

FIRE IN THE SKY  
**MARS IN 2025**

**The History, Culture, and Politics of the Red Planet**

**By Euphrosymina**



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*Fire in the Sky* is an alternate history/future worldbuilding project devoted to exploring the future of the world and humanity. The project features a timeline reaching into the distant future, covering the topics of space travel & colonization, terraforming, genetic engineering, and other future technologies, and their impact on society; the project also extends into the distant past, exploring topics such as pre-human civilizations and the evolution of extraterrestrial life.

*Please remember that this document is a work of fiction and that descriptions of authoritarianism, human rights abuses, or anything of the such do not correspond with the views of the author, and are merely a worldbuilding exercise. In the same manner, while most information in this document abides by the real conditions on Mars, it should not be taken as fact.*

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Mars is still a cold, red rock, and it may well be for a long time, but it's not a dead one. Mars not only has native life - both living and extinct - but also a rapidly growing population of over three million people living in dozens of countries, which are called polities on this planet. They come in many shapes, forms, and sizes, from colonial behemoths like Ares or Tharsis, to independent successes like Rothbard and the other Tharsis, to ethnostates, to entire nations that move on treads, and tribes who rove the wastelands between it all. And they all have their own religions - new and old - their own cultures and practices that have come to be on this world within just a lifetime. Mars may have been colonized less than 100 years ago - less than 50, actually - but it's already defined itself as an independent world from Earth.

Mars has well and truly become its own planet.

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## PRELUDE: GETTING TO MARS

Being born on Mars is easy, but if you actually want to get here from Earth, that's more difficult. Travellers in the 1980s made their trips on hundreds of small- and medium-sized spacecraft built to get lots of people and cargo between the two planets. These often had unpredictable schedules, used gravity assists with Venus, took up to ten months (although the average duration was still 6-7 months) to get to Mars, and were of course, extremely expensive. What's more, training was a hardy endeavor, with applicants spending months in deserts or arctic training facilities, and people were often rejected if they didn't match the intense physical and mental requirements for being a colonist.

The 1990s saw this trend continue, although the reformation of the Soviet Union and subsequent expansion of globalism brought an attitude of peace to the world stage during the decade, especially in space. This decade saw nations laying the groundwork for a class of twelve "cyclers" ships, which would, in theory, make travels between Earth and Mars easier than ever before. By the early 2000s, international cooperation was able to complete these ships on a timescale faster than anyone anticipated. While the cyclers are de-jure operated by the international **Twelve Castles Organization**, their sol-to-sol operations are managed by individual countries or alliances, while the organization is more of a peacekeeping body between them. Earth-Mars cyclers, and all cyclers for that matter, often called **Slow-Ships**, sit in orbits which regularly intercept two or more celestial bodies with little to no external input required to adjust their path. These cyclers take about 5 months to travel from Earth to Mars, and beyond that take another 16 months travelling through the asteroid belt, sometimes meeting at asteroids, before returning back to Earth.

The cyclers are, from largest to smallest: **Taurus**, operated by the United States, with a capacity of nearly 15,000 people; **Galilei**, operated by the European Space Agency with a capacity of 14,000 people; **Centaurus**, operated by the South American Space Agency, primarily Brazil, with a capacity of 12,000 people; **Pleiades**, operated by Japan and India, with a capacity of 11,000 people; **Crux**, operated by Australia, with a capacity of 9,000 people; **Orion**, operated by the United Kingdom, with a capacity of 9,000 people; **Cassiopeia**, operated by the Socialist Federation, with a capacity of 7,500 people; **Azure Dragon**, operated by China, with a capacity of 6,000 people; **Monoceros**, operated by East Africa, with a capacity of 6,000 people; **Aquarius**, operated by Greece and Turkey, with a capacity of 4,500 people; **Pinisi**, operated by Indonesia, with a capacity of 3,200 people; and **Al-Battani**, operated by the United Arab Republic, with a capacity of 1,500 people. Regardless of their operators, all twelve cyclers are open for anyone to use. Although to get to and board one, you will likely need, or at least want to go through some kind of training process which can take months depending on how long you take to reach astronaut-condition, or how long it takes for your application to be accepted. After training, it will take anywhere between one and four weeks to travel to the L2 Lagrange Point in Internesia, and you might have to wait several more weeks for a cycler to arrive. The opposite is true in the Mars-Sun L1 point, where you may have to wait before taking a month-long trip to Martian Orbit. Once you're at Mars, you probably have a plan to go to a polity on the surface - but if you don't there's still places for stateless people to go in orbit and on the surface, with the moons, independent space-nations, and the company-countries being the most willing to accept.

But what if you need to get to Mars faster? Or get back to Earth on a timely basis, because waiting for a cycler and then waiting months and months is too much time for you to spend? **Fast-Ships** are the antithesis to Slow-Ships. They're a lot smaller than cyclers, most commonly having space for a few dozen to maybe 150 people, and are suuuper expensive, but they can get you between the planets in as little as 1-2 months. Their cost stems from the fact that you're essentially paying for the craft's fuel, which can range from conventional chemical fuels to radioactive elements used in fission engines. These vehicles are also less spacious and are under much less regulation from major spacecraft, and while not common, disasters have happened before. Nonetheless, these vehicles will get you to Mars on a much more timely basis than the cyclers, and are typically used for Mars-Earth trips where an equivalent cycler would take over a year.

And once you're on the red planet, settling into your new life and adapting to your new community can take some time, so you're lucky that I've written about life here.

## **PRELUDE II: GROWING UP ON MARS**

Let's say you're a child of that last colonist, maybe they settled down, found a partner, and had a kid, and that's you. Your life on the fourth planet from the sun starts with doctors examining you for any birth defects, both those that could naturally occur on Earth and those that happen due to the effects of low gravity and radiation on Mars. Although they are rare, they do happen. Luckily, you're only a little underweight, but otherwise perfectly healthy. You also have a brother,

who is also healthy. Maybe you stay in the hospital (which is really just a few rooms) for a few more sols, no longer than a week for a healthy baby like you. Turns out, you won't live in a pod like everyone else on Mars, at least for now. A few months ago, your parents were given a special "house" by the government, so they have a private space to raise you and your brother, and any other children they may have, and keep you safe from outside threats in your most vulnerable years.

Your time as an infant is much the same it would be on Earth - babyhood really isn't all that interesting - your parents teach you stuff, and your first meal after your mom is done feeding you is a mashed up paste of fish and plants, or if your parents live in the right place, it's a specially-made can of baby food, possibly provided by the government for free. Speaking of, your mom and dad will get several weeks of maternity/paternity leave to raise you, and maybe your mom's leave will be longer, up to a few months. By the time you're a toddler, your parents are already raising you less than they used to - they're still your caregivers, but when they're away, a neighbor, maybe one of their good friends, or another mother with children of her own, comes over to care for you. You're also spending less time at home and more time at neighbor's houses, or in public common areas.

Preschool begins at 4-5 years old, and is frequently held in the morning in common areas. Real school begins at 6-7. A few years ago, schooling in your city was a rather lax endeavor; without a specially-built school of any kind, it was done off-and-on by teachers and people filling the role of teachers, classes held in community spaces or in people's homes. But your city just spent 2 years and almost all of their budget building a brand new elementary/middle/highschool. It's small, classrooms are used on different sols, at different times by different grades to make the best use of the space, but it works. Your teacher was born on Earth, but she's trained and knows what she's doing. She helps you and your classmates learn the alphabet, basic math, basic history, everything that kids your age would learn back on Earth. But there's not that many kids, only about three dozen others your age, although there's a lot more babies now. And there's also very few teens who were actually born on Mars, the adults say the oldest person born on this planet in your city is only 16 years old. You have a lot of friends and acquaintances, though the city is small enough that it's really an everyone-knows-everyone situation.

You still sleep and eat at home with mom and dad, maybe some of your friends come over, but you're spending most of your time in common spaces nowasols. Your tiny world is getting bigger, too - expansions are being made to the colony, they just spent millions of dollars building a new greenspace, filled with plants you've never seen. The roof doesn't open up to the real sky, but it looks like it does, because its LED screens that are affixed with lights that shoot out UV rays akin to what the real sun does, giving you and the other colonists a far more "natural" source of vitamin D. When you're 11 years old, you go on a terminal for the first time. It's slow, stuff takes forever to load, and you've never used a keyboard before, but it allows you to see things you've never seen before. You heard about Earth, apparently it's where humans come from, it's where all of the adults come from, but your teacher only had a few pictures of it. The terminal allows you to see hundreds of pictures of this strange world - and boy, it's insane. What do you mean you can just go outside? Those plants in the greenspace your colony has, they're

everywhere. And the sky? It just doesn't end - there's spaces bigger than anything you've ever seen, skyscrapers, cities, hundreds of cultures, \*billions\* of people - it really feels like you're reading something out of a fantasy novel. And it inspires you.

Congrats, you're in middle school now! Luckily for you, it's been almost a decade since they built the school, and they've expanded it a bit, so middle schoolers get their own classroom. When you turn 13, you do something insane. It's somewhat of a global tradition when you turn thirteen to go on a field trip to a major city. Going so far really opens up your mind a bit, broadens your perspective, you see stuff you've never seen before, and when you're there, you go to a fair targeted to people of your age. This is where you're supposed to really hone in on what you're gonna do in life, and there's a lot of options. Speaking of jobs, you just got your first real job back home: managing the crops in the aquaponics system. Not that boring - ever since your first time in the greenspace, and especially since learning about Earth, you like plants - but your real dream is leaving your tiny hometown and travelling the world.

In high school, you continue your work and start taking lessons for your future career. You want to be someone who explores the world, and boy, are they making a lot of discoveries about your planet's ancient biosphere as of late. Out of the two options you have, going into the trades or going into paleontology, you choose the latter. When you're 16, you pay to go on a field trip to a paleontological site 700 kilometers away. The trip is grueling, and takes almost two weeks one-way, but you see a lot of stuff you've never seen before. The hostels and bed-and-breakfasts on the side of the road are interesting, and there's tiny towns much smaller than yours with signs outside telling travellers not to stay past dark dot the road. Once you reach the site, you stay in the bus you're on - getting in a spacesuit and going outside isn't something you'll do for at least another few years. The fossils are very interesting, and if you're going to every corner of the world to study them, this is definitely what you want to do.

At 17 years old, and after a few months of back-and-forth between you and the university in the largest city in the country, which is also the only university in the country, you get accepted. Martian Paleontology will be your major. Before you go, a colony-wide party is held for you and the others who are leaving. It won't be permanent, but it will be a long time; for your bachelors, it's going to take two years (about four years on Earth), but you plan to stay longer for a masters degree, which will take nearly another year. Before you turn 18, you're off to university. When you get to the bustling city that'll be your home for the next three years, it's a bit of culture shock. You've been living in a pod your whole life, but at least you had a private domicile outside. Here, you really just have your pod - the bathroom and kitchen and living area are shared with about a dozen roommates, and you live in a dormitory of a "district", which is ten of your dormitories. The pod you live in is your only private space - you spend most of your time on the other side of the city at college, and when you're not there, you're working large-scale hydroponics to pay it off. The city is a lot bigger than where you grew up, there's miles of streets to get lost in, thousands of people, and a lot of amenities that your hometown couldn't dream of having. It even has its own train station.

I could talk about the rest of your life, but, well, it's 2025 already. You were born in 2005, so you got a better childhood than kids born back in the 80s or 90s did, but there's not enough time to cover their entire lives, let alone yours. You will probably spend the rest of your life in this city, visiting your hometown from time to time, seeing your parents on holidays or on their birthdays. You'll travel the world, have your own kids, and maybe you'll even go to Earth before you pass away.

Of course, this isn't a perfect description of every single person born on Mars - there are people born in tiny cities much smaller than the one in this story, and those born in bustling metropolises much larger. Kids born in the 1980s had a far different upbringing, and the same can be said for kids born in the 2020s, who are still toddlers right now. Both the time and place this story covers are a middle-ground. Not everyone will travel the world, either - many people stay in their hometown their entire lives.

But now that we're done with the introduction, and you have a very rough idea of what life on this planet is like, we can go into greater detail.

## The History

### PRE-COLONIAL ERA (PRE-1978)

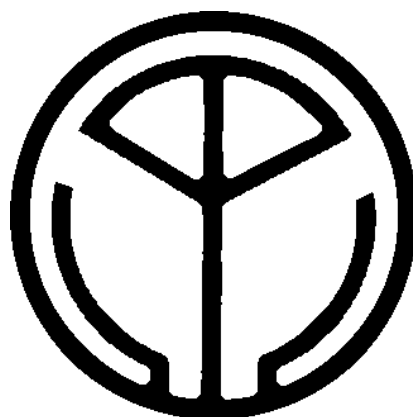
Mars bears the name of the Roman God of war, himself named after the Greek God of war (Ares). Indeed, the associations with Mars and war date back to Babylonia, its astronomers naming the planet after their own god of war, Nergal. In China, the planet was associated with grief, war, and murder. These connections most likely come from the planet's red color. By the 18th and 19th centuries, advances in telescopic astronomy led to the first detailed views of the planet. Astronomers such as Giovanni Schiaparelli and Percival Lowell purported the existence of planet-spanning "canals" on its surface, possibly built by intelligent Martian life, inspiring famous science-fiction works such as H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*.

By the 1960s, exploratory missions to Mars using satellites had taken off, first with the failed string of Soviet **Mars** probes, followed by the American **Mariner** crafts which shot the first detailed images of the planet. The **Viking** Probes/Landers in the 1970s were the first to land on the planet's surface and create a full, detailed photo map; these probes are the namesake of Viking Valley. Meanwhile, the European **Poseidon** probes and the Chinese Huoxing lander returned even more data on the surface. By the 1980s, the amount of probes and satellites had grown to become too many to count. But before we reach the 1980s, we need to talk about an event in the 1970s. The **Ares-Haven** missions were first conceived in the late 1960s and took nearly a decade to develop. In 1977, the Haven space station was launched from Earth to Mars orbit during the **Ares-Haven 1** mission, making way for the crewed **Ares-Haven 2** mission. The latter landed the first 10 humans on Mars, the first person to step on the planet being **Anna Lee Fisher**. See more about this in the Republic of Ares section of this doc.

## COLONIAL ERA (1978/1-2025/25)

Both the ESA and UK landed on Mars in 1980, followed by Japan in 1982, Australia in 1984, Indonesia in 1985, Yugoslavia in 1986, and in 1988, Mars' first independent nation, **Rothbard**, was founded. The 1990s saw an even more accelerated growth of the planet, with nations all around the globe establishing colonies, as well as private companies and various other organizations. By the turn of the millennium, Mars had over 200,000 people; that number still rapidly growing - What's more, the creation of cycler-ships between Mars and Earth allowed for even faster growth.

It was also during the 1990s that Mars' archaic symbol was replaced. Prior to 1995, the official symbol and "flag" of Mars included the original symbol for the planet, which by the modern era had become associated with the male gender over the planet Mars. The new symbol, simply named the "Seal of Mars" in official contexts, though commonly referred to as the "Tree of Mars" or the "Shield of Mars" in official and general contexts, took the shape of a circle with a central "tree", representing Mars itself while harkening back to the arrow on Mars' original symbol. Two semicircular lines on either side of the tree protruding from the circle represent Mars' two natural moons, and the circle represents the Martian system as a whole. The seal is featured on many Martian flags, including that of the United Martian Nations.

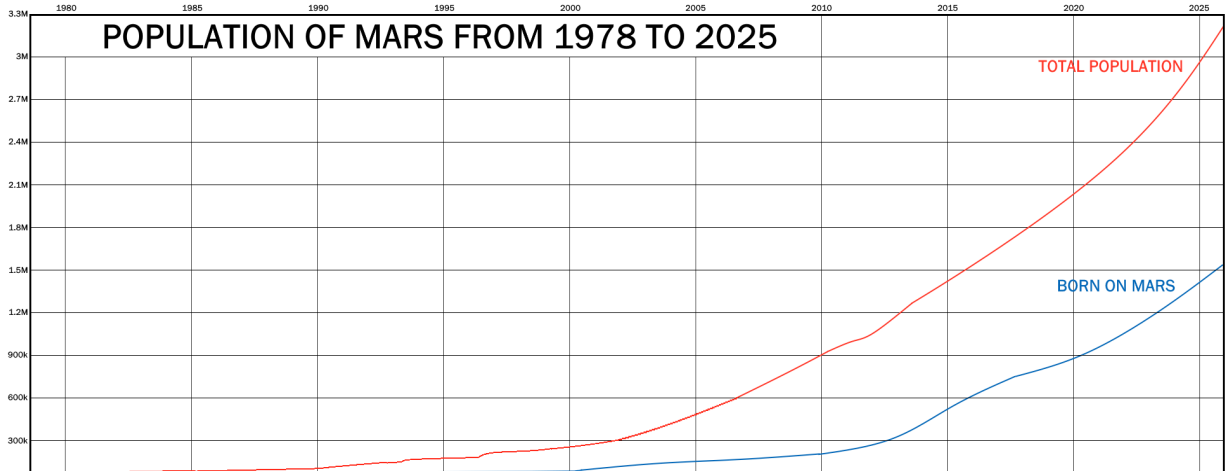


*Seal of Mars*

In years following the turn of the millennium it became abundantly clear that Mars needed defined borders. Until now, Mars' didn't really have defined borders - its political divisions were unmarked, often overlapping with condominiums and shared cities between them - not only this, but nearly two dozen independent "city-states" and smaller independently-operating cities without international recognition or defined borders made things even more complicated. Beginning in 2004, a long series of treaties and agreements, too many to fully list out here, but known together as the **Crimson Treaties**, were signed between the polities of Mars. These continue to this sol, in some cases, but mostly ceased in 2014-2015. The treaties opened the door for a new era of Martian history, and indeed, many of the treaties of this era, especially the

ones prior to 2010, are still in effect tosol. Some notable examples of polities created and borders defined in this era are those of Hellas-Melena, formerly separate Indian and Japanese colonies; New Albion; West African Mars; and the definition of real borders for countless smaller polities and city-states.

And then, in an era that seemed like it would define Mars' future as being one of peace, division swept over the planet. The Areo-Tharsian Split of 2010 split Mars into two camps, and began mostly due to disagreements on what the future of Mars should look like, how colonization should continue, if the red planet should keep being under Earth or become fully independent or somewhere in the middle. People with differing opinions on the subject generally organize themselves into two camps - Federalists and Unitarians, the former advocates for greater autonomy of Martian cities and colonies, the sovereignty of Martian polities, the independence of the red planet from earth, and for its new states to develop new, divergent identities - while the latter advocates for more centralized, unitary control of the planet, including Earthly governance, with massive - monolithic - Martian cultural groups dissociating from their old Earthly identities to unite. Some people in this camp also advocate for a completely united Mars with a completely united "Martian" identity. Read more about the split itself in "The Alliances". Not only has this split polarized the red planet into red, blue, green, and yellow, but it also arguably led to the Blacksand War of 2014 in Kawasan, arguably Mars' first true war, involving pro- and anti-independence militias and leading to the deaths of several hundred people. Read more about that one in the Kawasan section.



Early Martian growth rates were insane, the red planet jumped from 10 people in 1978 to 50,000 people by 1990, and 270,000 people by 2001. In 2011, the red planet shattered Earthly opinion by breaking the one million milestone, and in 2018 it surprised everyone again when combined census data revealed Mars had 2 million people. Now, in 2025, data shows Mars is home to about 3.2 million people, over one million of whom were born on the red planet. Even without the kids being born, Martian colonies have always grown because they need to grow - tosol, Mars brings in an average of about 100,000 migrants from Earth every year - but even in the old sols this number was still in the tens of thousands, and colonies needed to expand to

accommodate all those people, and expanded accommodations meant spaces for their kids - schools, housing, larger spaces in general, playgrounds, and businesses marketed towards children - all meant the expansion of Martian colonies into real cities. Many people moving to Mars also came with their wife or preexisting children, and Martian natalist culture meant that people were, and still are, incentivised to have children. This is what leads to 1.1 million native Martians by 2025. This "Baby Boom" has also led to a shift in Martian culture; first, because Martian political systems are generally more accepting to younger people than their equivalents on Earth, it is already easier for Mars' true natives to make an effect; but secondly, the oldest of natives are reaching their late 30's and early 40's, and have already been in the dirt of government for over a decade - but Mars' younger generation, what some consider "true" martians as an opposition to the earlier "Colony Children" born before 2000, are in their teen years or already several years into adulthood - these Martians already have oogles of influence in local municipal governments, and are bound to enter mainstream Martian politics as soon as they get the chance.

Contemporary Martian history has not only been defined by political stratification, but also by the development and construction of the planet's first megaprojects. In the 1990's, the first fears of water scarcity arose on the red planet, but these were quickly quelled by the discovery of deep aquifers across the planet - the only issue being that these are very, very deep underground and need advanced, expensive technology to reasonably access - Even tosol, most Martian colonies import water as large solid ice-blocks which are manually placed into machines that do the rest of the work, and waste, what can't be recycled, is really just buried under six feet of Martian regolith a hundred feet away from anything important. The megaprojects of modern Mars are beginning to change this, not by much, yet, but the massive aqueduct systems of the north and south, or the rail lines connecting Ares, Tharsis, Hellas, and New Albion's most important cities are bringing new life to communities all over Mars. The rise of Landships, meanwhile, has given more isolated communities away from the megaprojects a chance by connecting them to the metropoli of Mars. The thousand-kilometer long aqueducts and rail lines built in the last 15 years are also massively expensive, not only in terms of their pure monetary cost, but also their material cost - metal is not as common on Mars as it is on say, Mercury, making these projects real investments in terms of material - and the moons only have so much. Because of its metal scarcity, Martian colonies have been extending their influence to mining colonies in the asteroid belt, not only by direct control, but by way of proxy states, companies, or even moving a fair amount of asteroids into Martian orbit.

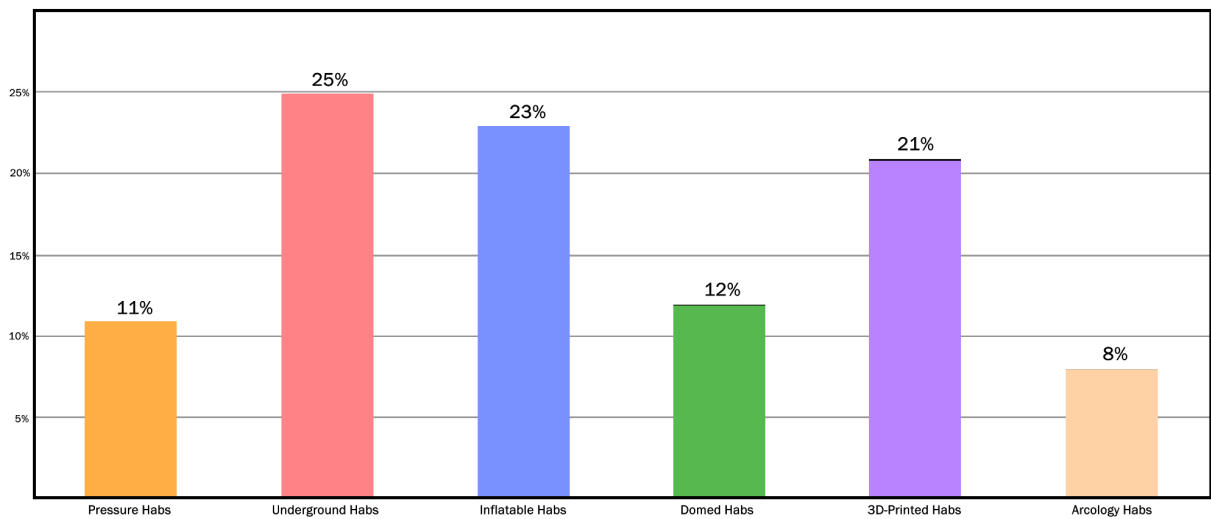
But the greatest of the modern martian megaprojects is above it. The **Anteros Ring** is a planned orbital ring system fit with space elevators connecting the Martian surface to a geosynchronous system of habitats, cities, and more attached to the ring, which is also right below Deimos' orbit. Right now, however, the entire ring is a thin band of wire circling the planet. Read more about it in the Orbit section.

Mars' future is uncertain - for one, the planet may stay united in the pursuit of its colonization and the megaprojects that follow close behind, but on the other hand, a switch that nobody could expect in the Areopolitical landscape, a major shift on Earth, or even, God forbid, some

kind of global disaster. Most people don't give more than a second of thought to these, but some people are seriously worried. The fact of the matter is that nobody can reasonably predict Earth's future, even if it's just a few weeks, and the same thing goes for every other planet, including Mars. In response to the question about the future of the red planet, I ask you a question, what do you want it to be?

## The Culture

### Settlements & Architecture



Prevalence of different habitat types on Mars by percentage

*Note: Moving cities are not pictured. If they were on this graph, they would take up <0.1% of total habitats*

Note: This graph comprises 50% of all Martian architecture - the other 50% is comprised of Marsbrick Architecture.

At first, Mars' cities and towns may seem overwhelming in their diversity - countless architectural styles and methods of city-building are seen across the planet. Martian architecture is a lot simpler than it seems, because in reality, all of the various buildings and structures on Mars can be organized into a few loose categories.

### MARSBRICK



*Igloo Settlement in Kawasan*

First envisioned in the early 1970s as a way to lower costs of living on Mars, Marsbrick architecture was first tested during the early Ares-Haven missions, proving itself to not only work, but be cost effective. Bricks and concrete on Mars can be made in a variety of ways, but the way they're most often created is by mixing filtered (or unfiltered, many people believe that it is stronger than filtered regolith due to its impurities) regolith with human bodily fluids such as blood or urine as a binder. The mortar that holds these bricks together is most often made with a different mix of the same materials, or made out of "rice glue", the same material that was used to hold the Great Wall of China together. After a basic brick structure is completed, all that needs to be added is an airlock and a life support module, as well furnishings and the like. Despite these costs, cutting away the expensive materials and methods needed to construct more orthodox habitats, drops the cost of Marsbrick structures below any other construction method - some structures are up to a tenth cheaper than the next cheapest, which is 3D-printing. This is why these structures comprise half of all constructions on Mars.

### **MODULAR**



*Temporary soil-research settlement in the middle of nowhere*

The first and oldest, but no longer most-common of these structures are Modular, built out of pressurized modules sitting on the surface of Mars - or within underground lava tubes - either way, they function the same. Modular structures are composed of, on average, dozens of small pressurized modules which range in size from a truck to a small building on its side, and are usually shaped like a long tube with spherical edges, or large hexagons, octagons, or squares,

but normally tubes, as they're both strong and space efficient, sometimes half-buried spheres are also used.

In the early sols, these pressurized bases were buried under layers of plastic and regolith to protect against solar radiation, though with the advent of Mars' artificial magnetosphere, this has become a scant practice in new constructions. Indeed, this architectural style, while safe and reliable, is also prohibitively expensive and requires fine manufacturing and materials which remain uncommon on Mars even tosol, meaning all these tubes are manufactured on Earth and sent to Mars via cycler.

### UNDERGROUND



*Lava Tube city in Alba Patera*

Another cheap and reliable architectural style - in fact, one that is still commonly used in new construction to this sol - is simply building cities underground. As it turns out, small caves are relatively common on Mars, I say relatively because, well, they're not everywhere, but they do pop up around volcanic areas or newer craters, and sometimes in the middle of nowhere.

These caves can be walled off and used to build colonies, in fact, many early Martian colonies used this method, and many still do tosol. But caves are also tight, prone to collapse, and don't exactly do what you want them to.

One solution Mars has found for this is blowing new caves right out of the rock, which are then fitted out for human habitation, this is why Martian colonies import so many explosives. Underground colonies aren't perfect, though, as small holes to the outside can leak atmosphere, and new water added to the surrounding rocks can destabilize them leading to collapse. Speaking of the soil, although there are methods to detoxify it in small quantities, exposed regolith in underground, rock-wall colonies can pose a risk to human health. Luckily, solid Martian rocks pose a much smaller health risk.

### INFLATABLE



*Small, single-family inflatable module in a colony too small to be seen on the map*

Inflatable modules took off in the 1990s, and are exactly what they sound like, well, mostly. These aren't balloons in the usual sense; rather, they are reinforced modules made of multiple layers of thick fabrics designed to keep the atmosphere in and the martian atmosphere out, while also being able to last long periods with little maintenance, and hopefully without popping. nowadays, they frequently come with rigid frames which are to be installed after the main "bubble" of the structure has been inflated, so air pressure isn't the only thing keeping it stable.

The benefit of inflatable modules is that they're far, far cheaper than normal rigid habs. Whilst they were the most popular in 1990's/2000's Martian architecture, they are still commonly used tosol, most frequently in smaller cities that have less money to spare on new technologies.

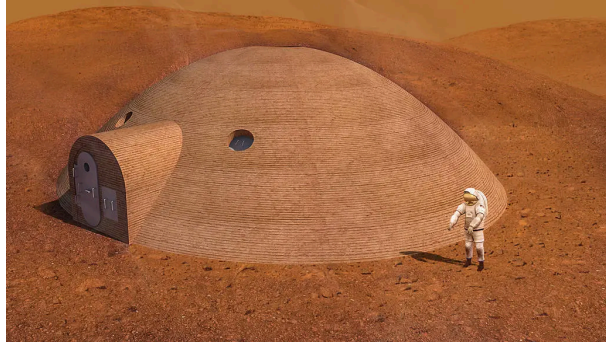
### **DOMED**



*Above-ground greendome in the EuroTharsian city of Der Weg*

On the polar opposite end of the price spectrum are Domed colonies. These colonies make use of domes made of marscrete, metal, or strong transparent materials that aren't glass but that I'm just going to call glass anyway. They commonly sit in craters which already have walls built up around the edges, although non-crater domes with walls to give outdoor parts of preexisting cities their own atmosphere are in the works.

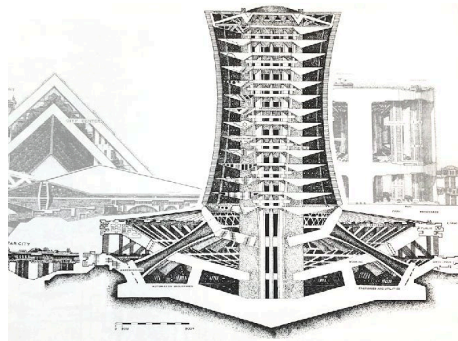
### **3D-PRINTED**



*Small 3D-printed home in New Albion*

3D-Printing technology was pushed along incredibly fast by space colonization, from plastic to concrete to metal - indeed, 3d-printed structures are becoming popular even on Earth nowasols - but nowhere are the benefits of large-scale 3d-printing more visible than on Mars. The technology first reached the red planet around 2007 with the advent of large 3d-printing bots, and has since proliferated around the planet. 3D printing allows for the vast array of architectural styles we see on Mars tosol, and allows for radiation-proof above-ground structures to be constructed with ease - what's more, advancements in the printers allow overhangs and roofs to be constructed without many additional, temporary support structures.

## ARCOLOGY



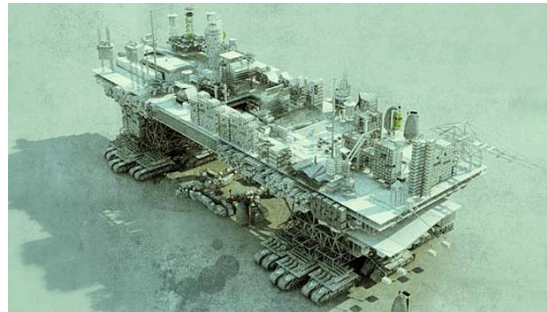
*Arcology concept by Italian architect Paolo Soleri, used in EuroTharsis*

Arcologies are self-sustaining cities entirely located within a single building. Usual martian colonies differ from this definition by way of being connected by small hallways, often with thick emergency blast doors, or are simply very long. This is treated sort of like the debate about if spires should be counted in a skyscraper's height, and for martian colonies, the fact of the matter is that different clusters of structures are usually not thought to be the same building even if they are connected by an interior corridor in some way.

In the case of surface colonies, different structures within a cluster are considered different buildings, with the pathways connecting them being considered roads. Arcologies differ from these descriptions by being one, singular, obvious large structure, usually above ground or in a

crater. Arcologies are also designed in the same way as ships or other megalithic structures; completely centrally planned and constructed in pre-fab modules which are more than likely going to be manufactured somewhere in Areonesia, or even in Lunar orbit, and shipped to the Martian surface before their assembly. The most obvious drawback of the Arcology is cost, but they also are limited in where they can be placed, and plumbing/electrical failures can be devastating.

### MOVING



*Ikamva Moving City*

Moving cities are exactly what they sound like... cities that can move. As of 2025, there are exactly three of these; **Harmonis**, an independent US-UK-based company which launched their city to Mars in 2005, becoming the first to do so. Back in the sol there were issues with sovereignty and the land that the city was driving on, but nowasols nobody really cares all too much, and Harmonis' long, treaded body mostly just treks around the northern flatlands; right now it's in Isidis Basin. Mzansi got the same idea with **Ikamva**, except only this time they armed the thing with guns and cannons and bullets "just for good measure". Also means nobody wanted to let it into their territory, of course, and nowasols it just treks around the equator, still banned from nations such as Ares or Tharsis. And then a Bulgarian firm got the same idea, they operate a somewhat shoddy cult-like moving city called **Ad Infinitum** that's having a hard time around all the craters in the southern wastes right now, earlier this year they had an encounter with the religious folks that got exiled from Aonia.

These are just the buildings made for humans - there are a vast array of non-human spaces and structures all over Mars. These include communications towers, long aqueducts which have been built from glaciers either at the Martian poles or in Hellas Basin to supply cities far away, power lines, boxes in the middle of nowhere that do who knows what, solar fields, and more.

## Food & Drugs

### FOOD

Food on Mars is something that's difficult to get a clear picture of from a distance, because every polity and city has different regional dishes, and although the Martian diet can be

simplified down to just a few food pillars, there could be a document simply covering every single cuisine on the planet and it probably still wouldn't hit all the bases.

Simply put, most Martian food comes from aquaponics systems, which are in their most basic form, a fish tank with hanging plants. Fish, most commonly Tilapia, and sometimes Bass, Catfish, Trout, Carp, Bluegills and Crappies, are all in the "water" part of the system. Hanging above the fish are plants, which can consist of almost anything, but they're most frequently various types of vegetable to fill vitamin and protein niches - some of these are suspended in midair and fed with water from the tanks, while others are directly suspended in the fish water, and you can also move the plants around which is important for the next part. The fish eat weeds, algae and parasites off the plant roots while not harming the roots themselves, and then poop it out, and the plants use that as fertilizer to grow. The crops can be harvested, and once the fish reach old age or there's too many in a tank, they too can be eaten.

Bugs are second-place to aquaponics systems, and are most common in Eastern Bloc descendant colonies or independent polities which couldn't afford aquaponics early on and got stuck in their ways, the reason behind why Aonia is the largest polity to overwhelmingly eat bugs. Bug farms are great because they're cheap and produce a lot of food, but to cover all the nutritional bases they're usually merged with a hydroponics system (hydroponics is like aquaponics but without the fish). Mealworms, Crickets, Beetles, Grasshoppers, and yes, even Cockroaches, are eaten all across the world. Not to drag on, but another plus about bugs is that they can be dried out and shipped; several cities have taken advantage of this to create bug farm factories and export the critters as delicacies.

But just because these are the most common foods on Mars doesn't mean they're the only foods. Dozens of different fruits and vegetables - some of them even slightly genetically engineered (thanks, Aonia!) are grown around the planet, and a few cities make bank off of being one of a few or even the only city on the entire planet to grow a certain crop, which they can sell to everyone else. In larger cities, some small-scale chicken/lobster/specialized-fish-farms have been built, and one city even tried raising goats, although that one kinda fell through. Anyway, all of these are delicacies and sold for insane prices to rich communities everywhere.

And that's not even considering food shipped in from Earth. Hundreds of foods are not available in any form on Mars, with dairy and meat being the most notable. Vegan meat patties are somewhat common, though they're difficult to manufacture due to their specific spice requirements. Lab-grown meat also exists, although it is also very expensive and difficult to grow on Mars. So most meat, cheese, and anything else that's difficult to produce here is ordered from Earth - These shipments are massive, only shipped to the biggest cities. Food is frozen, sometimes stored for years on end, far past the "expiration date" - which indeed means very little on this world. MRE's, canned goods, soups, and more, which are shelf-stable, are also shipped in. These are usually on the shelves of the local grocery store/food bank. It's also common for Martians to store and recycle the cans, bags, and tupperware this food was stored in.

## DRUGS

It is really a given that drugs exist on Mars; they are an almost integral part of the human experience, after all. Pharmaceuticals are everywhere, with the most common among them being Vitamin D supplements, and other vitamin/mineral supplements, especially prevalent in smaller towns which don't have the expensive earthlike amenities of larger cities. Indeed, all pharmaceuticals on Mars were made on Earth due to their costs and their difficulty to manufacture, which also makes them incredibly expensive, and their distribution in pharmacies limited to cities.

Cannabis, Caffeine, and Alcohol are the most common non-pharmaceutical drugs on Mars, in that order. Cannabis has medical uses in its own right, and often serves in place of more legitimate drugs due to its ease of manufacture. Mid-sized cities might have a section of their aquaponics system dedicated specifically to growing it, and large cities definitely have one, maybe even a whole room. Caffeine is second in line. The issue with coffee is that its beans are incredibly water-intensive, with one cup of coffee taking up to 140 cups of water to make. This isn't a problem on Earth, but on Mars, it limits coffee cultivation to the large cities. Similar can be said for tea, which, despite being slightly less water intensive, still needs to drink a lot of H<sub>2</sub>O to grow - this isn't even touching on the specific conditions both of these plants need to grow well, which also require complex and expensive systems.

Comparatively, alcohol is relatively simple and not intensive at all to produce. Fermentation is surprisingly easy and can really be done by someone who has no knowledge of brewing. As a result, it was produced in small quantities from, really, sol one. Nowasols, larger manufacturing plants for alcoholic drinks have been built, because of course they were. Meanwhile, nicotine and tobacco products in general would be far more common if it weren't for how water-intensive the tobacco crop is. Making the tobacco, plus the material required to make cigarettes/vapes/cigars/pipes, is often more expensive than simply shipping it in from Earth. Of course, you can just chew or sniff the tobacco, but that's considered even more wasteful.

Illicit drugs were a harder cookie to crack for early explorers, but evidence suggests that despite the hurdles, cocaine, opium, and more were being produced on Mars as early as the 1980s. Drugs that require actual synthesis such as LSD, Methamphetamine, etc, were and still are not able to be manufactured on Mars. The drugs that are, though, are illegal and the target of both national and international prevention missions, with the United Martian Nations' **Martian Ranger Force** operating the **Mission to Prevent the Spread of Illegal Substances (MIPSIS)**, which is supplied with guns and cooperates with national military/police forces to raid drug labs.

## Clothing & Fashion

Before all the chemical plants were built, producing clothes on Mars was difficult. Of course, a large share of clothing was imported from Earth, and made to last, but nothing lasts forever, and Martians had to get creative as early as the 1980s. Select colonies opted to simply wear

underwear or go fully naked, though this was an unpopular option from the start, and while the practice can still be found in some cities, it's very rare, only present in small settlements that probably aren't even on the map, and generally frowned upon by the rest of Martian society.

Algae and seaweed-based textiles were incredibly popular planetwide from the moment the practice was brought to Mars in the mid-80's - indeed, algae-clothes have become somewhat ingrained in "Planetwide" culture due to their widespread use in the early colonial sols, and they are still a common sight tosol. Bamboo, containing cellulose, was first used to make semi-traditional clothing beginning in the 1990s, and this process really took off in the 2000s, though bamboo-derived clothing and textiles, while lasting longer than their algae counterparts, also tend to be much more expensive.

Martian colonies being climate-controlled and generally the exact same temperature anywhere you go means that clothing meant for distinctly cold/hot temperatures has all but vanished on the red planet, with garments such as coats, scarfs, and boots either being something you would have taken with you from Earth when you first came to Mars, or imported luxury items/fashion statements. Martians prefer sandals or even just socks rather than full-on shoes, because Martian "Streets" are made of harsh metal, or if you're lucky, carpet/plastic, and these are cleaned quite often, so shoes aren't really required. It's also customary in almost every city on the planet to leave your shoes outside if you're going into someone's quarters (which often have up to a dozen people sleeping in what amounts to capsule pods, around a larger public living quarters), so it's not uncommon to see shelves of shoes/sandals right outside, although this practice may vary slightly depending where exactly you are.

Another trend seen the world over is the practice of one adorning their clothes with various pieces of memorabilia and decoration - usually meaningful in some way to them - as a way to express and distinguish themselves; if dyes and/or paints are cheap enough, they may also be used in this way. Adornments may consist of small nostalgic objects that a colonist brought with them from Earth, an object of importance gifted by parents or grandparents, sentimental gifts from lovers/partners or even friends, dyed/painted patterns such as the symbol of one's family or city, and much, much more.

And no, no average Martian walks around in a spacesuit like they do in sci-fi, 95% of people on the planet have probably never even worn a spacesuit if it wasn't for some kind of drill. These suits are complicated, expensive machinery designed to be used by skilled tradespeople or maintenance workers, and there's only a few even in relatively large cities.

## **Communication**

Back in the sol, if you wanted to talk to someone on the other side of the world you'd have to type some green letters onto the screen of a terminal and hope it'd reach whoever you're trying to send it to from some 80's satellite in orbit. tosol, the Martian communications network has reached similar levels to its Earthly counterpart; hundreds of communications satellites in orbit

provide at least some kind of NET access to every corner of the world. During the late 1990s, international projects began across the planet to lay thousands of miles of high-speed telecom and other communications cables, especially in densely-populated regions. These carry fast, large-scale, important messages between cities, such as live information related to the economy. The array of satellites in Martian orbit that facilitates low-speed communications send their signals to major interplanetary installations on the Martian Moons which send and receive thousands of messages between Mars and Earth, and sometimes the other planets, but mostly those two, and don't forget the communications delay between the two planets ranges between 4 and 24 minutes one-way.

The Martian NET, or **Telsat** (Satellite Communications Network, shortened and modified) is used on a weekly basis by approximately 75% of Martians, and on a daily basis by about 15% of Martians. It has its own "social media" equivalent, its own memes and culture, but for the most part is less active than Earth's equivalent, and is used by Martians for practical means or to have a little fun after the work-sol, instead of being something that's constantly in your face. This is at least in part due to the lack of personal devices on Mars; Phones exist, although they have some strings attached, they're not really something you open up to scroll Twitter on every 20 minutes at work, because they're big, thick, built to last, and for how much more thick they are than Earth's phones they're just as much as expensive. Buying a phone on Mars is an investment comparable to buying, say, a new couch, or a new suit, a thing that's going to be with you for years, maybe a decade, maybe even longer because you can open it up and replace the parts instead of buying a new one, and not something you buy new every year. As for actually making calls, they can do that, but people prefer landlines. Computers (still called "Terminals" on Mars) are much the same. In the richest cities, each family might have one (1) terminal used by the whole family, and if you don't like the time you get on it you can go down to the public Terminal Bay and get charged for every second you use it, and in smaller cities, these terminal bays are the only thing you have, although in settlements with a population smaller than Dunbar's number these probably don't charge you.

Mail's also a thing, and Mars has parcel-transport institutions on similar levels to Earth's, although the government institutions which are supposed to handle mailing usually outsource the job out to private contractors and small-scale cargo carriers. Letters in their usual, paper form do not exist - While wood is grown, it's an expensive highly sought-after material that isn't wasted on disposable paper, and any burning questions you may have to ask your granddad on the other side of the planet can be asked via email. Television is very common, and TV's tend to be built in the same way phones and terminals are, and they're all still operated by gauges and buttons instead of remotes.

## **Media & Entertainment**

As a baseline for general pop-culture on Mars, nobody here cares about Earth - especially for people born here. It's that dot in the sky that they learned about in school as the place humans came from. Celebrities, politicians, memes, trends, anything you can think of on Earth has no relevance to Martians. Try asking a Martian what they know about a celebrity on the blue planet

and they probably haven't even heard of them, maybe some people have heard of the US president, and even then, nobody cares what they're doing. Because Martians have their own celebrities, politicians, memes, trends and global events to worry about. What's more, most people living on this planet have far more immediate things to care about than pop-culture. This is a bit of a culture shock for Earthlings moving to Mars, but it's pretty funny for natives because they immediately know when someone is from Earth.

The "City Television" is a staple of a small Martian colony - even in larger settlements, there might only be a few TV's per few dozen people, and they can only show one channel at a time, so it's gotta be something everyone likes if you're gonna watch something. Many of these televisions are still big boxes from the 1990s, though newer colonies were lucky to catch the flatscreens later in the decade (they're still using the same televisions to this sol). And there's only a few channels to go around either way, maybe not as few as, say, Mercury, but definitely no more than two dozen anywhere you are. News channels are part of every administration on the planet, whether they be organized and funded or just a few people in a backroom, every polity has some kind of news channel directly connected to all their cities. But Martians tend to pay more attention and put more of their trust into podcasts (mostly because they're more entertaining). And everyone really just watches TV for the sports or Earth's reality show reruns.

Music is ubiquitous - like other media, early Martian music was imported from Earth in all its various media formats, from CD's to floppy discs and even records, but all this music is a product of its time (1960's-1980's). Still, later colonists brought their own music, and once Martians got connected enough with earth via wifi to just download music, getting it from Earth became a non-issue. Native music exists, too, a lot of colonists bring their guitars or electronic keyboards or brass or other small to medium-sized instruments with them, even if it costs some extra money to have them shipped. Folk music is quite common in general and pretty easy to make for the average joe. A few bands exist around the major metropoli, but they don't really do tours, though every Martian dwelling has a radio, so there have been songs that've gone global, and the planet generally has more of a music-monoculture than Earth does at the largest scales. The diversity of the planet means that 7/10 of the global hits don't have any lyrics.

A number of works inspired countless people to start a new life on the Martian frontier, from Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*, released in 1950, to Kim Stanley Robinson's 1980s *Mars Trilogy* to *The Iron Desert*, released in 1992, as some of the most influential for Western colonists. In 2025, Martians themselves have produced a great many works of fact and fiction on their own planet. Biographies are common, as are "life on mars" stories leaning both into fact and fantasy, but you can find just as many genres of novels here as you can back on Earth, except for one thing: They're all online. Not to say libraries don't exist, they do, but they're all filled up with books that were printed on Earth and imported to Mars, and are probably sitting on a dusty two-decade old shelf. All of the planet's native works were written and published online - and a lot of them aren't just written, are full-on multimedia stories with videos, sounds, interactable sections and more.

Games on Mars are both physical and digital - games like Scrabble, Monopoly, Chess, Stratego, Sorry, Battleship, and many others were brought to the planet by early colonists, nowasols, these tabletop games have probably been played on hundreds or thousands of times after becoming a sort-of public-use item for the entire colony. The earliest gaming consoles hit the scene in the 1980s, and by the 1990s and 2000s they were already nearly a decade ahead of their IRL counterparts, and of course they got taken with to Mars, too, and went down similar paths to the boardgames, becoming items that are used by everyone (sometimes nobody knows who the original owner was). Online video games do exist, though they tend to be similar to flash games, while truly online multiplayer videogames are less common, and very laggy with martian ethernet speeds.

The world of sports on Mars is a great deal different than it is back on Earth. For one, sports that require massive fields or areas to be played have either been shrunk down or don't exist in any real form; these include football, baseball, cricket (although someone did try to build a dome over a crater to make a cricket field), any sport involving horses, hunting or water (obviously), rodeos, motorsports, etc etc, let's get to what sports are played already! Starting at the bottom, **Monopoly** is the most common boardgame sport and a common first for Martian children. And not just in western colonies either; the game has a presence almost everywhere on the planet, though its inclusion as an international sport is somewhat controversial due to being partially chance-based. While **Chess** is still commonplace, **Stratego** is seen as more professional as a sort-of "Chess 2". It should be noted that hundreds of other boardgames, many of them developed on Mars, are played all across the planet and are technically the most popular sport on Mars, due to some games' inclusion in international sporting events. **Card games**, skill or luck-based, are also seen pretty much everywhere, though usually aren't included in actual sporting events.

Just a short jump up from boardgames are what some might consider more "real" sports, that are still commonplace in Martian towns. **Table Tennis** can fit in the corner of a room and has been played since sol one, and **gyms** are also a staple of most every city on the planet. **Tabletop RPG's** and **miniature wargames** also usually fit into this category rather than that of boardgames due to their larger size and their international prevalence. Indeed, the versatility of these formats means that there are thousands of homegrown, "traditional" games, often invented by children or teens which later became a staple game of their town/district's culture.

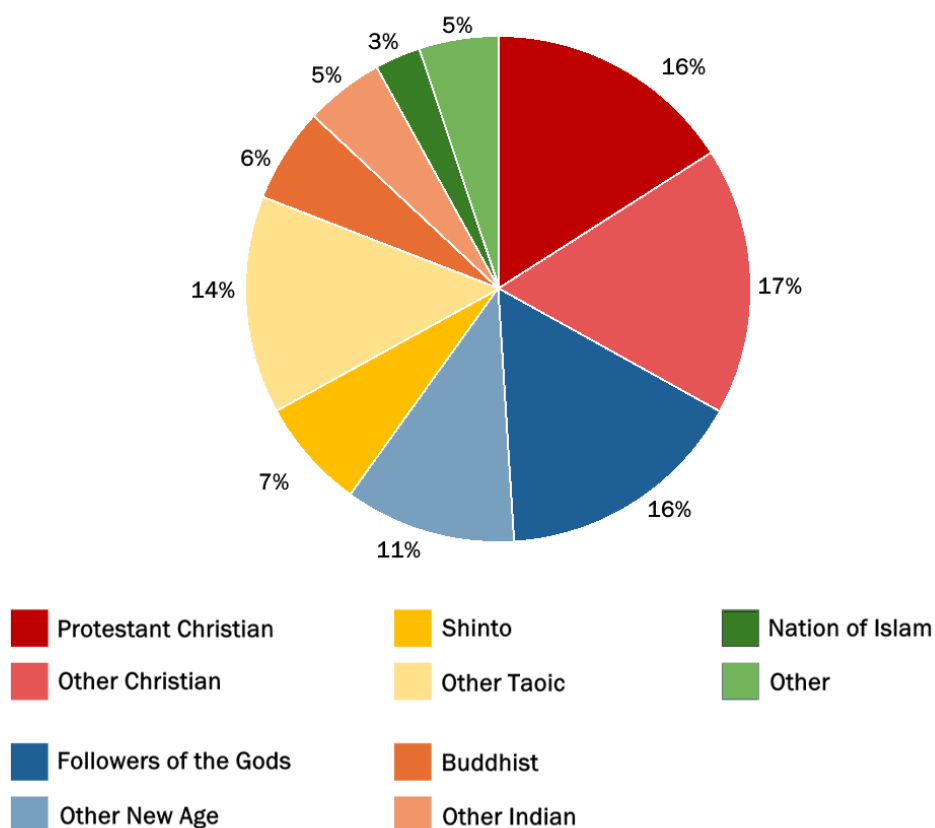
Often, single families don't have a single video game console - they may have a family computer, but no one person can use it for a significant chunk of the sol. Because of this, videogames and consoles tend to be public items in public areas of a city/colony, maybe a feature of a "district" with 30-100 people. Still, videogames and E-sports are common, being most popular in colonies large enough to have specialties such as game consoles, but not those so large that they can build larger sports venues. Virtual/Augmented reality is commonly used in richer cities to simulate outdoor sports, although these aren't usually represented in international events.

