

Nils Jeppe's

ARTH SPACE

A SPELLJAMMER CAMPAIGN SETTING

Credits

Written by Nils Jeppe.

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“The only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible.”

- Arthur C. Clarke

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INTRODUCTION

“The future cannot be predicted, but futures can be invented.”

- Dennis Gabor

Welcome to the Arth Space campaign setting.

This work is based on TSR's *Spelljammer*, and was inspired by many additional sources. It aims to provide a complete "fantasy space" role-playing setting. Concepts of space travel, a rough history and the current situation of the solar system will be presented, as well as other information that will let you use this setting for your games.

I started this work in 2005 and, six years later, it is still not done. I have cleaned up this book as best as I can, and I decided to release it in the hope that someone will find this useful.

I'd really appreciate feedback! If you like this – or don't – let me know. I'd love to get constructive criticism and suggestions on how to improve this work.

You can email me at: nils@pandemonium.de

The Universe in a Nutshell

It has been over fifty years since Man has first left his home planet, Arth, and began sailing among the stars. He has visited all major celestial bodies in the Solar System, and explored most of them at least superficially. He has established outposts and colonies on the most useful and valuable worlds and constructed several space stations. He has met many alien races, and established commercial and political relations with many of them – Sometimes as equals, often as conquerors. He has even left his solar system, sailed through the rainbow ocean known as The Flow, and discovered other Solar Systems beyond the crystal sphere he inhabits.

While space-flight is maturing and the human kingdoms of Arth are slowly growing into an interplanetary civilization, it is still an age of exploration and expansion. The universe is full of wonders and mysteries. There is enough room to expand into, but the kingdoms of Man have time and again come into conflict over what they see as the most valuable possessions. Even in times of peace, spies and other agents try to secure advantages for their realms. Many countries are sending their misfits off into space, and many people are leaving voluntarily in search of a better life. Merchants are making a fortune trading among the planets, and Pirates prey on them.

The latest danger that threatens not only humans and Arth, but eventually the entire Solar System is the arrival of the Formians. This insectoid menace has no other goal than to conquer all the territory available to them, and to establish the Hive as the supreme overlord of all living creatures. They are completely alien, and cannot be reasoned with; once the war breaks out in earnest it will be a battle for the survival of Mankind as an independent species.

SAILING AMONG THE STARS

“The real friends of the space voyager are the stars.”

- James Lovell

Space is an environment that is radically different from what human beings are used to. It's also very hostile. When the first pioneers on Arth built their space-ships, they had to overcome many problems they had never imagined. Over the years these ingenious men and women came up with solutions, technologies and magics that are still in use.

Before we can discuss space travel, we have to understand the environment that these pioneers found themselves confronted with.

Air

Most living creatures require air to survive. Air is something any inhabitant of a planet takes for granted. Only in rare circumstances would a creature be deprived of breathable air: A cave-in might trap it underground, or it might drown in a body of water. True vacuums are exceedingly rare, and usually the result of magic and hence very limited in scope.

When the first pioneers reached higher and higher altitudes in their dream to visit the stars, they found out that at a certain point the air began to thin rapidly until Arth's atmosphere finally ended, giving way to vacuum.

Experiments were done to clean or create air magically. The solutions proposed were all impractical. Attempts to create airtight capsules in which space farers could travel seemed more promising, but small capsules would only hold enough air for a very small crew for short periods of time. However, through these experiments the brilliant minds behind the effort to reach the stars learned enough to find the solution in use today. Before they were able to develop this solution, the pioneers first had to understand the nature of Gravity.

Gravity

Gravity is the force that pulls objects to the surface of a planet or other large object. The existence of gravity as a natural force had been known for a long time. Wizards and philosophers had developed mathematical formulas and spells to deal with gravity in some special cases. But not all benefits and aspects of gravity were understood before mankind left Arth and its gravity well and made its first tentative steps into outer space.

Air Quality

The air around any body or ship can be one of three classes of quality - fresh, fouled, or deadly. Four if you count vacuum.

Fresh air is completely breathable.

Fouled air is stale and partially depleted. It is humid and smelly and unpleasant. All characters act at a -2 modifier while breathing foul air.

Deadly air is completely depleted and filled with carbon dioxide. (Use the rules for “Slow Suffocation” from the DMG.)

Vacuum is the absence of air. Characters exposed to a vacuum will suffocate.

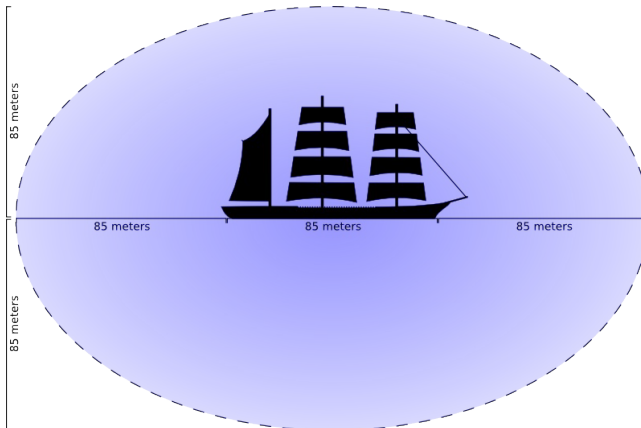


Illustration 1: Extent of the gravity plane and the air envelope of a barque.

Every body, no matter how small, exerts a gravitational force on all other objects nearby. In very small bodies, such as humans or rocks, this force is so small that it has no practical effect at all. In other objects, such as planets or moons, it exerts enough force to hold things to the surface of those bodies. Another side benefit is that gravity is also the reason why Arth has breathable air – without gravity the air would dissipate into space.

The magical manipulation of gravity was recognized as a necessary step to spaceflight from the very beginning. Other – more

mundane – methods to lift persons off a planet and into the heavens had all failed. In more successful early attempts, modified *Levitate* spells were used to lift items high into the air. The space pioneers began to outfit their experimental vessels with a Helm, a device to allow the crew control over the gravity of the vessel. At first it only lifted the ships, but the functionality was expanded quickly as a solution for the problem of providing air to the crew of any space vessel was needed.

The Helm was used to strengthen and extend the existing – although negligible – gravity exerted by the vessel enough to allow people to stand on its deck. Since it was impossible to simply create a point-source of gravity in such a small object the gravity was extended in the shape of a plane that runs through the ship at the keel level. This strengthened gravity also attracted enough air to the ship to provide a breathable atmosphere very much like the one of Arth – just much smaller.

This gravity plane is bidirectional; it attracts objects from both sides. It is possible for a spacefarer to stand either on the deck of his ship, or on the bottom of its hull. What would be “up” for the crewman on the deck is “down” for his mate on the bottom of the hull. When the crewman on the bottom of the ship returns to his ship he will have to at one point pass through the gravity plane – and his “up” and “down” reverse again.

It would be possible to take advantage of this bidirectional nature of the gravity planes and build ships with two “decks”, each facing away from the other. However, there are two reasons why this isn't being done.

First, it was found that many people cannot easily overcome their lifelong perception of the universe, and have problems dealing with situations where there is no definite “up”. Even the most experienced space crews work more efficiently with definite directions. The second reason is that such a ship would have a very hard time landing on a planet. Some races that are more adapted to a life in outer space do not feel hindered by such considerations; one example are the huge city-ships of the Dwarfs.

Falling Off and Drifting Away

A strange side-effect of the bidirectional nature of gravity planes is that any object which falls through the gravity plane will oscillate back and forth along the gravity plane, until air friction eventually slows it down and it settles in the gravity plane.

There is one problem for unrestrained objects that have come to rest in the ship's gravity plane. An object there is suspended in air, floating, but it will be slowly pushed outside towards the edge of the gravity field. Once it passes beyond the limit of the gravity plane, it is released and stays behind as the ship move away. This is an intended effect designed to prevent dust, garbage, rocks and other items from gathering in the air envelope.

If a person goes overboard, there is in general more than enough time to rescue him or her, but it can be a problem in battle or other special situations.

It is important to note that the air envelope and gravity plane do not turn when the ship turns - meaning the position of an object will change relative to the ship as it turns, but an object will not drift to the rear of the gravity plane simply because the ship moves.

A weightless adventurer who enters an air envelope is immediately affected by the pull of gravity of that object. He will, in effect, fall the distance from where he entered towards the plane of gravity. Normal falling damage applies if he hits something solid - like the ship itself.

Levels of Gravity

As in the “real world”, gravity in the Spelljammer universe is not granular. Its force is directly related to the mass of any given object. However, to simplify game play, the following abstract levels of gravity are used (based on the SRD):

No Gravity: Adventurers who are weightless can move under the normal laws of physics: Any force has an opposite force. A drifting adventurer could move - slowly - by throwing his equipment into the direction opposite the one he wishes to go into.

Negligible Gravity: The gravity exerted by nearby objects is very low. For practical purposes, this is the same as No Gravity, but over a long time the gravity will pull down nearby objects. Any character standing on an object with Negligible Gravity would be able to simply jump into space.

Light Gravity: The gravity in this location is less intense than that of Arth. As a result, creatures will find that they can lift more weight, but their movements tend to be clumsy. Characters exposed to Light Gravity take a -2 circumstance penalty on attack rolls and Balance, Ride, Swim, and Tumble checks. All items weigh half as much. Weapon ranges double, and characters gain a +2 circumstance bonus on Climb and Jump checks. Strength and Dexterity don't change as a result of light gravity, but what you can do with such scores does change.

Natives of a Light Gravity world will have lower Strength but soemwhat higher Dexterity abilities.

Falling characters in a light gravity environment take 1d4 points of damage for each 3 meters of the fall (maximum 20d4).

Normal Gravity: This is the gravity of Arth. Most of the inner planets, and most of the Earth worlds capable of supporting human life, fall in this category. The usual rules for ability scores, carrying capacity and encumbrance apply.

Heavy Gravity: The gravity on some large planets is much more intense than on Arth. As a result, Balance, Climb, Jump, Ride, Swim, and Tumble checks incur a -2 circumstance penalty, as do all attack rolls. All item weights are effectively doubled, which might affect a character's speed. Weapon ranges are halved. A character's Strength and Dexterity scores are not affected. Characters who fall on a heavy gravity planet take 1d10 points of damage for each 10 feet fallen, to a maximum of 20d10 points of damage.

Extreme Gravity: Some very large planets, suns, or exotic celestial bodies have a gravity that is so strong that it makes life difficult or even impossible for normal life-forms. Humans will find it hard to move at all, and will die if they stay in such a gravity for too long.

Gravity Planes and Natural Gravity

Gravity is a rather weak natural force, and since gravity planes are magically strengthened, the plane always overcomes the local gravity. If a character leaves the area of effect of the gravity plane (effectively the Air Envelope of the ship), he will be affected by whatever local gravity exists. If the ship is hovering above a planet this could result in a nasty fall.

A side effect of this dominance of gravity planes over local gravity is that vessels will retain their air if they encounter an airless object. However, some leakage may occur over time, as inertia drives air molecules over the boundary of the gravity plane. If the ship is within any type of atmosphere, the ship's air envelope and the local atmosphere will merge and mix quickly. This is normally done to freshen a ship's air, but on planets with poisonous or otherwise unhealthy atmospheres this means that even the dominance of the gravity plane will not provide any protection.

Interaction Between Two Gravity Planes

Ships which encounter each other in space will usually match their gravity planes as the first step. When two (or more, for that matter) gravity planes overlap, they will compress or push each other aside, creating a "border" between them at mid-point, until the two ships physically touch, at which point each Helm will try to "take over" gravity control for the new "combined object". This adjustment takes as long a time as creating a new gravity plane, so it is not usually an issue in boarding maneuvers or other short encounters.

However, if a gravity plane moves through the air envelope of another ship without actually intersecting that ship's gravity plane, then all objects within range will be affected by two gravity planes. This can cause serious problems and damage to both ships, but can be used as a weapon by a skilled Helmsman and a prepared crew. For this reason failure to match gravity planes is generally seen as a hostile act.

Gravity planes "snap" to each other easily, making the exact alignment of gravity planes a rather trivial maneuver.

Setting up a Gravity Plane

The gravity plane is “set up” when the Helm is installed in the ship. The Helmsman in control of the Helm at this time selects the strength of the gravity and the level at which the plane intersects the ship. The Helm will need time to set up the gravity plane – 10 minutes per ton of the ship – which does require the attention of a Helmsman. The process can be interrupted and resumed later. Removing a helm from the ship destroys the link to the gravity plane. The plane will collapse in the same time it took to set up; if a new Helm is installed, the gravity plane could be restored in only as much time as the gravity plane has had time to "degrade" since the removal of the old one; however if a new plane is to be set up one must wait for the old gravity plane to completely vanish.

Maintaining a gravity plane does not require any action or attention, it is automatic.

Temperature

Under normal conditions temperature is not a problem for space explorers. The sun radiates enough heat to warm their ship even at a considerable distance. However, the further they travel away from the central star the colder it will be. At extreme distances, temperatures become chilly, freezing or even deadly, and precautions should be taken accordingly.

A similar rule can be seen in planets; the further away a world the colder it is. Local conditions may vary wildly, however, for example due to the presence of high volcanism, a nearby small fire body, atmospheric conditions, or any kind of other reason. Magical and mundane methods exist to deal with all but the most extreme temperatures. Fire- and Cold-protection spells are as essential a tool of the space explorer as are heavy fur coats.

Of course, approaching any fiery body will be accompanied by the associated problems caused by the intense heat. Landing on the sun is similar to entering the elemental plane of fire. Survival of unprepared parties will be severely limited.

Time

Unlike on parallel worlds or alternate planes of existence, the flow of time is constant no matter where one is located in the universe. Of course local calendars and methods of time-keeping will vary wildly, but this is mostly a problem of communication and administration. There are no relativistic effects.

Spelljammer Helms, Sails and Rigs

There are three things that distinguish a Spelljammer from a normal ship: The Helm, the sails and the rigging, and – optionally – the Mass Detectors.

Sails

The enchanted sails used by Spelljammers are what provides these ships with motive force. The sails are normal sails made of sailcloth (or other materials, for more exotic Spelljammers). They have been enchanted and treated with magical substances so that they reach out over the

normal universe and into the Flow. The Flow then pushes against the sails, providing enough force for the Spelljammer to move forward.

The Flow changes its direction much like wind on a planetary ocean. Techniques similar to the ones used on ocean-going voyages are used to better take advantage of the existing Flow currents.

•Helms

There are several different types of helms available. The most common is the size and shape of a large, throne-like chair.

A Spelljammer helm is a magical device that takes existing natural forces and channels and strengthens (or weakens) them according to the whims of the Helmsman. For example, Helms are used to set up Gravity Planes for Spelljammers. This control over gravity is also what makes the Spelljammer able to float in a planetary gravity well.

But a Helm is also used to control the direction of travel of a Spelljammer – up, down, left, right – in place of a more traditional rudder. Without this control, the only direction a Spelljammer could move would be straight ahead.

Sensors

Crystal Prism

Most spelljammers carry a special crystal prism aboard. It is used to show a spectrum of colors that helps the crew analyse the composition of a planet's atmosphere before merging their own air envelope with a potentially deadly foreign one.

Mass Detector

A mass detector is a magical device that is used in the Flow to detect large masses in the normal universe. It has a great range and is very reliable, but it is useless to detect anything smaller than the size of a large planet. The device is used by space-farers to navigate the otherwise rather featureless Flow. A Mass Detector looks like a large crystal ball.

The device is only needed for ships which will travel into the Flow. Ships which stay within one solar system do not need such a device.

Celestial Bodies

The term “Celestial Body” describes any natural object that floats in space. They range from small asteroids to huge suns or nebulae that can be as big as entire solar systems. Planets and their smaller cousins, asteroids, are of most interest to adventurers.

Celestial bodies can have any shape, but most are spherical or – especially smaller asteroids – irregular. However, there are known examples of all kinds of geometrical shapes.

Sailing Among the Stars

Celestial bodies are composed of Elements; that is, Air, Earth, Water, and Fire. Some celestial bodies are composed primarily of one of the four elements, while others (notably Earthlike planets) are a mix of all the elements. For example, Air worlds often have smaller Earth bodies inside them. Fire worlds might have a surface of molten rock, and any world might have water or water vapor, and so on.

The Flow

The Flow – also called the Phlogiston – is an alternate universe which exists parallel to the “real world”. It is similar to the Ether or the Astral plane in that regard. It is possible to cross from the normal universe into the Flow – and vice versa – via portals; either naturally-occurring ones or portals opened by specialized magic spells.

