

Choir

It was natural for explorers from Earth to go to the TRAPPIST-1 dwarf system as part of the first wave of interstellar exploration, once humans finally cracked the code on faster-than-light travel. The planetary system had seven confirmed exoplanets, and a remarkably tolerant habitable zone for a dwarf star; it was also extremely young by stellar standards. So it seemed unlikely that life would have developed so quickly there... thus making it probably safe enough for a species just starting to practice exploring the Galactic Arm.

This proved to be... incorrect. Not only were there three water worlds with functional biospheres: the other four planets all proved to have their own forms of life. And sentient races living on all of them, although admittedly none of those species were born there. It turns out that TRAPPIST-1 is well-named; it's a favorite spot for monastic communities from all over this part of known space. Fortunately, humans were welcome enough... or at least their religious communities were.

The human names of the planets are below, and are based on the free translation of the original names by

someone with a certain sense of humor and odd hobbies. Assume that alien monasteries have access to mature TL11 technology unless otherwise noted. Also note that all of these planets are **dark**, are crammed into a solar system that is smaller than Mercury's orbit around our Sun, and have an orbital period best measured in weeks. Many Galactic pilots will feel distinctly claustrophobic.

- Seraph: (Ammonia) .9 Earth Mass (EM). Both Seraph and Cherub are favored by ammonia-breathing species that generally find the former planet to be rather hot and arid, and the latter one to be cool and bucolic. Seraphim monasteries are thus typically filled with monks who may not all be there entirely by their own choice.
- Cherub: (Ammonia) 1.3 EM. As noted above, Cherub is a lovely, pleasant place if you breathe ammonia. Its monastic population is largely made up of retirees.
- Ofanite: (Hadean) .4 EM. The only planet in this system with no atmosphere at all (what native life exist lives deep in the soil), Ofanite is reserved for solitary contemplation and reflection. Ofanim monks and nuns land on the planet's surface in personal spaceships, to pray and meditate in absolute isolation. Many do not come back.

- Elohite: (Garden) .6 EM. Elohite is an icy water world with very few land masses. Its monastics are typically aquatic and amphibious species who attempt to live in a state of nature. Readily available technology on this world is TL6 at best.
- Malakite: (Garden) .6 EM. Every militant order in the Galaxy -- including from species that are normally hostile to each other -- sends its warrior-monks to this planet, where they test themselves against the environment, the remarkably hostile animals integrated into the remarkably varied ecology (humans have been requested to provide genetic samples of polar bears, wolverines, alligators, and honey badgers), and each other. The testing in the latter case is strictly non-lethal, but assume that every Malakim monk or nun you meet is trained in multiple forms of combat.
- Kyriotate: (Garden) 1.3 EM. The gravity here is a bit much for humanity, and the lack of seasons or a real day-night cycle even more so, but other than that it's very nice. Those Earth religions that practice monasticism have already set up communities on Kyriotate... as well as some 'religious' communities (both human and otherwise) that may or may not be covers for various government and business organizations. Kyriotate is also unique in that one of

its two major continents has a left-handed ecosystem, and the other has a right-handed one.

- Mercurian (Greenhouse, wet) .8 EM. HEED OUR WARNING, YOUNGER RACES. ATTEMPT NO LANDINGS ON MERCURIAN. ALL THESE OTHER WORLDS ARE YOURS. LET ALL VOICES SING THEIR PRAISES TO THAT WHICH IS ABOVE US ALL. ATTEMPT NO LANDINGS ON MERCURIAN.

One last note: who runs the system? Well... nobody? The basic rule seems to be “Don’t annoy whatever species (singular or plural) that uses Mercurian.” Which is more limiting than it sounds, because nobody knows precisely what annoys the species that uses Mercurian...

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