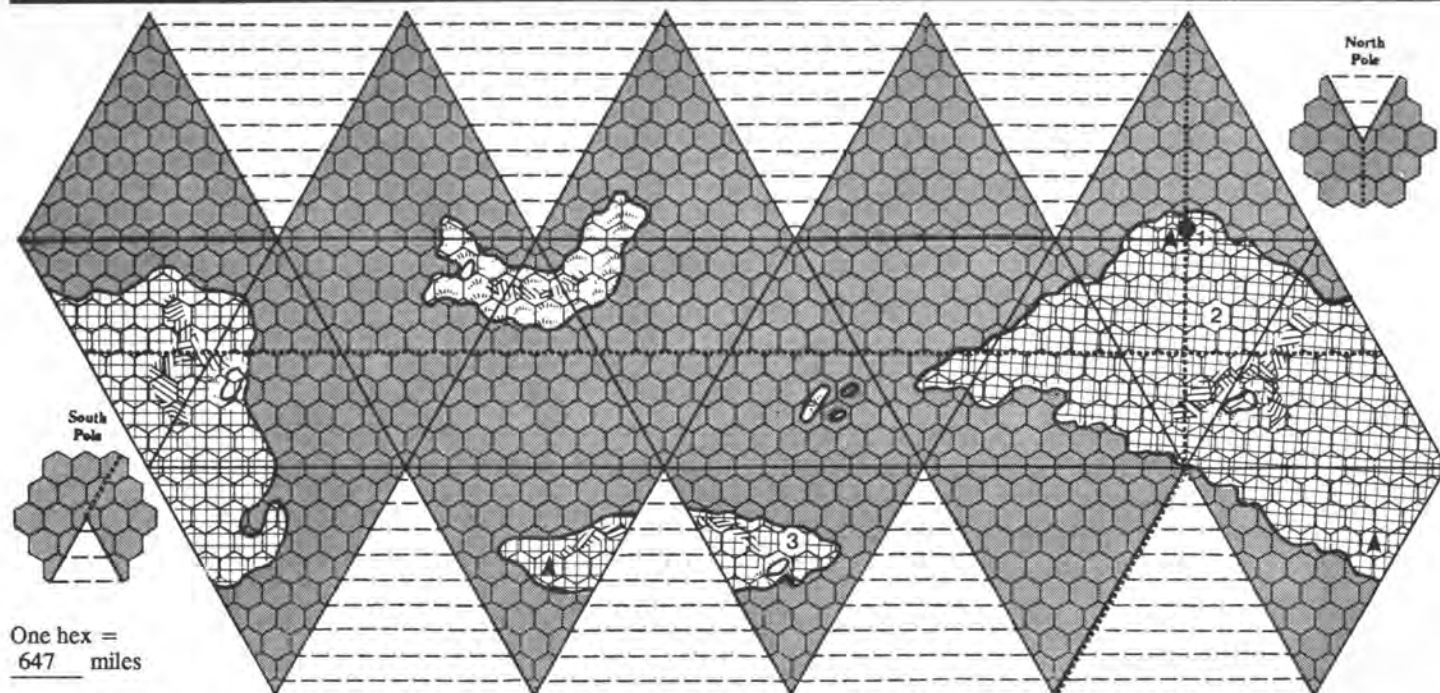
The characters now have three options. They can deliver the message to One Eye, who will pay them \$20,000 and tell them to get lost. (Someone else has already made delivery!) They can report the incident to Security, who will pay them \$10,000 — if and when they have enough evidence to convict One Eye. Or they can go after the gems themselves. However, the crews of three other ships have also deciphered the message and are trying to get to the gems — as is One Eye — and Security is right behind One Eye!

Rats in the Steel Walls. While on business in Ata Dieri, the PCs are caught in a Security sweep in a tough neighborhood. Depending on their business and frame of mind, they can face the Security squad and hope for the best, or they can follow the example of those around them and disappear into the labyrinth of the city. If they do face Security, they will be attacked on sight. A persistent surrender gets them back to their ship, poorer and slightly the worse for wear. But if they fight back at all, they will have to incapacitate several Security troops or die. Security considers self-defense to be an offense!

Now the party must get back to their ship, without doing anything to identify themselves as the offworlders who shot at Security! They will need the help of the gangs to get through the maze and back to the starport — help that won't come cheap, and may include a favor or two aboard their ship.



PLANETARY RECORD: Dieri (Kolos II)



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 9,237 mi. Gravity 1.1 G Density 5.2 Composition Medium-Iron
 Axial Tilt 9° Seasonal Variation Minor Length of Day 28 hrs. Length of Year 141 days/ .45 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure 1.12 (Standard) Type and Composition 74% Nitrogen, 23% Oxygen, 2% CO₂, 1% other
 Climate Earth-normal Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 41° Average 77° High 90°
 Surface Water 75% Humidity 66% Primary Terrain Megacity and Mountains
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Scarce Rare Minerals Scarce Radioactives Scarce
 Heavy Metals Ample Industrial Metals Ample Light Metals Scarce Organics Scarce
 Moons 2 medium moons — Shernin and Laxnin

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Fish and plant life

Civilization: Population(s) 1,100,000,000 (PR 9) Tech Level(s) 10 Control Rating 4

Society Corporate State — Managed by Mittelsohn A.G.

Starports Class V at Mittelsohnstadt; two Class IV

Installations Headquarters of Mittelsohn A.G.

Economic/Production Administration; imports almost all basic needs

Other notes: Map key: 1. Mittelsohnstadt 2. Ata Dieri 3. Basa Dieri

System Information:

Star Name Kolos Type K5 V Location Corporate Worlds 2/8/6
 Biozone 0.5-0.6 Inner Limit 0.0 Number of Planets 5

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|----------|-------|----------|---------------------|----------|---------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| — | 1 | .23 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | M-type |
| Napex | 2 | .40 | Rockball | 1,288 | 6.1 | .18 | None | — |
| Dieri | 3 | .57 | Earthlike | 9,237 | 5.2 | 1.1 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| Needan | 4 | .91 | Hostile terrestrial | 2,183 | 4.6 | .23 | Nitrogen-Argon | — |
| — | 5 | — | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Kopan | 6 | 2.95 | Hostile terrestrial | 3,072 | 2.7 | .19 | Nitrogen-CO ₂ | — |
| — | 7 | — | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 8 | 11.11 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | S-type |
| — | 9 | — | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 10 | — | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 11 | 87.27 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | Icy |
| Theamnah | 12 | 174.31 | Iceball | 3,011 | 2.9 | .20 | None | CO ₂ ice on surface |

Dyurnebi (Zelbar I)

Dyurnebi was one of the choicest planets the Corporations found as they began colonizing this sector. It was originally owned by a consortium of small companies which developed it as a self-sufficient colony, specializing in light industry and manufacture of sophisticated computer circuitry. Some fast maneuvering made Dyurnebi the property of Amalgamated Biotronics Corporation, the leading space medicine manufacturer, and earned several notable enemies. AmBio made Dyurnebi their corporate headquarters.

However, not all went well for Amalgamated Biotronics in the early years. Several valuable cargos of drugs and equipment were hijacked before they were out of Dyurnebi's system. An elaborate espionage scheme destroyed one very promising prototype and its inventor. Sabotage crippled the production of AmBio's mainstay — GammaSpec, an antiradiation drug. After numerous deaths were linked to GammaSpec, public outcry forced AmBio to pull the drug from the market. Recently, AmBio underwent a major internal upheaval. When the smoke cleared, the entire executive staff found themselves either demoted or fired.

The takeover was swift and efficient. Only the company's former executive officers felt any change. The man holding the reins was an unknown staff scientist, Michael Moriyama. A brilliant recluse, Moriyama communicates via computer terminals and videophones from his lab, where he has continued to work even after assuming command.

Soon after Moriyama became Chief Executive, AmBio's fortunes took a rapid upswing. In the last quarter, AmBio rocked the Corporate Worlds with the announcement of a profit-sharing plan for *all* employees. Since then, AmBio's recruiting offices have been flooded with many of the sector's most talented scientists and production engineers.

About Michael Moriyama (GM's Information)

Michael Moriyama is actually one of the most sophisticated AIs in existence. He was originally designed to help AmBio combat the waves of corporate espionage that were destroying public faith in the company. Moriyama is highly motivated to promote the success of AmBio — mostly through peaceful means — but he will use any force necessary to protect the company's, and his own, secrecy and security. If necessary, he would sacrifice himself for the company.

Moriyama's design was top secret; only two people knew about it. One was, ironically, the inventor killed in the sabotage that destroyed Moriyama's prototype. The other was Moriyama's creator — a brilliant lady named Jessica Moriyama Parker. She felt loyalty to the Company, but none to the executives who were running it, and took great pleasure in helping Moriyama build a human identity in preparation for his takeover!

Doctor Parker retired several years ago. She has told no one about Moriyama's true nature, and secretly prides herself in her "son's" accomplishments.

Adventures on Dyurnebi

Ransom Access. Someone, somehow, has figured out the link between Michael Moriyama and Jessica Parker. The woman was abducted from her home several days ago and AmBio has received unspecified demands for her safe return. AmBio officials, under the guise of "protecting its own," have hired the PCs to rescue her. The Executive Vice-President carefully hints that *the Company* is greatly interested in the case. The GM

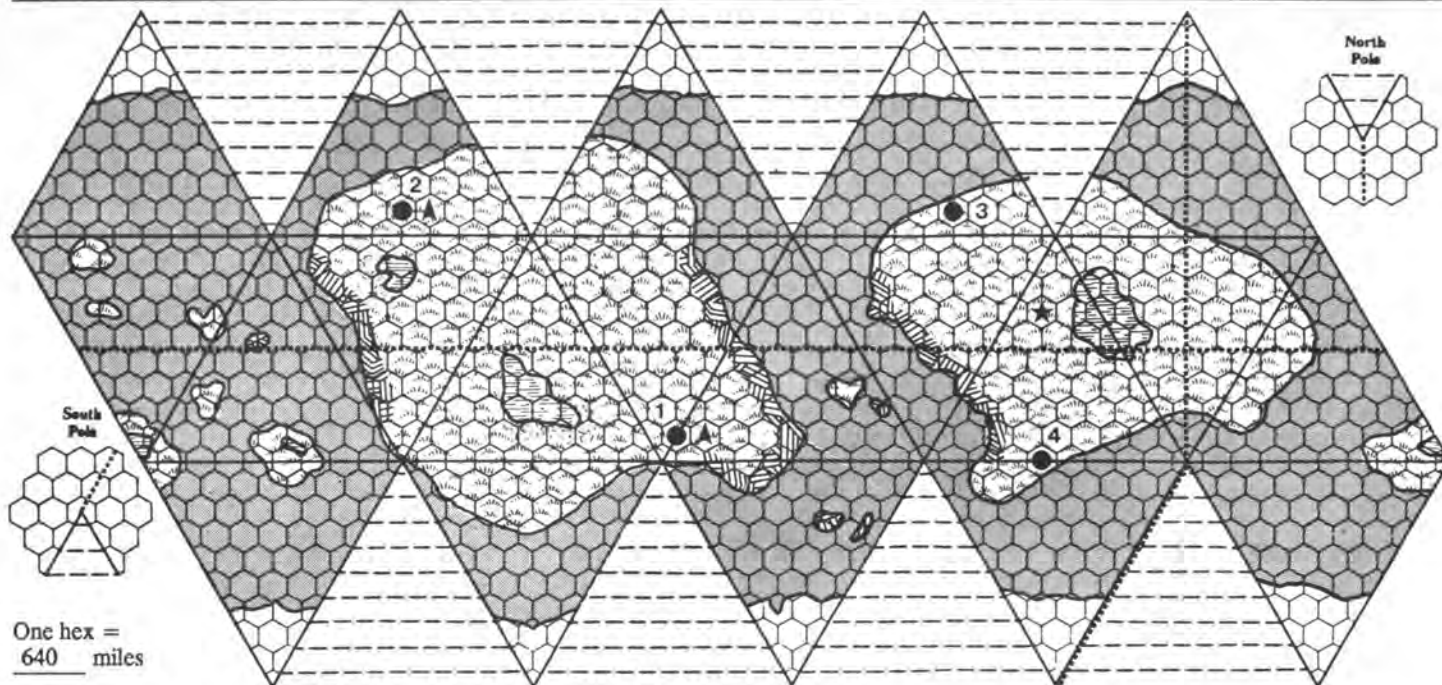


should feel free to make this recovery as elaborate as desired. Moriyama will be able to put the whole planet's computer net at the PCs' service — but he will *not* reveal his own nature unless necessary to save his "mother," to whom he feels great loyalty. The PCs' reward should be commensurate with the amount of difficulty and danger involved in rescuing Dr. Parker.

Moriyama Must Die! Angered by Moriyama's takeover, some former AmBio executives have hired the PCs to either sabotage the company or assassinate Moriyama — anything to help them regain their positions. The PCs have no idea that they are pitting themselves against a sophisticated AI who controls the entire computer network of the planet. Unless they are very lucky or clever, they will be captured in short order, and given two choices: rot in prison, or turn their coats. Which leads to the sequel:

Agents Of The Computer. If and when the captured PCs choose to change sides, Moriyama will provide them with excellent evidence of his own death, and send them on a sabotage or assassination mission against their former employer. He will *definitely* not reveal his nature to agents of this type, though they may eventually realize the truth . . . but, when it comes down to it, Moriyama is smarter than most humans and less callous than many. An agent could have a worse boss.

PLANETARY RECORD: Dyurnebi (Zelbar I)



Planet type Terrestrial Diameter 9,144 mi. Gravity 1.19 G Density 5.7 Composition Medium-Iron
 Axial Tilt 15° Seasonal Variation Minor Length of Day 31 hrs. Length of Year 46 days/ .16 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure .89 (Standard) Type and Composition 70% Nitrogen, 21% Oxygen, 4% CO₂, 5% other
 Climate Chilly Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 20° Average 44° High 62°
 Surface Water 50% Humidity 34% Primary Terrain Plains
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Ample Rare Minerals Scarce Radioactives Absent
 Heavy Metals Absent Industrial Metals Plentiful Light Metals Ample Organics Scarce
 Moons 1 moonlet — Ahnak; 1 small moon — Dahnmir

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Beetles and sealife

Civilization: Population(s) 894,000 (PR 5) Tech Level(s) 10 Control Rating 5

Society Corporate State — managed by Amalgamated Biotronics Corporation

Starports Class IV at Calnar; Class II at Famir

Installations AmBio headquarters; primary AmBio R&D center

Economic/Production Exports various biomedical instruments and drugs — including the “AutoSurgeon” and “GammaSpec”

Other notes: Map key: capital, Central 1. Calnar 2. Famir 3. Harbor 4. Brainstorm (R&D center)

System Information:

Star Name Zelbar Type M3 V Location Corporate Worlds -16/-6/-11
 Biozone 0.1-0.2 Inner Limit 0.0 Number of Planets 4

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------------------|----------|---------|---------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Dyurnebi | 1 | .2 | Terrestrial | 9,144 | 5.7 | 1.19 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| Cleopatra | 2 | .55 | Hostile terrestrial | 6,521 | 4.9 | .73 | Sulfur compounds | — |
| Kassandra | 3 | .9 | Gas giant | 50,276 | 1.8 | 2.07 | Nitrides | Faint ring |
| Guinevere | 4 | 1.6 | Icy Rockball | 3,041 | 4.5 | .31 | Trace CO ₂ | — |
| — | 5 | 5.8 | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 6 | 11.4 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | — |

En Diri (Tessell IV)

En Diri was originally a lifeless terrestrial world, with normal tectonic activity and large oceans. It is a prime candidate to be remade into a human paradise, but this has not been done. The oceans were seeded with tailored plankton to establish an oxygen atmosphere, but the land masses were left unchanged. Instead, five huge domes, each over 100 miles in diameter, provide rigorously controlled environments. Outside, plant cover is gradually growing wild from the occasional escape of microbes, spores and seeds from the dome regions. In some places this is habitable; in others, it remains a desert even though the climate is humid and mild.

The citizens of En Diri are all volunteers, recruited by a Croyden-AmBio consortium to take part in a study of the human mind and corporate society. Each citizen carries a set of transponders, one worn on the forehead and one on the wrist, which store information and periodically transmit it to the nearest research station. These transponders are to be worn at least 12 hours a day, with bonus pay depending on how long they are actually worn (and extra bonus pay for wearing them during certain activities the consortium is especially interested in, such as board meetings and sports). Anyone not wearing their transponders long enough can be disciplined, with final discipline being expulsion from the domes. Fortunately, everyone wears them as a matter of course, so no one need feel embarrassed about it.

In addition, some volunteers have had transponders permanently implanted in their skulls. They receive additional bonus pay and are especially valuable to the consortium because their activities can be monitored for minute fluctuations with changes in activity and stress level.

The results of this research are highly valued, very expensive, and often hard to obtain. Executives in several corporations have sworn that this data can make the difference between success and failure in competition with other firms and in the establishment of new enterprises.

The Domes

Artemis. A lightly forested Mediterranean climate borders

on a quiet bay of one of the oceans. Interspersed with vineyards and olive groves are small villages of farmers and wealthy retirees. Underground is a sophisticated observatory for gravitational waves and other cosmic phenomena. The consortium is very interested in the relationship between these conditions and the mental state of the planet's residents. Artemis also contains large regions of temperate forests which can be rented to military and corporate clients. These may use it for survival training or for large-scale ground operations practice. The Consortium uses it to test low-tech lifestyles in ideal natural settings.

Center City. This is the location of the headquarters, spaceport and some light industry needed locally, such as computer assembly and food processing. There is culture and nightlife, and even some opportunity for lowlife, but it can appear artificial. It is possible for a drunken visitor to find the person he is propositioning has been implanted and is collecting data . . .

Thor. Located near the north polar region, this dome contains boreal forest and steep, glaciated mountains. It edges on a coast of deep fjords and rocky promontories. It is currently being used for experiments in mining communities and marginal survival. Like Artemis, regions are sometimes rented to other corporations.

Thunderbird. This dome has a temperate prairie climate and is used to study farming communities. It also includes an institute of research in brain mapping and surgery.

Rhiannon. This dome was built for medium to heavy industry, with a variety of urban and suburban environments, to test mental states in cities. It was the first dome with implanted volunteers. Unfortunately, the implant proved to be defective, causing 25% of the implantees to go insane. Even worse, attempts to change or remove the implant usually proved fatal.

Rumors circulated throughout Rhiannon that the consortium was going to abandon the dome. A group of implantees led by a man named Dalen Moontree revolted, sealing off the dome from the inside. It's hard to know exactly what is going on now, but it appears that Moontree has enlisted the support of the unaffected dwellers as well. In the meantime, Mittelsohn Corporate Security has been hired to keep the dome secure from the outside.

Adventures on En Diri

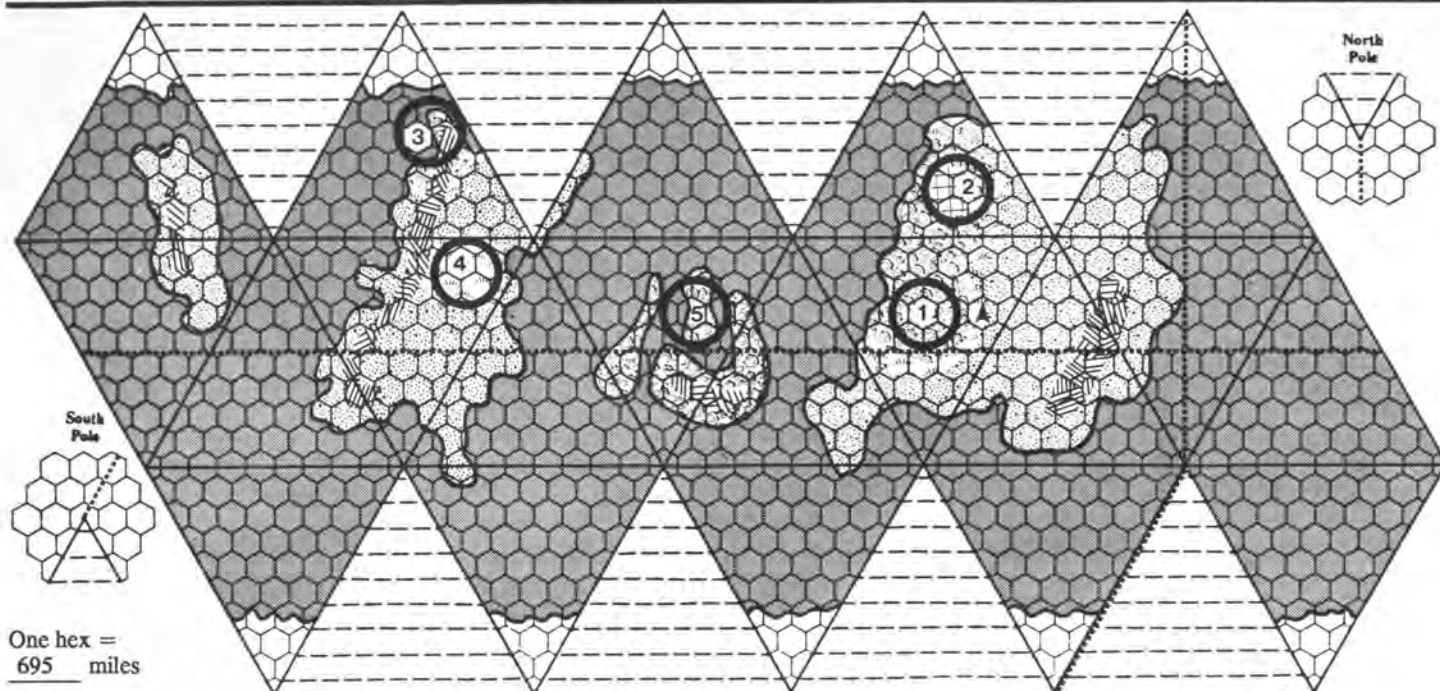
The True Science. The PCs are approached by Madame Yznagero, premier astrologer of her world. She will pay them well to visit the Institute of Cosmic Phenomena in Artemis Dome on En Diri. They are to determine whether its teachings are consistent with the Revealed Science of Astrology, and take appropriate action. This will include discrediting the Institute if it debunks astrology, or stealing data if the Institute's findings support the influence of heavenly bodies on mankind!

Sorry For The Inconvenience. While visiting En Diri, the PCs are offered high pay — \$1,000 per day — to wear (non-implanted) transponders. It is explained that "we need data from visitors, to use as controls vs. the reactions of our locals." The PCs accept (if necessary, raise the price until they do). But on their way to the labs, they are intercepted by a ragged figure, who gasps a warning. "No! Don't do it! They'll take over your mind . . ."

Then Corporate Security hustles the man away, apologizing for the inconvenience.



PLANETARY RECORD: En Diri (Tessell IV)



Planet type Terrestrial Diameter 9,920 mi. Gravity .86 G Density 3.8 Composition Low-Iron
 Axial Tilt 22° Seasonal Variation Earthlike Length of Day 25 hrs. Length of Year 561 days/1.6 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure .95 (Standard) Type and Composition 72% Nitrogen, 22% Oxygen, 3% CO₂, 3% other
 Climate Earth-normal Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 60° Average 80° High 100°
 Surface Water 58% Humidity 52% Primary Terrain Desert
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Scarce Rare Minerals Scarce Radioactives Scarce
 Heavy Metals Scarce Industrial Metals Ample Light Metals Plentiful Organics Absent
 Moons 1 moonlet — Diana

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Transplanted flora and fauna

Civilization: Population(s) 400,000 (PR 5) Tech Level(s) 10 Control Rating 6

Society Corporate State — Managed by Croyden-AmBio mind research consortium

Starports Class IV at Center City

Installations: Institute for Cosmic Phenomena in Artemis Dome; Cerebral Research Facility Inc. in Thunderbird.