While within the flow, the enchanted sails of a Spelljammer are able to fully capture the currents and "winds" of the Flow, and thus provide the ship with much greater speeds that would be possible in the Universe. It is thus possible to travel among solar systems in the Flow, a feat that would take centuries or millenia at normal Spelljammer speeds.

There are no star systems or solid bodies within the Flow. There are some pieces of debris from previous ships, but it's unlikely a traveler will encounter them. Since the Phlogiston lacks landmarks of any kind, space-farers use the magical Mass Detector to navigate among solar systems.

The Flow and the Universe interact only very weakly, and usually in a one-way direction; gravity and other forces will distort and bend the Flow and cause eddies and currents in the Phlogiston.

Phlogiston looks like a rainbow-colored fog that surrounds everything. It is very chaotic in nature, and can be almost hypnotic if one stares too long into it. It is also highly flammable. Any source of fire – be it a spark from steel and tinder, a candle, the ship's cooking oven or a magical fireball – will result in a fiery explosion of immense strength. Large enough flames will produce explosions that can utterly destroy a ship.

This, however, is not the greatest danger to a Spelljammer in the Flow. It is known that any Spelljammer which approaches a star too closely in the Phlogiston disappears. It's unknown what happens to these ships, as nobody has ever witnessed it to happen. There are wild myths and rumors, the most prevalent of which postulates monsters living in the flow, which will eat Spelljammers that come too close.

*Communication

Spacefarers use various methods to communicate between ships.

Shouting

It sounds obvious, but between two ships that are in close contact, voice – shouting – is the easiest way to communicate. It does not work if the air envelopes of the two ships are not in contact – as sound is carried by air.

Semaphore Flags

Semaphore flags are used on sea, and in space. Obviously the two ships must be using the same system to effectively communicate. Semaphores obviously do not work if a ship is in a large object's shadow.

Signal Lights

Most ships carry lanterns as a sort of positioning lights, but most also use them to communicate interactively. Lights can be seen over a long distance, and a blinking light will attract the attention of an alert lookout at a great distance.

Heliographs

A heliograph is an apparatus that uses mirrors and lenses to bundle and reflect the sun's light. These are basically large, complicated signal lights and used by moons, planetary bases, asteroid settlements, and space stations to communicate across interplanetary distances.

Variants use the *Daylight* spell instead of the sun, especially far in the outer regions of a system.

Telepathy

In a magical world, telepathy is an obvious choice to communicate between ships.

Ship's Crew

Positions

Captain: Commands the ship. Not necessarily the most experienced sailor, but the one with the best command skills.

Lieutenant / First Officer **2nd in Command:** Assists the Captain. Carries orders to the rest of the ship. Captain may have more than one Lieutenant.

Navigator (Astrogator): Plots the ship's course.

Helmsman: Controls the magical helm that propels the ship. There are usually several on board, to keep the ship going the entire day.

Ship's Cleric: Spiritual welfare and healing magic

Quartermaster: Responsible for provisions and supplies

Carpenters: A ship will have crew trained in repairing them. Most ships are made of wood, and carry carpenters, but ships made of other materials would carry different craftsmen.

Sailmaker: To make and repair sails. Specially trained in handling the sails of spelljammer vessels.

Rope maker: Ropes are another integral part of the spelljammer ships.

Sailing Among the Stars

Barrel maker: Barrels are useful for storing things.

Gunsmith / artillery engineers: To maintain the guns, ballista, and catapults.

Gunners: Useful in combat.

Cook: Keeps the crew fed.

Sailors: Take care of the day-to-day operation of the spelljammer ship.

Marines: Handle boarding of foreign ships – and the defense of their own!

Golems

Golems and other constructs are popular among spacefarers who can afford them. They are strong, work tirelessly, and above all, need neither provisions nor air. Constructs are used in boarding actions or for any task that requires great physical strength.

Undead

Similar to constructs, undead require neither food nor air and would thus be ideally suited for space. However, almost all societies have strong taboos against using undead labor for any purpose. Consequently, they are normally not used as space crew. However, particularly evil ship captains, especially Clerics or Wizards, might animate them to supplement their crew.

So-called **Bone Bundles** are stored in a ship's hold and animated when needed. This usually means ship-to-ship combat, where the undead serve as marines. Bone Bundles are also sometimes loaded on a catapult and hurled onto the deck of an enemy ship. There a trigger casts the Animate Dead spell, and the undead rises, attacking whatever is in his sight.

Weapons

Spelljammer ships carry a number of weapons:

- Ballista, Catapult, Trebuchet
- Jettison
- Cannons
- Rams are relatively uncommon due to the problems of overlapping gravity fields
- Greek Fire
- Chain shot – cannon balls linked with chains – these were designed to damage rigging and sails

SPELLJAMMERS

“Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible.”

- Lord Kelvin

Human Ships

Humans mainly use ships converted from naval duty. This began in the early days of space-faring, and was a matter of convenience. Arth's humans already knew how to build ocean-going ships, and they knew it well. Such ships are also able to land and anchor at any normal harbour, and, where necessary, could even land off the coast and sail into a harbour normally, hiding the special nature of the ship. Such ships have often been modified for the special requirements of space.

There are also many ship types which were designed specifically for space travel.

Squidship

Smaller, more maneuverable than Hammership

Piercing ram, designed for boarding

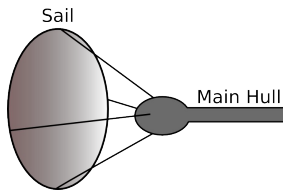
Hammership

Better armor than Squidship.

Aquatic Ships

Many seagoing ships have been converted into spelljammers. Galleon, Caravel, Cog, Frigate, Clipper, but also more exotic ships like the Dragonship, the Barge of Ptah, and so on.

Dwarven Ships



Overview

Dwarven ships don't look like anything that Humans, Elves, or any other species would consider to be a "ship". If the Dwarfs ever lived on a planet, if they ever evolved their "ships" from ocean-going vessels the way humans did then this must have been many thousands of years ago.

Dwarven "ships" are called "ships" simply because they're mobile. They are massive objects, hundreds of meters long, and made from rock and metal. Each provides living space for dozens or even hundreds of dwarfs.

The basic shape is that of a long, thin cylinder, to which various objects have been attached. Most common are large, more or less round objects on both ends of this cylinder, but it varies. Often, there will be smaller shapes attached all along the length of the cylinder. Sometimes the large shapes on the ends are rock – former asteroids – making the whole construct look like the Dwarfs simply made an asteroid mobile and thus took their home with them. And indeed this is often what happened.

The only thing these settlements-come-ships have in common with "normal" vessels is the sail. The dwarfs can set a huge, circular sail from one end of the structure. Usually it's one big sail, but some dwarven clans prefer several smaller sails.

The Dwarven ships are too big to enter the Flow; therefore the dwarves travel between the stars at normal Spelljamming speeds. Even though this is very fast for structures this size, it still means that travel times between solar systems are measured in decades. The dwarfs do not really mind; they are long-lived and very patient. They simply use this time to hone their craftsmanship.

Due to their size and gravity plane, dwarven ships carry a normal atmosphere. Some ships actually have "outside gardens" on their surface, to refresh the air and to provide food to the inhabitants.

Inside a Dwarven Ship

Each ship contains living quarters, gardens, and workshops for the entire clan. Raw materials are being melted in the ship's furnaces and made into tools, weapons or artworks in the workshops. There are large vaults which store the finest of the Dwarfs' work; anything that is deemed less than perfect is melted down again, to be recreated anew – hopefully improved.

Dwarven ships carry males, females, and usually also children. The smallest ships are home to a small clan of several dozen members; the largest ones can support hundreds or thousands of dwarfs. The ships are well guarded; every dwarf is trained in combat, but there is a detachment of guards on duty at any given time. The ship itself is armed with cannons and jetisons.

The gravity inside a Dwarven ship is very strange to any visitor. Their gravity plane follows the curve of the corridors and walls in many locations; the dwarfs use every trick they can come up with to maximize the living space in their ships.

Landing a Dwarven Ship

Dwarven ships do not land; they dock. The ship will navigate to a stationary point alongside an asteroid; the dwarfs will extend a "bridge" to the surface of the Asteroid and begin to mine the asteroid for ores and precious materials. If the asteroid is very small and thought to be valuable enough it might be secured directly to the side of the ship. If it is very large, or a direct contact is not possible or advisable for any reason, the dwarfs use small boats to transport personnel and materials. These boats are little more than flat cargo sleds equipped with a helm-like device that generates a gravity plane and enables the boat to float slowly. The boats are not able to float on water.

Other Ships

Insect-Themed

These have been sighted as manned by humans. They are part of an unknown spacefaring empire.

- Mosquito
- Dragonfly
- Damselfly
- Wasp
- Tradesman

Gnomish

- Gnomish Sidewheeler
- Gnomish Wreckship (Spidermoon)

Unknown Occupants

- Nautiloid
- Tyrant Ships

Spider-Themed

- Mindspider
- Deathspider

Butterfly-Themed

- Flitter
- Man-o-war
- Armada

THE HISTORY OF ARTH

“If you would understand anything, observe its beginning and its development.”

- Aristotle

Ancient History

The earliest recorded history on Arth reaches back some 1500 years or so to an age where various kingdoms rose in the island chains south of Engaron. These kingdoms were trading among themselves and explored the world. They had access to papyrus, and ship captains regularly kept logbooks. Many of their trading partners learned their language, script, and the secret how to make papyrus.

This continued for several hundred years; after a war between two rivaling nations refugees from the defeated kingdom settled on the mainland of the continent Engaron. They quickly conquered the locals and carved out a new kingdom. With enough room to grow, and access to resources that the island kingdoms had to trade for, their kingdom eventually became wealthy and powerful. A hundred years after the foundation of their kingdom, they developed techniques to work with iron.

With this advantage they continued to expand, and waged war on the kingdom which had defeated their ancestors. Their kingdom grew into the largest empire ever, and their calender which used the foundation of their kingdom as the year 0 became the standard calender for all of Arth. The name of their empire was Engaron, the name the continent remains known until today.

The rule of the Empire created an age of peace. All serious contenders were conquered. Other kingdoms allied with the Empire rather than be annexed. Others were genuinely keen to be part of the Empire. Road networks were built, the Imperial army enforced peace and law throughout the realm.

In the year 467 after the foundation of Engaron, the ruling emperor died without an heir. Several families and factions immediately lay claim to the throne, and the church which might have settled the dispute by divine decree supported a third candidate, claiming that the divine right of rule over the Empire should revert to the church as it had been granted by the gods in the first place. Not surprisingly, the result was a civil war which fragmented the Empire and eventually caused it to sink into anarchy. Trade broke down, separatist movements sprang up in some provinces, and kingdoms and “barbarian hordes” outside the Empire began to take advantage by occupying land or raiding cities that were too well defended before.

The Dark Age

Eventually, several kingdoms rose from the ashes of the Empire, and most of the provinces far away from the capital were given up. Wars between these kingdoms continued for a long time and only ceased when the nations had exhausted their ability to wage war on one another.

The church gave up their claim to the throne when the empire fell apart, and local branches supported whatever ruler had managed to throne himself. In fact the Church was the only moderating factor in those days. The clerics tried to encourage the kingdoms to fight a common enemy – invariably hethen tribes and kingdoms that did not recognize the church – and emphasized brotherhood and a common heritage as the "children of the gods". The church became more and more fanatic in its preachings, services more gloomy. It preached that the war-torn world was the divine punishment for the people's lack of faith and demanded total obedience from all levels of society. Doom threatened any who would not kneel before the divine will, both in a moral sense as well as a very practical sense: The church had started a grand Inquisition which sought to identify and kill any heretics within the kingdoms. Torture was commonly used to force confessions from identified heretics.

The Great Death

This dark age of brutality and wars continued until the year 677 FE, when the first cases of a new disease were seen at a time when a large comet hung in the skies over Arth. It was unknown where the disease came from; what had caused it and how it might be cured. It was certainly a dangerous disease because the first victims to display the symptoms died quickly. Priests were brought in, and to the great shock of witnesses, their divine healing magic failed to cure the diseased.

The church used its inquisition to suppress news of this at first, but it quickly became known widely. The plague ran its course through the known world. Church officials died by the score, just as criminals, simple peasant and nobles. Political borders shifted as aggressors took advantage of a weakened neighbor, only to find that the disease would decimate the invader's armies as well.

The Great Death, as the disease came to be known, burned itself out after 40%+ of the people had been killed.

The New Era

After the funeral pyres had ceased to burn, the survivors of the Great Death began to contemplate their fate. No family had been spared, everybody had lost friends and family members. The church had been unable to help even the most faithful. The kings and nobles – their positions derived from divine will – had likewise failed to protect their subjects. The people of Arth began to look beyond the church for explanations and guidance. They were more open-minded for new ideas, and humanistic philosophies began to develop. Wizards and sages became influential and powerful, and while most were too eccentric and hermitic to take advantage of this trend, some established themselves as rulers over small kingdoms.

With a shortage in labour in almost any given geographical area, there was no unemployment to speak of, and many realms could not produce everything they needed. A resurgence of trade was the result. Many kingdoms became dependent on each other for trade, and merchant families and -houses became very wealthy.

It was these merchants who began to sponsor artists, philosophers and wizards. Some was done for the love of art or knowledge, oftentimes it was done to impress one's peers. Schools and universities were founded. For the first time in the history of Arth, a truly scientific culture developed, with research done for its own sake and discoveries were made as the consequence of research rather than by accident. The printing press was invented in 698 FE and further helped spread knowledge all over Arth. Gunpowder was invented several years later, and reshaped the face of the battlefield.

Beyond the Blue Horizon

One boy of the name Leonis was born in a small hamlet near the port town of Evony in the kingdom Alenac in the year 701 FE. As he grew up it quickly became apparent that Leonis was driven by a curiosity about the world that even in these enlightened days few people possessed. His parents had no money to speak of and could not afford to send Leonis to a school. With the help of the local cleric of the church Leonis learned to read and write, and he kept a diary from an early age, whenever he could get paper.

Leonis was finally accepted by a wizard who noticed the boy as he travelled through the town. He took Leonis with him to Evony, and then later to Yene, a city in the mountains, where Leonis began his magical and scientific studies.

For the next twenty years, Leonis didn't once return to his home. When his mentor died, he continued many studies alone, though he eventually accepted two apprentices himself. Leonis did not focus on any single field of magic or sciences; he was a true generalist with an interest in everything.s two favorite subjects, however, are reported to have always been astronomy and flight.

Leonis finally made a voyage back to Evony in 733 FE, accompanied by several friends, retainers, servants, and his apprentices. His father had passed away, his mother was old and frail and was cared for by the local church. He left enough money with the church to pay for any expense his mother might cause, and purchased a tract of land near the city. He left again when construction on several buildings had started there under the supervision of one of his retainers. Leonis then travelled east, where he reached as far as Sylvis, before returning in 737 FE. He settled in his new estate – which had been completed shortly before his return – and began with experiments all dedicated to flying magic.

Leonis kept to himself, and his hired guards kept away any unwanted guests. Leonis began to work on his one obsession – he wanted to reach the stars. His experiments were slow because nobody had ever tried such a feat. Flight magic was very limited, and no scientific basis for heavier-than-air flight existed. At first, nobody paid any attention to his work. Leonis made some progress, but in the year 742 FE he began to run dangerously low on funds. He had to find a sponsor or give up and admit defeat.

It took Leonis several months to decide who he would approach; his cautious nature conflicted with the dire need for funds. In the end, Leonis contacted James Calder, a rich local merchant and presented his plans, theories, and current work to him. Calder agreed to finance his work.

With the influx of new money, Leonis conducted numerous new experiments and picked up the schedule. It quickly became known that James Calder and the wizard Leonis were working on a project together. Rival merchant houses began to show interest. Security at Leonis' estate had to be increased. Both church and crown showed an interest, and then came agents from other countries. Despite these difficulties, Leonis was able to achieve his goal within a few short years. In the year 745 FE he left the atmosphere of Arth for the first time, and in 746 FE he had solved the problem of breathing in space. An expedition was launched to the Moon in autumn of that year, landed and returned safely. The kingdom of Alenac of the planet Arth had become a space-faring nation.

The Age of Space Exploration

It took several weeks, but news of their wondrous voyage spread through the city, and then throughout the kingdom and beyond. The secrecy around Leonis' project had been intended to keep competitors and saboteurs away, and now that the voyage to the moon had been completed the greatest need for secrecy was gone. As Calder intended to profit from the new means of travel financially, the secret would have to be broken eventually. As Leonis and his assistants and apprentices built as many Spelljammer ships as possible, a representative of the king was invited on a second voyage to the moon.