Moving up a level, Racket sports such as **Badminton, Tennis, Pickleball, Wallyball** and the Scottish sport **Tambourelli**, which is especially common in Tharsis, Lunae, Xanthe, and New Albion. The rooms these are hosted in are small enough to be built in mid-sized martian cities, and a slight step up from them include **bowling alleys** and **basketball** courts, both of which are, expectedly, most common in western-founded colonies. Meanwhile, in the 1990s, the first **indoor fishing** venue opened in the Independence region of Ares, by a Minnesotan who missed the activity. Since then, dozens of indoor fishing ponds have opened all across the planet; these are commonly preexisting large-scale aquaponic farms. The first running tracks opened in the late 1980s - tosol, they're pretty much a custom among Martian cities - not only are they used for running, they're ordinarily repurposed for recreational and/or competitive cycling depending on how wide the track is, though stationary bicycles are far more common for every sol exercise.

The larger the sport is in area, the rarer it is here on Mars; as mentioned previously, the closest you can have to a real experience of playing, say, golf, is via virtual/augmented reality or the rare golf projector, while the real sport isn't played anywhere on the planet (although some golf balls have been hit). Soccer is so commonplace that it was pretty much bound to have a physical field built for it somewhere on the planet, and that happened in 1992. nowasols, there's nearly 200 soccer fields across Mars, albeit some of them aren't full-sized fields. American Football was restricted to AR simulations until 2017, when a full-sized 5,000 seat football field was built in the city of Utopia for the low low price of 500 million dollars. New Albion funded the creation of a similarly-sized cricket field, and EuroTharsis built the largest soccer field on the planet in New Berlin, capable of seating 10,000 people. Indeed, though they do exist, real fields like this are insanely rare and come with truly incredible construction costs, which don't pay themselves back.

## **Religion & Language**

### **RELIGION**



Religious Demographics of Mars, 2025

**Raelianism** was founded in France in 1974 by one **Maurice Marcel Vorilhon**, also known by his purported “Real” name “**Raël**” until his death in 2018. In late 1973, Vorilhon, while in a secluded volcanic crater in rural France, encountered a bell-shaped alien spacecraft. When he went to investigate the craft, an alien emerged and told Vorilhon that they had come to Earth with the sole purpose of meeting him, and requested him to spread their message to the rest of humanity. On a second visit, Vorilhon says, the aliens (now known as the **Elohim**) transported them to their home planet, where he had his DNA sequenced and a clone made of himself. Here, he was given a rundown on the whole history of humanity, how the Elohim are actually ancient human scientists and how all life on Earth was created by the Elohim/humans 25,000 years ago - it is also here where he met figures such as Jesus, Muhammed, the Buddha, among others - and received a copy of what is essentially the “Raelian Bible”, teaching that humanity’s duty is to follow what their ancestors did thousands of years ago and genetically engineer humans/earth life to spread to the rest of the solar system, with the Elohim insisting this next planet be Mars.

The Raelian Church grew massively over the course of the late 1970’s/1980’s, while the early colonization boom going on at the same time gave them, essentially, the perfect window to get in on the action early - by the late-80’s, a number of Raelians were already living in EuroTharsis, and in 1990, the first true Raelian settlement was established; Aonia. Now, remember just a

second ago when I said the Raelians got in on Mars at what, really, couldn't have been a better time? It shows in 2025, where the Church not only dominates the **Interpersonal State of Aonia** (Where Raelianism is a state religion, and where the Church operates its genetic engineering/cloning labs), but also has an influence almost everywhere you look on the red planet. Unfortunately, unethical practices by the religion in its "home" territory have led to its designation as a terrorist organization by several Martian states and its subsequent illegalization. More will be discussed about Raelianism - and a dive taken into its actions in Aonia, in its own section further down.

**Solarianism** is a broad term covering neo-pagan religions and faiths that worship the sun, and in some cases, other celestial bodies such as Mars' moons. Solarian beliefs are present in equatorial colonies, though even here they are still confined to small towns with populations in the dozens or low hundreds. Concentrated Solarian beliefs only exist in cities in eastern Lucusia, or in a number of tiny equatorial tribes which slowly circumnavigate the planet either directly on the equator, or in calculated movements to follow the sun through its path in the sky during different seasons.

In Tokyo, Japan, halfway through 1982, a woman by the name of Kazuko Nakana had an epiphany. She wrote in her journal that she had been contacted by a group of "Advisors" the night before, who spoke on behalf of "The Core". Several more encounters months apart throughout the rest of the year and all of 1983 revealed more information about both the Advisors and The Core, and what exactly was going on, why they were contacting her in specific, the history of mankind, and what they wanted her to do about it. The Core was a human code-name for a council of Gods who originate from Mars - billions of years ago, these Gods came from a 4th-dimensional "true" paradise to a young planetary system, in a bid to turn all the planets into paradises themselves for 3d beings which would live in harmony on each, and the capital, the planet "between" all the other planets, was named Mars.

The Gods descended to the core of Mars (at the time, the planet was a super-earth, but we'll get to that in a second), making it the "capital" of the system. In the next billion years, a civilization arose on Mars, one which was humanoid, though smarter than modern sol humans; this species spread across the planet and took it upon themselves to spread their Gods in the core to the cores of other planets and moons in the system, and in-turn make all those planets habitable. This was an affront to the Martian Gods, who used their power to strike down the other planets with various cataclysms one at a time; Mercury was struck first, hit by a protoplanet so large its entire crust was ripped off, leaving just its core intact; Protoplanets also struck Venus, Earth, and Mars, with Venus' rotation being slowed to a halt while its surface was boiled, Earth being hit by a Mars-sized object which created a new moon, and Mars being hit by an oort-cloud planet the size of Earth which migrated to the interior of the system, blowing off Mars' outer layers and turning it from a super-earth to what it is tosol, and creating the Asteroid Belt in the process. The moons of the outer planets shared the same fate, although Europa and Titan's

Gods fared the best during this process, possibly due to their loyalty to the Gods of Mars, though their intelligent civilizations were still obliterated.

Once the cataclysm was over, the civilization which once ruled over the entire solar system was all but destroyed, and the Gods of Mars settled in and waited, for surviving bacteria on one of the worlds to evolve into an intelligent form, which would return to Mars and be devout, loyal worshippers of Mars and only Mars. As it turns out, Earth did have an intelligent civilization in the past, but these beings did not want to return to Mars, and thus were destroyed by a nuclear war - modern humans must be devout, lest the same happen to us.

Nakana took these meetings and listened to the Gods' requests and their warnings, but as suggested by them, she didn't immediately go to Mars - if she went right now, she might not be able to gather any kind of following on the red planet - she would have to build it right here on Earth before moving to Mars. And build it she did; by the year 2000, there were over 10,000 Followers, with thousands living on Mars, predominantly in the Japanese colonies of Kasei. Nakana passed away in 2010, but the religion she created has spread incredibly fast, with just over 500,000 Martians following the Gods as of 2025.

Worship of the Gods first involves travelling to Mars from Earth or being born on Mars; you cannot truly be part of the faith unless you live on this planet - not to say people who don't live on Mars are heretics, but it is to say that people that decline going to the planet (or going "home") when they entirely have the capability to do so is frowned upon. To pray to the Gods when you're on Mars, colonies that abide by the religion have "holes", usually about a meter in depth with a staircase or ladder leading to them, which get you slightly closer to Mars' core, since being closer to the core of the planet means you're closer to who you're worshipping and more interconnected with your faith - this is also why hundreds of thousands of FOTG's adherents live in Hellas Basin, the lowest natural point in the world. It is thought FOTG's modern popularity stems from the majority of Japanese Mars colonists being atheist and/or agnostic, converting to following instead of aligning with traditional religions for a number of reasons.

Temples also follow the "closer to the core is better" mentality; FOTG temples, only one of which currently exists in its "true" form given to Nakana by the Gods themselves, is designed to be a standalone structure, containing a stepped 50-meter deep hole similar to ancient step wells, with a pyramid to cap the structure off - religious figures live, worship, and work in the walls of the Temples, while adherents walk to the very bottom of the Temple to pray. **Badwater Crater**, located in Hellas Basin, is considered the most holy place in FOTG due to being the lowest point in elevation on Mars. It is also one of the few places on the planet where atmospheric pressure and temperature are high enough at certain times of the year for surface liquid water and brine to exist without immediately evaporating; this water is considered naturally holy and commonly used in rituals.

The Martian focus of the Followers has allowed them to convert many average Martians not just in the south, but all across the planet, with conversion being especially popular in already-independent "Martian Nationalist" countries, such as Marscutters, Solar City, Two

Peaks, and more. Experts theorize another reason it has grown so much is due to this “Martian Nationalism” inspiring many Martians to abandon their older, traditional cultures and religions from Earth as a way to build something new.

Meanwhile, **Ijin-Tachi** is a smaller subset of FOTG, with beliefs varying slightly in where the gods come from and what’s actually going on. According to Ijin-Tachi, the Gods still exist and are still in Mars’ core, but they see Martian fossils still existing as evidence that Mars’ mantle being blown off didn’t actually happen, and assume that the ancient civilization that was present on Mars never colonized the rest of the solar system; rather, they lost faith in the Martian gods, tore down temples, and turned into nihilistic atheists. As a result of their heresy, their society began to fall apart, and as a final punishment by the Gods themselves, Mars’ crust was broken into pieces, creating Viking Valley and kickstarting an era of volcanism which would create Olympus Mons and Mars’ other massive mountains - unholy monuments of destruction that sit as far away from Mars’ core as is physically possible. Adherents of Ijin-Tachi believe settling these mountains is the most disrespectful thing a person could do, and many of them are extremely xenophobic to people who don’t live in or near Hellas Basin.

**Deorina** is a UFO-religion/cult founded in Malaysia in 1973, and it still maintains a rather large presence on Earth, especially in rural Malaysia. The religion preaches of its leaders hearing messages from a collection of “Universal Protectors”, warning of a cataclysm to befall earth during the 2100s; what exactly this cataclysm will be is unknown, but the Protectors say it is unstoppable (as in, even if humans find an asteroid and deflect it, the end of the world will just happen some other way), and that humans need to evacuate Earth to the solar system’s other planets to have any chance of surviving, and not just to Earth orbit or Luna, because those would also be destroyed. Starting in the 2000s and continuing to the modern sol, members of Deorina have taken advantage of Indonesian hiring programs meant to transport cheap laborers to Mars, as a way of getting off of Earth, resulting in a rather large population of Malaysian, and a fair amount of converted Indonesian adherents to Deorina in Nusantara cities. Fun fact: Some people believe that Deorina is some kind of psyop by the Malaysian or Indonesian government to get more people to space.

The **Order of the Solar Temple**, a neo-templar organization/cult founded in 1973, was heavily funded and incentivised to create a settlement on Mars by the Raelians in the 1980s, and the Solar Temple’s “Great Mission” in 1994 brought this goal to reality though a number of funny scandals and scams involving the Caribbean, and concluded with the establishment of the Temple’s sole colony, Sacred Heart. By the early-2010’s however, the city of Sacred Heart had been absorbed by Aonia, and their once friendly relations had been growing sour over the years prior. In 2015, the Interpersonal State of Aonia declared Raelianism as a state religion which everyone living in the state must follow, and outlawed all other religions with the threat of prison sentencing or exile, and this included the Solar Temple. But the Templars weren’t so eager to just leave behind their own mission, and instead of following Aonia’s demands, the Templars

contacted the West African Colonies, with a proposal that they would be the pioneers in the colonization of a then-unclaimed and uninhabited region to the southeast of the colonies, but northeast of where Sacred Heart already was.

The Move in late 2015 didn't exactly pan out for the Templars, and instead of re-establishing a second sacred heart, their population spread out in a diaspora across West Africa's southern cities - something the folks up in The Cluster aren't the most excited about, but something they've seem to have gotten used to over the past decade. A much smaller diaspora of Templars exists across the rest of the planet, most notably in the American and European colonies, but these combined number less than 300.

Various forms of **Neo-Greek religion** are present across the planet, but nowhere is this more prominent than the Aresian territory of Prometheus. Just south of the equator, Prometheus is home to just under 8,000 people - most of whom abide by a strange newfangled form of ancient polytheistic Greek religion, combined with modern pagan beliefs with a small sprinkling of Christianity and Buddhism on top.

**Areism** is a set of religions all about worshipping Mars itself, whether it be the living rocks on the surface or the planet itself (not any gods in the core). Sort of like Martian paganism. People like this are present everywhere, and due to the religion/faith not being entirely theist, the venn diagram overlaps with atheists and agnostics quite often. "True" Areism is practiced in a number of settlements, most of them small towns not large enough to be shown on the map scattered around EuroTharsis - though towns like this are also present near the Martian poles and in some isolated towns around the south. The densest presence of True Areans are in the Finnish colony of, uh, Finnish Mars, just west of the rest of European Tharsis, but not part of it due to a number of cultural differences between the colonists here, as well as a slight Libertarian sentiment among the Finns.

The **Aetherius Society** is a UFO-religion founded in the United Kingdom by George King in the mid-1950s. The religion claims to facilitate contact between its adherents and a select group of "Cosmic Masters", who will help humans solve their mortal problems and advance into a new age. By the wishes of these Cosmic Masters, numerous Aetherians from the UK migrated to New Albion, with the majority of them migrating to Mars in the 1990's, who then raised their children as Aetherians, making the Society the second-largest faith in the region, being the predominant religion in several large cities in southern New Albion. Aetherians tend to be humble and respectful to their peers; their churches are small, often appearing similar to a quaint storefront on the side of the road, and unlike other religions on Mars, they generally aren't expansionist, although there is a small number of Aetherians scattered about the rest of the world.

**Hindus** are rare on Mars; although there is a minor Hindu diaspora across the planet, there is only one large concentration of Hinduism: Badereet, India's largest Mars colony, home to about 10,000 Hindus, who comprise a fourth of Mars' estimated Hindu population of 41,000. A number of people in the region have also dropped Hinduism for FOTG, and many believe Hinduism will shrink to a minor diaspora religion on Mars in the best case, if not die out entirely in the worst case

**Buddhism** is present mostly in the areas you would expect it to be, of course being the Southeast Asian colonies on Mars - it is also present in the Free Peoples, but that's mostly due to its peaceful nature. Where you might not expect Buddhism is in the Brazilian and Argentine colonies; although the low population of these polities mean that there aren't that many Buddhists, they still number large enough to compare to the Catholic populations they share the region with. Buddhism is present in dozens of Buddhist neighborhoods in major Martian cities, or in smaller numbers in less-populated towns, which, especially in more diverse colonies, usually incorporate Buddhist architecture or other symbols of the religion.

A diverse range of modern-sol **Pagan** practices exist in a large number of small cities, predominately in EuroTharsis and some isolated towns in Ares. The largest concentration of modern-sol Pagans can be found in the North Pole Trust Territory, where a gradient of Pagan beliefs combine to become the largest religion in the area, followed by Protestantism. An esoteric version of Paganism derived from occult nazi theories is one of three state religions, and the most practiced faith in Thule.

**Zoroastrianism** is a minor religion, with its most concentrated presence being in the Iranian colony of Shehar, where it is the second most popular faith behind Mormonism. Outside Shehar, there is a small diaspora of Zoroastrians, mostly in the American, Indian, and Australian colonies, with much smaller numbers distributed across the rest of the planet.

**Atheism** may not be a religion in its own right, but Atheists and their indecisive agnostic cousins are spread all across the planet, although maybe not to the extent you might assume for the average space colony - the Overview Effect had a great effect on some people who explored the cosmos, but to most, the psychological effects of seeing Earth from space "wore off" after a while, and for people actually born on Mars, there was no effect whatsoever. A common misconception is that all atheists on Mars hate the other religions, when this is simply untrue - while there are a number of "Hard" atheists who actively oppose organized religion, with some targeting specific faiths, the vast majority of atheists/agnostics don't care about the religious folks.

While there are few actual Chinese colonies on Mars, there is still a great amount of Chinese presence, especially in western or privately-founded colonies. Olympus, the largest of the latter, covers the peak and surrounding plateau of Olympus Mons; populated almost entirely of people of Chinese descent, whether from China itself or from other parts of the world, the people living here almost exclusively abide by **Chinese Syncretic Beliefs**. A combination of boredom, curiosity, and white people not knowing anything about Chinese religions, has also led to parts of northern Rothbard and eastern Ares adopting similar forms of Syncretism, although these are sometimes molded to fit Christian or more generally western philosophies while still incorporating their roots from China. **Taoism**, meanwhile, is practiced in the CCP-founded but nominally independent country of Youyi, while China's artificial state religion, Neo-Confucianism, is practiced in the CCP's only true Martian colony, **Zhongyang Tudi**.

Prior to the spread of FOTG, Buddhism and **Shintoism** shared the Japanese colonies in Hellas. With the rise of FOTG, almost all former Buddhists in Hellas have converted to the new religion, though the Shintoists living here have been more reluctant to convert, at least in part due to the fact that many identify with both Shintoism and FOTG, with some even still identifying with Buddhism. Despite its decline, it is still the second-largest religion in the majority of Japanese cities.

The origins of **Abrahamism** aren't exactly known; a new-age religion/cult attempting to combine the tenets of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, it is infamous for stirring up drama back on the planet it came from (earth), its texts being extremely contradictory in many cases, while its adherents are insanely devout and cultish. Most Abrahamics on Earth live in Jordan, so it should be no surprise that Jordan's Martian colony, Nabataea, is almost entirely Abrahamic. However, it should be noted that Nabatea's population sits in the low thousands. There are also minor Abrahamic populations, especially in other Middle Eastern colonies, although Abrahamics are often discriminated against.

**Islam** is a large religion on Earth, and it's also a large religion on Mars. Muslims mostly live in the places you'd expect - Nusatara, Dostati, and Areopotamia for the most part, while also being present to a lesser extent in Ares, EuroTharsis, and New Albion due to muslims already living in the west back on Earth migrating to Mars. Not much else to say.

**Judaism** is a relatively minor religion on the red planet, though it makes up a larger total share of the planet's religious composition than Jews do on Earth. The majority of Jews on Mars, unsurprisingly, live in Shiraka Shutafut and Goshen, with more Jewish colonies, cities, and neighborhoods scattered around Ares. Generally, there are also Jewish cities and isolated communities in New Albion, EuroTharsis, and Synetairismos, though these are too small to show on the map.

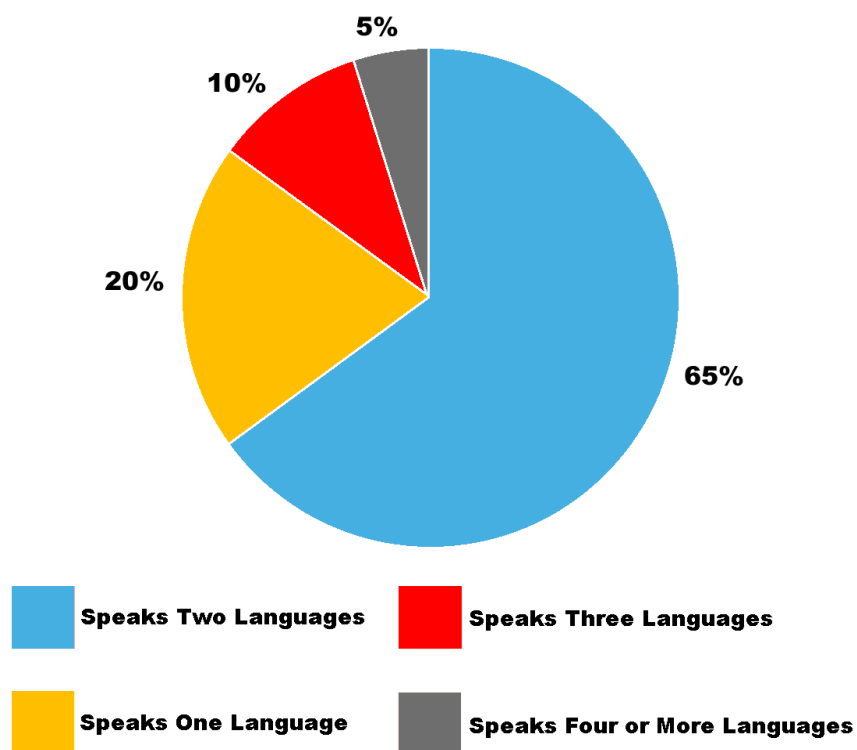
The **Baha'i Faith** wasn't a major religion on Mars until the 2010s, but as of 2025, it has grown massively around the Tharsis, Lunae, and Xanthe regions. Of course, the Faith was present, though in sparse numbers, across Mars prior to the last 20 years, though its major concentrations used to be at the poles. Beginning in 2007, the Faith back on Earth funded several missions to Ares, Lunae, Xanthe, Eurotharis, Argyre, and Jedinstvo; these missions, at their height in 2013, were behind spreading the faith to thousands of young people, and ballooning its numbers from just 15,000 adherents in 2010, to nearly 130,000 adherents by 2015 - this number has jumped to just under 200,000 adherents in 2025, with it being most practiced in regions just north of EuroTharsis. Bahai'i Churches make use of rare Martian marble, while some of the cities they're located in have been renovated to have nine sides or "wings". The faith is known for lobbying in support of gardens, greenspaces, and indoor parks, not just in its territories, but everywhere - it also funds and lobbies for the construction of international infrastructure.

The three major branches of **Christianity** dominate northern Mars, with Protestants being common in the North American/British colonies, Catholicism being common in the South/Central American colonies (including Mexico's Alba Patera, and Oceania's Argyre Republic in the south), while Eastern Orthodox Christianity is present in the Eastern European/Russian colonies, as well as Greece's colonial administration in the southern hemisphere. EuroTharsis is a mix between all three. Eastern Orthodox and Catholic folks prefer to build new churches on the planet out of native mars-rock, and the Catholics especially are known for going overboard (e.g. a city spending all its money on a massive, elaborate church). Protestant churches are much less grand, though decrees and suggestions made by branches on Earth about church architecture have led to many of them being built in underground caverns, both natural and artificial, with glass skylights and a generally meek feel to them.

A number of other Pseudo-Christian groups are scattered across the planet, with many of these being present in northern Ares; the **Noachian Saints** are the most successful of these, and has managed to dominate the northern half of the country since its inception in 1985, while also being spread across the rest of the planet, with higher a higher density around small craters in the south, and most notably in a tiny independent Noachian nation in between Indonesia's uninhabited western territories. The Saints began as a small group/cult back on Earth, believing the Garden of Eden was actually on Mars during its long-gone Noachian Eon billions of years ago, that humans and all life on Earth originated from Mars, and that it is Humanity's duty to undo the great Noachian extinction and bring the red planet's native life back. The Saints began their mission to Mars in the mid-90's with the establishment of a compound in the Southern Wastes, where they discovered few fossils but did have a nearby aquifer to work with to get water. Their second branch appeared in northern Ares during the mid-2000's, wherein they have been a major funding entity for various archeological groups and, despite their cult status, have done numbers in the fields of Martian archeology and paleontology.

Several dozen smaller Christian splinters are scattered around Mars, with the vast majority of them being in isolated regions of Ares or EuroTharsis, with some in New Albion and even the non-western parts of the planet, but only two of them have over a thousand members; the **Cosmic Circle** and the **Brothers of Christ**. Both of them operate from compounds in northern Ares, and despite a fierce rivalry, when you start looking into their beliefs they share more in common than they don't - although, this could be said for any cult which believes its leader is some kind of divine god, which both of these do.

## LANGUAGE



How many languages a literate, adult Martian can speak

The majority of Martians are bilingual at minimum, while roughly a fifth are monolingual. Because even seemingly united colonies such as Ares or Kasei were colonized by multiple different groups, they have different languages - most people in Ares speak English and Spanish, while most people in Kasei/Hellas-Malena speak Japanese and Hindi, or Japanese and Bengali.

English, German, and Japanese are by far the most spoken languages, with Spanish, Dutch, Hindi, and Portuguese in a close second. Although they are far from the only languages spoken; nearly 40 langs are spoken with some significance, and experts have come to believe that at least 400 languages are spoken in at least some capacity on Mars, although that capacity might only be a few people. In select cases, languages have come together to form new Pidgins, such as in the case of the English-Arabic Pidgins in Argyre or forms of what some call Spanglish

spoken in Ares and Rothbard, or even Croatian-Serbian-Slovene mixes in Jedinstvo. As of 2025, these haven't had enough time to become "true" pidgins, though some forms sound foreign to native speakers of their parent languages, and become more distinct in isolated communities.

## Economy & Vehicles

The driving industry on Mars even as of 2025 is building Mars; like how the Baby Boom and the immigration wave to the US following the Second World War fueled the construction of new suburbs and highways and skyscrapers and cities and all the little fittings that go inside all those things, like fridges and furniture and washing machines, the economy of Mars depends on continued population growth due to immigration and the red planet's own baby boom to produce all the technology needed for Mars' ever-expanding civilization to thrive. The start of producing anything on Mars is getting the material needed to produce it, and while a lot of complex materials are still imported from Earth, that's becoming more of a minority nowadays as Mars increasingly tends to pull its own materials out of the ground. In the old colonial sols, some people actually had to come out here to mine stuff, but as mining robots got more advanced and their costs plummeted, the dangerous jobs of going out and mining Martian regolith were replaced with jobs filled by button-pushers and tradespersons who go out and fix the robots when they inevitably break down.

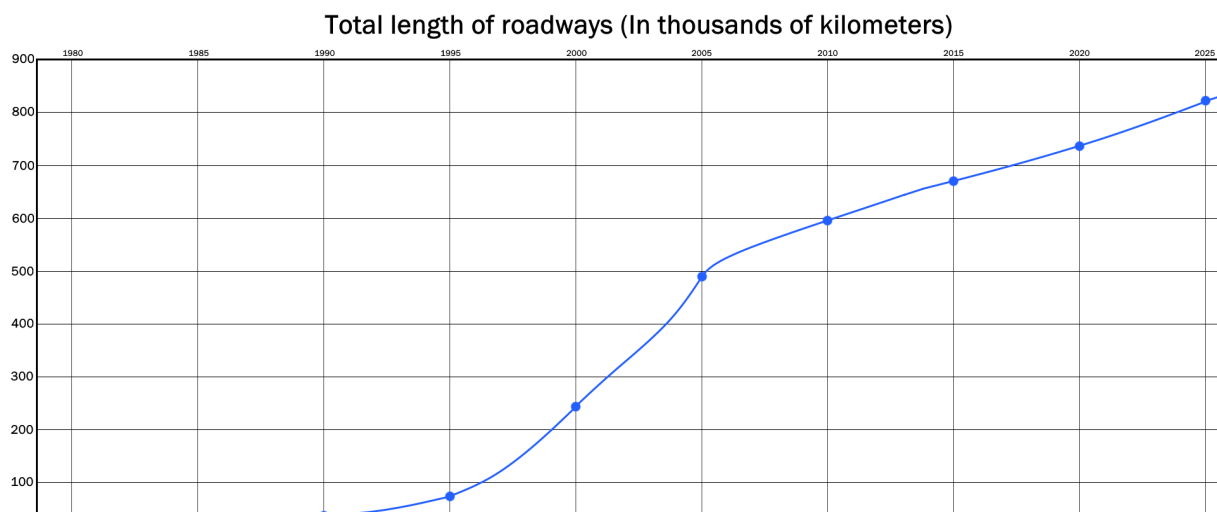
Metallurgy on Mars is more difficult than it is on Earth, yes, but not surprisingly so using things such as methane blast-furnaces and carbonyl metallurgy, allowing Martian rock to be filtered down and refined into useful materials - maybe not as pure as their Earthly equivalents, but pure enough to use in a number of applications. The lack of extensive precision-manufacturing or industrial centers for various smaller niches are the real inhibitor in Martian industry. On the other hand, the development of 3D printing and precision laser tech due to the colonization of space was so extremely fast that it covers many areas that would otherwise be filled by humans or other machinery. The Martians have found ways to produce most base industrial chemicals on their own planet, too. The lack of hydrocarbons or fossil fuels are the largest industrial caveat, but the Martians have taken a note out of the Venusians' industrial book and used newfangled methods to use native atmospheric carbon and hydrogen to create artificial hydrocarbons.

In the early sols, Martian travel was done via big carpools where everyone had to share beds every night in a big bus with all the amenities that a small base would have. "Personal" vehicles did and still do exist - although they are very rare; there are no long-range personal vehicles aside from small long-range ranger/rescue service craft common all around the planet - the **General Motors Cratertreader**, with enough space to house two people for upwards of one week without refueling, has been a dominant vehicle in this role ever since its first commercial release in 1987. By the 1990's, there was a large variety of vehicles ranging from small rangers like the Cratertreader to large double-decker buses and moving bases designed to move dozens between colonies. A fully-exhaustive list of all the different vehicles on the planet would take far too long. It would be like trying to list all the different car brands and the models

of those cars in, say, Albania, so I'll just explain the different "levels" of transport in general. The inhabitants of just a single city/colony rarely, if ever, go outside, and there's only a select few spacesuits for the few tradesfolk who do the work outside; it would be like if everyone living in a skyscraper had their own gear to clean the windows. Instead, cities on Mars still have their own roads and avenues and buildings, except they're enclosed, but generally even the farthest flung structures are connected by some kind of pathway. In some cases, nearby cities are even connected by very long underground/enclosed-surface pathways, although these are quite often built for industrial purposes and feature large industrial moving platforms alongside pipes and electric lines rather than anything a normal human should be going through. Travel between nearby cities is still usually done via these tunnels if they exist for convenience.

Where these tunnels, as well as other infrastructure that could make travel easier, do not exist, bus-like craft often comparable in scale to the largest dump trucks on Earth (also often equipped with an industrial/cargo "floor" below the smaller passenger section) are used to travel up to a few hundred kilometers, but are not meant for especially-long distances because they do not have solar arrays powerful enough to recharge in a timely manner. In Mars' developed regions, rail lines have been laid down, but they themselves come with caveats - first, metal production may not be in its infancy on Mars, but it's still nowhere near the same scale as Earth and comes with many drawbacks. What's more, temperatures can fluctuate from as high as 20 degrees Celsius (70F) at soltime and as low as -73 degrees Celsius (-100F) at night, putting even greater strains on the rail lines. Still, even with all the roadblocks, a considerable amount of rail has been laid down in Ares, Tharsis, Argyre, Hellas, and South American Mars, and they say a connection between the Tharsis rail lines and Argyre rail lines - possibly just a decade away - will greatly strengthen Martian trade. It should be noted that these rail lines, while including a small passenger section, are not focused on transporting people, and their principle purpose is transporting goods & cargo - still, it isn't impossible to travel on one.

The passenger-focused equivalent to trains on Mars are **Landships**. people disagree on when the first of these were built, but most agree that they came into being sometime during the 1990's as the aforementioned base-sized buses got larger and larger, morphing into massive landroving monsters capable of carrying hundreds of people on travels for thousands of kilometers by the time the 2010's rolled around. tosol, the largest landships are the 243 meter (800 foot) long Suzuki-Shimizu MF-1500V Landferries, consisting of 3-4 articulated sections consisting of a "pilot" module similar in size to a home, housing the craft's control room and a small nuclear fission reactor powering the MF-1500V's drivetrain, followed by three larger sections, two consisting of passenger quarters with enough space for 1,200 people, and the other being a modular cargo segment - an optional fifth module located on the aft of the Landferry is sometimes seen, and often equipped with road-laying equipment. The MF-1500IV's are the largest landships on the planet, and most measure in the low-hundreds of feet long with accommodations for a similar number of people, and most of them aren't nuclear powered, that's a semi-new thing with this new, massive series. The principle use of landships is ferrying people and cargo between isolated clusters of cities which are not connected to the rest of the world by road or rail - or if they are, the connections are run-down - an example route of a Landship is between Prometheus and EuroTharsis



Space travel on Mars isn't as ubiquitous as the stereotypes back on Earth might imply. It's common, don't get me wrong, I mean, it's the only way of getting on and off the planet. But spaceports are not in every city, in fact, it's quite the opposite, only the largest cities have extensive and active spaceports, while medium-sized cities may have a "space-field" where spacecraft can land and takeoff if required, while the smallest of colonies don't have anything. Intra-Martian transit using spacecraft is a thing, but "Jumping", as it's referred to, only really happens when Martian diplomats need to get to the UMNHQ fast. '

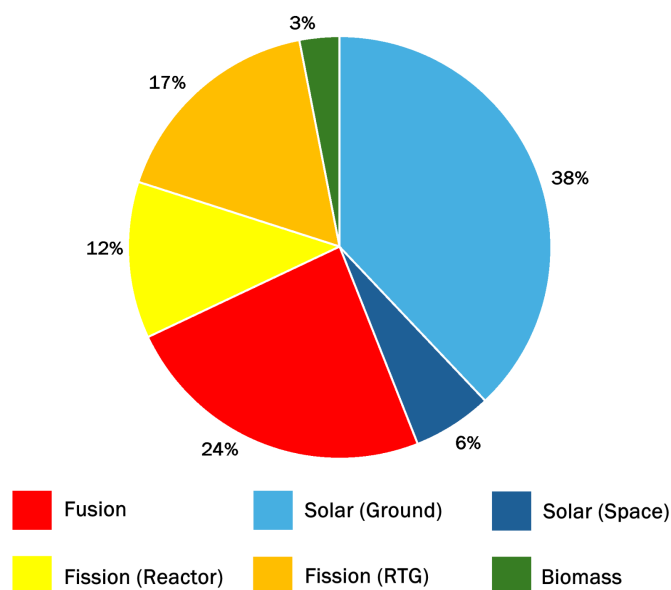
These vehicles all transport goods and services around the planet and collectively facilitate its trade web. Martian trade is different from Earthling trade - cities on the red planet are greatly isolated and autarkic, with some cities on their own having partially- or fully-automated economies just due to how small they are and how little they interact with the outside world. The base import for every city on Mars is water. Water is an incredibly versatile substance, it can be used to make air, used to grow food, used to drink or cook food, used in industry, used as insulation or as a construction material, and, oh, to keep you alive. But water isn't easy to come by, it can be found on Mars' moons, sure, but those primarily export their reserves to the rest of Martian orbit. Nearly all water on Mars' surface comes from the poles, where it's dug out of glaciers, melted, filtered, and frozen again into cubes up to ten or fifteen cubic meters, and loaded on trucks which get shipped to metropoli (Utopia, New Albion City, Preservacion, etc), where they are again processed and shipped to smaller cities. Larger cities on Mars have enough money to drill town and tap into Mars' deep water reserves - while other cities (especially in lowland areas such as Utopia, Viking Valley, Hellas, and Argyre) have the benefit of being able to tap into real aquifers, or in Hellas' case, glaciers buried under Martian regolith.

The next-largest trade is the transport of construction materials - another case of the largest economy simply being "building mars". These come in many shapes and forms, but in general, only a few cities have the industry capable of manufacturing complex materials, station

modules, life-support systems, heavy-duty marscrete, etc, meaning the cities that do manufacture these products can grow to massive sizes by helping the rest of the planet build itself. Behind construction materials are general “precision” products. Because Martian cities can’t make money off of, say, fish or bugs, because everyone else also produces those, a phenomena seen all over the world is cities venturing into one specific industry or the manufacturing of one specific product, not too niche to rarely be needed by anyone else, and at the same time not too common that there’s maybe just a few cities across the entire planet manufacturing that thing, and not too simple that another city nearby could pop up with the same product and sell it for less. This is most infamously seen in the food industry, with some towns making big bucks off of growing, say, pineapples, or a certain type of exotic fish, and selling them around the world, though the strategy works better when it’s with industrial products.

Aside from these niche industries, Martian trade leans more regional than globalist; in some polities, the capital city is not just the richest city, but richer than all the other cities combined by a longshot - and while this might not be the case in the largest polities, it should still be remembered that the capital cities of these polities are richer and more populous than many whole nations. Because of this, unless you’re living in one of the biggest polities, smaller cities depend heavily on the capital city for external products and general survival. In a way, this means that small to medium-sized polities are essentially a city-state with many smaller satellite towns.

Electricity isn’t a good that you can hold, but it’s a good nonetheless, and electricity generation is a large sector on Mars, but it’s not as large as you might think. Production at the municipal level is common via solar power, using efficient Perovskite Solar Cells, which are unstable in oxygen-rich and/or humid environments, of which Mars is neither. These solar cells, in some cases mixed with RTG nuclear reactors or biofuel systems, are enough to meet the demand of a small to medium sized settlement. Larger settlements also make use of these types of power plants, but at much larger scales - instead of a roof and field of solar panels amounting to an acre at most, there’s fields of solar panels covering many square kilometers and composed of panels mostly imported from Earth rather than manufactured around Mars. Instead of small RTG systems, large cities have nuclear fission, or even fusion reactors, which generate enough electricity that the remainder can be distributed to nearby towns. A relatively large amount of power also comes from orbital solar power satellites, a number of which are located in the Mars-Sun L1 point as a power source for Mars’ artificial magnetic field, while the rest orbit closer to Mars and beam power to the surface using radio waves.



Contrary to popular belief, Mars actually exports very little to Earth, because the fourth planet from the sun has less rare metals than Earth does, and nowasols, what Earth needs in metal needs is more so being mined on Luna or the asteroids in Earth Orbit; mining and shipping metals from Mars would be far too expensive. Meanwhile, any niche good that is manufactured on Mars is also manufactured on Earth in a far, far greater quantity with a much higher quality. The “Big Three” exports to Earth are Phosphorus, which is up to 5-10x more prevalent on Mars than it is on Earth, followed by Arezoa fossils for Earth’s prying eyes, and finally, people.

## Miscellaneous

### TIMEKEEPING & HOLISOLS

As per the **Martian Timekeeping Treaty of 1984**, two-dozen zones were created across the planet. Initially created along perfect lines of longitude, the time zones created by the treaty have gradually morphed to fit the lines of borders and polities over the years, because having all your cities in the same time zone is much more efficient than having one an hour behind or ahead. A notable exception to this rule early on was the Tharsis Confederation and what would later become the site of Equilibrium; Tharsis, prior to the signing of the treaty and when it had a fraction of a fraction of its current population, demanded it get zone 0 to itself, primarily for economic reasons and because of a belief that unified systems like this would keep the confederation from falling apart - part of a larger “pan-European” belief system. Tharsis got its wish, and gerrymandered to have 0 both remain its universal time zone and refuse its use by any other polities until the late-2000’s, when to bring themselves closer to Tharsis for trade incentives, several polities in Lunae began using a half-hour based zone, and their ‘ownership’ over 0 collapsed soon afterwards.

The twenty-four time zones correspond to the 24 hours of a Martian sol. Despite the fact that a Sol is about 37 minutes longer than a sol, the Treaty divided a Sol into 24 hours and made seconds ever so slightly longer to compensate; a Martian Second is 1.0275 seconds long, a Martian Minute is 61.65 seconds long, and a Martian Hour is 1 hour, 1 minute and 39 seconds long. The concept of “Midnight Hour” in which clocks are designed to begin a ‘countdown’ for the time past midnight was originally considered, but was considered too convoluted.

See a map of Martian timezones here

<https://www.deviantart.com/nathandominos/art/Globalism-Gone-Awry-Standard-Time-Zones-of-Mars-1256746239>

As you’ll be able to see on the map, a lot of these zones don’t correspond to when the sun actually rises or sets at all; rather, most cities larger than a few (eg. 200) people have their own artificial sol-night cycles which rarely correspond to what’s going on outside, and residents of said cities rarely, if ever see the real sun, rather taking Vitamin D supplements via fusing them with their food or using specially–developed UV-B lighting systems most commonly installed in public indoor greenspaces or rooms specifically meant for this purpose to prevent 24/7 exposure, which could lead to skin cancer. In a similar vein, landships and other vehicles travelling long distances on Mars also commonly use their own clocks. “Jet” lag can be a problem, yes, but the fact that long-distance travel is only common among merchants and traders, who are used to having their sleep schedules messed up or have their own clocks in their vehicles, makes this a minor issue.

The other side of the Treaty defined the term **Sol** as the term for Mars’ equivalent of a day, though the terms week and month haven’t changed, and the term fortnight has made somewhat of a revival in the english-speaking colonies. As for years, the international community settled upon the ancient Akkadian term for year “**Satu**” to define a Martian year - while this is the legal term, you’ll almost never see a real Martian using it, and it is most often used in legal settings, especially if the setting is between Mars and Earth. Year/Satu 1 corresponds to the Earth year 1978, the year when the Ares-Haven 2 mission landed the first humans on Mars. Although sol one isn’t June 10th, it’s on the solstice a little before then. 343 Sols though a Martian year is defined as the half-way point and when the international holisol **Midsatu** is celebrated, one of the only uses of the term in normal Martian vocab. This Satu is divided down into 24 Months, each 28 or 27 Sols long; **Sagittarius, Dhanus, Capricornus Makara, Aquarius, Kumbha, Pisces, Mina, Aries, Mesha, Taurus, Rishabha, Gemini, Mithuna, Cancer, Karka, Leo, Simha, Virgo, Kanya, Libra, Tula, Scorpius**, and **Vrishika**. The sols of the week are Solis, Lunae, Martis, Mercurii, Jovis, Veneris, and Saturni.

The most widespread holisol on Mars is the sol that Anna Lee Fisher and the rest of the Ares-Haven crew walked on the planet for the first time. It goes by many names, like Fisher sol, Darian sol, Pioneer sol, Ares sol, the Start of Civilization, but the most common names for it are simply **Landing Sol** or **J10**, (June 10th), which is a bit confusing since the actual holisol is celebrated on Tula 6th every year. This is when Martians of all nationalities and backgrounds, of

every creed and color, come together to celebrate the birth of their civilization. In some cases, this serves as a Thanksgiving-of-sorts, although most polities have their own Thanksgiving equivalent corresponding to their own Landing sol, which goes by many names depending on where you're at, and lies on the date when the first landing happened/city was founded in that polity. It's also an extremely important date for the Followers of the Gods.

Because Mars' years are almost twice as long as Earth's, the aforementioned **Midsatu** is a sort-of mini new year halfway through the actual year. The event is often celebrated by making amends with your enemies, people you've had bad past experiences with, or generally people you disagree with - forgiving, forgetting, and agreeing to be better in the future.

Christians are extremely prevalent on Mars, and **Christmas** is just as widespread. Every year on the first of Pisces, Christians go to mass to commemorate Jesus Christ and have a communal feast, while kids wait for pop-scifi Santa to come through the vents and give them presents wrapped in what looks suspiciously similar to mom's old sweater. On Mars, Christmas trees are made of metal and ornaments are sentimental family heirlooms or similar items. Presents are wrapped in cloth or clothes because there's no paper, and the bad kids get rocks from outside, because coal would actually be a very expensive gift. In some places, such as Ares and New Albion, Christmas is celebrated twice a year, once on the first of Pisces, and next on the first of Simha, twelve months later. "**Simha Christmas**" is less-widely celebrated and sometimes referred to as "Offbrand Christmas". Christians still take it seriously.

**Hanukkah** is practiced between Kumbha 18th and Kumbha 26th, ending just a few sols before Christmas. Candles are expensive and put more strain on life support systems, so Menorahs are electric and you screw in a new light bulb each sol.

**Kwanzaa**, a holisol just after Christmas celebrated almost exclusively by African-Americans, especially in the State of King. It is celebrated twice per year, once between Pisces 2nd and 7th, and next between Simha 2nd and 7th, with a communal feast on the sixth sol each time.

**Ramadan** still happens on Mars, but it's not based on the Darian Calendar, as the beginning of the Month of Ramadan is based off of the Crescent Moon, which Mars does not have. As such, the dates of Ramadan still go off the Islamic Calendar and change every year, sometimes there's two different Ramadans a year, depending on what happens. Fasting is observed from dawn to sunset as it is on Earth, which isn't an issue since a Sol is similar in length to a sol. Muslims use GPS apps to figure out what direction to pray in so they can face the Kaaba.

American-Style **Halloween**, with candy, costumes, and trick-or-treating, spread like wildfire among the first children of Mars during the 1990s and has since gained global significance. Wherever you are, in Ares, the Japanese colonies or Olympus, you can always expect a gaggle of kids wearing costumes to knock on your door asking for candy. This joyful holisol is celebrated twice a year on both Vrishika 27th at the very end of spring and Gemini 28th at the very end of autumn.

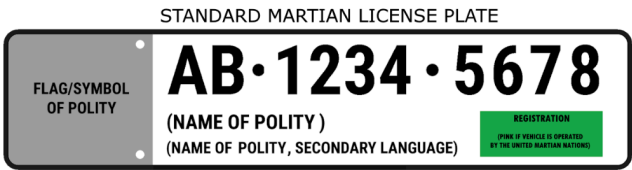
**Diwali** is another holiday that doesn't abide by Darian dates whatsoever. Diwali on Mars is celebrated at the same time Diwali on Earth is, so it's pretty random in the Martian year. Real diya oil lamps shipped in from Earth are used in Diwali celebrations, although some places use fake electric versions.

**Chinese New Year** is held on the First of Virgo, referred to as **Chūnfēn**, or just the Spring Equinox, and as its name suggests, it is the start of the Chinese variant of the Darian Calendar. Although China itself only has one populated colony on Mars, this variant of the calendar is also used in Olympus, Youyi, and many other Chinese communities.

## **INTERNATIONAL SIGNAGE**

Early on, the colonies of Mars often used signage of their home countries and/or space agencies in their colonies, or simply had commonsense rules and signs on doors that lead to airlocks or other things that might kill you. As the planet became more populated and diverse in the 1990s, disasters relating to people not knowing what a sign means became common enough for the international community to get together and think up a standard which could be used everywhere and understood by everyone. The **International Treaty of Martian Signage**, ratified in 2003 and signed by every nation on the planet aside from a few laggards by 2010, was among the first major treaties signed in the UMN's then-shiny new capital of Equilibrium. The treaty not only mandated usage of ISO hazard and safety signs for usage across the entire planet, of which versions were created for mars-specific issues. Martian ISO signs rarely make use of red. Instead they use reflective greens and blues for higher visibility in the largely red and orange environment; one example of this is the Red Cross being blue. As for road signage/infrastructure, that's a bit more interesting, and I have a collage of international road signs below:

### MOST COMMON INTERNATIONAL ROAD SIGNS



## AREZOA

The **Pre-Noachian** was Mars' equivalent to Earth's Hadean Eon; when the planet had just formed and was still hot and hellish, while being bombarded with meteorites and asteroids. It was during this period that the Vastitas Borealis feature formed, due to a massive body estimated to be about the size of Ceres impacting Mars - initially, this feature was probably a

near-perfect circle around the northern hemisphere of the planet, with the modern-sol polar highlands of Hyperborea likely being a central uplift feature common in complex craters.

The **Early Noachian**, from 4.1 billion to 3.95 billion years ago, was much the same, coinciding with the giant impacts that formed the Hellas, Argyre, and Isidis basins; these were likely devastating events that diminished Mars' ability to develop any kind of life for several hundred million more years. The Middle and Late Noachian epochs, spanning from 3.95 to 3.85, and 3.85 to 3.7 billion years ago respectively, took place mainly after the Late Heavy Bombardment had ended, and while there were still a large number of impacts during this period, there were far fewer impact events than there were prior to this time. This was the era when the first known Martian life developed. Curiously, the oldest Arezoa fossils closely align with the earliest known fossils on Earth, although billions of years of decay has destroyed all complex chemical structures of these ancient bacteria, so it is unknown if this was a case of panspermia or simply two separate cases of abiogenesis. Still, estimates suggest there was an impact large enough to create a new 100-kilometer wide crater every million years during the entire Noachian period, which hindered life's development even more.

The vast majority of this ancient life was present in the northern hemisphere, with many ancient fossils suggesting the vast majority of Martian life was present just south of the Hyperborean highlands near Mars' north pole, or in the aforementioned lowland impact basins, which, if we're going by buried, ancient geothermal vents, were so large that they had likely been volcanically active for some time following the impacts that created them. Keep in mind that the aforementioned bombardments also brought an ocean of water to Mars, and that these basins were oceans at this time. It is likely that these oceans were present in at least some form throughout the entire Noachian, although large impacts may have disturbed them or caused major freezing/evaporation events. Early and Mid-Noachian erosion patterns in the Southern Highlands have a close resemblance to tributary systems found in deserts on Earth, while younger valleys from the Late Noachian and Early Hesperian often have smaller tributary systems.