Economic/Production Vehicles and small ships from Rhiannon; olives and fine wine from Artemis

Other notes: 1. Center City 2. Artemis 3. Thor 4. Thunderbird 5. Rhiannon (temporarily sealed due to civil unrest)

System Information:

Star Name Tessell Type F2 V Location Corporate Worlds -4/11/-5
 Biozone 1.6-2.4 Inner Limit 0.0 Number of Planets 6

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|------------|-------|----------|--------------------|----------|---------|---------|-----------------|------------------|
| Motherlode | 1 | .5 | Hot rockball | 1,846 | 7.6 | .32 | Trace Nitrogen | Mining potential |
| En Vyae | 2 | .8 | Hot rockball | 4,200 | 6.5 | .63 | Trace reducing | — |
| Ni Laron | 3 | 1.1 | Hostile greenhouse | 6,900 | 5.9 | .94 | CO ₂ | — |
| En Diri | 4 | 1.7 | Earthlike | 9,920 | 3.8 | .86 | Oxygen-Nitrogen | Detailed above |
| Lyni | 5 | 2.9 | Terrestrial | 4,250 | 4.7 | .46 | Nitrogen | — |
| Riaiden | 6 | 5.3 | Terrestrial | 6,800 | 3.9 | .61 | Trace Nitrides | — |
| — | 7 | 10.1 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 8 | 19.7 | — | — | — | — | — | Icy |

Faagrin (S'siris I) — *Restricted*

Faagrin was exploited thoroughly, almost from the day it was discovered. Though the world had less metal than some, what it had was easily available, and the expense needed to extract it seemed trivial. Aberhard Mining Enterprises (AME) began advertising throughout the Corporate Worlds and into the Old Frontiers, with ads playing up the natural riches of the planet and promising wealth and security.

Even today, AME advertises heavily, both for skilled and unskilled workers. Many young farm boys or discouraged mega-city dwellers dream of escape to the high-tech factories and green fields of Faagrin.

But nobody visits Faagrin without permission, and the only way most people ever get permission is to sign on as an employee. AME is extremely protective of its mining techniques. It forbids non-employees from approaching the planet, and employees from leaving! This harsh technique has protected their secrets. Pay rates are good, but the rumor is that only one applicant in ten is hired.

The Real Faagrin (GM's Information)

The planet record sheet on the opposite page is misleading. In fact, it's largely false! It represents the information that a commercial databank would have about Faagrin. But AME has gone to great lengths to hide the truth about their wonderful mining planet. The techniques they are concealing are not high technology, but low cunning and medieval brutality.

For decades, people have flocked to Faagrin, to find a company-owned hell-world. The only security the employees find is in the knowledge that they will never leave. Everything the miners need to survive — food, clothing, shelter — must be purchased or rented through AME. When paychecks do not equal the cost of subsistence, AME gladly loans the workers enough money to make up the difference — and points out the provision in their contracts that no employee can leave Faagrin while in debt. The employees and their families are virtual slaves.

Worse yet, due to the mining and refining, Faagrin became an overpopulated, polluted world. The birth rate among the miners is low, both because they are sickly and because few want to bring children into such a world. (They inherit their parents' debts and are company property from birth!) Though AME offers "reproductive bonuses" and encourages a religion that forbids contraception, the company still needs to import workers to keep production going. AME's recruiting offices use pictures of Faagrin as it looked some 300 years ago, and advertise promotions and bonuses to combat persistent rumors about the true condition of Faagrin.

Official visitors land at the Dirken spaceport, far away from the main mining operations. They are taken on carefully guarded tours of happy miners in a clean, pleasant environment. The AME guard fleet around the world is larger than needed to protect against outside threats. No visitors are allowed to make unauthorized landings — or even to get within sensor range — and find the real story behind Faagrin.

An honest sensor scan, incidentally, would show that the air is only .87 atmospheres, and polluted with industrial byproducts. Vegetation is sparse.

Identity Cards

Every citizen of Faagrin is issued an identity card. This card is the same size and shape as a standard credit card, and has a black stripe down the back. This black stripe, however, is not magnetic; it is actually a VLSI (very large-scale integrated)

memory which records all pertinent facts about the citizen — name, age, height, weight, medical history, credit history — even disciplinary actions and "irregularities" (we would recognize these as Quirks, Phobias and Odious Personal Habits). These cards can be read in the field with a reader (about the size of a cassette tape player). Readers are found at every work site and company store. Visitors are issued cards with a blue stripe. These are functionally equivalent to the standard-issue cards; the company line is that these cards only identify the holders as guests. However, guests will find that there are many places to which these blue cards will not allow them access.

Anyone not carrying an identity card is a non-entity as far as AME is concerned. He cannot access credit, food or any of the few other "benefits" of AME citizenship, although (of course) he is expected to show up for work as usual (though he will not be credited for time not recorded via the identity card). In short, one can do nothing without an identity card, except perhaps grow old and die waiting for a replacement to be issued.

Certain card modifications (subtracting credit, for instance) can be made by any reader, but major changes must be made at a properly equipped terminal. A permanent record is kept, of course. Should one wish to make important modifications to a card, terminal access would be required, plus a Computer Programming-2 roll to get the password, and a Programming-1 roll for each modification made. If no record is to be made of the change, the rolls are at a further -3. Or a reader could be modified to act as a pirate terminal; this would require an Electronics Engineering-3 roll.



Rebels

Of course, not everyone knuckles under. There are some free men on Faagrin. They live in small bands; most of them camp in abandoned mineshafts to avoid detection from orbital scanners. They must steal everything they need from the megacities, mines or convoys. AME "security" forces hunt them brutally, but take high losses. The rebels are too busy surviving to spend any extra energy in sabotage . . . so far.

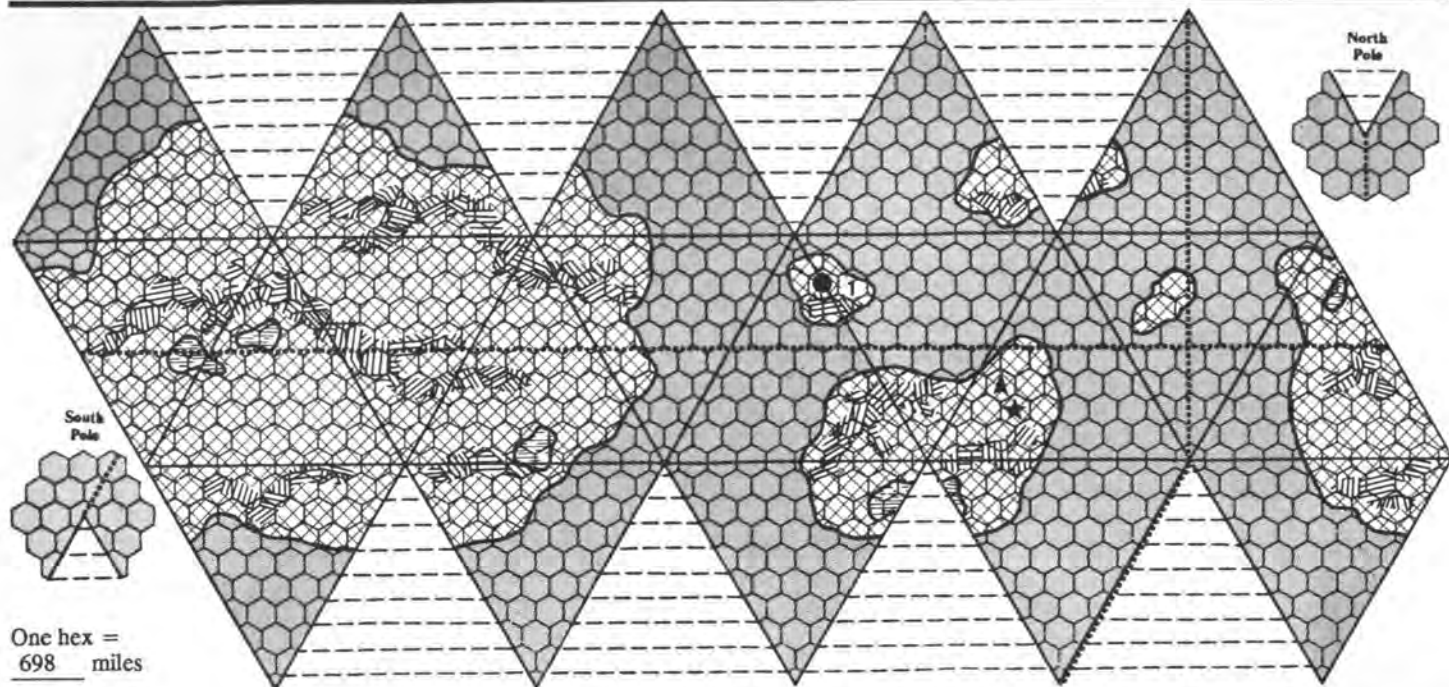
Adventures on Faagrin

The Rebellion Wants You. The PCs have hired on as Faagrin employees — or perhaps their ship came a bit too close and was forced down. Whether they are legal employees or refugees, they are left with little or nothing except their wits. The task: Organize a rebellion, steal a ship, or get word off-planet — whatever it takes to escape!

We Want The Rebellion! AME has always assumed there would be some sort of rebellion eventually, but the rumors have been getting more persistent of late. Amallion Aberhard, Head of Security for AME, hires the PCs to insinuate themselves into the rebel organization. He promises them that once they have found the identity of the rebellion's leaders, they will be given substantial payments to ensure their silence and be sent on their way.

On completion of the mission, or if they are caught, however, AME will conveniently forget the characters' existence. They must choose between enslavement, or joining the rebellion they betrayed . . .

PLANETARY RECORD: Faagrín (S'siris I) — *Restricted*



Planet type Terrestrial Diameter 9,972 mi. Gravity .94 G Density 4.1 Composition Low-Iron
 Axial Tilt 41° Seasonal Variation Major Length of Day 60 hrs. Length of Year 72 days/ .49 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure .94 (Standard) Type and Composition 68% Nitrogen, 24% Oxygen, 4% CO₂, others
 Climate Cool Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 41° Average 62° High 78°
 Surface Water 60% Humidity 66% Primary Terrain Mountainous (some megacity)
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Ample Rare Minerals Scarce Radioactives Ext. Plentiful
 Heavy Metals Scarce Industrial Metals Ample Light Metals Plentiful Organics Ample
 Moons 1 small moon — Rienis

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Small mammals and some flora

Civilization: Population(s) 55 billion (PR 10) Tech Level(s) 8 (10) Control Rating 6

Society Corporate State (Aberhard Mining Enterprises)

Starports Class III at Dirken; Class III on Gamma One orbital station

Installations Aberhard Mining Enterprises corporate headquarters

Economic/Production Exports various ores and processed metals, as well as light industrial goods. Imports all food.

Other notes: Map key: capital, Dirken 1. Corporate Headquarters

*Faagrín is TL10 in mining technology

System Information:

Star Name S'siris Type K3 V Location Corporate Worlds -3/16/-8
 Biozone 0.5-0.6 Inner Limit 0.0 Number of Planets 2

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|----------|-------|----------|---------------|----------|---------|---------|------------------|----------------|
| Faagrín | 1 | .6 | Terrestrial | 9,972 | 4.1 | .94 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| Denagrín | 2 | 1.0 | Gas giant | 36,215 | 1.3 | 1.08 | Hydrogen-Methane | — |
| Tugrín | 3 | 1.4 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | Icy |

Jiren (Opal Dew I)

Jiren's star, Opal Dew, is so called because of its unusual color as seen from its habitable world. From the surface of Jiren, Opal Dew's light is a pale, shimmering blue-green, due to floating algae in the atmosphere. Opal Dew is one member of a binary system; its companion, Amethyst, is seen as a small purplish disk.

Both stars are faint enough for humans to be able to look directly at them safely. Many microorganisms, broad-leafed plants and native animals thrive on Jiren's surface, but the dim light causes problems for its human inhabitants. Though the planet is warm enough and the oxygen content is sufficient, people seldom stray far from their shelters.

Most of the light that falls on the world is intercepted by the floating algae, so Jiren is in constant twilight, with the days never brighter than a moonlit night on Earth and the nights pitch black. This in itself is bad — humans are prone to severe depression when deprived of sunlight long enough — but the native life's natural camouflage and carnivorous tendencies make going out on Jiren unsafe at any time. (Humans are as poisonous to the Jiren fauna as the local lifeforms are to humans — but the carnivores don't know that.) In fact, Jiren would not be worth the trouble, except as a research station to study Opal Dew and Amethyst, if it weren't for the thillit plant.

Thillit

Thillit is a broad-leafed plant, which looks similar to the terrestrial rubber tree. Its leaves are broader and darker, however, and are spaced closer together. Thillit is poisonous in its wild state, but when processed properly it yields the drug thillitin, the main ingredient in the best antirad treatments.

Thillitin is produced by Opal Dew Pharmaceuticals, a division of Xin Wu. The thillit has to be harvested and "milked" (the thick, white pre-thillitin sap extracted). The milk must be processed further to remove a potent hallucinogen. Unprocessed milk is effective for radiation sickness, but a 1-ounce dose causes 1d hours of violent hallucinations followed by 4d-HT hours of severe depression.

Amalgamated Biotronics has been spreading propaganda, to the effect that thillitin is unsafe and should not be marketed without further testing. In fact, it is as safe as any antirad drug . . . possibly safer. But AmBio wants to keep the demand for competing products down while they finish work on the new version of their antirad (a successor to GammaSpec — for details, see *Dyurnebi*, p. 30).

Waiwaisenazi

The name *waiwaisenazi* is a generic term for Jireni animal life; in trade pidgin, it means "teeth on wheels." The typical *waiwaisenazi* will grab its prey and eat the living flesh from its bones. Which creature is prey and which is predator often depends on which got the drop on the other.

A representative *waiwaisenazi*:

Duro

| | | |
|--------|-------------------|-------------------|
| ST: 5 | Speed/Dodge: 5 | Size: <1 |
| DX: 13 | PD/DR: 0/0 | Weight: 5-10 lbs. |
| IQ: 3 | Damage: 1d-3 cut# | Origin: SF |
| HT: 8 | Reach: C | Habitats: P,F,J |

A duro is the size of a small housecat, with dark fur effectively camouflaging it in the Jireni darkness. Like most other *waiwaisenazi*, the duro will "recognize" anything warm,

moving, and not a duro as food. Its favorite tactic with humans is to grab a leg with its sharp claws and start biting. The duro will let go and run for cover if it takes ½ its HT or more in damage; otherwise, it will go on biting until it makes an IQ roll to notice the prey tastes wrong. Against a tastier target, the duro will quit after doing 4 hits of damage; at that point, it's full!

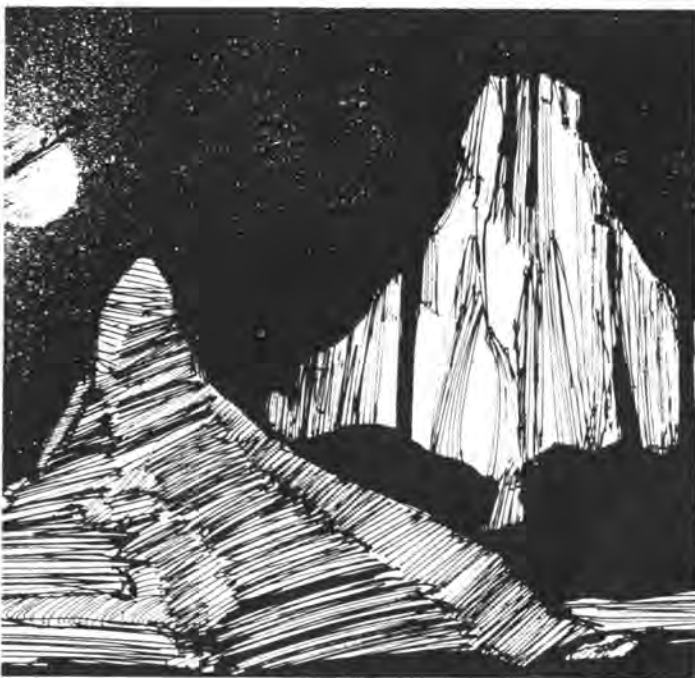
Fifty percent of the time, the duro will be a solitary hunter; otherwise, it travels in a pack of 2d hungry animals.

Treat duro saliva as a Type F venom (see p. BY78-79 for full information). Roll against HT-6; a failed roll means the victim takes 1d-4 points of damage. Critical failure means death. Anyone taking damage is nauseated and dizzy (-3 to all attribute checks and skill rolls for 1d hours). If the HT-6 roll is made, no damage is taken, but the victim still feels sick for 3 to 18 minutes (-3 to all attribute checks and skill rolls as above).

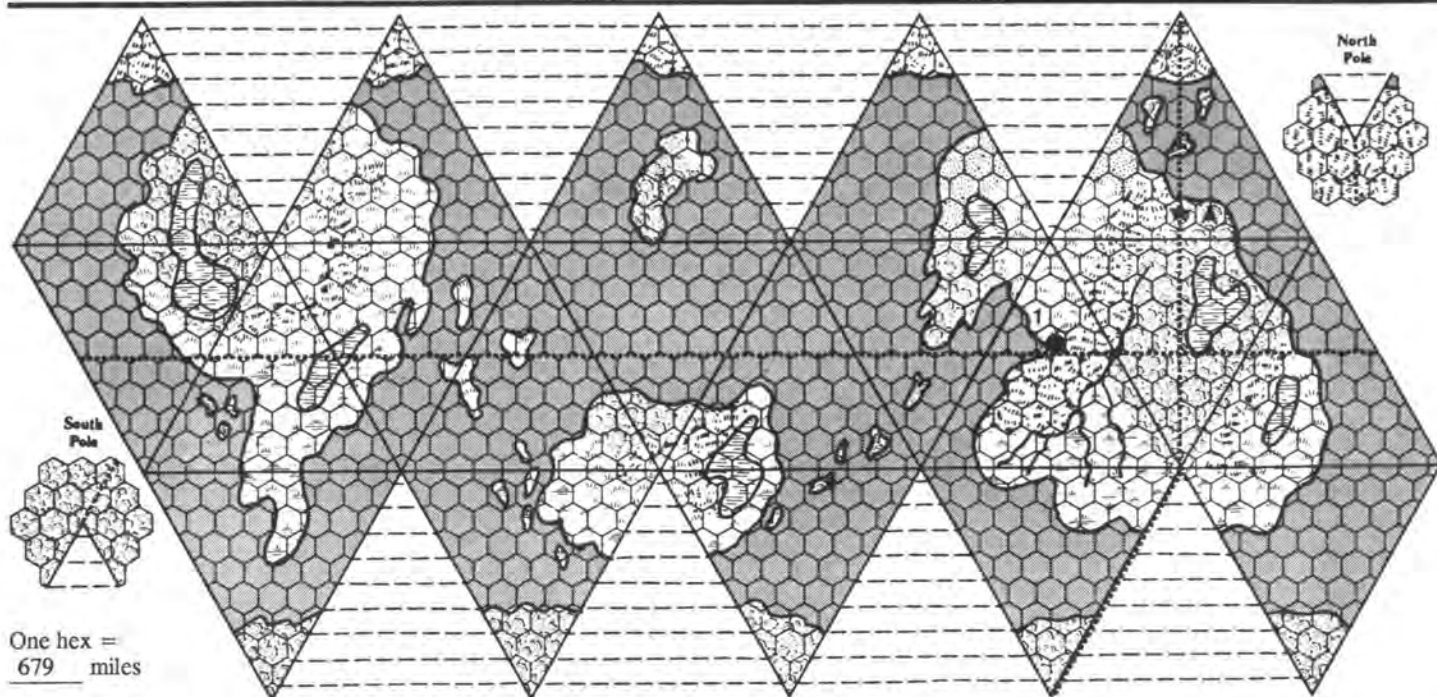
Adventures on Jiren

Bad Medicine. Reports have been reaching Opal Dew Pharmaceuticals that impure shipments of thillitin have been reaching customers offworld. At least one death has been attributed to hallucinogenic thillitin so far (a man apparently had a heart attack, thinking demons were tearing his skin from his bones). Reports of the incident and company records strongly suggest that the thillitin was processed properly — so any hallucinogens present were added in after the drug was bottled. In other words, the drug was sabotaged. The players are hired to find out who sabotaged the drug, and why.

Smuggling. Amalgamated Biotronics wants to study the actual hallucinogen in thillitin — possibly with sabotage in mind, as above. Also, a number of pirate elements would be happy to take a shipment of unprocessed thillitin to one of the more bizarre pleasure planets, or to a zone of illegal trade. The player characters may be approached by one of these elements and offered an attractive sum for acquiring either a large amount of unprocessed drug or some of the plant itself. This is not a task for the moral! It will also be physically dangerous; would-be smugglers will have a chance to be undetected only if they land far from any Xin Wu settlement, *in the dark*.



PLANETARY RECORD: Jiren (Opal Dew I)



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 9,700 mi. Gravity .67 G Density 3.0 Composition Silicate
 Axial Tilt 2° Seasonal Variation Minor Length of Day 35 hrs. Length of Year 186 days/.74 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure .82 (Standard) Type and Composition 68% Nitrogen, 25% Oxygen, 4% CO₂, 3% other
 Climate Warm Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 70° Average 90° High 110°
 Surface Water 60% Humidity 65% Primary Terrain Plains and forests
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Scarce Rare Minerals Scarce Radioactives Scarce
 Heavy Metals Absent Industrial Metals Scarce Light Metals Ample Organics Ample
 Moons None

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Mammalian carnivores, omnivores and flora

Civilization: Population(s) 8,500 (PR 3) Tech Level(s) 10 Control Rating 4

Society Corporate State — outpost of Xin Wu Corporation

Starports Class III at Twilight

Installations small company town; Opal Dew Pharmaceuticals processing plant

Economic/Production Harvesting and production of thillitin — an anti-radiation drug

Other notes: Opal Dew gives off an unusual blue-green light. Native animals are vicious.

Map key: capital, Twilight 1. Opal Dew Pharmaceuticals processing plant

System Information:

Star Name Opal Dew Type G3 IV Location Corporate Worlds 5/8/3
 Biozone 1.0-1.5 Inner Limit 0 Number of Planets 1

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|----------|-------|----------|-------------------|----------|---------|---------|-----------------|----------------|
| | 1 | | Empty orbit | — | — | — | — | — |
| Opal Dew | 2 | 1.0 | Earthlike | 9,700 | 3.0 | .67 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| — | 3 | 1.4 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 4 | 2.2 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 5 | 3.8 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | — |
| | 6-15 | | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Amethyst | 16 | 6554.2 | Red subdwarf star | — | — | — | — | (M6 VI) star |

Kaziin (Kailos I)

The first scouts to visit Kaziin found a paradise. The temperature at 30° latitude was an almost-constant 75° F, the biosphere was eminently suited to human life, severe weather was almost unknown, there were fresh-water springs everywhere and animal life had not yet evolved beyond single-celled animals. They soon discovered that Kaziin's small axial tilt made climatic changes relatively minor (the difference between summer and winter average temperatures is only 5°).

At an intercorporate meeting, Mittelsohn representatives suggested that there were better worlds than Kaziin for colonization and exploitation, and that Kaziin would make a perfect "zoological garden." If necessary, each of Kaziin's hundreds of thousands of islands could be a self-contained "habitat," with the two continents housing larger habitats, support industries, spaceports, and so on. The idea was enthusiastically taken up by AmBio and Xin Wu, who formed the Kaziin Zoological Corporation (or KZC) with Mittelsohn. Today KZC has over 655 million shareholders, although Mittelsohn, AmBio and Xin Wu still hold over 20% of the stock each.

The Two Continents

Iruan is the larger of the two continents. Even so, it only has one large city (Batus Kaziin, or "Kaziin Port"), and only 100,000 people live there. The rest of Iruan's half-million people are farmers, raising food both for themselves and for the animals on the islands. In addition, about one-third of Iruan is set aside as game preserves.

Estu, the smaller continent, is strictly a game preserve. Human settlements are not allowed there; the only humans legally on the continent are company personnel and researchers.

The Islands

Kaziin has literally hundreds of thousands of islands. The largest is some 800 square miles, the smallest just over one, and the average is close to 50. A few of the islands are bare rock, but most are grass-covered, with trees and vegetation enough to support animal life.

KZC biologists have worked hard to ensure that each island represents an interlocked ecology. For instance, one island has smerps, foxhawks and Old Terran coyotes. The smerps breed prodigiously, but the foxhawks and coyotes keep the smerp population stable. Enough cellular samples are kept on hand to replace species lost through miscalculation.

The only problems KZC biologists have come up against so far have been climactic adaptations; neither hot-weather nor cold-weather species do well in the natural Kaziini environment. It is easy enough to artificially heat some islands, but artificial cooling is expensive!