More and more ships were built, and parties were sent out into space to explore what lay beyond Arth. Several ships were also used to map Arth itself as accurately as never before – from the air. Calder's merchants used the "flying ships" to visit distant countries – voyages that had once taken months could now be done in hours or days. Money began to pour in.

The King gave his blessing to the house Calder and signed a decree effectively giving Calder and Leonis the exclusive right to build Spelljammers and to explore space – in return for a special royal tax on any profits and for spelljamming helms to power royal warships.

Spelljammers visited Xula and made contact with the first "aliens", the Elves. Trade was established and two Elves were brought back to Arth where they were met by an astonished crowd. Tall tales of space exploration circulated; House Calder received thousands of volunteers who wished to travel into space. The only limit to the exploration of the solar system in those early days lay with the number of Spelljammer that could be outfitted.

As more and more helms were made and more and more people travelled into space and witnessed the operation of the magic of the helms, other kingdoms began to see some progress in duplicating the work. Eventually, agents also succeeded in stealing working spelljammer helms. In 752 FE other merchants and kingdoms began to test their own designs, and quickly joined Alenac in exploring space.

Meanwhile, Alenac had a good head-start. The kingdom set up little outposts on Xula and some other celestial bodies to facilitate trade, and some of them quickly grew into full-fledged colonies. Adventurers traveled to other worlds. Goods and money streamed back and forth; the kingdom grew very wealthy. The rivals began to contest much of this trade. Others set up

The History of Arth

colonies as well, undercutting House Caldor prices. As with any ship traveling to unknown regions, most space-ships were heavily armed, and it was only a matter of time before the first battles broke out in space. House Caldor was very powerful, with a relatively large space-navy, and nobody dared attack them; but the lesser space faring powers began to battle over what they saw as the most profitable trade routes. It was House Caldor which negotiated a truce and prevented the outbreak of an interplanetary colonial war, at the urging of Leonis. Several ground rules were set down which regulated space exploration. Few nations would have anybody dictate to them what they could and couldn't do, but eventually most kingdoms saw that it was useful to have a way to settle disputes.

Exploration of the solar system continued, and soon all major moons and all planets had been at least visited by humans. Voyages to the distant stars seemed impossible, but in 768 FE a method to access The Flow was found. Ships travelled much faster in the Flow than within the Solar System, and subsequently several nearby solar systems were found and explored. Colonies were established on a few worlds, and contact to several intelligent species was made. The merchant empire of Arth expanded with every year.

The Present

It is the year 799 FE. The fathers of Arth's space-flight, Calder and Leonis, are both dead. They left a lasting legacy, however; Arth's society has embraced space-flight and society and politics of the planet have been changed forever.

While much has been explored in the past 50 years, many mysteries remain. There are many places in the Solar System for adventurers to explore (and loot), and even more so outside. Some colonies – especially those on Velvun and Xula – have grown greatly since their foundation. Hundreds of thousands of humans today live off Arth. Space exploration is still mostly peaceful – there is so much space to expand into that the kingdoms of Arth can usually avoid one another, but none of them has given up espionage or sabotage to ensure that its rivals have a harder time. Other factions – like pirates – have emerged as well.

Finally, the first interplanetary war looms on the horizon. Though humans are yet unaware of the extent of the threat, Formian hives have begun attacks on the worlds of Arth.

ARTH

“The Earth is the cradle of mankind, but one does not live in the cradle forever.”

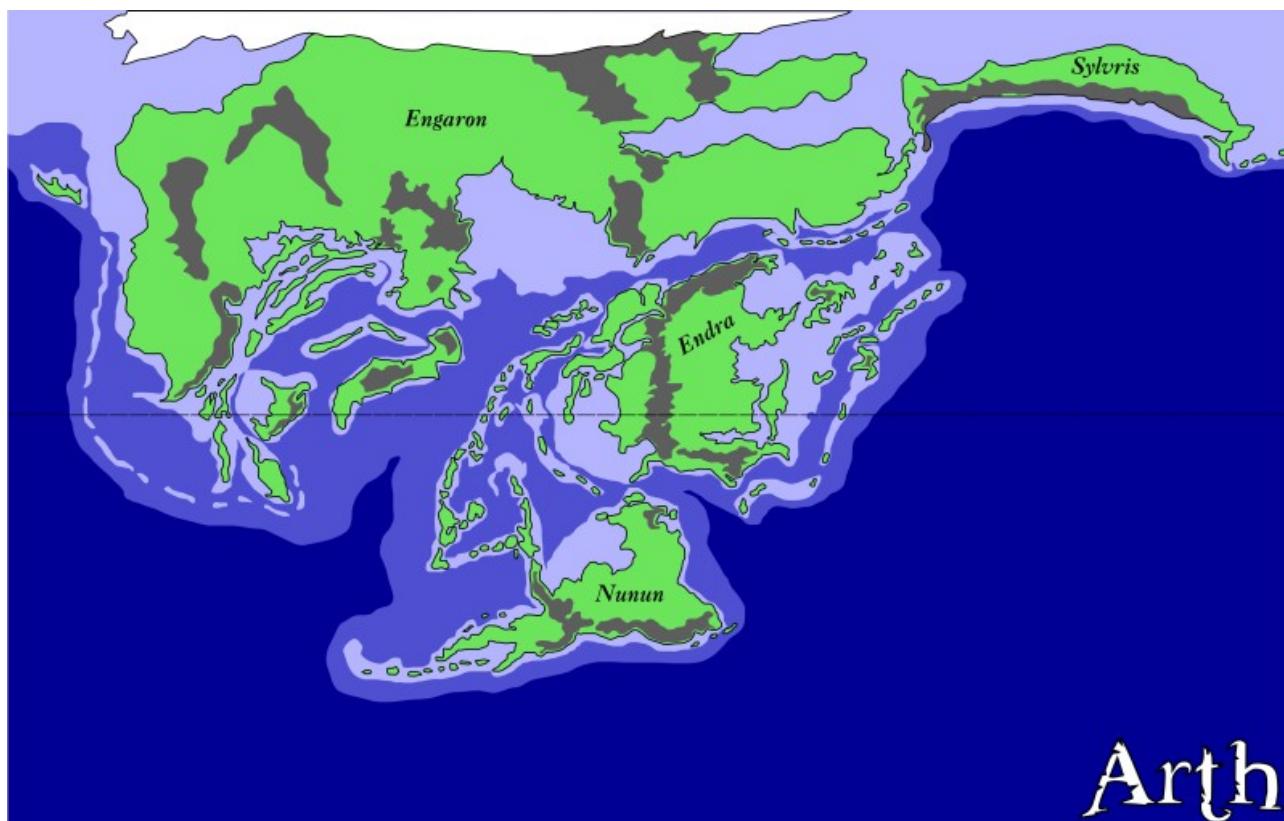
- Konstantin Tsiolkovsky

Arth is the home world of mankind. Humans have, over time, conquered most of its surface and adapted to local conditions with various ways of life and customs. Humans share this world with countless other species – all of them can be classified as either animals or monsters. There are no other sentient humanoid species present (unless one counts the occasional ghost or summoned demon). In civilized lands, monsters and the wilder animals have been driven off inhabited lands long ago.

Geography and Climate

For the most part, Arth is a warm and pleasant world. The polar regions are freezing cold during the winter – which lasts half a year for each of the poles due to the inclination in the axis of the planet. During the summer, the polar regions thaw up. The South Pole is almost completely ice free during this time, only the largest icebergs do not melt. In the North Pole region, plants and trees bloom and grow; the temperatures can reach as high as 10°C on warm days.

Arth consists of three main landmasses. The largest by far is called Engaron. It stretches over half-way around the globe. Its northern part is at the north pole; its south-western tip reaches



almost to the equator. The northern areas turn from arctic to temperate climate, and much of the continent is subtropical or even tropical. Several ragged mountain ranges subdivide the continent.

The two smaller main landmasses are called Endra and Nunun. Endra lays further to the east. Most of Endras interior is shielded by a massive mountain range to the north, west, and south, and consequently receives so little rainfall that it is one vast desert. The land west of the mountain range is fertile and humid and receives so much rain that many large streams flow back into the ocean. Flooding is a regular event, and a lot of the land consists of marshes and swamps.

Nunun, the southernmost of the landmasses of Arth, is covered by lush vegetation. It's a light rain forest that receives a lot of rain and sun and there is life everywhere. As the rainfall spreads out over larger areas there are fewer swamps and usually smaller rivers.

In addition to these three main landmasses, Arth has countless islands. Many of these are large enough for individual countries to have developed on them. The largest of them lies to the east of Engaron, in the temperate climate zone. It is called Sylvis. Its southern coast is a massive mountain range with some of the highest peaks on Arth; the northern part consists of farmlands, pinewood forests and plains.

Politics and Society

Engaron

Engaron is divided into countless kingdoms and city states. The most populous and powerful dominate an area comprising – very roughly – the southern half of the western half of the continent. The north-western lands are thinly populated, and while they supply many valuable resources such as iron, coal, and timber, most people prefer the warmer southern climates.

Like most people of Arth, the kingdoms of Engaron have always been expert shipbuilders and skilled traders. These traditions developed out of necessity; the terrain of Engaron is rugged with many forbidding mountain ranges. At the same time, the oceans off the coast had many inhabited islands. Travel by ship has always been the easiest way to travel longer distance, and the society of Engaron's kingdoms has been heavily influenced by this maritime past.

Most kingdoms of Engaron follow the classic feudal model. Hereditary monarchies are the rule – A king, who inherits his position from his ancestors, rules by "divine right" and offers protection to his subjects, who in turn swear loyalty to their lord. However many variants exist; for example in the kingdom of Alenac the king is viewed as a servant of the people; he still holds his title by right of inheritance, but he is expected to place the welfare of his subjects higher than his own. This works – with some kings better, with some not so well. Some kingdoms have parliaments; in most, these consists of noblemen. General suffrage is rare, and usually doesn't extend to women or peasants.

The Church maintains a strong influence on life in Engaron. The vast majority of the population are faithful believers. However, the church has lost much of its direct political power since the Great Death. Most notably the church does not maintain standing armed forces anymore, with the exception of an orders of Paladins whose main task is to protect the monasteries and

temples of the church. People attend church because they ask favors of the gods, not because they are fearful of the gods (or the church).

The kingdoms of Engaron get along fairly well, by and large. Traditional conflicts have been defused as each nation turned its attention space-ward. There seems to be little sense in envying the lands of your neighbors when entire planets waited to be colonized "out there". This doesn't mean there is no rivalry left, quite the contrary. The kingdoms still spy on each other and the more aggressive ones conduct sabotage where they can. The space-ports and fleets are a primary target, as are the wizards who make spaceflight possible. The stakes have been raised, after all – it is no longer a game played to control a continent (or world); whoever gains or keeps the upper hand will shape the fate of many worlds for centuries to come.

Life for most peasants and citizens has improved by leaps and bounds since the Great Death. There is no shortage of work; even the most unskilled workers can find gainful employment in agriculture. Many colonies are not self-sustaining, and import large amounts of food. In return, gold, silver, and goods flow back to the kingdoms on Arth. Even remote rural communities live in wealth compared to the situation a few hundred years ago. Citizens who are still unhappy with their lot in life can – and often do – immigrate to one of the many colonies and hope for a better life there.

Nunun

The rain forests of the southernmost continent do not lend themselves well to agriculture. Tribes and small kingdoms are self-sufficient, but they do not produce a large surplus. Traditionally, these people have exported silks, spices, exotic woods and of course precious metals and gemstones. Several powerful kingdoms had established colonies on Nunun; that is, conquered the lands of the natives.

With their attention turned to space, the colonies on Nunun have been neglected or even given up. The solar systems promises much greater riches. The locals for the most part are happy to return to their traditional ways of life. Colonists are being peacefully absorbed into the local population, and the locals did learn a thing or two from their would-be colonial masters: Irrigation techniques, the manufacture of steel weapons, and others.

Unfortunately, not all is peaceful. The northern tribe of the Cusa have access to horses and gunpowder weapons, and their chieftains have decided that it's now their turn to go on a war of conquest. They have managed to conquer many neighboring tribes, and are slowly working their way south and west. As their opponents are badly organized and usually badly equipped, it seems like only a matter of time before the entire continent falls to the Cusa. It remains to be seen what will happen then.

Endra

The inhabitants of the eastern continent Endra had never much to offer to the people of Engaron, and thus escaped being "colonized". The western wetlands are inhabited by small unorganized tribes who usually try to live on subsistence farming in a selected small area; the huge eastern desert is inhabited by nomadic tribes who travel around the desert, looking for food and water. Their lives are harsh and often short. Starvation and dehydration are constant

threats, and tribes often battle over an oasis. Reportedly, many tribes will not refrain from cannibalism either, usually out of necessity.

Sylvris

The entirety of Sylvris is controlled by one large empire ruled by a cult that calls itself the "Servants of Zhu". The people of Sylvris shy from contact with outsiders. Travelers and merchants were allowed to land, and many did manage to sell or buy from the locals, but always were they encouraged to leave again as quickly as possible.

Zhu is the greatest dragon that lives on Arth today. He is served by several lesser drakes, who are in turn worshiped and served by the cult. The cult, finally, rules over the peasants. The dragons do not bother the humans much, as long as the humans do not bother them. They will accept offerings of treasure or livestock, and they will protect the humans in case of an outside threat. They don't do anybody "personal favors", however, and do not listen much to what their worshipers have to say. This system has existed for hundreds, possibly for thousands of years.

THE SOLAR SYSTEM

“For I dipped into the Future, far as the human eye could see; saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.”

- Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Overview

The Solar System in which Arth is located does not have any special name. Arth's inhabitants simply refer to it as "The Solar System". However, when dealing with Outsiders, they will proudly distinguish their system as the "Solar System of Arth".

Arth's Solar System is a rather typical one as far as systems go. There are no strange or unusual conditions. Temperatures are fairly pleasant throughout the system, although temperatures get a little chilly beyond the asteroid belt and downright freezing as one approaches Xplanet9. Still, the low temperatures are nothing some thick coats cannot solve.

Spelljamming is commonplace in this system. Many “groundling” kingdoms own and operate spelljamming vessels and maintain bases and colonies on other worlds. There are many types of ships used by governments, trade organizations, and private individuals. Most groundlings are quite aware of spelljamming, even if they never even see a docked Spelljammer in a harbor.

Naming Convention

All planets are referred to by the names given to them by the humans of Arth, as they are the dominant space faring race. Local names have been noted where these exist. Other cultures will have their own names for all the planets as well.

Moons and other bodies that were unknown to Arth prior to the age of space flight were usually named by their discoverer, or by settlers, if any. Some have multiple names, especially if the discovery is disputed. The most common name has been used for these celestial bodies.

Minor Moons

The largest worlds usually have dozens of moons, many of them small asteroids. It is mentioned how many such moons are known; but they are not described unless there is a special reason for it. These minor moons are smaller than 200 km in diameter, usually smaller than 100 km and often smaller than 50km.

The Sun

Type: *Spherical Fire Body*

Diameter: *1.4 Million km*

The Sun is the central body of the Arth system. All other bodies - planets, moons, and so on - revolve around it. It provides the warmth and the light that gives life to the planets of the

The Solar System

system. Some say that the sun contains a gateway to the elemental plane of fire at its core. The sun does have a poisonous, searing hot atmosphere that is lethal to most creatures. Several "islands" of solid basalt float on or above the surface of the sun.

Appearance from Space

The sun looks like a giant, featureless ball of fire. The floating islands are lost in the glare. Due to the atmosphere of toxic fumes, its edge appears hazy.

Climate and Terrain

The sun is composed almost entirely of elemental fire. As a result the conditions on its surface are very similar to those found on the elemental plane of fire, and only the most fire-resistant creatures can survive here. Consequently, there is little variation in the terrain of the sun's surface. The sun does have an atmosphere, but it is composed of poisonous gasses and deadly toxins rather than air breathable by any humanoid being.

There are, however, a few places where the surface of the sun is solid. These can be seen from a distance as so-called "sunspots". In reality they are islands of solid basalt floating on or above the fiery surface of the sun. Some of these last for only a few days, but some have existed for hundreds or even thousands of years without being consumed by the intense heat. Whether they are short-lived or long, their undersides are half-melted, while on their topsides the cooled basalt forms the strangest crystalline shapes. The heat on any of these is still so high that any ship approaching close enough would be incinerated, and the poisonous atmosphere is still a problem, so few explorers have ever set foot on them.

Flora and Fauna

Few creatures not native to the elemental plane of fire can survive the heat on the surface of the sun. There are salamanders and magma, fire, and steam mephits. There are also rumors of colonies of Azers, fire giants, and other similar creatures. A few dragons may also have lairs on some of the more permanent rocky islands.