While the Mid- to Late-Noachian was dominated by a warm era with a mostly stable climate, the tail end of the Noachian going into the entire **Early Hesperian** (3.9 Billion to 3.4 Billion years ago) was characterized by a drier climate, as well as intermittent and often unpredictable glacial and warm periods. Like the Cryogenian on Earth, however, these periods lasting many millions of years forced life to adapt, and evolve at a truly rapid rate. Between the Late Noachian and the midpoint of the Early Hesperian, life underwent a rate of evolution so fast that it puzzled scientists for decades, morphing from single-celled bacteria to complex lifeforms eerily reminiscent of Earth's Ediacarian Biota. Astro-Paleontologists in the 1980s and 1990s struggled to understand how life could evolve this fast when it took billions of years on Earth, though most have settled on the aforementioned glacial periods, as well as genes more prone to mutation, being the culprits. This is now known as the Mid-Noachian Biodiversification Event, or more commonly, the **Noachian Explosion**.

This explosion saw small multicellular lifeforms from the Early Noachian become an array of species so wide they built an ecosystem, with its golden age lasting nearly 200 million years between 3.6 and 3.4 BYA, while the Pluviazic in general lasted about 400-500 million years between 3.9 and 3.4 BYA. For reference, the Cenozoic, the modern geologic period of Earth taking place after the K-Pg Extinction, has only lasted 65 million years.

The four domains of life during the **Pluviazic Eon** were:

**Epipedae:** Greek for “Flat”, these are named due to the fact that fossils of these organisms are often incredibly flat, though paleontologists speculate that they were not actually this thin, but were “deflated” after dying. Epipedae were anoxic photosynthesizers, using Mars’ massive amount of surface iron as an electron donor and excreting “rusted” iron as a byproduct; this is one of the reasons why Mars’ entire surface is coated in a dusty red layer of iron-rich soil. Some specimens used hydrogen sulfide as an electron donor and produced elemental sulfur as a waste product. Epipedae came in a wide variety of forms resembling underwater plants and corals, though most often were sheets 10-20 cm thick and up to a meter wide, with hairy bottomsides, packing tightly to each other in shallow coastal regions. Due to their iron concentrations, their coloration was some kind of red or purple. Hundreds of single-celled Epipedae species also existed, which, along with the preexisting iron, likely made the oceans red or deep purple during the Pluviazic.

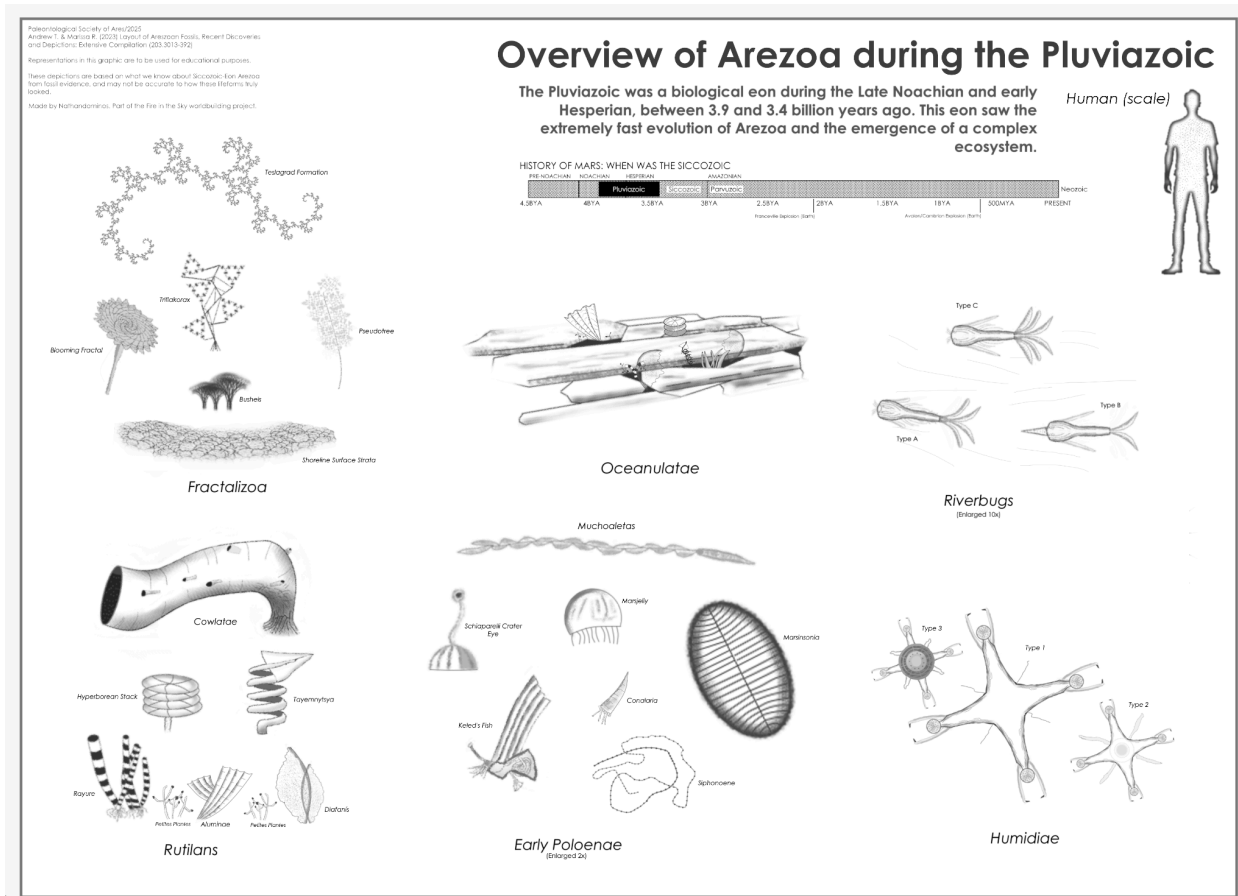
Some later forms of Epipedae evolved primitive forms of locomotion, likely due to migration during droughts or floods, while some are theorized to have evolved filter-feeding organs, making them mixed autotroph/heterotrophs.

**Drogonae:** Greek for “Hydrogen”, this domain was comprised entirely of single-celled sulfur-reducing bacteria, which reduced elemental sulfur produced by some kinds of Epipedae to produce hydrogen sulfide, creating a “Sulfur Cycle” that kept both kingdoms alive, while also producing hydrogen as a byproduct. Not much else to say, aside from the fact that these were and still are found everywhere on the planet, and are one of two kingdoms still found on Mars tosol.

**Methanopegia:** Greek for “Methane Source”, these organisms are the widest known extant Arezoa as of 2025. While these organisms are only present tosol in underground, water-rich environments, in the Pluviazic they were the most extant form of surface life. Species of Methanopegia could grow to the size of small plants on Earth in the kingdom’s heysol, with a universal pattern of “Fractal” leaves meant to filter CO<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere. Their fractal formations indicate that they could likely interconnect and benefit each other in colonial structures regardless of species, conveyed by remnants of massive colonial “mats” most commonly found along ancient coastlines and shallow seas. This isn’t to say that all Methanopegia was compatible, nor that it only lived in these regions; hundreds of lone species and millions of bacterial species have been found all across the planet, though the disappearance of Mars’ magnetic field killed anything larger than a cell. As of 2025, Methanopegia is responsible for seasonal methane spikes in Mars’ atmosphere.

**Dipliformiae:** Greek for “Two Forms”, the earliest fossils of these organisms were discovered by paleontologists near Hyperborea and were initially considered to be some kind of joint heterotrophic-autotrophic post-colonial organism due to their similarities between the then-known shapes of Methanopegia and Epipedae. This hypothesis was later disproven when more species connected to Dipliformiae were discovered and found to have different shapes, but the name stuck around. Dipliformiae are mobile organisms and Mars’ ancient equivalent of animals; they are theorized to have evolved from more ancient mobile bacteria which became colonial and merged into one common ancestor. Specimens have only been discovered where ancient oceans were located, and are most common along coastlines, with specimens being especially common just south of Hyperborea in Vastitas Borealis, and in regions of the plain that weren’t eroded by later outburst floods. Meanwhile, there have been no discovered specimens in the Hellas or Argyre basins, or in most of Mars’ dried crater lakes. Due to the fact that Dipliformiae shares its chemical composition with Epipedae, and its fossils are often found together, there was for a long time a dispute in the scientific community of whether they should be constituted as separate kingdoms - this dispute was finally settled after a conclusive study in 2014.

These four domains lived in relative balance with each other for the duration of the eon, allowing for the vast proliferation of complex life across the planet. They were likely all descended from some common ancestor at least 4 billion years ago, a Martian LUCA. Accounting for recency bias in the fossil record, Martian biodiversity probably peaked around 3.45 Billion years ago, before declining in the later part of the eon as glaciations became more erratic and temperatures declined, causing a 50 million year long mass extinction that was more like biodiversity gradually decreasing over millions of years, marking a slow transition into the next eon.



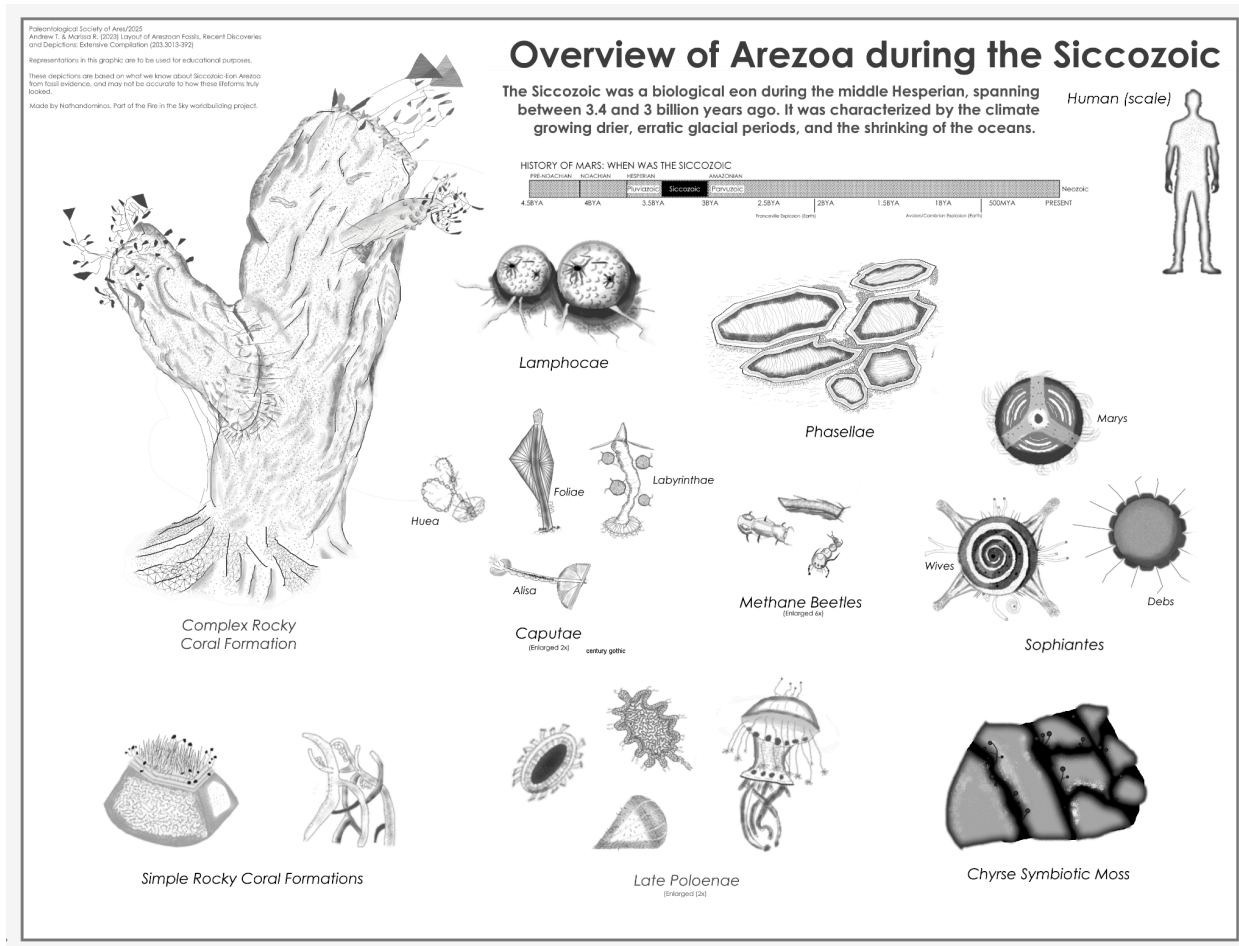
### *An illustration of Mars' Pluviazoic lifeforms*

Going into the **Middle Hesperian**, The “Golden Age” of the Tharsis Volcanoes during this period was the catalyst for the Viking Valley to form, and the valley’s formation spurred on a trend of increased, cataclysmic “outburst floods” as tectonic and volcanic activity caused the formation of new, unstable lakes, which “burst” out, flowing down to Mars’ lowlands - this is how Kasei Valles, Chryse, Echus Chasma, Ares Valles, and many similar minor features formed. The volcanoes, while warming the planet slightly, also caused the already-unpredictable glacial periods to become even more erratic; while they might’ve lasted tens of millions of years in the Late Noachian, now these periods might only last several million years - in this era, the constant climate change became more of a hindrance to Arezoa than an advantage, causing a series of mass die-offs, while some forms of life evolved ways to stay sessile without water for hundreds or thousands of years.

The ensuing **Siccocoic Eon** lasted 400 million years between 3.4 and 3 billion years ago, from the Middle Hesperian to the beginning of the Amazonian period . Lifeforms during this time evolved to become smaller, more sessile, and more “rocky”, becoming what can be equated to a kind of “Martian Coral”. Organisms often ditched “Gelatinous” forms to become more solid and crystalline, often using waste minerals to build themselves. These organisms were reminiscent of massive sponges, giving them the name “**Complex Rocky Coral Formations (CRCF’s)**”

containing many thousands of tiny holes for water to get caught in. CRCF's often went into a sort-of "hibernation" for hundreds to thousands of years, before springing back to life and becoming more fleshy when coming into contact with a considerable amount of water. Oftentimes, these larger coral/rock structures would have ecosystems hidden within, filled with organisms that were more like those found in the Pluvial Eon - plant and fungi analogs are also often found; Due to their rocky nature, many of these organisms simply died and were gradually buried by martian sand over the eons, also preserving the life that lived within in the process, making CRCF's a treasure trove for paleontologists. What's more, has led to there being an overabundance of Siccozoic fossils; indeed, the first fossils from this eon discovered were often mistaken to be normal rocks before they were cracked open and found to have hundreds of other lifeforms. Valleys, such as Viking, have the highest density of Siccozoic lifeforms.

Meanwhile, species of Epipedae, which were already changing at the tail end of the Pluviazoic, almost fully ditched their bottom-dwelling lifestyle at the beginning of the Siccozoic, with some becoming fully mobile, and evolving eye/hearing-like bodily structures, essentially filling a new "animal" niche as the influence of Dipliformiae declined. Other families retained their plant-likeness, though still ditched the seafloor, becoming akin to large algal mats or lily pads floating at the surface - indeed, bottom dwelling lifestyles did still exist, but they became less and less common the further in this eon you go.



### *An illustration of Mars' Siccocoic lifeforms*

By the late Siccocoic, however, not only had large bodies of liquid water become a rarity, but Mars' dynamo was in its final stages of shutting down. While the planet's surface life had adapted to some radiation due to the planet's lack of a significant ozone layer, the complete lack of a magnetosphere exposed life to extreme levels of radiation on a scale it couldn't adapt to. What's more, the disappearance of the magnetosphere also began tearing away Mars' atmosphere faster than volcanoes and/or life on the surface could replenish it. All of this happening within the span of about 50 million years led to a gradual mass extinction about 3 billion years ago.

What followed was the Parvuzoic. Beginning at the same time Mars' Amazonian geological period began, the Parvuzoic has been defined by, essentially, Mars being what it is tosol. We do have some evidence to suggest that in the early parts of the eon, just a few hundred million years after the end of the Siccocoic, that there was some form of multicellular life still in existence, possibly kept alive by continued, though small, outburst floods and intermittent rains keeping Mars somewhat wet - though by 2.5BYA, even these stragglers had all died off.

The **Middle** and **Late Amazonian** have been mostly dead in all honesty. After the disappearance of Viking's glaciers the only catalysts for Mars to change have been periodic and rare impact events and the continuing activity of the volcanoes in Tharsis. The last major volcanic eruptions on the planet were about 20 million years ago, with the last eruption in general being near Elysium about 53,000 years ago, though the only major effects of these are slight heating to the planet and adding more CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere, as well as making the shield volcanoes taller. The most noticeable effect modern-sol Arezoa (specifically, Methanopegia) has on the planet is seen in seasonable methane spikes, with the entire Parvuzoic Eon dominated by single-celled organisms, though small multicellular life, multicellular bacteria, and colonial lifeforms do still exist. Epipedae and Dipliformiae are extinct, while Methanopegae and Drogonae entered a perpetual, endless relationship, a relationship which led to the two domains merging back into one around a billion years ago; **Dufacuae**. tosol, Mars' deep biosphere is still quite active, but its surface life is all but dead, with methane-producing bacteria surviving just under the surface and being responsible for Mars' seasonal methane spikes.

While Earth's life went through the Ediacaran, Cambrian, Devonian, and experienced the evolution of complex multicellular lifeforms which began to shape the planet, soon leading to Earth's first intelligent civilization in the Carboniferous, which might or might not have explored Mars, life here went unchanging. From the Great Dying to the era when dinosaurs walked the Earth, and while life on Europa and Titan remained complex, nothing changed on Mars.

And then something happened.

In 1978, the first humans landed on Mars, and despite their best efforts to prevent it, they brought millions of extremophile bacteria with them, with some surviving outside the pressurized Ares-Haven 2 lander and making Utopia Planitia their new home. By the 1980s, and regardless of the fact that existing Martian life had been discovered, most efforts to prevent cross-contamination between the two planets fell through, resulting in hundreds of thousands of species of Earthly bacteria finding their way to Mars. The vast majority of these cannot survive on the Martian surface and are only present within human colonies, but the ones that can survive outside, mostly extremophiles that found themselves here one way or another, found themselves in the perfect environment to spread. tosol, large colonies of Earthly bacteria can be found living within existing glacial structures alongside native Martian organisms, and in Mars (very few) geothermal vents existing near more-active volcanic structures. The full extent to which Earthly life has invaded the Martian biosphere is unknown, and the question of if its presence will or already is causing a mass-extinction event is debated, but the new bacteria are likely having great, if not well studied, effects on existing Martian ecosystems. This is the **Neozoic Eon**, "**Fisher's Exchange**", if you will. Who knows, maybe the smart people will figure out a way to bring some of Mars' old life back, but only time will tell.

## **The Alliances**

## UNITED MARTIAN NATIONS

In 1987, 9 years after the first landing on Mars, the **United Martian Nations (UMN)** was created as an international peacekeeping and regulatory body. Its structure was built on the shoulders of the United Nations and European Union, while making sure to avoid the mistakes the two made. The UMN's central base of operations is the city of Equilibrium, at Mars' 0' 0' point or "Null Point", just north of the Tharsis Confederation. It also controls the Martian poles, and has pseudo-control over Mars' two natural moons. The **United Martian Nations Security Council (UMNSC)** is composed of seven permanent members; Ares, Eurotharsis, New Albion, Hellas-Malena, Argyre, Kiele, and South American Mars; and 5 non-permanent members chosen at random, which are currently Thidin, Elysia-Ulahan, Bosporia, Nahralgharbia, and Olympus. The council has veto powers for the assemblies below it, although at least three members need to agree on a veto for it to take effect. The **United Martian Nations General Assembly (UMNGA)** is the upper house of the UMN Legislature, representing polities equally. One polity has one seat in the Assembly and no more, for 102 seats in total. Condominiums are not represented unless they are shared with a polity that has no other claim to Mars. The only case in which this has happened is with Dosati. The **United Martian Nations Parliamentary Assembly (UMNPA)**, or simply the **UMN Parliament**, is the lower house of the UMN Legislature. While the General Assembly represents polities equally, the Parliamentary Assembly represents them based on their population, with one representative in the Assembly speaking for 10,000 Martians. And a representative must always stand for 10,000 Martians, that number can't go up to, say, 15,000, because new seats are added as Mars' population grows. Right now, the Assembly has 320 members.

The UMN's branches include, but are not limited to:

- The **United Martian Nations Department of Peace (UMNDP)**, which manages a small, mostly non-armed military and global police force meant to serve either as a backup force for polities who do not have their own equivalent, or as a peacekeeping force in unstable regions. UMNDP's most famous exercises took place during the Blacksand War of 2014, when UMN military personnel took control of several districts of Bunga, a move that went on to become a defining moment in the UMN's history, and one that was incredibly controversial on Earth, which worried that Mars was gaining too much autonomy.
- The **International Civil Infrastructure Organization (ICIO)** makes and enforces regulations on Martian signage (road signs or otherwise), rail gauges, street diameters, engineering safety standards, orbital ring construction, pipeline and cable management, and much more. It's pretty boring, but it does a lot to keep the globalist system running.
- The **International Martian Monetary Fund** keeps the international economy in check and facilitates international and national trade. It provides financial assistance to cities, and manages the funding of the rest of the UMN.

- The **International Life Support Organization (ILSO)** keeps track of the international food, water, air, and pharmaceutical trade, to make sure every city and town on Mars has access to these fundamentals and at least some connection to trade. While less common, their auditors randomly inspect large Martian cities and their respective districts, sometimes restaurants and life support systems, to make sure everything is operating well and won't kill people. Kind of like Martian OSHA.
- The **International Space Organization (ISO)** manages the Martian Moons, which are semi-independently governed under the UMN Phobos Authority and UMN Deimos Authority. Aside from the moons, the ISO manages space station and satellite orbits to prevent collisions, as well as auditing stations to make sure they keep up on routine maintenance, and have their lifeships in good condition in case anything does go wrong.
- The **Martian Court of Justice (MCJ)** is weaker than the regional courts of polities, but it still prosecutes international criminals. Unlike most Martian prisons, the MCJ's incarceration system has a robust policy of rehabilitation at all costs, with the most modern (and expensive) prison facility in the city of Equilibrium. If prisoners can't be incarcerated, they're usually sent to the UMN's other prison in Hyperborea that they don't like to talk about, the maximum-security **Axiom International Detention Facility**.
- The **Ranger Forces (RF)** are semi-autonomous from the rest of the UMN and are covered more in the "Nonwestphalian Oddities" section. Essentially, they are the more-rural, more-local-policing "independent" version of the Department of Peace. They also operate drug sting operations in cooperation with the DoP and independent police forces.

## NATIONS FOR MARTIAN DEVELOPMENT

In 1991, the **Nations for Martian Development (NMD)** was founded as a separate, Martian-based organization headquartered in New Berlin, meant to handle relations between colonies and independent nations, and have an independent stance on colonization in general. Over the years, the NMD gradually transitioned away from diplomacy and went on to focus almost entirely on new colony building, national parks and preserves, megascale international infrastructure projects, safety regulations on martian construction, and more. The reason the NMD isn't shown as an alliance on the map is because it really shouldn't be, because it's not really an alliance that you can "join", it's like a giant regulator body that has influence over the entire planet, so every nation is technically part of it. Martian polities also like the NMD because it keeps the waters cool between them and their semi-independent non-westphalian tribal groups that maintain their roads, but you'll have to wait until the "Tribes" part of this doc to see more of those.

## MARTIAN PEACE UNION

The **Martian Peace Union** was created in 1995 as a sort of 'Martian Alternative' to the UMN, after concerns began to crop up especially among newly-independent nations on Mars, of their sovereignty being threatened by Earthly colonizers. Over the course of the 2000's, the MPU would have heavy influence drawing Mars' borders in cooperation with the UMN, though this era would gradually see the alliance become rather Tharsis-biased.

### **ARES-MARS TREATY ORGANIZATION**

In the aftermath of the Areo-Tharsian split of 2010, Ares, its close cooperators and allies collectively left the Martian Peace Union and formed the **Ares-Mars Treaty Organization**, AMTO for short. AMTO is like the MPU, except instead of being biased towards Tharsis it's biased towards Ares. While AMTO was created in 2010, the soft rivalry between it and the MPU only began in 2015 in the aftermath of the Blacksand War, when issues relating to autonomy and Martian sovereignty boiled over enough for both sides of the spectrum to completely split apart. AMTO, and Ares' principles in general, as well as the principles of its allies, are based upon those of liberty, autonomy, sovereignty, independence and self-reliance, especially from Earth, this can be seen especially in Ares' own states and territories, which are described as being akin to independent nations, it's a very federal body. Meanwhile, Tharsis and many of its allies are unitary - indeed, this can be seen most clearly in Tharsis, with all of Europe and its dozens of cultures coming together to create a relatively unified body, while the US, a relatively unified body in cultural terms at minimum on Earth, has already split into new cultures on Mars. - Basically, Ares is federal, and Tharsis is unitary, that's the most basic explanation. Of course, each side has its outliers - such as the MPU's members including Rothbard and South American Mars, both highly federal unions - and AMTO including West African Mars and Shiraka Shutafut, both highly unitary states.

As a more extreme version of AMTO on the liberty front serving as an international forum between the independent nations of Mars, the Union of Free Martians (UFM) was created in 1998. Since its creation, the UFM has only allowed independent Martian nations in, which includes both the weird flashy nations of Mars (most notably Aonia), and a few unrecognized nations (KaseiCo). The three most authoritarian nations; Goshen, Fisher, and Thule, however, are restricted from entry due to their vast restrictions on human rights and civil liberties, which expressly go against the purpose of the forum, and Aonia gets to stay in no matter what because it's the richest and most powerful independent polity on Mars, and depending on who you ask is about half the value of the entire alliance. The UFM is also pretty weird - it doesn't have a capital building or congress anywhere, the diplomats all just turn their camera on and join zoom to vote on the policies - what's more (this is why you should read the docs), the Aresian states of Elysium, New Carolina, and Gadsten are part of the alliance and abide to many of its policies, while the rest of Ares isn't and doesn't, very weird situation.

### **GLOBAL COOPERATION ORGANIZATION**

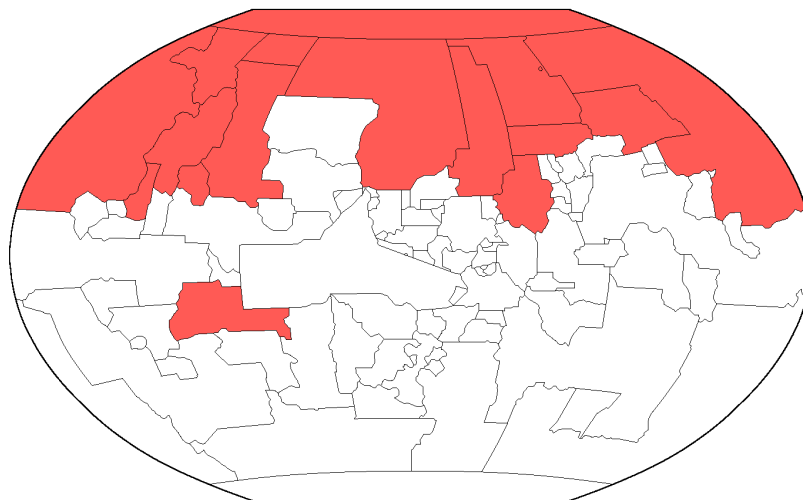
And then there's the **Global Cooperation Organization** (GCO), possibly the weirdest alliance on Mars and one that shows that Earthly politics don't really matter on Mars at all. Members of the GCO include Japan and India's colonies, along with Indonesia and China, the right-wingers

down in the valleys of Viking, the independent Catalan and Basque states, East Africa's colony, Greece's colony, and all but one of the former states of Areopotamia. The GCO isn't a military thing, however, and is constitutionally an international economic body, sort of like what BRICS would be if it had a unified currency and was on Mars. Oh, that? The **Martian Vortex** is the international currency of the GCO, replacing older colonial (re: earthly) currencies with a unified economic body to ease trade. It's a pretty strong currency too, but you've gotta join up to get access. Oh, and the Equatorial Orbital Compact is a body between all of these uniting equatorial nations on construction of the Anteros Ring System & its space elevators, the first one to be built on Pavonis Mons, Ares is kinda pissy about not being allowed in because its not at the equator, so they wanna buy Finland's territory, see more in the Orbit section of this doc.

Finally, there are many, many more small international military & economic compacts between just 2-3 nations, scattered all across Mars and created for any reason you can imagine. These even stretch down to individual cities, especially in the more confederal colonies, but they're too numerous to get into here.

## The Politics

### The Boreal Plain



The Boreal Plain is the massive swath of land to the north of Mars - this valley, or more accurately, lowland, is a dried up ocean bed, now the home of some of the largest aquifers on the red planet, and also the location of some rarer items, such as fossils and living martian bacteria. The plains also have another, more practical use as being great places to land and take off.

### *Life on Mars*

*July 4th, 1978 / Tula 6th, 1*

### *Utopia Base Camp*

At 7:00 AM sharp a loud, annoying, beeping alarm woke the seven astronauts aboard the Ares-Haven 2 lander. 24 Sols ago the entire world celebrated as the first person in human history walked on another planet. Anna Fisher took the first steps and said the first words & overnight was among the most famous people ever. Ellison Onizuka wasn't one of the three hooligans stuck in orbit - he was the 4th person on Mars - but he didn't garner the fame of the first three nor the (more ironic) infamy of Russ, who was the last person to hit the ground.

Nonetheless, he was one of the first seven humans to land on another planet, and being a tad less famous than his crew didn't do all too much to upset him. The last three weeks and then some had been spent gathering core samples to haul back to Earth, and using the in-lander minilab to experiment with anything between geology and marine biology, while the ever-prying eyes of NASA's scientists watched and listened to every move they made.

But tosol was different. It was July 4th - Independence sol - not to say the crew would just get to sit around all sol, but there was less work to do. For the past week, Russ and Kerwin had been trying to fix that gizmo NASA sent over; they wanted to dig a few meters down into the soil. Ever since the Mariner probes, the boys back at NASA really wanted to find life here; the probes and rovers can't dig deep enough, so that's one of the main objectives of this mission.

The morning was just like any other, maybe everyone was in a bit less of a hurry. Onizuka, for his part, would be taking a look at the samples coming in later tosol from that machine, now that the boys outside say they've fixed it, and the guys back on Earth are really up-in-arms about getting those dirt samples checked out. But for everyone else, the sol was the same as any other, say for happier attitudes because of the big sol.

"Didn't know you were a Redcoat" said Fisher with a chuckle, as Onizuka poured a packet of tea into a cup of steaming-hot water. "Hey, red coat, red planet, damn fitting" responded Ellison. The seven astronauts had been eating canned goods and MRE's for the past month, and they'd been saving the good ones for tonight.

Ellison tuned into Kerwin's frequency on the intercom. "You done diggin' that ditch yet? I'm supposed to be off tosol"

Kerwin chipped back "What, did you sneak a firework on board?"

"Hey, at least I'm not out there with you guys - the sooner you get those samples, the less I'll have to bicker you about them"

By 1:00 in the afternoon, the boys outside had finished up their work, Fisher and Hartsfield were out on a short trek to examine a rock that the science guys back on Earth were interested in, and Onizuka was down in the lab putting the new core samples under a microscope - NASA didn't want to wait for these to get back to Earth, especially if they actually *did* have life in them. Onizuka himself had grown bored of the songs he brought with, and usually just tuned into someone else's mission radio for a bit of entertainment. You can hear everyone inside the lander,

so usually he tuned into the space station frequency when it was on this side of the planet to see what the crew up there was talking about, or if there were guys working in the base they'd set up outside a few weeks ago, he'd see what was going on there.

tosol, the space station was on the other side of the planet, meaning he couldn't get a signal, and nobody had been in the base all sol, but Fisher and Hartsfield did have their little mission, so he tuned in on them - didn't turn on his microphone, but they picked up a ping and knew he was listening. "Hey Ellison, is that you? It's great out here, lots of sand, you'd know a lot about that" said Henry. Fisher could also be heard chipping in and saying hi faintly in the background. "Remember when they said that the first person somewhere gets to name it? What do you say we name it Onizuka, make it interesting, y'know?" Ellison didn't respond to these comments, staying focused on examining yestersol's samples.

It wasn't until later in the afternoon until he could look at tosol's samples; 2.5 meters down, nothing out of the ordinary; 2.6 meters down, nothing; 2.7 meters, a bit more water than the last few samples, which could be useful if there's further exploration, but it's still nothing out of the ordinary - Ellison doesn't think anything will come of Mars like they say in all the science fiction movies. 2 hours of testing later, another sample labeled "41", meaning it came from 4.1 meters under the Martian surface, was put under the scope; nothing, nothing, water, nothing, wait a second. Ellison called for Kerwin - now back from the drive he and Ann went on earlier - to come to the lab downstairs; both of them were versed in geology and biology, but Ellison was in charge of all of the minilab's operation, and last time he called someone downstairs it was when he picked up traces of hydrogen from a meter under the surface, which was odd, but not totally unexpected. This was different, though.

Kerwin looked into the microscope before Ellison could say anything, and saw what he immediately presumed was what he got called down for. "Looks like a chain, what the hell.. is that?" "That's why I wanted you down here" responded Ellison. Upon digging the microscope into the dirt - something the boys at NASA didn't enjoy them doing - they saw something even more extraordinary. "Stop moving for a second, you're shaking the sample, you're gonna make me think these things are moving around" said Kerwin; Ellison went upstairs in an attempt to reduce disturbances on the sample, but those chain-looking things under the scope were still moving, slowly, but moving. Ellison was called back downstairs and took a look himself to make sure it wasn't just Kerwin, but no, he saw them moving too.

An hour later, Fisher, Onizuka, and Kerwin were down in the minilab, while the rest of the crew was watching the three through the entry ladder inside the tiny space, which was already over-capacity with three people. Fisher saw the same thing - in fact, all of them had taken a round down in the lab and saw the little chain-looking things moving around; Hartsfield even said he saw one of them eat another one. Pictures were being taken, deeper samples were being tested and had even more of those little critters moving around. They were scientists, they didn't want to come to any conclusions, but everyone who'd taken a look thought that it was pretty darn conclusive what they saw: this was life - if they were fossils, if they weren't moving at all, they

could be written off as some kind of abiotic chemical reaction - but these things were moving, similar to each other, there were too many of them to simply be chemicals, *this was life*.

Broadcasts to Earth had to be sent through the Haven Space Station, which was currently on the other side of the planet and would be coming over the horizon in 27 minutes. Meanwhile, a final chemical analysis of the soil found something that made the crew all-but confirm that what they were seeing was biological: Hydrogen, small amounts of it, sure, but higher concentrations than what should be naturally possible, especially buried underground like that.

At 3:32 PM, the crew sent a message to the Haven station when it was clear overhead, so the signal wouldn't be distorted in any way. The message read "Haven, we found Life on Mars". Initially, the three astronauts in Haven thought the ground crew was joking. "The radio isn't meant to be used for jokes" said Williams - but the ground crew insisted that they weren't joking - though images would take hours to transmit. At 3:39, Haven forwarded the message to Earth, reading "Houston, Utopia Base has reported mobile biological life. This is serious.". Which didn't hit quite the same way the surface crew were intending, but it still had a massive impact when the message reached Earth fifteen minutes later. NASA immediately cancelled all other mission objectives for the sol, directed the crew to focus specifically on these samples, confirm that this wasn't a case of cross-contamination, and requested images.

The crew was fixed to the lab until the sun set, nobody had dinner, everyone was too fixated on what they were now jokingly referring to as Aliens. The first images took hours to transmit back to Earth - indeed, the only pictures that had been sent to NASA thus far were important events transmitted while the crew was asleep, while non-consequential photos were taken with an on-board camera that didn't send the data to Houston. Samples dug up late past dark helped to confirm that these organisms weren't cross-contaminated Earthly bacteria.

*July 11th, 1978*  
*Utopia Base Camp*

The last week the crew had on Mars was spent doing nothing but researching what they were still simply calling aliens. On Earth, the press had already given them a wide number of names. "Little Green Men" "Aliens" "Roswellians" "The Martians" or the less-goofy name "Arezoa". From what the crew had heard, apparently, since it broke the news last week, it's been the "*most followed story in the history of mankind*", with even greater publicity than the Mars landing a month prior, only rivaling Buzz Aldrin taking the first steps on Luna nearly a decade ago. After all, man had just discovered alien life. We had proven we were not alone in the universe.

Now, it was time to leave. It was time for the first members of mankind to walk on another world to return to their own. It was all but confirmed that the small base they spent so much time building would be built on and lived in by the next crew, and crews after that; their discovery a week ago all but confirmed that NASA, and likely the rest of the world would commit to further explorations of Mars. Ellison, for his part, was credited with discovering & being the first human being in history to observe alien life.

“Haven, this is Ares, all systems are a-go” Fisher radioed to the space station just coming over the horizon. Schweickart, observing the countless meters on his dashboard, chimed in “30 seconds”, which soon became 25, 20, 15, while the entire crew vocalized the last 10 seconds before launch.

5...4...3...2...1... The ascent stage of the Ares-Haven 2 lander lifted off the Martian surface, blowing up a flurry of dust in its wake, which only had the effect of making another chore for the next mission to do - cleaning the dust off the Utopia Base. Less than 30 minutes later, the ascent stage docked with the Haven space station, where all ten crew members stayed for another three sols.

On July 14th, 1978, the crew departed from Mars. They made it back to Earth safely on December 10th, 1978, and were welcomed as heroes. They were the second Life on Mars.

### **UNITED MARTIAN NATIONS TRUST TERRITORY OF THE MARTIAN NORTH POLE**

The Northern Trust Territory (Often called Hyperborea to the locals), like its southern equivalent which we'll be talking about at the end of this section, was carved out in 1982 to internationalize the vast water reserves at the planet's north pole, and to prevent any single nation from having control over them. Before 2003, the region was a generally respected international area dotted with various nationally-interested water-mining and areobiotical research base-cities with no real government between them aside from minor regional agreements and treaties. In 2004, several low-level skirmishes over water reserves occurred in the region, and while there were no deaths, there was a push to do something to keep peace in the north, and later in the year, an international referendum between the cities of the region on if to unite under the “North Pole Trust Territory”, a would-be governance region of the United Martian Nations, ended in a 63-37 outcome. tosol, the NPTT functions as an independent ground for both water-ice mining and areobiological preservation, two duties it balances to the best of its capability. Prior to the designation of the poles as a UMN territory, they were magnets to early independent colonizer-groups which, in many cases, didn't have the funds to import water or drill extremely deep wells to Martian groundwater, or didn't want to haggle with creating an independent nation. Instead, these groups ventured to the poles where water was abundant - and profitable - American, Chinese, European, Russian, and even South American and African groups all flocked especially to the north prior to 2004. You won't see many new cities founded after the treaty, however, as one of its clauses was that new cities were not to be founded unless they were limited to small research laboratories and were strictly non-impactful.

Between 2009 and 2016, the **Tigris Aqueduct System** was constructed. First envisioned as early as the 1990's, the aqueduct funnels polar water from drilling stations in the far north and keeps it in its liquid form inside the pipe using fancy insulation and warming technology, funnelling the water all the way down to the capital of Ares. While the pole has fewer fossils than you would first envision (the largest fossil fields are just slightly further south), the glaciers here have the largest amount of still-living martian bacteria, many of which are within Marsfossil International Park. The UMN, for its part, has been surprisingly good at keeping the cities in the

territory united, though it has needed to keep a fine balance between autonomy of the cities and the governance of the north pole's water reserves.

## REPUBLIC OF ARES

The Republic of Ares is the conglomeration of independent American States and Territories on the red planet, under the banner of the newfangled American "Republic" system. If you're not already in the know, a Republic is, in its simplest, a sort of "Mini America" in space, complete with its own President, in its own executive branch, which shares the government with the other two branches of government - Legislative and Judiciary, which all function mostly-independently from influences back on Earth. The only thing Republics don't have full control over are their divisions of the US military, and it should be obvious why.

Excerpt from the Mars!2001 doc, giving an overview of Ares' extremely early history:

*The earliest explorations of Ares were in the 1970's with early probes, but actual colonization wouldn't come until the 1978's when the Ares-Haven 2 mission landed **Anna Fisher**, as well as **Joseph P. Kerwin**, **Russel Schweickart** and **Henry Hartsfield**, **Ellison Onizuka**, **Jeffery Hoffman** and **Donald Williams**, on the red planet, and all got their spot as the first human beings to ever land on another planet, as well as being the earliest pioneers of Mars. AH-2 lasted less than a year later, and was followed by AH-3, and then AH-4, and then whole ships carrying dozens or hundreds of people, all in the early 1980's. Now, there's over 40,000 people living all across Ares.*

At first, all these colonists settled down in the Utopia Base Camp (They shortened it to Utopia in 1985), but it didn't take long for other cities to be founded, and within the first five years of Mars' settlement there were already ten settlements in the Utopia region. By the mid-1980's, Utopia' population had, against all expectations back on Earth, already reached the thousands due to giant, expensive colony ships bringing hundreds to the planet at a time. On top of this, babies were being born, in part due to the US shipping married couples to Utopia on those colony ships. This caused speculation on what the future of Utopia would - and should - look like; would the colony gain independence? Stay a territory? Gain Statehood? Indeed, it would be a mix of all three of these. Through a combination of events too complicated (and to an extent, insane) to explain here, Congress passed a bill that would grant the colonies of Mars a sort of pseudo-independence while remaining part of the US, with the colonies essentially becoming a sort of "Little US". The system of Republics was criticized by groups on the left and right for a great many reasons, but in the end, the Martian colonies were happy and didn't immediately become a new rebellious neo-confederacy, and everyone stopped caring after the Mercury landings in 1989. The designation of Utopia as a republic also gave it a new name that you all know and love; the Republic of Ares, with four divisions being created in the process; the District of Fisher, its equivalent to DC; the State of Utopia, encompassing its principal region with its most populated cities and most important infrastructure just outside Utopia; and Fairbanks, a region slightly north which, at the time, was experiencing a population boom consisting mostly of

Alaskans. The fourth and final territory created was the Unorganized Territory, a region that, at first, really had no defined “edge”, really just extending to where American influence ended.

Indeed, Ares’ early years of colonization would mirror the British colonization of North America and the disputes of the thirteen colonies - as an example, like Virginia, the Carolinas, or even Connecticut, the states of Ares drew straight lines across Martian maps to define their borders. The “Four Division” system didn’t last long; in 1987, the Territories of Roosevelt, Independence, and New Providence were carved out, containing cities heavily populated with New Yorkers, Midwesterners, and New Englanders respectively. These territories gained full statehood in the late 1980s and early 1990s, while at the same time, even more territories were carved out of the Unorganized Territory. During the Crimson Treaties of the 2000s, Ares’ international borders were fully defined, and by the mid-2010’s the Republic and its borders became mostly identical to what they are tosol.

As of 2025, the Republic of Ares has a population just shy of 650,000, with 14 states, 9 territories, 2 condominiums, and one federal district. The President since 2024 has been Christina Koch of the Millennium Alliance. Ares’ politics would be almost unrecognizable to an Earthling - While the Republic still has the three branches, its Senate only has 25 people, while its House consists of only 65, a far cry from the 800+ of the US of Earth. Like Earth, the Republic uses ranked choice voting in its presidential elections, but the parties are very, very different.

Prior to 2000, Ares’ Congress consisted entirely of independents with no real parties or even coalitions - sure, there were small coalitions or alliances between just a few people that normally only lasted a few months, but large, united parties didn’t form for 15 years, possibly due to the Libertarian, anti-party sentiment of many of Ares’ original colonists, or just due to the fact that communication between colonies was lackluster, impeding the development of politics as we see them on Earth. Well, except for one; in the early 1990s, a small coalition of Libertarians, usually sitting at just 2-3 seats, formed, outlasting Ares’ other coalitions and living into the era of parties. In 1999, a group of Congressmen, some very small coalitions and alliances, merged in time for the 2000 Presidential Election as the **Millennium Alliance**, the largest political coalition Ares had seen yet, and the closest thing to a true political party. For some reason, the MA didn’t immediately fall apart as had happened with every coalition that preceded it, and lasted throughout the 2000s to the 2004 election unimpeded by any other party or coalition; the reasons are many, but experts generally look to its size as the explanation. By the mid-2000’s, the political domination by the MA was put under pressure as its first true opposition appeared during the 2006 midterms; the **Community Coalition**, formed out of a coalition of those who truly disagreed with the MA, and those who never even joined it, put up a good fight up until the 2010s - some were worried that Mars would devolve into the old Earthly two-party system, which had actually just been thrown away back on the blue planet - but these fears were unfounded when new parties kept appearing and both the MA and CC shrunk. In the tail years of the 2000s, the Party of Convention, a wholly right-wing alternative to the existing two coalitions, and the Coalition for our Future, a wholly left-wing alternative, were created, and these two would mostly replace the centrist-leaning CC throughout the 2010s, splitting its voters

into two camps. The Libertarians, by this time, had grown from a small friendship to a full-blown political party consistently in third or fourth place behind the big two (or three).

As of 2025, the Millennium Alliance is still the largest political party in Aresian congress, which many political experts attribute to its acceptance of opinions from all sides of the spectrum, allowing the coalition to morph itself to fit the times. The Community Party isn't really relevant anymore, being overshadowed by the PoC and PfoF since the late 2010s. Generally, Ares' political sphere has stratified into two general coalitions for left and right, heh, can't even escape it on Mars. Right now, the 'Right' is in control, led by the Millennium Alliance, with the 'Left' led by the PfoF stuck in second place. The MA's dominance and centrism make it the decider of which one of these coalitions are in power. Along with these two, the "Third Way" parties, not really aligned with anyone but each other, covers a fourth of the Congress, currently made up by Citizens Party, Miners Party, and Martian Native Front. Once you get away from national and state-level politics, things get a lot more diverse, and fun; Martian cities are isolated, colonized quite often by Earthly groups with very specific, strong views, and as such, every one city is different from the next in its politics, from insane-o right wing extremists, insane-o left wing extremists, technocrats, folks who think Mars is alive and use that to justify Martian eco-politics, people who want to terraform Mars, people who don't want to terraform Mars, and even more wholly-newfangled political positions.

Aside from the big parties and the three branches, Ares' executive branch also has its own departments, but these are a bit different than their equivalents back on Earth; There is no Department of Homeland Security or Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Energy, Department of Transportation, Department of Housing, and Department of the Interior are all one entity as the **Department of Colonial Affairs**, the Departments of Labor and Commerce have been merged into the **Department of Labor and Commerce**, the **Department of Health, Education, and Welfare** still exists, the Department of Agriculture has been rebranded as the **Department of Public Works**, managing oxygen, water, food, and more, the Department of Defense doesn't exist on Mars, and all the other departments are the same. There's also a new one: **The Department of Culture**.

Anyway, enough with the politics themselves, where do they actually take place? Well, that would be the District of Fisher, named after Anna Lee Fisher herself. The DF is home to all the principal organs of Ares' government, the **President of the Republic of Ares (POTRA)**, who lives in the famous 1960's-retrofuturist "**Orange House**" built partially out of Martian rock, the Ares Capital Building, renovated from a maze of hallways to a proper building made of three domes over three artificial craters, calling back to the original capital building on Earth, along with dozens of other government buildings, museums, and more in a maze of underground streets, hallways, and surface domes. Being the home city of more people than live in some independent Martian countries, the DA is very, very developed both on the surface and underground, though much of the city and its population, especially settlements on the surface, stretch out beyond the limits of the District. For the tourists, you can find a number of museums covering the stages of early Martian history (what hasn't been shipped back to the Earthlings for their own museums), and exhibits of Martian life or fossils. There's also monuments on the

surface; the Monument of the Settlers is a structure built in a megalithic style reminiscent of Stonehenge, except constructed out of red Martian rocks with modern construction equipment. Meanwhile, the Monument of Ares is a 500-foot tall observation tower with a base built out of Martian rocks (Originally, the whole tower was supposed to be built out of these rocks, similarly to the Washington Monument, but this proved infeasible), with a three-story tall rotating observation deck and hotel at the top. The **Monument to Martian Astronauts** is a memorial for those who died colonizing the red planet, and is also one of the oldest monuments, while the **Monument to Martian Conflict** serves as a memorial for those who died in conflicts on the red planet. Back down underground, between the Capital and the Orange House sits the **Ares National Mall**, a long, tall, open space similar to a natural Martian lava tube, pressurized with green-spaces, and LED roof, apartments, restaurants, ponds and trees all the way down.

Surrounding the district is the **State of Utopia**, colonized by a diverse collection of people from every corner of the United States and beyond. Utopia contains Ares' second and fifth largest cities, Touchdown, the capital of the state and smaller of the two, and Jamestown, the larger of the two. About 40,000 people who live in the city of Utopia actually live in the state instead of the district. Stretched between the three is a loose conglomeration of tents, inflatable modules and small, family-owned settlements all dedicated to growing millions and millions of crops, which combined feed about 2/3rds of Ares. Utopia is the epicenter of the Utopianist Movement, a left-leaning eco-preservationist group which advocates for terraforming Mars in a human-friendly manner, ergo, by building floating cities on the would-be oceans so people don't have to relocate to everyone else's homelands. Not very popular anywhere else, maybe the name has something to do with it.

Just north of Utopia is the **State of Fairbanks**, it shares the title as the oldest state on Mars with its southern neighbor, with both being founded on the same sol. Fairbanks' first wave of colonists originated primarily from Alaska, hence the name. The second wave in the mid-to-late 90s and 2000s brought in colonists from Montana, Oregon, British Columbia, with smaller numbers coming in from California and the Rocky Mountain states, with a third wave of colonists from the early-to-mid 2010s mostly consisting of Chukotkans, Sakhans, and general Siberian people groups. The state is also infamous for its number of UFO cults and pseudo-alien worshipping religions, which get crazier as you go further east.

The **State of Independence** is home to even more of the red planet's oldest cities, and is the largest state in Ares. Independence was colonized initially from the late 80's through to the mid 2000's almost entirely by an eclectic group of midwesterners from every state in the region, from Ohioans, to Illinoisians, Indianans, Michiganders, Wisconsinites, Minnesotans, to even South Dakotans and other folks from the great plains. It should come as no surprise, then, that the state has developed a sort of "Neo-Midwestern" or "Red-Midwestern" culture noticeably distinct from its counterpart back on Earth or the other cultures in Ares, being one of the states that gives people the impression that Aresian states could be considered different countries. While tosol, there are more complex industries which contribute to the state's economy, the foundation of Independence is still built upon water extraction, much of which tosol is pumped into the aqueduct and down to the big cities in Utopia. Recently, the state's second major-migration

wave has attracted large hispanic populations from Chicago, Detroit, Rockford, Milwaukee and the Twin Cities, and while most of them are settling into preexisting cities, they've also founded several new colonies. Bisecting north and south, the **Alien National Park** is home to large, protected fields of living Martian bacteria, which contribute heavily to yearly methane spikes in the northern hemisphere of Mars.