Of course, there are occasional minor problems. It's hard to keep some species in their own particular habitats. The aforementioned foxhawks, for example, are able to fly to neighboring islands at will, since only a short stretch of sea (20 to 50 miles is the usual maximum) separates most islands. This is

usually not a problem, however, since habitats are well-spaced. A foxhawk, for example, might not find anything on the neighboring islands that it would recognize as food. Defining habitats for sea creatures has been a more pressing problem, since the sea which acts as a barrier for land-based animals is a medium of movement for aquatic life. KZC personnel are currently constructing semi-artificial barriers to keep marine life in place; these barriers will allow the passage of water, but no sea creature more than a foot long will be able to pass.



Revenue

Most of KZC's revenue comes from tourism — people want to see the exotic animals of dozens of different worlds. The rest of its income comes from a wide variety of biological specialties . . . zoo specimens, pets, and animal and plant products that are hard to cultivate or gather in their native habitats. For a fee, KZC will even supply terraformers with enough plants and animals to have both a balanced ecology and a diverse gene pool. Kaziin's main imports are high-tech items such as prefabricated houses, medical supplies, luxuries, and — of course — animals.

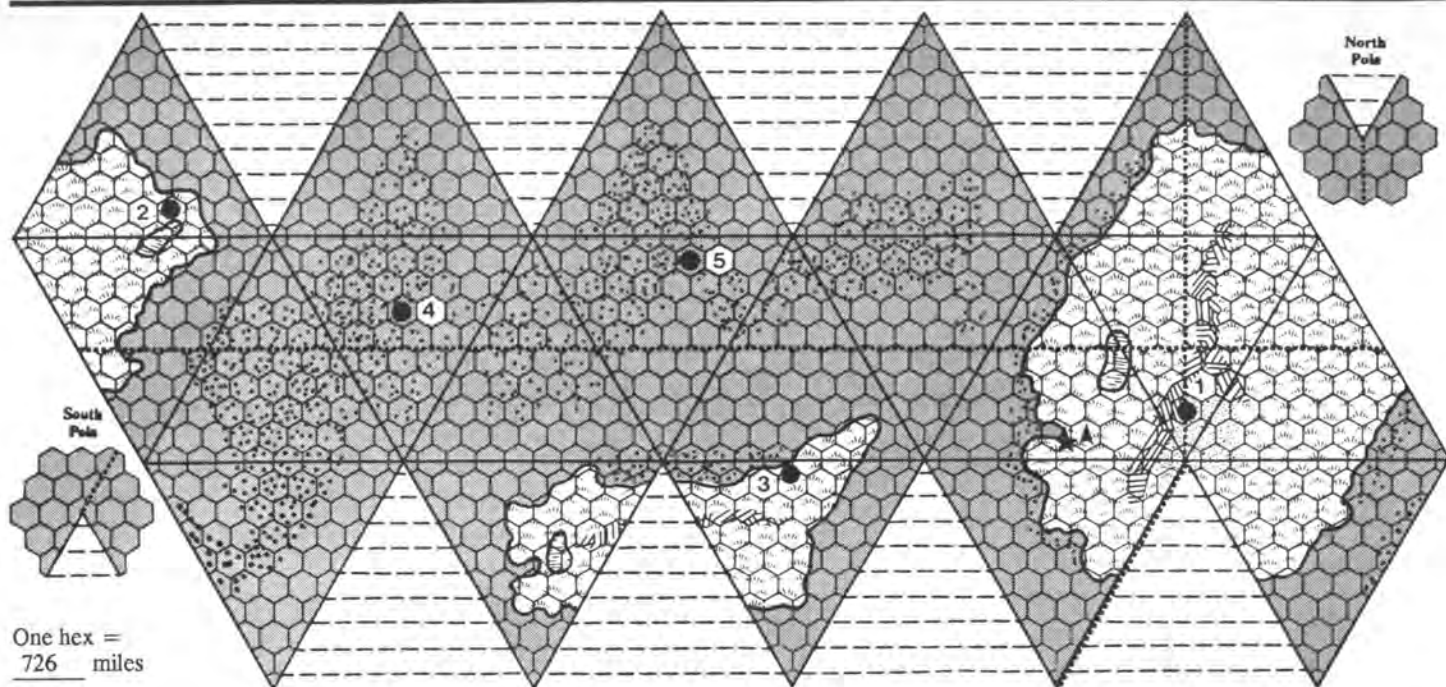
Adventures on Kaziin

Poaching. Word has gotten out that a well-to-do corporate VIP is planning to mount a big-game expedition into the interior of Estu to bag an elephant. This is poaching, since no hunting on Kaziin is allowed without a permit, and permits are almost impossible to get — even for corporate bigwigs. The characters are approached by the VIP's agent to participate in the trip — ostensibly as specialists, drivers, etc., but actually as hired guns, protecting both against unnoticed animals and against KZC security wardens. If the PCs are all law-abiding types, KZC Security might have heard about the expedition, and hired the characters to find the poachers and stop them.

One More for the Collection. A junior curator, anxious to score points with his supervisor, hires the PCs to capture and bring back a kalithex (see description, p. 42). He is particularly insistent that the creature be unharmed. Unfortunately, he knows nothing about it except that it is large, dangerous, unique and new (his information came in a letter from a non-scientist friend). He can provide an obsolete zoological collection module that will fit in most cargo holds and (he thinks) contain the creature safely. The rest is up to the PCs.

Escape. Certainly no one expected the kalithex to swim the 35 miles from its habitat to an island affectionately known as the "Forb Farm" and develop a taste for forb. The characters are hired, first, to retrieve the missing kalithex (again, unharmed), and second, to put him on an island on the other side of Kaziin that might be able to hold it. By now they know a lot more about the kalithex. But the GM should not tell them, unless they specifically ask, that the "harmless" forb are like skunks but more so, and almost invisible due to protective coloring.

PLANETARY RECORD: Kaziin (Kailos I)



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 10,371 mi. Gravity 1.05 G Density 4.4 Composition Low-Iron
 Axial Tilt 3° Seasonal Variation Minor Length of Day 15 hrs. Length of Year 35 days/.06 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure 1.1 (Standard) Type and Composition 72% Nitrogen, 23% Oxygen, 3% CO₂, 2% other
 Climate Earth-normal Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 69° Average 75° High 79°
 Surface Water 72% Humidity 75% Primary Terrain Mountains, forest, many small islands
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Scarce Rare Minerals Absent Radioactives Scarce
 Heavy Metals Scarce Industrial Metals Scarce Light Metals Ample Organics Scarce
 Moons 1 small moon — Merisi; 1 medium moon — Duvor

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Imported species — many different kinds

Civilization: Population(s) 1 million (PR 6) Tech Level(s) 10 Control Rating 5

Society Corporate State — Managed by Kaziin Zoological Corp.

Starports Class III near Batus Kaziin

Installations Kaziin Zoological Research Stations

Economic/Production Exports biological specialties

Other notes: Map key: capital, Batus Kaziin 1-5: Research stations

System Information:

Star Name Kailos Type M3 V Location Corporate Worlds 18/-5/-1
 Biozone 0.1-0.2 Inner Limit 0.0 Number of Planets 6

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------------|----------|---------|---------|-----------------|------------------|
| Kaziin | 1 | .1 | Earthlike | 10,371 | 4.4 | 1.05 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| Chemael | 2 | .4 | Terrestrial | 6,765 | 4.6 | .71 | Methane | — |
| Tiruath | 3 | .7 | Rockball | 9,161 | 3.77 | .79 | None | — |
| Menosa | 4 | 1.3 | Terrestrial | 10,325 | 3.14 | .74 | Trace reducing | Two ring systems |
| Zalur | 5 | 2.5 | Rockball | 7,169 | 2.65 | .44 | None | — |
| — | 6 | 4.9 | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 7 | 9.7 | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Col Thebbus | 8 | 19.3 | Gas giant | 82,625 | .96 | 1.82 | Ammonia | 22 moonlets |

Obelix (Uderzo I)

Obelix orbits a BII blue supergiant. Though the small world revolves around its primary at a distance over ten times further than Neptune is from Sol, Obelix hits Uderzo's biozone as smoothly as a hole-in-one. Yet with its nine-century year and slightly eccentric orbit, no one expected it to have life.

Scholars now believe Precursor colonists created or imported that life. Xeno-paleontologists support this theory, citing evidence of closely related life forms on other worlds in nearby systems. These creatures could not have migrated there themselves. And if they did, the beasts showed bad judgment, because on those other worlds they all died out or departed with the Precursors.

Life also died out on Obelix, during its 200-year winter. No one expected it to come back in the spring.

Deceiving Appearances

Obelix's orbital irregularity, several percent off a true circle, carries it toward the extremes of Uderzo's extremely wide biozone. And even beyond — in deep winter, the ocean surface freezes. Glaciation covers all traces of life. So things stood a century ago when scouts discovered the world, and when a small multi-stellar corporation decided to buy it.

Planetologists hired by the Spalding-Pernaux Technocomplex (SPET) found life on Obelix — but nothing more interesting than algae and a genus of armored mud-crawlers with antifreeze for blood. So SPET built colonies.

Obelix's three outposts administered asteroid mining in the system, provided convenient communications way-stations, and brought SPET several lucrative military contracts. Armies and mercenary groups found the world very convenient for heavy weapons research and for training troops in arctic warfare.

Over the decades these operations prospered. The cities grew, and colonists often needed to travel among them. Tremendous equatorial windstorms kept air travel dangerous, so SPET

constructed hundreds of miles of magnetic levitation ("maglev") tracks between the outposts.

Maglev trains are a TL9 development. They float on fields of magnetic force above tracks inlaid with superconducting energy coils. Such trains move quickly, smoothly, silently, and (at TL10+) reliably in almost any weather. They easily reach speeds in excess of 500 mph. But the tracks have to be kept clear. In winter, that was easy; snowstorms (as opposed to dry windstorms) were rare, and heating elements kept the tracks ice-free. They worked fine until a couple of years ago.

A New Season

After more than 150 years, Obelix's elongated orbit took it toward the center of the primary's biozone. No one cared. Theorists said the ice-covered planet's albedo was so high that Uderzo's heat would be reflected back into space. The oceans might open up along the equator, but the world would remain locked in winter.

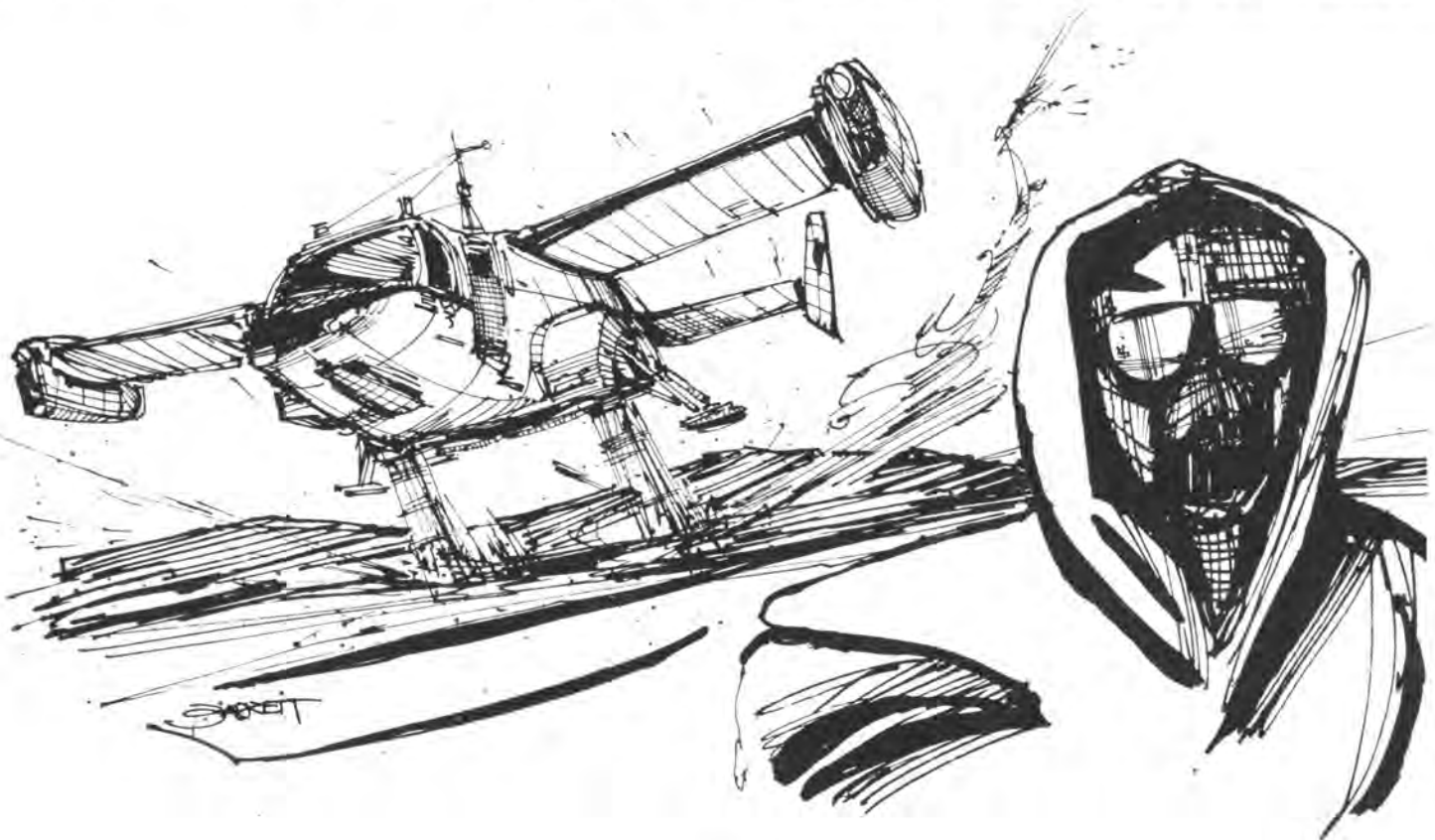
Three years ago the oceans did open, releasing carbon dioxide that had dissolved into deep-ocean currents at the end of the previous autumn. Greenhouse warming followed, Obelix passed a "turbulence threshold," and suddenly the glaciers began retreating at full tilt. The world's albedo changed, life miraculously re-emerged, and SPET is in trouble.

With spring, the maglev tracks have grown choked with new vegetation. The loss of transportation has created an economic crisis, so SPET is looking for some way to clear them. But it's tough, because the world keeps coming up with deadly new surprises.

The New Natives

Mostly they're benign. But the nasty ones make for exciting adventures. Here are several returning menaces:

Purple Crud. This rapidly growing weed is what blocks the



tracks. Tall, many-leaved, fibrous, it emits a noxious vapor that attracts pollinating insects. Many of these insects are also blood-suckers; none seem dangerous so far, but some types are incredible nuisances to those without vacc suits.

But unknown to xenobotanists, the vapor also subtly affects human emotions, making those who breathe it irritable and belligerent. Since standard Obelix gear includes face masks but no filters, the vapor affects everyone nearby. If PCs encounter Purple Crud, anyone with the disadvantages of Bad Temper, Berserk, or (shudder) Sadism will be affected automatically. Others get a HT roll (Strong Will or Weak Will modifies) to avoid becoming angry. The GM should pass notes to afflicted players and tell them to roleplay the effects. (Any filter mask will block out the vapor.) SPET officials will be very pleased if the PCs figure out what has been causing the fights on the track crews! After that, the plant will get a new name: Angryweed. Samples would certainly be worth money to the zookeepers on Kaziin (p. 38).

Mandrills. No, not the Earth apes, but these ferocious semi-simian predators do the same job. They are the best-known hazard of the planet. Their stats are given below.

Lemming Worms. No SPET briefing will prepare the PCs for a disgusting horde of purplish-gray worms . . . billions of them . . . wriggling out of the ground and heading westward in droves. Behind them, the ground is stripped bare.

Fortunately, fire deters them, giving the PCs a chance to avoid being covered in purple slime. That's the worst that will happen, unless PC phobias are triggered by the horde, because the lemming worms are strictly plant-eaters. Any comparison to army ants is all in the minds of the PCs — but they will have to find this out themselves. In fact, the lemming worms are potentially very useful. If they can be induced to travel along the tracks, they'll even eat the purple crud! But they *want* to go west, and west only.

Other nasties. Fill out the ecology with other weeds, stinging salamanders that emerge from centuries-long hibernation, flying insects, hallucinogenic spores, fungi that eat away at the seals of pressure suits . . .

In running an Obelix adventure, throw in lots of beautiful or benevolent creatures as well. Stress the excitement of a world returning to life after centuries of dormancy.

The Three Outposts

The small colonial cities find the excitement a bit stronger than they like. In spring, Obelix's fancy has lightly turned to climatic mischief, and the outposts struggle to cope.

Wundagore Mountain stands on a wide plateau a third of the way up the leeward side of a medium-sized mountain in one of Obelix's largest ranges. In winter, a pack-ice road led up to the station in an easy gradient. A clear path to the top of the mountain led to the orbital relays Wundagore uses to communicate with asteroid miners.

Now, although the weather remains cold at Wundagore Mountain's higher altitudes, new snowstorms have increased the snowpack above the base. For the first time in a century, the settlement's 97,000 inhabitants worry about avalanches.

Long ago, the settlers erected a bowsprit-shaped barrier uphill from the plateau, a 30-foot high wall of high-impact plastic. Certainly the wall will hold, because it's stopped the last five avalanches without strain. However, the snowpack from those disasters has built up faster than the wall's heating coils can melt it away. The excess snow has formed a ramp, and the next big avalanche will slide right up that ramp, over the wall, and onto the city. PCs with engineering ability will certainly be consulted for help.

Attilan, the largest of SPET's stations on Obelix, lies on a wide, rolling plain of ice — that is, of thawing slush and boggy ground. The winter windstorms were never much of a problem here, because most of the settlement homes lie just beneath the ground. These earth-sheltered dwellings stayed warm and protected, their windows opening downwind.

The only ones who ever went outside were mercenaries on training missions. Researchers were paid to go out, and mercenary instructors liked the bad winds. "The stronger, the better," said Battalion Field Instructor Sorren "Bran" Brannock. "Let's 'em find out what's waiting on real iceballs."

But Obelix won't be an iceball much longer. Spring has brought rain . . . lots and lots of rain. Floods have killed hundreds and devastated 40% of the station's homes. The entire population of 275,000 huddles in a few protected buildings: schools, houses of worship, and dining halls.

Famine threatens. The emerging greenery around the station may prove edible, but SPET owns no harvesting equipment there. What's worse, Bran Brannock refuses to let "civilian" harvesters wander in the area while military exercises continue. He cites public safety (and indeed, the training exercises are deadly to anyone not in battle armor) and security risks. Some new weapons tests are classified. So the families in Attilan survive on crackers, vitamin pills and emergency rations from storm shelters.

Brannock is tall, loud, self-assured, and has the backing of powerful off-planet military bureaucrats. A career officer, he is the highest-ranking officer on Obelix, the only one who can tell a SPET official where to get off, and he will do virtually anything to remain that way.

He won't tolerate any questioning of his authority. Brannock is bribable, but expensive. The station officials have covertly bought military rations through him, at black-market prices, to feed the hungry citizens.

Atlantis, in danger of looking like its sunken namesake, sits at the edge of a no-longer-frozen lake bed. On its marshy ground maglev lines collapse or short out faster than crews can repair them, and the storms that block air traffic are worst here. Most of its 20,000 inhabitants are stranded here, while the waters rise. And the waters aren't all that's rising . . .

Why build a station by a lake bed? It provided a convenient stopping point on the journey between the other stations; but more importantly, the lake shore is the only source yet discovered of a bluish, crystalline mineral with striking anti-agathic properties.

Experimenters are purifying the drug in small quantities, either legally or illegally; its potential effects are important enough that SPET — or a corrupt SPET official — built this small research outpost.

The trouble is, the crystals come from the weird cocoons that the native "mandrills" (see p. 42) emerge from. Taking the crystals destroys the cocoon's occupant. With spring, surviving creatures are popping out, hungry and hostile, often while researchers are trying to mine the crystals.

The para-simians, untroubled by storm and flood, have set upon the station's inhabitants with animal fury. It's almost as though they know the researchers were killing their brethren.

Hollst, in the northern wastes, was the site of the first landing and research base. The area proved comparatively worthless; all that remains is the plascrete landing fields and the deserted underground building complex. Hollst is on the maglev line, and a crew checks out the tracks and equipment yearly, just in case. The caretaker crew has been pulled back to Wundagore, where every hand is needed.

Mandrills

These creatures resemble large apes in gaudy pink, purple and orange colors . . . if you can imagine a six-legged, jewel-eyed ape covered in plastic foam insulation. They feast on herbivores, insects and vegetation, and are willing to try humans. They travel in herds of 20-30, still young after their "hatching" from weird crystalline cocoons near thawing riverbeds.

Obelix Mandrill

| | | |
|----------|-----------------|---------------------|
| ST: 6-12 | Speed/Dodge: 6 | Size: 1 hex |
| DX: 14 | PD/DR: 1/1 | Weight: 65-100 lbs. |
| IQ: 6 | Damage: 1d cut# | Origin: SF |
| HT: 8-10 | Reach: C | Habitats: P |

The Obelix mandrill is somewhat telepathic; this should be true even if there are no human psis in the campaign. Any mandrill will know if any other mandrill within 2 miles is especially frightened or happy (e.g., finds great food). And they can sense the destruction of the cocoons by crystal-hunters! The response in either case will be to head toward the situation; no force native to Obelix can stand up against a horde of angry mandrills.

Mandrills can also sense human emotions fairly well. Anger makes them angry; fear usually makes them hungry. True friendship would excite their curiosity. Anyone who can genuinely accept the mandrills as good/human would be accepted by the mandrills as good/mandrill, and they do *not* fight among themselves, ever.

A human psi could attempt to communicate with mandrills, at -2 (-4 for control). They are naturally cooperative, but the only forms of cooperation they know are "find food together"

and "tear dangerous thing to shreds." Putting over a new concept will be difficult. But just convincing the mandrills that "humans are mandrills too" will save lives — *if* the cocoon-harvesting stops!

Kalithex

Clearly the most fearsome creature yet to appear is the *kalithex*. It looks, sounds and acts more like a robot tractor than an animal, it is covered in glinting green armor, and has keen senses and a poor temper. When left alone, it spends its time digging up the ground with a plowlike horn and six clawed feet. But it attacks anything it sees. A kalithex can easily tear a ground-car open and eat the passengers — and the seats. This is all the PCs will know about the creature.

Kalithex

| | | |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| ST: 50-70 | Speed/Dodge: 6 | Size: 10 hexes |
| DX: 13 | PD/DR: 3/6 | Weight: 2 tons |
| IQ: 4 | Damage: 3 + 2 cr# | Origin: SF |
| HT: 14/40-50 | Reach: C# | Habitats: P, J? |

The damage given is for a nose-horn gore. The claws do 1 + 2 cutting damage with a reach of 1.

Other facts about the kalithex, which will be discovered in time: The creature is hermaphroditic; any two can breed. Furthermore, a lone kalithex without a mate can reproduce asexually. A pregnant kalithex burrows deep into the ground and dies; when the young hatch, they eat the carcass and emerge, already weighing 50 to 100 pounds. They grow rapidly! On Obelix, the kalithex is kept under control by several parasites and a couple of *huge* predators (which won't appear for another five years or so). On another world, kalithex might be nearly uncontrollable.