Resources and Trade

The sun isn't suited for exploration or exploitation. Some of the rocky islands floating above it may contain precious metals, crystals or gemstones, but it would be relatively difficult to mine them.

Adventure Hooks

- x A ship carrying a unique cargo has crashed on one of the floating basalt islands. The characters must find a way to retrieve that cargo from this difficult location against the opposition from well-equipped agents of a foreign power. They have to equip a ship in a way that will withstand the heat (using shades, mirrors, heat shields, protection from fire magic, and so on). In the climactic battle, they must fight the enemy agents on the islands while retrieving the cargo. Of course the island is about to disintegrate, and their heat-protection will not last forever.

Khumrar

Type: *Spherical Earth Body*

Diameter: *4880 km*

Orbit: *57.9 million km*

Khumrar is a small, rocky world that orbits close to the sun. It is tidally locked to the sun; its rotational and orbital speed cancel each other out and the same side of Khumrar faces the sun at all times. As a consequence, while the sunward side is hot enough to melt metals, the other side of the planet is a frozen wasteland. A small band of twilight circles the planet, but is made all but inhospitable by the savage storms that result from the uneven temperatures.

Although the surface of the planet is so hostile, there is some intelligent life in the region. Several space-stations of the so-called "Sun Kings" orbit Khumrar, shielded against the glare of the sun by giant screens and sails as well as magical protection.

Appearance from Space

The hot side appears as one giant desert, broken up only by occasional mountains or small, shiny lakes of molten metal. The desert is not of a uniform color, however; it has many shades of ochres, yellow, and brown sandy tones. Sand storms, especially near the twilight border to the cold side, can at times cover large tracts of land and block the view from space.

The cold side lies in eternal darkness.

Climate and Terrain

The sunward side of Khumrar is scorched day after day by the intense heat from the Sun. It is hot enough that lakes of molten lead exist here instead of normal seas, and most organic matter will be burned quickly if exposed to the intense heat. Barren rock and sandy deserts round out the sunward landscape of the planet.

The dark side of Khumrar is the opposite of the hot side. Here, what water or humidity once existed on the planet has long fallen as snow, forming a mighty glacier covering most of the hemisphere. The ice is as hard as rock. A few mountains pierce the glacier.

In between the two sides lies a small band that would be habitable were it not for the incredible winds. Air is warmed over the hot side and rises, pulling ice cold air from the cold side in. The winds are usually strong enough to knock any creature brave enough to best the storms off their feet. The wind is strong enough that it has polished the mountains in this area, resulting in strange smooth shapes that look utterly alien and out of place.

Flora and Fauna

The surface of Khumrar is almost completely hostile to any life-forms. What creatures might survive the extreme temperatures are likely unable to withstand the high winds and sandstorms. There are, however, many species that live under the surface. Various types of creatures burrow through the sands of the deserts on the hot side or through the ice on the cold side. The Thoqqua and a sand-dwelling variant of the Purple Worm are two prominent examples for creatures found on the hot side; Frost Worms live inside the glacier of the Cold Side. All

The Solar System

creatures on the cold side have some way to see in the darkness that forever cloaks their side of the world.

No settlements exist on the surface of the planet, however, there are several space stations in orbit around it.

Civilizations

Roughly a dozen "space stations" orbit Khumrar. Originally set-up by wealthy human families in the very early days of space exploration, they benefit from their strategic location in the center of the system. More often than not, long-range voyagers will pass by - and dock at what is the only hospitable place at the very core of the system.

And "hospitality" is the magic word when it comes to these stations. Their owners, the self-titled "Sun Kings", live in style and extravagance and they do everything to make their guests feel welcome. The space stations are in a state of continual carnival, with masked balls and all forms of entertainment. It is widely rumored that all imaginable pleasures can be had on the Sun Kings' space stations, as well as black market goods and information that would be hard to come by anywhere else.

The Sun Kings are loosely organized, with each of the stations having one vote in an irregular council that presides over matters that will affect all the stations. Bribery, blackmail and backstabbing are common means to affect such votes.

Ports of Call

Dozens of space stations circle the planet.

- x Sol Station
- x City of Light
- x Crystal Palace
- x Paradise station
- x Dreamland
- x Light Eternal

Resources and Trade

Khumrar has extensive deposits of metals and minerals. However, extracting them is very costly and dangerous and as a rule prospectors tend to move elsewhere for business unless there is some very specific reason to try a landing on Khumrar.

The Sun Kings do send expeditions to the surface of Khumrar to obtain water ice, and to hunt various native creatures for their furs and skins as well as food.

Other Issues

The Sun King stations are a hotbed of intrigue and crime. Even discounting foreign dignitaries, merchants and adventurers who are visiting, the Sun Kings are constantly plotting against each

another. To them, it's as much about real power and influence as it is a game to keep themselves entertained.

Moons

Khumrar does not have any moons.

Adventure Hooks

- x The Sun King stations can serve as a very colorful backdrop for any adventure. For example a murder mystery works well here; the Players have to uncover who committed the crime against the background of the eternal carnival, while agents of some of the Sun Kings are trying to disrupt their investigations.

Velvun

Type: Spherical Earth Body

Diameter: 12100 km

Orbit: 108 million km

Local Name: Ssyllra

Velvun is a world with a thick, acidic atmosphere. Its surface is covered by a dense jungle of strange plants. Few large bodies of water exist on the planet. It's always foggy, except for times of heavy monsoon-like rains, where the thick clouds will block even more of the sun's light. The highest peaks pierce the cloud cover like islands an ocean and are colonized by humans and other races.

Appearance from Space

Due to its almost constant and complete cloud cover, Velvun appears as a featureless, white globe. The mountain peaks are generally too small to make out at a great distance.

Climate and Terrain

Velvun is covered in a thick layer of clouds that traps heat from the sun and causes the entire planet to be covered by a steamy, hot jungle. As relatively little light penetrates the cloud cover, the days on Velvun are only as bright as a severely overcast day on Earth. The jungle's fog only clears during the times of monsoon-like rain. However, during the rain periods, the clouds will block even more light, limiting visibility even further. The jungle is dark and forbidding during rainy periods.

The atmosphere is very rich in carbon oxides, which cause much of the water on the planet to be rather acidic. While non-native life forms can survive these conditions, it causes them severe long-term health problems.

The exception to these conditions are the tops of the highest mountain peaks. These pierce the atmosphere, and conditions here are much more friendly. Several cities have been built on these

The Solar System

peaks by humans and other humanoid beings who would find life on the actual surface difficult or even dangerous.

There are few large bodies of open water on Velvun. There are many lakes and countless swamps and rivers, but no seas that would warrant the name "ocean". What seas exist are relatively shallow. Most lakes, rivers, and seas carry murky water, and all are inhabited by many aquatic animals many of which are predatory.

Flora and Fauna

All kinds of unusual plants grow in the jungles of Velvun. The plants are fiercely competitive for what little sunlight filters through; this has caused many plants to evolve in strange directions. Many of the oddest plant-like creatures can be found here.

The highest forms of animal life on the surface of Velvun are reptilian. Their thick hides protect them from the acidic conditions. Dinosaurs, dragons, wyvern, digesters, but also snakes and a large variety of amphibians can be found living in the jungles. There are also many types of plants or plant-like monsters, for example Greenwise, Phantom Fungus, Tendriculos, Assassin Vines or Shambling Mounds. The most intelligent natives on the surface of Velvun are Kobolds and Lizardmen.

Civilizations

Life in the mountain peak cities is totally different. These are inhabited by humans, some elves, half-elves and a few individuals of other species.

The most advanced civilization on Velvun is that of the cloud-city dwellers. These cities conduct frequent trade with other worlds, selling products from the lowlands in exchange for manufactured goods.

The lizardmen of the surface live in primitive villages and clan-like tribes. While some lizardmen are sometimes hired as soldiers, they have little desire to leave their homes. While they are distrustful of strangers, they do trade with the cloud-city dwellers. Their customs are savage, though overall honorable.

The kobolds are an entirely different lot. They find the concept of space travel fascinating, and they have little that holds them on their home planet. Here, they are mostly scavengers - not intelligent or powerful enough to hunt the bigger animals, and treated like vermin by both the city dwellers and the lizardmen. They lack the infrastructure and resources to build their own spelljamming ships, but will try anything and everything to get on board one if presented with the opportunity.

Ports of Call

The mountain-peak cloud cities provide convenient ports-of-call for spacefarers; however, they usually do not have open bodies of water and so require ships to either stay afloat in the air, or land on solid ground.

Resources and Trade

Velvun is rich in exotic organic materials. Exports medicines, herbs, leather, tough wood, and (illegally) drugs. Heaven for big game hunters.

Other Issues

No entries.

Moons

Velvun does not have any moons.

Adventure Hooks

- x A Kobold stowaway makes for a great side-plot, and this would be a great way to introduce a Kobold PC to the party.
- x A human hunting party has been killing off entire tribes of Kobolds. The PC's are invited to "join the fun". If they parlay with the next tribe selected as a target, the Kobolds will beg the PC's to be their protectors. If they agree this could have long-term effects on their reputation on Velvun – some colonists will appreciate their sense of justice, while others will view them as traitors.
- x An expedition was lost on Velvun, the PC's are hired to find them. Only cryptic hints remain – a near-dead native guide, and a diary. Due to the cloud cover, thick vegetation and fog the PC's cannot search from the air and must retrace the steps of the first expedition. The native guide – Lizardman or Kobold – might join them as well, giving the DM a great chance for various Jungle adventures on the way. After they return from their mission of mercy, the PC's will know Velvun fairly well.

Arth

Type: *Spherical Earth Body*

Diameter: *12700 km*

Orbit: *152 million km*

Arth is the home world of the human race, and due to their dominance of space the political and economic center of the solar system. For the most part, it is a true "garden" world; seemingly perfectly adapted for human life (while, of course, in reality it is the other way around). The climate runs across the whole spectrum from cold polar regions to steamy jungles. A large percentage of the surface is covered by water.

Appearance from Space

Arth looks like a blue-green sphere; many bands of clouds cover parts of the world at all times. A large silvery moon orbits Arth.

The Solar System

Climate and Terrain

The climate of Arth varies greatly. Overall it is fairly temperate. The polar caps are frozen solid for the winter, but thaw during the summer. There are some deserts on the main continent. The rest of the planet is subtropical to tropical. There is hardly any place on Arth that does not teem with life – and that is not inhabited by humans.

Flora and Fauna

Because of the variety of climates and environments, and its relatively hospitable environment, Arth is inhabited by a huge variety of plant and animal life.

Civilizations

Humans are the dominant species of the planet. Organized into kingdoms of various sizes. Few kingdoms trust each other, but they will co-operate against outside threats. Roughly 16th-17th century earth. Gunpowder, printing press, universities. Advanced feudal societies, influence of church waning. Republican ideas are taking hold in some regions.

Ports of Call

Many, many, many. Most space-faring nations have 1-2 main ports.

Gateway: An asteroid orbiting halfway between Arth and its moon. A city slowly grew on the asteroid, which is often described as the "first outpost of mankind". Several kingdoms maintain small ports on the asteroid and use it as a base from which to patrol the orbital space of Arth. Gateway is also the site of a large observatory.

Resources and Trade

Arth exports food, because its overall very mild climate and established agricultural society allow it to produce food in relatively large quantities. It also exports weapons and other manufactured goods. Most kingdoms are very weary of exporting firearms to planets on which they are unknown, however there are many unscrupulous merchant houses who will not follow such restrictions.

The planet, in turn, imports luxury items, spices, exotic goods, cloth, silks, jewelry, precious metals and stones, and other valuables.

Other Issues

Many rocks, dust, and other bits and pieces have gathered at the Trojan points. The asteroids here are all fairly small, but together they allow the Trojans to be used as hiding places. This was used by pirates in the early years of space exploration, and several merchant ships met their fate here. However, the navies of Arth eventually ended piracy so close to home. However, there are now also parts of various ship-wrecks intermingled among the cloud of rocks at the Trojan points. While little valuables remain, these wrecks are still sometimes visited by inquisitive adventurers or by smugglers who wish to use them to temporarily hide their contraband.

Moons

The Moon: Arth has a single, large moon, measuring 3512km in diameter. It is of a grayish silvery-white color and covered in myriads of craters – some large, some small. Most are the result of meteor impacts, but some are of volcanic origin.

Some regions of the moon are flat and covered with seas of a fine, darkish dust. This dust is suspended in air and has about the same overall density as water, which makes it possible for sea-worthy spelljammer ships to touch down in these seas. However, the dust particles will damage a ship's hull over time.

The moon isn't totally lifeless. It has a thin atmosphere – too thin for normal humans, but enough to sustain local life forms. There are many varieties of mosses and lichen.

The casual explorer would never realize that the moon is also inhabited by intelligent creatures. Mooncalves live in the jagged mountain ranges of the "dark side" of the moon. Moonbeasts live in caves, where they feed on a race of intelligent insectoid creatures.

Finally, there are several colonies of Myconids in the deep caverns below the moon's surface.

Gateway: This asteroid city circles Arth roughly half-way between the planet and its moon. See "Ports of Call", above.

Adventure Hooks

- x One of the pioneers of space exploration dies, and his heirs find several exquisite crystals in his possessions. Notes indicate that they were found on Arth's moon. The heirs want to sponsor the players to go to the moon and find more of these crystals. A diary or other notes provide clues; the crystals can only be found deep underground. The player could raid the caves, or they might find a way to deal with one of the sentient races.
- x One of the space-faring nations might decide that aerial gunboats give it the edge to defeat the dragons of Sylvis and begins planning an invasion. The players could take part in this invasion (on either side) or try to prevent the plan.

Xula

"Professor Lowell had been right – right theory, wrong universe."

- Robert A. Heinlein, "The Number of the Beast"

Type: *Spherical Earth Body*

Diameter: *6800 km*

Orbit: *228 million km*

In the distant past Xula was once much like Arth. However, for some unknown reason, the world began to dry up thousands of years ago. The water slowly vanished. Rivers dried out. Oceans and lakes shrank, leaving swamps, marshes, salt flats, and deserts.

The Elves, the dominant native civilization of Xula, tried to irrigate their cities by building huge canals. But this enormous project failed as the water reclined further and further and the Elves

The Solar System

became nomads, losing most of their former achievements. Today, few open bodies of water remain and most of the planet's water is locked in the polar ice caps.

Three separate civilizations live on the surface of Xula today: The human colonists from Arth, and the original natives of Xula: The Elves and the Orcs. Interaction between these species has also resulted in Half-Elves and Half-Orcs.

Appearance from Space

Xula appears as a dusty desert world. Sand and rock cover most of its surface. The color ranges from ochre to oranges and some yellows to deep reds; overall the planet appears unnaturally red. Some areas are dark green; these are the remaining marshes and steppes. Few clouds are in the atmosphere, and those that form will do so mostly at the poles or near very high mountains. It never rains on Xula. Also of note are several very high volcanoes, easily spotted when one approaches the planet. The vast network of huge canals that the natives built is also visible from orbit.

Climate and Terrain

Little is left of Xula's once lush forests and gentle meadows. The planet has turned into one giant desert. Red and ocher sands cover most of its surface. Huge volcanoes reach high into the thin air. Mountains, rolling hills, ragged cliffs and deep canyons criss-cross many parts of the planet's surface.

In some areas, mostly the lowest basins of the former oceans, small lakes that do not deserve the name "sea" survive. Marshland and swamps are common around them.

The native civilization of Xula built a huge network of canals to irrigate their dried-up cities. As the oceans shrank, the cities - and with them the canals - slowly followed the dropping water line. Later, the natives expanded the canal network to transport water from the polar regions all across the planet.

Even today, many of these canals and the mysterious pumping stations that power them, are still operational. Others, however, have become clogged up or have had their dams break, allowing the precious water to flow into the countryside. Again, marshes and swamps have developed as a consequence.

The canal network is fed by the polar caps at the North and South pole of Xula. Here, large reserves of water ice survive in arctic conditions. The ice melts during the spring and summer, rushing down the canals.

Flora and Fauna

With the slow disappearance of water, most species of flora and fauna had to either adapt rapidly, or become extinct. Arctic creatures survive well at the poles, as their habitat has changed the least of all.

In other parts of the area, desert- and marsh-dwelling creatures may be found thriving. Inside the canals and few remaining sea-lakes live all kinds of water creatures. Due to the intense competition for the small remaining habitat, these tend to be extremely tough compared to their Arthian counterparts.

Civilizations

Three distinctive civilizations now inhabit the red planet. Two of these are natives: Elves and Orcs. The third is a recent arrival, and has taken control of many important regions of the planet: Humans.