**Fisher** and **Magnolia** flank Independence to the west and Fairbanks to the north, and while they're similar in size, they're very different in culture. Fisher was founded as a sort of "internationalist" response to the more focused colonization missions in other Artesian states, taking on the name Fisher and naming its cities after the first people on Mars. Although the state originally intended to attract people the world over, it turned out to only really take in left-wing gen x bilingual Californians. But the globalist sentiment wasn't wholly lost, as a second migration wave in the 2010s has attracted a fair number of Japanese, Chinese, and other East/Southeast Asian immigrants who, due to their wealth, got out of colonizing New Asia. Magnolia, on the other hand, was colonized by the Magnolia Republic, a Jackson-based African-American focused group advocating for a new form of southern nationalism catered towards the region's historical black population, advocating not for a New Afrika but for a more friendly Republic with the symbol of a Magnolia. From its founding in the mid-80's, the organization was constantly in the shadow of its larger New Afrikan cousin, and constantly made fun of, sabotaged, etc. But there were still a fair share of supporters, and they decided to set up shop on Mars in the early 2000's to create the true vision of their Republic on Mars instead of uselessly haggling on Earth. As one of Ares' two "Black Nationalist" states, Magnolia is commonly considered the more peaceful of the duo, despite initial sentiments for independence, Magnolians consider themselves autonomous while being part of the larger Aresian Experiment - again, an example of states seeming as different countries on Mars.

**New Providence**, admitted as a state in 1995, is a strange mix of Nevadans and New Englanders, and while, yes, some of the money does come from the various casinos across the state, the vast majority comes from industrial manufacturing and mining operations. Despite being one body, the western half of the state tends to share more in common with Ares' western territories, while its people's ancestry leans towards New England, and the eastern half leans towards Utopia, while its people come from Nevada. A large portion of the state's Nevadans (see: a few thousand) were displaced upon the revival of Lake Lahontan on Earth, and instead of settle back down on the shores and deal with all the new beachgoer tourists, they left behind the deserts of Nevada to take their chances on the deserts of Mars. New Providence generally steers to the middle on political issues, perhaps stemming from the combination of left-wing New Englanders and right-wing rural Nevadans, while its governor, Angela Merkel, was actually born in Germany, and migrated to the New England region as a child, before moving to Mars on her 31st birthsol.

Meanwhile, the **State of Gadsten** (yes, it's spelled that way), was admitted as a state in 1992. From its earliest sols, it has attracted a large number of more traditional libertarians who didn't want to take their chances in Rothbard or one of the other libertarian-utopias of Mars. This didn't just include people from the US, although they were the vast majority, it also included a fair

amount of people from Western Europe, the Middle East and even some from the former Soviet Union. Gadsten retains its libertarian, freedom-loving identity to this sol, although its libertarians are famously at odds with Rothbard's libertarians, which is pretty funny.

**Fontana**, on the other hand, was colonized by many apolitical or left-leaning folks from around the Chesapeake Bay area, including Delaware, Maryland, D.C., and some from Virginia or New Jersey. The area was initially settled by a group of scientists before it was carved out as its own territory and began attracting its current population. As of 2025, the state retains its initial "scientific/areobiologist" culture by being governed by a technocratic council, with the state's governor serving more as a ceremonial figure rather than one who makes the decisions.

**King** is kind of like the antithesis to Magnolia - descended both from groups of southern New-Afrika supporters, New Yorkers, Chicagoans, and African Americans drawn from other cities around the US, King puts on a distinctly more black-nationalist persona than its cousin up north. The first in the region was created in 2004, when the area was still part of the State of Roosevelt - but once King gained a significant, distinct population, the region was separated as its own territory in 2010, before being admitted as a state upon even faster population growth in 2013, becoming one of the fastest regions in Ares to go from being uninhabited to a state.

The **State of Roosevelt**, meanwhile, has its own black population hailing from New York City, although here, they're overshadowed by the larger chunk of the population hailing from the rest of the city, or state. Roosevelt was the third state admitted to Ares after Utopia and Fairbanks, so it should come as no surprise that it was also one of the earliest-settled regions in the Republic. While many New Yorkers did, and still do reside in Utopia and its surrounding cities, many more took the opportunity to go and create a "New New York" on the Martian frontier, some New Jerseyites came over too. Not only was Roosevelt colonized by English-speaking white or black New Yorkers, but was also settled by large amounts of the city's hispanic population, who have, for the most part, created their own isolate neighborhoods and cities.

The state of **New Carolina**, the newest state of the Republic, created less than two years ago back in 2023, may or may not be a Jeffersonian plot to gain more influence in Congress, depending on what drunkard you ask in the bar. Still, they have a point, it's the smallest state in the Republic with less people than some territories, and it's right above Jeffersonia, and a lot of people there have the same views that a lot of Jeffersonians do. Other than that it's pretty boring.

Just below New Carolina is the aforementioned **State of Jeffersonia**, which is.. Weird. It attracts right-wingers who call themselves Libertarians but who aren't actually Libertarian at all, mostly young (and some older) white dudes, along with a small minority of Hispanics. To give an example of how weird it is: it's governed by a former podcaster/internet personality-turned pseudo-politician, who's only taken seriously in the state.

**Elysium**, meanwhile is like Gadsten or Jeffersonia or Rothbard's more sane second cousin, populated mostly by Texans, Floridians, and some Louisianans, many of whom are also

Hispanic, ergo, Elysium is sort of like the Florida of Ares, complete with its own oddball news headlines every now and then. Also one of the most prolific swing states of Ares, last year it voted Libertarian, the year before that it voted for the Millennium Alliance, and before that- you get the point. On top of Mount Elysium is where the city that bears its name, and the responsibility of being the state's capital, Elysium, is located. The city sits within a small crater inside the much larger crater/caldera at the volcanoes' peak, and to get to it you have to go down through a dead lava-river valley. Elysium National Park, just south of the capital, is less a park and more a preserve for the ancient lava formations in the region.

To the east, the Kennedy and Carter territories are two lowly-populated regions settled mostly by scientists from the rest of Ares. **Kennedy** is home to a fair number of New Englanders hailing from New Providence, who originally hailed from Connecticut back on Earth. Many of these moved to Kennedy in search of resources in the depths of its many trenches, only to come out empty handed and unable to return home, and the shovel sellers got the last laugh. This leaves Kennedy tosol with a rather oddball population slightly shy of 8,000, and not very much else going for it aside from Kennedy portraits painted by niche Aresian artists. The **Carter Territory**, on the other hand, has no Georgians, a really bad flag, and uh, nothing else.

Lonoaina (lots of Americans back on Earth think it's called "Aloha") is a more interesting story. Starting in the 1980's, a group by the name of the **Holoholopinaau Movement** appeared on Earth in response to the decimation of native Hawaiian culture due to the American colonization of the islands. While other groups of its kind advocated, uh, normally, for reviving Hawaiian culture on Earth, this movement believed that truly authentic native Hawaiian culture and invasive American culture could not meaningfully coexist, and for Hawaiians to have any chance at reviving their culture and language, that they would have to do as their forefathers did and settle a whole new land. The Holoholopinaau Movement took advantage of early American colonization missions to Mars instead of building a whole new country, building the city of New Hawaii hundreds of miles west to any other Aresian settlement in 1992, with strict DNA tests for citizenship. By 1999, the region became its own territory, and maybe overscheduled, in another 10 years, it was finally admitted as a state of Ares. All things considered, the Movement has done a pretty good job at reviving Hawaii's ancient culture on Mars, and has even taught a fair share of Lonoaina's children the Hawaiian language, which 67% of the state's population can fluently speak.

Just north and south of **Lonoaina** are the **New Sonora Territory** and **Isidis Territory** respectively, commonly considered Ares' two "Spanish" colonies. Isidis, the older of the two, was initially settled by a number of eastern-hispanic groups from New York City, Boston, Baltimore, and others, including Los Angeles as an outlier, throughout the early to mid 2000's, although many of these people would settle down in Utopia or Independence rather than move all the way out to the middle of nowhere. Still, 11,000 people live in Isidis nowasols, and the language stats show that 87% of them speak Spanish, followed by English and Italian, the latter of which came from a number of bilingual Italian-Spanish speakers from New Jersey joining in for the fun of it. The New Sonora Territory drew its colonists from the Southwestern United States, although there was no major movement here. Rather, New Sonora was initially

colonized by sparse entrepreneurs looking to build roadside hotels when the area was still part of the Unorganized Territory, in an era when New Asia and Isidis were seeking connections to the more populated eastern half of Ares.

**New Sequoyah** was colonized by colonization organizations originating among the tribes of eastern Oklahoma, most notably being the Cherokee, Choctaw, and Chickasaw. Early attempts to colonize the region came in the mid-90s during the North American Spring, after movements to make Eastern Oklahoma its own state called “Sequoyah” fell through for a variety of reasons. In response, colonization groups all under one banner opted to revive the idea on Mars in the early 2000’s, adopting the name “New Sequoyah”. Today, about 10,000 people of Native American ancestry live in the region.

Meanwhile, **New Asia** is sort of the opposite; instead of being colonized by Native Americans, it wasn’t even colonized by Americans at all - well, that’s a lie, it was. In 2003, an organization called the New Asia Society appeared in Baltimore, Maryland, and placed a colonial charter for a then-uninhabited region in the far, far east of Ares, about a hundred kilometers outside where Ares’ de-facto border stood at the time. The government of Ares accepted this, and the first colonists, mostly Chinese-American applicants, built the first settlement in 2004. By the mid-2010’s, in the midst of genocides and ethnic cleansings in Southern China, a diverse mix of small South Chinese ethnic groups began to immigrate to the US, and some of them thought it would be a good idea to try to revive their dreams on the red planet, creating a sort of “Little China” on Mars. Is it a racist government plot to get Chinese people out of the big cities? Is it a refugee movement? Is it both? You decide!

Further north, we find the remains of the once all-encompassing Unorganized Territory, which is still quite a mixed - and weird - place as of 2025. In the south, the Noachian Saints, a small Christian sect/cult founded in the late 90’s on Earth, a derivative of the larger “ancient Martian civilization” religions on the red planet, the Noachian Saints believe that an ancient, watery, Noachian Mars was the location of the Garden of Eden, and that it is humanity’s duty to restore the planet to its perfect, utopian glory, so it’s only natural that the center of their religion would be in a place literally called Utopia. The Noachian Saints have a dominant presence throughout all of Northern Ares, except in some of the cities of the far, far north, where they’re opposed by smaller christian-derivative cult-like religions such as the Cosmic Circle or the Brothers of Christ. Ozymandians are surprisingly less popular up here than they are in the rest of the Republic.

To wrap things up with Ares, the condominiums; **Borealia** and **Antillia**, are shared with Canada and the Caribbean Federation, respectively. Borealia is a partially-french territory populated with Canadian fascists who use the “Shield of Ares” symbol on their flag, while Antilla is home to a sizable number of Caribbeans, most prominently being Jamaicans, as well as an oddly large number of Germans. There’s also the Mars Orbit Territory, but you can read more about Mars Orbit’s stations in that part of the doc.

**FREE AND FAIR REPUBLIC OF ROTHBARD**

**Rothbard** is the true OG independent nation of Mars. In the 1980s, fueled by a growth of European Libertarianism in the 1960s and 70s, and a divide in both Euro and American libertarians between the “common man” and the “lib” politicians representing them, New Age Libertarianism came into being. These folks caught onto Mars like a magnet to metal, and throughout the first major colonization wave to Mars in the 1980s to the 1990’s, Libertarian groups popped up in the colonial cities all across Mars. But the Libs still weren’t having it, and one Murray Rothbard wrote a few books about it before funding an entire independent nation on the red planet, and his followers opted to make him the namesake. By 2000, Rothbard grew into half a dozen cities across the plains of Utopia, already with two breakaway cities in the south. Still, it was shielded from outside influences on the east by the Erebus Montes, though relations with Ares to the west had always been sour.

tosol, Rothbard is still intact, and one of its two breakaways in the south has rejoined. While it may not be the pinnacle of libertarian utopia its founders hoped it would be, it is still a highly successful Martian nation with a strong economy, and a fresh new culture that’s still developing. Rothbard’s capital, **Rothbard City**, is built in a style very reminiscent of the solarpunk arcologies designed by Paolo Soleri in Southern Italy, which are famous for fueling regionalist movements and eventually the succession of Mezzogiorno. Rothbard’s government, while not giving as much autonomy to its cities as it initially promised in the 1980s, still grants individual settlements a fair amount of self-guidance. Each city has a fixed 3 seats at Rothbard’s **Freedom Table**, as the founders believed for freedom of expression to be truly free, and for political parties or the notions of “blue and red” to not put roadblocks to people’s expression, each city would have a fair share at the table, composed ideally of three people with different viewpoints about their hometown. The **Intermediary of Rothbard** is the individual who acts as a public figure, but the position is not on par with, say, the US president, and in fact it is more similar to something like the Speaker of the House, as someone who keeps the Freedom Table in check or is the tie-breaker in discussions.

While Rothbard is definitely not free of its problems, it has generally managed to become a successful example of a Martian country. As of 2025, it hasn’t been taken over by any capitalist mega-corporation, or descended into complete anarchy, and is still a quite nice place to live, not on par with Ares or Tharsis, sure, but it’s no Fisher.

## UTOPIAN CIVILIZATION OF FISHER

**Fisher** broke off from Rothbard in the 80’s after thinking it was drifting too far from the libertarian agenda, and too much freedom allowed a megalomaniac dictator to consolidate power, turning it into a dictatorial hydraulic society. While Freeland, the other city that split off from Rothbard at a similar time, drew back on total freedom and managed to not fall to despotism, eventually rejoining its parent country, Fisher maintained its authoritarian government to the modern sol and never rejoined. tosol, Fisher is known across Mars for its dictatorial policies inside the base, which in fact, is shaped like a flower with 5 protruding “pedals” which take design notes from Earthly prisons and Venusian aerostats with divergent panopticon designs. The leader of Fisher, his government, and all the life support, oxygen-recycling, water-drilling and power generation

facilities sit in the “old city” sectioned off from the pedals with an armored wall. We still don’t know much about what goes on inside the city because they don’t let anyone in, so all the data we have about the place is from satellite imagery.

What we do know about the city is that it abides by a state mandated ideology/religion. The so-called **Utopia Civilization**, which posits that for itself to survive, that the city must be fully self-reliant and not depend on any other state/civilization, and for this prosperity to occur, that its population must function as cells do in a body, with allegiance to the ruling party or the “brain”. The idea of Utopia generally faced resistance in Fisher during its inception in the 2000s. A secretive brainwashing program using Fisher’s public school system sort of trained the younger generation to be subservient to the government and essentially forced them to be “cells” in the machine of the state, and taught them to report anyone speaking out in any way against the state and/or performing rebellious actions, or “cancerous” people in the eyes of the government. As of 2025, the kids have grown up, and many of them reported their “cancerous” parents during their childhood or teenage years, who were later killed or forced into state-bound slavery. Now, they’re raising their own kids in the vision of Utopia.

Literally 1984.

## REPUBLIC OF NEW ARGENTINA

And then there’s **New Argentina**, a rather small polity with only 23,000 people (most Argentinians just decide to go to the Federation), because the Argentinians never really focused on settlement in their space colonies, no, they wanted the money. New Argentina was created with the express purpose of mining mars to become a dominant economic body, the people could come later. Unfortunately, Boreal mars turned out to be lacking in material resources no matter how far north the Argentinians went, say for a few craters and their metal-rich deposits. nowasols, the colony is known for its Argent Buddhists in the south, especially showing in the Buddhist-Argentinian novel fusion architecture in the large cities down south. Aside from that, New Argentina really does not have anything interesting.

## HALL

**Hall** was founded by scientists fleeing the late Lomonosov Scientific Base in 1999. We’ll talk about Lomonosov more in 2 sections. **Hall Base** continued in its predecessor’s footsteps with its research of Areobiota, and to their surprise, landed upon the largest known fossil field on the entire planet. The Hall Base Fossil Fields are a sub-section of the larger Boreal Fossil Fields, which is a widespread conglomeration of over two dozen denser fossil beds scattered across half of the northern hemisphere, and the HBFF are the largest among these, stretching several hundred kilometers from the northern glaciers all the way down to Borealia and the Argentinian territories, covering an area so large that it was likely the largest biological producer Mars ever saw, with millions and millions of fossils in what used to be a shallow sea billions of years ago. As of 2025, Hall has a population ranging between 1,500 in the deepest parts of winter, and up to 5,000 in the summer, when thousands of Areobiologists temporarily live up here to do their

research out on the fossil fields. Hall's territory corresponds to the land given to the Arcadia International Protection Zone, a preserve meant to protect both the fossils and the modern-sol bacterial colonies in the region.

## REPUBLIC OF NEW ALBION

Next up is the British colony of New Albion. From the earliest sols of its colonization of space, the British had plans to put people on Mars. These ambitions were proven in 1980, when the British Space Force landed its first colonists, with its own rockets, and founded the small settlement of New Albion City. Perhaps due to the last dying breath of British colonialism coming back at the tail-end of the 20th century, or just due to the relatively lax requirements for British space colonists, the newly-founded colony of **New Albion** drew a surprising number of colonists in its early sols - although this can also be explained by the colony not only drawing colonists from the UK itself, but also from Ireland, Mainland Europe, Commonwealth nations, and even a fair share of South American colonists before they were able to set up their own red planet colonies. Of the colonists from the mainland UK in specific, there was a peculiar draw of older British colonialists and imperialists in the 1990s, and perhaps many of these were boomers who were born right after the end of the Second World War and witnessed the decolonization period, the collapse of the once "Great British Empire" their parents spoke of, in their childhood, growing up with a longing for a supposedly idealized time they never experienced. Now, while there were true imperialists and colonialists in these groups, many of them didn't want to oppress foreign nations and steal their resources - rather, many aspired to become an explorer on the safari, charting the uncharted and contacting the uncontacted. While Mars didn't fit most of their expectations, the idealized "explorer" notion of British colonization still drew a large number of older (40s-50s, some even in their 60s) boomers to Mars, also pushed here by their midlife crises'. A share of younger people were also drawn in by these notions, and indeed, there were more younger people in the colonies than older folk, but not even close to as many were drawn in by the same neo-colonial movements. Still, these sentiments have given the colonies of New Albion a distinctly "Trad-British" style, especially showing in its architecture - with indoor streets flanked by rows of revivalist-tudor and neo-georgist style homes, while larger structures tend to follow neo-gothic or english baroque styles, or at minimum, what Martian colonists tend to think these styles look like, they should really all have a 'neo' prefix, because none of them are that authentic to what they draw from. Culture in New Albion tends to also lean towards traditionalism, with a heavy emphasis on the importance of the monarchy, familial structures, and maintaining British culture (including the food).

Aside from the British-majority in "**The Solarway**" (named as such due to the prevalence of solar panels in the cities), the region is also populated by a number of mainland Europeans, with Germans and Spaniards being the most prevalent - with smaller groups of Danes, Frenchies, and Germans. There are also quite sizable neighborhoods, notably in New York, North Avalon, Eden Bay, and Williams, of Indian, East African, and South American peoples (they have the best food). Going north from Eden Bay, aptly-named New Erie leans more Irish than British, while Areoland again leans more in favor of people from Britain's former colonies, with sizable Bermudan, Jamaican, and Cypriot populations. New Harare, just slightly further north, was

leased to Zimbabwe by New Albion, and is de jure Zimbabwe's only colony on Mars, even though it trades entirely with New Albion, and is only really connected to Zimbabwe-on-Earth via wireless communication, and it's also the third city along the **Red Pontcy Aqueduct**, named in lieu of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct in old Britain. This is also where we begin to encounter strange revivals of more ancient - esoteric - cultures that shouldn't be labeled as "British". You see, New Albion absorbed a number of older late-80s to early-90s era semi- or fully-abandoned trade cities on the route from The Solarway to the northern ice caps, and as Mars' population grew, these cities saw new life in the 2000's; not only as part of a larger revived trade artery between the north and the south, but also as cities for new-age ancient-revivalist cultures to thrive. From modern Pagans, to Celtic revivalists with thick British accents, to Druids, building their own megalithic architecture out of the red rocks of Mars, you will surely find a lot of weird up here.

The M1 is the dirt road connecting the populated eastern half of New Albion to the sparsely-populated western half. In the old sols, it took a month to traverse, and although it only takes two weeks now, it's still a grueling journey for any colonist unfortunate enough to travel on it. For nearly 2000 kilometers, there's nothing but red boulders and rust-orange dirt, occasionally broken up with the stray sign, roadside solar-powered light, or in the rarest of cases, a roadside family owned hotel made of shoddy-at-best inflatable modules. It should come as no surprise that travel on this road is slowly but surely being replaced by landships - but not fast, as there's really nothing on the other side. Well, except for one thing, the Tharsis Rise National Park and its visitor center have had a strange and unlucky reputation since their earliest sols; the first probe to explore the region, an experimental "walking" rover with a rudimentary guidance AI glitched out and started walking on its own, falling off the side of a cliff and breaking into pieces before the scientists on Earth could get control of it. And the trend has continued to this sol - despite the presence of Martian fossils, even the most esteemed, atheistic, non-superstitious scientists stray away from here because of all the disasters that have happened over the years; depressurizations, landslides, collapses, a number of untimely deaths, people going missing, and much more gives this unfortunate land a terrible reputation. Oh, and some of the crazies here dug up a hunk of metal with low, but notable concentrations of rare metals that don't match up with the patterns in the surrounding terrain - the experts say it's a meteor, but is it? Only time will tell.

Back down in the south, at the far western end of The Solarway, the Gonnus-Tanaica Region is home to the most hardline traditionalists and monarchists in all of New Albion - much more-so than even the old folks over in the capital. The reason this place is so jam-packed full of trads is because of an only somewhat-united movement composed of a number of smaller monarchist-leaning colonization groups originating in Central and Northeast England. These organizations first started gaining prominence in the early 2010s among the youth, most commonly people in their late teens to late twenties, and especially young men just about to go into life, who really had nothing going for them. Drawn into the movement by its promises of settling the frontier, having a family and a stable, traditional life, these young men took their chances, cut their ties, and left for the red planet. tosol, they're in the process of creating a similar, but also distinctly unique culture in a place that's already drifted far from the norm on Earth. Conflicts with the older South American population, which had already settled Western

Tharsis in droves nearly a decade before the new folks came in, are unfortunately quite common.

## PHILIPPINE REPUBLIC OF LARANGANIA

And then there's **Larangania**, the Philippines' famously long, colonial-looking polity stretching all the way to the Northern Trust Territory, what they don't want you to know is that nobody lives in the giant panhandle other than a tribe that's only gonna be there for another 2 weeks. According to the 2024 census, there were 43,304 people in Larangania, and most of them are just normal, catholic Filipinos, if not a bit right wing. Paglalayo and Tingnan are known for their domed inflatable "bubble" architecture on the surface, leading into mazes of underground anthill-like hallways and residences which the even locals have a hard time getting their heads around, while the outer cities were centrally-planned and 3d-printed in the style of traditional Filipino architecture.

## DOSATI SHARED TERRITORY

**Dosati** is a joint Chinese-Pakistani condominium populated with Muslims and Mars Worshippers. Before it became a condominium, the region now occupied by Dosati, and this entire section of the Boreal Plain in general was a swath of land ripe with territorial disputes but lacking any people to enforce them, with Lomonosov right in the middle, and the last unclaimed territories on Mars. In 2015, to prevent conflict in the immediate aftermath of the Blacksand War, when everyone was scared it could happen again, except at a planetary scale, the UMN called a meeting to decide what to do with the territory, and this is what came out of it. But come on, you're here for **Lomonosov Base**, the infamous MADHOUSE of MARS. If you're not up to speed, this base began back in the late 80's as a generally autonomous and international settlement dedicated to the study of Martian life. And then, because fossils are useless if you want to make money, Lomonosov invited an array of the weirdest folk from across Mars, and then went crazy themselves - Lomonosov circlejerked itself into insanity over the course of the 1990s and came into the new millennium kicking and screaming with conspiracy theories about ancient civilizations on the red planet and their dictator (who actually called himself a dictator) telling everyone he was the descendant of one of these Martian Gods. Turns out when the Martian faith that said there were ancient gods down in the core popped up a few years later, everyone in the base suddenly believed, with no doubt, that their dictator was telling the truth, and that lasted for another decade until the territory was annexed by China. In the aftermath of the annexation, China went in and kinda helped Lomonosov tone down its insanity, though it's still known planetwide nowadays as a madhouse. Also known for its architecture, which incorporates the fossils as decorative pieces and ornaments.

## LEVANTINE REPUBLIC OF SHIRAKA SHUTAFUT

**Shiraka Shutafut** expanded initial Israeli-Palestinian peace sentiments from the confederation on Earth and put them in space, and the even greater successes of those sentiments in space travelled back to Earth. Yeah, space fixed the Palestine issue in this timeline, get used to it,

anyway, we're talking about Mars here. Shiraka Shutafut is a heavy Palestinian-Israeli mix with slightly more of the latter than the former. Eretz is built in a style reminiscent of Earthly cities of the region, just built out of Martian rocks with bulletproof glass as the windows and airlocks for the doors. The other cities are dug into the ground as sort of "ant hill" colonies with very little infrastructure present on the surface.

### **STATE OF NABATAEA**

Jordan never got a Lunar colony, but it did have a space station and a close relationship with the Levant in the field. In 2003, in a joint program with the Levant, 100 Jordanites went out to the Martian desert and founded what was then supposed to be an autonomous base part of Shiraka Shutafut, called Nabataea. It lasted 14 years, until 2017, when Nabatea (with only 5,700 people, and quite a bit of new territory from the recent treaties) held an independence referendum, which came back with 57% of people in favor of independence. In reality, Nabataea is still entirely dependent on Shiraka Shutafut for anything more complicated than growing lettuce.

### **REPUBLIC OF KAWASAN**

In the 1990's, Malaysia was just coming into its golden age in the space industry. In the early years of the 90's, the government-owned Malaysian Space Agency bought a stock of old Greek and Turkish experimental rockets which helped shoot them to the moon, and in the later end of the decade allowed them to shoot to Mars in 1999, creating the colony of Kawasan. In the 2000's, Malaysia took advantage of its exclave on Borneo to capitalize on self-landing reusable rocket boosters to expand its influence in space, notably with its expansion of factories in Earth orbit, but also notable for its colonization of Mars in the later years of the 2000s, building a chain of cities on the border between Araby Terra and Acadalia Planitia. Now, Martian colonies are used to debates about independence, they're pretty common, and usually they don't lead to anything. Thing is, Malaysia allowed anyone to go to Mars, and they let colonists bring anything they wanted with them, including guns. Now, they didn't care all too much, some even thought it was a good thing, in case, say, a neighboring independent polity decided to invade (this hadn't really happened yet in the 2000's), and by the time the 2010's came around, there were two guns for every person in the colony.

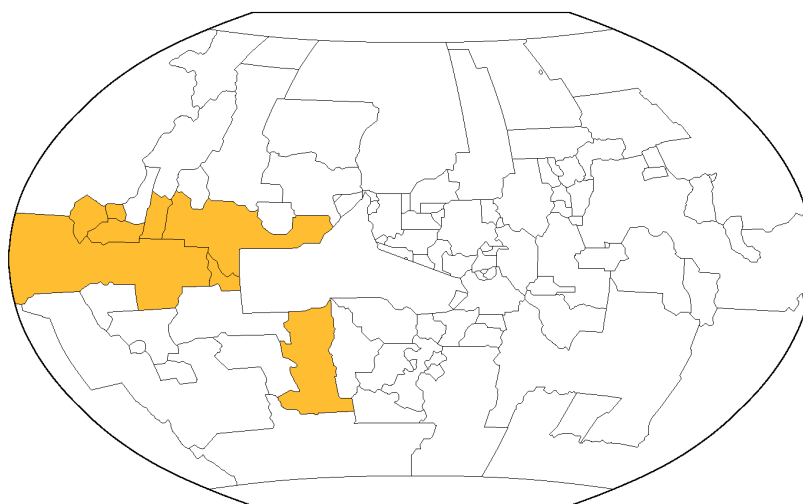
It was also around the turn of the decade when the first independence debates popped up - again - Kawasan is surrounded by independent Martian countries, so the people living here, already somewhat disillusioned with the Malaysian government on Earth (I mean, they came all this way to get away from them), started seriously debating breaking away - just, this time it differed from any other colony on Mars, because everyone was already polarized and had guns with them. One thing led to another, and an independence protest in the capital was shot down by armed guards (more like an anti-independence militia), and each city swore their allegiance to one side or the other. The reality of the situation, however, meant that this wouldn't be a normal war - there weren't armies travelling between cities - rather, the war was a slow-burn between mostly-unorganized militias in temporary coalitions for the duration of the war, who, upon victory, would solve their disputes. It shouldn't be a surprise that Kawasan's cities became

somewhat of a playground between the other colonies; Ares, which supported the Colonialist Movement and for Kawasan to stay a territory of Malaysia, due to the US' friendship with the Malaysian government on Earth; and Tharsis, which supported the independence-fighters.

The **Blacksand War**, as the conflict would come to be known as, was fought between February 10th, 2014 and November 29th, 2014, with the worst of the fighting taking place in Bunga and Ketcantikan. Though the war wouldn't end with a bang or a broken siege, or the capture of an enemy leader. Indeed, the end surprised everyone and nobody at the same time, because everyone in Kawasan just ran out of bullets. Even though everyone had guns, the bullet supplies were rather limited, and the manufacturing process for bullets means that you can't easily make them on Mars, so the supplies simply dried up in early November, and everyone sort of just went "What now?". Some people thought it would be best to have fistfights with their neighbors in the streets or start using melee weapons, but for the most part, nobody did much else. The anticlimactic "end" to the Blacksand War is perhaps what allowed peace to come so easily on New Years, with the UMN and MPU drawing up a peace deal giving Kawasan independence to the chagrin of Earthly Malaysia (which still claimed Kawasan until mid-2016).

The Blacksand War, despite anything Earthlings thought about it, was a wholly Martian affair, and the first true war to take place on the planet. The peace, like the war, was another Martian affair with little to no Earthly input. While the war's 283 deaths also made it one of the deadliest affairs on Mars to date, it also made a point to prove that Mars was morphing into its own world, truly independent from Earth. 20

## The Western Craterfields



The Western Craterfields are a large, chaotic swath of craters in the far western hemisphere of Mars. Widely considered to be useless in early Martian history, these fields gained their use as

the land claims for smaller, pariah Martian states which were unable to get the “good” territories on the planet.

### ***Sweat & Blood***

*April 8th, 1990 / Mina 5th, 6*

*New Amazonia, Amazonis*

The craft cracked and groaned as it shot through the atmosphere faster than a bullet. Himself seated near the lander’s small window, Jose looked to his right, past two other colonists in their own blueish-green tinted spacesuits. Instead of a vast horizon, the window was blocked by a wall of fire encasing the craft as it darted towards the ground. Less than a minute later, an incredibly loud, continuous blast was heard from below the vehicle – some people flinched, but this was no explosion, it was the descent engine activating to slow the lander down. As the engine activated, Jose and the other passengers were pushed down into their seats, as if they had two of themselves sitting on their shoulders.

By the time the engine weakened enough for the passengers to not be glued to their seats, the fiery ball of plasma around the craft had dissipated enough for Jose to be able to catch his first glimpse of his new home. Outside the window, hills of orange and red were broken up by valleys of dark black sand. Though the terrain near him paled in comparison to the faint monolith on the horizon, what he assumed was hundreds of kilometers away, the silhouette of Olympus Mons stretched halfway across the horizon. By the time the lander entered the chasm in which New Amazonia is located, the massive mountain had been hidden behind the cliffs and walls.

The spacecraft slowed as it neared the ground. The intercom warned passengers to brace for impact, although when the vehicle touched the ground less than a minute later, its shock absorbers dissipated most of the impact, with the intercom announcing “Aterrissamos, permaneçam em seus assentos.”, “We have landed, remain in your seats”. Thirty minutes later, the some-35 individuals exited the lander and boarded a raised bus-like vehicle reminiscent of mobile lounges from the airports of Earth. The windows weren’t real, but the high-definition RGB screens projected an image of the environment outside the vehicle onto the screens inside, giving these fresh-Martians their first true view of their new planet. That sol, Jose Pereira became a Martian.

*1980s, Rio De Janeiro, Brazil*

Jose Pereira grew up just outside Rio back in Brazil – as a child, he didn’t take very much interest in space; in fact, he was entirely disinterested in it. Never really knew what he wanted to do when he grew up, either. He started working his first job at 14, as a janitor in the back of the local supermarket. By 16, he was working as a stocker, janitor, and cashier at different times of the week while going to school, which still didn’t pay much. Spent his twenties bouncing around construction, auto maintenance, truck driving, and even had a short stint up in the north with the logging industry. Come his 29th birthday, things weren’t going great – the logging company he

worked for just got shut down by the government for knocking down a native village - which he wasn't involved in, at least. But now he was jobless and still as broke as he'd been his entire life.

That night at the bar, one of his drunk friends a few seats away suggested he take up one of those new free missions the government has to send people to space. Jose took it as the drunken joke it was at first, but a few weeks later, he still couldn't find a job and his money was beginning to run dry. He had made a promise to himself to not break into his savings unless it was an emergency or his retirement, but now he was really thinking; am I going to do the same thing for the rest of my life? Jumping from job to job and barely scraping by?

*April 21st, 1990, New Amazonia, Amazonis*

Most of the colonists thought they would have an easier time once they got to the red planet, but the gravity crushed their backs and they had to spend time laying in bed for the first few sols. Jose didn't have it as bad, and at least his pod was slightly bigger than the bag he had back on the spaceship. It still wasn't anywhere near as big as the tiny apartment he used to have back on Earth, but nobody is going back to Earth at this point, it's time to forget about that, everyone is here to stay. Back during his time as a construction roustabout on Earth, he'd spent some time laying bricks, and as it turned out, the smart architects who designed the colonies here found a way to build buildings out of bricks, so he'd be doing the exact same thing. Except apparently these bricks were held together by blood, sweat, and piss, but that doesn't really matter.

Jose's first step on Martian soil wasn't triumphant, he and a work crew of 24 other workers were, for all intents, pushed out of the airlock. The crew already had basic knowledge on what to do from the training videos they watched back in Brazil, but none of the new guys like Jose really knew what they were doing - maybe they knew how to lay bricks, but they didn't know how to lay bricks on Mars - so it's a good thing that there were people that'd already done it. It's hard, gritty, and dangerous work out in the desert, the crew Jose was in was assigned to build igloos that sol, while another, more technical crew was appointed to install the airlocks and life support for the igloos crews that came before his own had built. They say one sol people will live in them.

After a long sol of work, all Jose and his fellow crew got in return was dinner in the mess and their paychecks that they couldn't spend, before spending the night in the commons or in their pod. Well, Jose himself didn't get a paycheck; for the next 5 years, all his checks would be paying off his training debt. Indeed, the psychological effects of life in early Mars colonies were terrible - at least the workers outside had the real sun, but many people were stuck inside 24/7 with no real outside light, no fresh air, interacting with the same people and doing the same thing every sol.

*1989, Brasilia, Brazil*

With no other options, Jose broke open his savings and spent his last real on a train ride to Brasilia. One sol later, he arrived at the headquarters of the Brazilian Space Force, a modernist, openly-planned heptagram-shaped facility on the outskirts of the city's Monumental Axis. While

the front desk was initially unwilling to accept him into the program, Jose's lineup of varied past work prompted the office to accept him.

Jose would not be a scientist or a botanist or a normal civilian in the new colony - instead, he would be a low construction worker - long sols, long hours, tiny paychecks that he couldn't even spend. But hey, maybe he would get to start a family, or like the posters on the wall said, he could be one of the founders of an entirely new civilization. What's more, while the trip to Mars itself was free, paid off by the work on the red planet, Jose still had to pay for the costs of his training, which he couldn't entirely afford even with his entire life savings, and he would have to take on a debt which would be paid back with his Martian paychecks.

The US had an alliance on training with Brazil, so Jose and about 200 other prospective Brazilian colonists were put on a plane and flown up to the **Death Valley Training Facility**. Here, Jose and his crew were locked behind a blast door in an underground city that they could not leave unless it was an absolute emergency. This was meant to test the colonists' psychological limits and how the rest of the crew would handle someone who can't handle life on Mars. While in the facility, the crew trained to be astronauts by doing anything between bricklaying, intense physical training, growing crops and keeping their aquaponics systems sustainable, and going in real vacuum chambers to test their endurance in simulated, but still real depressurization and power-loss disaster scenarios. By the end of the training, 98 of the original 200 applications didn't make it, with 35 of them seeing their limits and outright quitting. Jose, though, made it through.

*July 14th, 1990, New Amazonia, Amazonis*

4 Sols ago, someone lost their life. Francisco Silva was a young man who came to Mars for many of the same reasons Jose did. 4 sols ago, he was a member of a mission to the top of one of the cliffs not far from the center of the colony, and you can probably guess what happened next. A simple slip, forgetting to double check his safety harness, and an intercom temporarily switched off after an argument all contributed to his death. Unfortunately, even with a spacesuit to cushion your fall, you won't survive falling off a 750 foot cliff, and neither did he.

Silva's funeral was held in the City Commons, the largest single open-space in New Amazonia. All 332 residents of the city, young and old, scientist or roustabout, were all present. It was a moment of silence, a time when nobody was working, nobody sleeping or eating or arguing, it was a time of unity for the entire colony, even if for a somber reason. Silva was buried under a pile of Martian regolith outside - indeed, just as Jose's story has been one of many, so was Silva's. Often fatal accidents were a common occurrence, especially before 2000, though they continue to this sol.

After the funeral concluded - the fifth colonist to die in Amazonis alone - the crew, of course, had to return to work. Everyone was more careful, but Jose was back out on the jobsite. The igloo he was building a month ago was finished and was to be inhabited by the next wave of colonists, with his team being instructed to begin construction of another row of marsbrick colonies. The posters on the wall never said anything about how much work it takes to build a new civilization.

### *November 8th, 1990, Salvador Launch Facility*

The Salvador Launch Facility is a bustling complex on the sea. Founded in 1978, the facility has brought industry and tourism to the city of Salvador. Unlike his crewmates, Jose didn't have any dimes left to spend downtown during his last sols on Earth, and mostly spent his sols at the facility taking walks, making calls, and preparing for his trip to Mars. On the tenth, the spaceplane which would be carrying him and 30 other people to space touched down on the runway; it had just made it back from another mission in Earth orbit. The next sol, the crew was shuttled to the plane and boarded via an airstair. Before long, they were in the air, rapidly accelerating from Mach 1, to Mach 5, Mach 10, and going higher and higher in the atmosphere as it sped up. The activation of rocket thrusters pushed its passengers deep into their seats and accelerated the spacecraft enough to reach orbital speeds.

The crew spent a short time at a small rotating station in orbit before boarding a much larger zero-gravity shuttle to Mars. Unlike American shuttles to Mars or Soviet shuttles to Venus, Brazil's interplanetary spacecraft did not have gravity-rings in 1990, meaning the entire crew would be in microgravity for the next six months. And those six months came and went; before long, the crew transferred to a preexisting, tiny station in Mars orbit. The landing craft departed from the station with all its crew, including Jose, on April 8th, 1990.

In Martian culture and media, the "Seven Minutes of Terror" - the time when a spacecraft landing on Mars is at most risk of being destroyed, cut off from the outside world by a white-hot ball of plasma - is considered the point of no return for people travelling to the red planet. The point at which you cannot go back; before the Seven Minutes, you're an Earthling, a Venusian, a Lunarian; after the Seven Minutes, you are a Martian.

### **FEDERATED SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF LUCUSIA**

The Soviet Union never had a good dice roll with Mars, but its successor would put the bad luck behind it - at least to an extent. Even with the tension of the Cold War, it wasn't unheard of for Soviets to live in Ares throughout the 1980s, the famous **Solidarity** mission of 1986, as an example, brought a crew of 12 Russian astronauts to Utopia, and six of them are still alive and well, living in the city tosol. But even with new notions of Amero-Soviet peace following the Union's reform in 1989, it wasn't able to get a red flag on the planet's surface until after the turn of the millennium, mostly due to issues on Venus. In 2004, a soviet colonization crew docked with the Zima Earth-Mars cycler; arriving at Mars 5 months later, they first landed in Utopia before trekking with an American convoy to a region south of Ares, near the preexisting Russian corporate-colony of Nashmarsa. This is where Lucusia was founded - and during the Crimson Treaties, it attracted a significant amount of territory - though this was mostly due to nobody else being in the region. Though, despite some rather old-timey communist city naming, the FSS never got who it wanted to move to Mars, and rather than old-timey communist sympathisers, Lucusia was colonized by Russian libertarians.

The bulk of Lucusia's economy is based upon underground ice deposits formed by ancient volcanic activity in the region. Dozens of small mining towns and cities dot Cimeria and the Lucus Plain. Ares already has its own water supply coming from the North Pole, though, so Lucusia sells its ice to West Africa, Rotersand, Vanguard - generally all of the colonies to its south; a pipeline connecting the major cities of the Martian Southwest is in the works, but it's yet to break ground.

### **FREE REPUBLIC OF ELYSIA & FREE REPUBLIC OF ELYSIA-ULAHAN**

The Elysian Sisters; **Elysia** and **Elysia Ulahan**, are descended from free Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Sakhan organizations starting in the mid-2000's. The Elysia Project took advantage of American colonization missions to reach Mars by 2005, but once they got to Ares, they didn't stay - instead, the first colonists of the Elysia Project travelled south of the great mountains of Elysium to a then-unclaimed region between Nashmarsa, Lucusia, and Ares. From 2005 to 2015, the city of Mount Elysia grew slowly, taking in people from the former Soviet Union, and despite its small population, it was a Martian city-state nonetheless. In 2017, movements for a kind of "Conditional Independence" from the city of Ulahan surfaced - Ulahan is overwhelmingly populated by Sakhan peoples, and the city hadn't related very closely with its Ukrainian neighbors for quite some time. After a referendum, the city of Ulahan gained independence in 2018 as the nation of Elysia-Ulhan, with a population of... 2,104. *tosol*, Elysia and Elysia-Ulhan are still very closely related in matters of trade, and may as well still be one country.

### **NASHMARSA COMPANY**

**Nashmarsa** was the first real "Russian" polity on the red planet. Before Lucusia was created in the 2000s, the Soviet Union's string of disasters relating to Mars missions led its successor to not even consider a mission to the planet for the next decade and a half. But new capitalist structures in the Socialist Federation allowed a number of space firms to open up, especially around Central Asia and near Baikonur Cosmodrome. One of these was the Nashmarsa Company, founded in the very late 80s with the eventual goal of building mining colonies on Mars. Nashmarsa got its wish in 1995 with the creation of the Leonovsk Base, named in honor of Alexi Leonov. While it is no longer the only place where Russians live on the red planet, it's still the oldest, and unlike other Martian mining ventures, Nashmarsa chose a rather resource rich area, and has managed to keep itself afloat off mining and small-scale manufacturing.

### **PRESIDENCY OF AMAZONIS**

Brazil was never all that interested in the ongoings of Mercury, Venus, or Mars - well, it would be a lie of I said that, it was interested, because there's Brazilian colonies on all three worlds, but it definitely didn't throw all its force into the colonization of the planets, instead focusing its primarily spaceplane-based space industry on Internesia. While Indonesia was the playground of China and the Soviets for its equatorial position and its abundance of islands, Brazil's Atlantic coast got a similar treatment by the United States - and to a lesser extent, the European Union - and these new spaceports opened up the doors for colonization beyond Earth orbit. In 1985,

Brazil gained its first Mars colony, albeit with great assistance from the US. The proliferation of cyclers in the 2000s interrupted the US' dominance over Brazil's interplanetary colonies, allowing their home country to place a much firmer hand onto the planets, and onto the red one in particular.

Initially named the **Brazilian Colonial Administration of Amazonis**, the immigration of a great amount of Buddhists from isolated communities on Earth in a decade-long migration wave from the early 2000's to the early 2010's, cut short by the economic crisis going on back on the blue planet, and their intermixing with the more traditional Catholic Brazilian population already living in the colony, led to a some new political ideas popping up in some people's heads and the colony gaining a new form of governance - a **Presidency**. On Mars, you have an elected President, who acts identically to how a normal Administrator would. The difference is, instead of a parliament, there exists a smaller "Organization" composed principally of technocrats and other science-guys who sift and pick and choose through the population of the country to try to find the best candidates for President, and then interview them, and then place them on the ballot for election. Presidential terms in Amazonis are 4 Earth years (about 2 Martian years), while seats in the Organization are a mere two years long with no term limits, and the rest of the council can vote on the "Exclusion" of a specific member with a 2/3rds majority - not being totally kicked out, "Excluding" lasts three months, with no limits - the controversy of the system, and the 2/3rds majority in the Organization required to do so, means that this rarely happens.

As of 2025, the Presidency of Amazonis is home to 62,000 people living in relative luxury, well, for Mars. The colony is known for its extensive use of 3D-printed architecture, often incorporating cultural practices from both Brazilian and traditional Buddhist temples, although often even these lean more Brazilian in nature, as none of the Buddhists here actually come from Asia.

## **NEUTRAL LUCUSIA**

Starting in 2009, a small chunk of land just to the east of the State of Elysium in Ares became a disputed claim between Rothbard and Amazonis - Neither of them really needed the lands for anything, back then none of it was staked out for minerals, and even if it was like it is nowasols, for the most part, there isn't much of use to be found here. The real reason both sides were laying claim to the territory was mostly due to nationalism; neither side wanted the other to have the territory, both wanted to make their territories look bigger on the world map, and maybe, just maybe, if there was something there, get a piece of the pie before the other guy did. Maybe it was fate, because the lands here didn't stay disputed forever - just six years later, in 2015, in an era just after the end of Mars' first war when everyone was worried about getting their disputes settled so it didn't happen again, Rothbard and Amazonis finally got together at the table and talked about what they should do with the lands. An agreement was reached less than two weeks later wherein both polities would jointly control the lands as a condominium with joint resource rights to the area, and thus, **Neutral Lucusia** was founded, and in 2019, its first settlement was too.

## COLONY OF FINNISH MARS

From the earliest sols of European colonization, there were always Finns in Tharsis, with dense Finnish populations around the northern "Scandinavian" cities. Finland was never all that keen to join the Tharsian colonies, though, for one, Finland doesn't have much of a reason to go to space, it can just let its people go to Tharsis and do that without all the trouble of maintaining its own Martian colony. But those red rocks below your feet? They're not just rocks, they're alive, Mars is alive, the entire planet is one huge living organism - Earth isn't, Venus isn't, Mercury isn't - Only Mars. Why? Because it's colored red, of course, and red is the color of meat, so it has to be alive and have a soul in the core, we can call it Areism. This pseudo-religion pseudo-cult was founded in Northern Finland in 2013, when it became surprisingly popular with its movement to "Move to Mars, Worship the Red Plains" gained an astonishingly large following of bored, northern Finnish car-repairing alcoholics too busy watching topless gun on their TV's to go down to Helsinki and get a real life. Anyway, their commune in the forests of northern Finland, beside a small lake, slowly grew from 2013 to 2015, which is when they made their move; the entire commune/compound, now numbering 1,500 people, took off on spaceplanes and rockets from the mainland EU and met up with a cyler in the lagrange point a month later. Who funded their missions to Mars? Uhhhh.

Anyway! Now they're at Mars - but they still want to be Finnish, so they land east of Tharsis, north of Prometheus, and claim the lands for Finland, and the government back on Earth gets super confused, but eventually accepts their claims anyway by 2017, but only kind of. Finland treats its pseudo-Martian territories as if they were independent countries with, perhaps, the colonies only de-jure being part of Finland-on-Earth while de-jure functioning sol-to-sol 100% independently from any blue planet feds. Meanwhile, the cul- sorry, the Finns on Mars are doing quite well nowasols, with a growing population nearing 2,000 people, lots of babies, and a growing base to show for it. Things aren't going entirely swimmingly, though - it turns out the Areists didn't put too much future thought into where they were setting up, or maybe they were playing 4D Chess, because they made their claim right on the equator, something Ares desperately wants to build a space elevator eventually, so now some Aresian politicians are proposing to buy the territory.

## SOMALI REPUBLIC OF HALKAAS

Switching over from Finland to Somalia, we encounter a much larger, much more traditional Martian colony. Long story for why Somalia is even able to have a Mars colony at all, but if we skip all that and get right to the red dusty sand you're all here for, we find out that Somalia's martian colony was first created in April of 1992 with only a dash of American help along the way. The original Mars-1 base proliferated into five by the turn of the millennium and expanded to what it is tosol by, well, tosol. While you may expect this Somali colony to be overwhelmingly Muslim, it actually isn't - Halkaas is only 8% Muslim, not even enough to show on the little Martian religions map, but this can be explained by the fact that Somalia has a much greater amount of atheists and agnostics in this timeline, with a great amount of those concentrated in the country's space sector - and it would be these people that would first colonize the red planet.

But as the story went for so many other initially-atheist space colonies, it turns out that religion brings a sense of community, it's something to do, and it gives life meaning, but the Halkaans didn't want to go back to the old religions of the planet they just left so quickly, and instead adopted a new religion, Following their Gods in the center of their planet. Halkaans, despite their initial atheism, take their religious beliefs under FOTG to extremes most other countries don't even go to. Residences in Halkaas - tending to be newer, more modern, and larger than some of their older counterparts, have space for things that may not be entirely utilitarian, including "Worship Holes", in a normal FOTG city/colony, there will be 1-3 Worship Holes in public areas, but in Halkaas, there's one in every house, wait, what's a Worship Hole? It's a square hole you go into to pray to your Gods, since on Mars, being lower rather than higher gets you closer to God.