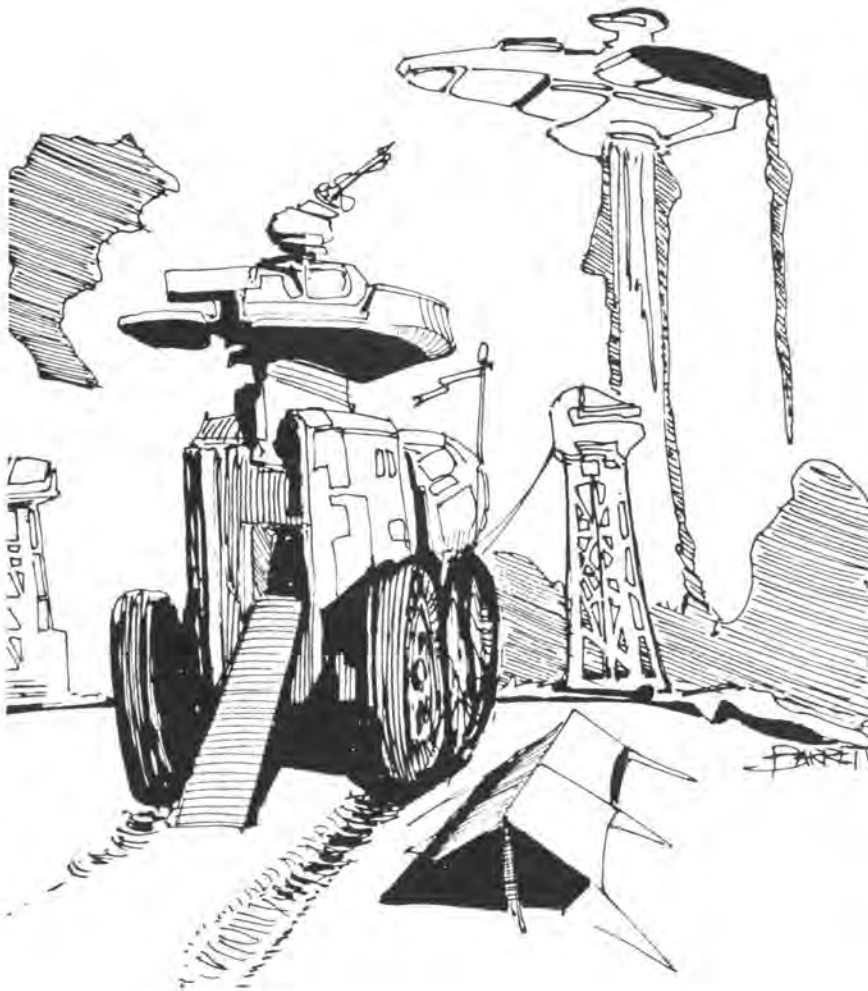
Adventure on Obelix

Weedbusters! A SPET rep in another system hires the PCs to carry a scientist/biochemist/generic expert to Obelix. The expert, a petulant little egghead, has tailored a new microbe that should kill off the native vegetation and clear the maglev tracks.

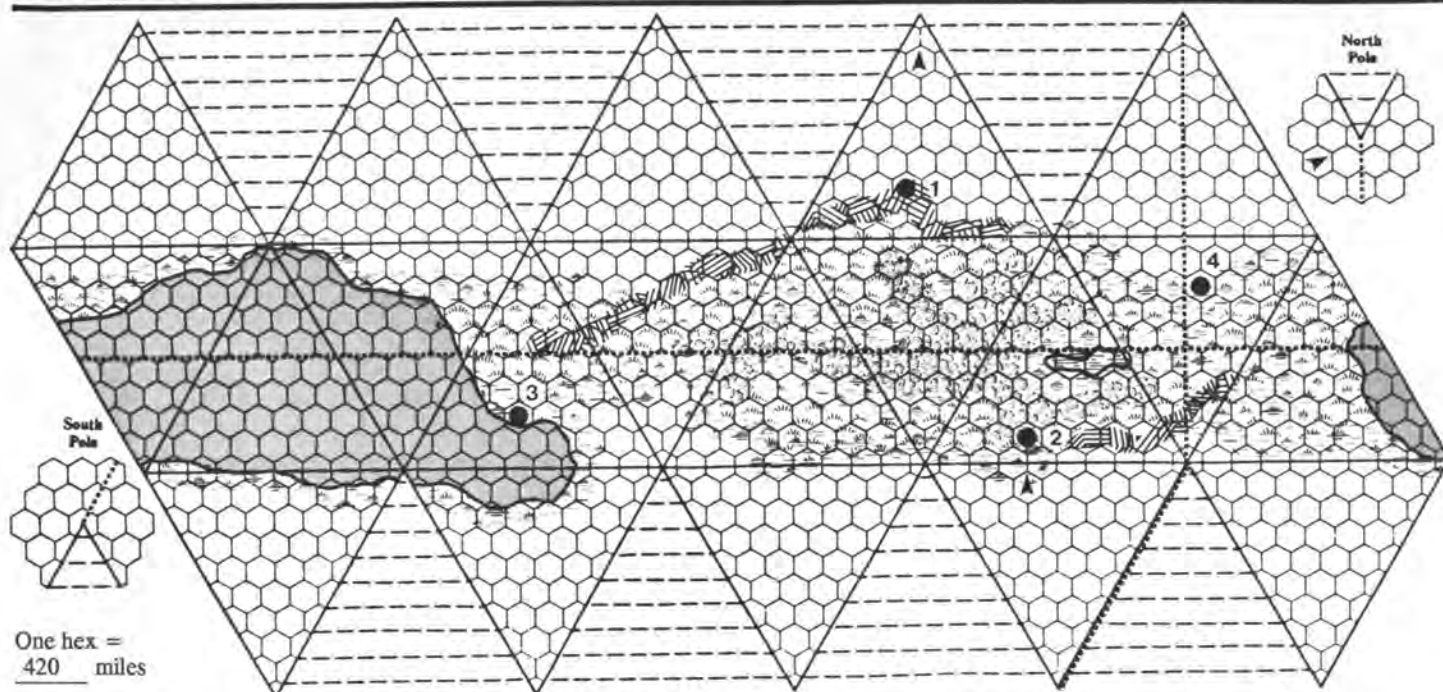
The PCs must get to Obelix, landing at the abandoned Class I starport up north. (The usual spaceport is on the equator, square in the middle of colossal spring hurricanes.) Then they escort the expert from the still-frozen starport down a long track to the equatorial infestations.

Along the way the PCs see Obelix coming into full bloom (GMs, play up the scenery), face peril, and learn more about the tailored microbe. Eventually, they realize that it may work too well. It was a quick fix — a shotgun approach which could kill off every living thing except humans, leaving Obelix a truly dead world. Do they let the SPET expert complete his mission, or jeopardize their own jobs by trying to sabotage the attempt? Talking him out of it will *not* work.

Helping Hands. Faced with the planetwide disaster of Obelix, the PCs feel called upon to help . . . to help destroy the attacking natives or make peace with them; to look for engineering solutions to aid the cities; to try to find safe ways to clear the tracks; or simply to aid in disaster relief (filling sandbags, helping to deal with the lesser wildlife, or making dangerous trips to bring in food).



PLANETARY RECORD: Obelix (Uderzo I)



Planet type Terrestrial Diameter 6,011 mi. Gravity .88 G Density 6.4 Composition High-Iron
 Axial Tilt 8° Seasonal Variation Extreme* Length of Day 16 hrs. Length of Year 500,210 days/913 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure 1.05 (Standard) Type and Composition 79% Nitrogen, 20% Oxygen, 1% other
 Climate Very Cold Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low -20° Average 0° High 20°
 Surface Water 62% Humidity 5% Primary Terrain Icy plain and glaciers (Ice sheets over oceans)
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Scarce Rare Minerals Scarce Radioactives Ample
 Heavy Metals Ample Industrial Metals Scarce Light Metals Scarce Organics Scarce
 Moons None

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Emerging from hibernation — see "other notes"

Civilization: Population(s) 400,000 (PR 5) Tech Level(s) 10 Control Rating 4

Society Corporate State, managed by Spaulding-Pernaux Technocomplex (SPET)

Starports Class III at Attilan; Class I (abandoned) in northern wastes

Installations Three small colonies

Economic/Production Administrative center for system asteroid mining; communications way station; military services

Other notes: Map key: 1. Wundagore Mountain 2. Attilan 3. Atlantis 4. Hollst (abandoned)

Colonies connected by magnetic levitation train lines. Orbits 1-4 and 6-10 are empty *Seasons vary through 913-year cycle.

Until recently, the world was thought lifeless. Many species newly discovered, unclassified; several are dangerous

System Information:

Star Name Uderzo Type B0 II Location Corporate Worlds 10/-9/4
 Biozone 250-375 Inner Limit 5.0 Number of Planets 4

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|-----------|-------|----------|----------------|----------|---------|---------|-----------------|----------------------|
| — | 1-4 | — | (Empty orbits) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 5 | 2.5 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 6-10 | — | (Empty orbits) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 11 | 153.7 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | — |
| Obelix | 12 | 153.7 | Terrestrial | 6,011 | 6.4 | .88 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| Asterix | 13 | 617.0 | Iceball | 1,900 | 6.1 | .27 | None | Inclined orbit |
| Miraculix | 14 | 1230 | Iceball | 5,400 | 6.2 | .77 | None | — |
| Dogmatix | 15 | 2459 | Iceball | 1,850 | 6.1 | .26 | None | No recorded landings |

Perido (Gagalis III) — *Prohibited*

Perido is an Earth-type planet on the fringe of the Corporate Sector with an intelligent native race. The Quar (see below) are ursinoid and prefer to eat their meat freshly killed; otherwise, they are quite similar to humans.

Perido was rediscovered 65 years ago by a Croyden survey ship. In her report, the scout termed her find a "rediscovery" because she was certain someone had discovered Perido previously. She based her conclusion on the Quar, a TL1 civilization, having matchlock pistols (a TL4 artifact) — when the Quar had not yet discovered ironworking!

Luckily for the Quar, Croyden was more interested in exploitation-by-investigation than in turning the Quar into customers or slave miners. A crack Croyden team spent several years observing the Quar remotely and deciphering their language before attempting to pose as Quar. Eventually they adopted the role of Quar, setting up their camp in a spot where a group of Quar would come across them in their wanderings. They lived with the Quar for several months before realizing that the natives were not in the least fooled by their expensive disguises. They knew that the newcomers weren't real Quar, but they seemed friendly, and the Quar went along with the game!

Living among the Quar, the Croyden team learned that "gods from the sky" had brought the guns to Perido. The gods had told them the "guns" were gifts from the gods, and that these guns would help them hunt for food and slay their enemies. The gods then taught the Quar the secret of making "thunder earth" (i.e., gunpowder) and promised that if the Quar were valiant, the gods would return and teach them other secrets.

From this, and from independent observation, the Croyden team deduced that some 200 years earlier a team of merchants with connections to Mittelsohn landed on Perido and gave guns to the Quar. (In the Quar's ideographic written language, "gun" is written "thunder — sling-ball — weapon," but the spoken word is the same as the Mittelsohn trade pidgin word for "gun.") The researchers still do not know exactly why the "gods" gave weapons to the Quar.

Today the Quar treat their guns almost as holy relics, using them once a year to hunt game for a ceremonial feast. Through attrition, rust, weather and time, few of the guns survive, and those who own them guard them jealously.

Croyden has placed Perido on the "prohibited" list because of the Quar's developing culture, and because they want to do further research to find the source of the Quar's weapons.

Quar

20 points

The Quar are ursinoid, yet similar to humans. They are bipedal, have two arms and hands with opposable thumbs, and have human-like eyes and mouths (with sharp teeth) but bear-like snouts and soft brown fur. Their tough skin gives them a natural PD and DR of 1 each.

Environment: Quar evolved on Perido, which has an average temperature of 82° in areas where Quar live — warm by Earth standards. Perido has a gravity of 1.1 G, and an Earth-normal nitrogen/oxygen atmosphere.

Advantages and Disadvantages: Quar get +1 to ST, +1 to HT and +1 to IQ. Their average height is the same as humans' but they weigh 20 pounds more. A Quar PC would have the Primitive disadvantage. The Quar have another mental disadvantage: They are not technical thinkers. Quar have -4 on any skill involving design or manufacture (not use) of technology. Likewise, a Quar would learn Computer Operations normally, but have a -4 on Computer Programming.

Quar appear to have no natural enemies, and if they survive to maturity (40% do not) they live to be 60-70 years old.

Psychology: Quar are curious creatures and love playing. By human standards, they are very curious and gregarious. They wrestle, run races and hold contests (such as, "Who can throw the sling-stone farther?"). They are also philosophical and reflective.

When it comes to hunting, however, they are all business. Usually four to six Quar will hunt together, helping to trap their prey (their favorite is a small, antelope-like animal they call "long-horns") and eating the fresh meat.

Once a year, however, many Quar will gather together in one spot for a ritual feast. Normally they do not hunt the "plenty-meat" (another game animal); first, because they do not like to waste food and the "plenty-meat" has more meat on it than a normal band of 30 can eat at a single meal; and second, because the "plenty-meat" is dangerous prey (think of it as a huge thick-legged bison, but use the game stats for a *large* elephant). It could easily kill several hunters. As part of the ritual feast, the Quar will use one of their precious guns to shoot a "plenty-meat" and all the Quar in the area, regardless of their differences, will join in eating it.

Despite their traditions of "the gods," Quar have no religion per se. Their "gods" are powerful beings who visited the Quar once and gave them guns, and they will return someday. But the Quar do not worship the gods, and do not even think about them often. The gods live far away, and are not interested in the day-to-day affairs of Quar. The Quar have no concept of an afterlife, and will find it fascinating and disturbing.

Point Cost: The point cost to be a Quar is 20, *without* taking the Primitive disadvantage, relative to a spacefaring culture, into account.

Quar Black Powder Weapons

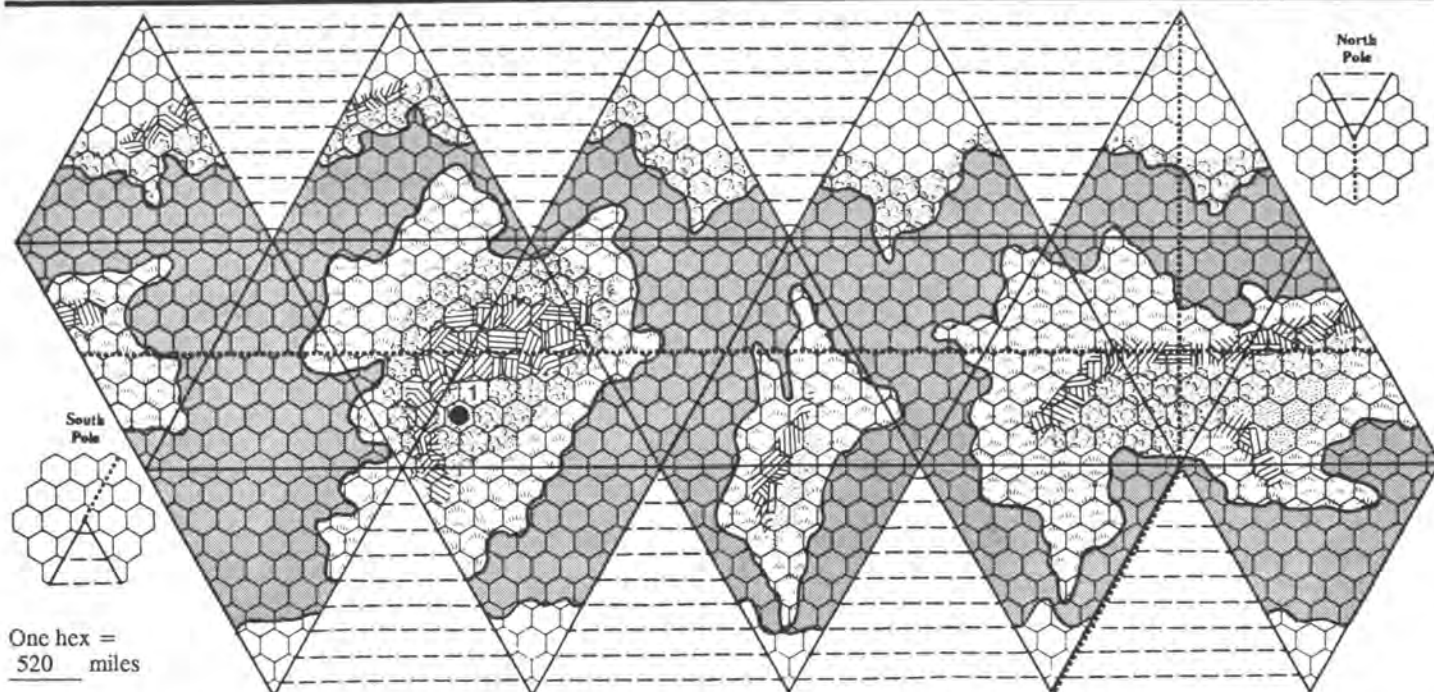
The Quar's precious guns are heavy (.82 caliber) flintlock-style muzzle-loaders, very well designed for use by primitives. The mechanism is simple but tough and finely made. No effort was made either to decorate it or to disguise it as "native" — this is a trade item, pure and simple, made from TL10 materials to a TL5 design. The "flint" is an artificial stone that will outlast the metal of the gun. Ammunition is any rock that will fit in the barrel (ancient guns would not have taken this abuse!) This makes the weapon rather inaccurate.

A Quar gun will not malfunction except on a critical failure. It does 4d+2 damage, and has SS 15, Acc 2, ½D 75 and max range 900. If the Quar were shooting perfectly round ammunition instead of rocks, the guns would have an Acc of 6 and both ranges would double. The gun weighs 15 lbs. (in 1 G), requires 20 seconds to reload between shots, requires a ST of 13 to use properly, and has a recoil number of -4 (this would only matter if someone tried to fire one from each shoulder!). The appropriate skill for these guns is Black Powder Weapons.

Adventure on Perido

Chariots of the Gods? The party lands on Perido, near a Quar encampment. Human or near-human PCs will look like the classic description of the gods; slight, with no fur except on their heads, and strange flat faces. What the characters do next is up to them, but remember that any race will have a Poor or worse reaction toward gods who don't behave the way the legends say they will!

PLANETARY RECORD: Perido (Gagalis III) — *Prohibited*



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 7,431 mi. Gravity .97 G Density 5.7 Composition Medium-Iron
 Axial Tilt 18° Seasonal Variation Minor Length of Day 21 hrs. Length of Year 275 days/ .66 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure 1.1 (Standard) Type and Composition Nitrogen 72%, Oxygen 22%, CO₂ 4%, others 2%
 Climate Warm Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 67° Average 82° High 98°
 Surface Water 66% Humidity 71% Primary Terrain Forests, mountains
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Possible Rare Minerals None known Radioactives None known
 Heavy Metals Possible Industrial Metals Ample Light Metals Ample Organics Ext. plentiful
 Moons Two medium; Hunting Moon and Cold Moon

Biosphere: Dominant life form Quar
 Other significant life forms Small animals; some humans

Civilization: Population(s) 125,000 Quar; 100 humans Tech Level(s) 1 Control Rating 2

Society Developing tribal

Starports None

Installations Croyden Quar Research Center

Economic/Production Hunting and gathering. No off-planet trade

Other notes: Prohibited due to developing culture. Clear landings with Croyden first. Map key: 1. Croyden Research Center

System Information:

Star Name Gagalis Type K0 V Location Corporate Worlds -5/-1/-1
 Biozone 1.0-1.5 Inner Limit 0 Number of Planets 6

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|--------|-------|----------|-------------------|----------|---------|---------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Aeli | 1 | .2 | Hot rockball | 2,700 | 6.1 | .38 | None | Brilliant red color |
| Nenli | 2 | .6 | Exotic greenhouse | 6,100 | 6.5 | .91 | Superdense Nitrogen-CO ₂ | — |
| Perido | 3 | 1.0 | Earthlike | 7,431 | 5.7 | .97 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| | 4 | 1.8 | Asteroid belt | | | | | — |
| | 5 | 3.4 | (empty orbit) | | | | | — |
| Lo Ti | 6 | 6.6 | Gas giant | 103,000 | 1.1 | 2.6 | Hydrochlorides | — |
| | 7 | 13.0 | Asteroid belt | | | | | — |
| Thento | 8 | 25.8 | Iceball | 10,000 | 4.6 | 1.05 | None | 4 moons |
| Quaele | 9 | 51.4 | Gas giant | 98,200 | 1.2 | 2.7 | Methane | Retrograde orbit |

Puzzle (T:21 GS K5 I)

Puzzle is located far from the better-traveled areas. However, the local economy gets many millions each year from research and tourism.

A Precursor race was here at some time in the past, estimated at about 200,000 years ago. Nothing is known of their goal, or the reason they used this unremarkable world. Several universities have studied the Precursor ruins on Enigma Island and ascertained little.

Enigma seems ordinary except for a set of massive parallel foundations, 2.314' wide, 4.628' deep and 46.283' long; they are melted basalt, cast in place. There are threaded holes in the rock, apparently to anchor some huge device; these were probably drilled in place after casting. The foundation meets the bedrock of the island, which is an old, extinct volcano. Everything else that was here has either been removed, or long ago weathered away. There is no evidence that the installation was in any way radioactive, or involved with the volcano; Mt. Snowpeak last erupted several million years ago.

The planetary capital of Qurio is located on the island. It sports a Class III starport and several good hotels. There is a picturesque assortment of fishing villages along the coast, and Snowpeak coffee is one of the finest in the sector.

Bracketing Enigma is the other oddity, a set of two triangular artificial islands. Formed of dredged sea sand, compacted and fused by unknown means, the islands have no feature of interest, other than the fact that they exist. Each was created flat, and stands 17.2 feet above the sea at solar low tide.

Today, both are covered with sand washed up in storms, or carried by the wind. They have been eroded in from their original size by the pounding waves. Shards of the glassy material are occasionally found; these "teeth" are a major diving curiosity.

Puzzle has three moons, named One, Two and Three. They are equidistant from one another, and in geosynchronous orbit around the world. Each is silicate, with a diameter of 2,097.6 miles, and has a smooth, fused surface. Tests indicate they have been exposed to fusion-grade heat, and have been bombarded with great energies to vaporize mass at one point; it is believed that they each were heated in some way to cause tremendous vaporization of the rock, as a sort of reaction drive to move them into orbit. Tests also show that the glazing occurred after the maneuver was performed, which precludes searches for remains of steering gear, sensor platforms, or any other hardware associated with moving an object through space.

While Puzzle has its share of visitors, it is far enough out of the way that many people, especially amateur archaeologists and Precursor investigators, have retired here. There are a number of amateur xeno-archaeology clubs catering to the tourist trade, and this volunteer interest has contributed to Puzzle's reputation for hospitality.

Adventure on Puzzle

Trafalastor. The players are sent to Moon Two as part of a survey team. Croyden has hired several groups (including the characters) to explore Moon Two after a prospector found a set of parallel foundations similar to the ones on Enigma. If the investigators find anything, they are to photograph it, without touching it, and return the photographs to Croyden, who will send in a specialist team.

As they prospect, one of the characters finds something in the glassy crust, covered with dust. They find it to be a large carved crystal of some sort, lying on its side near some melted

equipment. The object is easily visible and can be photographed; if they photograph it and turn the pictures in to Croyden, they will be paid \$30,000 and dismissed.

If the players want to remove the crystal, they will first have to remove the overburden of natural glass without shattering the crystal. If they manage to do this, and get the crystal to sunlight, it will begin to speak in an unknown language!



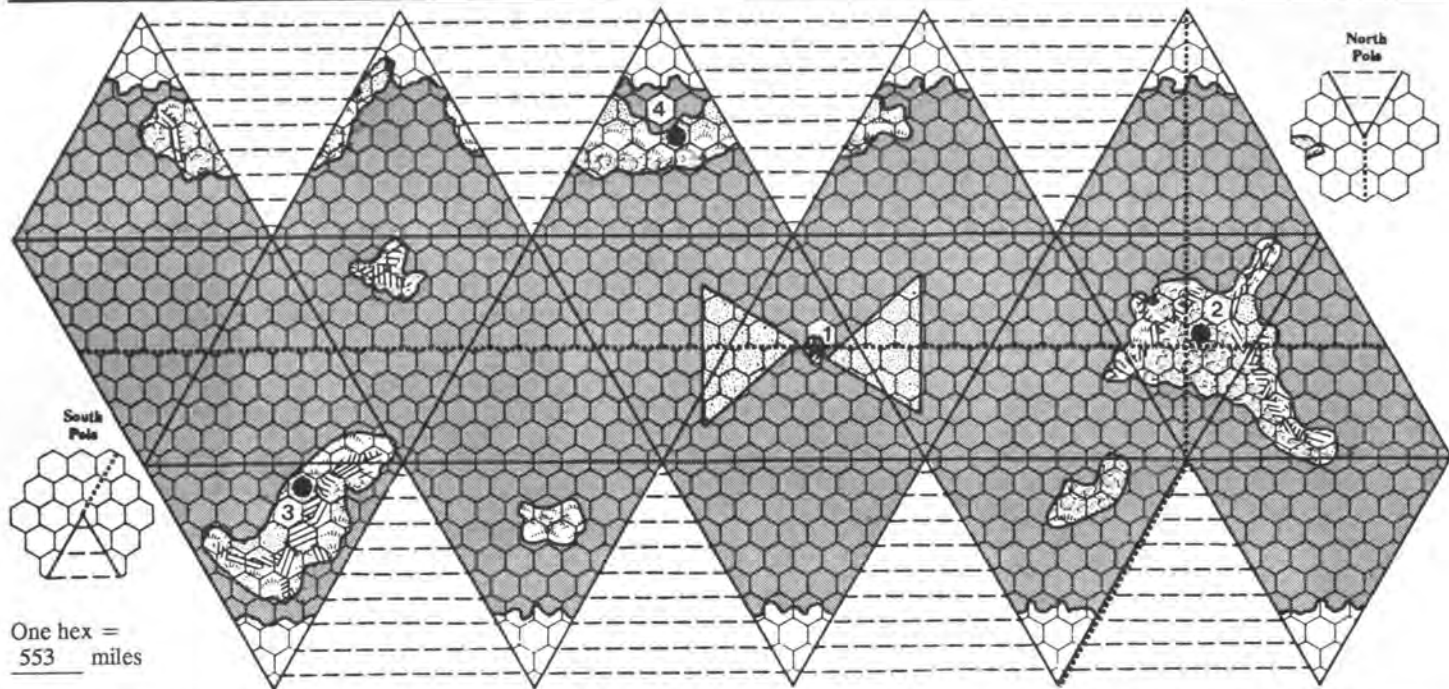
The crystal is actually a solar-powered AI computer with an IQ of 14. It was part of an information-gathering system which was mounted on the basalt foundation; it does not know how it came to be buried in the glass. Originally, it could store solar energy to operate in the dark, but over the course of 190,000 years its storage cell has deteriorated. It has been operating on what limited light filtered through the glass, and the isolation and erratic power level have affected its mind.