The Orcs and Elves share a common origin and once ruled over the planet together, usually in peaceful coexistence, at other times under more difficult circumstances. It was they who built the cities and pyramids and canals that now lay in ruins. When the water began to dry out, the more aggressive Orcs began to compete fiercely for the remaining resources, leading to a "civil war". When the Elves gained the upper hand, the Orcs retreated into the hills and mountains of the planets, where they still live in barbarous tribes, preying on wildlife, Elven caravans and human travelers alike.

The Elves have become a nomadic species by necessity, traveling from one lake to the next, living off the land and never taxing any location too much. They often clash with their former allies, the Orcs. The Elves have grudgingly accepted that Humans now rule their planet. Some Elves have befriended Humans, and some have decided to leave their home and explore other planets, but most Elves just continue to mind their own business, and trek on as they have for thousands of years.

Several kingdoms of Arth have set up outposts on Xula, which quickly developed into full-scale colonies. Many volunteers wanted to start a new life on another world, or wanted to be part of the great adventure. To the kings, this was perfectly fine: They quickly realized that Xula meant an entire new world that would be a source of great wealth. It didn't matter that it was a wasteland – Arth has plenty of food, but Xula is rich in minerals, and in lost treasures and ancient secrets that might well give their discoverer an edge in the great game of intrigue that is played out on Arth every day – or, at the very least, would mean tremendous riches if unearthed.

Ports of Call

There are various human colonies but no native space-ports. There are not many bodies of water except a few canals; almost all of the large remaining cities are located on canals and so ships that can only land in water can easily visit this planet despite its desert climate.

Resources and Trade

Due to its very nature, Xula imports food and other plant and animal products. It exports some manufactured goods, technologies, magic items and knowledge, art objects, gems, and precious metals.

Other Issues

The Orcs are fighting against Elves and human colonists alike. The colonies are rivals of each other, and while they will band together against the Orcs, there is a lot of competition (in good times) or even armed conflict (in bad times) between them.

Moons

Xula has two tiny moons:

The Solar System

Fynn is a small asteroid some 22 kilometers in diameter. It orbits Xula once every 8 hours, as it is very close to the planet. From the surface, it can be seen rising every 11 hours.

Xiva is even smaller than Fynn, a mere 13 kilometers in diameter. It orbits Xula at a much greater distance, slowly catching up with Xula's rotational speed, and can thus be seen to rise every three days.

Adventure Hooks

- x A trek across the surface with an Elven caravan or a voyage along one of the grand canals in a barge would be a good framework for many adventures – Explore ruins, protect against an ambush, learn about the local culture and so on.
- x Orcs have kidnapped human explorers. The players have to rescue them before the Orcs get around to slaughter their prisoners. (Or worse.)
- x Two human settlements are fighting over a mine or over fertile land. The Pcs must either chose sides, or negotiate a compromise. Matters are complicated by a weapons merchant, who is actively (but covertly) stirring up the conflict to sell his wares.

Asteroid Belt

Type: Earth Belt with a few Earth Clusters in between

Diameter: Varies, 220 larger than 100 km and up to 1000 km

Orbit: 300 – 510 million km

Gravity: Light – Normal

A belt of asteroids orbits around the sun between Xula and Awan. These asteroids are believed to have been a planet once in the distant past; however it is unknown what may have caused its destruction.

The rocks are thick in the belt and present a clear navigational hazard for spelljamming ships. Most asteroids are far apart, and easily avoided, but some groups of rocks are thick clusters that ships can only enter at great risk.

Many of the asteroids, however, also promise riches of some sort; some have breathable air or even plant- and animal life; on others crashed Spelljamming ships await salvaging. The hardy dwarves mine many of the asteroids rich in metal ores. There are also persistent rumors of pirate bases.

Appearance from Space

Every asteroid looks different, but most appear as irregular rocky shapes. The asteroids are generally relatively far apart – many kilometers at least – but some dense clusters of chaotically tumbling rocks exist as well.

Climate and Terrain

The climate of most asteroids is temperate to cold, though they are too small to have any real weather or even cloud formations. Some are lifeless rocks, others are big enough to support

complete – if small - ecologies. Most do have atmospheres and at least some plant life like moss and lichen on them.

Flora and Fauna

Besides space pirates, who hide among denser groups of rocks for unwitting prey, the asteroid belt is sparsely populated. Undead can be found on surprisingly many asteroids. Corporeal undead are usually the remains of spacemen who were marooned there; the incorporeal undead, spectres, and shadows are said to be the restless souls of the planet that once existed here. Either will attack on sight, and ships exploring the asteroid belt had best bring a cleric along.

Civilizations

Belt People: The Asteroid Belt is inhabited by a colorful group of people known collectively as Belt People. Many of them are prospectors, eternally searching the Belt for that rich deposit of ore that will let them live like kings; others are tradesmen, explorers, or even pirates. They all have a flamboyant attitude in common that also reflects in their clothes. Do not expect anything less than garish colors, boastful talk, and wild fencing duels in the streets of the asteroid cities.

Formian Forward Base: Not generally known is that the Formians have established at least one large forward base in the asteroid belt. From here, they launch occasional raids, but they mostly keep track of the activities of the other races in the system from this base, using mind-controlled humanoids as the crew for captured vessels.

Dwarves: The dwarven clans maintain several asteroid bases within the Belt. They are constantly looking for metal ores, which they mine and manufacture into goods of all sorts.

Ports of Call

Some of the largest asteroids in the belt have settlements.

Resources and Trade

The asteroid belt is very rich in minerals, especially metals and metal ores. The chaotic nature of the belt means that many ships have been wrecked here in the past, and salvaging operations are a profitable, if minor, business.

Finally the belt makes for a good hideout, and an easy location to ambush ships in. As a consequence, the belt has a large pirate population.

Other Issues

The human asteroid miners feel some resentment towards the dwarfs, who they view as direct competitors. The dwarfs in turn sometimes view the human prospectors as heretics, who take the natural resources of the asteroid belt for mere personal profit. They also consider the human goods and craftsmanship as very inferior to their own, which isn't helping the relations between the two groups.

Adventure Hooks

- x Jack, a belter, has managed to find a rich lode. The asteroid that contains it has a very eccentric orbit, and nobody except Jack knows about the asteroid. However, he has to hire additional men to mine it, and someone sells him out. Claim-jumpers begin to make his life difficult, and pirates are scouting out the area. Jack believes it is only a matter of time before they will attack, and he hires the Players to defend him and his claim.
- x All eyes turn as a Dwarf enters the tavern the players are currently in. He knows the players by reputation, and he asks their help. A well-organized band of pirates has attacked his home ship. The pirates were beaten back, but the ship damaged. The dwarf is certain that the pirates will try again. Many of his clan members already grow hostile of humans in general. The dwarf wants the players to help defend their ship, so his fellow dwarfs will see that humans are not generally evil. The players must avoid alienating the hostile dwarfs, and earn their friendship and respect, to avoid a general deterioration of the relations between humans and dwarfs.

Awan

Type: Spherical Air Body

Diameter: 143000 km

Orbit: 780 million km

Gravity: Normal on the "islands"

Awan is a classic "air" world. It consists of a huge sphere of breathable air, made clearly visible against the space background by the many layers of colorful clouds within the air envelope. There is no central body, but several solid "islands" of rock float among the clouds. Many moons of all types orbit around Awan.

Appearance from Space

Awan is a huge sphere of blue air in which many layers of colorful clouds circle around a central point. The clouds are broken in many places, allowing the a view further down inside the planet. As a result, Awan looks like a sphere of swirling colors.

Climate and Terrain

The "floating islands" usually aren't round asteroids, but rather have flat tops and jagged undersides. It is not clear what process shaped them. Gravity will hold things down on the flat surface, but if a person stands on the other side, he will feel like standing on a very steep mountain. Some of these islands are quite large – many kilometers across – and many have puddles of water, some plant or even animal life.

Flora and Fauna

Due to its nature, Awan is home to many types of avian creatures. But there is also a variety of flora and fauna on the various rocks floating in its air envelope. Some of these are not native, but

were brought here by chance by various methods including visiting spelljammer ships. There are no native sentient species.

Civilizations

Awan does not have a native civilization. However, there are some supply depots and minor outposts set up by Arth humans.

Ports of Call

The Arth outposts serve as the only civilized port of call in Awan.

Resources and Trade

Awan has no real resources to export, except some food, water and air as supplies for passing spelljammers

Other Issues

No entries.

Moons

Awan has four large and many small moons. The small moons are similar to the Asteroids in size; the largest of them are a few hundred kilometers in size. The four large moons are:

Furnace: This moon measures some 3600km in diameter. It is a volcanic world with a poisonous atmosphere. This world has the most active volcanism in the entire solar system; in fact its surface gets completely reworked at least every decade, making maps of the world useless and making long-term settlements on the surface completely impossible. Some magma and mud related creatures live on Furnace, however, and some areas are relatively safe for humans for extended periods of time. Unfortunately, a seemingly habitable area could be engulfed by lava without warning at literally any moment. Spells that cause earthquake-like effects are always *Empowered* on this world; all spells that create or use volcanos are automatically *Maximized*.

Xmoon6b: [Europa] This moon is a water world with a diameter of 3120km. The surface of the moon is frozen, and only about 20% of it is open ocean. Most of the open ocean is in the form of cracks between large ice "continents". The water is salty; it is icy cold at the surface, but gets warmer the deeper one dives until it is similar to the water of tropical climates. The reason for this is that the small rocky core of the planet contains hot magma on the inside which then warms the water around it - and ultimately keeps the moon from freezing solid.

The frozen surface is relatively smooth, with few jagged peaks, canyons or impact craters. It is criss-crossed by a large number of cracks and fissures, however, as the ice cap keeps breaking up from the tidal forces acting on the world.

The oceans of Xmoon6b are home to many water-dwelling species. Many of them are plant-based, for example there are aquatic versions of shambling mounds and otyughs.

Xmoon6c: [Ganymede] is the largest of Awan's moons, measuring 5260km in diameter. It has a rocky core which is completely mantled with a thick layer of ice. No free water exists on the

surface, and the moon is essentially life-less. The surface of the ice mantle consists of a roughly equal mix of darker, mountainous regions and bright, flatter areas. There are several large and many small impact craters visible from space.

There are indicators that the moon was once much warmer. Explorers have found the frozen remains of both plants and animals during tentative mining operations. However, there are no signs that any kind of sentient life-form ever lived on Xmoon6c. As there are few resources or treasures to be found on the moon, few spacefarers visit it.

Xmoon6d: [Callisto] This is an icy moon of some 4800km diameter. Its surface has been shaped by a sheer bombardment of asteroids; craters are about the only feature that can be found on the surface. The largest craters are several thousand kilometers in diameter. The moon's atmosphere is thin and extremely chilly. No life exists on the moon.

Adventure Hooks

- x No entires.

Xplanet7 Saturn "Hot Air World"

Type: *Spherical Air Body*

Diameter: *120500 km*

Orbit: *1426 million km*

Gravity: *Normal (on the floating rocks)*

Like Awan, Xplanet7 is a world consisting mostly of air, but here the similarities already end. Bands of white clouds streak through the atmosphere and make it more visible. The one thing that truly makes Xplanet7 stand out, however, is the system of majestic rings that circles around the world. These rings are one of the main reason explorers travel to Xplanet7; despite their natural beauty the rings are a source of crystals and diamonds which can earn a successful prospector a lot of money.

The planet itself consists of a myriad of rocky bodies floating inside the air envelope. They are warmed by a small, central fire body. Most of the rocks support some form of life, from lichen and plants to higher animals. Some have even been settled. Xplanet7 is also home to many avian creatures.

Appearance from Space

Xplanet7 looks like a translucent the pale blue and white sphere of gas; it's surrounded by a wide ring which looks impressive from afar and absolutely spectacular from anywhere within Xplanet7's system of moons. The ring is made up of lumps of ice and rocks and crystals and glitters in the light of the sun.

Climate and Terrain

Due to the central fire body within Xplanet7, the planet is unusually warm and the temperature on the floating rocks depends on how close to the core they are. The outermost rocks are temperate to warm, while the vast majority of the rocks are subtropical or even tropical. Since a

lot of "sunlight" (from the central fiery body) shines on the "undersides" of the rocks, plants usually grow more densely there than on the "upper sides". At the same time the rain falls on the upper sides. Plants either live off of the moisture that leaks down the sides and to the underside, or grow roots around – or sometimes through! - the rocks to reach the water on the upper sides. This gives these chunks a weird “upside down” feeling in the eyes of humans.

Xplanet7 has very active weather patterns. Water condenses in clouds in the uppermost atmosphere, rains down and falls towards the core, only to be vaporized immediately. Sudden, heavy rains are a common occurrence, as are heavy thunderstorms.

Flora and Fauna

Xplanet7 is home to gigantic insects of all types. They rule the planet supreme, but are not sentient. The top predator of the planet is a type of huge spider, however, which catches these insects in gigantic nets. The largest of these nets can be a hazard for unwary spelljammers.

Civilizations

No native civilization.

Ports of Call

No local ports.

Resources and Trade

The ring system of Xplanet7 contains many gems, crystal, and other precious stones and minerals. Of course, finding them is a problem: While popular legends suggest that one just has to fly close to the ring and open one's hand to find a diamond, the reality is different: Due to their nature, the ring is very dangerous for Spelljammers; and it takes a lot of patience and a little luck to find enough of the stones. And then it takes a loyal and experienced crew to defend against pirates who would rather leave the risks of prospecting the rings to others. It is sure money, but it's also very, very dangerous.

Other Issues

No entries.

Moons

7 major moons, 0 medium moons, 45 minor moons

The Rings are not exactly a moon, but of course the mechanics are similar. They consist of countless tiny rocks and ice fragments and glitter beautifully in the sunlight. Most of these are very small - only very few are larger than a few dozen meters. The rings are densely packed with objects, which tumble about, sometimes colliding with each other, and often fragmenting into smaller pieces in the process. To steer a spelljamming ship into the ring would be suicidal. However, there are enough precious stones, gems, diamonds and valuable crystals in the ring system that many daring prospectors try to mine the rings. Many lose their ship and lives in the

attempt, others never strike it rich before giving up – and some are lucky and become very wealthy.

Another unusual feature of the Rings is a number of huge stone pyramids of unknown origin that have been reported drifting within. It's unclear how many there are - it's almost certain there is more than one, but no two have ever been seen at the same time. The pyramids seem to drift around the ring system in either a very complicated pattern or purely at random. It's practically impossible to predict where they will be, and the only way to find one is by pure chance.

Xplanet7a [Mimas] - also known as Death Moon - is a somewhat egg-shaped moon of Xplanet7 measuring some 400km in diameter. At some point in the distant past, a huge object must have collided with Xplanet7a. It ripped the planet's surface open and catapulted most of its atmosphere into space. As the molten rock cooled, a gigantic impact crater remained. It is some 130km in diameter; its walls are 5km high. It is very visible from a distance, and by far the most notable surface feature of the moon.

The tiny moon must have been very different before the impact. It must have had a much thicker atmosphere that supported life. Even today, dried-up lakes and other geological features can be seen on the surface where they were not obliterated by magma during the time of impact. Moreover, at several locations on Xplanet7a cities can be seen even today. They lay ruins, and have been thoroughly plundered. Given the moon's small size, it is unlikely that any undiscovered ruined cities remain. However there very well may be sealed-off vaults or other secrets, and explorers and scavenger parties periodically visit the world.

It is not known who originally inhabited the moon, but given its small size it seems unlikely they were native to Xplanet7a.

Xplanet7a's atmosphere is very thin, but breathable - comparable to the highest peaks on other planets. Explorers will become fatigued quickly, with possible brain damage or even death after several days if they do not bring their own oxygen supply (such as on board a Spelljammer).

Xplanet7b [Enceladus] is a small moon of a mere 500km diameter. It is a barren, rocky world, covered by strange pillars of stone. They branch out at the top, much like regular trees; for they are indeed huge plants. Their biology is based on silicates, and each stone tree takes many millenia to reach its normal height. In many regions the trees grow quite close to each other, making landing by Spelljammer difficult, but there are enough clearings to permit landing. The stone trees cast many shadows on the ground as they try to absorb as much sunlight as possible - as a result the actual surface of Xplanet7b is dark and gloomy. Other than this, there is no animal life and no food on Xplanet7b. Some fresh water in the form of ice can be found in the polar regions.

Xplanet7c [Tethys] is about 1070km diameter. The moon is characterized by the snow storms which engulf much of its surface at any time. Several mountain ranges pierce through the snowy surface, most prominently are ring-shaped mountains formed by a large crater (about 400km in diameter) in the western hemisphere of the moon. On the opposite side of the world, the snowy and icy surface is broken up in a huge chasm that reveals an ocean underneath the ice cover. This ocean is very salty and very cold.