## **HARMONIS**

Because Isidis Basin and the eastern half of South American Mars are much closer to Ares and Lucusia than they are to the rest of civilization, it feels more apt to put this here than group it in with that section. This is also legally an entity separate from the Federation.

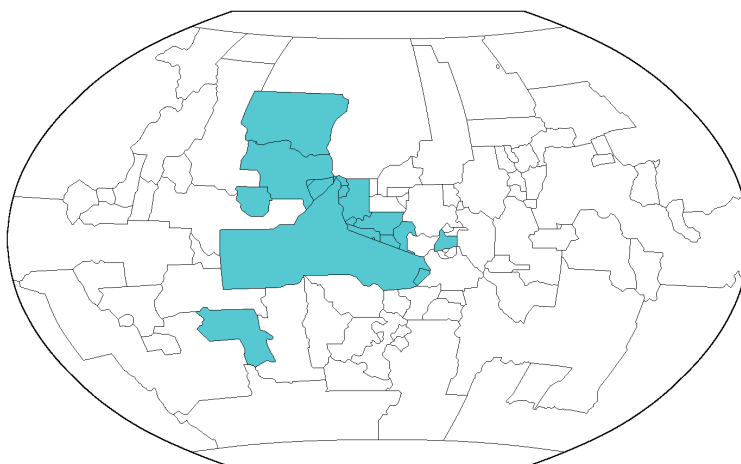
Harmonis is what we call a moving city. You may have heard me talk about landships earlier in this document, but these aren't those; well, they are, but they also aren't. While landships are almost always just one vehicle, possibly with supplementary vehicles used for maintenance, moving cities may be composed of multiple independently-moving segments. Harmonics is currently at this stage, with two separate moving modules larger than the largest landships moving in twain - there have been proposals to build even more of these modules and distribute them around the planet, but neither Harmonis' government nor the other nations of Mars like the implications of a polity that has moving cities on opposite sides of the planet.

The earliest idea for a moving city on Mars was drawn up decades ago, but the idea wasn't taken seriously until the MoveMars Company, an American-based startup, convinced a number of construction and automobile companies to work together on the project in the late 2000's, promising them returns via profiting off of large scale industries such as road, pipeline, electrical wire, and rail construction, while also prospecting for Martian mineral and ice deposits in the process. The city was assembled in eastern Ares and completed on a rather timely basis from 2008 to 2012, though after its fitting out was completed and even after it got moving, legal troubles with both Ares and other martian polities about the legality of moving cities, state sovereignty, and more, had to be solved. These affairs became controversial enough that they were raised all the way up to the assembly of the UMN, which ultimately decided that, yes, it is ok for moving cities to exist, they only have sovereignty over their crafts and not the land they sit on, and that martian polities are allowed to restrict movement on them to their desire.

The city operates as a sort-of freedom ship for rich folks from Earth who don't want to live the grueling normal life of a Martian colonist, but this goal requires an underclass of (brown) maintenance workers, robots, and even more maintenance workers to fix said robots. These people are often rarely seen or thought about by the average resident of Harmonis; indeed, the

entire city has a network of secret doors, passageways, maintenance rooms, kitchens, and more only comparable to a victorian mansion just so the rich white and east asian people who live in the nice parts don't have to see the crew. In total, there are 403 'normal' residents of Harmonis, with nearly 2000 maintenance workers to support them. Except that those 403 keep giving MoveMars money so they can keep the whole operation running, and that many of them see their life in the city as a sort-of sunk cost fallacy, because Mars was more boring than they expected, but it would cost a lot of money and time to go back to Earth.

## The Great Mountains



Indeed - the great Mountains of Mars and the Tharsis Plateau extending thousands of kilometers around them, penetrated by the extremely deep and wide Viking Valley, is also one of the great centers of Martian civilization as of 2025 along with the Ares Megalopoli.

### ***Silent Night***

*July 20th, 1999 / Pisces 1st, 11  
Kilometea, Tharsis Confederacy*

6.. 5.. 4.. 3.. The elevator halted its descent at floor 2.

19 year-old Johanna Koopman stepped off the elevator and followed a line of blue signs, finding her way to her cities' farm district.

It was just past sixteen on Christmas Eve; the aquaponics systems were empty, say for some rudimentary robotic systems watching the plants. Johanna picked out a basket full of plants - Lettuce, Tomatoes, Duckweed, Radishes, and some others.

It was Christmas Eve, her mom threw some fish into the oven this morning and needed an assortment of greens to surround the main dish. The dish itself wasn't to be eaten by them alone as a family, it was going to be shared in the commons among their entire district.

Just when she was about to make her way back to the elevator, she saw someone on the end of the hallway. It was an older woman, maybe middle aged, she didn't remember if she'd seen her before.

"Hi, Merry Christmas!" Said Johanna to the woman in her native Dutch.

"Merry Christmas! How are you?" She responded, also in Dutch.

"Good, Good, so are you going to the Gathering tonight?" Johanna asked.

"Well, of course, wait, are you new? I've never seen you in Shelby"

"Shelby? No, I'm in Eindhoven, why are you here?" Johanna questioned. "Don't you have a farm?"

"Oh, yeah, they have a thing going on where it's like, closed off for the season, and, I don't know what they're doing"

"I get it, yeah, they do that here sometimes" Johanna was cut off as the elevator reached her floor. "Wait, did you say you're in Shelby? Yeah?"

"Yeah, Why?" the woman asked. "I was just thinking of coming over tonight" answered Johanna. The woman responded "Oh, you don't have to", to which Johanna quipped back "No, please, and Merry Christmas"

"Merry Christmas and Godspeed"

Johanna took the bushel of fruits and vegetables she had gathered and walked back, about 300 feet, to her home. 632 7th St. Upon opening the door, she was greeted by her two 8-year old brothers, who immediately took a curiosity as to what was in the basket.

"Is presents?" asked one of the two. "No, no, Santa comes at night, don't you remember? Tonight. I'm not Santa!"

"JOHANNA DID YOU GET THE FOOD" her mother screamed from the kitchen - which was really just a corner section in their small, open-planned home. "YES MOM!!" she said as she walked to the kitchen and placed the basket on the counter. "Did you get my- Oh thank God." said her mom in a slightly concerned tone. "Get what?" Johanna asked her. "Forget it".

Her younger brothers asked if she could go outside yet. Johanna told them that she couldn't take them out yet, and told them to ask their older brother, who was sitting in his room on a call right now. After she got them pestering him, she went back outside into the small community

courtyard in front of their home. A large metal Christmas tree adorned with nostalgic personal ornaments placed by everyone in her block stood in the center of the room; it was surrounded by people, kids playing, presents wrapped in cloth and clothes, and a number of tables that would soon be laid out with food.

Freya, one of Johanna's coworkers down at the local precinct, approached her and asked her "Where's Adam", to which she replied with silence for several seconds before responding "I tried, he couldn't make it, he's stuck up north at least till next month" Adam, Johanna's boyfriend, worked in an electrical field that brought him all across Tharsis, and, unfortunately, he wouldn't be with them for this Christmas.

After about an hour of conversation and being called back inside by her mom to help on the food several times, and Johanna's father returning home from his own Christmas-eve work, each family in the block began to populate the dinner tables with food.

Tilapia, Carp, Catfish, and even some imported MRE-type dehydrated foods only really seen elsewhere on Merbold Sol, were the staples of this Christmas dinner. Meanwhile, these central meals were surrounded by an assortment of fruits, veggies, and various other dishes, like stews or pan-oven-baked caricatures of "traditional" Dutch foods from Earth, that were already becoming customary foods here on Mars. Of course, being born on Mars, Johanna had already eaten foods like these (and worse) her whole life, but there were some people in her district fresh from Earth who were getting used to the fact that "Turkey" or "Rabbit".

Johanna sat at a table close to her home, and was joined by her mother, two sisters, and brother.

For a moment, just after everyone had sat, the table fell silent for prayer. Most everyone was some type of Protestant or Catholic, but there were also a few atheists at the table that Johanna knew of, a few Buddhists, a few Muslims - nonetheless, no matter what faith, Christmas is a time of unity and for all to pray. Being on God's good side is helpful when you're in a place where you die when you go outside.

After dinner, activities in the courtyard persisted deep into the night, though by 1:00 in the morning everyone was back home, and the kids had been tucked into their beds for hours.

She was awoken by her younger sisters at about 7:00 in the morning; they were jumping up and down outside her pod asking if they could go outside and open presents.

"Why didn't you ask mom?" Johanna asked. "She's in the bathroom". The younger of the two responded. "Yeah whatever, wait for me to get my shoes on though"

The two rushed outside and began unwrapping the presents marked with their names - the younger of the two opened his present to find a small wooden toy, while the older was given a Monopoly board. Many Christmas gifts, especially this early in Mars' history, were things traded

with other colonists and ultimately things coming from Earth due to the planet's lack of a strong industrial base.

The sol was peaceful; no arguments, no fights, no new major conflicts in the news. Johanna spent the rest of the sol watching the kids play with their new toys and talking to her boyfriend on the phone. Contrary to dinner on Christmas Eve, dinner on Christmas Sol in most places isn't very extravagant - Harkening back to the Christmas feasts eaten by Mars' pioneers, canned foods and MRE's are staple foods, in a similar fashion to Thanksgiving/Landing Sol.

But Johanna forgot to do one thing. Later in the sol, as the sun was starting to go down, she took a trip to Shelby, about a 30-minute walk away. The lady she spoke to yestersol never said her name, nor her address, only what District she lived in. But Johanna was respectful of her promises. She spent the better part of the night looking for her, before the two ran into each other, and had a relatively lengthy conversation. And that's Christmas.

## **STATE OF OLYMPUS**

Olympus is the "Chinese Country" on Mars, not one of China's actual colonies, or the New-Hong-Kong-Topia of Youyi, Olympus is really China on Mars. Prior to 1995, there were surprisingly few missions to the mountain, with only prestige landings by superpowers, or crazy space mountaineers spending weeks climbing the tallest mountain in the solar system. The true colonization of Olympus Mons was performed by the Chinese-American company Shancorp. The company was already a trusted entity on Earth for its mastery over producing jet engines and satellites, and was incentivized to create a base on Mars by the United States. The first base, Shancorp-1, was built in the remains of a much older temporary European base that was built in the early 1980s, although the colony had a slow growth rate until the death of Shancorp's CEO in 1996, and his replacement spurred population growth via promoting incentives for Chinese-American migration to the colony.

This migration later included a substantial number of South Chinese people, the bulk of whom settled in Shancorp-2 and Shancorp-3, and while Mandarin and Cantonese are the most popular languages, commonly both taught to kids in school, many minor languages are also taught and spoken, especially in Olympus' less-populated "minority" cities, this includes Mandarin sub-dialects and associated languages. Almost everyone adheres to some form of syncretism, although there are also smaller groups of taoists, confucianists, and a tiny and often discriminated-against group of neo-confucianists, as well as a quite large community of people who have taken interest in the neo-greek ways of Prometheus and adopted similar beliefs, albeit with an East Asian spin on them.

Despite being extremely isolated from the rest of Mars due to its elevation, the cities of Olympus Mons have managed to make the polity as a whole the tenth-richest on the planet for two reasons; The mountain's prior volcanic activity means that it is more metal-rich than the surrounding region, giving it a large mining economy, which itself is boosted by billions of dollars of foreign investment from companies and other polities alike. What's more, the peak of the

mountain sits well above Mars' atmosphere and pokes out into space. Normally, Mars' atmosphere makes landing on the planet a complicated activity that still requires some kind of heat-shield, but on the peak of Olympus Mons, this is not the case, and craft can land just like they would on a body that has no atmosphere, meaning the mountain is just as connected with space-trade as it is with surface-trade, essentially doubling its viable economic size. A lesser, but still notable end of its economy lies in vehicle production, and Shancorp is known to produce some of the best vehicles Mars has to offer.

## CONFEDERATION OF THARSIS COLONIES

Depending on who you ask, the countless cities that dot Tharsis united in confederation are either the most prosperous, diverse megalopolis on the planet, or a modern sol example of European colonialism with near-byzantine policies and political divisions more complicated than the Holy Roman Empire. In reality, it's somewhere between these two, but everyone has a different opinion on where that is.

The origins of Tharsis date back to 1980, when the first European astronauts landed on the Red Planet during the Poseidon Mars Missions. The first Spationaut (what Europe calls Astronauts) was Urf Merbold, who gave the quote "Wer, keine Deutschen, keine Franzosen, keine Italiener. Europäer, machen Sie diesen Schritt vereint" or in English "Us, not Germans, not French, not Italians. Europeans, take this step united" indeed, this quote would inspire a pan-European sentiment from the earliest sols of its colonization. Still, Tharsis from the beginning was nowhere near united, because Europe isn't just one country. While New Berlin has long been a pan-European melting pot, cities further afield, especially smaller ones, have their own cultural identities - sometimes European, sometimes mixed, sometimes something new entirely. And while the ESA is united, nowasols, it's far from what it used to be - the ESA still exists to launch rockets and do all that stuff back on Earth, but its Martian branch is tasked with governing and lobbying the Martian colonies while keeping them close enough so they don't all break apart - its unification is, in part, why every European country doesn't have its own independent colony.

The hundreds, literally hundreds, of different institutions which manage the Confederation can be boiled down to a few government and ESA-associated bodies which have the most influence over the Confederation as a whole. The **Assembly of Tharsis Colonies** at the center of it all is a 800-seat body based out of New Berlin. Political parties are banned officially, but that hasn't stopped over two-dozen political party-like groups, alliances, lobbying fronts and cliques from forming, overlapping with each other and constantly contradicting themselves - many calls to organize the body have fallen through, with the Assembly being known planetwide as kind of insane. Above the Assembly, the ESA took a lesson out of Switzerland's book and put together a 11-person elected council at the top of everything, with one of these people taking the role as the Confederation's figurehead every year with no term limits. Meanwhile, below the assembly, dozens and dozens of smaller parliaments, presidents, and organizations, often with similar structures to companies (or literally just derived from corporations) exist to govern the countless cities of the confederation, with all of these groups being highly autonomous from the central confederation. The one rule of being in Eurotharsis is that you can't leave - you can become

autonomous, you can become very autonomous, so-much-so that you essentially function as an independent country, but you can't leave, you're in here forever - and if you do leave, expect a military response, as Tharsis is one of the few polities on the planet to have functional armed forces.

The internal divisions of the Confederation aren't as complicated as you might think; they can roughly be divided into four "layers". Colonies are the most common among these and are essentially to the ESA what American states are to the federal government, with leeway on the fronts of law and policy-making, though still highly subservient to the central government. Meanwhile, **Extended Governance Areas** usually consist of a large city surrounded by mostly-uninhabited rural hinterlands granted to the city because nobody else wanted it - sometimes, these regions are autonomous to the city. If colonies are to the ESA what states are to the US government, **Autonomous Regions** are to the ESA what independent countries are to the EU. Because of the difficulty of attaining this much autonomy within the Confederation, only a few of these regions exist. On the other side of the spectrum, the Capital Governance Area is governed directly by the ESA, and there's only one of them; New Berlin.

Despite the relatively simple layering of administrative divisions, there exist many intercolony and interregion compacts between these divisions, forming rough "mini" confederations and alliances within the larger body; the **Viking Valley Compact** is an economic alliance between several colonies in the Valley, fostering cooperation and organization of mining and major infrastructure projects; meanwhile, the **United Colonies** (of New Scandinavia) comprises the northern colonies around Mt Asraeus, which were settled primarily by Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes. Meanwhile, the **Union of the Eastern Sun** is a larger political and economic lobbying compact most prevalent in the eastern region of the confederation, with less influence in the valley. These compacts contribute to the many grand infrastructure projects pursued by the Confederation - Tharsis is so rich and so developed that many Martians think that it's on par or even above Ares, and that the two are so far ahead of everybody else that if they were united they could easily take over the world. But theories about global domination aside, what has Tharsis actually done?

First off, the **Trans-Tharsis Rail System** is the largest single rail system on the planet. With construction beginning in 1989, the rail line connects the entire Viking Valley from Labyrinthville to Ciudad Marciana to Cliffside before going south and ending at Argyre's 700 City, with plans in the works to connect the line to the rest of Argyre's rail system. Meanwhile, the trains also travel up 4 kilometers of cliff the best they can from New Berlin and across the cities of the Sinai Plain, and in the north, they connect to Equilibrium before stopping in the other Tharsis, with plans to connect to New Albion some time in the next one and a half decades. The line has at least a few electric trains running at all times with several dozen in storage. As a whole, the project was comparable in price to IRL's International Space Station. At the same time, a network of communication and electric wires are laid down either on the surface or buried underground alongside the rail lines, and in some cases, they are joined by small aqueducts as well as other pipelines.

**New Berlin** itself is a vertical metropolis built on and into the side of Viking Valley. The old central “pillar” of the city is a 600-meter tall vertical city built in the 1990s housing several thousand people. In total, many more of these vertical structures have been built, with Mars’ lower gravity allowing them to be much taller than they would otherwise be on Earth. “The Shaft” connects all of New Berlin’s many vertical segments, creating a massive four-kilometer atrium in the middle of the city. Meanwhile, roads, elevators, pipelines, and more span the cliffside all the way down to the bottom of the valley, where massive mining operations have been ongoing ever since the city was created. New Berlin, in spite of its excessively-german name, is the most diverse colony in Tharsis and one of the most diverse on the entire planet, not only being home to at least one member of *every* ethnicity in Europe, but also thousands of people from every corner of the Earth. The population of the city as a whole is 62,000 - and while most of them live in the vertical cities, a good number also live above the valley in poorer neighborhoods built out of prefab modules and used rocket parts, on Sinai Plain. The famous **Poseidon Museum**, with exhibits ranging from Martian fossils to the first landers Spationauts used to explore the planet and found New Berlin in the first place, is actually in this Sinai district of the city.

**Cavernopolis** was founded by a combination of French and Dutch colonists hailing from France, the Netherlands, and Belgium. The city is named for being in a labyrinthian system of caverns so vast that even in 2025 it hasn’t been fully mapped, and it is likely that hundreds of kilometers of tunnels go undiscovered. The city occupies many of these caverns, and a large section of the cave was sealed off and pressurized in 2005, though that’s not to say there isn’t also significant surface infrastructure. Unfortunately, despite the presence of ice-water in the caves, the city appeared to be relatively poor in rare metals. Perhaps this wasn’t a bad thing, however, as it resulted in its economy and culture going down a different path in the entertainment industry.

Meanwhile, the city of **New Amsterdam** was founded by settlers from, uh, Amsterdam, in the late 1980s - while the city has a thriving economy in chemical manufacturing, most people know it for its red light districts and distinct “futuristic” culture. In the mid-2000s, the city of **Neurostock** was incorporated into New Amsterdam’s Extended Governance Area. Neurostock was founded in 2002 by the Earth-based **International Pantropy Foundation**, at the time, a major and well-respected organization promoting Pantropy. Wait, I hear you say; what is Pantropy? Essentially, instead of terraforming planets or building settlements with air and water, the Foundation believes that humans should genetically modify themselves to live in space environments, and the city of Neurostock is using its autonomy, as well as its institutions on Earth, to research the best path humans should take to achieve this process.

The cities from **Persephone** to **New Paris** were all built by French colonists in the 1990s and 2000s, and their core demographic to the modern sol is still French people, with many of them being former French Algerians or French Guianans - Persephone in particular attracts a French diaspora from all around planet Earth. Meanwhile, Ares and the Santa Maria Metropolis, as well as the cities surrounding them were all founded by Spanish colonists looking to start a new life on Mars rather than live in wartorn Spain back on Earth. The Spaniards here take from leftist movements during the civil war and cities commonly revolve around socialist/pseudo-communist

governments. Further south, Dutch, Italian, and even more German colonies populate the eastern half of the valley, with dozens of tiny settlements and prefab bases between them, often with their tiny local governments revolving around fringe extremist movements on both ends of the scale. Just to the south, large Irish populations spurred on by an economic boom and the construction of a large spaceport in the country, as well as promises of a “Martian Gold Rush”, Arrived at Mars in droves in the 1990s and settled this region.

Further east, the condominium of **Paxton**, once a highly disputed region which many thought would be prone to conflict, has become as separated from both the Confederacy and the nation of Viking as if it were its own country. Both the capital of Viking and the smaller, but still sizable city of Motorway Pass have become large economic centers by tapping into aquifers deep under the Martian crust, and using that water in large-scale manufacturing projects ranging from aquaponics to rocket fuel manufacturing. What's more, Paxton sits at an important chokepoint in the Valley, a fact it uses to make money off of the construction of roads, railways, and pipelines through its territory.

To the north of Viking sits another French region of the Confederation; **Lower Ophir**. Separated from the rest of civilization by cliffs and plateaus, Lower Ophir makes its own living out here by trading far more with Youyi and Viking than it does with the polity it's actually in. This is also a fact that can be said for the Occitans and their autonomous region in the far north of Tharsis - the city of Al dessus de la Terra sits in a deep valley, which, while met with a cliff going into the rest of Tharsis, is a gradual slope when travelling to Lunae. Because of this, and its longstanding association with the Free Towns, as well as anti-French sentiment from the people living here, the city is almost nonwestphalian in a way, and if it weren't for the fact that you can't leave, it would probably be part of the Free Towns. **Upper Ophir**, meanwhile, is another French colony with a large chemical manufacturing industry, and sits at an important intersection between the western and eastern parts of the Confederation.

To the west, the **Scandinavian Belt** is one of two Swedish/Norwegian/Danish-majority regions in Eurotharsis, spanning between Sutton and Busker, being the location of such cities as Asgard and Hibernia, both with massive populations and extensive manufacturing and mining bases. Unlike the United Colonies up north, the cities of the Belt have not tried to form a melting-pot Scandinavian entity, and have instead tried to preserve their own cultures from Earth, sometimes going so far as to revive cultural practices from the medieval era. Even further west, where the valley begins to thin out, a number of Greek internationalist colonists have settled - instead of trying to incorporate modern/ancient greek architecture into their construction as Greece's own Martian colony does, the Greeks here have adopted a bleak and brutalist style in their buildings. These brutalist cities of New Greece fixate their economy around the construction of Martian vehicles and repair parts for colonies, and other general manufacturing that's not too niche but also not that common. They're also an entrepot for Noctis Labyrinthus.

Often called the “**Labyrinth of Night**”, the far western extremities of Viking Valley break the trend of a large open chasma and deform into a labyrinth of hundreds of minor valleys and passageways, still all with cliffs that separate the region from the overlooking plateaus by

kilometers. Here, the walls of the valley have allowed the region to preserve subsurface water-ice deposits for billions of years - indeed, the region is also one of the most suitable places for extant Arezoa outside the poles. The presence of water and the maze that the region is has also led to a number of extremely-isolationist communities and sometimes cult towns, often too small to be shown on maps and with 10-year old census data, to appear in the extremities of some of these valleys, which in many cases aren't too different from the "hollers" of West Virginia.

Past the Labyrinth, the true Tharsis Plateau begins, and soon we reach the great mountains of Tharsis. While Pavonis Mons already has a large economy and a future as a space elevator anchor, the other mountains are generally poorer and more disconnected with the outside world. Arsia Mons is mostly populated by Portuguese people from, uh, Portugal, and has an economy based around mining and small-scale mountain climbing tourism. Between them, the city of Overheaven is somewhat infamous for its radical "new age" eugenics movements, which advocate for the development of systems to detect and remove defects and disabilities, or modify core personality traits before birth in an attempt to make the lives of those babies better - so far, research of this practice has been condemned on Earth, and they only really have support from the Raelians. On the other hand, the aforementioned United Colonies, also called the Scandinavian Triangle, is a group of predominately-scandinavian colonies in the far north - unlike their sisters in the south who prefer more nationalist identities, these colonies abide by a more united, modernist Scandinavian culture - one which in the last 40 years has developed quickly and already become largely unrecognizable to their ancestral homelands on Earth. The North Point Areographical Reserve covers Mt Uranus; its small visitor center houses a small monument in the shape of a trident to mark the northern extent of the Confederation and the mountain itself.

The western extremities of the Confederation abide by FOTG instead of forms of Christianity as most of the rest of Tharsis, and the backgrounds of the people living here also differ from everywhere else. Estonian, Wallon, Chuvash, and Slovene-speaking peoples have populated the great red west - while these cities might seem ethno-nationalist at first, in actuality, they're attempts to preserve these languages from destruction on Earth - even if they're really in no danger on the blue planet right now, who knows what could happen to them in the future? Meanwhile, tiny towns and settlements dot the wasteland between the cities, eventually leading into Finnish Mars and further into the western half of the planet.

And then there's **Sirenia**, completely disconnected from the rest of Tharsis. The Sirenian colonies were founded by French-nationalist colonists in the mid-1990s, and were funded by the ESA for the purpose of researching the Martian environment in a far-flung place where nobody had gone before. tosol, the Sirenian colonies are quite weird, different from the rest of the Confederation for sure - it's not like there aren't bubbles that go against the grain maintain nationalist sentiments in the contiguous part of Tharsis, but Sirenia is by far the largest of these and the only actual region to have a noteworthy nationalist presence, although the region as a whole is home to less than 10,000 people.

## **EAST AFRICAN STATES OF KIELE**

Despite East Africa's extreme domination over space, the East African Space Agency wasn't intent on doing much on the red planet. In Earth Orbit and on Luna, you get to build space stations, manufacture things, mine metals, and make money; on Mars, you get none of that, and for an agency so keen on making a profit, pouring hundreds of millions or even billions into a Martian space colony to the likes of the ones that were built during the 1980's. Still, the nation, possibly out of pride or the demand of the government, landed a man on Mars in 1991. Although the EASA was very keen on leaving Mars at that, express interest from the public and pushiness from the government forced them to leave the Martian colony open.

By 2000, however, the EASA realized they may have been wrong about the whole Martian initiative after all; in light of the colony being a money-sink at first, other Martian powers had already plowed the field for mining technology, and East Africa could just buy mining infrastructure instead of developing its own. Meanwhile, while the agency wasn't all that interested in Mars, the public was. Thousands of EASA aspirants answered "Mars" in their interview after being asked what planet they would most like to travel to and/or live on long-term, and by the end of the decade, many of these thousands had gotten the new homes they wished for in the gently-sloping desert just south of Alba Patera.

While a number of EastAfrican ethnic groups are present in Kiele, most of these don't really matter, not because they don't exist, but because aside from radicalists and historically-oppressed peoples, the vast majority of East Africa's population just see themselves as "EastAfrican" nowasols. What can be said about the diversity of Kiele comes from other African states; Somalis have their own colony on Mars, but there's still a fair number of them present here; hundreds of Ethiopians, Malawians, Kivuan, Mozambicans, Madagascans, Equatorians, Sudanese, and South Africans live in the country. Of the places where immigrants are most numerous is the country's arcology-stacked capital from which it derives its name. The **City of Kiele** is a land of megastructures which nearly twenty-thousand people call home, with some of the arcologies reaching upwards of 100 meters in height. Outside the bustling metropolis, the rest of Kaskazinia is relatively uninhabited, say for a few tiny settlements too small to be shown on the map.

**Magharibi** and **Mashariki** are the outlying states of Kiele, home to ice-mining settlements, fringe groups which usually have settlements too small to be seen on the map or have a significant impact on the polity as a whole, or simple bed-and-breakfast stopover points. Kambli Ya Pango is the largest of these, although it doesn't really fit any of the definitions; the city was founded initially to be a connection point between a proposed trade route, but once the city in New Argentina it was planned to connect to was cancelled, the city became primarily an ice-mining settlement digging up small quantities of ice and frost from the valley it sits in. It's not a great way to make a living, but it works. Mashariki, on the other hand, is even less populated and sits upon an extremely dry region even by the standards of the planet it's on, which owes to its extremely small population.

**Kusini** was where the earliest **Jembe** probes landed. Jembe 1 and 2 were simple, stationary craft built to study the material composition of the region for future colonies, while Jembe 6 landed here years later was engineered as a rover; it now sits inoperative as a landmark a few kilometers outside of Miji Wa Aquifer. Oh yeah, that's another thing, while the ground is extremely dry just a few hundred kilometers to the north, there's a relatively large underground water deposit in Kusini, which has allowed for it to become so large.

Kiele has a diverse economy with a large manufacturing sector and a slightly smaller mining sector which supplies the factories. The colony has also seen excessive economic growth by way of... chickens. See, unlike EuroTharsis, at first, Kiele's restrictions on husbandry and agriculture were far more lax, while Kiele had almost as much money to blow on space as the Europeans. By 2000, Kiele had the largest indoor chicken farm on the planet, and in spite of the advent of lab-grown chicken meat, the decline of chicken meat in Martian cuisine, and foremost, larger farms elsewhere, Kiele is still in the top 10 for producing chicken meat and in first place producing eggs - which it now gathers from several other bird species, a few of which are the only examples of their species on the entire planet.

## **REPUBLIC OF KUBUNTU**

Meanwhile, the Republic of Kubuntu is the product of nationalists of the Hutu ethnic group migrating to Mars prior to and after the annexation of Rwanda-Burundi by the rest of Federated States of East Africa. The nation's declaration of independence from the rest of Kiele went unrecognized for years, before the two nations made peace with each other and recognized their borders following the Treaty of Perseverance (2004, there were a lot of Treaties of Perseverance), allocating the city of The Bridge to its own shared condominium and mineral rights zone.

Kubuntu functions as a Hutu homeland (Ethnostate) on Mars, and requires 100% Hutu ancestry to gain citizenship, although if you do meet the requirement it is quite easy to become a citizen, and if you don't fit it's impossible. Not to say there isn't a fair amount of migrant workers living and working in Kubuntu's landship-manufacturing factories, though these folks live here on visas often months to years long, and live on wages so little that they can never live, a form of modern-sol slavery. Despite the poor livelihoods of the migrant worker population of Kubuntu, the city itself is quite well off. Kubuntu the city is a large arcology-like structure filled to the brim with the most cutting edge engineering you can find outside Mars' superpowers, no doubt coming from leases from Mars' foremost landship companies which built their craft in the country.

## **MEXICAN REPUBLIC OF ALBA PATERA**

Mexicans never took great interest in colonizing space, and the ones that did almost always used America, Europe, or South America's space industries to get a much bigger bang for their buck, and of those, most of them stayed in Earth orbit or on Luna. But the Mexicans that've

made the trek all the way to Mars have found themselves upon one of the planet's great mountains; Alba Patera.

Mexico was able to get on Mars via the **North American Foreign Mars Assistance Treaty** in the 1980s, which led to the establishment of the first Mexican settlement on the planet in 1992, Martae Cohetaerea. The "first wave" of Mars colonization led to several thousand Mexicans, mostly belonging to either hardline right-wing or hardline left-wing factions colonizing the planet, but instead of a civil war, all the right wingers took their chances to go live out in the hinterlands while the left wingers kept their control over the colonies by the time the 2000s rolled around. Also in the 2000s, dozens of surveys explored the hundreds of lava tubes atop the mountain the colony sat on, and many of these were not only deemed to be habitable, but also had small water deposits.

Unfortunately, political instability in Mexico-at-home delayed the true colonization and exploitation of these lava tubes until the 2010s, when just a few small cities were founded, and by then, Mexican interest in the red planet had all but dried up. Tosol, Alba Patera's center of civilization still sits atop the peak of the mountain, and is surrounded by a ring of nearly a dozen small towns and seasonal research colonies which the colonization corps hope one sol will blossom into full-on cities. Underground, the lava tubes have all been marked out but go largely uninhabited for long periods of time outside the few small towns. A running urban legend in Alba Patera is that there's tribes, or demons, or something living down here, but so far there has been no satisfactory evidence of any habitation aside from what Alba Patera is doing, but there are hundreds of branching channels, so who knows.

Alba Patera for a long time was an Administrative Republic with an unelected government - and it seems this might've done something to the colonists, because by the 2010s, Alba Patera had a massive movement advocating for real democracy, but also for a "monarch" to still be in position at the top. These movements culminated in the administration hosting a reformist vote in 2014, which ended with 72% in favor of restoring the Imperial house of Iturbide in Alba Patera, creating a national parliament and bringing the current head of the House to Mars. Born in 1992, **Ferdinand von Götzen-Iturbide** was King of Alba Patera for 2 years on Earth until 2016 when he finally moved to the red planet - Tosol, he's still the King, but he doesn't actually do that much, acts more as an international figurehead, a negotiator, while Alba Patera's parliament and president handle everything else.

## STAR CITY

Star City is a minor polity bordering Tharsis and Baderet, and some people wonder why it and its northern neighbor are even countries at all. The story of this city goes all the way back to 1982 with a lottery ticket and a man down on his luck - then 31 year-old **Vincent "Vince" Matus** started his life in a small village in rural Chile. In his teenage years, he moved out of his parents' house to make a life in Santiago. From 16 to 26, Vince worked as a mechanic, a bartender, a janitor, line cook, and countless other menial professions. At the age of 27, he got knocked out during a fight and spent half a month in the hospital, at the cost of his job; but it seems that this

concussion sent his life down a different path, because shortly after his recovery, he began to research astronaut programs in South America - the only issue is that they didn't really exist yet in the late 1970s. For the next 3 years, Vince was caught up in bureaucracy trying to get a Brazilian passport to be involved in their space program, while sending letters to the BSA's astronaut applications office, just to be outright denied in late 1981. Fast-forward a few months, Vince just got back from the bar to his room in the 5th floor of a dingy hotel in a bad neighborhood of Rio; with money running out, he'll have to go back to Santiago soon - at this rate, maybe he still had time to get himself a cushy office job and start a family. But things didn't pan out that way.

450,000,000 Reals. Vince won the jackpot, equivalent to about 300 million USD with both numbers adjusted for inflation, or equivalent to near 400 million real life USD. Vince cashed in the ticket and went back to Chile to help his family move to a nice house in Santiago, before ditching South America entirely and moving to Europe, he spent 2 years learning German, and spent another 6 years at TU Munich (he also converted to Baha'iism, this will be important later), graduating with masters in engineering and computer science. While the first ten years were spent wasting away doing essentially nothing, Vince had used the next near-10 years to turn his life around all in the pursuit of his dream of going to space. Unlike the late 1970s, space by the early 1990s was pretty developed, with bases on the Moon, Mars, and even Venus, and by this point the first two were pretty easy to go to, the places you needed real skills in were the frontiers on Mercury. So, he was able to get a high-ranking position in the Martian colony of New Berlin after arriving in 1992. But the two years spent repeating the same bureaucratic cycle was boring - he'd gone to space for the adventure, the novelty - not just to repeat the same menial tasks and citylife he'd spent all his life on.

So Vince left New Berlin, and went north. In 1993, he spent almost all his money (and a bit of Baha'i money) on buying modules for a new city in the north. He built his credibility by cooperating with Baha'i organizations and taking in Baha'i people, maintaining a stable democracy and operating as a minor tradeport between the southern and northern colonies. The only issue came in the 2000s, when a dispute over Martian geology led to Baderet claiming part of Star City's UMN-allocated territories, something that it still does to this sol, which nobody on the planet actually recognizes. The city is home to several thousand Baha'is, Vince spent 20 years being a sort-of "Martian Marco Polo", leaving his city behind to explore the planet, but he's since retired and returned. All-in-all, things worked out well.

## **ILLUMINATED STATE OF NEW ALDERAAN**

The creation of New Alderaan mirrors Star City in many ways, though instead of being the story of someone having their life changed and pursuing their dreams, it's the story of a once-sane man having lost his mind and yet also build a colony on Mars. Russell Harper was born to an upper middle-class family in Connecticut in 1955. As a child, he was a prodigy in mathematics with a hyperfixation on world history. He was accepted into Harvard at age 16 and graduated with a Master of Arts degree in mathematics at age 20 in 1971. By 1976, he had already been to Leonesia several times and had a short stay in a Lunar base earlier that year, and now he was

on track to be the Head Administrator of one of NASA's planned Lunar bases as part of the Destiny Program. Jumping forward to 1986, we see that this plan didn't exactly pan out; instead, Harper punched above his weight and became a high-ranking administrator of Utopia, the largest city on Mars and capital of the newfangled Republic of Ares.

Psychoactive drugs were and are still illegal in Ares, and were not \*officially\* imported, but the steady flow of new colonists meant that something was always being brought in from Earth, and the boredom of living on the red planet led many to using (small) amounts of psychedelics, or at least, whatever they could get their hands on. This included Harper himself, who began intermittently using them in 1985. By 1987, his colleagues began to notice significant personality changes and a small but noticeable mental decline in Harper. A severe mental breakdown in 1988 led to a demotion and Harper being placed into a rehabilitation program (ergo, whatever Martians could make work, come on guys, we don't have the resources for this yet), and he was a high-value subject, so he got more treatment than the average guy would at this time. It was also in 1987 when Harper developed a great obsession with Star Wars.

By 1988, it seemed to his colleagues that he'd recovered enough from his previous breakdown(s) to have a normal profession - oh, and they just needed it, labor is scarce on Mars. Instead of a bureaucratic job as an administrator, Harper was put on task to transport goods from Utopia to the new, small settlements on its periphery. And this was actually going well, for about a year; one sol, Harper was put in command (alone) of a truck carrying food and potable water, which was supposed to be shipped on a 14-sol voyage to Independence. All went well until about a week in, when the vehicle he was driving vanished from GPS and telecommunications went silent - a rescue mission arriving to Harper's last known position found no trace of him or the vehicle, but he also never arrived at Independence.

Later that year, he was found living under an alias in Rothbard, where he was building up his reputation with a Star Wars cult following the fictional religion of the Jedi, of which he purported he could master if he were to channel it in a place far, far away, surrounded by his followers. In 1995, he took an opportunity and some funding from private opportunistic groups in Rothbard to found a settlement just north of another growing city. This settlement of his would be called New Alderaan, in reference to the old one being destroyed in the Star Wars films. While it struggled to gain recognition and stable borders during the conferences of the 2000s, the UMN had bigger fish to fry and accepted its rather minor territorial demands. ToSol, the city is one of the least-populated polities on Mars, with estimates of its population ranging from the high hundreds and not going over 2,000. Harper is still alive, although many of his followers believe that he's teetering on the edge with declining health. To be a citizen of the city, you must be a devout branch of Harper's brand of Jediism (the Jedi organizations on Earth swear they're not associated with the crazy Martians), and partake in a complicated initiation ritual - people who have gone through it say it's so life-changing that they feel it defined their entire life, but they also can't remember it in full - it's probably some combination of DMT and LSD.

## **INDIAN REPUBLIC OF BADEERET**

India's troubles in the nineties pushed back the pursuit of Martian colonization until the latter end of the 19s. By the 2000s, however, a sizable Indian population was living on Mars - mostly with the help of cycler ships filling the role of Indian spacecraft. The demographics and economic state of India at the time meant that, despite India's vast cultural diversity, the majority of these colonists hailed from Goa, Delhi, Maharashtra, and to a lesser extent, Uttar Pradesh and states which bordered the Bay of Bengal, due to India's spaceports being built on the eastern side of the subcontinent. Indian Mars saw its primary settlement wave in the 2000s, with colonization generally flattening after 2010 - this boom was caused by a number of private companies and startups yearning for the colonization of Mars popping up just after the turn of the millennium and going bust when the Bangladesh War began, and India consolidated them into its central space program.

tosol, Badeeret is home to 24,000 Indians, with about half of them being followers of the new-religion FOTG, and the other half mostly consisting of Hindus with small numbers of Buddhists and Zoroastrians. Since 2020, a smaller wave of colonists has been steadily flowing into the colonies, with their primary driver being internet movements ranging from ethno-nationalism to international socialism, and with their adherents building tiny new settlements with gofundme's. The government takes a rather lax approach to these, and is far more worried about its international policy than its internal one - it's had a few disputes with its neighbors over the years, but aside from the ongoing Star City Dispute, which began in 2008 and which nobody really mentions, things are going fine.

## **REPUBLIC OF CENTERTON**

In the final years of the 1990s, an internet forum based in Ireland, dedicated to reviving the Irish language in space, gained significant popularity among young GenX'ers and older Millennials in Dublin. This forum secured enough funding to set up a small base in an area in Lunae thought to have water deposits; instead of being part of the Tharsis Confederation, this colony would be independent. Initially built out of prefab parts, the water deposits in the region turned out not to be so dense in this specific area - the region actually had a lot less water than the scientists anticipated - but the residents of what was now known as Centerton didn't give up on their main goal.

As of 2025, while Centerton doesn't have the most Irish people on the planet (that title goes to Tharsis), it does have the most Irish speakers; the fact that most colonists were already bilingual Irish speakers, as well as school teaching kids Irish as a first language, has 93.5% of the city's 6,230 people are fluent in Irish, with about 22.3% being fluent in English. The city really has no real economy aside from potato farming, and functions as a de-facto communal/communist state.

## **THARSIS REPUBLIC**

What began as a loose collection of Southeast-Asian colonies tracing their origins back to a selection of organizations funded by the US, Europe, and the Philippines in the 1980s, united

into the Tharsis Republic all the way back in 1992. The Republic is what many call a “Cycler Nation” founded by groups of people setting out to the Martian deserts only supported by money flows from Earth, but not by any corporation or nation, at least not directly. Cycler nations were all the rage back in the 1990s and even 2000s, and although they’ve been mostly replaced by “Cycler Towns” nowasols, because there’s no land left on the planet to found a new country, the OG’s stand strong. As mentioned, the Tharsis Republic was primarily colonized and is still mostly populated by an array of Southeast Asian ethnicities - indeed, the Republic took it upon itself to become a refuge for the region’s many peoples and ethnicities, and also as a space for which to keep dying languages and cultures alive.

To do this, the nation has built a sort-of “Segregated Diversity”. Dozens of different ethnicities with their own cultures are present, but they live in neighborhoods segregated from each other and don’t mix too much - if you’re Laotian, you go to the Laotian neighborhood, if you’re Mon, you get put in the Mon neighborhood - and you can’t really dispute this, the government enforces it. This is, of course, a controversial practice, but the Tharsians justify it by saying it actually preserves the uniqueness of each culture rather than doing what the Free Peoples did by accidently creating a melting pot. Earthlings often care about this a lot more than the Tharsians, or even other Martians, do.

Controversies aside, the Republic’s economy and influence over the Martian stage is truly enormous; Tharsis is the second largest independent economy on the planet and the ninth largest overall. Its most productive economic sectors include manufacturing and mining, as well as limited globe-spanning infrastructure projects and shipping, which combined, bring in billions of dollars every year. This all gives the Republic a high living standard, on par or even above that of colonies of Earthly nations. The Republic has a unicameral parliament with one seat reserved for every one ethnicity, while the rest of the seats are occupied by half a dozen political parties.

## **DIVINE KINGDOM OF ASTRID**

Little is known about the backstory of **Astrid** prior to their arrival on Mars, and what they do say about their past life is often contradictory, even their age isn’t known. It is likely that they arrived on Mars sometime in the late 1980s or early 1990s - despite their backstory, most people think that they came from Greece based on their accent. In 1993, they made a name for themselves by beginning a journey - a journey across Mars, being the first person who would do it fully on foot. For the first few hundred kilometers, the only people to visit them were intermittent suppliers and visitors, but by Kilometea, they had built up a permanent group of people in their footsteps - although these people did drive vehicles, they were still on their own. It was likely around this time that the name “Astrid” became a thing at all - while their original name was probably being used before this, everyone who was by their side has either forgotten or prefers not to speak of their name. The signature “Odysseus Y.” has been attributed to them, though this is unconfirmed.

By the time they left Tharsis and were on their way to Ares, their surrounding by nearly two-dozen vehicles and up to a hundred people at times became a permanent fixture. It was around this time that people purport that Astrid's personality drastically shifted from being nuanced and laid-back to ambitious and charismatic to their (literal) followers. The journey on the planet was remarkably fast, though grueling - by 1995, a full two years after the journey began, Astrid's followers finally reached Ares. Travelling through the Libertarian and often naive Rothbard and Olympus had gained Astrid an even greater following, and by this point, the trek and people following it was morphing into a cult surrounding Astrid. The 2-year trek through the desolate regions of Eastern Mars further intensified the cult - with the region being so unpopulated, no new "members" joined the convoy and nobody left, aside from the stray resupply mission - combined with Astrid's increasingly megalomaniac personality, created an echo-chamber. When Astrid's Followers finally arrived at Jedinstvo on an optimistic timescale, now in 1997, they barely talked to the locals, and people who would've probably joined beforehand had no interest in involving themselves with the Followers' extremist beliefs.

From Jedinstvo, it only took 2 months to reach the Followers' final destination. Mind you, it wasn't where Astrid had started 4 years ago in New Berlin, but it was close enough, a nice spot just north of Tharsis and just south of... Tharsis. Ergo, the followers settled in what later became one of the largest trade arteries on the planet, akin to the Suez or Panama Canal on Earth - and near what would become essentially the capital of the planet. Most everyone put aside their cultiness because of their apparent dependability. The UMN was shaky on the issue up until Astrid and their followers heavily contributed to the construction of Equilibrium, after which they granted "Astrid's Castle" independence as Astrid's Kingdom.

The Capital of Astrid's Kingdom fixates around Astrid's Castle, a massive building on top of a hill reminiscent of a European medieval castle, built out of monolithic stone blocks, with a pressurized interior. The Castle was compared to the Great Pyramids or Lighthouse of Alexandria during its construction - built between 2001 and 2010, the Castle has been the home of Astrid, their wife and three cloned children, as well as a small army of mindless servants and commissioners who do everything the Family says. Surrounding the castle is a ring of homes, rocket fuel manufacturing plants and storage tanks, solar panels, and recharging depots collectively home to 7,000 people. Beyond the city are thousands of loose, inflatable farming modules which travel twenty kilometers out to the only other city in the Kingdom - Anodyne, a smaller water-ice mining city home to less than 300 people.

The Kingdom functions as an absolute theocratic monarchy with worship centered around, you guessed it, Astrid. Rights and freedoms are not restricted outright by any law, although saying anything against the King or Kingdom will get you bad looks at best and a beating at worst. And the UMN loves them because they help fix anything that breaks in their own capital. Speaking of.

## **UNITED MARTIAN NATIONS HEADQUARTERS**

From the beginnings of the UMN, the organization primarily functioned out of a small branch of the city of Utopia, with other administrative offices in New Albion, Alba Patera, and New Berlin. The goal of the organization to not be explicitly centered around any one nation or region - and definitely not the major colonizers - led the organization to consider building its own capital in the early 1990's. Optimistic plans called for its construction to finish off just in time for the turn of the millennium in 2000, but delays and disputes over where it should be postponed that date to 2002. It was decided that the capital would be built at 0,0, "Martian Point Nemo", just above the Viking Valley on the heights of Lunae Plain - coincidentally, also where many independent Exostates were popping up at the time. By 2004, the centerpiece of the project was finished - a rather humble dome housing the circular assembly of the UMN, with a labyrinth of administrative buildings and all the support needed for a city in a formation roughly matching up to the symbol for Mars if looked at from above.

tosol, the capital of the UMN has expanded past its original boundaries, though the initial shape can still be made out from above. The city is home to several thousand permanent residents and a few thousand more temporary residents who only assemble to support the two-hundred Martian diplomats who come from every polity on the planet whenever the UMN hosts an assembly. To bring in diplomats and all the material needed to support them quickly, the Headquarters is attached to a large spaceport. The entire capital cost nearly ten-billion dollars to construct, no doubt due to a bit of corruption and tampering, and a lot of Martians say that the money could've been used on something better, but it's already built, and what can you do now?

## **MARTIAN BRANCH OF THE NATION OF CELESTIAL SPACE**

The **Nation of Celestial Space** is an entity based on the far side of Luna. Its belief system some say has similar functions to a religion, although it is not defined as one in official data. The Nation's core belief revolves around humanity's need to expand through the universe (or, Celestial Space), and to maintain peace in the vast cosmos while making sure humanity has a 'core bloodline' and doesn't diverge into separate species. The nation's embassies have flags with colors that cover the entire rainbow - Mercury's flag is pink, Luna's flag is blue, Earth's flag is green, and there's many more, but Mars' flag is red.

The Martian Embassy was established in 2008 near the capital of the UMN, and the surrounding area, referred to as the Martian Branch of the Nation of Celestial Space, was granted to the Embassy in 2009. As of 2025, the population of the Embassy is just over 3,000, and it promotes itself as a neutral, docile entity dedicated to continuing peace on the red planet, and it is true that this embassy is among the most peaceful in the nation. Although it usually ranks low on freedom scores due to the fact that democracy isn't a tenet of the religion/ideology that dominates Celestia.

## **CONFEDERATION OF THE FREE TOWNS OF LUNÆ PLAIN**

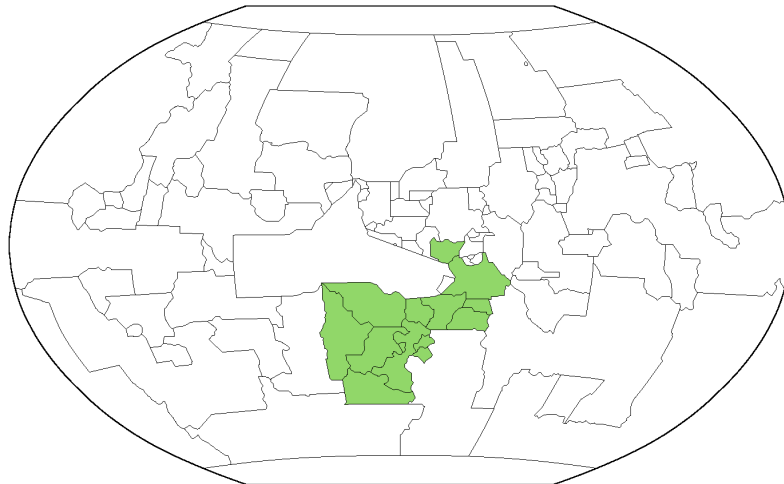
In the 1980s and 1990s, a small number of settlements big and small were founded just north of the Viking Valley, and in a process that would later be repeated by Bosporia down south, these

cities found prosperity in cooperation. The Treaty of Perseverance (yes, another one) established the Confederation of the Free Towns of Lunæ Plain in mid-2014; prior to this, the towns here were all de-facto independent, though lacked significant representation in the UMN's parliament, and the situation was a huge pain in the back that everyone wanted to get rid of. The confederation is run as, well, a confederation, with each city maintaining enough autonomy that if they weren't a member they could still be considered an independent entity. The **Central Congress** is the governing body of the confederation, taking a book out of another book with three seats per town so no single settlement has too much sway over the confederation as a whole, and so that representatives can disagree, and then agree to disagree, and discuss their opinions about what is best for their town.