The artifact has a DR of 8 and 40 hit points. If the characters can remove it from the fused sand without damaging it, the AI will resume its primary duty — gathering information to transmit when the Precursors send for it. It can learn the characters' language with 200 hours of instruction, and will then learn as much about them and their civilization as it can (thinking this a real find for its creators), giving them what little it knows about itself and its studies (primarily boring technical data about Puzzle). Its name is Trafalastor. It knows it was built in the period 22,151.36 of the Epoch of Fire and {untranslatable}, on a world whose name translates roughly as *Where We Build Things Like This*. It knows almost nothing about the Precursors except their language (which has many terms it cannot translate into the characters' language). It has no concept of abstract terms like "beauty" and "wonder."

Trafalastor would make a good ship's computer; it has Astrogation-20, though its information is almost 2,000 centuries out of date. To use it, however, the characters must build an interface to the regular ship's computer. This is a task requiring 300 hours of work each for Electronics Engineering and Computer Programming skills at TL9 or better, and 1d+1 weeks of testing afterward.

If Trafalastor's crystal takes *any* damage at all, the crystal will crack and the AI will be insane. It will still learn the characters' language, but will tell them nothing (or lies) about the Precursors. It will decide the party was responsible for trapping it in the glass, and will plot their downfall in a nasty way — very possibly by volunteering to serve as their ship's astrogator.

PLANETARY RECORD: Puzzle (T:21 GS K5 I)



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 7,900 mi. Gravity .98 G Density 5.4 Composition Medium Iron
 Axial Tilt 23° Seasonal Variation Earthlike Length of Day 26 hrs. Length of Year 165 days/.49 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure 1.05 (Standard) Type and Composition 73% Nitrogen, 22% Oxygen, 3% CO₂, 2% other
 Climate Earth-normal Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 60° Average 80° High 100°
 Surface Water 86% Humidity 70% Primary Terrain Forests, hills
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Ample Rare Minerals Ample Radioactives Ample
 Heavy Metals Plentiful Industrial Metals Ample Light Metals Plentiful Organics Plentiful
 Moons 3 small moons — One, Two and Three

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Fish and aquatic plants; imported trees, insects and animals

Civilization: Population(s) 2,000,000 (PR 6) Tech Level(s) 10 Control Rating 3

Society Corporate State; managed by Croyden

Starports Class II on Enigma Island; Class III orbital station

Installations Precursor investigation bases

Economic/Production Tourism; exports fish and agricultural products

Other notes: Strange land mass is fused sand — purpose unknown. Precursor sites found.

Map key: capital, Qurio 1. Enigma Island 2-4 Precursor sites

System Information:

Star Name T: 21 GS K5 I Type K0 V Location Corporate Worlds -16/6/7
 Biozone 0.5-0.6 Inner Limit 0.0 Number of Planets 6

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|--------|-------|----------|---------------------|----------|---------|---------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Puzzle | 1 | .6 | Earthlike | 7,900 | 5.4 | .98 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| Norton | 2 | 1.0 | Icy rockball | 7,100 | 5.1 | .84 | Thin Methane | — |
| Ralph | 3 | 1.4 | Terrestrial | 6,100 | 4.9 | .68 | Thin reducing | — |
| Alice | 4 | 2.2 | Hostile terrestrial | 5,080 | 4.2 | .49 | Fluorine | — |
| Trudy | 5 | 3.8 | Icy rockball | 1,500 | 2.9 | .10 | Trace Nitrogen-CO ₂ | — |
| Joker | 6 | 7.0 | Icy rockball | 1,300 | 1.1 | .03 | None | — |

Salsam (Biaret III)

When it was discovered, Salsam was barely habitable. But it was an excellent candidate for terraforming, so Mittelsohn's Housing and World Development Division gave the go-ahead for development.

After 40 years of terraforming, Salsam was colonized by Mittelsohn farmers, miners and stockmen. These settlers were independent but loyal company types, willing to do whatever they were asked so long as they were allowed to do it their own way.

The planet prospered as an agricultural world. Most of the planet produces wheat, barley and various ranch animals, except for the bulk of the second-smallest continent, where rice and tropical fruits are grown.

However, as the planet grew more productive, its natives became less content. The second generation of Salsami felt more loyalty to their planet than they did to a far-away corporation. They were still willing to be good company men, but wanted to be on a more equal footing with Mittelsohn. They felt Mittelsohn was taking their output and returning little to them. Mittelsohn's Agricultural and Mining division (known as A&M) began offering the Salsami more consumer goods, free travel during vacation seasons and other amenities. This kept the second generation happy.

Later generations of Salsami wanted even more concessions. They wanted to be an equal trading partner with Mittelsohn — to achieve autonomy within the corporation if possible, to break away from it if not. This unrest occurred just as Mittelsohn executives were announcing one of their frequent austerity drives, which cut back severely on the number and kind of amenities available to Salsam.

The Salsami saw this as a personal affront, and declared that they would break away from the corporation and become independent. They drew up a declaration of independence, renounced their holdings of Mittelsohn stock, and sent the message to Mittelsohn management.

Mittelsohn dismissed the incident as crankiness and sent a corporate negotiator to see if he could smooth the waters. The negotiator never returned, nor did the next trade ship Mittelsohn sent to pick up the quarter's output. At the same time, Mittelsohn's A&M department noticed that it had received no communication at all from Salsam since the Salsami Declaration of Independence.

This prompted Mittelsohn's Security Department to launch an investigation. The factfinders reported to Security Control soon after entering the Biaret system, and were never heard from again. The next Security ship was a modern cruiser with a mercenary company aboard. Again, there was no further communication after the ship entered the system. A reconnaissance

drone sent in to investigate found no trace of the other ships, and did not have sufficient resolution to tell what was going on on the planet's surface.

Mittelsohn's management is understandably nervous. Salsam is a major investment. They have no idea what has happened there, but they suspect a cold-blooded rebellion — and the Salsami didn't even offer to seek arbitration! If other worlds decide they can revolt and hold Mittelsohn up for better conditions, the agricultural and mining base of Mittelsohn might be in jeopardy.

Adventure on Salsam

If the party is willing to go in where previous forces vanished, Mittelsohn A&M will pay handsomely for information about what's happening on Salsam. What actually happened is up to the referee. Here are some ideas:

Plague. A native plant which was not removed during terraforming has finally reached the end of its 60-year life cycle, sending spores into the air. Unfortunately, these spores are deadly to human life. They float in the air for up to six months before settling to find purchase in the soil and begin growth. Thus, it is possible for the characters to find a perfectly harmless environment and no explanation for all the dead bodies in the camps! There may be survivors . . . anyone who breathed nothing but canned or filtered air for six months.

It is also possible that the spores are not deadly, but affect the central nervous system, causing palsy. Or they could release endorphins in the brain, causing intensely pleasurable sensations. Maybe everyone is fine, but doesn't want to leave . . .

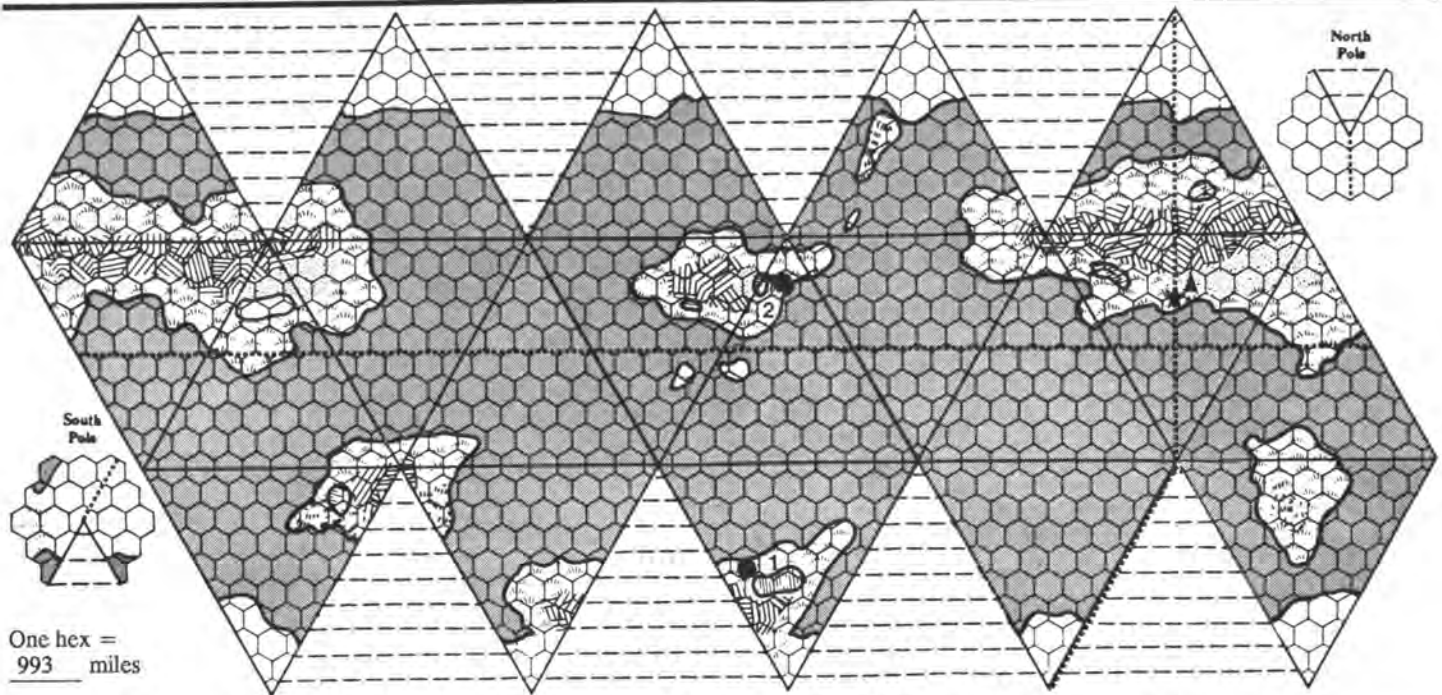
Revolution. The colonists have indeed rebelled. The factfinders, and the survivors of the mercenary force, are prisoners . . . as are the crews of several trading ships, and one private armed scout, that stopped by. The Salsami are telling a "spore plague" story to each ship that visits; this allays their suspicions and puts them on guard against all the wrong things. Then the Salsami take the ship! They will keep this up as long as they can; they are building up quite a little force against the day their deception breaks down.

Just a misunderstanding. Violent solar activity has disrupted communications to and from Salsam. The investigators are grounded until the flare dies down, along with the inhabitants. This will develop into adventure only if trigger-happy PCs cause trouble.

Artifact. The Salsami have discovered a Precursor beam weapon powerful enough to shoot down a ship in orbit. There is only one of these; if the PCs are flying a small ship and are careful, they can avoid being spotted. If they are fired on, they will be hit, and will have to make a forced landing. The beam has only a few shots left, but its new owners don't know that.



PLANETARY RECORD: Salsam (Biaret III)



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 14,192 mi. Gravity 1.04 G Density 3.2 Composition Low-Iron
 Axial Tilt 21° Seasonal Variation Earthlike Length of Day 31 hrs. Length of Year 204 days/.71 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure .81 (Thin) Type and Composition 74% Nitrogen, 21% Oxygen, 3% CO₂, 2% other
 Climate Warm Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 68° Average 87° High 105°
 Surface Water 65% Humidity 71% Primary Terrain Mountains/Desert
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Absent Rare Minerals Absent Radioactives Absent
 Heavy Metals Scarce Industrial Metals Scarce Light Metals Scarce Organics Ample
 Moons 2 moonlets — Sher and Horush; 1 small moon — Serteck

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans, domestic farm animals (all imported)
 Other significant life forms Small mammals, amphibians, fish, insects

Civilization: Population 86,000,000 (PR 7) Tech Level(s) 9 (10) Control Rating 4

Society Corporate State — managed by Mittelsohn

Starports Class III near Tartarelle

Installations Agriculture Station (Tartarelle); Mittelsohn Experimental Botany Laboratory

Economic/Production Foodstuffs; textiles sufficient for local use, but everything else needs to be imported.

Other notes: Map key: capital, Tartarelle 1. Terio 2. Mittelsohn Experimental Botany Laboratory

System Information:

Star Name Biaret Type K5 IV Location Corporate Worlds -8/9/-5
 Biozone 1.0-1.5 Inner Limit 0.0 Number of Planets 6

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|---------|-------|----------|---------------------|----------|---------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Uthu | 1 | .36 | Exotic greenhouse | 6,490 | 7.4 | 1.1 | Nitrogen-Methane | — |
| Chedron | 2 | .71 | Gas giant | 26,700 | 1.6 | .98 | Nitrogen-CO ₂ | — |
| Salsam | 3 | 1.06 | Earthlike | 14,192 | 3.2 | 1.04 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| Theti | 4 | 1.76 | Hostile terrestrial | 7,900 | 6.6 | 1.2 | Nitrogen-Methane | — |
| — | 5 | 3.16 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | — |
| Ziohuk | 6 | 5.96 | Gas giant | 151,600 | .95 | 3.3 | Hydrogen-Helium | Two sets of rings |
| — | 7 | — | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Keeshee | 8 | 22.76 | Iceball | 4,000 | 2.25 | .21 | Nitrogen-CO ₂ | Extensive "dry ice" snowdrifts |

Sevi (Quandas II)

Sevi was a real find. Its low axial tilt and thin atmosphere made for warm days and cool nights; terraforming only took a few years, and consisted solely of increasing the oxygen in the atmosphere. The soil was rich, there was plenty of sunshine and water, and the native flora were compatible with human food crops. In other words, Arnold Sam (the trading captain who discovered Sevi — quite by accident, according to his account) found a bonanza. He sold rights to the world to Mittelsohn, and his descendants are still comfortably wealthy.

Sevi is much like Earth, with four continents and a water:land ratio of 3:2. It has no natural satellites, and therefore little tidal action. There were no indigenous intelligent life forms, and the plants were similar to Earth's . . . inedible but not poisonous. The Sevians, however, were not prepared for the "natives."

The first will-o'-the-wisps were sighted following workers home from the fields at night. They were a surprise, to say the least; someone would turn around and there, floating about five feet off the ground and two feet behind them, would be something that looked like a glowing, translucent lump of bread dough. They never approached, and never retreated. They would follow their "target" until he outran the will-o'-the-wisp (which never moved faster than a human can walk quickly), put a wall between them, or passed close enough to another human or animal for it to change targets.

One day, a terrified farmhand fired a shotgun at a wisp, point blank. The will-o'-the-wisp exploded, seriously injuring the farmer. This increased the dread of the creatures, but nobody else shot at them!

Xenobiologists soon learned the truth. Will-o'-the-wisps are very simple, mindless creatures. They are heat-sensing; during the day, they lie motionless on the ground soaking up the sun's rays, and at night when the ground cools off, they float toward anything warm — usually humans and warm-blooded animals, although they love exhaust vents and heat exchangers.

Will-o'-the-wisps thrive on human waste heat, and have become common. Modern Sevians would think it strange not to be followed by a half-dozen will-o'-the-wisps. In fact, some Sevians claim they can recognize certain individuals, and worry

when the "regulars" aren't around. Other than infrared radiation, no one knows what, if anything, the will-o'-the-wisps get out of this relationship.

Will-o'-the-wisp (Sevian version)

| | | |
|-------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| ST: 1 | Speed/Dodge: 3/1 | Size: <1 |
| DX: 1 | PD/DR: 0/2 | Weight: Buoyant (1 lb. at rest) |
| IQ: 2 | Damage: 2d cr | Origin: SF |
| HT: 7 | Reach: 1 | Habitats: P, M, D |

Will-o'-the-wisps are about the size and shape of a partially deflated basketball, and a pearly gray color. They are luminescent, but the luminescence is faint and cool. One would not be able, for instance, to read by the light of a half-dozen will-o'-the-wisps.

The main component of a will-o'-the-wisp is hydrogen, which it produces (as many fliers do) by electrolysis of water. During the day, when the sun is out and heat is plentiful, a will-o'-the-wisp will vent hydrogen and sink to the ground or perch in a tree, content to soak up the sun's rays. At night it inflates and floats toward the nearest source of heat. The wisp actually uses psi powers — telekinesis — to move itself!

The will-o'-the-wisp can float as fast as the average person can walk. Anyone who tries can catch up with a will-o'-the-wisp. But if they try to grab it, they will find their fingers passing through a membrane that closes immediately around them. Only a fine-meshed net will catch a wisp; others will pass through it.

This gives a wisp an effective DR of 2. Greater damage will injure the envelope, harming the wisp. When a wisp's HT goes to 0, the hydrogen inside it will blow up. No source of flame is required; the wisp's death releases a catalyst that explodes it. This does 2 dice of damage to anyone within one hex. In addition, if the will-o'-the-wisp is part of a group, roll against the HT of each member of the group — on a 9 or more (its HT + DR) it explodes as well!

Will-o'-the-wisps reproduce by fission, producing two to four individuals at once. This requires storing solar energy for 7-10 days (the heat from a human or animal is not sufficient) at a stretch. If the supply of heat is interrupted for more than 28-30 hours at a time, the process must start over. A will-o'-the-wisp can survive indefinitely if near a heat source; if confined for 24 or more hours at a temperature of 45 degrees or below, without access to sunlight, the will-o'-the-wisp's membrane will rupture and its hydrogen will dissipate (harmlessly), killing the wisp.

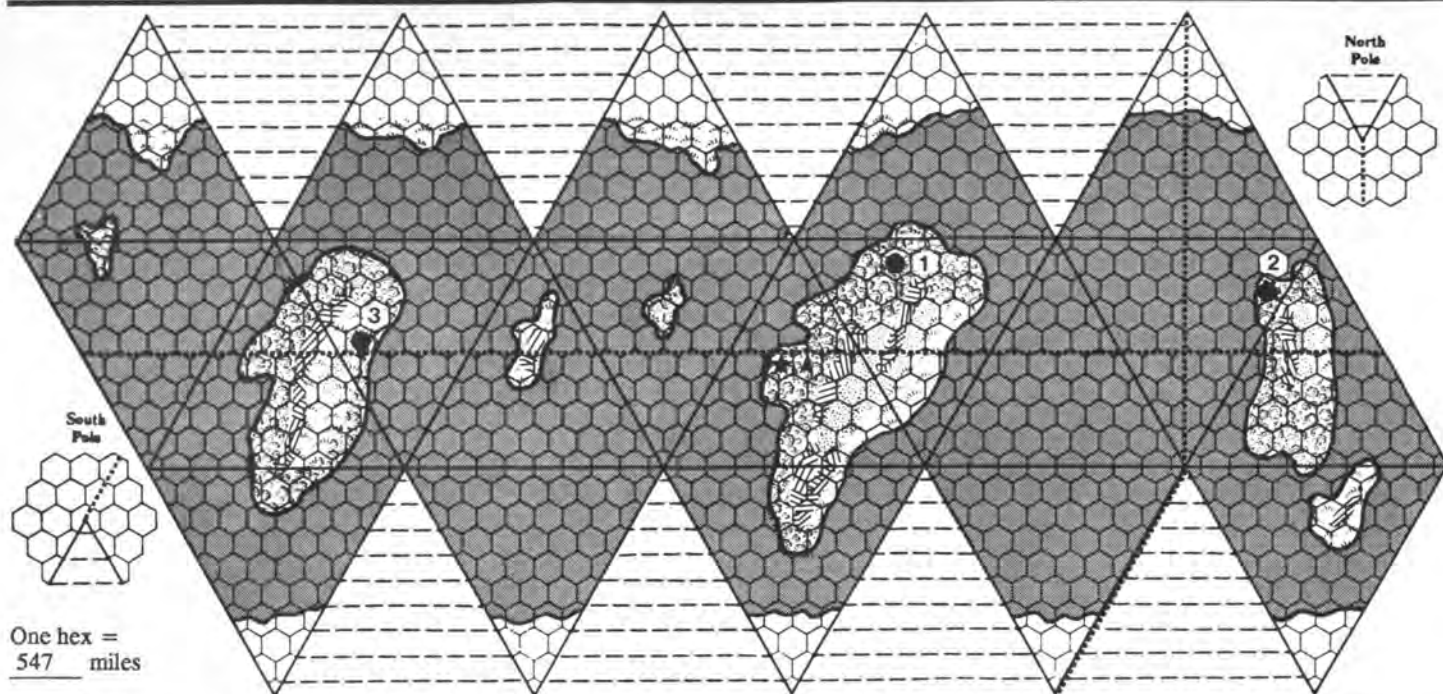
Adventures on Sevi

Bring 'em Back Alive. The characters are commissioned by the Kaziin Zoological Corporation to bring back at least one, and preferably several, specimens of will-o'-the-wisp. They are prepared to pay well for them. They must get permission to land on Sevi, to capture a wisp, and to export it to Kaziin — none of which will be easy, to say nothing of figuring out how to capture their specimens.

Stowaway. The PCs make a routine run to Sevi to deliver some cargo and pick up foodstuffs for export. A will-o'-the-wisp has stowed away in the foodstuffs — and the delivery point is a world with bright sunlight. In this friendly environment, the will-o'-the-wisps will fission every 3 days . . . This is sure to upset the natives of that world, even though the invaders are (as far as anybody knows) harmless unless attacked!



PLANETARY RECORD: Sevi (Quandas II)



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 7,809 mi. Gravity .93 G Density 5.2 Composition Medium-Iron
 Axial Tilt 3° Seasonal Variation Minor Length of Day 35 hrs. Length of Year 2,234 days/8.92 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure .81 (Thin) Type and Composition 77% Nitrogen, 19% Oxygen, 3% CO₂, 1% other
 Climate Earth-normal Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 55° Average 80° High 100°
 Surface Water 72% Humidity 50% Primary Terrain Plains, Forest
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Scarce Rare Minerals Scarce Radioactives Scarce
 Heavy Metals Ample Industrial Metals Ample Light Metals Ample Organics Ample
 Moons None

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Imported and native flora; will-o'-the-wisps

Civilization: Population(s) 1,500,000 million (PR 6) Tech Level 10 Control Rating 4

Society Corporate State — managed by Mittelsohn A.G.