Some volcanos also exist at various locations, mostly around the equatorial regions.

Xplanet7d[Dione] is a moon a little over 1000 km in diameter. Its surface consists of plains, broken hills and low mountains with various large lakes and small oceans at various locations. Erosion has given the mountains, hills and other such formations a rounded, soft look: Heavy rains and strong winds are the most common weather, and only rarely does the cloud cover of Xplanet7d break up to let sunlight reach the surface. Several very active volcanos exist as well, and volcanism seems to be the main source of new mountains. Still, the world is much less active than Furnace and all but the most dramatic eruptions are easily avoided. Fortunately, those are very rare.

Xplanet7d was visited several times in the past by prospectors, and abandoned mines can be found at several locations.

Emerald is a moon some 1530km in diameter. It has a relatively thick atmosphere and a high humidity. Much of its surface is covered in lush, green rainforests. Some open seas also exist. The largest of these seas is located around the north pole. High plateaus and mountain ranges pierce the foliage here and there.

Xplanet7f [Titan] is a moon surprisingly similar to Arth. It is some 2000km in diameter. Standing on its surface, one might mistake the scenery for Arth - except for the shorter distance to the horizon, and the spectacular view of Xplanet7 in the sky. The terrain is very rugged, there are only small open seas but many rivers and many long, deep lakes. Coasts and lake shores are ragged with many fjords. Most of the planet is covered with pine tree forests. The winters are long and harsh, there is a lot of snow. The summers however are rather friendly, but there are rainfalls which can last for weeks at a time. Xmoon7f has extensive polar ice caps.

Several settlements have been founded on Xplanet7f by religious communities who for various reasons wished for a simple life away from Arth and the dominant Church. Most are hunters or farmers, few are craftsmen. Community sense is strong; strangers are treated with hospitality but also with suspicion.

Xplanet7g[Iapetus] *The low [density](#) of Iapetus indicates that it is primarily composed of [ice](#), with only a small amount of rocky materials.*

Furthermore, the overall shape of Iapetus is neither spherical nor ellipsoid—unusual for a large moon; parts of its globe appear to be squashed flat, and its unique equatorial ridge (see below) is so high that it visibly distorts the moon's shape even when viewed from a distance. Scientists are currently unable to describe Iapetus's shape perfectly as the Cassini probe has not yet imaged its entire surface.

in the [seventeenth century](#), [Giovanni Cassini](#) observed that he could see Iapetus only on one side of Saturn and not on the other. He drew the conclusion that one side of Iapetus was darker than the other, a conclusion confirmed by images from the Voyager and Cassini spacecraft.

The difference in coloring between the two Iapetian hemispheres is striking. The leading hemisphere is dark ([albedo](#) .03–.05) with a slight [reddish](#)-brown coloring, while its most of the trailing hemisphere and poles is bright (albedo .5–.6, almost as bright as [Europa](#)). The pattern of coloration is analogous to a spherical [ying-yang](#) symbol. The dark region is named [Cassini Regio](#), and the bright region [Roncevaux Terra](#).

The origin of this dark material is not currently known, though several theories have been proposed (see below). Its thickness is also unknown; there are no bright [craters](#) present on the

The Solar System

dark hemisphere, so if the dark material is thin it must be constantly renewed since otherwise a meteor impact would punch through the layer to reveal brighter underlying material.

When NASA's [Voyager 2](#) flew past Iapetus on [22 August 1981](#) at a relatively distant 966,000 km (600,000 mi), the spacecraft's cameras could make out few details in the area of dark material, but revealed the bright side to be icy and heavily cratered. On [31 December 2004](#), the Cassini spacecraft passed within 123,000 km (77,000 mi) of Iapetus and photographed Cassini Regio at far a higher resolution than Voyager was able, but the mystery surrounding its origin has only deepened.

Adventure Hooks

x No entries.

Oloro

Type: *Spherical Air Body*

Diameter: *51000 km*

Orbit: *2870 million km*

Gravity: *None (no solid bodies)*

Oloro is another air world, but it is very different from Awan and Xplanet7. Where those two are basically pleasant, habitable places, Oloro is a hell of noxious fumes and poisonous gasses. It is also unusual in that its axis of rotation is tilted by 90°, pointing the poles at the sun for about half the year.

Appearance from Space

Oloro already looks menacing when viewed from space. It is an air world, but its color is a sickening mix of cyans, greens and browns. Large storms are visible from afar, some large enough to swallow smaller planets.

Climate and Terrain

The planet has no solid core or bodies within it. It consists entirely of air and gasses. Due to its extreme axial tilt, the sun mostly warms one of the two polar regions for much of the year. This results in extremely violent seasonal storms. During winter, snow of a sickly, greenish-white color forms in the clouds and eventually falls towards the core of the planet.

Flora and Fauna

Oloro is a poisonous hell that no humans could survive without adequate protection. Some bizarre airborne life-forms make this world their home; most of them shaped like gas bags or balloons, eternally drifting through the hazy, poisonous atmosphere, preying on one another.

There are no settlements or native sentient lifeforms of any kind on – in – Oloro.

Civilizations

There are no local civilizations.

Ports of Call

There are no ports of call. But see Xplanet8a.

Resources and Trade

Oloro offers little to the inhabitants of the solar system. Some of its gasses might interest mages for certain experiments, and there are always the curiosity-seekers; but Oloro has no natural resources of any kind; its atmosphere is poisonous and the biology of its fauna such that they are inedible to any of the spacefaring species of the solar system.

Other Issues

No entries.

Moons

5 major moons, 0 medium moons, 22 minor moons

Xplanet8a[Miranda] is a small moon - only 470 kilometers in diameter. Its surface is twisted and broken, with huge canyons covering much of the surface. These canyons are up to 20 kilometers deep. This small moon has only a relatively thin atmosphere, which is only breathable to Humans in the deep canyons. Much life exists here; the floors are covered by jungle-like forests, and all kinds of animals inhabit the side walls of the canyons. Birds and flying reptiles are particularly common in these canyons, living in the walls, unreachable by most predators.

There is a penal colony on this moon, which mines Guano – a valuable fertilizer and ingredient of the manufacture of gunpowder. The prisoners are subject to hard physical labour, living conditions are rather bad. There is a small naval detachment stationed here who guards the colony from attack and the inmates from receiving help from outside.

Xplanet8b[Ariel] is similar to Xplanet8a. It is also covered by a large network of canyons. However, it is much larger (1160 km diameter), and the canyons cover a much smaller portion of its surface. They aren't quite as deep either - only about 2km at the deepest. Many of the canyons are filled with water, and strange spring floods can occur anywhere due to the tidal forces acting on the moon.

Xplanet8c[Umbriel]'s surface is dark, mountainous and heavily cratered. There is little free water on the surface; its atmosphere is breathable to humanoid life-forms, but the climate is very dry and somewhat chilly. There is little plant- and almost no animal life. Perhaps the most striking features on the surface are a circular crystalline structure near the world's equator, and a clearly related crystalline structure on the central peak of a crater a few hundred miles away. The circular structure appears to be a city of some sort. The Dwarfs of Xplanet8d have avoided this moon; their legends speak of an ancient evil that is trapped here. There must indeed be something dangerous down there, for few expeditions to the crystal city have returned to tell the tale.

Xplanet8d[Titania] (Diameter 1577km) this rocky moon is covered by ancient impact craters, ragged mountains and deep canyons. The extended system of valleys and canyons is the moon's most notable surface feature: It stretches across most of one hemisphere and in some locations is as deep as ten kilometers. The moon's atmosphere is thin and cold, but safe to breathe. Lichen, ferns and some grasses grow in many areas, but most of the surface is bare rock. No open oceans exist on Xplanet8d, and there are few lakes or streams. However, there are extensive caverns and tunnels under the surface of the moon. There are several ancient Dwarf settlements here, and mines supposedly have been drilled deep into the core of the moon over the centuries.

Xplanet8e[Oberon] (Diameter 1525km) is very similar to Xplanet8d in landscape, except that it doesn't have any extensive canyon system. Instead, its surface is very heavily cratered. The dwarves of Xplanet8d also maintain mines on Xplanet8e. Parts of the surface are covered by boreal forests. The climate is cold, but not arctic. Some animal life also exists.

Xplanet8f[Sycorax] is the largest of Oloro's minor moons. It is still only about 190km in diameter. Its surface is cratered and unusually reddish in color.

Adventure Hooks

- x A salvage operation of a ship trapped deep inside the atmosphere of Oloro would be a challenging adventure. The players must protect themselves against the harsh conditions. The ship's crew might have returned as poisonous undead, and there might after all be vicious and poisonous life-forms floating within Oloro.
- x A friend of the player characters or the heir of a nobleman has been imprisoned in the penal colony on Xplanet8a. The players are asked to undertake a rescue mission.

Xplanet9 "Neptune"

Type: *Spherical Water Body*

Diameter: *49500 km*

Orbit: *4498 million km*

Xplanet9 is a giant water world. Its radiant, deep blue color is only broken by the white of the ice chunks ranging in size from small icebergs to masses as big as continents that float on its surface, seemingly at random. They are propelled by the incredibly high winds that rage through Xplanet9's atmosphere.

Appearance from Space

Xplanet9 appears as a large spherical planet of a radiant, deep blue color. White clouds streak through its atmosphere, and the shiny white ice continents stand in stark contrast to the deep blue ocean.

Climate and Terrain

Xplanet9 is an arctic place. Temperatures range from "cold" near the equators during the summertime, to "frozen hell" during the winter. High winds blow constantly across the surface of the planet, making spelljammer landings very difficult and dangerous.

Flora and Fauna

The world is home to all kinds of aquatic life.

Civilizations

No known civilizations.

Ports of Call

No ports of call.

Resources and Trade

Fish and sea products. Pearls.

Other Issues

No entries.

Moons

1 major moon, 2 medium moons, 7 minor moons

Xplanet9a[Proteus] is an irregular, cratered rock some 400 kilometers in diameter. It doesn't possess any atmosphere, life, or special features.

Xplanet9b[Triton]: A huge ocean of icy water covers about 70% of the surface of this world. A single continent occupies the rest, centered around the moon's south pole. Only a few small islands can be found on the rest of the surface. The south pole continent is subarctic at the coast, and becomes very cold the more south one ventures. The landscape is dominated by snow and ice. A few hardy types of plants live on Xplante9b, but no known settlements exist.

Xplanet9c[Nereid] is of irregular shape, very similar to Xplanet9a, but somewhat smaller at only 340 kilometers in diameter. Its surface is covered in a strange opaque mist that reaches about 70cm high. It seems to emanate from several craters around Xplanet9c and may have its origin in the interior of the moon. Presumably, there are extended caverns underneath the surface.

Adventure Hooks

x No entries.

Xplanet10 "Kuiper Belt"

Type: Earth/Ice Cluster

Diameter: Varies, 220 larger than 100 km and up to 1000 km

Orbit: 10 – 11 billion km

Far beyond the orbit of Xplanet9 lies another asteroid belt. Unlike the belt between Xula and Awan, the Xplanet10 belt is spread out over a great amount of space. It is rare for any two objects in this belt to come close to one another.

Appearance from Space

Xplanet10, the outer of the asteroid belts, is spread much thinner than the inner asteroid belt. As a consequence, it does not appear to be a single object, and each asteroid is approached individually.

Climate and Terrain

Many of the asteroids have an atmospheres, especially the larger ones - which also often sport some form of life. The climate is usually chilly to arctic depending on how far away from the sun they orbit. Even many of the rocky objects are icy or covered in ice, reminiscent of the polar regions of the regular planets.

Flora and Fauna

Smaller Kuiper objects usually have at most some form of primitive plant life; however the larger ones are able to support more complex ecosystems and this is indeed often the case, serving as a welcome source for food for expeditions this far out. While only the Dwarves and the Formians maintain major settlements in the Kuiper Belt, it is rumored that smaller settlements or pirate bases might also exist.

Civilizations

The Dwarves have created several mining settlements in the Kuiper Belt, searching for valuable metals.

Recently, the Formians have moved in and started to convert many of the larger Kuiper objects into colonies. This has resulted in several clashes with the Dwarves, who defend "their" territory fiercely.

The Formians are about the only race living out here that one could call civilized. They are hiding from visitors; any lone ship happening across one of their bases risks attack and capture, but the Formians will not try to challenge any opponent that seems capable of resisting and fleeing. They'd rather not risk to expose their bases in the Oort Cloud at this point.

Ports of Call

Dwarf Settlements.

Resources and Trade

"Dwarven" Ores, including Mithril and Adamantium

Rare oort cloud objects might have natural resources such as iron or other metals; however it is far easier to obtain such materials elsewhere and therefore no mining is taking place here. There are several lost expeditions or wrecked ships, but finding them should prove nearly impossible if the prospective treasure-hunter does not have pretty good information about their locations.

In short, this desolate region of the solar system sees few visitors and even less trade or exploitation of any kind.

Moons

Xplanet10a – Pluto and Charon

Xplanet10b – Persephone

Xplanet10c – Kobold

Xplanet10d – Sedna

....

Adventure Hooks

- x No entries.

Xplanet11 "Oort Cloud"

Type: Earth/Ice Cloud

Diameter: Varies, 220 larger than 100 km and up to 1000 km

Orbit: 20 – 22 billion km

Xplanet11 is not an asteroid belt, but rather a cloud of mostly icy objects that surrounds the Arth solar system. Most of the objects in the cloud are small, only a few meters to a few dozen meters across. Objects as large as several hundred meters are still common. There are only few objects that are larger than a kilometer; the largest of which can be as large as small moons. The dwarves maintain several settlements in the cloud, and recently the Formians have arrived as well.

Xplanet11 is considered to be the "boundary" of the Arth system.

Appearance from Space

The objects in the cloud usually consist mostly of water ice. There are some rocky objects, however, and many of the larger bodies have rocky material inside them or on their surface.

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Flora and Fauna

There is no native life in the Oort Cloud, but some creatures able to withstand extreme cold have migrated here. The Formians, immune to the extreme cold, have set up a number of bases around the Oort Cloud as well.

Civilizations

The Formians are the only civilization in the Oort Cloud.

Ports of Call

No ports of call – none friendly to visitors, at any rate.

Resources and Trade

Water (in the form of ice) and air.

Moons

No moons.

Adventure Hooks

- x No entries.

Comets

Comets have traditionally been viewed as a sign of change on Arth. They were not a bad sign, until the beginning of the Great Death coincided with a large comet that was very visible in the Arth sky. Since then, comets are usually associated with doom and destruction. Many of the more superstitious space travelers would not land on one for any price.

Adventure Hooks

- x The arrival of the comet as the Great Death started was not a coincidence. Arth passed through the comet's tail, and this is how the plague arrived on the planet. The comet carries the disease to this day, dooming any ship that lands there. If a ship was to land on the comet, the entire crew would be exposed and the disease might spread to other vessels or space stations. The players could be charged with cleansing a thus infected vessel or station.

OTHER SOLAR SYSTEMS

"I had the ambition to not only go farther than man had gone before, but to go as far as it was possible to go."

- Captain Cook

Arth Humans have visited many other solar systems since they first began exploring space. Such forays have been mostly exploratory in nature. However, the humans (and other races of the Arth system) have set up trade routes, enclaves, and even some outposts and colonies on many planets – usually for special reasons.

"Small System"

There are no very large worlds in "Small System". The Sun of Small System is a yellow-orange dwarf star, and all the other worlds are to size:

- x Inner most from the sun is a wide Asteroid Belt. The largest of these asteroids are a few hundred meters across; most are mere pebbles. The asteroid belt easily occupies two orbits, and is dangerous to navigate.
- x Next out is an air world of little more than Arth's size. It contains no solid bodies within its atmosphere; however there is water there and various types of floating plants. The world has four moons:
 1. "Lilliput", the homeworld of Halflings and Gnomes.
 2. A forest world inhabited by semi-intelligent bear-like creatures capable of no speech beyond grunts. These creatures are at a stone age level of technology.
 3. An air moon which consists of deep, heavy clouds.
 4. A small water moon.
- x A ragged ice world.

Ideas for further worlds/systems

- Shattered Space: A sphere which contains nothing but asteroids (maybe an air world or two, again filled with asteroids).
- A system in which Mind Flayers have conquered all (including a humanlike race of some sort, for extra effect).
- A system similar to that in the movie Pitch Black might be a lot of fun
- Home system of the Formians; several other systems should have Formian presences. At least one "conquered" system.
- Sargasso-System of some sort. Question is, what might disable a Spelljammer but still allow players a chance for escape?