In spite of the Confederation being rather peaceful, the discovery of small mineral deposits in the north led to the city of Herbert claiming a region in the north, then controlled by a relatively new and weak Xanthean Arabia. In the years since, XA has grown significantly, and they're not too happy about the claims and prospecting going on in what's legally their land, though de jure governed by the Free Towns. Luckily for the Confederation, none of the other towns agree with what Herbert is doing, although none of them have the capability to do anything.

The population is chiefly composed of Libertarian Americans, Africans, and Hong Kongers, with the economy mostly being based upon the cities being stopover points and bed-and-breakfasts for passing vehicles, an economic tactic that works surprisingly well in the bustling region north of Viking.

## The Warring Steppes



The steppes and chaotic crater fields to the south, just west of the Argyre Basin and just south of the mountains of the Tharsis Plateau. These midlands were originally the bustling center of Martian exo-nationalism, before it all came down.

***Forced To Flee***

*January 8th, 2009 / Pisces 4th, 16  
Earth / Areopotamia*

**EXONATIONALISM: A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE  
FROM P21 - SEEDEE VIDEO SHARING - TRANSCRIPT  
FIRST QUARTER OF VIDEO**

(Travis, sitting in a bright room with foliage, puts a CD into a CD player)

You may know about Exonationalism. Every year, it seems like Space is drifting away from Earth faster and faster, it's hard to keep up with what's going on up there. A simple search brings up dozens of articles about a new country, a new movement, or even... A new conflict.

What's more, as with any subject as divided as this, it is difficult to find unbiased sources, things can get blown out of proportion, and people on Earth who - frankly - know very little about what happens on the other planets, it is easy to fall into sides or have misconceptions about the realities of Exonationalism.

But what about a more personal perspective?

(Stock Videos of Mars and Martian cities to cut to the next scene)

If you don't know what Exonationalism is, here's a rundown.

Exonationalism is extraterrestrial nationalism and the creation of new countries off of Earth. Independent nations that are not on Earth are dubbed Exonations. These exist on the Moon, on Venus, and in Internesia.. Sort of. But that's not what we're talking about tosol. The most Exonations are on Mars.

And you probably haven't heard of most of them, like, have you heard of Marsex? But I can bet that you've heard of Areopotamia.

(Images of the Middle East, Tanks moving, and Martian landscapes)

Kurds, Yazidis, Druze, Assyrians, and more, have been historically oppressed - stateless - in their homelands in the Middle East. But this began to change less than 20 years ago. The creation of the Libertarian nation of Rothbard told people it could be done, and these people were next to create their own second homeland on the red planet. They got their Self Determination. And tosol, we're going to talk to a real Aeropotamian, live.

Before we get into the video, we should tell you that this interview technically isn't live. We had to wait about a half hour for each question, and the entire discussion took place over a few sols. We would have loved to make it longer, but the laws of physics wouldn't allow it. We will link to books written by Areopotamians and Martians in general about life there in the description.

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## INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Hello! To start off, please tell us a bit about yourself. How did you get to where you are?

Qamisli: Hello. My name is Ciwan Qamisli. I have been a resident of the Martian country of Areopotamia for just over 7 years. I was born in Kurdistan, in northern Iraq, and came here with my wife and kids in 2002.

Interviewer: Interesting. So, do you feel safe where you are? Do you wish you could return to Earth at some point in the future?

Qamisli: Well.. No. I hope the best for our brothers on Earth, but for me and my family, I do not believe that it is a safe nor accepting place for us to return to. My sons, young men, have a life ahead of them here, not there.

Interviewer: Well, I'm sorry to hear that, would you tell us more about your life in Areopotamia?

Qamisli: Thank you for asking. It's hard work, but not much harder than life was in Iraq. We have no fear of being killed here, I cannot say we live in prosperity, but we also do not live in constant fear. We don't get full homes. Well, the government told us they will give us homes. My wife, my kids, we all live in different pods, and that's all of our private space.

Interviewer: Thank you, if we can get back, dig a little deeper into life there later, that would be wonderful. I'd like to ask you about how you got there, what process did you take? How much did it cost? You know, if you don't feel comfortable getting into specifics, that's fine.

Qamisli: It was a flyer, in the market of my hometown. It said something like "Free transfer to Mars, little cost." and a netsite link, and a phone number. So I remember I think it was a week later, maybe two, I get some free time. So I go to the website, and it's an application - they say that the program favors families over single men or

women, I click it, makes me fill out a, well, it must have taken me at least three hours. A month later my phone rings, it's the same Netsite, they ask me to meet at their office about thirty minutes away. I go there, and, well, then there was training, more papers, we had issues with the Iraqi government. But then, six months later, my family and I are on a rocket.

Interviewer: Very interesting. So, wait, was this really free? Are they still doing this tosol? Where did you launch from? Sorry if I'm asking too many questions, it's just, takes so long to go back and forth. Oh, also, how did your family agree to go to Mars?

Qamisli: Thanks, so I can answer these. Well, I don't know if it's free tosol, I don't keep up on it. And you do have to pay back taxes, you know? Like, there's taxes everywhere, and they're here too, but they get you in by saying it's free. They took us to training in the United Arab Republic, and then they took us to the Spac (SIGNAL CUTS)

Interviewer: I'm sorry Ciwan, looks like your video, uh, cut out. Can you re-record the last part, after you, uh, were, you were talking about the launch when it stopped.

Qamisli: Apologies, I've had issues with signals between the planets before, it's a very messy system. They took us after we trained, we went in a plane, then a bus, really full of people, like you couldn't even walk around. They took us to the biggest space center in the nation, and we went to space on a spaceplane, then a big space station, I think they call them cyclers. It took months, I mean, it was scary, I had to be the defender of my family.

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From our interview with Ciwan, we learned that the reasons people migrate to Exonations are nuanced, not black-and-white as some mainstream sources want you to believe. The reasons behind why many of these people go to space is due to conflicts on Earth forcing them as refugees to safer places.

**FIRST FOURTH ENDED. SEE PAGE 2/4 FOR SECOND PART OF TRANSCRIPT**

## **PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF YOUYI**

Back in the sol, and by the sol I mean 1989, China scared everyone by building its colony right next to the Europeans, but they made the mistake of not hand-choosing the colonists. Most hardline Chinese communists colonized Venus, with very few being leftover, or even wanting to settle on Mars. Meanwhile, the few Chinese liberals who got through the space program were much more keen on jotting Mars down on the test that asked "Where would you want to go as a

Taikonaut”? A scandal in 1990 involving the Chinese Space Program led to the then-100 colonists in Youyi coming together and deciding that their independence would be more beneficial than remaining a colony of China, and to everyone’s surprise, China actually agreed to this. To their credit, the CCP didn’t want to trigger an interplanetary war over a tiny colony on a planet they didn’t really care about, so they just allowed Youyi to remain in free association.

Come the modern sol, China doesn’t care about Youyi anymore and the same can be said for Youyi’s opinions about China - nowasols, the country is greatly associated with Tharsis, and, to a lesser extent, the surrounding colonies in Lunae. While there are a number of south-chinese “lower caste” ethnic groups in Youyi’s cities, usually living in their own districts, most of the colonists come from Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, United States, or Taiwan. Precision industries make up the bulk of the country’s economy, while simple mining comes in second place. Water extraction is almost nonexistent, and due to the region Youyi is in being extremely dry even by Martian standards, the country has to import all of its ice from Tharsis.

Youyi itself is governed by a technocratic parliament which picks the “best and brightest” members of society, or who they deem fit to join them in the country’s governance district. Indeed, over the years, a fair amount of corruption revealed by whistleblowers has led to some scandals and lawsuits, and some government officials “disappearing” while the policies and the corruption themselves barely change. Cities in the old sols were stuck by Hong Kong’s motto and were cramped, built more for utility and purpose than life, and to try to resolve this, the residents made use of neon lights to try to brighten up the cities they lived in. In 2014, a fire tore through the western half of Youyi’s capital (bearing the same name as the country), and prompted a redesign to what was once one of the most densely-populated settlements on the planet, and while nearly 100 people died in the fire, the district has been rebuilt to be far more open, and fireproofing standards have been revised all around the planet.

## **SECOND REPUBLIC OF AREOPOTAMIA**

**Areopotamia** was at one point the pride and joy of Martian nationalism, but through a series of political fall-outs partially caused by the foundation of the state upon mixed ethno-nationalism, the whole experiment fell through. Areopotamia started all the way back in the 1990s as an exo-nationalist refuge for the Kurdish and Assyrian peoples of the Middle East; the range would expand to cover several other Arab groups in the coming years - most notably, Yazidis - and though Aeropotamia had a difficult time gaining international recognition in the years after its creation, this was only due to international organizations still being leary about independent countries on Mars. When Areopotamia did gain its recognition in the early 2000s, it flourished, bringing in thousands of peoples from Arab homelands on Earth and growing to an immensely successful example of Martian-Nationalism, with some historians considering Areopotamia in its golden age in the late 2000’s to be at the same level as Rothbard or the Tharsis Republic were at the time. But the cracks were already showing as early as 2005; corruption in the highest levels of government; ethnic disputes; economic hardships in half a dozen cities, all were concerning for those paying attention.

Areopotamia's cracks finally burst in 2017, when the recent presidential election went not to a few fringe group's favor and the ordeal snowballed down to local administrations, and their administrators took their chance after years of disagreement for freedom. Basically overnight, the country went from a unified body to nearly two dozen unrecognized city-states trying to file for nationhood in the UMN assembly. Now, although Areopotamia didn't have many guns, a great many folks across Mars expected what was now being called the 'Areopotamia Crisis' to spiral into a full-on war, including the UMN, which is why right after the country fragmented, international powers on Mars came into reorganize things before they spiraled out of control. The result was Areopotamia being split into three new countries; Nahralgharbia, Altall, and... Areopotamia, the Second Republic of Areopotamia, reunifying its most centralized cities. Didn't last long, though, and Areopotamia tosol is still very unstable, somewhat corrupt, and has three breakaway states inside of it, one of which is so recognized it's actually in one of the "Big Three" international alliances.

Through all this, the life of the average Areopotamian has been rather.. Normal? If you can say that, I mean, there are despotic city-level administrators and your life probably isn't great if you live inside one of the breakaways, but things could be worse. People still have water and food, even if the food isn't all that great, and whatever breaks in the colony will still probably be able to be fixed, and things didn't descend into absolute war. Even politically, Areopotamians are still relatively united in their identity despite the government-level conflicts which led to the fracturing of their home country; many Areopotamian children are told the life they have on Mars is leagues better than the life they would have had if they were born on Earth - it's not uncommon for Areopotamians to think Arabia on Earth is a big, fiery, warring radioactive desert.

## **REPUBLIC OF NAHRALGHARBIA**

**Nahralgharbia** is the historically ethnically-kurdish side of Areopotamia - one of the reasons for why it was split off from the rest of the country - Unlike other Aeropotamian breakaways which go unrecognized by the government and the international community alike, Nahralgharbia has good international standing with especially good relations among its neighbors, something which can especially be seen through its condominium with Areopotamia. Still, due to the breakup, Nahralgharbia has lost much of the prowess it once had, with not only an economic decline, but also much of its population moving to greener pastures; the population of the country declined from 27,302 in 2017 to just 15,703 as of 2025, a downturn that can be seen in its half-abandoned "ghost town" districts.

## **REPUBLIC OF AREOPOTAMIA (AREOPOTAMIA-LOWELL)**

**Areopotamia-Lowell**, officially just Areopotamia, is an unrecognized breakaway state based around Lowell Crater. The reason they broke away isn't exactly clear - the militant ruler of the territory likes to say it was due to "political and cultural faults" stemming from the central governments of the old Areopotamia, but has never given a definite explanation to exactly what those differences are. While A-L has terrible relations with Areopotamia itself, and shaky relations at best with much of the red planet in general, it managed to join the Global

Cooperation Organization in 2019, adopt the Martian Vortex, and has avoided fully falling into economic catastrophe.

### **ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF SHAMAL & CITY-STATE OF BARIY**

**Shmal & Bariy** are two former Areopotamian cities which declared de-facto independence in 2019 and 2020 respectively. To this sol, they go unrecognized by nearly everyone else on Mars, including of course Areopotamia itself. It shouldn't be surprising that it is also difficult for these cities to access precision materials, repair parts, newer technologies and even nutritious foods.

Areopotamia doesn't want to budge until they rejoin, the UMN is too worried about everyone else to care about them, and they already tarnished their relations with Areopotamia-Lowell, so unless the administrative despots here decide it's time to step back, the citizens of the two are going to suffer.

### **PRESIDENTIAL STATE OF CRATERIA**

Founded as a city-state in the early 90's and gaining real territory in the treaties of the 2000s, **Crateria** was never part of Areopotamia, but it may as well be. Well, it serves as a bridge between the region of Areopotamia (not just the country), and the Argyre region. As a Bahai'i leaning state, and the only major center of the faith for hundreds of kilometers, it shouldn't come as a surprise that Crateria is a very egalitarian society, and has taken in hundreds of those fleeing Areopotamia over the past odd decade.

### **GREEK REPUBLIC OF SYNETAIRISMOS & TURKISH COLONIAL REPUBLIC OF PARLAKONIA**

**Synetairismos** was founded by Greece in 1994, with its Turkish neighbor, **Parlakonia**, founded in 2007. The colonies have an extensive record of cooperation going back to the sol Mars-1 was founded. Both are known for their widespread cultivation and husbandry practices, which are among the most advanced on the planet; Synetairismos having large chicken and even goat farms (the only place on Mars where goats are raised), while Parlakonia became the first to bring cattle to the planet in 2016, and is now the only place where naturally-produced cow milk is manufactured. These also have allowed both colonies to have some of the best, and most earthlike cuisine. Despite their similarities with cuisine and general manufacturing, they differ in political aspects, with Parlakonia much closer to the European colonies just north, while Synetairismos aligns itself with the Global Cooperation Organization and often exports its food products to fellow GCO members. They have also both taken in several hundred people from Areopotamia.

### **PEACEFUL REPUBLIC OF BOSPORIA**

Pax City, David's Folly, and Fallerston were founded as three separate city states in the mid-1990's. Built to act as stopover points on the trade artery between Tharsis and

Areopotamia, these cities had a significant amount of economic growth early in their history, and the discovery of a massive aquifer filled to the brim with living arezoan bacteria less than a decade after their founding fueled the economy even more as the cities became research sites for living Martian life. By 2005, the collective cities and smaller settlements surrounding them were already de-facto operating as one country, and the same year they all officially united as one entity, the **Peaceful Republic of Bosporia**. The country would operate on peaceful “scientific” terms, with nominally neutral foreign policy and an alignment with other independent Martian states such as Areopotamia - even being in the GCO and UFM, Bosporia still remains in good relation with Tharsis and other states.

The predominant languages in the country are English and Arabic, the former coming largely from English-speaking scientists migrating to the area and having families, and the latter coming from Areopotamia. Meanwhile, the Bosporia Fossil Fields and the aquifer out east have been reserved as a preserve - the second largest in comparison to its countries total land area behind Hall.

### **PEOPLE’S CITY OF IKAMVA**

Currently travelling through Bosporia and expected to cross into Chinese Mars in about two weeks is the moving city of **Ikamva**. This rolling metropolis resembling a tank was built by the People’s Republic of Mzansi, a post-South African state in the eastern half of the country, near Johannesburg, which was created in the aftermath of the South African Civil War. While South Africa itself had some space prowess, its successors did not - and while the Cape Republic and New South Africa had some success with their new, small space industries, Mzansi was barred from doing nigh anything throughout the 1990s and 2000s as it was recovering from the civil war, and was blocked again from having significant influence in space by the 2010 Economic Crisis, which the nation was hit especially hard by.

Come the mid-2010s and most land on Mars had already been claimed, and what wasn’t was either in disputed zones or was completely useless, or was part of a much larger claim though still uninhabited. But it’s the future, and staying sessile isn’t the only way to survive on Mars anymore, because landships are getting bigger, and a few years ago, some billionaires built an entire moving country. The smart guys in Mzansi get an idea to keep their paychecks flowing and get that prestigious mission that the government wants on Mars up and running. Several Japanese and African firms were contracted to assist with the construction of what would become Ikamva, with some large sections of the vehicle built in KaseiCo, although most were assembled in Hellas-Malena throughout 2016 before the pieces were slowly moved to Chinese Mars over the course of half a year to be assembled in early 2018.

Since its fitting-out and completion in 2020, Ikamva has been slowly traversing the planet near the equator. To circumnavigate the world on average once every six months, Ikamva travels at a speed of between five and ten kilometers per hour, although it often stops at cities and towns to refuel and perform maintenance. Luckily, Mzansi didn’t have to deal with the diplomatic trouble of moving cities, because Harmonis had already gone through those loops half a decade ago

when it started to move - it should be noted, however, that unstable relations between Mzansi and some nations on Earth has led to restrictions placed on where the moving city can travel. The population of the city numbers just under 1,000, with a good number of them being engineers and maintenance workers living there specifically to keep the city moving; unlike other landships and moving cities, Ikamva has not had any contracts for road-building or cable-laying as of 2025, and its economy depends mostly upon tourism and transport, with millions of dollars coming in from Earth just to keep the city running.

## **CHINESE MARS**

I might've mentioned it before, but China never had great luck with Mars, and always focused a great deal more on its Venusian colonies. Even when it did begin to colonize the red planet, its missions were for the most part restricted to stations in Martian orbit, and its influence didn't extend beyond simple trading stations until a dispute cropped up in the early 2010s. Between Tharsis, Bosporia, Areopotamia, Highshovel, and Viking was a territory claimed to various extents by all of them; some, like Highshovel and Viking, claimed almost the entire region, while others, like Tharsis and Bosporia, only claimed small sections or had disputes with other members. During the Treaty of Shancorp-1 (2016) this dispute was resolved by the attendees reluctantly giving the territory to China, under an agreement that every member would be able to access the territory with limited mining and economic rights for significant resources.

Fast forward to 2025, and China still hasn't taken as much interest in Zhongyang-Tudi than it has its other space colonies, even in Chinese Mars. This is partially due to the fact that the region appears to be very poor both in water-ice and metals, meaning mining isn't a viable industry. Despite China's efforts to build a number of cities in the region, most of these small towns and settlements have small populations due to the fact that Chinese people would rather migrate to Ares, Olympus, or any other Chinese community on the planet rather than one governed by the CCP. Still, a few thousand people live here, and the ones that haven't moved out yet are the ones who are loyal to the government and abide by Neo-Confucianism.

## **REPUBLIC OF HIGHSHOVEL**

The North American Spring and subsequent reformation of Canada in the 1990s led many in its western provinces to advocate for independence, greater autonomy, or their admission into the US as states. While there was significant support for these, their goals weren't united nor mainstream enough to become major political talking points. This was about when the Organization of the High Shovels came into play; a West Canadian traditionalist-secessionist group, the OHS was founded in the early 1980s, though didn't gain significant influence even in local politics until the late-1990's. By this point, disillusioned West Canadian secessionists joined the Organization en-masse after they announced their crazy new idea to colonize Mars.

After a number of delays and funding issues, the operation was up and running in 2013 just south of the legendary City of Perseverance. With just over 10,000 residents as of 2025, Highshovel's population almost-entirely hails from Edmonton, Saskatoon, and hundreds of

smaller towns dotted across the Canadian Prairie; its politics lean conservative and traditionalist, while its economy sits on agriculture and trade.

## **CITIES OF PERSERVERANCE**

Perseverance is quite possibly the most legendary independent country on Mars - while Rothbard is immensely successful and Kawanon fought the first war on the planet for its independence, Perseverance stood the test of time in the Martian hinterland to become the bustling and diverse center of one of Mars' largest trade arteries in 2025. The first settlements in the region date back to the 1980s, and were the first examples of proto-pre-fab architecture on the planet being used by people to make money - in this case, serving as points on what was then one of the longest, most dangerous trips Argyre's had to make to reach the rest of Mars.

Come the 2000's, many of these settlements had been abandoned as a more developed trade route going through Areopotamia became popular among traders out west, but the city of Perseverance endured these trying times, dipping down from its population height of over 1000 to just 200.

By the early 2010s, things began to look up for the city once again as relations warmed between Viking and the rest of the planet, and the construction of rail lines connecting Viking to the rest of Tharsis brought new life to both polities. Highshovel's creation just south was another good sign for Perseverance, while increasing political tension in Areopotamia meant that cities over there were running out of resources for travelers and the older eastern route going through Perseverance regained its popularity among travelers. Tosol, the city, with its decades-old colonial architecture contrasted by a massive new arcology structure under construction, is a famous landmark for travellers on the road between Viking and Argyre, while multiple new cities bearing the name "Perseverance" have been founded in the region".

What's more, the so-called "City of Peace", a nickname it gained in the 1990s due to its neutral position between two of Mars' superpowers, has made it a popular site for various international treaties, as well as a popular destination for asylum-seekers and refugees, wherever they come from around the planet, most of whom have settled in the capital.

## **VIKING REPUBLIC**

In the immediate aftermath of Viking's complicated breakup with the rest of Tharsis, the fashies had trouble garnering support from the rest of Mars, and although they were able to keep their population growth steady via immigration from Earth and their ideology favoring families, the country was unable to attract major economic investment for the entirety of the 1990s after their independence, and into the late 2000s. Despite the nation attracting many thousands of fascists, hard-righters, nazis, and those types from Earth, the government decided that if it wanted to be successful in the global economy, that it would have to roll back on some of its more extreme policies, a process which began in 2009 - to nobody's surprise at all, these

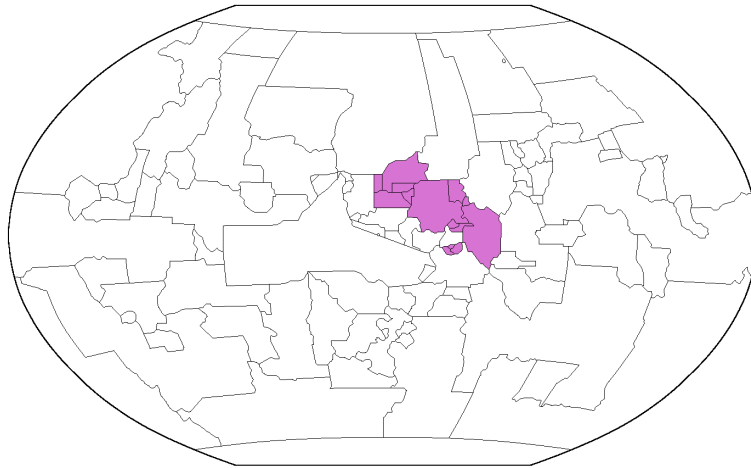
changes were met with extreme controversy in Viking itself, though they were applauded by some living outside the nation, and especially to Earthlings who had no idea what was going on.

The reforms included the expansion of the preexisting Administrative Council and its rebranding to the Civil Council, and the softening of discriminatory racial policies, although the latter was in part due to the other half of the reforms. The Administrative Council was split into two bodies; the aforementioned Civil Council, which would have representatives from Viking's cities, and the new Corporate Council, which would have representatives from companies willing to invest in Viking and its government; in cooperation with these companies, Viking's prisoner population would be sent to newly-built company towns. By 2012, the most extreme reforms had all finished up, and a number of Martian & Earthling companies took interest in Viking for its material resources and de-facto slavery policies (they could make money off of this).

To everyone's contempt but almost nobody's surprise, the reforms did help to expand Viking's economy, greatly. As of 2025, the company towns and prisoner-slave staffed factories scattered about the valleys have managed to boost it to the twelfth-largest economy on the planet, with its major exports including steel, aluminium, water, and foodstuffs. Its trade wealth is in-part aided by its controversial link to the Trans-Tharsis Rail System; indeed, numerous companies involved with Viking's Corporate Council operate outside the country and within Tharsis, and were no doubt invaluable to the construction of the rail line, which is why the two nations, usually at odds with each other, cooperated on this project. The collapse of Areopotamia also sort-of forced Tharsis to build the line to Argyre through Viking. In spite of common discrimination against non-european-white ethnicities, Viking's usually-racist residents respect the traders going through more than you might think, mostly because it makes more money to do that, and it gets them less bad press; if any of them actually decided to move to the nation - they would most likely get their application rejected - but if they did actually get in, they definitely would not be treated as well.

That is to say that despite the reforms in the early 2010s, Viking's government is still extremely discriminatory to minorities, and its people are often racist, hold fascistic/nazi beliefs, and agree with what the government is doing - not to say everyone has the same ideology, but it's widespread enough that it's really not even a stereotype, it's just true. Still better than Thule.

## The Xanthe & Lunae Plains



Just above the Tharsis Plateau, perhaps not far north enough to be entirely off the plateau, depending on who you ask, these plains are dotted with small to mid-sized craters, perfect for settlements and domed cities, while some regions have grand cliffs and overlooks to valleys smaller than Viking, but still many times larger than the largest canyons on Earth.

### ***Pass The Torch***

*October 14th, 2015 / Capricornus 4th, 20  
Teslagrad, Jedinstvo*

Journal 42, Page 209

In all my years of writing these journals, there are a lot of things I never expected to happen. I started writing before the Second World War, although my first entries I have forgotten, and they were lost when my family left my homelands in Yugoslavia during the German invasion. I wrote about my struggles and my successes, when I got my first job, my first love, when I got married. I miss you, Susan. Exploring the world was something I wrote about when I did it, something I never thought would happen prior to that point. I had a feeling that I wouldn't go past that, but then I went to Mars when I was 60 years old. That was something I couldn't predict.

Looking to the past, onto my health, onto all the things I've done that should have shortened my lifespan, I wrote in my books predictions of dying before 40, before 50, before 60. So it comes as a great surprise that tosol, October 14th, 2015, or in Darian, Capricornus 4th, 20, I have reached 90 years old.

Reaching this great age was something I could have never predicted. But it seems this world does things I do not always expect. Even still, I do not expect to be here to reach 100, even though I have said that for every new decade in the past. When I lived on Earth, with my wife, we had kids, and they had kids. I don't know how many grandkids or great grandkids I have, but when she was still there, when I was still with her, before my adventures, we had a great family. Here, in this new world, I tried again. In my second life, in spite of my old age, I was able to have two more kids. I look back at this as a mistake as you have read before, what if I died and left them alone? Luckily, they have had 28 years with a father, regardless of their father's age. They now have their own children, I am always appalled at how many kids people on Mars have. I grew up in a family of seven, as you know, but when I was on Earth people were having less kids than in my age. Here, families have four, five, six kids, and my two children of Mars have given me 11 grandchildren.

Looking back, so much has changed. I am not sure of the political situation on my homeworld, but I know things are changing. I can only wonder what the world will look like in ten years, 2025, maybe twenty, thirty years. My life started with me witnessing the most terrible war in history, but in the decades since there has been no such conflict. I can only wish that another conflict of such intensity will not happen in my lifetime. I cannot predict what will happen next, but if I tried, I would say another conflict of such intensity is bound to happen a hundred years after the last, in the 2040s, a time I will not live to see. Mars changes people, it changes society, there is no way some of the things that happen here would ever work where I came from.

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The culture, the music, everything, it is all so strange and foreign. Perhaps it is a result of my decades spent in America, but going back to my roots was a culture shock as I wrote about in the distant past. Thirty years it's been already, thirty years. A third of my life has been spent on an entirely different world. Even this place has changed very much from when I first arrived. They said coming here would give you a chance to start a new life, a new civilization. And I suppose I did help to do that, but now it's more like my old world than ever. Back then, you had to wait months for food, you were scared of dying. Now, people are building large roads, everything is connected, the moons above are being built around. I can't say this is a bad thing, of course, but seeing how fast the world has changed around me is a greatly fascinating experience.

My kids and some of my grandkids are coming to see me tosol. I've had ninety birthsoles, but this is an important one. I'm not certain all of them will be able to come, but I have not seen many in months, even years. There have been 3 new grandkids since my last birthsol. Luka, Maria, and I think it was, I cannot remember, it starts with an I, it could have been Ivan. I'm very happy to see them, they come all this way every year to see me. Should they? I think they

should, but are they doing it out of their own volition or because it's a custom? Perhaps I am thinking about this too much.

End

It was Ivana, not Ivan. Some of the grandkids couldn't make it, they said that they got stuck. I'm not angered at all but I still wish I could've seen them, they look very nice in the pictures, growing up very fast. David got a new job as a welder, his wife didn't want to come with to visit for some of the past years, but she was able to make it this time. I think she's Japanese? But I am not sure. Milorad has more kids than David, they had another child this year. The party, if you can call it a party, was enjoyable. They commented on my mobility at this age, and I, well I have to acknowledge that I am becoming frail, but couldn't that be said years ago? It is a gradual process, and I don't think that I suddenly became a frail old man at 90 years old, though at 80 I was less keen on joking about the subject.

Not my kids, but their grandkids, they will be the ones to inherit this planet, and however many grandchildren I have on my old world will be the ones to inherit it too. It's how the world works, there's a cycle of time that keeps repeating, a cycle of children inheriting the world from the old. I used to hate this, I could not come to terms with it, I denied it. But now, at this age, I accept this state of events, because I cannot change it, and I will be with my bygone wives and my parents when God says.

End

### THREE SISTERS OF THE CLOUDS

Upon the great mountains of the eastern extent of the Viking Valley sit the three largest (independent) arcologies on the red planet; **Marsex, Aurora, and Hepastesus**. The three sisters of the clouds are closely related to each other diplomatically and economically - centered around large single-structure arcologies, powered by their own nuclear reactor systems. Their economies are based around the growth and trade of rare fruits and vegetables, as well as the manufacture of several niche precision-based products.

**Marsex** was the product of the Marsex Colonization Company and a lot of ESA funding during the 1980's, culminating in the creation of the city of Marsex in 1995. Unlike its two sisters, the city abides by the Bahai'i Faith with only a small new-age population, and generally a slower population growth and older demographic, many of whom were born on Earth. Initially an administrative government, the success of its experimental arcology-design and explosive population growth necessitated a reformation of its government; tosol, the city has an Administrator who has the same duties a president or prime minister would, and a small, elected

unicameral parliament. The city is known for being a center of Martian media, and is, in a way, one of the planet's "Hollywoods" - instead of making several hour-long movies, media produced here is usually in shorter, but still mostly orthodox formats, known for their serious and dour plotlines.

**Hephaestus**, meanwhile, connects the cities of the valley to the cities of the plateau, and its economy reflects this. The wealth of the city comes from providing water and electric refueling services to any passing vehicle, which it does by piping in water from a crater-glacier a hundred miles away, and using its nuclear reactor in The Center to both synthesize this water into other useful materials, giving it a large precision-manufacturing sector, as well as power the vehicles stopping over. The Center itself is a massive arcology built on the side of a small rockface overlooking the much larger cliff that drops down thousands of feet to Viking. Back in the old sols, everyone living here was some brand of Christian, with a large number of specifically Orthodox Greeks and Polish Catholics. nowadays, everyone's following the Gods down in Mars' core, a belief it shares (mostly) with its closest neighbor:

**Aurora**, while built by a private contractor in Japan, was funded by the Japanese new religion **World Divine Light** and its associated **World Divine Light Organization**. The WDL already had a small foothold on Mars by the 2000's by way of Japan's other colonies on the planet, but it still didn't have much hard influence. In 2003, plans were drawn up in cooperation with Marsex to build a new crater-arcology, and by 2010, those plans became reality. Now, the "First Wave" settlers of the city were hundreds of migrant workers coming in from the other Japanese colonies, who at this point were already hardliner FOTG adherents and were not keen on switching over to the WDL - and that's a trend that continues to this sol, because out of the city's 7,504 inhabitants, only 340 of them adhere to the WDL, and of those, about three-hundred are part of the city's "inner circle" of government. Aurora legally functions as a technocracy with no public elections, however, this system has been exploited by the Organization to only appoint its own members into the city's council, essentially making it a WDL-governed dictatorship.

## **UNITED STATES OF JEDINSTVO**

Just outside the cliffs of Viking Valley sits the **United States of Jedinstvo**. Founded in 1986 as the Colonial Administration of Yugoslavian Mars; it became the Yugoslav Republic of Jedinstvo in 1991, and gained significant autonomy while still remaining part of Yugoslavia following the 2012 Constitution, becoming the modern-sol USJ. This region was a notable target of Baha'i missionaries during the late 1990s following their successes in EuroTharsis. To everyone's surprise, the Faith latched on even better here - thought to be due to the fact that the majority of Jedinstvo's colonists were young and already-dissolutioned with the system back on Earth, commonly having internationalist or "pan-humanist" views, which in-turn led many of them to Bahai'ism.

Indeed, the fact that colonists came from near-everywhere in Yugoslavia, say for poorer regions such as Macedonia or Montenegro, contributed to this internationalist sentiment. The National Assembly of Jedinstvo is a bicameral parliament with a large lower assembly and a smaller

upper house, with the lower house meant to represent the variety of languages and people groups in the States, while the upper assembly is more-so meant to actually make laws with the input from the lower assembly. The President of Jedinstvo is voted for by both of the assemblies, with terms lasting 687 sols (one Martian year), and a two-term limit.

Despite its status among the most populated states on Mars, its economy is only the 14th largest. This can be explained by Jedinstvo failing to keep up with the times, especially during the 2000s and 2010s, when robots were taking over mining sectors and more advanced sectors were popping up, Jedinstvo didn't invest as much time or money as it should've into building new factories or carving out its own economic niche on Mars. This predicament was half-solved back in 2019 when the government decided to open up its factories to landship-building, although that hasn't been enough to fully salvage the economy nor raise it from its position. Maybe when the orbital ring is done they can lower a space elevator down to Svetilnik, they say, but that's still a few decades away at least. Its inability to come to a compromise with Viking over a decades-long border dispute in the south has also diminished its standing on the global stage.

## **ALL CROATIAN KINGDOM OF NOVA DOMOVINA**

Immediately following the Second Constitution, there were fears that an increasingly-autonomous Jedinstvo would have its own greater movements for autonomy or independence. These concerns were usually overblown, and most of them have no merit, but one of them did. The city of Crvenigrad had long been infamous for being a magnet for hardliner Croatian nationalists and monarchists - and it's no surprise why - the city was founded by an organization specifically in favor of Croatian independence and the revival of the Croatian monarchy. Following their failure to gain significant support in the 2010/2011 disputes, and subsequent doubt in Earthly Croatia ever gaining independence or ever becoming a monarchy again, the organization moved to Mars for a second chance.

In 2013, Crvenigrad became the first and only city to break away from the rest of Jedinstvo, its population with 97.2% Croatian ancestry. A dispute between the Tharsis Confederation and Marsix in the mid-2010s was resolved by giving the disputed territory to Crvenigrad, giving it a somewhat credible position on the world stage. And then what everyone expected would happen, happened. In 2016, the aforementioned nationalist party, which had already been in power since the city's independence, went all the way with its ideals - something which was actually supported by nearly everyone in the country - come late 2016, Crvenigrad was renamed to Nova Domovina and its capital renamed to Nova Domovina City; the country became an exclusively Croatian ethnostate with the few non-croats living within its territories given the choice to either extradite to Jedinstvo or essentially have all of their rights removed. The lack of any suitable descendants to the Croatian throne led to the then-president of Nova Domovina, Marko Kovac, claiming his position as the nation's king. This has also led to the nation losing almost all of its credibility on the world stage, although it still retains somewhat close relations with its neighbors.

## DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN SEC

On the other hand, back in 2014, a convoy of French prospectors were exploring a region of Chryse thought to have ice and water deposits leftover from Mars' ancient oceanic era. They struck gold (well, water), when they were about halfway through the valley, and by 2015, a number of contractors had funded a water-mining settlement where the discovery happened. The prospectors didn't want to lease out their water to EuroTharsis, but they also didn't want to be, and couldn't feasibly be an independent state. The compromise they came up with was being a direct colony of the French government - literally the only example of this happening anywhere - Ocean Sec became France's only true space colony in 2015. With a population numbering just under 1,500, the small colony's economy is carried by water-ice mining, while it also has a role as a small stopover between Xanthean Arabia and Solar City.

## SOLAR CITY

Moving on, **Solar City** began as a billionaire dream-project in the late 1980s; an idea to build the largest solar farm on Mars, something that would be big enough to power half of the planet. It didn't remain a dream, however, because the city became real and started building its solar field, with impressive progress by 2005. The project slowed going into the late 2000s and especially the early 2010s with the economic crisis back on Earth limiting solar panel imports (because solar panels are extremely difficult to produce in-situ on Mars). Operations resumed at their normal rate in 2015, and the initial plans drawn up in the 90s were revamped to include a much smaller solar field, far more feasible than the initial plans for the farm to be the size of Czechoslovakia - made possible by the development of panels far more efficient than the ones of the 1990s.

As of 2025, Solar City itself remains a small settlement filled with engineers and mechanics whose job it is to repair the fields of solar panels that, in some cases, extend all the way out to the administrative border of the country. Meanwhile, power cables run up and down Ares Valles and across Araby to power Jedinstvo, the capital of Kawasan, Nova Domovina, the Arcologies on the Cliffs, and there's even links being built to Xanthe and Lunae.

## ADMINISTRATION OF CANTIK

Sitting on the edge of the last plateau of Tharsis, overlooking the ancient channels and rivers of Chryse is a small city-state by the name of **Cantik**. Thailand's early space industry - and even its modern one - heavily depend upon the private sector to build and launch the rockets, while most of the science is done by foreign powers or government entities. Cantik was built by the government-contractor and largest space company in the country, Thai Space, in 1997, as Thailand's quasi-first space colony and test bed in preparation for their real ventures halfway across the planet, which only began a year later. A schism between the Thai government, its space agency, and its various private space contractors at the turn of the millennium eventually ended up with the space companies coming a lot closer to the Thai Space Agency and the end

of its space programs being purely geared towards private companies, in-turn leading to Cantik becoming a quasi-independent entity.

The HM2 Disaster just a year after Cantik's founding destroyed the majority of its scattered, early colonial infrastructure, and led to the deaths of 65 people. While a tragedy, the disaster led to the complete reimagining of Cantik; instead of the mess of colonial modules it was, the city would be rebuilt into a crater-arcology. As of 2025, this arcology has been completed with funding (and immigrant workers) from Thailand's allies, and the city has just over 15,000 people, and a lot of them are from the Philippines. From their quasi-independence to the 2010s, the city insisted on doing its own thing away from both the central govt of Thailand and the rest of the country's Martian colonies, which culminated in Cantik securing its true independence in 2016, while still maintaining close relations with Thailand, such as the city being open to the Thai military.

## REPUBLIC OF XANTHEAN ARABIA

**Xanthean Arabia** (Also known sometimes as **Xanthe**) was a hotspot for anti-monarchy Saudis to move to during the reign of the Saudi Monarchy, and after the start of the civil war, and the fall of the monarchy on Earth (mostly), what was the Saudi Arabian Republic of Mustaemara became the Republic of Xanthean Arabia in 2012. The Republic currently functions as a democracy with an elected Prime Minister and a unicameral parliament, and has proven itself on the world stage by making peace with its neighbors; one example being the Lunae Plain City Dispute, wherein Tharsis built a city on uninhabited lands claimed by Mustaemara - Xanthean Arabia resolved this dispute by suggesting the region become a condominium.

In recent years, the discovery of massive underground aquifers and glaciers near the Martian equator, and especially in the Outflow Channels, has been exploited by Xanthe with ice-mining operations in Zirconium and a number of smaller mining settlements in Chryse. Mainstream news on Earth likes to report that Xanthean cities house branches of the Saudi Monarchy, and that the country is "at risk" of being coup'ed by the monarchy soon; real Xantheans laugh every time they hear one of these headlines.

## SUNG REPUBLIC

The **Sung Republic** split from the rest of Tharsis in 2022 due to political and ethnic differences. During the early 2010s, two seasonally-inhabited "gas station" bases were renovated by a Laotian ethnic-nationalist party to become permanent, segregated settlements for Tharsis' Lao population, whom the party said were marginalized among the rest of the population. Indeed, the **Sathalanalad** party was created as an explicit ethnic-nationalist party, and suggestions that Tharsis' Lao population was oppressed in any way were propagandic attempts to move enough Laotians to the north in a bid to secure independence.

By 2015, several thousand Laotians had moved to the northern cities, and a lengthy political battle began with Tharsis' central government on the grounds of autonomy, falsified reports of

Laotian discrimination in the administration, and a number of reports claiming to have found evidence of corruption and bribery among Tharsis' government officials. By the 2020s, the issue had become so complicated that Tharsis made the difficult decision to simply let the north go; an independence referendum was held among the northern cities in early 2021, with the north becoming a separate country on August 2nd, 2022. ToSol, the Republic is controversial in the region, as it functions as a Lao-only ethnostate; although it has small numbers of other southeast Asian ethnicities, they are non-voting "lower class" workers.

## REPUBLIC OF THREEPOINT

The city of **Threepoint** was an early example of a city-state built out of "prefab" modules - beginning as a small settlement settled between EuroTharsis and New Albion in the mid-1990s. Threepoint grew rapidly through the decade, being at a major "three way" trade point between major polities, before growing even more in the later parts of the decade and the beginnings of the new millennium. Sometime in 2003, the city received a shipment of several dozen plastic and metal yard flamingos; instead of sending the shipment back to Earth or placing these flamingos in storage (both were considered a waste of resources) these lawn decorations were repurposed into indoor/outdoor decorations, and have since become iconic symbols of the city, sometimes even idolized by children who've never seen and/or heard of the real animal. A unique potato-based dish developed in Threepoint has been dubbed the "Flamingo Potato".

## UNION OF FREE PEOPLES

Despite the inherently colonial nature of colonizing Mars in the way it was done in this timeline, there were also leftist, anti-colonial movements to settle the planet. The most notable of these is the **Union of the Free Peoples**. This city-state was founded in 1992 as a refuge for oppressed peoples of Earth; in the early sols, the city grew slowly, only taking in as many people as it could with its limited funding to get these people to Mars. With the introduction of Earth-Mars cyclers in the 1990s and their affordability for the average person in the 2000s, the funding needed to bring its applicants to Mars was significantly reduced, though because the people moving to the city weren't average middle-class western people, some funding was still needed. Controversies stemming from the worries of Earth's countries required the city to use unorthodox practices to train its settlers for Mars. Famously their cooperation with Zambia in the late 1990s and early 2000s saw over 5,000 colonists trained in cold-war era Zambian training centers.

While The Union's population originates from all over Earth, most people here come from Ethiopia (Oromos, Gurages, Afars, Tigrayans, Halabans) South China (Zhuang, Miao, Yi, Wa, Dai), Burma, Vietnam, Thailand, parts of Indonesia, and marginalized communities in the United States, Canada, Europe, and the Socialist Federation, although these number less. The Union is also ranked as the most accommodating towards disabled people on the entire planet.

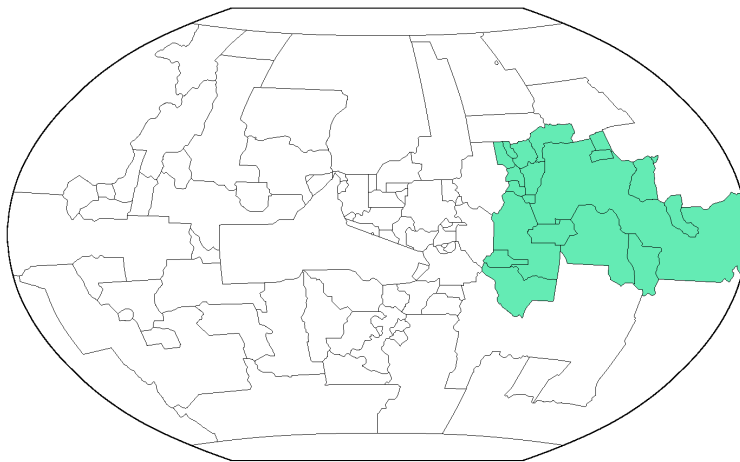
The Union's government is based upon a complicated tricameral parliament; multiple lower congresses at the municipal level, with members elected by the population of their

corresponding cities; a second “middle” congress akin to a mix of a jury and the house of representatives functions as a demarchy with randomly-selected members (who can deny joining if they wish); and a third “high” congress akin to the senate, with members elected by everyone living in the union. At the top, the Union Council, composed of seven members - all elected by the rest of the Union - was taken out of Switzerland’s book, and makes sure no single person can have too much sway over everyone else in the Union.

### **CANADMARS AUTONOMOUS AREA**

The first colony in what is now known as **Canadmars** was founded in 1987, although major political strife in the 1990s due to the North American Spring, followed by lesser political issues redirecting Canada’s focus away from Mars throughout the 2000s delayed the colony’s initial plans of building mining settlements out west until the 2010s. By the time the colony had enough money to build these colonies, a number of untimely delays pushed back their construction even further. In 2019, the realization that the actual 90s architecture and engineering of the colonies had become decades-outdated, led to what was supposed to be a “Two Year Architectural Revision” which has been put on the backburner with no public information on the project’s design or construction since 2022. On a different note, Canadmars is 92.2% Baha’i; the colony was first settled by atheists and mostly non-devout christians, most of whom converted to the Faith, which itself has made the colony a common destination for Canadian and American Baha’is.

### **The Great Open East**



The fields of chaotic craters south of the Boreal Lowlands and north of the Hellas Basin turned out to be the prime location for more pariah colonies to make their homes - perhaps not as pariah as in the western craterfields, as this region is the location of the South American Colonies - though it is also home to several ethnic-regionalist, nationalist, and theocratic states.

***Murphy’s Law***

*November 14th, 2020 / Mesha 3rd, 23  
Concepcion, The Federation*

# The Solly Scroll

## By Martians, For Martians, Since 4

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### LIVE UPDATES: MESHA ELECTIONS & CRISIS IN THE SOUTH AMERICAN FEDERATION

**(2 Minutes Ago):** Protests dissipate; Citywide Curfew still in effect in Concepcion.

**(3 Minutes Ago):** Medical sources say that 28 people have died, while 102 people are in critical condition and many hundreds are injured. Most casualties are attributed to panicked stampedes during the citywide power outage; some were also caused by CO2 poisoning. Some sources say that the automated life support system, in an attempt to reduce CO2 levels in Downtown/The Capital, pumped excess gas it couldn't scrub to residential areas.

**(15 Minutes Ago):** Half a dozen field hospitals are hastily constructed across Concepcion.

**(21 Minutes Ago):** Orbital medical crews from 9 polities, including Ares, land at the Concepcion Spaceport. Backup forces from neighboring cities arrive at the city.

**(37 Minutes Ago):** Salazar and 8 of his supporters are found by a ranger crew 2 kilometers outside Concepcion. All nine are arrested.

**(1 Hour Ago):** 12 Cities as far as 1000 kilometers away vow to send rescue forces, including medical personnel. On-site responders report over 450 people in Concepcion are injured in some way, with 73 people in critical condition, and 6 reported dead.

**(1 Hour Ago):** Receiving news of the crisis, most protestors stop protesting, and encourage others to do so. Several homes are found to have unconscious residents inside, thought to be due to air redirection by the automated system. Overflowing sewage and water floods some residential districts.

**(2 Hours Ago):** Over 1000 people are still sealed in the Capital Complex & Downtown region, only 3 blast doors out of the estimated 89 rendered inoperational have been opened. Operational blast doors in residential regions were overridden and reopened.

**(3 Hours Ago):** Life support operators restore lighting to essential regions, panic subsides. Salazar is reported missing from his apartment. Violent rioters in the Capital Complex are placed under arrest by police forces.

**(3 Hours Ago):** Neo-Shanghai, Region Occidental, Morenoland, and Bolivarria have announced a "Neutrality Pact". The Pact is discussing independence from the Federation & appointing Valdez as president if Salazar's "Coups Attempt" succeeds.

**(3 Hours Ago):** A riot police squad cuts through panicked protestors in the Capital Complex, securing the Life Support Complex. Meanwhile, Valdez Counter-protestors secure Congressional chambers & push-out Salazar rioters.

**(4 Hours Ago):** Blast doors, failing to account that they are closed, attempt to close again in response to the power overload, breaking and/or frying their gearboxes, and trapping hundreds of people in several districts. A supposed power surge causes several life support mechanisms to shut down.

**(4 Hours Ago):** A combination of high electricity usage due to people watching the crisis on their televisions, all life support appliances (Including pump systems) being active, solar panels being inactive, & human overseers unable to manage the grid, causes a power overload. An automated system disables all non-essential municipal systems (non-essential lighting, water filtration & pumping, sewage management, mining activities, commercial and residential grids). Grid workers meant to remedy the situation are being held hostage or have fled.

**(4 Hours Ago):** Rioters breach the Capital Complex; begin making their way to chambers of Congress, sealed by blast doors. The Central Life Support Management Complex is breached by rioters, workers are held hostage.

**(5 Hours Ago):** An automated life support system in Concepcion detects the mass of people in the Capital & Downtown regions. In response, it brings several oxygen generators & carbon dioxide scrubbers online, directing the air to those districts.

**(5 Hours Ago):** Hundreds of protesters clash with riot police outside Congressional Complex; some reported injured.

**(6 Hours Ago):** Amid the curfew announcement, over 400 rioters stampede from Downtown Concepcion to the Capital Complex, about half of a kilometer away, preventing blast doors from being shut. Over one thousand more protestors are attempting to travel to the Capital Complex from other parts of the city.

**(6 Hours Ago):** A citywide curfew has been mandated in Concepcion. Emergency blast doors meant to be shut in case of a disaster have been closed for the curfew.

**(7 Hours Ago):** Small protests in Miranda & Nova Bogota are broken up by local police forces.

**(9 Hours Ago):** Protests turn to riots in Concepcion's Downtown as civilians violently clash with police. Some report that their homes have been breached by police forces. At least 4 people are in critical condition.