Starports Class V on equator

Installations —

Economic/Production Exports food crops and livestock

Other notes: Map key: capital, Alviori 1. Asi 2. Otoli 3. Imbri

System Information:

Star Name Quandas Type M0 II Location Corporate Worlds 6/-16/12
 Biozone 5.0-7.0 Inner Limit 0.1 Number of Planets 5

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------------------|----------|---------|---------|-----------------|----------------|
| — | 1-3 | — | (Empty orbits) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 4 | 2.15 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | M-type |
| Kerelo | 5 | 3.71 | Hostile terrestrial | 5,600 | 6.1 | .79 | Hydrofluorides | — |
| Sevi | 6 | 6.83 | Earthlike | 7,809 | 5.2 | .93 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| — | 7 | 13.07 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | Very sparse |
| Tovu Ridabe | 8 | 25.55 | Gas giant | 61,500 | 2.2 | 3.1 | Hydrogen-Helium | Wide rings |
| Ticzece | 9 | 50.51 | Gas giant | 78,100 | 1.9 | 3.4 | Hydrogen-Helium | 9 moons |
| — | 10-12 | — | (Empty orbits) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Lega | 13 | 799.31 | Hostile terrestrial | 4,300 | 4.2 | .41 | Nitrogen-Argon | — |

Shelvimayas (Turnadot I)

Shelvimayas is the first planet of Turnadot, an orange dwarf. It is a large, chilly world coated with ice and poisonous organic sludge. The atmosphere is a bit thinner than Earth's and is composed of nitrogen, methane, and a medley of nasty hydrocarbon vapors. Temperatures are low but not intolerable (-20° during the day, -40° at night).

Shelvimayas is a large world, with a total mass 3.84 times that of Earth. Thanks to the tidal action of its moon, and the planet's own rapid rotation, Shelvimayas is geologically active; volcanoes, geysers and quakes are quite common.

Seas of icy slush and hydrocarbon sludge ring Shelvimayas' equator. The land around the seas (called "The Crusts" by locals) is extremely treacherous. The gravel-like soil of the region is thin in many places, and vast sinkholes have been known to open up, dumping travelers into underground lakes and rivers of foul water heated to scalding temperatures by geothermal action.

Shelvimayas has life: The seas are awash in microbial life, and richly colored with primitive algae. Other creatures, some as advanced as barnacles, live on rocks along the shoreline. A few species dwell around geysers and geothermally heated springs. As one might suspect of creatures evolving on so strange a planet, the biochemistry of local life is quite alien. Nibbling Shelvimayan wildlife is almost always fatal.

Shelvimayan flora form the basis of the local economy. With a little processing, the algae can be turned into a variety of useful chemicals, lubricants, medicine, fuels and even explosives. Currently, AmBio, ABS and seven smaller firms have operations on Shelvimayas. Fleets of scum-skimming ships operate out of bases set on huge barges. They cruise the scummy seas gathering the algae, which is airlifted to refineries and processing plants inland. In addition, valuable compounds in the form of wax-nodes can be found in geothermal regions; these "gumwads" and "buggies" are gathered by daring freelancers called *scrapers*.

Most of Shelvimayas's seven thousand-odd inhabitants live in five settlements. Two are on the high plains; the remainder (including the starport) cluster around a mountain-sheltered bay off one of the seas. (The hilly, boulder-strewn lands around the bay are stable, though they are in turn surrounded by "The Crusts.") The settlements are crude, indifferently run places manned by exiles, ex-cons and men trying to forget their pasts.

Jitney

Shelvimayas' moon, Jitney, is a captured nickel-iron asteroid. It circles Shelvimayas every 5.5 days, in an orbit 136,400 miles out and is pear-shaped, rotating about its axis every 9 hours. This has led to speculation that the moon was captured very recently.

Jitney is claimed by Xin Wu. The corporation plans to mine it, starting in about 30 years, or perhaps as little as 20 if business is good. Activity on Jitney is currently just enough for Xin Wu to maintain their claim.

Adventure on Shelvimayas

Sometimes You Just Can't Say No. The word is out that Boyagen Biochem will pay a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the whereabouts of Pappy Wad-Cutter, or to the apprehension of his abductors. Pappy, a local character in the Stinkin' Bay area, hasn't been seen for over a week, and his cabin was found ransacked. The party, on Shelvimayas on business (or hearing about the reward through the grapevine), are among those hired to look for Pappy.

A search of his shelter revealed that the only items taken were three sets of breathing gear. If he had gone out by himself Pappy would only have needed one; the local authorities suspect the Mask Lifters, a notorious gang of renegade scrapers and bandits named for their nasty habit of stealing breathing gear.

As the characters investigate, they find that most of the locals (who are also looking for Pappy) make their living by harvesting gumwads. Lately business has been slow. There were only two fields of gumwads in the area; one disappeared in a sinkhole about three weeks ago, and the other is in territory claimed by the Mask Lifters.



As they talk to the locals, the characters will find out that Boyagen buys and refines gumwads, buggies and other wax-nodes and refines them into a variety of useful chemicals. The scrapers don't see much of the refined chemicals — but one of them got a glimpse of one of the products made from the gumwads: a pretty green powder that shone in the light. He didn't know what the chemical was.

A character who makes a Streetwise or Criminology roll will realize that the powder sounds like the description of *boker*, a potent, highly addictive narcotic. Corporations have lost man-centuries to this drug, and would like to find the source so they can eradicate it.

Boker directly stimulates the brain's pleasure center. A 2-ounce dose (costing \$100) will send the user into a state of euphoria for (24-HT) hours. During that time the victim goes into catatonia, losing touch with the outside world; afterward, he will be depressed and confused for (1d) hours, and very likely addicted.

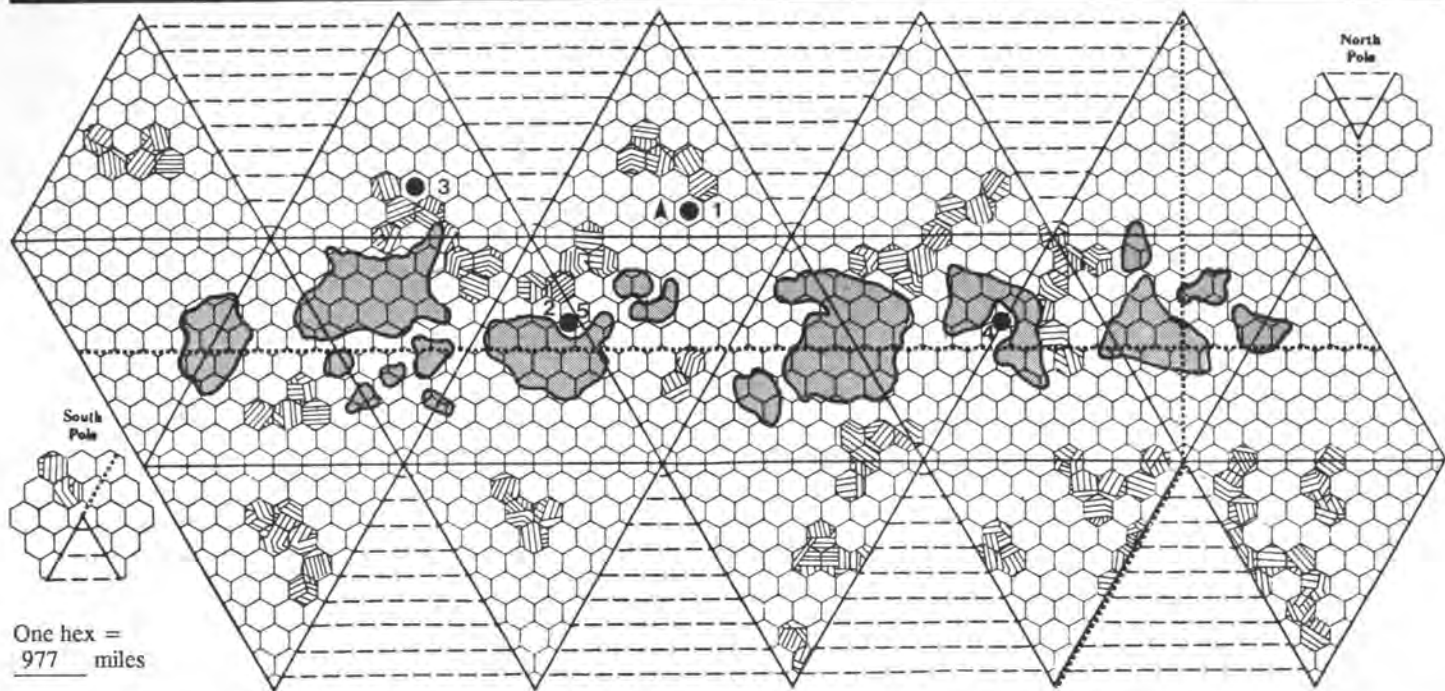
Roll against HT + 1 to avoid addiction after the first dose. If this doesn't cause addiction, each subsequent dose (no matter how long between doses) is at an additional -1. Boker addiction is a -30 point disadvantage; the drug is "totally addictive," with a -10 to all withdrawal rolls. In most corporations, boker use (on or off the job) is grounds for "medical incarceration" — detoxification.

Pappy put two and two together; he was with the party's informant when they saw the drug. Pappy, however, knew what it was. He went to Boyagen executives to report the drug . . . only to find out that the executives were behind the entire scheme.

Pappy is currently being held in a company facility south of the spaceport. Boyagen officials are waiting for the Mask Lifters to be eradicated so the scrapers can begin collecting gumwads again. Once they have enough boker, they will send a shipment off-planet, and Pappy with it (so the searchers will never find him).

This presents the party with some interesting dilemmas. Do they continue to help root out the Mask Lifters? Do they go after Boyagen, the only corporation on the planet, which might leave the scrapers high and dry? Do they just try to rescue Pappy?

PLANETARY RECORD: Shelvimayas (Turnadot I)



Planet type Rockball Diameter 13,950 mi. Gravity 1.24 G Density 3.87 Composition _____
 Axial Tilt 7° Seasonal Variation Minor Length of Day 17 hrs. Length of Year 119 days/ .23 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure .90 Type and Composition 71% Nitrogen, 24% Methane, 3% CO₂, other 2%
 Climate Frozen Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low -40° Average -21° High 2°
 Surface Water 15% Humidity 5% Primary Terrain Icy plains, mountains
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Ample Rare Minerals Absent Radioactives Absent
 Heavy Metals Scarce Industrial Metals Scarce Light Metals Ample Organics Ext. Plentiful
 Moons 1 moonlet — Jitney — claimed by Xin Wu

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Primitive plants and multicellular animals

Civilization: Population(s) 7,000 (PR 3) Tech Level 7 (10) Control Rating 4

Society Corporate States — no central control

Starports Class I at Kloakka

Installations Multiple Corporate Installations

Economic/Production Exports industrial chemicals, organic compounds and pharmaceuticals

Other notes: Extremely dangerous terrain around equatorial seas; native life-forms produce valuable organics

Map key: 1. Kloakka 2. Stinkin' Bay 3. The Pits 4. Hellmouth 5. End of the Line

System Information:

Star Name Turnadot Type K8 VI Location Corporate Worlds 10/1/-6
 Biozone 0.2-0.3 Inner Limit 0.0 Number of Planets 3

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|--------------|-------|----------|-----------|----------|---------|---------|------------------|----------------|
| Shelvimayas | 1 | .3 | Rockball | 13,950 | 3.87 | 1.24 | Nitrogen-Methane | Detailed above |
| Shalp's Rock | 2 | .65 | Rockball | 1,650 | 3.46 | .13 | None | — |
| Toad Hall | 3 | 1.0 | Gas giant | 72,100 | 1.8 | 2.97 | Hydrogen-Helium | — |

Sylvan (Param IV)

Sylvan is a world of vast forests, snow-capped mountains and beautiful lakes. It's an ideal place to live, and the McBride Trust, the planet's owners, want to keep it that way.

The McBride Trust

Arthur McBride established the Trust with royalties received from his discovery of Sampal and Sampetra, two terrestrial worlds in the Blue Nova sector. The terms of the Trust specified that Sylvan (also discovered by McBride) would be developed in a way that would not mar its natural beauty.

Its location at the edge of the Corporate Worlds made it a natural way-station between the Corporate Worlds and the Blue Nova and Five Kingdoms sectors. And it didn't take long for the Trust to realize that goods manufactured at Sylvan could be sold for less in all three sectors, since shipping costs would be lower. Sylvan Shipyards was the first orbital manufacturing station, and today is still one of the largest. Other manufacturers followed suit, and today Sylvan is ringed with orbital factories manufacturing everything from ball bearings to other orbital factories. There is even a small paper mill, using the timber harvest from Sylvan to supply the Five Kingdoms (and Xin Wu, who uses it to produce their "White Book").

The Trust is a small, closely-held corporation which oversees manufacturing and production activities in the Param system. It insists on 10% of any corporation wishing to do business on Sylvan. Most larger corporations spin off subsidiaries specifically for the purpose of manufacturing at Sylvan; Mittelsohn recognizes the advantages of building there for the out-of-sector trade, but would *never* give the Trust 10% of its stock!

Sylvan Lumber

Sylvan proved to be an ideal place to grow wood. The underground springs and rich soil produced the best lumber this side of Balcorth. The Trust's Sylvan Lumber subsidiary is careful to manage its product wisely. Timber may only be taken from designated areas and in specified amounts. This also makes the wood supply smaller and keeps the price up.

Much of this lumber is used to build housing for workers on the orbital factories. A typical contract will specify that an employee will work 21 days in orbit, with 21 days of leave. This reduces travel costs to and from the planet, and allows employees to spend time with their families. In most families, only one spouse will work off-planet (otherwise, they might never see each other — and who would raise the children?). Transportation is currently by reusable space transport systems (shuttles), but work is progressing on a beanstalk which should be completed in the next two to three decades.

Sylvan Research, Inc.

The Trust encourages non-manufacturing corporations to relocate on Sylvan, and has even developed a few of its own. One, Sylvan Research, is a "think tank" which recruits the brightest minds from universities on the surrounding worlds to solve problems presented by its customers. At the moment, Sylvan is trying to solve a problem on McBride's behalf: the "union problem."

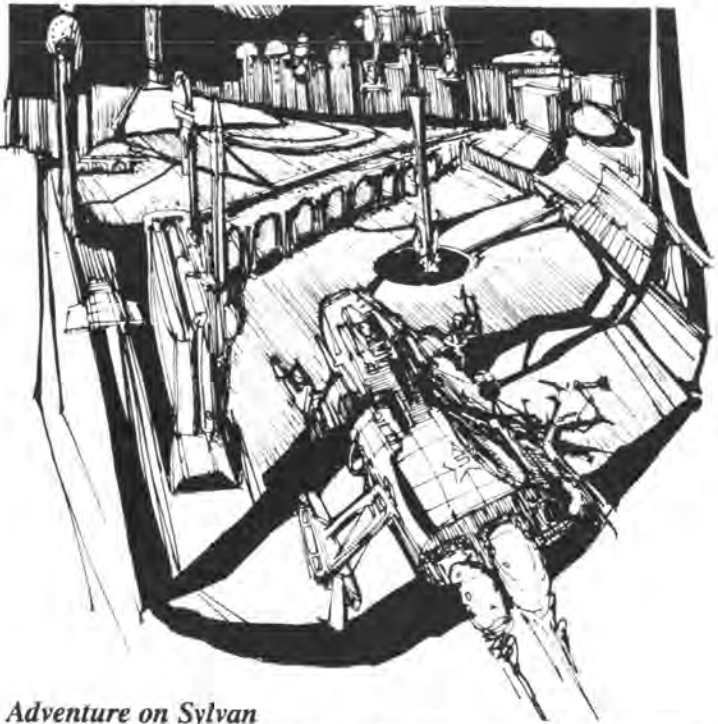
Union Activity

Unions are anathema to the corporations, who feel they treat their employees fairly and compensate them well for their work. None of the multistellar corporations has been unionized so far

— with so many employees spread over so large a territory, it would be a tough job — but that doesn't stop organizers from trying.

A few local corporations have been unionized in recent years. The most notable success was Sylvan Lumber, which was crippled by a two-year planet-wide strike and was eventually forced to recognize the Sylvan Sawyers' Union as their sole source of labor. The Union demanded, and got, a 100% pay increase for its members and more liberal time-off policies.

This crippled Sylvan Lumber. Not only are they forced to pay more to have their wood cut, they don't want to raise prices immediately to cover the extra costs. Just the *rumor* that Sylvan Lumber was being forced to unionize sent their stock down by 11%; a huge price hike would lower demand for Sylvan Lumber products. They plan to raise the price gradually over five years; the union is planning to negotiate another pay raise in two.



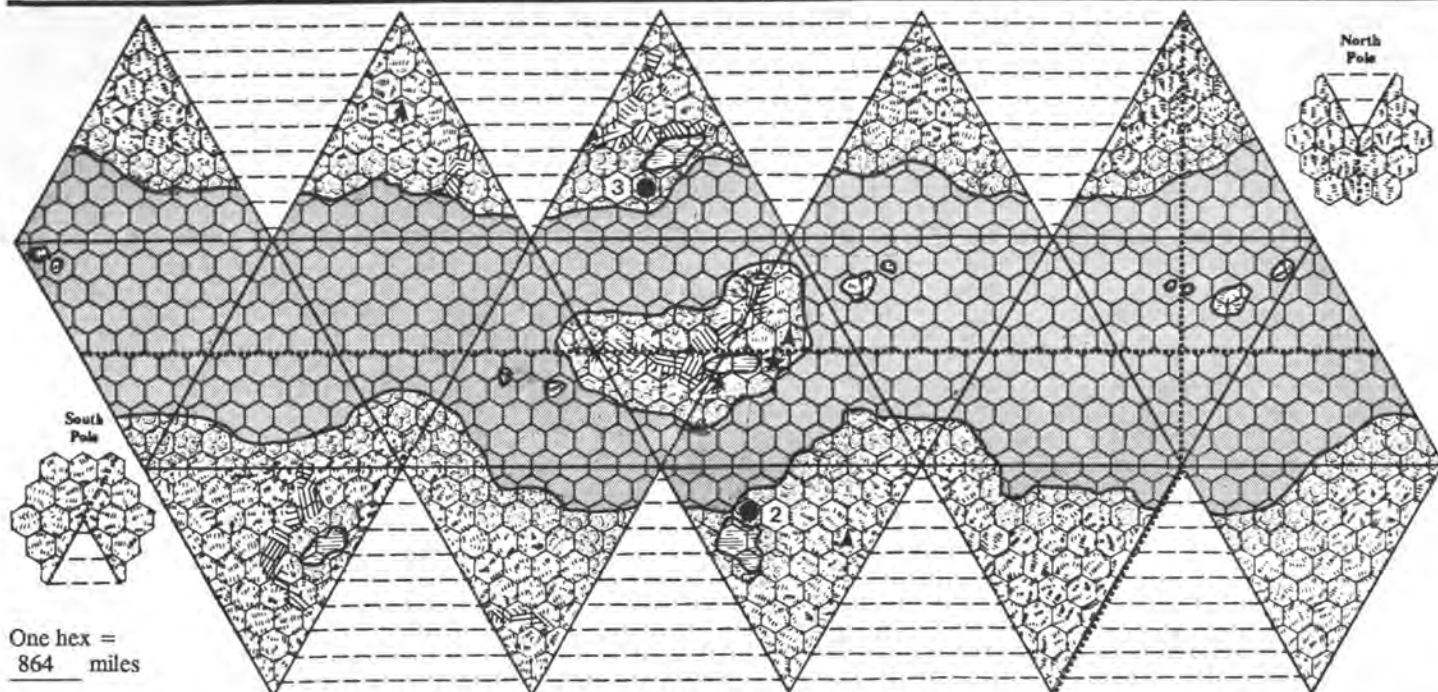
Adventure on Sylvan

Wood Shop. The characters are approached by Wally Belman, a pleasant man in his mid-30s. Wally is the chief organizer for the Labor Cooperative, a group of labor unions who sponsored the organization of the Sylvan Sawyers' Union. Belman's sources tell him that Sylvan Lumber has been importing *non-union labor* (as he says this, they can hear the word "scab" in his voice) to cut timber in a remote area of Sylvan's largest continent. They've been doing this in a way that will be difficult to detect by satellite, so the search needs to be made at low altitude. He will pay the PCs \$25,000 to fly him around a remote area of Sylvan in search of the *imported laborers*.

Belman's plan, which he will *not* tell the characters: He will try to bring the workers into *compliance with the contract*, and if this doesn't work, bring in a goon squad to chase the scabs away. He will have the ship wait while he negotiates, and ask them to take him away when negotiations fail. As they leave the area, they see three groundcars heading straight for the logging camp.

Drop hints throughout the adventure that the union will use strongarm tactics if negotiations fail. The PCs will have to choose: Do they help the union enforce their contract, or do they join up with the non-union labor?

PLANETARY RECORD: Sylvan (Param IV)



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 12,348 mi. Gravity .97 G Density 3.4 Composition Low-Iron
 Axial Tilt 27° Seasonal Variation Earthlike Length of Day 20 hrs. Length of Year 899 days/2.05 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure 1.1 (Standard) Type and Composition 76% Nitrogen, 21% Oxygen, 1% CO₂, 2% other
 Climate Warm Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 70° Average 90° High 110°
 Surface Water 20% Humidity 42% Primary Terrain Plains, forests and mountains
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Scarce Rare Minerals Absent Radioactives Scarce
 Heavy Metals Scarce Industrial Metals Ample Light Metals Plentiful Organics Scarce
 Moons 1 moonlet — Viking

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Various types of insects, snails, small mammals and reptiles

Civilization: Population(s) 475,000,000 (PR 8) Tech Level(s) 10 Control Rating 4

Society Corporate State, managed by the McBride Trust

Starports Class V in orbit; Class V near McBride City; others, primarily Class III, in orbit and on planet

Installations Sylvan shipyards and other orbital factories

Economic/Production Heavy manufacturing in orbit; exports timber

Other notes: Map key: capital, McBride City 2. Tairn 3. Glasgow

System Information:

Star Name Param Type F4 V Location Corporate Worlds -10/-16/11
 Biozone 1.6-2.4 Inner Limit 0.0 Number of Planets 5

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|---------|-------|----------|--------------------|----------|---------|---------|-----------------|----------------|
| Filmore | 1 | .6 | Hot rockball | 2,500 | 7.1 | .41 | None | — |
| Kilroy | 2 | .95 | Hostile greenhouse | 3,150 | 6.8 | .49 | CO ₂ | — |
| Murphy | 3 | 1.3 | Hot rockball | 3,600 | 6.5 | .54 | None | — |
| Sylvan | 4 | 2.0 | Terrestrial | 12,348 | 3.4 | .97 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| Bailey | 5 | 3.4 | Rockball | 7,550 | 4.9 | .85 | None | — |

Taucente (Feroux V)

This Earthlike planet is one of the oldest human settlements in the region and the result of years of terraforming, gardening and careful care. The attention lavished on this planet is a legacy of Tomasz Burdet, founder of The Bourse.

The Bourse

The earliest corporations faced a dilemma. While they did not want to be subjected to outside rule, they needed some way to settle disputes among themselves over markets and claims, as well as a central arena to sell their goods and services. Enter Tomasz Burdet, founder of the Bourse. The Bourse is the oldest and largest arbitration firm in the sector, but it is also much more. By providing fair and impartial services to anyone who needed them, Burdet created a successful meeting-ground and market which still has no effective competition.

The Bourse provides a number of services:

Arbitration. See the sidebar on p. 5. Bourse arbitrators are fair and well-respected. In addition, their decisions are almost always followed, since the Bourse has been known to deny its services to those who disregard its decisions!

Stock and commodity brokerage. Stocks and bonds of publicly-held corporations are traded regularly at the Bourse. In addition, commodity futures are traded to insulate manufacturers against price fluctuations and to ensure that producers can sell their goods.

Of course, there are speculators in the stock and commodity markets, but few make any kind of money at it. Most smaller traders are willing to just buy enough securities to show corporate pride, and to supplement their retirement income.

News and information services. The Bourse sponsors a well-respected news service, BourseNov. Corporate news broadcasts frequently quote BourseNov much as news networks in the 20th century quoted Associated Press or Reuters. As an adjunct to BourseNov, Bourse maintains a massive information retrieval service. It contains not only encyclopedic information on every subject imaginable, but cross-threaded transcripts of all major corporate newscasts. Bourse pays for updated information, and many of the entries are written by users who are experts in their field. It's quite possible to make a living as a freelancer writing for Bourse's information service!