Other Solar Systems

- Thalassa, an Earthlike Ocean World. Warm. Small Arth colony on the only islands. Exports exquisite pearls and other sea products. Lobster-like monsters live in the sea.
- Planet/system in which the native species has completely died; the world is a desert wasteland and all that remains are ruins and most of these are now under meters of sand etc. Some towers and pyramids are still visible. The race which lived here left behind many golem servants who still guard their homes, palaces and temples.
- A planet of molten metal

RELIGION

“This most beautiful system of the sun, planets and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being.”

- Sir Isaac Newton

Each independent culture of the solar system worships their own pantheon of gods. However, these pantheons are usually small, and some of them are the same Gods in different guises.

The Church

History of the Church

The dominant religion of Arth is known simply as "The Church". It developed before the days of the Empire of Engaron and quickly rose to become the state religion of the Empire. When the Empire expanded to dominate the "known world" of the time, the faith of Church spread throughout the lands that were conquered by or did trade with the Empire.

During the Dark Ages after the Empire's collapse the Church was the single unifying political and social factor among the fragmented kingdoms. It maintained its own standing army and special orders of clerics and knights which actively sought out heretics and other enemies of the Church. This Inquisition stopped at nothing to hunt down heathens, witches, and anybody else who the Church viewed as a threat. They often used torture to force confessions. The Church also instigated several holy wars, in which rival religions – often native people of the other continents – were converted at sword-point.

The plague known as the Great Death ended these practices, and eventually broke the power of the Church. The disease swept across Arth and killed purely at random; nobody was safe, not even the most devout followers of the Church. This was seen as a clear sign that the Church had fallen out of favor not only by many priests inside the Church, but also by many citizens.

In the years after the Great Death, the church lost much of its influence among the populace of Arth. People began to seek alternative explanations and philosophies. They still worshipped the Gods, but the Church was not seen as the final authority on matters concerning the world and every-day life. Although it was not widely advertised, a power struggle took place within the Church and ended only when those who had criticized the violent practices rose and disposed off many of the high church officials. A "New Revelation" was preached, and the violent ways of the Church had officially ended.

Beliefs

The Church recognizes three deities; Visca as the Creator; Inanna as the Protector, and Tarjan as the Destroyer. The three deities interact constantly and depend on each other; there can be no Destruction without Creation and no Creation without Destruction because nothing ever lasts forever. The Gods are therefore worshipped together, but of course to varying degrees. The

Religion

Creator, Visca, is thanked in prayers for his role in creating life and all those things that sustain the believers. Young couples who wish for children might also pray to Visca, as would anybody who is about to undertake a project to create or build something (artists, stonemasons).

Tarjan, the Mad God, the Destroyer, is usually avoided in prayers; he is mentioned only so as to not to enrage him. The faithful would try to placate him with prayers and offerings, so that he may spare them and their loved ones. However, it is not really in his nature to listen to such prayers.

Inanna, in her role as the Protector, is consequently the most active and most worshipped god. She guards all of creation – and every single being in it – from harm. She keeps Tarjan at bay and enforces the balance of nature.

The people of Arth, being a civilization founded on countless centuries of sea-faring, also believe in a lesser god called Ahba, who is the guardian of the oceans. He unifies aspects of Inanna and Tarjan, in that he jealously guards and protects the oceans, sea life and any treasures that the ocean has 'claimed', but like the oceans he is violent and unpredictable.

Many humans – especially rural communities – are also very superstitious. They believe in a plethora of ghosts, spirits and other creatures; some benign, other malevolent.

Organization

The church is organized rather simply in a flat structure of four levels. At the top of the Church stands the Matriarch or Patriarch, the highest of the High Priests. He is selected for life by the high priests of the church by divining the Divine Will. The Patriarch communicates directly with all three deities; in his holy position he sets overall Church policy and makes all large decisions for the Church.

The High Priests are the second level, and see to the day to day workings of the Church, with the help of many assistants and normal clerics (who form the third level). They high priests and their assistants and lowly clerics are roughly divided into three groups, each serving primarily one of the three gods.

Each of these groups oversees local temples erected for "their" god. Temples which are dedicated to all three gods are managed by representatives from all three groups.

In addition, the Priests of Inanna also oversee the order of the Holy Paladins, a more noble version of the inquisition. The Holy Paladins seek out evil throughout the world, and aim to help the poor and the defenseless. They constantly seek to repay the "debt" earned by the violent acts of their ancestors, the Inquisition. The Holy Paladins take this very seriously.

The Schism

Ultra-conservative priests of the Church defected after the Great Death and founded their own sect which they called "Church of the True Faith". While it sees itself as following the one true teaching of the Gods, it is not recognized by the larger Church. Yet it does enjoy support from religious zealots and from anybody who stands to gain from a return to the old ways. The "True Faith" does have supporters in the larger Church as well, but they are of course not voicing their views.

The True Faith is organized in a similar way to the Church. The main difference is that their Paladins are more violent, and more fanatic than their Church counterparts. They are not well liked by the people of Arth, relatively few in numbers. They often travel in secret, or simply stay with the True Faith temples. When they meet Paladins of the Church, it is not uncommon that the two will fight – often to the death.

There is also an active and very secretive cult which worships Tarjan and his most violent, mad, and destructive aspects. They argue that destruction of life and the universe is the ultimate liberation from worldly suffering. Needless to say, this cult does not enjoy much support from either the Church, the True Faith, or the common people.

Customs

Burial Customs: Humans usually practice cremation; if a deceased person is instead buried, the grave will usually contain a stone sarcophagus or a wooden coffin with stones placed on top of it. Even makeshift graves – where no coffin is at hand – will be "weighed down" with a pile of rocks.

Crypts with iron gates are also popular.

The reason for these measurements is to prevent the dead from leaving their graves easily, should they be animated by a necromantic spell. Of course, this does not stop a necromancer from actively releasing them; it just makes the job of gathering an "undead army" a little more difficult.

Other Religions

Not all sentient beings of the Arth solar systems follow the teachings of the Church.

The Servants of Zhu

The people of the small continent Sylvis, on Arth, serve and worship the great dragon, Zhu. Zhu is ancient; it is the single most powerful creature on Arth. He rules over many lesser dragons, which in turn control the human worshippers in an organization simply called "Servants of Zhu". The entire continent is ruled by an empire controlled by this cult. The people of Sylvis shy from contact with outsiders. They will be hospitable, but encourage their guests to leave as soon as possible.

Consequently, little is known about the practices of the Cult. Their priests practice martial arts, and some few of them travel the world before joining the temples of Zhu. As information is sparse, all kinds of rumors about Sylvis and the Cult are rampant. The cult is supposed to make human sacrifices to the dragons and engage in dark rituals of all sorts.

In reality the relation between the dragons and the humans is fairly superficial, and based on mutual defense. The dragons protect the humans, who in turn discourage anybody who would want to bother the dragons. The society of Sylvis is advanced and practices philosophy and martial arts.

Burial Customs: The dead are generally cremated, the fire symbolizes the breath of the dragons. High ranking priests are actually burned by a dragon's fire breath – a dragon is the guest of honor at the funeral.

Religion of Velvun

The lizardmen of Velvun worship natural forces, like thunder and lightning, fire, storms, rain, and the sun. The lizardmen do not have any deity for the stars. The sun god is relatively weak – the sun is hidden by the thick cloud cover at almost all times. The dominant god is the god of thunder.

These gods are personified natural forces, their personalities in line with the force they represent.

Kobolds follow the religion of the lizardmen, reasoning that since the gods made Lizardmen strong, maybe they would also make the Kobolds strong eventually. So far, the Gods must not have heard the Kobolds' prayers.

Burial Customs: Kobolds usually die because they get eaten by predators. Lizardmen place their dead high into the trees, wrapped in leather hides and giant leaves; a custom that Kobolds emulate. Unfortunately for the Kobolds they cannot reach as high in the trees as Lizardmen, and those kobolds who die for other reasons than falling prey to predators usually get eaten by scavengers after they were 'buried'.

Religion of Xula

The traditional religion practiced on Xula teaches that the planet itself is alive. Not literally so – but all living creatures, all life on the planet is part of one overall Spirit entity which permeates the world. The Elves and Orcs cared for their world, and for the living creatures around them as part of their religious practice. What was good for the Spirit was good for the Elves and Orcs, for it meant a healthy environment and a plentiful harvest.

Unfortunately, disaster struck at some point in the distant past, and the Spirit began to wither and die. As a consequence, Xula began to dry up and all life on the planet was in danger. The Orcs and Elves began to build canals; first locally and then finally on a global scale to irrigate the world with polar water. The plan succeeded, to a point: Most of the planet was transformed into a barren wasteland, yet thanks to the ingenious canal system life continues.

The belief in the Spirit is still very prevalent today, but some Elves have already been converted to the Church or – to a much lesser extent – to the True Faith. They usually combine both belief systems easily, and most Elves think that Arth, too, has a "Spirit", even though Humans never noticed this.

Orcs have reverted to savagery, but they still follow the Spirit belief in shamanistic rituals, many of which are quite gruesome. They will also actively seek out and slay any preacher who stands against the Spirit – which usually means anybody who is not an Orc.

Burial Customs: Elves will bury their dead near the fields, so that the dead bodies might fertilize the fields. Both Elves and Orcs will revere their ancestors and ask advice from their deceased ancestors (in Spirit form). Orcs do not bury their dead; they usually place the bodies in tombs after lengthy rituals. Every year, the Orcs will then remove the bones or mummified remains of the dead ancestors from the tombs and perform recurring rituals to honor their ancestors. In some Orcish tribes, cannibalism is also practiced, and few Orcs would object to eating a dead enemy; especially if it was a powerful foe.

Dwarven Religion

Dwarfs believe that their god, Mohagrim, created them from asteroid iron and tasked them with creating beautiful and useful items out of the natural materials of the universe. As a result dwarfs spend a lot of time honing their crafting skills; blacksmithing is especially popular. Creating items is considered a religious service, and all priests of Mohagrim will be very talented craftsmen. There is nothing that forbids the dwarfs from selling or giving away items they created. In fact they will usually give the purchaser a short lecture on how they should thank Mohagrim for the fine item they received. Spreading dwarven products means to slowly spread the influence of the faith.

Deities

Ahba

"Neptun"

Domains: Water, Law, Storms

Inanna

Domains: Law, Protection, Strength, Magic, War

Inanna's temples feature several spires and a big dome over the main temple, tiled in shiny red.

Khari

"Neptun for Spacefarers"

Domains: Space, Law, Sun

Visca

Domains: Creation, Life, Magic, Plants

Tarjan

The Mad God; The Destroyer

Domains: Chaos, Destruction, Madness, Death, War, Storms

Appearance: An old man with wild, white hair, his face in a mad grimace. He wears dark red robes.

Symbol: A stylized eye with a golden iris and a black pupil

Tarjan is the antithesis of Visca. He destroys where she creates. He is usually viewed as utterly uncaring, corrupt, immoral, mad, and evil. He is never responsible for any good deeds, and about the only nice thing that anybody has to say about Tarjan is that he eventually also destroys evil people. Tarjan can find pleasure in that, too.

The people of Arth worship Tarjan out of fear, and because he is a part of the trinity of gods that are responsible for the creation and continued existence of the universe. The clerics of Arth do recognize that the universe would be static without destruction. The common people, who do not usually follow such abstract philosophies, try to appease Tarjan with their offerings. For

Religion

example, a farmer might sacrifice a cow to Tarjan so that he may spare the rest of the cattle for the season.

There is, however, a group of people outside the Church or even the more radical True Faith who worship Tarjan and all of his most violent and destructive traits. They believe that destruction at the hands of the Mad God results in eternal liberation and salvation from the mundane universe, and will be followed by eternal bliss. This cult is not well perceived by those who do not share their beliefs.

Tarjan has shrines in most cities, as nobody wishes to offend the deity. However, there are few "official" temples of Tarjan. His cult operates the largest and most splendid of his temples. They are built from black basalt wherever possible, with tall spires and obelisks that reach into the sky.

Thunder God of Velvun

Lightning and Thunder, Storms

Domains: Plant, Strength, Storms

Mohagrim

Dwarven God

Domains: Protection, Law, Strength, Artisans

RACES

“I don't believe that there are aliens. I believe there are really different people.”

- Orson Scott Card

Languages

Every culture develops their own language over time. Since languages have a tendency to develop in differing ways if two cultures have no contact to one another, an uncountable number of languages, accents and dialects are spoken in the Arth system alone. The languages of important nations begin to dominate, and are spoken by many space-farers. Trade pidgin variants of these languages are also common. Some sages even learn the languages of natives of other planets...

Xulan Language

The Xulan Language is spoken by both Elves and Orcs, as they share a common cultural heritage. But like all aspects of relations between the two people, language is also not without problems.

The Xulan Language sounds pure and rhythmical and almost like a song when spoken by the Elves. When an Orc opens his mouth and speaks the same phrase, the same word, it sounds ragged and evil and brutal. Orcs use guttural noises, grunts, squeaks, and even spitting noises in their speech. The words are absolutely not recognizable as being the same language.

The written form of the Xulan Language would be understandable by both – with maybe some exceptions of words recently formed. Again, unfortunately, while Elves pen flowy, beautiful handwriting, most Orcs don't actually know how to write. They will use drawings to "write". Those orcs that do read and write either use a writing composed of squiggles, spots and wild streaks, or they will use whatever alphabet those used who taught them how to read and write.

Orcs are suspicious of anybody who can write, and usually this talent is only reserved for shamen and priests.

Dwarves

Dwarves are humanoid in appearance. In fact they look like smaller humans with knobby noses and thick facial hair. They seem to be stocky, but only very green adventurers mistake the somewhat roundish shape as anything other than muscles. Dwarfs are generally between 1.20m and 1.50m tall. Their skin is darkly-colored, from tan to brown. Haircolors are black, gray, or brown colors.

Races

The Dwarfs are an ancient space-faring race of traders and artisans. They live in huge metallic space-ships that are settlement as much as they are transport. These space-ships are long and thin and irregular and can unfurl huge sails for additional propulsion. Some dwarves also settle down on asteroids and moons, often to mine various metals or other precious materials. They will always succumb to wanderlust, however, and abandoned dwarven settlements can be found all over known space.

Even the dwarves do not remember where they originally come from. It seems obvious that all dwarven clans share one common origin, but this has been lost in the distant past. The dwarfs believe that they were created by Mohagrim out of asteroid iron, and that it is their duty to shape the natural elements into tools and artworks.

Whatever their origin originally was, several settlements of Dwarfs operate in the Arth system and trade with anybody who wishes to do so in a civilized manner. They do not feel "at home" in the Arth system; Home to them are their huge asteroid cities; Arth is "just another planet", an attitude that caused quite some misgivings during the first contact between Humans and Dwarfs. However, both races soon discovered that they preferred to trade with one another peacefully rather than worry over such fine detail, and today Dwarfs are Humans best friends.

Dwarfs are a capable race of warriors. Their weapons and armor are of exquisite quality, and their warriors know how to use them. They prefer waraxes, thrown hammers, warhammers, maces and any tools that might be handy (picks, shovels). For ranged combat, they use guns or crossbows. Dwarven settlements are usually also trapped, to aid in defense. To raid a Dwarven base is a dangerous proposition, for dwarves carry long grudges.

Due to their distant voyages, the Dwarves know of – and hate – the Formians. In the Arth system, there has not been much contact, and the Dwarves are not aware that the Formians are staging a large-scale invasion. Dwarfs attack Formians on sight, out of sheer self-defense. When the Formians are ready to attack the Arth system, the Dwarfs will be mankind's closest ally.

Dwarven Statistics

Dwarven characters have all abilities as per standard Dungeons & Dragons rules, with the following exception:

Skills: +2 knowledge (space)

Weapons: Proficient with guns

Automatic languages: Dwarven only.

Bonus languages: May pick any language of a space-faring race as a "bonus" language.

Elorcs

Elven-Orc hybrids. More common than Half-Elfs and Half-Orcs. Usually the result of rape (see Halforcs; should probably not be in final sourcebook) and fiercely hated by both elves and orcs.

Elves

The Elves are one of the two sentient species which developed on Xula.

They are nature-loving and love their home world. They're traditionalists with strong customs. They're nomadic out of necessity, though there are still many city dwellers who remain in what is left of the once proud Elven cities.

Half-Elves

A number of human-elf marriages have sprung up since colonialism of Xula began, and thus half-elves are comparatively common there. They are disliked by conservatives, often the butt of racial slurs, and thus sometimes try to conceal their heritage. Some have a great desire to travel into space, to visit Arth – their “second homeworld”.