**(11 Hours Ago):** Police clash with protestors in Concepcion. Several police officers and civilians are reported injured. Riot forces have been deployed to at least 3 districts, and the police forces of Miranda & Nova Bogota are on standby.

**(12 Hours Ago):** Protests expand to downtown Concepcion as Valdez cracks down on his victory. Over 2500 people are currently participating in protests, according to sources.

**(14 Hours Ago):** Several known disinformation-spreading accounts and radio stations purport that Salazar won the election, Salazar responds to these accounts with support.

**(16 Hours Ago):** Small pro-Salazar protests have been recorded in several districts in Concepcion.

**(16 Hours Ago):** Opposing candidate Enrico Salazar denies election results on social media; encourages his followers to "Fight, Fight with all your might against this evil".

**(17 Hours Ago):** Congress confirms Benjamin Valdez as winner of the 2020 Election in the South American Federation.

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### **2020 Concepcion Election Crisis - From The Lexafin**

On Mesha 3rd, 23 (November 14th, 2020), widespread protests & riots supported by PDP candidate **Enrico Salazar** took place in **Concepcion**, the capital of the **Federation of South American Mars**. The rioters, believing in **fraudulent claims that the election was rigged** in winning candidate **Benjamin Valdez**'s favor, attempted to place Salazar in power by taking over the **Capital Complex** of the Federation. Initial protests immediately following the confirmation of the election were small and dispersed. The protests grew following **several social media posts** by Enrico Salazar encouraging his supporters to "Fight, Fight with all your might against this evil". A **curfew** put in place in response to protestors & rioters becoming violent inadvertently led to a **mob** in Concepcion's Downtown Region storming the nearby Capital Complex; some protesters took crucial workers and government officials as **hostages**. Meanwhile, a **cascading failure** caused by an incorrectly-calibrated **life support system** triggered a **power overload**, trapping thousands behind blast doors or in darkness for up to 6 sols.

The Crisis led to the death of 47 people, with nearly one thousand more injured in its aftermath. The total cost of damage from the riots & grid outage was approximately 19.2 Million USD. The protests failed to overturn the election or place Salazar in power for any period of time; Salazar was found attempting to flee the city and **arrested** with federal charges amounting to 20 years in prison. The crisis involving the automated life support system was the first **incident of its kind** to affect the entirety of a major city, and led to a complete renovation of Concepcion's life support management systems. It also spurred the creation of **several international safety laws**.

## **FEDERATION OF SOUTH AMERICAN MARS**

**Unification sol** of May 1st, 2005, brought a number of small, incoherent South American colonies already closely-related to each other together as one coherent entity. The Federation of South American Mars functions in a similar way to EuroTharsis, albeit more federal than confederal. Preservacion, Ecuador's base on Mars - already a multicultural South American hub - ballooned into a massively populated metropolis after being designated as the capital of the Federation, while the smaller Bolivar Base farther south became the second-largest city. In 2009, the Federation absorbed the former United Nations research bases to the southeast - while there were proposals for the UN to lend these to the UMN, they were already so closely associated with the Federation economically that they all overwhelmingly opted to join. After which, many inhabitants of these cities took their chances in Preservacion.

**Region Capital**, home to the city of Preservacion and all the major governmental structures of the Federation, is no surprise also the most populated, richest, and still the fastest-growing settlement, with the 2024 census showing a population just over 52,000. **Mirandaterra** and **Nova Bogota** meanwhile are more-so geared towards specific colonization from select South American countries - Mirandaterra was founded by Venezuelans and has generally attracted Venezuelans, and the same can be said for the Colombian colony of Nova Bogota, with each being large cities in their own right, though still dependant on the capital economically, however.

The **Santa Maria Special Administrative Region** was a product of the Cuban Revolution and the democratization of the country in 2005 - following the collapse of communism on Earth, Cuba's Venusian colonies parted ways with the Earthlings leaving Cuba with just a Lunar colony. As a symbol of friendship between SATDU (the South American Treaty and Defense Union, a South American NATO/EU), and Cuba, the former offered the latter a new chance on the red planet, which Cuba's space force gladly accepted. And in 2011, the first Cubans landed on Mars, made a trek up to the then-uninhabited northeast, and founded what would become the autonomous city of Santa Maria. While leftist Cubans still tend to make their way all the way out to the Venusian colonies, the average Cuban who wants to go to space will most likely go to Luna or this city on Mars.

Passing the city of Concord, a product of early European exploration of the region involving the Concord Probe in the 1980s, and a dispute involving a semi-independent European group wanting to colonize the region, led to a unique situation wherein this base is governed not by the Tharsis Confederacy but by the European Space Agency itself, while the city proper rarely interacts with the Europeans and is now closely associated with the South Americans, due to being right on top of a major trade artery. That artery leads down to the two cities of Concepcion in the Region of Concepcionterra. This region was settled by Chile and has generally been colonized by it, as well as Argentina, and Peru to a very minor extent. An American hard-left group travelled to Chile back in the mid-2000's and ended up finding their way here, just a fun fact. And just south, Morenoland was primarily colonized by Uruguayans as well as a few Brazilians - aside from growing a number of exotic crops not found anywhere else on the planet, there's not much to say about this city.

Meanwhile, further north, the small city-state of **Gotham** was founded in the late-90's by a small Czech-based Mars colonization startup; to secure funding for the base, the company took an advertising from Warner Communications to name the settlement Gotham - Warner had considered doing this with a base in the Republic of Ares earlier on, but plans fell through. Gotham grew as a minor stopover between Marscutters and the South American colonies, eventually becoming so interconnected with them, that, despite the colony speaking Czech and not a lick of Spanish, they joined the Federation when it formed in 2005.

**Ciudad Independiente de Neo-Shanghai**, in the middle of the **Neo-Shanghai Autonomous Area**, is an odd case. Shanghainese nationalism began to rise in the late 1990s and early 2000s following a series of unpopular policies put in place by the central Chinese government, and though these nationalist movements would eventually be banned in China proper, they eventually found new life in the South America, where many Shanghainese people who were previously part of nationalist movements took refuge in - most of them went to Peru. It's thought that sometime in 2009, several leading figures in the movement had a private meeting and came to the conclusion that an independent Shanghai on Earth would be impossible, at least in the timespan of, say, the next few decades, and brainstormed what else they could do. The best solution they could come up with apparently was to go to Mars. Fast-Forward to 2025 and Neo-Shanghai is going strong with several thousand Chinese-Americans, Chinese-South-Americans and a number of people from Shanghai itself - without direct road connections to the outside world, the city is connected to the rest of the Federation by a number of landships, which it also uses to trade with Almiriykh.

## **UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC OF ALMIRIYKH & ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF HIJINZ**

Speaking of **Almiriykh**, this collection of cities was founded by the United Arab Republic founded in 1990 on a surprisingly optimistic timescale - and all would go well up until 1998; you see, Almiriykh was colonized predominately by atheists or chill muslims, but a small percent of people were more devout muslims or even islamists, who objected to the secular ways of the rest of the colony. By the later years of the decade, the Secular-Religious divide became a West-East divide, with the western cities being mostly secular and the eastern cities being far

more Islamist, and this culminated by the eastern half of the colony seceding as the **Islamic Republic of Hiujinz** in 1998. Almiriykh de-facto recognized Hiujinz because they could not do anything to bring them back, and they squabbled until settling their differences and defining their borders in the early 2010s. tosol, the two are allies and have quite positive relations with each other; an influx of Bahai'is to Hiujinz, as well as muslim migrations to Almiriykh have settled the religious differences, and it's not unlikely that if Almiriykh ever gains independence from Earth, that the two polities would unite.

## **IRANIAN REPUBLIC OF SHEHAR**

To the west, **Shehar** was founded in 1998 by Iran with the assistance of the European Space Agency. In 1999, the northern of two bases was abandoned due to an air filter fault after a dust storm, and the southern city being repurposed into the capital - as well as very few Iranians being interested in going to Shehar - meant that the northern city was never repopulated. Some of the city's modules were repurposed for use in a small research settlement in 2018, called Pahlavi. Currently, Shehar has a population of exactly 4,271, and the majority of them are Mormon due to the colony bordering Nauvoo to the north.

## **THODAPOORV TERRITORY**

**Thodapoorv** is a rather small Indian colony with a single settlement populated by a small sect of Indo-Mormons. Not much else to say here

## **STATE OF NAUVOO**

Just east of the bustling center of Viking lies **Nauvoo**, home of Mars' most insane Martian splinter group. The Saints of Ares were founded in central Utah during the mid-1980's as the newest of many UFO religions forming in the US - and indeed, around the world, at the time. The group/cult gained a significant following throughout the 1990s, and got enough money in the bank by the year 2000 to launch a mission to complete its one goal: Colonizing Mars. The mission landed on the planet in the later half of 2000, laying the groundwork for the base of the SOA's first Martian base. In the nearly three decades since, the SOA has become a great amount less extremist in its views and has attracted a lot of, what you could call more "normal" Mormons from across the lands of Utah and Idaho. As of 2025, Nauvoo has a population of 51,309, with the majority of them living in the country's largest city, coined the "Walls of Pale White", due to the extensive wall system around the crater the city occupies, with the architecture following traditional Mormon design principles, grinding down specific types of stones or importing mars-grade paint from earth just so all their walls aren't red or gray.

## **PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF NOVA PATRIA & CITY-STATE OF WELLS**

In the aftermath of the Second Spanish Civil War, many Basques and Catalans were hoping to gain independent states, after all, they'd functioned pretty independently during the war, but no, Catalonia and Euskadi both ended up being re-incorporated into Spain as autonomous zones,

which was better than what they had before, but pissed a lot of people off. The most common response was protesting, the second most common was terrorism, and the third most common was... \*flips notes\* even more terrorism. The fourth most popular option was dumping Spain entirely and trying to set up a new homeland offworld, which is exactly what the Basques and Catalans of Nova Patria did in 1997.

This is the origin story of the country of **Nova Patria** on Mars, with a population of 73,300 principally composed of Catalans with a fair amount of Basques in second place, the country functions as a new homeland for the two peoples on the red deserts of Mars, and has grown far beyond its humble beginnings as a hole in the ground with 100 people as it was back in '97. The colony is known for its extensive media industry and cultural export, while having more robust manufacturing sectors in reusable rocket parts and the launch industry in general, due to its position near some of Mars' flatter craters. Now, the Basques and the Catalans haven't always agreed on everything - ever since the country began, they almost never do, which is why just up north there's a smaller city state called **Wells**, home to just about five-thousand Basques living in a city in a lava tube deep under Mars' surface. Wells and its southern neighbor have had a shaky relationship over the last 20 years, but none of it has led to war, and things cyclically stabilize every few months.

## **CITY OF BRADTORY**

**Bradtory**, founded in 2006, is known around Mars as the City of Walls, and that's because the city of Bradtory, centered around its namesake of Bradtory Crater, because the crater its in is actually not natural; rather, the Crater was carved into a preexisting hill, and the rocks drilled out were used in the construction of the buildings inside the crater. This new-age construction method proved to be prohibitively expensive, but sunk cost fallacy meant that the digging continued even when the funder's pocketbooks began to dry up. The initial colonizers of Bradtory came from a diverse mix of online space colonization-focused chatrooms, with most of their members being atheist or at least agnostic. When they got to Mars, many of them realized life on the red planet was rather boring, and when a Bahai'i missionary knocked on the door one sol they were hooked. As of 2025, Bradtory has a population of 7,000 people, 92% of them part of the Baha'i faith, and indeed, the small city has made it its business being a meeting place for Bahai'is all across Mars, primarily because it never found a way to break into any other economic sector after selling all of its rocks. Well, other than trade, because the city sits at an important chokepoint between Nuwabia, Grandes Sables, and South American Mars, it is often a nightly stopover point for travellers.

## **NUWABIAN NATION**

During the 1990s, the Nation of Islam, already heavily present on the far side of Earth's moon, shifted from being purely a religion to more of a large-scale lunar colonization "mission" and lunar construction contractor, becoming one of Luna's first international non-westphalian entities. This shift started a schism within the Nation, ending with it splitting in two in the

mid-1990's, and with hardliners moving to restart the NOI in a pure form on Mars. Unlike on Luna, the Nation's presence on Mars is restricted to one small region; **Nuwabia**. The Nuwabian Nation was created as a modern-sol "Homeland" for the newfangled concept of the "Nuwabian Race", because, as everyone knows, Yakub actually came from Mars. The Nation never managed to gain the popularity it once had on other worlds, and has remained irrelevant in the grand scheme of things. tosol, the Nation has two cities with a collective population of 6,192 people. Although the Baha'i Faith is officially banned in the territory, with the Nation of Islam being the official, state-manded faith, a number of its residents have secretly converted to the Faith ever since the Baha'i-dominated City of Bradtory was founded.

## EMPIRE OF GRANDS SABLES

Meanwhile, **Grands Sables** is a mid-sized polity founded by French-nationalists, who, over the past decade, have been getting increasingly worried about the possibility of France relinquishing its sovereignty to a united Europe. The people here believe that a strong monarchy is key to a successful state, but there's one issue; they don't have a monarch - well, not a human one. It is written in Grands Sables' constitution that the nation must have a monarchy, but from the start, the colonists were unable to find a fitting king or queen, because no living descendants of the House of Bourbon, House of Orleans, or the House of Bonaparte wanted to travel to Mars, nor rule a bunch of random French nationalists with no legitimacy. The solution? Create an artificial intelligence with the same worldview as the colonists, meant to act as a public figure. So far, " , although there are issues with high-level political figures tinkering with the AI so it matches their

## BEICHENG TERRITORY

**Beicheng** is China's little claim where there absolutely shouldn't be one, and it was given to China because nobody could agree on who should get the land. Not much else to say because nobody lives here.

## COLONY OF NEW SAIGON

South Vietnam's space industry was always.. Lacking, compared to its northern, more communist, more externally-supported brother. South Vietnam took too long to try to scrub away its corruption to get a good spot on Mars, and instead got stuck in the cratered, chaotic mess of Araby Terra, with **New Saigon**. Founded in 2011 and squished next to the much older, far more prosperous Crater City, and just a CC away from the most racist country on Mars, I mean, they're lucky they're not right up on Thule's border. Perhaps New Saigon isn't the largest colony on Mars with its quaint population of 5,293 people, but these people love the one thing that makes their colony unique: **The Face**, a massive mountain that vaguely resembled a human face from space from one satellite image, until future satellite images proved it doesn't really look like a face at all and was just a normal mountain. But New Saigon says: "Or Was It?", what if it is a face, though? And of course, they capitalized on this. The fame of their face (technically, the term is the "Cydonia Structure", they use this when they want to sound fancy) attracts many

people across Mars to this sol, and it'll keep bringing in people for years and years, possibly decades, possibly centuries, who knows.

## CRATER CITY

And then there's **Crater City**, built in a real crater by self-made American billionaire Mark Walz in 1992, Crater City is one of the oldest Martian City-States, and tosol has grown into one of the largest. The city is built in a 400-meter wide crater, which was domed over with transparent radiation-proof materials and metals imported from Earth. Initially, the only requirements for moving to crater city were making a phone call or going to a netsite and paying.. 100,000 dollars, but the price didn't stay high for long - it dropped to 50,000 by 2002, and dropped to its modern price of 25,000 in 2011. Crater City expects people to pay to move because of its highly technocratic and "innovative" governance council, which, to its benefit, has kept the city intact for all these years and the economy's growing more and more every single year, and the city has 29,309 people. The city has great relations with its Vietnamese neighbors and some crazies who worship the Cydonia Structure, but they really wish Thule wasn't what it is, because then they could build a nice big road right through and connect to the South American colonies, because then they'd have green bills pouring out of their grandkids' pockets. Oh right, what is Thule, anyway?

## THULE REPUBLIC

On January 15th, 2007, a city was founded to the west of the Marscutters settlements and to the east of Crater City, this colony was named **Thule**. From its beginnings, this colony was meant to be a colony of white nationalists, encouraging European and American whites from Earth to move to Mars, to survive the "takeover" that was supposedly happening in their homelands on Earth - and encouraging Martians to move instead of sticking around commonly-diverse normal Martian colonies. Since about 2009, Thule has attracted a steady stream of white-nationalists/supremacists, neo-fascists, neo-nazis, KKK-sympathisers, racists, and a wide array of other far-righters and bigoted groups who are all united by a "white" identity, with the first requirement for Thuleian citizenship being to prove your ancestral origins as from a "white european nation".

While Thule isn't a democracy by any means, it also shouldn't be described as outright barbaric, because Thule does hold elections, but you have to be part of Thule's "Armed" forces to vote in them, and the Director (they thought "President" and "Prime Minister" were terms paraded by "them) has no term limits, and can veto anything the Table (equivalent to a Congress or Parliament, just a lot smaller) says. Even with some level of democracy, Thule is still extremely xenophobic to outsiders and refuses to even trade with anyone but Viking, who themselves are even on the edge about supporting Thule. As mentioned before, to even enter the nation you must prove your ancestry as coming from a historically "white european nation". It should come as no surprise then, that with only one outside supporter on Mars itself, that Thule is a very isolated state, and full self-sufficiency is difficult even for a polity its size that has outside support and money, which Thule has neither of, meaning life in the nation isn't great for the average

individual, there are better places on Mars. Before we talk about the cracks forming, we first need to cover Thule's military; The Thule Armed Forces (TAF) is the military wing of Thule, and one of the only real militaries on Mars. Well, "Real" in the sense that it exists, because, in reality, and even despite the best efforts of some of Thule's colonizers to ship in as many weapons that they can, nobody is rich enough to buy the fancy space weapons from Earth's best militaries, not like they'd let them, anyway. This means Thule's military is more like ragtag LARP militias with guns that would run out of bullets if a war were to start, than a real, functioning military; instead, of fighting conflict, the Armed Forces mostly just sit around the base all sol and do exercises while the young males do things some of the hardliners might not like, but what are they gonna do.

The cracks in the nation stem from Thule's first generation of kids starting to reach adulthood and learning there's more to Mars than their little hermit kingdom. Now, the feds have done their best to indoctrinate the children to believe that Thule is the white homeland and doesn't need any contact with the outside, and many of the kids follow this, but many still see the clear benefits of what's going on outside, and are beginning to wonder if all the isolation and xenophobia is really needed. Now, they're still extremely racist and xenophobic, of course, and even the most internationalist still believe Thule needs to be an ethnostate for the white race, but their views, many of which directly oppose the core principles of Thule's government, might lead to the cracks growing bigger down the line - right now, it's too early to know.

## **MARSCUTTERS INDUSTRIES**

Moving onto the company-state right next door, going by the name of **Marscutters Industries**, known across the planet for being the first country founded entirely by a private organization. Before moving its headquarters to its actual territory in 1998, Marscutters was founded and based in the Republic of Ares - despite their increased autonomy, the company and state it occupies/owns is still reliant upon Ares for its economy, and the Republic remains its largest trading partner. During its initial colonization in the 1990s, Marscutters was colonized by a great number of young, often bilingual Hispanic-Americans looking for a new life on the frontier; most of these were also men, and of the ones that were married, their wives usually went on to be button-pushers or bureaucrats in the colony while the men got stuck with the actual mining jobs - though this is less of a problem nowasols, because the company's got those new automated mining bots (they're cheaper).

Once they made enough money, many of the older first-wave colonists moved to communities in Ares or the Federation. Sometimes their kids came with them, but in many cases they stayed behind and worked the same jobs their parents did. Gen Z in Marscutters, instead of adopting their parents' often Catholic beliefs, they turned to new Martian-bred religions in great numbers, with conversions to FOTG being among the most common. Not to say this makes the younger generation more societally "progressive" or anything; FOTG itself still gives leeway for the beliefs of those who join it, and the culture of the region remains deeply traditional and Catholic-coded.

What's more, Marscutters isn't democratic in the slightest; it's governed by a company and functions as one, with the CEO and Corporate Board having sway over economic decisions in the cities. A number of riots and a near-disaster in one city, though, has led to the corporate overlords not being entirely dystopian - they tried to cut costs and that almost led to their downfall - nowasols, they keep a stable balance between how far they can push people and what costs they can cut on people's livelihoods, while still giving the population enough luxuries with promises of being promoted or giving a bonus big enough to leave so they don't outright revolt. For the board itself though, headquartered in an isolated district of Marscutter Alpha, life is great. Marscutters, with its innovative mining strategies and early-lead on the industry, is among the top economies on the planet - although with the increasing expansion of mining industries in the rest of the world, as well as the discovery of greater mineral deposits, their lead on the industry is beginning to decline, though this may be averted with Marscutters "investment" (corporate puppeteering) into other Martian polities.

## STATE OF GOSHEN

As you might expect, not every Israeli nor Palestinian was happy with the creation of the confederation, but nobody fumed more about this one-state-solution than the extremists at either end. Here, just south of the multicultural poli of Shiraka Shutafut, we encounter the city-state of Goshen, where the requirement for getting your citizenship ID has jumped from you needing to be just 70% Jewish when the place was founded, to tosol, where you need to prove you have 100% Jewish ancestry just to get in. Goshen is a.. weird, place in many ways, and it's no doubt that the Zionists living here don't like press, which is why they have no solid connections to the outside world via any road and either self-produce everything through a semi-functional autarky or import it from their suppliers all the way back on the ball of blue in the sky, which obviously takes a while. Maybe if Goshen and Thule stopped despising each other for being different they'd find they have more in common than they first thought, you know, being extremely xenophobic ethno-centric dictatorships who don't allow foreigners in whatsoever. The good thing about Goshen's breed of hyper-zionism is it gets the most extreme of the Zionists off of Earth entirely, and helps increase peace in the Levant in a funny way. Don't worry, there's also a flying city on Venus where the most extremist Palestinians go if they truly hate the situation on Earth.

## FREE STATE OF METROPOLIS

Travelling over hundreds of miles of empty, dusty, red desert is enough to make someone go crazy, but then a city peaks over the horizon. **Metropolis** began as a small venture by a big-minded Mexican billionaire of Brazilian descent in the mid-1990's and wasn't even recognized as a true city-state until 2004. The last twenty years have seen Metropolis grow from a small settlement with big plans to a great Art Deco/Art Nouveau city of 16,200. The city is most economically associated with the neighboring South American colonies, however, it refuses to build permanent roads between any outsider city and its walls, preferring to use "single-use" vehicles and/or landships as transport to and from the outside world. tosol, the city has carved out its niche on Mars producing various types of media not commonly found on the

planet due to their cost of production, such as various types of movies, TV shows, animes, and even video games.

## **THAI REPUBLIC OF THIDIN & REPUBLIC OF THAI AMERICA**

**Thidin** and **Thai America** are the two Thai-Buddhist states of Mars bordering the Republic of Ares in its far eastern reaches. Why are there two of them? Rewind back to 1988, when with a great amount of American assistance, the first Thai colony was set up on Mars. This colony doubled by the turn of the millennium. Also around Y2K, an American billionaire going by the name **Joe Baldet**. dissatisfied with his life in Ares took his friends out to the true frontier and set up their own, shiny new base that they could rule on their own, and got some of Thailand's help in the process. Ares seemed to care a lot about "Baldet City" at first, but the US gradually stopped batting any eyes at the city once it became what was essentially a puppet of its larger Thai neighbor. There were a lot of funny political incidents back in the sol though. Baldet passed away in 2013, and the city/colony was renamed to "Thai America" due to the roughly equal population of Thais and Americans in the city by this point - they also adopted a new flag, attempting to combine the preexisting Thai and American spirits into one banner. While Thidin is pretty normal - and boring - populated almost entirely by Thai Buddhists and a small number of devout atheists, Thai America has a reputation for being much weirder, taking on a name as the "Middle Ground" between the so-called Two Asian Colonies, Thidin and New Asia. Most of its American population is Chinese-American, too.

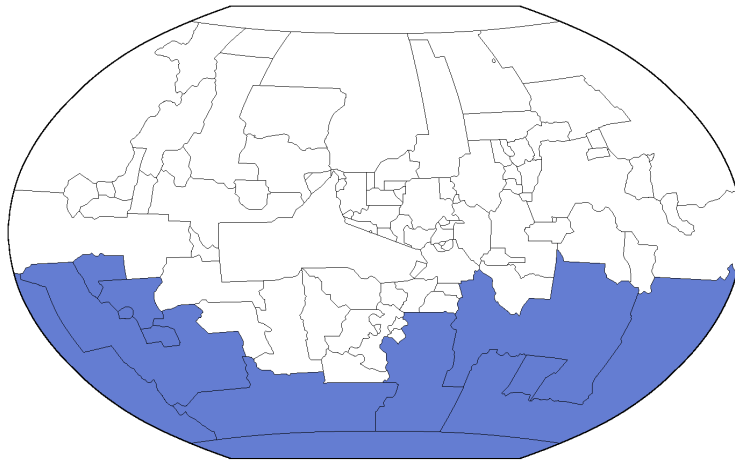
## **FREE REPUBLIC OF TWO PEAKS**

**Two Peaks** started its life as **Starman City**, a small research outpost at the farthest-flung edge of Ares in the 1980's. This small settlement gained new life in the 1990s upon the moving-in of American billionaire Robert Jones, who had his own plans for the city's future. In the next half-decade, Jones invited dozens of colleagues, friends, business partners, and people he didn't know that still had smarts, like Aeroengineers, Areotradesmen, and of course, Aero-construction workers to build all the new geodesic domes he was putting up with his oodles of money - also built were districts made of spent rocket boosters, many of which came from the American-built Harlem-1 Non-Reusable Mars Lander, giving one of Starman City's districts the nickname "New Harlem".

The future of the city shifted from being just another Martian gentrification-operation to what Jones had originally envisioned the city as being all those years prior when he first moved in. In 1997, a scandal involving Jones "Dying" (he was later found in hiding all the way down at the South Pole, in 2010), and handing over power to his 10 year old son, who himself was caught up in his own scandal involving if Jones' money was legitimate or not after leaks had come out back on Earth, snowballed into Jones' son being ousted from office by an interim government, which then hosted a non-binding-to-ares independence referendum, passing in an incredibly narrow 51-49 vote. The Republic took this as a sign of succession (technically not illegal for territories, which Starman City or "Two Peaks" counted as), and launched a minor invasion force consisting primarily of the metropolitan police from Utopia. Two peaks spun the invasion against

itself after 15 Aresian soldiers died out in the desert on their way to retake Starman City, by convincing the rest of Ares' soldiers that a war wasn't worth fighting while they were still driving across the desert. In the end, the Republic of Ares was forced to grant independence to the Free Republic of Two Peaks, also in 1997. This technically could count as one of Mars' first wars, but Martian historians don't consider it one for a myriad of reasons. First, Two Peaks may not be the hyper-isolationist corpocracy that it started out as, but it still has no solid road connections with the outside world and greatly prefers to interact with the South American colonies than Ares.

## The Southern Wastes



### *Pilgrimage*

*January 17th, 2025 / Aquarius 3rd, 25  
Meridionalis, South Pole*

The town of Meridionalis is small enough for someone to be able to walk from one side to the other in less than half an hour. Celeste White made this walk almost every morning and every evening to visit her dying mother, who lived on the other side of the city. On the way, she always made sure to find her two brothers and see if her five (adult) kids could come with. Unfortunately, for the past few sols, Celeste was so caught up in work that she was unable to visit the hospital.

The Whites are Followers of the Gods. Before the sun dips over the horizon, Celeste and her family never forget to pray for the good of all Martians, and specifically right now, their mom. Before reaching the hospital and her family on the way, Celeste stops in the City Courtyard, where her eyes are drawn to the city's small FOTG Temple. She opens the door to be surprised by a middle-aged man exiting, for whom she holds the door. The path to the Temple is a 50-foot deep spiral staircase with exposed Martian rock as the stairs and walls. The Temple itself is a small cavelike room lit by a single candle. The room is light on decor; a small red carpet covers the floor, while the table the candle sits on is tight on the back wall. A circle of nine other unlit candles surround the central light.

Celeste touched the table with both of her hands while looking at the floor in an attempt to communicate with the Pantheon of Gods. Praying for her mother. She did not get a response from the Gods, even after twenty minutes of trying.

They probably wanted her to see her mother, instead of spending time here.

One of her brothers was on the other side of the planet, on a many-month long pipebuilding job. Her other brother was all the way down at the true south pole researching the ice deposits, and three out of five of her own children were too busy at work to come along, the other two promising to visit the hospital that evening.

The medical complex itself was small; just a few rooms in the back of the city, with just half a dozen doctors and nurses on staff at any time of sol. One nurse led Celeste to her mom's room. She was taking a nap. One of the hospital's two on-duty doctors, an older Japanese man, entered the room. Celeste asked him if it was ok to wake her mother, but he refused. The words that came out of his mouth next were heartbreaking to her and her two brothers.

"Mrs White, we are not sure how it happened. In the past three sols, the cancer has.. Well, it's... worse... I've talked with my colleagues and we assume that it's progressing to Stage 4. It is best if your mother gets as much rest as she can get."

"Well. What Wait? How did you not catch this before now? I.. Please tell me she'll make it, please. How bad. Sorry.."

"We're doing all we can - we have already discussed bringing Martha to a larger facility in the city. Some of the other doctors don't think she could make it through the entire ride, we think it would take.. Ehh.. I think it was 2 sols? It doesn't sound like a lot, but for someone in your mother's condition... it's very dangerous."

On her walk back home about two hours later, Celeste passed by the Temple again. Walking down the winding spiral staircase, she spent an entire hour praying to the Gods, to little avail. But before she left, she decided to sit on the floor itself, hands not touching the table, moving the carpet out of the way and scratching into the hard Martian rock to try to get deeper in the soil. The thin plastic layer covering the slightly-toxic rock came loose, allowing her to dig into the hard, natural surface of the cave itself.

She heard the Gods

She didn't hear them - per se. But she had a thought, a thought that couldn't have come from anywhere else. She needed to go to the most holy place on Mars. The most holy in the Universe. This is what would save her mother.

Badwater Crater is an impact crater located in the Hellas Basin. In the middle of the 33-kilometer wide crater is the lowest point in the world. This point is the location of the most holy temple of the Followers, and, indeed, the most holy place in the known universe for the Followers of the Gods.

Celeste visited her mother at the hospital one last time, made sure to spend as much time as possible just in the off-chance that this was in fact their last time they would be able to talk, said one last prayer in the temple, and hitchhiked on a truck bound to the south.

*January 28th, 2025*  
*Between Destinations*

The Gods were going to make this a challenge. A sol after she left, a massive dust storm stretching from the South Pole to Nusantara blocked the normal road needed to get to Hellas. Maybe it was fate, but ice melting during early spring is known to cause dust storms in the southern hemisphere, although it's still winter and the storm is much larger than usual.

The seasonally-inhabited towns of the western south pole region were a refuge for spring travellers. This season, they were the home of soil researchers from Ares and Tharsis, coming all the way down here to study a theorized aquifer. Nice people, very nice people, they spoke of their old lives on Earth and how the food was up north, although Celeste didn't care very much for the jokey political rivalry the Aresians and the Tharsians had.

By the start of February, they were on the road again - now riding on the Southern Circumpolar Highway - Celeste finally arrived at Amundsen-On-Mars, where she left behind the truck and the people she'd formed connections with on board. A small, old landship by the name of the MLV Course of Light was her next link on the way to Hellas. The landship was cramped, more cramped than the truck and tighter than the smallest pod she lived in back home. But that was expected, this thing was 23 years old. In spite of the old lady's age, she endured like she had for the past two decades and made it to her destination nearly fifteen hundred kilometers away without a hitch.

*February 15th, 2025*  
*Baaharee Raajadhaanee*

As the landship passed through the industrial districts of the Malena Cluster and docked at a small, old, run-down airlock, Celeste felt a hand on her shoulder. It was an older man, seemingly of Indian descent. Celeste herself spoke English as a first language, but living in the mixed south pole region had taught her a lick of Hindi over the years, enough to communicate with the man. He pointed at his family, a few rows down. He said that they traveled a lot, and when they got home, they liked to invite travellers still en-route to the rest of Kasei to join them for a night for dinner. Explore the city, see the world.

"Uh, who, sorry.. I don't.. No thank you" she said in Hindi.

After disembarking, she got lost on her way to the ticket office. Coincidentally, she ran into the man again. “Oh, hi! Do you need help, finding some-anything? I think I’d know” he said with a chuckle.

“Just. the Uh.. oh, the ticket offices” Her Hindi was pretty rusty, hadn’t used it in so long.

“Oh, just keep going, and turn left on Moore St, there’s a yellow sign, and then the government offices are about 200 feet past that, easiest thing to spot around here.” said the man “I can come with, if you’d like.”

“Sure, yeah”

After buying her next ticket, which would take her to the city of Kasei over the next week, she accepted the offer from the man- who had now introduced himself as Achyuta Singh.

On the way back to Singh’s district, Celeste saw her first glimpse of true city life. While the 5,501-person population of Meridionalis was above the Martian average, it was nothing in comparison to the 40,000-strong population of Sign’s hometown. As the work sol grew to its end, the streets were flooded with hundreds of people trying to make their way home, or to the dozens of bars and restaurants they were walking past. Celeste had never seen such a thing in her life, only heard of it. Nonetheless, Achyuta guided her through the crowd back to his family’s home.

His district was much more.. Friendly than her own. Perhaps a consequence of the greater communal identity of the mixed South/East Asian communities of Hellas-Malena resulting in a much more prominent communal identity than her mostly Australian home city.

Achyuta’s wife was a Japanese woman slightly younger than himself. Their kids - 15, 8, and 2, respectively - were of mixed descent, and often accompanied their parents on their business travels to the northern cities. During dinner, Celeste learned that Achyuta had migrated to Mars from Earthly India all the way back in the 1990’s, and he met his wife - Mizuki - in the late 2000s. Being a Kshatriya in India’s caste system, Achyuta was a mid-level official in Hellas-Malena, and frequently traveled to the Capital or to other places around the world with his wife for various government and business meetings. Despite originally being a Hindu, he later converted to a Follower of the Gods after moving to Mars. Celeste told him about her own hardships and why she was making this trip, and he and their wife prayed for her and her family, wishing them the allegiance of the Gods.

Dinner went by fast, the food was something new for sure. Celeste slept in an unused bed in the Singh family home. As quick as they had met, she and the Singh’s parted ways as she had to board yet another, slower, even older landship to travel to Kasei City. She thought, with H-M being the center of landship construction on Mars, why were all of the ones she was riding on so dingy?

After leaving the big city, the next town she came across was Unity City, a mixed, but small haven of mixed Japanese-Indian culture. They'd be staying there for a night. Indeed, during each stop on the trip to Kasei City, Celeste would become more outgoing, social, and friendly to the people she met along the way. In Unity City she joined another family dinner. In Sunoahausu, she spent the sol with several people and experienced a "normal" sol in the tiny town. She visited and truly experienced Kyanionzu, Tsurishiti, Samitto, and even more places, big cities and small towns alike.

A resource crisis on the border of Kasei had caused Nusantara to close the entire border to public visitors since early January. Not the first time this happened, not the last. The issue was that Celeste was now stuck in Kasei for.. Well.. she didn't know how long, could be sols, weeks, months...

*March 25th, Pangkalan Kawah*

But maybe the holdover was a good thing. The dispute ended two weeks after she arrived in Kasei City, meaning she got to experience one of the largest cities on Mars for a whole fortnight. By the time she stepped into Nusantaran territory, all the worries and fears she had about the delay and the trip in general had faded away. In a trip that she originally intended to be less than two weeks, to the Temple and back, in a desire sincere but not earned.

She could've always turned around at the dust storm, went back when the border closed, denied the Singh's invitation. But she didn't. Something Changed.

There were no roads connected to Badwater Crater. No rail. Back in the early 2010s, the drilling companies of Nusantara wanted to exploit the groundwater of the region, and the Followers valiantly opposed any move they made.

A small bus, smaller than the landships, but bigger than some of the cars she had hitchhiked on, was the only thing that connected the Holy site to the outside world. Its dormitories were isolated from each other, and the international dispute meant just 12 other people were going to the Temple with her. The monks were mindful of her and the other guests, but also remarkably silent, tranquil in their movements; they communicated with each other mostly in their own version of sign language.

It was something the old Celeste would have loved. But it was an experience the new one found strange.

*April 6th, Badwater Crater*

The sol was young, the sun just coming over the horizon. Waking up, Celeste viewed out her window dust devils swirling over the vast landscape of black and brown sand. One nun from the front cabin informed her that they were nearing the crater and would arrive at its edge within the hour.

Badwater Crater was so large it curved over the horizon, with its other wall just barely visible as a dark silhouette on the horizon. The crater gradually sloped down, with semicircular hills surrounding a smaller central valley.

The vehicle descended the crater walls slowly . One nun asked Celeste if she needed anything to help her wake up. Water, maybe? No, she didn't need it. Requesting something of material this close to the Temple would be seen as an affront to the Gods. As the sun gradually lit the crater edge, small rivers of liquid water, something Celeste had never, ever seen outside before, slowly dripped down the hills and coalesced into small puddles. This crater, and the craters surrounding it, are the only places this phenomenon can happen.

As they approached the Temple, Celeste was called to the front cabin. Out the windows of the Bridge, she caught her first glimpse of the grand structure on the horizon. A pyramid, it was, like the ones her mom told her about from Earth.

The front gates were massive, monolithic - built out of bright white marble and granite columns from Earth itself. Three monks adorned with decorated spacesuits escorted Celeste - herself wearing her own space suit - to the rather modest airlock doors that lay behind the grand gates. Within the temple, the rocks of the pyramid gave way to a massive open space, reflecting itself and digging 100 feet into the ground in a fashion reminiscent of a step well from ancient India. Poking out of the stair walls in some places, pipes that look like faucets protrude from the rock, occasionally dripping water down into a mote, itself surrounding a small island. This is not water imported or heated up, this is natural liquid groundwater.

The intercom was silent from the moment she encountered the priests and during the pressurization of the airlock. Two of the three monks stayed behind at the airlock as the last asked Celeste to take off her spacesuit before descending the stairs, which she did. Afterwards, the last of the monks went back through the airlock, leaving her alone in the massive space. After coming all this way. Nearly four months of travel, Celeste finally walked down the stairs. The island in the center of the time was surprisingly similar to the temple in her hometown; red carpet, table, candles. She spent a long time praying, praying as close as you could possibly pray to the Gods. At this point, she was not wishing or pleading, she was content either way. Her long trip changed her, in a way, after seeing so much, doing what she might never do again, seeing places, meeting people outside the bubble she had lived in for her whole life. She simply made a request for there to be more life and peace in the universe, not even gloating to the Gods about how much time she had spent to get here.

And the water dripped. And the sun shined through the windows. And she no longer feared what could happen in the future, for she learned of the present.

**PLURINATIONAL FEDERATION OF HELLAS-MALENA**

Japan landed its first man on Mars on the edge of Hellas Basin in 1982. This location was later where **Kasei Base** was founded, the settlement which later became **Kasei City**. During the 1990s, the colonization of what was then known as Kasei was faster than many expected, with rocket architecture using spent spacecraft parts harboring hundreds of people without costing as much as more orthodox constructions would've. By the late 80s, however, the mess of rocket boosters home to nearly 5000 people in the Kasei Base had become labyrinthian, hard to navigate, and downright dangerous in some areas. By the 1990s, a project to build a new city around the old one, dubbed "New Kasei" was underway, and by the 2000s this project was completed. While "Old Kasei" still exists, the new city is a massive partially-underground arcology capable of endless modular expansion, with its first module providing optional new homes for the residents of the old city as well as thousands of spaces for incoming colonists. Meanwhile, the old city shrunk significantly and turned into an industrial zone, which is still one of the largest industrial powerhouses in the region tosol.

Beginning in the 1990s, a border dispute between Kasei and Indonesia's colony, Nusantara, nearly led to a major conflict before the disputed region in the center of Hellas Basin was resolved with a makeshift condominium. Despite initial predictions of the region being rich in metal resources based off of biased ground samples and theories that the meteor that formed the valley would still be intact, which were what started the dispute in the first place, the actual central region of the valley turned out to be more average in metals, though it still had large glaciers and aquifers. A subsequent refocusing of Indonesia's priorities to the proven metal-rich edge of the valley allowed Kasei to buy the disputed central region in 2004.

In 2005, India established a colony in the rather resource-poor Sisyphi region of southeast Mars, with its first colony growing slowly and steadily over the course of the next half a decade. Its proximity to Hellas meant that this city and its satellite towns, now collectively the "Malena Colony" traded often with Kasei. Poor relations between India and Indonesia soured relations between their Martian colonies and restricted trade, funneling Malena to trade with Kasei even more often. By 2015, the two were incredibly integrated, and India creating a manufacturing base in its colony which used Kasei's mined materials grew them closer together. By 2019, Japanese influence in Malena had grown significantly from its influence in 2015, with most of its residents being, at minimum, bilingual in Hindi and Japanese. Because of this, as well as public support for a more united political sphere and potentially a better economy, led to a vote being held within a temporary parliament composed of those of the two colonies. This parliament wouldn't be temporary for long, however, as the vote was a landslide in favor of becoming a unified condominium.

The economy of the newly-unified Hellas-Malena didn't shift very much from its two predecessors, although the state being fully unified has made trade easier than ever before. In Hellas Basin, everything from refined iron to billion-dollar landships and moving cities are manufactured, as well as a rather robust water-mining industry. Meanwhile, the refineries of Malena turn metal mined all the way up north in Hokubushu and turn it into high-quality, usable material which is often shipped again to Hellas to be turned into pretty much anything.

Meanwhile, the aqueducts and power lines criss-crossing the region north to south unify Hellas-Malena even more.

The province which all other provinces orbit is **Chubushu**. Not just home to most of H-M's industrial base, but also to the capital itself and over 50 thousand people. While the province was majority-Japanese for a long period of time, demographics began to shift when large-scale northeast Indian populations looking for new lives after the war in the 2010s migrated here, with Assamese-speakers among the most prevalent. Meanwhile, a tiny amount of Laotian immigrants have had massive influence on the region's culture, especially making a mark on its cuisine. The **Chen Region**, meanwhile, is a mixed borderland between the Japanese and Indian parts of the Federation, and is also the least populated with just 7,302 people. While South Korea has no colonies beyond the Earth sphere on its own, Japanese international missions have managed to put Koreans on Mars, and most of them live here. Indeed, its low population notwithstanding, the region has a robust water-ice mining industry in the north, while its south has taken advantage of remarkably potent lithium deposits. On the other hand, **Misoshikonushu** is where the mixing ends and the country becomes almost 100% some kind of Indian, with Hindi-speaking folks from the Gangetic plain being among the most prevalent. Indeed, they're not the only demographic, as Japanese people are still common and the Assamese population is very high. As mentioned before, while the province lacks a major mining industry, it is Hellas-Malena's largest refinery. The big controversy right now is FOTG. You see, the Faith took off in Kasei when it was still wholly-Japanese, but since the merger the new religion has been spreading like wildfire among Indians, with younger Gen Z converting away from Hinduism and Buddhism to go to FOTG in droves.

On the other hand, the northern provinces initially under Kaseian control are still majority Japanese. **Gureishazurandoshu** is the third-most populated province behind Chubushu and Misoshikonushu and has a majority-Japanese population, with Assamese, other Northwest and South Indian, and even a few Vietnamese people making up minorities which comprise about twenty percent of the province's population. Most of the provinces' non-japanese minorities work blue-collar jobs, along with many Japanese people themselves, though white-collar jobs are almost entirely occupied by people of Japanese descent. **Hokuboshu**, on the other hand, was founded as a mining exclave from the rest of Kasei in the 1990s. *tosol*, the province's economy is still built upon its mining industry, although it has made small ventures into other sectors in recent years. A large minority of its population is composed of Bengali immigrants.

Hellas-Malena is ruled by two presidents with equal power - one Indian who has more proportional power and one Japanese president who has less. This is intentional, however, to make sure the Japanese half of the condominium doesn't dominate the Indian half. Below the presidents, the Federation has a bicameral parliament with a smaller upper house and a larger lower house, as well as tiny parliaments for each province and region. While it isn't the most democratic nation on Mars, with an abundance of corporate influence and lobbying, especially in local politics, basic human rights remain mostly unaffected, though the health of the nation's political culture could be better. Unfortunately, anti-immigrant policies have carried over to Mars with the influx of poorer refugee and migrant populations from South India and the rest of Asia

over the past decade and a half, and minorities are often discriminated against despite their benefit to the nation's economy. The Indians and Japanese get along quite well, though.

## KASEICO

The situation in KaseiCo is... Weird. Prior to 2000, the Kasei Company was a well-respected, though very profit-driven company headquartered in Japan since its creation in 1983. The company was instrumental to building and managing the first colonies in Kasei, and later developed new technology for mining robots and Martian metal refineries. In 1999, the company founded two new bases far away from the rest of Kasei - in fact, these bases were "behind" Nusantara. While these bases were de-facto part of Japan, KaseiCo insisted that they were independent entities and that Japanese laws didn't apply to them, in what seemed like an attempt to do the same thing Nashmarsa or Marscutters had done. In 2001, the "KaseiCo Problem" resulted in the company essentially splitting in two, with the original Kasei Company being recognized by the government as the real one, while the rogue KaseiCo and its associated bases were split off. Despite the best efforts of Kasei to reintegrate these territories, a military intervention in the 2000s was off the table and diplomacy had no chance of working. Still, KaseiCo managed to turn a profit by selling its mined metals to other independent Martian colonies and joining the Union of Free Martians. For many years, KaseiCo merchants travelled the desolate southeastern deserts of Mars to trade with the rest of the planet, while gaining its population via looking for desperate people on Earth or Mars looking to start a new life somewhere far away.

tosol, the lands of KaseiCo have a population numbering 9,000 people according to the most recent estimates, with most of them being migrants from neighboring Hellas-Malena or Nusantara, with a smaller amount of people from the poles, Argyre, and Lunae. The population in KaseiCo is stratified between the rich, Japanese-descendant 監督者 **Kantoku-sha** (Overseers), often the few original settlers of the region and part of the companies' Board of Directors. And the 職人 **Shokunin** (Workmen), the working class who labor on menial jobs like fixing the mining robots or cleaning up the second guy this week to get crushed between the tracks of that landship over there. The corporate system means that life in the colony, at least for Shokunins, is poor at best, and freedom of speech, expression, protest, and other basic human rights are greatly restricted. Meanwhile, long work sols and minimum pay that's just paid back to the company make life as a Shokunin a life of indentured servitude. Still, it may come as a surprise that the actual living conditions in KaseiCo aren't appalling - to satisfy the worker population, homes in the country are often larger than counterparts even in the richest Martian countries, food needs are met, and many luxury amenities are provided, although this is really all just bread and circuses to make sure the working population doesn't revolt.

Foreign relations are another thing entirely. While KaseiCo remains in a good relationship with its fellow alliance members, its associations with its neighbors are far less friendly. Kasei (Now Hellas-Malena) still claims the territories here, along with Nusantara. Over the years, both sides have tried and failed to integrate KaseiCo into their own territories, but continued failures on these fronts have led to the area becoming a sort of neutral zone between the two powers,

because if one or the other decided to actually, say, invade it, the other would consider it an invasion of their own territory, and that could lead to very bad things. KaseiCo traders legally can't travel through Nusantara's territory, but they don't care, they still do it every sol - the Nusantara Ranger Forces arrest them sometimes, but for the most part they're let off with a bribe.

## FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NUSANTARA

Indonesia has a long and travelled history in space; the nation has tons of space stations in Internesia, tons of Lunar bases, and established its first settlement on Mars as far back as 1975. tosol, Nusantara is a massive powerhouse where over 200,000 people live, and the Federal Republic ranks as the 7th-richest nation on the planet, just behind Argyre. The bulk of Nusantara's economy stems from its global influence in construction and infrastructure sectors, and its continued innovations in the fields of martian architecture and engineering. Dozens of government-owned companies which own their own subsidiaries operate planetwide, assisting other Martian polities and infrastructure groups on the fronts of feasibility studies, planning, and the actual construction itself - a fact which can be seen even within its own borders, as Nusantara has built incredibly extensive infrastructure projects over the years. The most notable of these is the **Great Hellas Aqueduct**, this massive, mostly-underground pipe system connecting the major cities of Hellas to water-ice mines and water filtering plants was constructed as a joint project with Japan and India between 2015 and 2023, and future plans want to run the pipes all the way up to Nova Patria. Meanwhile, a number of large electric and rocket-fuel piping systems connect the major cities of Nusantara and Hellas-Malena in the basin itself.

Nusantara began as one of Mars' healthiest democracies, but a lacking political culture and the apathy of its residents led to its parliament being lobbied by infrastructure companies over the years. While in the old sols the country would've been shown as bright blue on the democracy map, now it's shown as purple - elections are rigged most of the time and the average person doesn't have much say in what the government does. This usually isn't a problem, especially for cities far away from the capital, as they function autonomously, and freedom of speech isn't infringed on too much.

Most residents of Nusantara speak some variety of the Indonesian language, with small numbers of people in isolated settlements speaking other Indonesian languages (confusing, I know). In spite of this, Bengali is actually the second most spoken lang, most prevalent in the south among poorer migrant workers brought in by the Indonesian government between 2016 and 2024.

Nusantara's religious population is perhaps worth mentioning too. While Islam is the most widespread faith due to the nation's predominant Javanese population, other religions, such as Buddhism and Christianity are also extensively-practiced, coming in at second and third, respectively. At the same time, new faiths have also made their way into Nusantaran culture - while FOTG hasn't managed to convert a significant amount of people here, the Deorinan

religion, a latter-sol UFO-faith founded in Malaysia in 1973, is popular among northern cities and especially common among the younger generation. Another interesting community present especially in southern and southeastern cities is **The Coalition**. In spite of terraforming being a little-discussed issue usually not taken seriously in official contexts, The Coalition (of Hellas Cities) is one of Mars' largest anti-terraforming movements, which formed due to terraforming advocacies in Utopia and Tharsis almost a decade ago now. The principal reason The Coalition exists at all is because, in the case of terraforming, Hellas' cities wouldn't just be flooded, they would be under literal kilometers of water - not even making artificial islands would be possible, and the cultures and peoples of the basin would simply be destroyed.