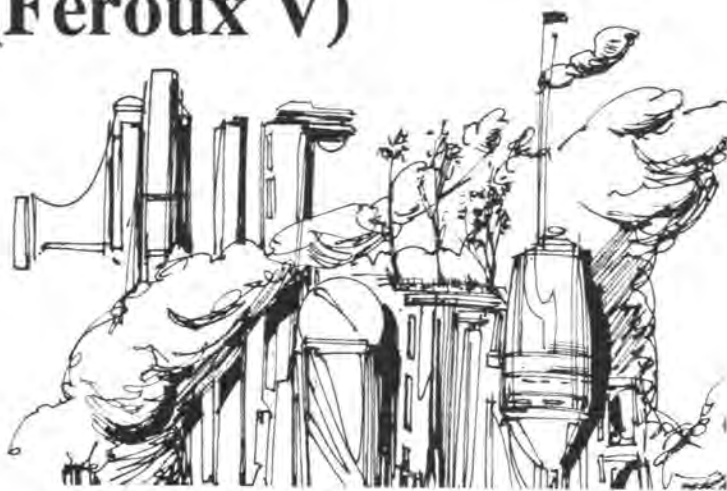
Banking. Each corporation has its own banking system, but the Bourse Central Bank is where the corporate banks keep their money.

Today Taucente is diversified in its economic base and almost entirely self-sufficient, with an extremely high standard of living. Significant contributions to the theater and other performing arts and to literature have originated on this world, and it is the location of several fine universities.

The Lost Natives

Though Taucente's present is bright, its history is troubled. A native race, not yet starfaring, welcomed the first interstellar visitors to this planet . . . and vanished within a decade, wiped out by diseases carried by the newcomers. Ruins are visible at the edges of the clear, clean sea, often in regions which were once land. They were reclaimed from the sea by a system of dikes and earthworks, but are now underwater along shallow continental shelves. Excavation of the ruins has not led to much new knowledge, and the records kept by the first visitors are fragmentary. Yet, there are obvious remnants of a sophisticated technology.

The planet is home to a quiet and little-known fanatic net-



work called the Lifecult, which is convinced that the old ruins shelter a vast library of information somewhere and that when it is found, all the mysteries and problems of humanity will be solved forever. Each time the planet's full moon passes over a coastal town near a ruin, the cultists will gather, and invoke the gravity of the moon to pull the ruins out of the sea. All that ever happens, of course, is that the cultists get chased off the beach by a rainstorm or the local police.

Energy Systems Inc.

One of the planet's most notable native corporations is Energy Systems, Inc., which has introduced several recent improvements in power plant and thruster technology. These breakthroughs are *not* closely related; it is generally accepted that ESI has a high-quality AI, a genius on the payroll, a secret contact with an unknown alien race — or perhaps all three.

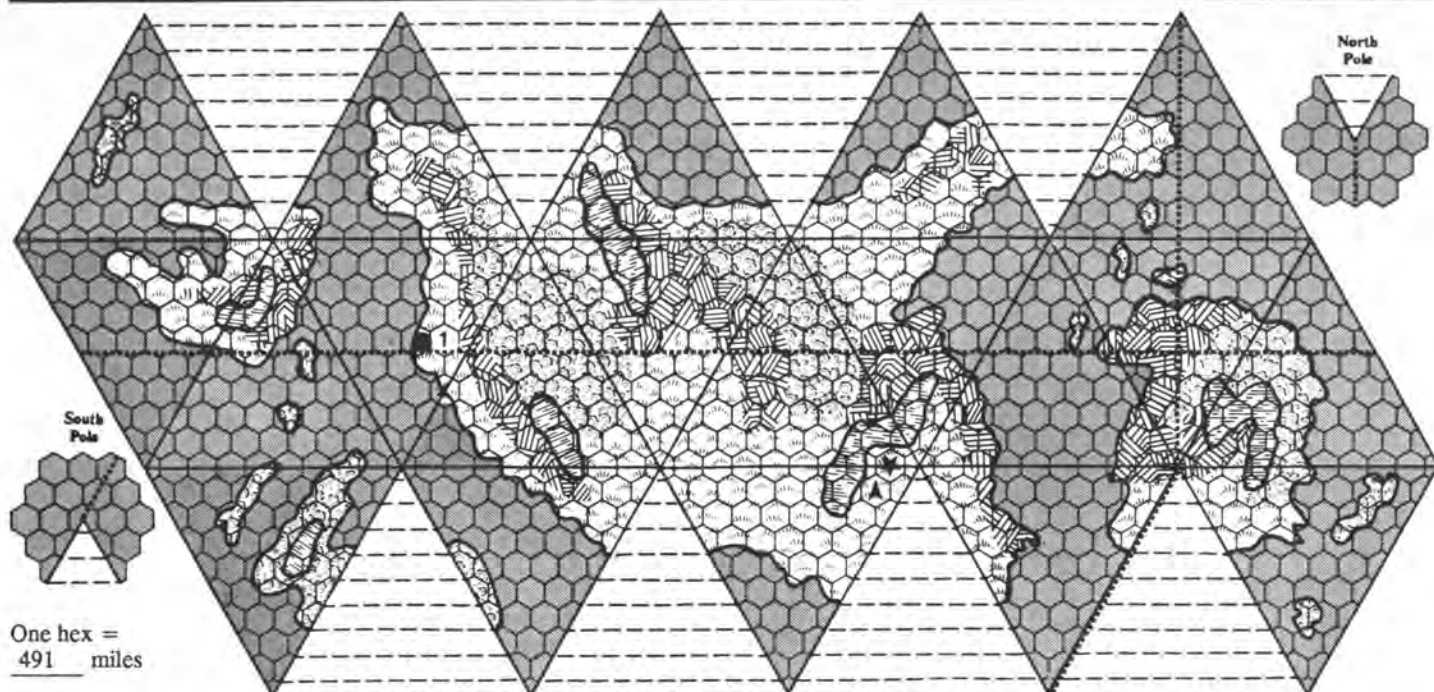
Some executives in Energy Systems privately admit that some of the inventions may have been influenced by artifacts from the native ruins. Those "in the know" dismiss this; only fragmentary artifacts have been found. But what if ESI had managed to find a better-preserved cache? Every so often another wave of alien-loot hunters descends on Taucente, full of hope and greed.

Adventures on Taucente

The Missing Artifact. The Lifecult is believed to be responsible for the theft of an ancient native plasma generator from the museum of the University of Sainte-Marie. M. Robert LaFitte, the elderly curator of the museum and the head of the Department of Native Archaeology, is beside himself with worry. He believes that what appears to be random scratches on the inside of the generator's shell are in fact a mathematical language, which he was on the verge of deciphering. His theory is quite correct, but the Lifecult didn't steal the generator. Instead, it was stolen by riffraff in the pay of Energy Systems, who is afraid that if the native language could be read, it would prove that the native culture was, indeed, the secret ESI "idea mine," and set off yet another treasure-hunt. The University is offering a reward, and it is possible that ESI could also try to bribe the characters, or stop them.

Artifact Hunt. The PCs have clues (perhaps acquired during the above adventure) that send them cave-crawling in search of intact Taucentan devices. They'll have to race ESI search teams. The SSI squad knows exactly what to look for, but they have to be secretive, while nobody pays much attention to the PCs; treasure-hunters are old hat!

PLANETARY RECORD: Taucente (Feroux V)



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 7,019 mi. Gravity .95 G Density 5.9 Composition Medium-Iron
 Axial Tilt 3° Seasonal Variation Minor Length of Day 32 hrs. Length of Year 10,822 days/140 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure .99 (Standard) Type and Composition 71% Nitrogen, 21% Oxygen, 5% CO₂, 3% other
 Climate Warm Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 70° Average 90° High 100°
 Surface Water 40% Humidity 51% Primary Terrain Forests, plains
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Scarce Rare Minerals Scarce Radioactives Scarce
 Heavy Metals Ample Industrial Metals Ample Light Metals Ample Organics Ample
 Moons 1 small moon — Magic

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Imported flora and fauna

Civilization: Population(s) 4.6 billion (PR 9) Tech Level(s) 10 Control Rating 4

Society Corporate State, managed by the Bourse

Starports Class V at Sainte-Jeanne

Installations Headquarters of the Bourse and Energy Systems, Inc.

Economic/Production Exports financial, investment and information services and power plant technology

Other notes: Map key: capital, Sainte-Jeanne 1. Ruins of advanced (but apparently extinct) civilization

System Information:

Star Name Feroux Type M3 II Location Corporate Worlds -13/13/8
 Biozone 16-24 Inner Limit 0.3 Number of Planets 8

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|----------|-------|----------|--------------------|----------|---------|---------|--------------------------|----------------|
| — | 1 | .3 | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 2 | .7 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | — |
| Ferris | 3 | 1.0 | Hot rockball | 1,000 | 6.6 | .16 | Trace CO ₂ | — |
| James | 4 | 5.2 | Hot rockball | 7,400 | 6.3 | .36 | Trace reducing | — |
| — | 5 | 6.4 | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Caught | 6 | 8.8 | Hostile greenhouse | 10,100 | 6.2 | 1.43 | Nitrogen-CO ₂ | — |
| Eromene | 7 | 13.6 | Hostile greenhouse | 6,200 | 5.8 | .83 | Nitrogen-CO ₂ | — |
| Taucente | 8 | 23.2 | Earthlike | 7,019 | 5.9 | .95 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| Stavong | 9 | 42.4 | Terrestrial | 6,300 | 5.2 | .76 | None | — |
| Vastos | 10 | 80.8 | Terrestrial | 10,800 | 4.1 | 1.01 | Nitrogen | — |
| — | 11 | 157.6 | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Toobig | 12 | 618.4 | Gas giant | 33,000 | 2.3 | 1.74 | Hydrogen-Methane | — |

Thishri (Dekko IV)

Thishri is a mining planet of considerable potential — little of which is being realized right now. Due to a misunderstanding that escalated into open conflict, two powerful corporations are at war over the world.

The highest native life was plankton and shrimp, and terraforming seemed unprofitable. However, the crust was rich in rare earths. Accordingly, Mittelsohn's Agricultural and Mining division posted a claim to the planet and sent in a team to start mining.

Unknown to Mittelsohn, however, Riko Mining had a previous claim. Riko had bought out the assets of defunct Fortune Exploitation Ltd . . . and one of those assets was its claim to Thishri. Mittelsohn's lawyers had overlooked the Fortune claim. The mistake cost lives, and a great deal of money.

Riko's advance team of engineers arrived on the planet to find a Mittelsohn colony already digging ore. The error was discovered almost at once, but solving it was harder. Negotiations began at once for exclusive rights to mine, then for non-exclusive rights. But both sides wanted the whole world. Neither side would agree to binding arbitration, and eventually both Mittelsohn and Riko sent armed troops to Thishri "to protect their interests."



Of course, it didn't take long for the two groups to begin sabotaging each other, which rapidly escalated into open warfare. Today, Thishri is an armed camp. Little mining goes on, and both sides watch the horizon for marauders.

The rest of the sector hears little of this, however, outside of denials by Mittelsohn and Riko that any fighting is going on. To the average citizen, it's "business as usual" on Thishri. And, despite their armed conflict over a planet, Mittelsohn and Riko are trading and doing business with each other elsewhere in the sector.

The War

So far, surveys have identified four major deposits of rare earths on Thishri. Three are on the largest continent, and the fourth is on a large island in the southern hemisphere. Each company has control of one of the veins, with the third being in the militarized zone between the two camps. Neither side had time to develop the fourth (on the island) before the shooting started.

Each side wants to threaten the other's base and force a surrender. Both sides have heavy infantry screens, dug in over hundreds of miles, with scouting by air and space. Mittelsohn has a heavy armor reserve; Riko has two companies of excellent battlesuit troops, with high-speed APCs for transport. Mittelsohn has a defensive missile system around its base; Riko depends on antimissile fire from a destroyer in geostationary orbit.

Most of the mercenaries are satisfied with duty on Thishri. It's a comfortable enough place to fight a war, but not so pleasant that they feel bad about shooting up the countryside. It has breathable but thin atmosphere, making life support equipment highly desirable but not strictly necessary. Most troops wear air masks as a matter of course.

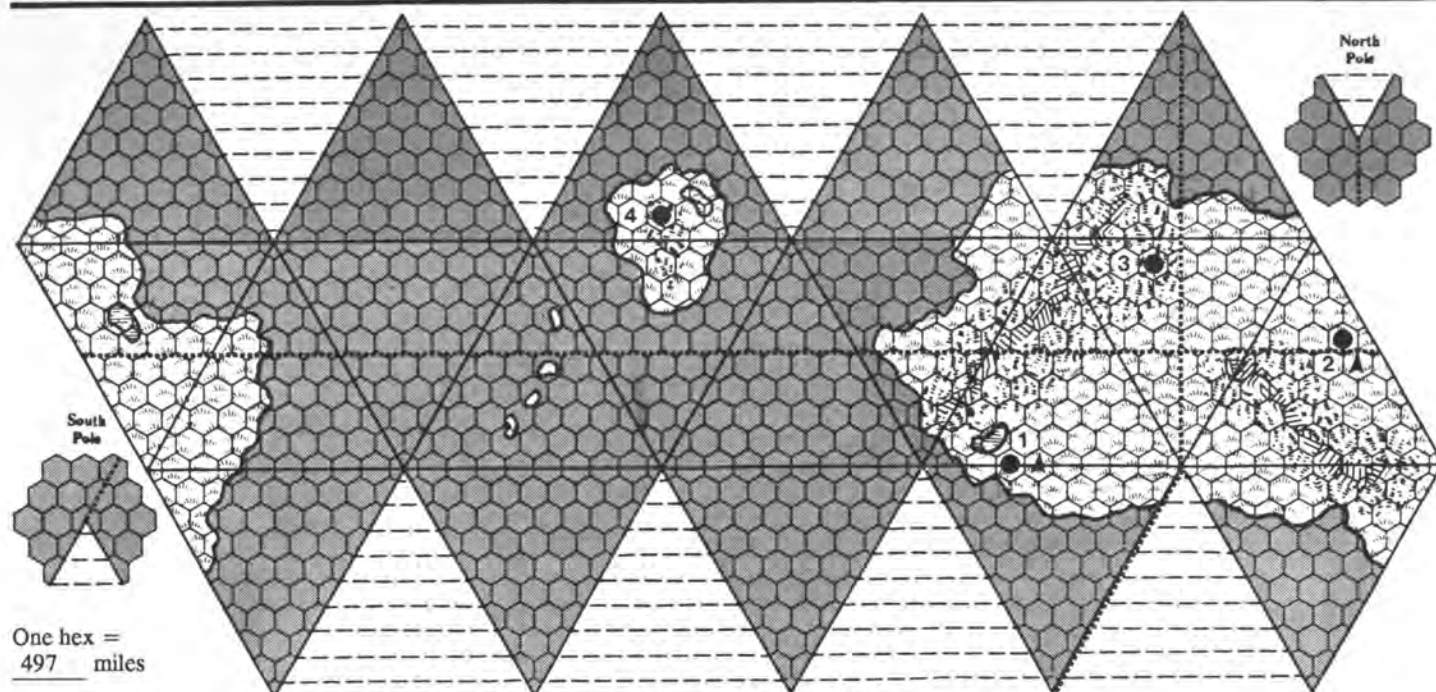
Adventure on Thishri

Three's A Crowd. The PCs are mercenaries, either serving on Thishri or looking for work there. Sensors report a landing in force on the unoccupied island with the fourth rare earth deposit. Each side assumes it's the enemy. They're right, and they're wrong. Both sides have a new enemy: Cheever Resources Pty., a startup company with big money behind it. Cheever is taking the position that, since the two claimants can't agree, neither has a valid claim to anything they haven't developed yet. And precedent is with them; if they can start mining, the arbitrators will probably let them keep the island.

Worse yet, though the PCs don't know it: Cheever is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Goliath Weaponry. Goliath, though based outside the Corporate Sector, is extending its interests here. If Mittelsohn and Riko join forces to smash the Cheever base, the return strike will be very well-equipped and competently delivered. Goliath's standing "navy" is three times the size of any "native" corporate force, and Goliath doesn't mind using it if profit is at hand.

Getaway. Some of the miners on Thishri are tired of living in a war zone and are calling it quits. They will pay well to be taken off the planet, where they can take their chances with a different mining concern. The PCs might enter as mercenaries, or as tramp haulers hired to bring supplies to the combatants and rare earth back out. If they are tramp haulers, they will have to wait around for their return cargo (mining operations are constantly being disrupted), giving ample time for the miners to contact them. A potential complication: mercenaries wanting to desert and escape.

PLANETARY RECORD: Thishri (Dekko IV)



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 7,096 mi. Gravity .91 G Density 5.6 Composition Medium Iron
 Axial Tilt 27° Seasonal Variation Earthlike Length of Day 43 hrs. Length of Year 579 days/2.84 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure .78 (Thin) Type and Composition 72% Nitrogen, 16% Oxygen, 7% CO₂, 5% other
 Climate Warm Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 65° Average 80° High 101°
 Surface Water 62% Humidity 69% Primary Terrain Mountains, hills, steppes
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Scarce Rare Minerals Ext. Plentiful Radioactives Plentiful
 Heavy Metals Plentiful Industrial Metals Ext. Plentiful Light Metals Ample Organics Absent
 Moons 1 small moon — Valnar

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Native plankton and sea life, small invertebrates

Civilization: Population(s) 25,000,000 (PR 7) Tech Level 10 Control Rating 4/6

Society Corporate State — one colony each from Mittelsohn and Riko

Starports Class III at Renzer (Mittelsohn); Class III at Pulli (Riko)

Installations Mittelsohn System Operations Headquarters; Riko Mineral Extraction Center

Economic/Production Exports rare earths and heavy metals.

Other notes: Map key: 1. Renzer 2. Pulli 3. Disputed ore deposits 4. Unexploited ore deposits
 Mittelsohn and Riko are disputing ownership of this world.

System Information:

Star Name Dekko Type F0 III Location Corporate Worlds 13/8-10
 Biozone 2.5-3.7 Inner Limit 0.1 Number of Planets 8

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|------------|-------|----------|-------------------|----------|---------|---------|------------------|-------------------|
| Lolere | 1 | .68 | Rockball | 2,051 | 6.6 | .31 | None | — |
| Tinnic | 2 | 1.19 | Exotic greenhouse | 8,140 | 5.9 | 1.4 | Nitrogen-Ammonia | — |
| Nalio | 3 | 1.7 | Rockball | 3,520 | 5.2 | .42 | None | High radioactives |
| Thishri | 4 | 2.72 | Earthlike | 7,096 | 5.6 | .91 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| Biroa | 5 | 4.76 | Rockball | 3,120 | 4.9 | .35 | None | — |
| — | 6 | 8.84 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | — |
| Bachii | 7 | 17.0 | Gas giant | 47,200 | 2.7 | 2.5 | Hydrogen-Helium | Oort cloud |
| Isaus | 8 | 33.32 | Gas giant | 61,500 | 2.2 | 3.1 | Hydrogen-Helium | — |
| — | 9 | — | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Chochanash | 10 | 131.24 | Gas giant | 29,600 | 1.9 | 2.8 | Hydrogen-Helium | Brilliant rings |

Tien Men (Eilon II)

Tien Men (the name means "Heaven Gate") is the homeworld of the powerful Xin Wu corporation. Unlike, for instance, Mittelsohn's homeworld of Dieri, Tien Men is attractive, with parks and woods interspersed with towns scattered worldwide. "That which is functional is beautiful," says the Xin Wu White Book, a combination corporate guide and philosophical text, "and that which is beautiful is functional."

When Xin Wu claimed the planet, it designed it from the beginning as a headquarters world and showplace. Xin Wu's leadership saw Dieri as too stark and austere, and also as vulnerable — the Dieran megacity has large warehouses, but nowhere to grow food, and its inhabitants would starve within a few months if supplies were cut off. Therefore, the largest continent was designated as the site for corporate headquarters, and the three next-smallest continents were designed to be agricultural centers, growing enough food to support Tien Men's population.

The showpiece of Tien Men is Tien Chung ("Center of Heaven"), located on the Chung River. The board of directors of Xin Wu, the president and many senior managers have offices here. Most of the important work of Xin Wu is carried out in Tien Chung, as high-level managers, communications personnel, security and other departments combine to keep Xin Wu running. Four million people live in Tien Chung, but it is designed to give the appearance of a much smaller city. Parks and greenbelts separate the neighborhoods, with public transportation to central areas such as shopping areas and Xin Square, a combination park, cultural showcase and meeting center.

No other city on Tien Men has over 450,000 inhabitants, and all are designed to maximize the feeling of space and beauty one feels in smaller towns.

Unlike many company worlds, Tien Men welcomes visitors almost everywhere but in Tien Chung itself. The smaller cities have nothing to hide, and are considered a priceless advertisement for Xin Wu's services, products and way of life. And, of course, visitors spend money . . . The population of Tien Men is generally orderly, and management does not fear that they will be "corrupted" by outside influences. Those who leave are obviously misfits. And the on-planet police forces are quite firm with misbehaving visitors!

Hei Men

Hei Men is Tien Men's only moon. It has one domed settlement: Hei Men City. Several smaller cities would only divert precious resources.

Hei Men City is given over to low-gravity manufacturing, hospitals, and other endeavors requiring only microgravity (.15 G). It also boasts a large and luxurious low-G recreation complex, including such delights as bubble-swimming and wing-flying.

Even though it is a domed megacity, the city planners managed to give Hei Men City the same spacious look as on Tien Men. This is another example of "beauty as functionality;" the trees and plants spread throughout Hei Men City exchange carbon dioxide for oxygen, filtering and recycling the air.

Shan Xeng and the Celestial Lion (GM information)

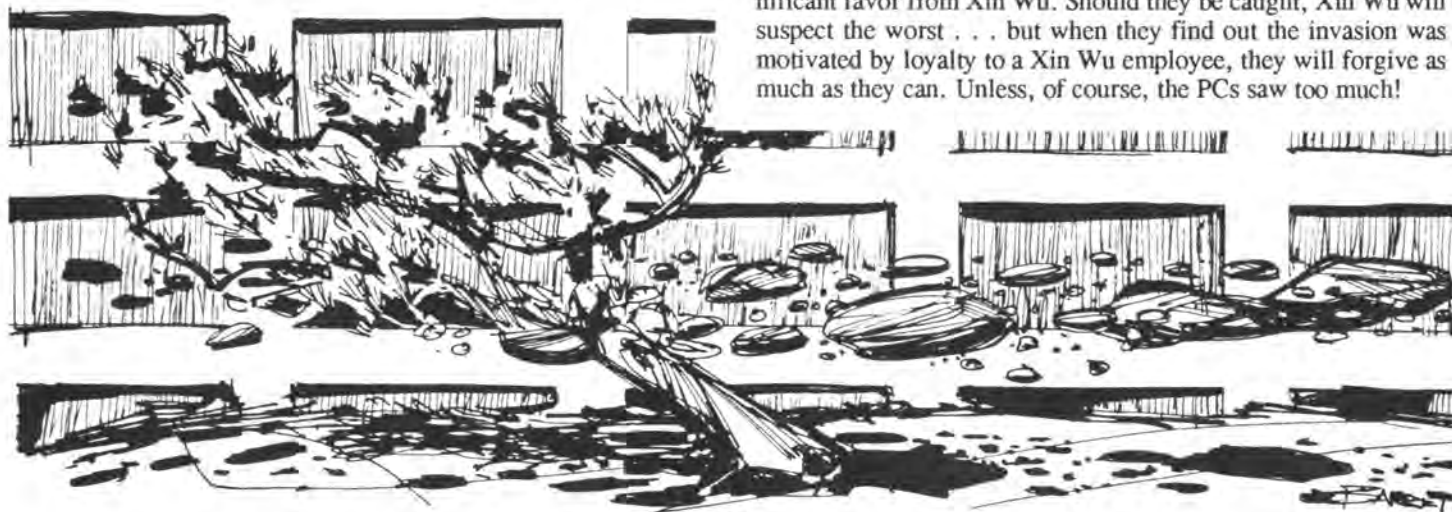
It is common knowledge that Hei Men holds a powerful fortress. The details, needless to say, are classified.

In point of fact, the steel-gray dome, on the other side of Hei Men from the beautiful city, is a paper tiger. It serves as the system's scout and patrol base, but has none of the fearsome long-range weapons that popular fancy expects. Of the Shan Xeng base personnel, only top-level ones know that the dome is not what it seems; lower-ranking troops are hypnoconditioned to believe that they have seen huge ships and weapons, the details of which have been blanked from their minds . . . disguise within disguise. Some troops even believe they have served aboard giant cruisers which never left the dock for the whole tour of duty.