Half-Orcs

Human-orc hybrids are rare and almost invariably the result of rape. They are hated by both the orcs (who see them as weaklinks) and humans (who see them as monsters). They usually end up working as soldiers, criminals, brutes, thugs.

Humans

Humans are the native sentient species of the planet Arth. Though they are not the first race of the Solar System to have discovered the principles of Spelljamming traffic, their competitive nature, natural curiosity and lust for adventure quickly led them to create an interplanetary society.

Kobolds

Kobolds are a race of short, reptilian humanoids native to Velvun's lowland jungles where they live alongside the lizardmen. They have scaly skin that ranges from dark rusty brown to a rusty black color. They have sharp teeth, red, glowing eyes and a nonprehensile tail. They are 60cm to 80cm tall and mass 15-25 kg. Many of the native life-forms of Velvun consider Kobolds a treat; especially the large dinosaurs prey on Kobolds. Lizardmen think of Kobolds as a nuisance at best, and usually kill Kobolds with little more thought than a human would kill a rat. As a result, Kobolds are cowardly and easily frightened and will grovel before those they consider to be powerful. They speak Draconic and have no problem learning other languages. Their voices sound whiny and like a yapping dog.

On Velvun, Kobolds live in tribes of 40-400 members. They inhabit caves or primitive huts; their villages will usually be as well hidden as the Kobolds can manage and the Kobolds will place many traps around it.

Kobolds will try to fight only when they have overwhelming odds – at least two to one – or when they can use trickery or ambushes. They'd rather flee than fight, if confronted, and usually only

Races

fight when cornered or when hunting for food. They open with volleys from their slings, then enter melee with stone-tipped spears or stone daggers once their opponents have been weakened. They'll wear leather armor if they can obtain it. Kobolds that are living in human cities or off-world will wear colorful cloth rags.

Kobolds are fascinated by space flight, though they have neither the skill nor resources to build their own ships, let alone Spelljammer helms. They don't feel particularly happy with their lot on their home world, and many Kobolds will try to leave Velvun if they ever get the opportunity – offering to pay if they have any money, or, more likely, begging for passage. If they are turned down, they will try to stow away on the ship.

Kobolds have a natural affinity for mechanics and engineering. On Velvun, there is rarely a chance for them to discover this talent, however. Kobolds also love firearms, and seem to have a knack for using them.

Kobold Statistics

Kobold characters have the following abilities:

Ability scores: -4 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution.

Small size: +1 bonus to Armor Class, +1 bonus to attack rolls, +4 bonus to Hide checks, -4 penalty to grapple checks, lifting and carrying limits are $\frac{3}{4}$ those of Medium characters.

Speed: A kobold's base land speed is 10 m (30 feet)

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a daylight spell.

Darkvision: 60 feet range.

Racial Skills: Kobolds have a +2 racial bonus on Craft (trapmaking), Disable Device, Open Lock and Search checks.

Tough Hide: Kobolds receive a +1 natural armor bonus for their scaly hides. Due to the nature of their homeworld, they also get an automatic Acid resistance of 3/-.

Favored Classes: Sorcerer, Rogue.

Level adjustment: +0

Lizardmen

Lizardfolk are about 1.80 – 2.10m tall, and have green, gray or brown scale. Their tail is used for balance and about 1-1.50m long. A lizardfolk weighs between 100 – 130kg.

Orcs

Orcs are a violent, brutal, warlike species which developed on Xula together with the much more delicate Elves.

They live in hills and caves; they are hunters who will also prey on Elven caravans and Human explorers whenever they get the chance. Favorite past-times are torture and cruelty.

OUTSIDERS

“Chances are, when we meet intelligent life forms in outer space, they're going to be descended from predators.”

- Michio Kaku

For people who live in a solar system populated with dozens of sentient races, the word "alien" means just that: Strangers outside one's own race. Arth's humans view the solar system as their territory, and as a consequence, the aliens of the solar system are viewed as mankinds – if maybe lesser – siblings.

A different term has risen to describe all creatures that are not native to the Arth Solar System; these beings are referred to as "Outsiders". That is a term also sometimes used to refer to extraplanar entities, though these are more likely to simply be called "Demons" collectively, regardless of their technical classification.

Formians

The Formians are insect-like aliens that arrived in the Arth system years ago, and have since then been waging a small-scale war on the humans. They are too alien to be communicated with, and the Arth humans don't have any idea how serious the threat is yet...

Halflings

The halflings live in another solar system, which they share with the gnomes. Halflings were named so by Arth explorers because they are roughly half as tall as the human average.

Gnomes

Gnomes are to Halflings what Dwarfs are to humans: A slightly smaller "cousin". They reach about 60% the height of Halflings.

CHARACTERS

“Outer space is no place for a person of breeding.”

- Lady Violet Bonham Carter

Core Classes

Paladins

Protectors of the church. Add note about blackguards.

The Holy Paladins are an order which is the successor of the Inquisition. It serves the goddess Inanna, the Protector in the human faith. Their task is to protect not only the Church and its temples from defilers and heretics; they also seek to protect the common people of Arth, always trying to repay the "debt" that the Inquisition incurred. They will also fight the supporters of the renegade Tarjan cult on sight, and will often fight the Paladins of the True Faith as well.

Inquisitor

Inquisitors are the True Faith pendant to Paladins.

Allowed Prestige Classes

Dwarven Defender

Dwarven Defenders are the elite guards of the Dwarven Ships – sort of a Dwarven Marine. They are rough, rowdy, and tough, and unquestioningly loyal to the Dwarven Clans.

Assassin

Assassins are relatively common on Arth, as the various nations and factions constantly try to weaken their rivals. Perhaps the largest group of Assassins, however, serves the Tarjan cult, and tries to bring about death and destruction in the name of that dark god.

Duellist

Blackguard

Blackguards are dark paladins – the religious warriors that serve Tarjan, the Destroyer.

Skills

Knowledge (Local)

The Knowledge (Local) skill can be taken as specializations to cover a solar system or any one planet of the solar system (or other systems, for that matter). Depending on the level of civilization and population density, a character might wish to further specialize in a specific region or even city on another world. Of course, the character's background story should explain how he came to know this place so well.

Profession (Space Sailor)

This is the professional skill required to work as a crewman on a spelljammer ship. It includes all tasks involved in handling the ship; from working the rigging to etiquette and terminology. A rank of 5 in Profession (Space Sailor) provides a +2 synergy bonus to profession (sailor) and vice versa.

MAGIC

“Magic is a method of talking to the universe in words that it cannot ignore.”

- Neil Gaiman

The Multiverse

The Universe – the one that Arth resides in – is not the only universe that exists. This is generally known among the people of Arth, and sages, priests and wizards have a relatively detailed knowledge of the workings of the so-called multiverse.

The Flow

First and most important to the space-travellers of Arth is the Phlogiston. The so-called Flow exists in parallel to the normal universe; that is, each point in the universe matches a point in the Flow. The borderline between these universes is relatively easy to cross, something that Arth's humans exploit every day to propel their space ships. To the best of anybody's knowledge, the Phlogiston does not connect to any other universes. You can go from the Arth universe into the Flow, and back to the Arth universe, but nowhere else.

Transitive Planes

Then there are three so-called transitive planes which are reachable from Arth. They are the Etheric Plane, the Astral Plane, and the Shadow Plane; commonly referred to simply as Astral, Ether, and Shadow. They can all be used to travel to other universes and planes of existence, though the means employed – and the dangers of each – are different.

The Astral Plane is a plane of thought, memories, and spiritual and psychic energy. The souls of some people stray from their bodies during sleep and travel through the Astral plane. The Astral plane is also where the souls of the deceased go, on their voyage to the afterlife. All travellers on the astral plane – except the deceased souls – are connected to their bodies via a silvery strand of energy.

The Etheric plane is the source of all matter in the multiverse. It is a shapeless chaos that can and does contain the "blueprints" for all kinds of matter. It shapes matter in the multiverse but is also shaped by objects in the real universes. The problem is that the impressions from an infinite number of universes all overlap in the Ether, and thus no consistency can form.

The Elemental Planes

The Inner Planes (Elemental planes such as Fire, Water, and so on, but also Ooze, Magma, et cetera) also work like their normal D&D counterparts. Naturally-occurring portals from these planes to planets that are mainly of the same elemental type are common, but of course considering the size of these planes and planets, would still be hard to find.

Magic

As a consequence of this, all spells that take advantage of the Shadow, Ethereal, Astral or the Elemental planes work normally (subject to other spell changes defined in this chapter).

Spells

General Rule

As a general rule, there exists no magic that can reach over interplanetary distances. If such spells do exist, they are truly epic in scope and only to be used by NPCs part of a campaign.

CAMPAIGNS

“Destiny is not a matter of chance. It is a matter of choice. It's not a thing to be waited for - it is a thing to be achieved.”

- William Jennings Bryan

Campaign Types

Merchantmen

- Trading among the various planets
- Smugglers, Pirates
- Get involved in all kinds of adventures too
- Crash-landed Merchants may become Pioneers against their will

Explorers

- Solar system's mysteries - there's plenty of mystery
- Fly to different star system - mostly cut off from reinforcements and civilization
- Any kind of imaginable world can be found out there
- Contact with inhabited worlds is always challenging
- Especially so if the newly contacted civilization is capable of Spelljamming
- Could easily turn into a Pioneers campaign

Pioneers

- The players could be settlers who move to one of the colonies
- Pretty much any kind of frontier adventure
- Look for "wild west" for inspiration
- “Mysterious Island”

Space Race

- Variation of "Explorers" campaign
- Focus the campaign on the first steps into space
- Rival nations trying to steal secret or sabotage efforts
- Boldly go where no man has gone before
- Turns into an Explorers, Merchantmen or Pioneers campaign

Campaigns

The Formian War

- Can affect any campaign
- "sideline action" - for example quell panic that ensues about rumours of a bug invasion; fight back invasion of an asteroid or small city
- Formian hideouts, colonies and bases can vary greatly depending on the mind-controlled races enslaved there.
- Invasion of one of the main planets is a possible scenario

Mercenary Campaign

Small Folk

This campaign assumes that players will play humans, dwarfs, elves, and other races found in the Arth system. However, a campaign could easily be based around the Gnome-Halfling civilization.

- Gnomes and Halflings have no Spelljammers of their own, but they could have bought or captured one.
- A single kobold may be a good addition to such a group, for diversity.

Planetary Campaigns

Each of the inhabited planets of the Arth system provides enough opportunity for dedicated campaigns that never move out into space.

Arth: *Plots of one nation against the other; Republican revolution; Three Musketeers; Exploration of the Moon*

Xula: *Conflict between Elves and Orcs, Colonists and Natives; Exploration of ancient ruins; Why did the planet dry up?*

Velvun: *A campaign based around the Kobolds (trying to get off-world, or trying to protect tribe against Lizardmen and Humans)*

Option: Alternate Primary World

If you're playing in an ongoing campaign, you could replace Arth with your existing campaign world. Unless you're playing on a very exotic world, it should be fairly easy to retro-fit. You could fast-forward your world's history by 50 years or so. During this time, Spelljamming is discovered

and your new campaign can start among the stars. Or the PCs could be hired as the crew for the first interplanetary exploration vessel.

If your main campaign world contains any races that live on other planets in the Arth Space setting, you should give some thought on explaining why these races live on other worlds than their home world. The easiest explanation is to postulate a "lost age of Spelljamming" in the distant past. During this age, the races of your world colonized the solar system (or the other way around!); but after a great war space flight ceased and was forgotten.

Option: The Crystal Sphere

Distance from Sun: 14000 million km

If you are using a standard Spelljammer cosmology, then a Crystal Sphere marks the outer boundary of the Arth Solar System. It separates the system from the Phlogiston, the Flow outside. Portals allow Spelljammers to pass through; such portals can occur naturally (and can be found if enough time is spent searching) or could be opened with magic spells.

The Crystal Sphere appears to be a completely flat, matte black surface. It causes any Spelljammer that comes close enough to drop into tactical speeds. Due to its dark color and the difficulty in judging distances to such an enormous object, Spelljammer captains must take special care not to crash into the Sphere. The Sphere can not be damaged; something that cannot be said about any Spelljammer.

The surface of the Sphere can be touched. It feels neither cold nor warm, and it is absolutely smooth; there is no dent or bump in it.

The Stars that can be seen from within the Sphere are bright balls of light of various sizes, usually white but often with a hint of color. They flicker over time, sometimes changing their colors as well. They float just above the inner surface of the Sphere. They do not emit any heat. Ships that try to "catch" one of these stars will find that the stars are not fixed to the inner surface, and will easily evade any contact. The mechanism for this is unknown; theories range from an automatic, natural law to divine intervention to sentience on the part of the "stars".

DESIGNER'S NOTES

Design Goals

- Create a functional, logical (consistent) spelljammer setting.
- It is a parallel universe to "our" Earth, and should contain all the concepts I enjoyed from Burroughs et al.
- One solar system with a space-faring interplanetary society
- Interstellar travel, exploration, trade is in its infancy
- No silly stuff
- Don't put too much stuff into too little space
- Many races, but not too many
- One race per planet (not counting colonies and outposts) - General rule, exceptions possible.
- No gnomes or halflings in default solar system.
- Formians --> the bugs from RAH's Starship Troopers. Thanks to "Shadow of the spider moon" for this idea!

The Solar System

The solar system of Arth is obviously based closely on Earth's solar system. The similarities of many worlds to their real-world counterparts should be obvious. Where I had no reason to change them, I have kept size, gravity, and general composition of all celestial bodies. Of course, the details have been changed dramatically: This is a fantasy universe, after all.

When designing the planets I have tried to use archetypes as much as possible. Many of these are based on the "planetary romance" genre of the late 19th and early 20th century – the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs et al. In that the solar system also slightly resembles that of Buck Rogers XXVc, which also rooted its design in the pulp era.

Races

The mix of races in Arth Space might be a little non-standard. **Humans** are of course the primary race, simply because they make a great versatile race and because many players will most easily identify with what is basically themselves. **Elves** make a good ancient culture, powerful with their magics but pushed aside by fate and the "younger" races. **Orcs** make a good "bestial" or "barbarian" counterpart to the cultured Elves. As a consequence, with Elves, Humans and Orcs mingling on Xula, there are a lot of half-breeds: **Half-Elves** are fairly common; **Half-Orcs** less so.

Half-Orcs of Orcish and Elven parentage are more common than Half-Elves of mixed Human-Elven parentage.

There are no **Gnomes** because Gnomes are just a sort of magic-using dwarf (and don't get me started on the Tinker Gnomes) nor are there any **Halflings** which are just too Tolkien and too much like small humans. They'll be in other solar systems somewhere. If you miss them, just throw some of them in somewhere.

I included **Dwarves** who, because of their mining prowess and underground lifestyle, make a good addition to a fantasy space setting (Dwarven Citadels and Asteroid Mines, for example) and are different enough from Elves and Humans to be interesting.

Finally, **Kobolds** are a little bit of a replacement for both Gnomes and Halflings. They have a bit of mechanical aptitude, and they have decent natural toughness, but they are small creatures, often cowardly and wimpy. Their draconian origin makes them great sorcerers. I envision them a little bit as Klabautermänner; A Klabautermann is a German merry and diligent guardian spirit that helps the crews of ships - and despite all his help only shows himself to the crew of a doomed ship.

Spelljammers

I must wonder how much time was spent researching sailing ships for the design of Spelljammer, and especially the D20 version from Polyhedron. I am not an expert on the matter myself, but using Google it seems to me that the dimensions of many ships - especially from *Shadow of the Spider-Moon* - are completely off. Tonnage seems way too low for most ships (even considering that a Spelljammer ton is not a "regular" ton). And the biggest ships in *Shadow* are only 240 feet long while being operated by 20-30 men. The largest ship in classic Spelljammer was the Elven Armada, 300 feet long, requiring 40 people to operate.

Quick research on the Internet suggests that ships of the line - British warships of the 17th Century, the "Golden Age of Sail" - are easily 200-260 feet long. The biggest sailing ship ever built was the barque "France", which measured an impressive 418 feet. Tonnages were 2000 for a British war ship and 5600 tons for the France! A fully-crewed war ship could easily have 800 crewmen.

And these size limits were only for ocean-going ships. A fantasy setting, which has magic and much better materials available than 17th Century Earth did, could come up with totally different - and bigger - designs.

It was my intention to (eventually) bring Spelljammer ships in line with their historic ocean-faring cousins. However, it is not goal of this document to provide rules mechanics for spelljammer ships or for Spelljammer combat. If the Spelljammer mailing list people do not come up with a decent work I can still tackle that some day... perhaps.