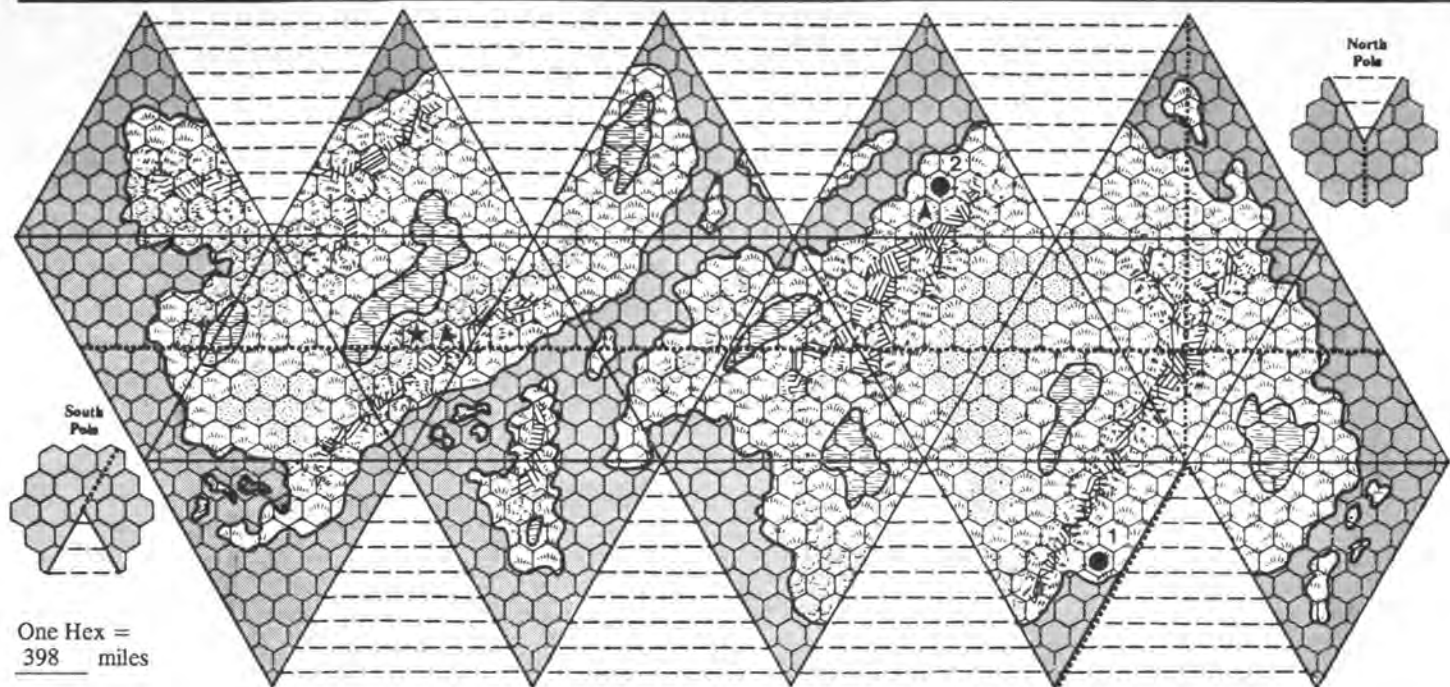
In fact, Xin Wu does have a *real* space fortress. The *Celestial Lion* is a hollowed-out moon, without FTL capability but with powerful normal-space drives and weaponry. It normally orbits Hu Bao, the gas giant in the next orbit out from Tien Men, pretending to be an unimportant moonlet. If danger ever threatened, the mask would drop, and *Celestial Lion* would move into a protective orbit around Tien Men. Or, should the planet suffer a surprise attack, the hidden dreadnaught might be able to strike from above, becoming the hammer to smash the invaders against the anvil of Tien Men's own defenses.

Adventure on Tien Men

Evil Secrets. The PCs meet and become friendly with a Xin Wu pilot, who had formerly served with the Security forces at the Shan Xeng base. (A good GM technique would be to introduce this NPC during a previous adventure, and let the PCs hire him or travel with him.) Quite unexpectedly, the pilot has a phobic reaction and goes mad. Among his babbles are sinister hints about what the base really holds. Once the PCs get their friend safely put away, they may imagine some evil Xin Wu scheme and attempt to infiltrate the base. Should they succeed and find that the tiger is toothless, they will be in a position to demand a significant favor from Xin Wu. Should they be caught, Xin Wu will suspect the worst . . . but when they find out the invasion was motivated by loyalty to a Xin Wu employee, they will forgive as much as they can. Unless, of course, the PCs saw too much!



PLANETARY RECORD: Tien Men (Eilon II)



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 5,679 mi. Gravity .75 G Density 4.3 Composition Low Iron
 Axial Tilt 22° Seasonal Variation Earthlike Length of Day 23 hrs. Length of Year 309 days/ .81 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure .97 (Standard) Type and Composition 72% Nitrogen, 23% Oxygen, 3% CO₂, 2% other
 Climate Earth-normal Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 60° Average 80° High 100°
 Surface Water 45% Humidity 55% Primary Terrain Plains/Mountains
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Absent Rare Minerals Scarce Radioactives Ample
 Heavy Metals Absent Industrial Metals Scarce Light Metals Ample Organics Plentiful
 Moons 1 small moon — Hei Men

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Imported Earth-type plants and animals

Civilization: Population(s) 2,000,000,000 (PR 9) Tech Level(s) 10 Control Rating 3*

Society Corporate State — Xin Wu homeworld
 Starports Class IV near Tienjing; Class V at Meridan; Class III on Hei Men
 Installations Xin Wu headquarters complexes
 Economic/Production Administrative center; agriculturally self-sufficient

Other notes: *Control rating effectively 2 for middle management (Status 3-4), 1 for upper-level management (Status 5+)
 Map key: capital, Tienjing 1. Shanshang 2. Meridan Spaceport

System Information:

Star Name Eilon Type G2 V Location Corporate Worlds -2/-7/9
 Biozone 0.08-1.2 Inner Limit 0.0 Number of Planets 6

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|----------|-------|----------|---------------|----------|---------|---------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Chi Che | 1 | .5 | Hot rockball | 3,870 | 7.3 | .65 | None | — |
| Tien Men | 2 | .9 | Earthlike | 5,679 | 4.3 | .75 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| Hu Bao | 3 | 1.3 | Gas giant | 52,600 | .8 | .96 | Ammonia | — |
| Da Lai | 4 | 2.1 | Gas giant | 85,200 | 1.7 | 3.3 | Nitrides | Spectacular ring |
| — | 5 | 3.7 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 6 | 6.9 | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 7 | 13.3 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | — |
| Er Lai | 8 | 26.1 | Gas giant | 54,500 | 2.3 | 2.9 | Hydrofluorides | — |
| — | 9 | 51.7 | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| — | 10 | 102.9 | Asteroid belt | — | — | — | — | 8% H ₂ O ice |
| — | 11 | 205.3 | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Yin Hua | 12 | 410.1 | Terrestrial | 1,740 | 3.8 | .15 | None | — |

Veritas (Joy II)

The shrine to the Great Cheerful One dominates the plains of the world Veritas, casting its shadow across the land every two hours with each sunset and sunrise. Thirty-two stories high, strung with lights like a holiday tree, the beneficent and smiling face of the Inoffensive Guru beams down on the populace and the farms with searchlight eyes and a smile of long-range sensors. On this world, each of the Cheerful Ones is watched every moment of every day, carefully monitored to prevent any manifestation of Unhappiness. And the Holy Smile, symbol of the Cheer-Spreaders, is seen everywhere.

The world is a beautiful one, carefully terraformed with Earth life so that in many places the native flora has been completely overcome by forms compatible with human life. However, the human life here is most unusual. The planet is governed by priests, the Cheer Spreaders. Outsiders call them "Happies" (though not to their faces). They live extravagantly, dressing in a baroque manner and spending most of their time on games and carousing. The majority of the people call themselves the Cheerful Ones, wear plain brown clothes, are forbidden fancy food, drinking or dancing, and are not allowed to even speak to the opposite sex in public. The priests explain that these things will make them unhappy. They describe Mittelsohn and AmBio employees as the epitome of Unhappiness, to be attacked on sight.

Veritas was not always so bizarre a place. The world began innocently enough as a farming world founded jointly by Mittelsohn and the Amalgamated Bionics Corporation. Although isolated, the planet had no severe problems, and life was serene. Some 70 years ago, a philosopher named Zaor began preaching a gospel of simple happiness. Man could conquer any problem, he said, by just being happy. Two of Zaor's disciples, Zidgood and Skarski, saw this as a way to gain power; when Zaor was incapacitated by a stroke, they began expanding on his message, adding tenets Zaor certainly never had in mind. At public festivals they would trot out Zaor in his wheelchair, smiling blandly and unable to react to the preaching of his disciples or the acclamation of the crowd.

After a series of shortages caused by plant infestations and piracy in space, the two disciples began to convince their followers that the corporations had abandoned them. Mittelsohn and AmBio were told they could not export food from the planet, since they were doing it for self-serving ends. When Zaor finally died, his two disciples led a pogrom against corporate employees, driving them entirely offworld. Employees sent to reclaim the world are either converted or killed. Nothing short of a house-by-house conquest would suffice.

The Cheer-Spreaders consolidated their power. They instituted the Happiness Patrols, whose duties were to make sure people were happy, whether they wanted to be or not. Those accused of unhappiness were sent to Happiness Camps to learn to be Cheerful. Soon, the Festivals began, where twice a year believers would gather at their local shrines to be happy. Or else.

The Happiness Festival

Twice a year, at equinox, a beam of rainbow light emanates from each Shrine toward the nearby cities and farm villages. The people then gather to be instructed by their leaders, and to judge those accused of infractions of the Law, which is, "Happiness

above all else." Everything from murder to shoplifting is considered to be a manifestation of unhappiness. Some of the punishments are quite final. And the Happy Quaff (see below) flows freely.

The Happy Quaff

This is one of the Cheer-Spreaders' most potent weapons. Usually, it is nothing more than a sugar-sweetened beer, brewed by the ton and distributed to all the Cheerful Ones daily. But whenever an area seems unsatisfied, the Happy Quaff they get is special.

Anyone drinking this Quaff must make a Will roll or suffer severe hypnotic effects (below). Each additional drink taken within 24 hours will require another roll, at -1 (cumulative). Quaff affects humans and other warm-blooded races equally well.

A Quaff drinker who fails his Will roll will automatically fail *all* Will rolls for the next (20-HT) hours. He also acquires, for that same time, the disadvantage of Gullibility (p. B33). Any drinker of altered Quaff becomes very cheerful, and must make a Will roll to avoid drinking another Quaff. Additional drinks have no further effect on IQ, but anyone who uses the drugged Quaff for more than a week or so will suffer the effects *permanently*, becoming a happy, obedient zombie.

If the effect is not yet permanent, a powerful stimulant will counteract it, but the victim will become very sick (-4 to all stats) for (16-HT) hours. Once the effect is permanent, there is no known treatment (which simply means the PCs will have to go looking for one!).

Adventures On Veritas

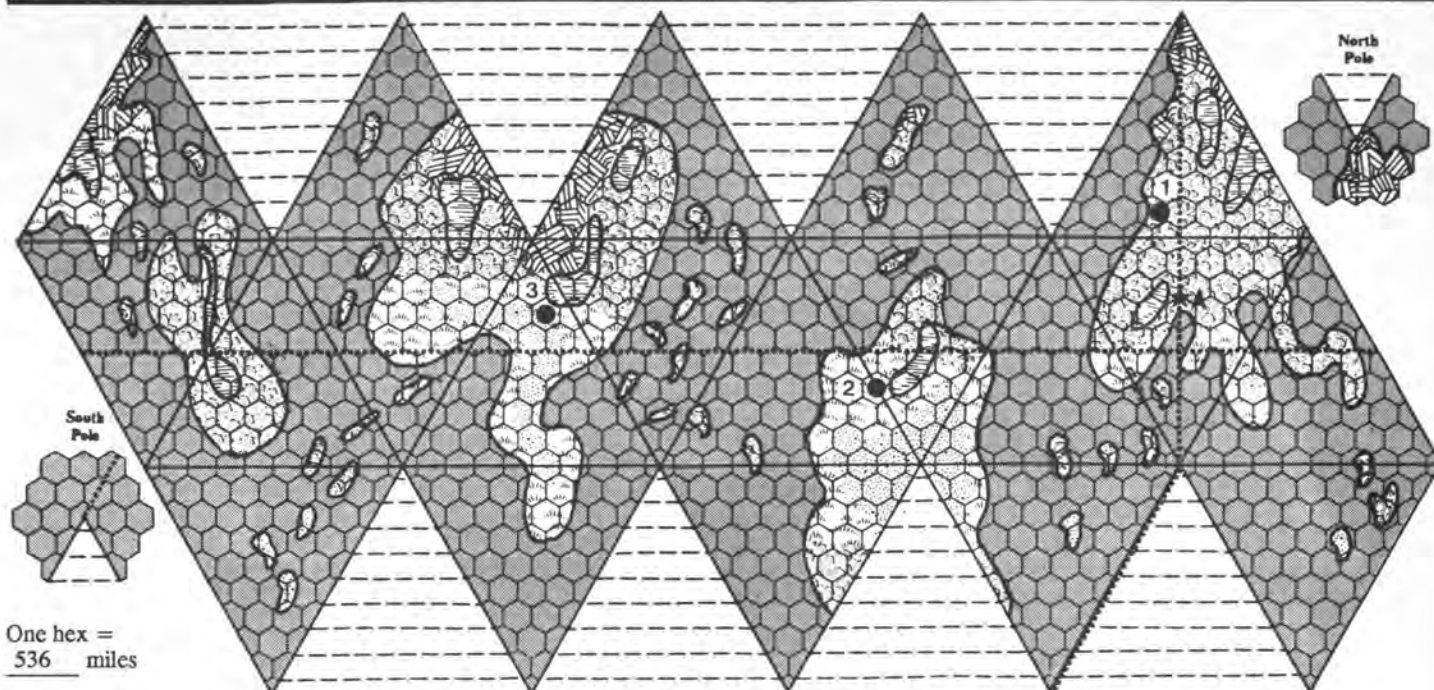
Kill A Happy Face. AmBio and Mittelsohn are fast losing patience with the Happies. They are preparing to invade the planet and take it by force. Horrible stories of Happiness Camps and other atrocities occasionally leak out from refugees escaping the nightmares of Mindless Cheerfulness. Mittelsohn, in particular, is willing to do anything they can to bring down the regime. Interested characters are welcome to participate and will be paid very well.

Spread It Thick. Alternatively, the characters could be hired by the Happies to help protect them from the anticipated Unhappy Hordes. While there, the characters will be expected to keep the same kind of cheerful disposition as is expected of the Veritans, or suffer the consequences: anything from lectures, to the Happiness Camps, to Happy Quaff. On the other hand, PCs who impress high-level Happies (Carousing rolls will help) may be invited to stay on Veritas as members of the ruling class.

Festival. While making a delivery on Veritas, the characters are caught at the Happiness Festival. The best course of action for the characters is to join and be cheerful, whether they feel like it or not. If they have been especially morose or broken laws or customs, they can be tried; the sentence may be light if the natives know that these people are not from Veritas (which will not necessarily be the case). The GM should keep the dictum "Happiness above all else" in mind, and have as much fun (or make the situation as grimly cheerful) as his imagination will allow. The PCs may have to rescue comrades who have drunk the Happy Quaff.



PLANETARY RECORD: Veritas (Joy II)



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 7,650 mi. Gravity .93 G Density 5.3 Composition Medium Iron
 Axial Tilt 11° Seasonal Variation Minor Length of Day 4 hrs. Length of Year 1,495 days/.68 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure 1.01 (Standard) Type and Composition 74% Nitrogen, 23% oxygen, 2% CO₂, 1% other
 Climate Warm Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low 70° Average 90° High 110°
 Surface Water 55% Humidity 51% Primary Terrain Forest, plains, some desert
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Scarce Rare Minerals Scarce Radioactives Scarce
 Heavy Metals Scarce Industrial Metals Ample Light Metals Ample Organics Ample
 Moons 1 small moon — Happiness

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans
 Other significant life forms Imported flora has overtaken the planet

Civilization: Population(s) 112 million (PR 7) Tech Level(s) 7 Control Rating 6

Society Formerly a Corporate farming world; now a theocracy.

Starports Class IV at Ecstasy

Installations Several cities falling into disrepair

Economic/Production Formerly exported agricultural produce and light industrial goods; export has stopped.

Other notes: Starport often unavailable due to political unrest — closed approximately 50% of the time.

Map key: capital, Ecstasy 1. Elysian Fields 2. Zaorport 3. Sirsi

System Information:

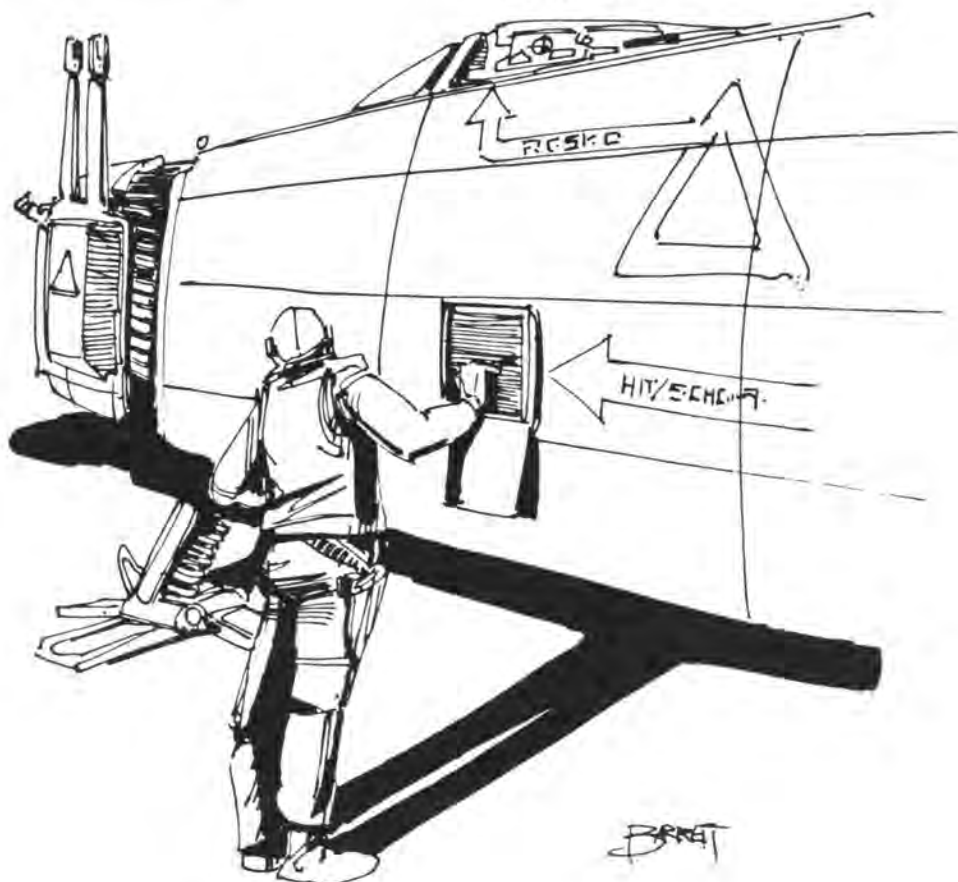
Star Name Joy Type G2 V Location Corporate Worlds 11/14/-2
 Biozone 0.8-1.2 Inner Limit 0.0 Number of Planets 7

| Planet | Orbit | Distance | Type | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Atmosphere | Notes |
|--------------|-------|----------|---------------|----------|---------|---------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| — | 1 | .2 | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Hellas | 2 | .5 | Rockball | 2,320 | 5.6 | .30 | None | — |
| Veritas | 3 | .8 | Earthlike | 7,650 | 5.3 | .93 | Nitrogen-Oxygen | Detailed above |
| Glee | 4 | 1.4 | Terrestrial | 6,400 | 5.3 | .78 | Trace Nitrogen-CO ₂ | — |
| Reality | 5 | 2.6 | Terrestrial | 5,200 | 5.0 | .60 | Nitrogen | — |
| Completeness | 6 | 5.0 | Terrestrial | 7,800 | 3.2 | .57 | Hydrochlorides | — |
| — | 7 | — | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Peace | 8 | 19.4 | Gas giant | 52,800 | 2.1 | 2.54 | Hydrogen-Methane | — |
| — | 9 | — | (Empty orbit) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Sanctuary | 10 | 77.0 | Gas giant | 56,000 | 0.8 | 1.03 | Hydrogen | — |

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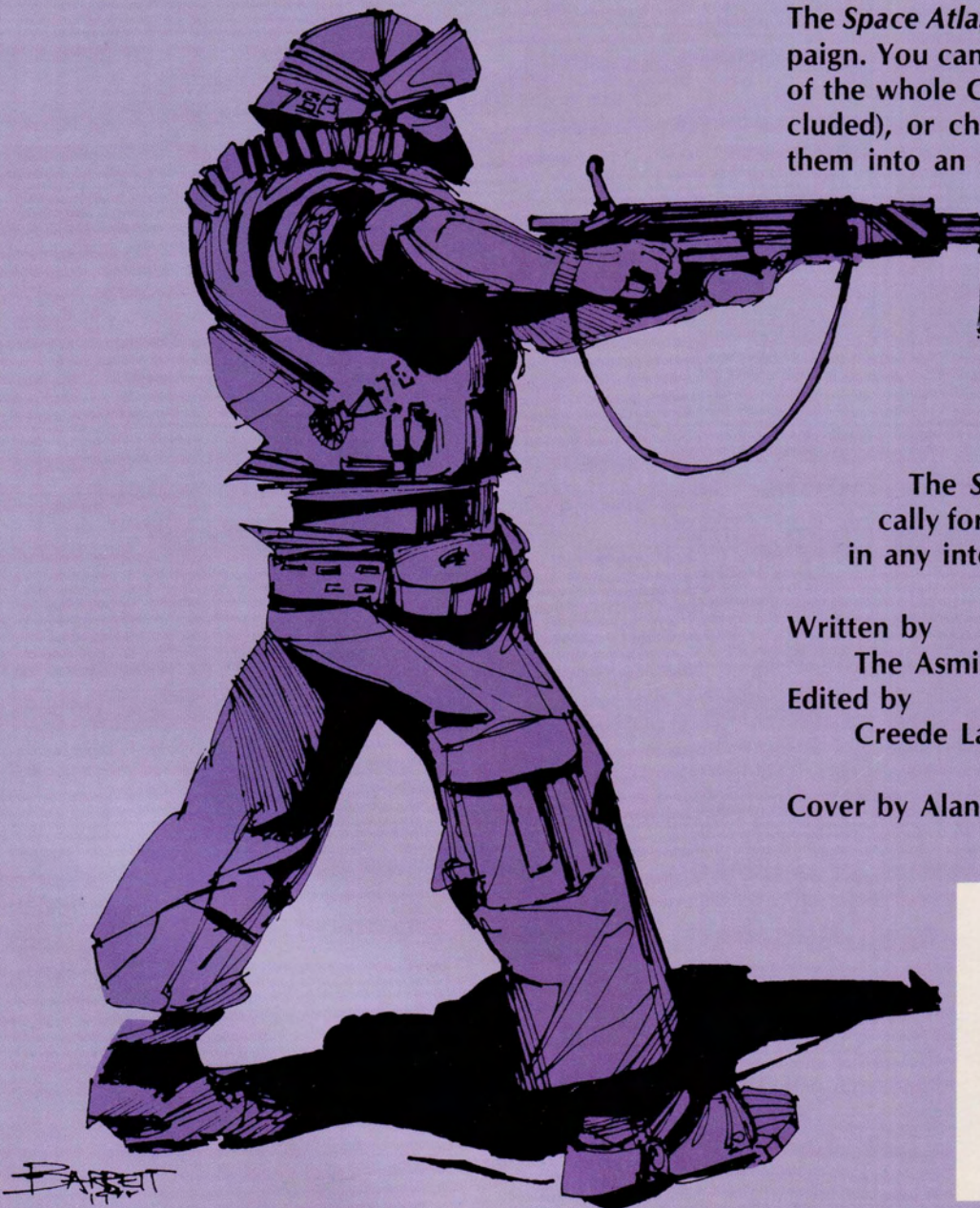
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