## COMMONWEALTH OF ARGYRE REPUBLICS

In 1984, with the assistance of Commonwealth space initiatives, Australia got its first man on Mars. By 1990, Argyre Land was a relatively large colony now run and maintained entirely by Australia's own space industry. Indeed - early colonists of Argyre came from not just every state of Australia, but also from New Zealand, Indonesia, New Guinea, and Pacific islands such as Fiji, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Micronesia and many others - by 2000, there was even one singular Nauruan living in the city of Argyre Land. Speaking of, Argyre Land, capital of the Commonwealth, is where the government is run out of. With a Senate, a House of Representatives and a Prime Minister just like Oceania - though like Ares, Argyre functions as a largely independent body from its earthly parent country, with its institutions operating independently of their larger counterparts, and with the Commonwealth having its own states and territories which do not usually classify as part of Oceania-On-Earth. In the same vein, the Commonwealth has leeway to make its own laws and policies, collects its own taxes which are usually not sent back to Earth, and even operates its own very small armed forces.

**Argyre Land** itself has a population nearing forty-thousand, while its collar cities add another near-fifteen thousand. These cities are populated by all the aforementioned Pacific ethnic groups and even people from India, Bangladesh, Japan, and China. Meanwhile, the cities of Moana and Uluru, the former of which operates semi-autonomously under the **Pacific Lease Territory**, are inhabited by Pacific Islanders and Aboriginal Australians, respectively. Moving away from the state of Argyreland, the state of **New Outback** is known for being the crazy libertarian state of Argyre, an equivalent to Ares' Elysium, just even more unhinged. **The Great Western Territory** used to have a pretty small population due to its distance from, uh, everywhere else - but the collapse of Areopotamia and subsequent refugee migrations have allowed the territory to bring in a substantial amount of people.

**New Victoria**, on the other hand, was (obviously) founded by people from the state of Victoria, though tosol its population comes from all over Australia - still, most of the people here hail from somewhere in Southeast Australia. **700 City** is a bit of an oddity. This cyberpunk, silicon metropolis is so large that it is its own state in Argyre, but it wasn't founded until 2005. Envisioned by a Tasmanian billionaire in 1995, the city was laid down in the mid-2000s and was "completed" by 2013, although construction is still ongoing to this sol. The reason why this city is so rich is because of its location along a major trade artery, as well as its large spaceport, which

is the second-largest in the entire country serving far-flung regions. What's more, cooperation with Highshovel and Perseverance led to even more growth, and its position at the terminus of the Trans-Tharsis railway has given it even greater economic influence. On the contrary, the state of South Argyre is home to a wide array of different groups with an even wider array of different beliefs - like other similar settlements covered in this doc, these towns do exist, but due to their tiny size are not pictured on the map. The further you go south, the more Indian it gets, with most people in these cities being at least minimum bilingual Anglo- and Hindiphones.

The Argyrian economy has, of course, the usual suspects such as mining and manufacturing, though entertainment is also a major facet of its income, as well as other niche industries. The Amundsen-Argyre Aqueduct was envisioned connecting to Areopotamia, but you can see why that plan fell through. Nowasols, the aqueduct thins out until ultimately ending at the city of Hooke. The New Outback fork of the pipeline might be extended all the way up to the equator once Argyre and Viking's rail lines are finally connected.

A fringe movement growing worryingly-fast in the Argyrian political sphere is the **Aquarius Movement**. The movement is greatly in support of terraforming Mars - almost to an extreme. But why, you may ask? Isn't Argyre in a basin that would be flooded? Yes, it is, and this is why the Movement advocates for genetically modifying human embryos to have gills and be able to breathe underwater - something scientists have been working very hard to make work back on Earth. Aquarius is controversial due to its somewhat eugenic nature, although its followers claim that people who don't want to convert their babies to fish-hybrids would be fine.. Except they would be underwater. Anyway, despite the popularity of the movement becoming ever-more popular, the idea of terraforming is still far-off and probably won't happen anytime soon, so there's no worry. Well, they still want gillbabies to be born immediately in preparation for when Mars is terraformed.

But aside from movements like this, Argyre is still a free country with stable politics and a political culture that would make certain nations look at it in awe. In fact, the nation ranks among the top 5 freest countries on the planet, with its quality of life following close behind. This explains much of why the nation is a common refuge for asylum-seekers and stateless people from all around both Mars and Earth - lots of cycler-folk who came to Mars and were unable to become a citizen anywhere else came here.

## **INTERPERSONAL STATE OF AONIA**

We may have already discussed the Raelian Religion earlier in this doc, but that's only half of the story. The Interpersonal State of Aonia is home to 76,203 people as per the latest census, and every single one of them is Raelian. Well, at least in public - in reality, thousands of Aonians are FOTG, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Buddhists, or any other faith, but the reality is that Raelianism is a state religion in the country, with lawbreakers being sentenced to slavery at best, and being experimented on at worst. The reality is that Aonia's extreme growth both demographically and economically primarily stems from their intake of poor people from all around Earth and Mars, advertising themselves as a refuge for people to make more money

than they could in their home country, while giving them three square meals a sol and a free place to live. In reality, for most of Aonia's population, living conditions are absolutely abysmal while devout Raelians carrying AK's force you to build new colonies for 12 hours a sol in a shoddy spacesuit held together by duct tape. If you want to move up in the Aonian social ladder, good luck if you're one in this cohort. To be higher class in Aonia, you'll most likely already have to be a devout Raelian on Earth, and the Church will move you to Mars on a mission that you may or may not come home from (although, most Raelians on these missions stay on Mars by choice). But once you get here, even at the lowest ranks, life is quite good - remember those things the lower class was building? You'll get to live in those.

Indeed, life varies even at this level, with your average AK-weidling Raelian living a much different lifestyle than the people at the top. The diplomats and politicians in control of Aonia are the most-respected saints of the Church. While the leaders of the Raelians are known to the public on Earth, on Mars, this is a different story; an 11-15 man anonymous Council (we don't know the exact number of seats) calls all the shots behind the scenes, while a public president with little to no real power acts as a figurehead and international diplomat. But life for someone between the followers and the masterminds is nice - mind you, you still can't really say anything against the Church or the State, which are so close together that they may as well be a unified entity - but if you've already made it, or been born into this level of society, you probably won't even have any rebellious thoughts. This is in part due to the fact that Aonian state-education teaches children that they essentially equate to cells in the machine of their faith, their country, and their future - that their child- sorry, clones, will live prosperous lives when that time comes to pass, and right now, despite how bad their lives may seem, everyone should be united in working towards that goal. Aonian propaganda seen by adults reflects these notions.

Indeed, it should come as no surprise that Aonian policy pushes the tenets of the Raelian religion to extreme extents; instead of having a child the normal way, you will have a clone grown in an experimental artificial womb - clones are the children of the future, and the children that will revive the ancient paradise of the Elohim. Everyone that is part of the Faith - man, woman, or anything in between - are forced to undergo this process once they have reached a mature age and if they have few or no physical or mental defects - while the immigrant "lower class", while not actually sterilized, is effectively banned from undergoing cloning or having children. This forced growth is the other contributing reason to why Aonia has such a massive population. Human cloning and artificial wombs were both invented on Earth, heavily funded and lobbied by Raelian groups less-insane than the one present on Mars, but still sharing much of the same beliefs. And while both technologies are controversial, they are also incredibly beneficial in specific circumstances - it's just that the Raelians didn't invent them for these purposes, they invented them so they could build their society on Mars. Aside from these two innovations, a number of other genetic-engineering related breakthroughs attributed to the Raelians have come to be on Mars. And the reason why is because the nation operates underground laboratories that experiment on, well, sometimes animals, but more common are humans, because there's more people on Mars than there are animals. Almost all of these humans are felons and/or heretics, and also coincidentally, most of them are of the working

class. It is not uncommon that these people disappear after they're arrested and sent to one of these labs, although the exact nature of the experiments isn't known.

Still, despite its incredible controversy and hatred due to its aforementioned actions, many Martian nations and polities still trade with the nation. It can't be downplayed how successful the nation is economically, being the richest independent nation on the planet and the eighth-richest overall. Aonia skipped the basic stages entirely - there's really no mining industry - rather, the economy is built around manufacturing advanced technology rare on Mars. From base modules to repair parts to semiconductors, vehicles, medicine and more, Aonia is one of the few places on Mars to produce these extremely complicated goods, which they sell for exorbitant prices, which, while more expensive than ordering from Earth, also doesn't take 5 months to get to Mars. Generally, these economic deals happen behind the scenes, and the planet's public attitude towards the State is less friendly. But even for the countries which fully oppose the State and its actions, something like an invasion is off the table. For starters, Aonia has as many guns as the rest of the planet combined and enough bullets sitting in storage to shoot every single Martian twice - and it's making more, because it's also one of three places in the world to manufacture bullets. While other polities' armed forces can be formidable, most of them are measly in comparison to Aonia's massive, well-armed and loyal Self Defense Forces, which could probably steamroll their neighbors if they ever needed to.

Not all of Aonia is evil, however. Antipodea was a rather small city-state founded by Australian-libertarian Robert Baker as part of the Antipodea Program as what turned out to be a scam. Baker was arrested, but the Aonians kept going and had themselves a pretty successful country - if small - by the 2000's. Though when the 2010s rolled around, the city fell on hard times, especially with the collapse of Areopotamia flooding the city with refugees which overwhelmed its resource supply and life support systems, requiring 175 million USD to be invested in repairs. Curiously, Aonia stepped up to pay for the maintenance costs, but under the condition that Antipodea joined the State. The leaders of Antipodea knew this was risky, but really had no other choice. However, they got out of becoming just-another-Aonian-city by striking a deal to join the State as an autonomous region for the next 25 years before being fully integrated. tosol, the city hasn't changed all too much from how it was prior to joining, and is a kind-of beacon on the hill for those wishing to escape the draconian life of the rest of the state, but the people at the top have caught on and make sure to patrol the border of the Autonomous Area with everything they've got.

## **FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF WEST AFRICAN MARS**

West Africa had a remarkable post-colonial recovery in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, going from a ragtag group of newly-independent countries all speaking different languages and following different cultures, to a rich, united multiethnic federation with a remarkable standing on the international stage. While it's not in the best place for space travel, the nations of West Africa pre-unification all got slivers of Luna in the Selene Treaty. Post-unification in the late 1990s, West Africa and its newly-united, strong space industry set out to build its first colony on Mars, which it did in 1998 with the founding of **Mer**. In a bid to appeal to the international

community and get more people to Mars for the sake of national pride, the West African Space Agency greatly promoted Mars colonization in the early 2000s, aiming for the goal to “Get All West Africans on the Red Planet” - this also included international missions to bring Liberian, Sierra Leonian, Malian, and Nigerian astronauts on missions to Mer, which was now known as Cluster City. By 2010, a project to build a ring of cities around Cluster City had taken hold, each named by West Africans via a contest, using their native language - with the constructions also planning to feature traditional architecture from across the Federation. The construction of these cities officially finished off in 2019, though none of them have managed to gain a significant population, and many people assume that their construction was more an international statement than a real way to get more people to Mars. Cluster City, on the other hand, has grown immensely from its small beginnings to a large metropolis built within a domed crater, with a labyrinthine system of tunnels and districts dug underground spanning out from the center. Cluster City’s economy leverages off a surface industrial district, which refines metals extracted from colonies further afield into something that can turn a profit.

Meanwhile, **Christsboro** was founded by a small organization of fundamentalist West African Christians during the late 2000s, and due to cultural differences (as well as a fair bit of lobbying), the city of 1,200 was granted a status as a “Free City” in 2015, giving it a plethora of extra options of for policy/lawmaking and general autonomy that other cities in the Federation don’t have. Life in Christsboro is exactly how you would expect life in a christian-fundamentalist governed city to be. Meanwhile, **The Rhombus** was founded by the associated Rhombus Organization, a widespread UFO-cult most prevalent in Gabon and the Ivory Coast. Adherents to the cult worship aliens and their rhombus-shaped UFO’s, and believe that Earth is destined to be destroyed or colonized by an alien species, meaning that humanity must travel and settle other worlds. Small numbers of Rhombus adherents live on Luna, but the largest community, numbering about 6,000 individuals, lives in this region on Mars. Yes, the cities themselves have architecture based around Rhombi, the cities are arranged in a Rhombus, and the only thing they’re missing is for the region as a whole to have the borders of a Rhombus.

Aside from a low and dispersed population of Templars in the south, there are few settlements here and the ones that do exist are, for one, too small to be pictured on the map, and for two are inhabited by even more African UFO-cults, often with adherents numbering in the dozens.

## **AD INFINITUM**

Bulgaria was never really all that into the space race. Well, it’s position in the cold war and the need to fit itself into the global economy after the Warsaw Pact fell apart didn’t help, but the actual reason why Bulgaria had a very minor presence in space is because of its lack of significant spaceports - when the Soviets built launch centers for their allies, they put more funding into places like Romania, or Indonesia, or anywhere that’s actually good for launching rockets, and Bulgaria got the short end of the stick - something it couldn’t compensate for by making rocket parts or fuel either. By the 2010s, the Bulgarians finally caught up and took a gamble on rocket startups. One of these, **TeknoSpace**, was founded in 2002, but didn’t gain prominence in the Bulgarian space industry until 2014. Its expansion since has been nothing

short of remarkable, with the company funding and constructing a new launch center on Bulgaria's coast and refurbishing the nations' decades-old outdated space stations and lunar bases.

By 2019, TeknoSpace was in the top 15 valued companies in Bulgaria, and had been planning out a mission to Mars for the past several years. This wouldn't be any normal mission to go and build a base or something, no, Teknospace was planning out a moving city to the likes of the two that had already been built on the planet, and advertised the project to Eastern European and Middle Eastern magnates who heavily invested in the project for an opportunity to live in luxury on Mars. By 2023, construction on the project, now known as Ad Infinitum, had been completed. The structure was constructed in Hellas-Malena by the well-known landship firms which already had experience with building moving cities. During the "Fitting Out" process in early 2023, 500 rich Eastern European colonists travelled on a cycler ship to Mars, arriving in Hellas-Malena on June 23rd and staying a month before the rope was cut on Ad Infinitum and its residents were shown their new penthouses. A number of delays and issues with the city's movement inhibited the thing actually moving out of the shipyard until earlier this year, and even more mechanical issues have stalled it even more, which is why it hasn't even gotten out of West Africa yet.

## **REPUBLIC OF NIGERIAN MARS**

West Africa built its colony in the 1990s, but Nigeria didn't get involved with it until the late 2000s, and even then, the Nigerians didn't want to be a full part of the program. Instead, Nigeria-On-Mars was founded in a then-uninhabited region just north of the communist city of Vanguard, with the Nigerian government incentivising advertising fronts and startup companies to promote notions of a Martian "gold rush", except this time, with even more rare elements. By the 2000s, when hundreds of men, women, and families had moved, including many people from West Africa's preexisting cities, to the Nigerian Colonies out west, the facade was dropped and everyone realized that the region was the opposite of what it was advertised as - resource-poor and essentially useless. Some people left for the future city, others still went back to West Africa's colonies or started new lives even further afield, but most stayed right where they were despite the region's relative worthlessness, because most people simply don't like leaving their entire life and culture behind for something new.

A scandal with the Nigerian Space Agency and West Africa which followed led to the reformation of the Agency, as well as the Nigerian Colonies being released from the rest of West Africa's claim as part of a larger Nigerian retreat from West Africa's sphere of influence, both on Earth and on Mars. Meanwhile, the Republic reformed itself from a state with a non-elected administration to a semi-democratic policy with a constitution, a unicameral parliament and a president, as well as a provincial system wherein provinces gain minor say over policy making decisions. With a population of 14,203, Nigerian Mars is one of the smallest semi-federal states on the planet. Oh, and then there's Rossi Crater. This small crater city was founded by a Nigerian-nationalist ethnic organization in the early 2010s, though said organization going bust and a subsequent period of decline, has led to the city switching gears and gaining new

prominence as an autonomous entrepot to Nigerian Mars, and subsequently the far more desirable Future City, which people actually want to go to. Speaking of.

## INDEPENDENT STATE OF FUTURE CITY

Future City never lived up to its initial plans in the 1990s. Plans promising a fusion reactor by the 2000s with the largest arcology on the planet surrounding it, to have the most cutting-edge technology in the world for everyone. Future City in 2025 doesn't have a fusion reactor, and only part of that massive arcology got constructed - while the inside does have some advanced technology, it's advanced for the 2000's - by 2025, the decorations fitted 20 years ago have become gaudy and outdated while the technology is actually lagging behind most new Martian cities.

The government of the City is composed of a unicameral technocratic parliament heavily influenced by corporate and religious influences, although the laws haven't been so fully infiltrated as to take away core human rights. Back in 2018, the parliament thought it would be a great idea to cancel the construction of the rest of the central arcology entirely and build a new city out in the desert. Now known as "Future 2", this star fort shaped structure panned out as an even bigger failure than its predecessor; plagued with mechanical issues since the start, and unable to attract residents from further afield, Future 2 is a rundown mess mostly maintained by The Yakuza.

## VANGUARD COMMUNE

While most communists opted to go to Venus, some didn't like the authoritarian stalinist-esque authoritarian communism in the aerostats, and the insane costs of building something floating in the skies above hell. This is why hundreds of grassroots leftist organizations made their way to Mars instead, and the most successful of these, at least as an independent state, has been Vanguard. Derived from movements in Paris, New York City, Boston, and London in the late 1970s, the movement gained prominence on the net during the mid-1980s in major cities across the US and Europe. By 1990, the grassroots "**Millennium Vanguard**" movement had become extremely prominent in leftist circles, even though not everyone agreed with its ideology of settling Mars. Still, in 1991, the movement and its newfangled associated organization had pooled enough donation money and secured a contract from, er, West Africa, to build a small settlement on the true outskirts of civilization. Growth was slow and disagreements were high at first, but by 2005, the colonists had come to an agreement for the future of the city.

Tosol, Vanguard is a semi-isolationist polity only connected to the outside world via landships and lacking any decent road connections. It has managed to counter the economic deficiencies of isolationism by building itself as a near-complete self sufficient state wherein resources are equally distributed in the population and new modules for agriculture are added as needed. The city's districts govern themselves highly autonomously, with a workers' council which fluctuates depending on the size it's required to be at the time. Despite it being a Jeffersonian idea, the colonists adopted an integral policy in which their constitution is revised every 19 years to

consistently fit the needs of the new generation - although by the time the 19 years is up the constitution has usually changed so much that it's unrecognizable from its original format anyway. The first constitution was written in 1995, revised in 2014, and will next be revised in 2033.

Vanguard's most influential impact on Mars has been the pioneering of "Martian Native" architecture built with bricks and mortar in the same way buildings on Earth have been for thousands of years; the only thing that has to be imported is the life support system. Vanguardian policies have supported this kind of architecture over more costly options since the polity's inception. Familial structures have also been disassembled in Vanguard - while families on Mars are generally a lot more decentralized than on Earth as it stands, in Vanguard this is taken to a whole new level with children being raised by a larger social group, and to at least some extent, the whole city, with their parents having relatively little input.

### **GERMAN COLONY OF ROTERSAND**

Not everyone supported the pan-european cause that EuroTharsis put forward, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the German Colony of Rotersand. The colony can trace its origins back to the **Deutsche Klassikfront** (German Classical Front), a right-wing traditionalist group especially popular in East Germany and Austria following reunification in the 1990s. While not explicitly "Nazi", the movement did promote a belief that Germans needed a homeland away from the globalists on Earth, and to do this they needed to go to space - after the colony was founded, notions of Islamophobia and conspiracy theories about globalists trying to erase European cultures by uniting the continent played into their rhetoric. But in the early 2000's, they were still just sane enough, and had enough people who had STEM degrees, that the (tiny) German Space Agency took them up on their offer to set up a small research base on Mars. Rotersandstadt saw its first hundred residents in 2009, with more flowing in over the better part of the next half of a decade - a time in which the colony leaned much more right and got much more hitlerite. By 2016, the German government on Earth, as well as the ESA and Tharsis Confederation were all condemning the policies and actions of Rotersand's government and had to threaten cutting the colony off from the outside world to get them to cool down.

nowasols, Rotersand is by no means perfect, because a lot of the racists went over to Thule in the second half of the 2010s, but it's a lot better than it was 15 years ago. Doesn't mean they want to join Tharsis, though, nope, they still hate Tharsis and don't want anything to do with their supposed "Secret Agenda", and nowasols the Rotersandians mostly trade with West Africa and Lucusia anyway, barely get anything shipped in from Germany itself - perhaps history is destined to repeat itself, but only time will tell.

### **UNITED MARTIAN NATIONS TRUST TERRITORY OF THE MARTIAN SOUTH POLE**

We started our trek though the polities of Mars at the north pole and we're gonna end it off at the south pole, although there'll still be things to cover between borders and societies up in the sky. From the time the first satellites flew by Mars, the North was always a more attractive location

than the south; now, this was in part due to that the major civilizations on the planet were initially in the northern hemisphere, and the southern hemisphere outside the basins went mostly uninhabited up until the 2000s. But the south pole does have glaciers and water - less of it than the North, but it still has it. Unlike the North Pole, which was rushed by American companies, organizations, and colonists, with smaller numbers of water-rush colonists from around the planet, the South Pole was built by Australians and colonized by Indians. Like its northern counterpart, the South Pole was placed under a UMN administration in 2004 and the construction of new settlements was outlawed unless under very specific circumstances. This means that despite its overwhelming Hindu population, you really don't see settlements named in the language - rather, the original names chosen by the initial Australian colonists are still in use.

Meanwhile, the Amundsen-Argyre Aqueduct, constructed between 2018 and 2021, provides water to countless small Argyrian settlements in the South before reaching larger water refineries in the basin itself, where the water is filtered and refrozen to be shipped all around the southern hemisphere.

## **The Nonwestphalian Oddities**

Nomadic culture on Mars has existed since the 1990's. It exists in a large variety of forms for a large variety of reasons. Whilst when people imagine nomadic groups on Mars they often think of them in the same way of their analogs on Mercury - these opinions are often misnomers, however - indeed, while there are cult-like tribes, many nomadic groups exist for just causes, like infrastructure construction/management in place of local or federal governments, mailing, law enforcement, and more.

### ***Dreaming Under The Stars***

*N/A, N/A*

*N/A, N/A*

Tashi looked into the sky, scratching the positions of the sky's countless points of light into a flat plate of sheet metal, connecting the dots with lines to form a rudimentary map of constellations. This process was done every six months to keep an accurate map of the stars, which are what her tribe uses for navigation. She had been out here, sitting alone in a small vehicle all night. While waiting for more stars to come over the horizon, Tashi briefly reflected on her life, her place in the universe.

Tashi Vanlonger was born - actually, she doesn't know when she was born, nobody really keeps track of that, but she thinks that she's somewhere around 7 Enums old. Her earliest memories she can pin to about 2 enums old, playing with some of the other kids who explored some room her parents told her to never go to. She listened and didn't go in, but a few of the kids that went in never came back out, which was strange.

Throughout her childhood, she learned the basics of her native language, German, from everyone else around her. Her parents and the elders told her when she was young that they had some kind of generational mission to “Restore the German Nation”.

Now, Tashi had never been to Germany - in fact, she barely even knew what it was - to her, the German people and their land is more of an abstract concept than something which physically exists. She knows she lives on Mars, and she’s heard tales good and bad about other people who apparently also live on Mars, but she’s never seen any of them with her own eyes.

Because she’s a Nomad

The Vanlonger family came to Mars many years ago, from another world far away called “Earth”, an even more abstract concept to Tashi. Maybe twenty five or thirty of them came, sometime in the 1980s, but by this point everyone’s forgot what Earth was like and where they come from. They have no radio contact with the outside world, no GPS, nothing. Which is why Tashi has to chart the stars so the elders can run some math that’s far above her level, and point a pin into a rugged, torn old map of Mars so the Vanlongers know where they are.

Now, whenever that is, the Vanlongers number fifty-four individuals, living out of a small group of solar-powered cars and trailers, constantly circling somewhere in the world’s northern hemisphere. Nothing is logged or kept, there’s no paper to do that - even Tashi’s star maps are tossed once they’re not needed. Food is grown in dingy hydroponics systems, and sometimes one of the elders will take the cars and bring back packs of bagged food that’s always like nothing she’s ever seen. Not her business where they get it, she can’t even eat it yet.

Before she could finish thinking, Tashi could hear the airlock of the vehicle she was in activating - she was alone and meant to be focused on watching the stars, so why would anybody disturb her?

Two men whom she had never seen before came out of the airlock, donning space suits not tan like she was used to, but bright white, and much more lean. She couldn’t see who they were through the black visors on their suits, and they spoke to her in a language she’d never heard before - it seemed close enough to German, but it definitely wasn’t.

The flags on their shoulders weren’t red and white and black like she was used to - the flags had two stripes, a black one on the bottom and a yellow one on top, with a red symbol of some kind on the left side of the flag.

They tried to calm her down, used body language. One of them went back out the airlock while the other stayed. About 15 minutes later, he came back with a glowing metal box with stuff that changed on the screen. They used it to translate their words into her language.

“We are here from the Rangers, Please, follow us for a moment”. Rangers. Rangers Rangers Rangers . Where had she heard that before? Rangers. She swears she recognizes that name. Rangers.

They attached something to the airlock, and brought her into a different vehicle. Much nicer on the inside, nothing broken, no rust, people that looked like her and people with darker skin that she was taught to hate by the Elders, she’d never seen one until now. Maybe this was the evil society she was taught to hate, maybe it was a dream.

They sat her down in one of the backrooms. An older man with a beard walked in, he asked her “What is your name?” in fluent German. She refused to speak at first, but after some time, she responded “My name is Tashi. Tashi Vanlonger”. He wrote something down on a board and handed it to someone else who left the room.

“Who are you, Where am I a- Where is my family?” Tashi asked the man, who now identified himself as Walter.

“We don’t know where your tribe is, we do have trackers on you, but it would take a few hours for us to find where they went-”

“Went? What happened to them?” responded Tashi before he could finish

“I was just about to tell you” “I don’t know what they had you out in that car for, but, I’m not sure how to say this, they left you there” “One of our rangers saw your car and thought you were stranded” Hearing this, Tashi went silent.

“If you need to get some rest, sleep, we can give you a room, I can come to talk if you want” said Walter after roughly five minutes of her silence.

Without a word, Tashi got up from her chair and followed Walter to a small pod about a hundred feet away. The vehicle they were in was huge - nothing she had ever seen before, but it wasn’t time to question that right now. She didn’t go to sleep immediately. Now in a more comfortable, shut-off space, Tashi talked to Walter about where she was, what she was doing here. It had been about two hours, she estimated, since when the people in white suits invaded her vehicle.

The people who had found her and boarded her vehicle were from the United Martian Nations, part of their Ranger Forces. The rest of the people she’d seen were from all over Mars, Walter himself was from a place called Fairbanks. It turned out that something called a “Landship”, apparently a huge vehicle that’s used to transport people across the world, was within a few miles of her. Walt assumes the rest of her tribe spotted it and drove away in a panic.

The conversation ended, and Walt stayed outside until Tashi fell asleep.

Before we cover the actual cult-nomads of Mars, we should start off with the much more common and far-less extreme nomadic or semi-nomadic groups. So-called “Infrastructure Collectives” present in most large polities of the planet and some smaller ones make money off of cooperating with and getting paid by larger governments in exchange for taking the burden off of infrastructure construction and/or maintenance. It isn’t uncommon for groups like these to maintain roads, pipelines, electric lines, and more. These might or might not have a central base of operations, and even if they do, few of their members actually live there full-time, with makeshift bases being common constructions where work needs to be done. Hundreds of these are present across Mars, with most of them having several dozen members at most - still, a few of these have grown to have thousands of part- or full-time members with major regional or even global influence. Members of these groups are known to cooperate with or even be dual-members of the UMN’s **Martian Ranger Corps**. The Aresian Highway Commune is the largest of these, numbering about 2,000 nomadic members with an estimated 10,000 people “in reserve”. The **Crimson Roads Community**, currently operating in Nusantara but historically present in Tharsis, maintains the titular Crimson Roads, the largest Martian highway system, stretching from Hellas all the way to Kiele.



*Martian Ranger Corps License Plate*

In a (somewhat) similar vein, not-so-nice groups such as gangs, transnational cults and other organizations of people claiming some kind of territory might or might not fall into these classifications, but that’s not to say they don’t exist on the planet at all. Secret societies which manipulate governments from behind the scenes are far, far more prevalent on Luna, though they exist on Mars in a minor capacity, usually influencing regions and cities rather than entire polities.

Anyway, cults. The **Rythm** Tribe was founded in 2016, and is currently present in Lucusia. It is one of the most devout Solarian movements, and circles the planet on or as close to the equator as it can get. Life inside the tribe is hard to get information about, but it’s known to have an eccentric, sometimes-megalomaniac leader who often goes sols to weeks without speaking to the rest of the tribe, and only gives cryptic orders or warnings about the enemies of the sun when he does. Meanwhile, **Los Exiliados** primarily circles the Boreal Plain in New Argentina and Amazonis, sometimes trekking into Rothbard or New Albion. The tribe is made up of people (Mostly Hispanic) who have been “exiled” from the rest of Martian society for one reason or another. The presence of stateless people due to early colonial policies of simply exiling criminals from colonies led to the early-founding and growth of the movement. The **Equimarchers** may travel the same route as the Rythm, but their motives are far different. Back in the early 2000s, satellites and ground-expeditions revealed vast aquifers near or at the

Martian equator, and this group is a sort-of nomadic polity of prospectors which seeks out great water deposits and/or new types of Martian life, also often taking in many people shunned from the rest of society. The **Water Kings**, a Philippine group in the northern part of Larangania, was founded in 2014 to scour the northern regions of the polity for water reserves in a desperate attempt to found a colony and make money off of the water. Despite their failure to find any major new reserves or convince anyone to develop the region, their leader maintains that one sol they, or their kids will discover the mythical "jackpot" water reserve and become royalty. The **Lost People** are a majority-Arab group roaming the southern hemisphere. Similar in nature to Los Exilados, the Lost People initially served as a new home for shunned or exiled, stateless people from the southern part of the planet, and in recent years their numbers have ballooned due to the collapse of Areopotamia and the increasing extremification of Aonia adding to their numbers. And last but sure not least, the **Polaris Commune** circles the South Pole Trust Territory as another of the major international infrastructure groups.

Mars' biggest nonwestphalian group is mostly settled, however its residents are scattered across the entire planet. The **Mars Society** was founded in 1987 as a small fraternity based in New Albion. For many years, the Society flew under the radar, with its single lodge only bringing in about 20-30 people in its weekly meetings, dwarfed by other societies of the time. Beginning in 2000, the Society's first leader died, and his successor enacted a series of reforms which transformed it into a far more public entity, along with making it easier to join. The Society was also given a purpose, turning into a global quasi-militia/crime prevention group operating in small "cells" around the world, which could re-establish order if a city ever fell into chaos, in lieu of Curtis Sliwa's *Guardian Angels*. The changes caused many older members to leave, but also led to a wave of new members joining - when Telsat became popular, its numbers continued to grow. The Society operates globally, even in regions where it is banned such as Aonia. Its most notable historical action has been its intervention in Kawasan's Blacksand War and peacekeeping operations in its capital. The Society's members were regarded as heroes by people across Mars following the war - as a result, the UMN gifted it a sort-of "Quasi-Independence" wherein its members are citizens of the landless Society, and hold passports and other legal identifiers pertaining to it.

## Above Mars

### Orbit

Martian Orbit, more commonly referred to as **Areonesia** - mostly by the locals - is, well, the space above Mars in the planet's orbit, also commonly including Mars' solar lagrange points and sometimes stations above the martian moons, although these are more commonly associated with their parent moons and associations than Areonesia. There are a total of 94 space stations in the region, including the lagrange points, which range in size from small modular-habitats, sometimes even inflatable, and much larger rotating wheels, stanford torus stations, and

inflatable bubblehabs. The first station in Areonesia was **Ares-Haven-1**, which served the first ten astronauts to land on the planet, old AH was a conglomeration of small rotating wheels and zero-gravity modules, before undergoing a massive renovation in 1995, adding a large rotating wheel and morphing its zero-gravity section into a large interplanetary spaceport. *tosol*, Ares-Haven has lost its title as the absolute largest station in Martian orbit, though it still serves a hugely important purpose in Areonesian trade, and is home to thousands in several rotating wheels. Meanwhile, **Dinokiller station** - Mars' first corporate orbital habitat - turned into the red planet's first tourist trap in the 1990's, *tosol* it still serves this purpose and is the destination for many Earthly families who have young children and are migrating to Mars - after a long cycler journey, you can take a breath and explore the animatronic dinosaur exhibits, fly around in the zero-gravity bubbles, or take a trip to the museum of Arezoa, where you can find real fossils of ancient Martian life. While most of the station operates at a centrifugal gravity between 0.3 and 0.4 g's, one section of hotel rooms moves "inward" towards the center of the station every night to give the accommodations just 1g of gravity. It really is a nice introduction to Mars, especially for the children, and also comes equipped with a fairly sized port serving cycler-transporter ships.

**Port Nautica** learned lessons from early zero-gravity bubble stations in Earth and Mars orbit, but the technology to build cheaper inflatable Onsinsky Spheres had not come along yet, so Port Nautica's zero-gravity sphere is a half-kilometer wide ball of very thin metal keeping the atmosphere in. Inside the sphere, you can find an array of about 40 "floating islands" consisting of small houses to entire city blocks built in earthly architectural styles - as expected, Port Nautica is home to much of the full-time zero-g populations in Mars orbit, and has the infrastructure needed to accommodate them - the sphere is flanked by two smaller rotating wheels for the population that's used to gravity, one of them containing a nuclear reactor, and the other leading out to a large port complex. Port Nautica gets more of its money from zero-gravity specific manufacturing than it does from tourism, though. **New Kasei Station** is a pair of half-kilometer wide stanford tori collectively home to 8,000 people, and gets most of its money from entertainment and precision-manufacturing, while **Booster Bay** took on an ambitious project in the 1990's and 2000's to turn itself into a bernal sphere, but after a series of delays and disasters throughout the late 2000's (some old guys in the bar suspect these were terrorist attacks by Phobos or Deimos, no proof), the project was cancelled when less than half the sphere was completed, and the bones of the would-be sphere have been built onto with the same style the rest of Booster Bay is infamous for; rocket boosters, fuel tanks, and other spacecraft parts which were never meant to house humans, bought cheaply by the station and converted into wet workshops, or more accurately, wet residences stacked on top of each other and connected by a maze of zero-gravity hallways. But of course there's new stations, and if you read the 2001 doc you'll already have read at least half of this. **Timur** and **Fisherpolis** are known for their rotating agricultural modules, which have the only pigs, goats, and several other fauna species in the Martian system, of course used to produce ultra-exotic fresh meat bought by the folks around Areonesia and down on the surface, and the exorbitant prices make the stations' business model sustainable. **Talaria**, Europe's primary settlement, meanwhile, has become the largest station by population, being the permanent home of an impressive 9,000 people. Many of Mars' other colonizers of course have their own stations up here in low Areonesia or even some in the higher orbits, but they're all smaller and wouldn't be worth talking

about in detail due to their similarity, but it should be worth mentioning at least that the Congo has a station up here despite not having any real territory down on the surface, so that's fun.

The independent states of Areonesia are weirder - for one, the OG Port Mars is still Mars' beloved (or behated) red light district attracting tourists and travellers from all over Areonesia, now with three other Stanford Torus rings like the first one, a half-finished half-inhabited kilometer-wide ring, and a planned, but not started, kilometer-wide ring on the other side. All the interior surface area, or more like square footage, makes Port Mars about the same size as the country of Monaco, all filled to the brim with sex-hotels, sex-theatres, sex-shops, sex-supermarkets, sex-casinos, and many more normal things with the adjective sex- added onto them. New immigrants coming from Earth usually pick Port Mars as their stopover before they go down to the surface of the Red Planet, instead of one of the dozens of more normal Areonesian stations, because everyone would want a break after the several-month long trip in a cramped bunk with saran-wrap walls and MRE food that's a cycler, giving Port Mars a truly massive economy rivaling even nations and colonies on the Martian surface.

## **MIJIYAWATU**

Meanwhile, Mijiyawatu is an Onsinsky Sphere measuring 5-kilometers in diameter, wi- wait, what's an Onsinsky Sphere? Named after Russian scientist and writer Ana Onsinsky, (1929-2005), who both invented the sphere and featured it heavily in her later sci-fi works, the Onsinsky sphere is essentially a massive inflatable bubble which is filled with breathable air. Since Onsinsky spheres have no gravity in and of themselves, you can place open-roofed stations within them where they just float, and you can float between them. And due to their relatively small volume before they're inflated, and the cheap(ish) costs of manufacturing the material that contains the air (it's not just plastic, it's like.. Space grade plastic), means that these spheres are far less costly than larger solid stations like Port Mars. Several of these spheres are scattered around Martian orbit with many more present in Earth orbit, but the only independent one here at Mars is Mijiyawatu. The station-state was first dreamed up by Japanese billionaire Haruto Watanabe in the 1990's. Watanabe was big into space and sci-fi, and his life's path had been getting to the highest levels of the Japanese space industry over the course of the 1970s and 1980s, but now it's the mid-1990's, and Watanabe goes to the library one sol where there's some new books from Russia in the sci-fi section, and one of these contains a supposedly really cheap way to make a space station. Watanabe brought this to his colleagues in the office where they proved that the idea was indeed plausible, and similar inflated balloons had actually been launched by NASA all the way back in the 60's, although these NASA balloons were crude communications satellites rather than anything to live in. The first Onsinsky Sphere was launched in 1997, a small prototype to test the strength of the material - however, development on the Sphere concept would cease in the last years of the 1990s after roadblocks were put up by the Japanese government due to safety concerns. Turns out, Watanabe's sphere had given pushed him up the ranks of the company over the past few years, turning him from a space-millionaire into nearly a space-billionaire, but unable to get "his" creation approved by the government, he resigned, took his money and fled to Romania, tried to get a startup there to launch his sphere, where shoddy materials caused it to explode, and the

company he originally started at got the sphere approved and copyrighted its design. Watanabe started his own company after this, recruited a combination of old colleagues from Japan and Romania, as well as Brazilian rocket scientists, where they in-secret built a new sphere over the mid-2000's, using his colleagues to steal important design elements from his initial company, which had now launched several in Earth orbit.

In 2007, they paid a couple million up-front to get their "oversize" cargo loaded onto a cyclor to Mars, and all jumped aboard. After reaching Mars, Watanabe and his cabal set up in Martian orbit, and through some haggling with the newfangled Lagrange Society and its rocks in L2, were able to get the thing filled with air. Immediately, his sphere attracted the attention of everyone on Mars, who'd never seen such a thing before, and thousands wanted to see it or move there. The unexpected amount of interest spurred heavy investment and the first true settlements to be built within the sphere - these "Islands" use unpressurized and unorthodox zero-g construction techniques, but this also makes development within the sphere much easier. Nowasols, the interior of Mijiyawatu's sphere houses several dozen of these islands ranging in size, with a population of 5,000-7,000. Watanabe himself died in 2014, and passed down control of the station to one of his close-colleagues. The station specializes in the niche of zero-g oxygenated manufacturing, and tourism, as some islands function as mini zero-g theme parks where people can experience microgravity while being able to breathe, somewhat of a norm in Earth orbit, but a rarity in Areonesia.

## **TERARA STATION**

The third and final of Areonesia's fully-independent nations aside from the Lagrange Society (we'll get to that in just a moment), is Terara Station. To understand the roots of Terara, we first have to go all the way back to Earth, a very important place on Earth.. Maine - but we're not talking about lobsters or wildlife here, we're talking about ROME! The organization Nova Roma, dedicated to the revival of ancient Roman customs and culture is not headquartered in Rome, but rather, on the quaint coasts of Portland, although there are delegations in Copenhagen and Budapest. Anyway, in 2005, a splinter group of Nova Roma, named Terara, splintered off and convinced a few hundred of Nova Roma's members to live in a compound in Northern Maine to plan what would be their great trip to space. Each planet had its own ups and downs, but ultimately, Mars was chosen as the destination. Only issue: Terara didn't have any money. Around 2007, New Jersey's favorite entrepreneur, actor, TV-star, and part-time multi-hundred-millionaire rocket scientist Johnnothan "Johnny" Saverino had just hit the ripe old age of 60 and was looking for a new career path - hm, go to Mars? At this age? Alone? Nah, that's for youngsters - now joining a cult-ish compound of Roman LARPer's in northern Maine? Now that's more like it. Saverino retired from his acting endeavors after the flip action-romance-racist film 'A Shooting Star on Venus', to join the Terara Compound, which now had just over 3,000 permanent residents.

Turns out, Saverino really loved the Mars idea, because he'd already considered going to Mars but didn't really have anyone to do it with, so he used his vast funds and increasing mental insanity to fund the Terara Compound's mission to Mars; of course this wouldn't be to the same

scale as the other space stations in Mars orbit, but it would still be something big. Fast forward to 2012, Terara has commissioned a station-builder in Earth orbit to build a small rotating wheel hab, which is then shipped to Mars via cyclor, and the first residents arrive in 2014. tosol, Terara has another wheel, and its compound in Northern Maine is still active - its operations have been moving to mars - albeit at a snail's pace. The Terarans initially tried to emulate Roman Empire-type governance in their compound in Maine early in their history, but quickly learned that fascism wasn't all that swell, and switched over to the slightly more democratic methods of the bygone Roman Republic, which carried over to Terara Station. Terara Station maintains a doctrine of neutrality in Martian orbit, only going as far as to join the United Martian Nations, and stay out of the Lagrange Society as all but a few orbital polities have done.

## **EURO STATIONS**

Of course, there's also the **Euro Stations** - a small but sizable conglomeration of former-European stations in Mars orbit. The Euro Stations were initially fully integrated into the rest of Europe's mars colonies, but through a series of events too complicated to fully get into here, involving zero-gravity independence protests on the French stations, and the resignation of several station administrators, the Euro Stations gained a sort of pseudo-independence and became sort of like a trust fund to Tharsis and the rest of the ESA's Mars colonies, with each station having its own unique form of governance and flying the flags of both the ES and Tharsis, which actually has little to no governance over any of the stations.

And then there's **Anteros**. Anteros is a prospective ring system to one sol encircle Mars in space stations, solar panels, nuclear fusion plants, bernal spheres and o'neill cylinders, all connected to the surface by a series of space elevators - the first one to be built on the highest equatorial point on Mars - Pavonis Mons. Right now, none of that exists, and the Anteros ring system is really just a very thin wire circling the planet at Geosync, which was really controversial at the time due to the sheer amount of material it took to just do that. The space elevators intersect Phoban orbit, but the smart folks designing the ring have a solution for this; they'll just tilt the whole thing a degree whenever Phobos is due to intersect an elevator. Anyway, where is the ring right now? Well, as I just mentioned, all that's been completed is that wire around Mars, and the biggest concerns for getting the thing done right now are material and labor concerns - I mean, Earth hasn't even built an O'neill cylinder yet and they have all that metal from Luna, how's Mars gonna build 100 of them? The space elevators are also a concern, because while scientists say they'll find a way to build space elevators off the equator, their brains, however big they are, haven't come up with anything that's very cost effective other than building another elevator on the other side, which would most likely be hundreds of kilometers away from anything else. Ares especially isn't happy about not being included, and is looking into purchasing Finland's territory for their future space elevator, but the Mars-worshippers that live there aren't very keen on mixing with the Greek LARPer down south, so that whole thing might cause some drama down the line.

## **The Moons**

## PHOBOS

Phobos is Mars' innermost and largest Moon. It can trace its human presence back to 1982, when a relatively small mission from the British Space Force landed the first few humans on its surface, and set up a short-lived base near the edge of Stickney crater, did some research on the moon's composition, and left. Then, in 1985, the BSF came back to Phobos with bigger plans, just as scientists and futurists back on Earth were drawing up all manner of methods for the colonization of the \*rest\* of Mars. Stickneydon was founded near the older now-abandoned research base and grew into a colony of several hundred within just a few years. The American Trailblazer Program landed the first Yanks on Phobos who founded the settlement of Phobostown in the same year, and then in 1986, China, looking to gain at least a flagpole in the Martian system, founded the colony of Tianmen on Phobos' surface. Now, the colonies on Phobos were pitifully small at first, but grew faster than most expected due to an abundance of water-ice deep inside the moon, as well as a smaller conglomeration of metals deeper inside. The mining industry was spurred on by the development of industrial centers and rocket-fuel manufacturers on Phobos' surface, especially around the three largest cities, also spurring on the creation of many smaller settlements and stakes across the moon in search of its smaller metal deposits. While most of these are abandoned tosol, some are still active, and there are dozens and dozens of small remains from the dormant colonies, or old drills which found nothing, all across the surface.

The "Ice Rush" cities dotted across Phobos peaked at hundreds or even thousands of people in the late 1980's to the late 1990s, but declined beginning in the 2000's once deeper wells on the Martian surface gave colonies easier access to water, and most of Phobos' ice-rusher population moved into the three largest cities. Aside from the three largest backgrounds from the US, UK, and China, Phobos also attracted quite a sizeable Bhutanese population, and slightly smaller Nepali population coming in from independent colonization groups from both of those nations on Earth, and Phobos tosol has the most Bhutanese people in one place aside from Bhutan itself. It was around the early-2000's when Phobos realized it needed to diversify its economy, and it needed to do it fast. Luckily, water has the ingredients needed to make rocket fuel, and as Areonesia, especially Lower Areonesia, began to get more and more crowded, Phobos saw an opportunity. Until now, ships in Martian orbit were refueling at small stations scattered about, or going all the way up to Deimos with its larger fuel manufacturers and ports. In 2005, Phobos' government got exactly what it needed, when it was contacted by a company from Internesia by the name of **Rotacity International**, who were selling a brand new type of asteroidal settlement. A rotacity is essentially a bowl in a crater that rotates to generate centrifugal gravity, the bowl shape to compensate for any preexisting gravity on the body it's built on. Rotacity was contacting Phobos, because its engineers had come up with a truly insane concept to build one of their cities in Stickney Crater - indeed, it would be the largest project they had undertaken as of yet - but they knew that Phobos' government probably wouldn't be all-in on this idea at first, so they proposed a smaller project to the Phobos Administration, to be built in East Side Crater, a smaller crater within Stickney Crater. The administration was hesitant at first, but approved the project in 2005. China saw this and began construction on their own discount rotacity in 2006, and the massive Stickney Rotacity saw its

construction begin in 2009. In 2012, both the East Side and Tianmen Rotacities would prove to be massively successful, greatly expanding Phobos' economy and bringing in a new wave of immigrants, mostly from Deimos and some from Mars itself, who wanted to take advantage of lucrative business opportunities in the new rings. Also in 2012, the Stickney Rim Rotacity Project was expanded to include a massive sub-orbital spaceport, industrial complex, and new city on top of a space elevator connecting to Stickneydon - Port Cabot, named after the first Brit in the new world, symbolises the joint-construction of the project by the United Kingdom and United States - it is a small O'Neill cylinder connected to the Franz San Galli Heatsink Complex, which will serve as a power-generation and heat radiation complex for all of Phobos. Port Cabot and the Heatsink aren't done yet, but the elevator and skeleton is, and the entire project is expected to open for contractors to develop by 2030.

Meanwhile, the Stickney Rim Rotacity finally reached operational capacity - it had already had its centrifuge turned on since 2018, but this was the point when contractors were allowed to come in and start fully developing infrastructure inside the ring. As of 2025, the Rotacity is home to about 15,000 people, including a fair amount of its former construction workers, and a quite large number of former East Side residents. The ring is currently divided into six "districts", with six "Glingas", greenish spaces using Martian regolith as soil; the name comes from the Dzongkha term for "Park". The largest of the Districts is **Steel Bottom**, a name derived from the Washington D.C. Neighborhood of Foggy Bottom, where Phobos was discovered from. S.B. also harkens back to D.C. by being the location where most of Stickneydon - and Phobos as a whole's government is located, being the home of the Phobos Congressional Parliament building (another example of Phobans trying to merge American and British terms). Steel Bottom is, arguably, the nicest area on Phobos, and the most developed part of the ring insofar. Looking into the crater, bordering Steel Bottom on the left is **New Emzei**, deriving its name from the semi-famous module/city district MZ-1 in Old Stickneydon. New Emzei is known for, among other things, being the new home of thousands of construction and maintenance workers who built the ring, and it has a noticeably more utilitarian flair than Steel Bottom, which S.B. doesn't really like all that much, and they keep trying to get Emzeians to move farther away from the capital or attempt to make the buildings look more appealing. **The Greenway** over on the other side of Steel Bottom is unarguably richer than New Emzei, and is known for being home to some of the biggest millennial yuppies on the entirety of Phobos, while also being the location of Stickneydon's schools and second-largest library behind the one next door in SB. The Greenway's architecture is known for having many small greenspaces and parks, with the outer shells of buildings incorporating older British/Londonite styles in their designs. While the exteriors are British, the interiors tend to lean on the side of what you might find in an older American suburban house of the 80's, of course simplified down to what you can access on Phobos. **Little Thimphu**, on the other hand, is back over on the other side and is right next to New Emzei. While New Emzei leans on the side of a melting pot with all of Phobos' various peoples and their backgrounds, Little Thimphu is overwhelmingly Bhutanese, and has attracted a ton of the Bhutanese Diaspora on Phobos. As such, the architecture here tends to take on a more traditional Bhutanese flair, everyone's a bilingual Dzongkha/English speaker, and the food is Bhutanese-British fusion (already common on Phobos before the Ring was finished, just overwhelmingly present here). Some consider Little Thimphu to be a district of a district within

New Emzei. While The Greenway is arguably the richest part of Phobos, the Blackway on the other side of the Ring is, well, maybe not the poorest, but definitely the dirtiest. Named as such because it is a conglomeration of various factories and warehouses the farthest from Steel Bottom you can be. The Blackway was also the first district that was allowed to undergo preliminary construction before the gravity was even turned on back in 2015, and was the first district to open up for business before any of the others even had their furniture put in. Due to this early opening date and the district's purpose, The Blackway has doubled Phobos' industrial output, being the size of all other industrial districts on the moon before then. Not as much of a mob hideout as you'd think, either, what mobs do exist on Phobos have stuck to the East Side. Also the only part of the ring that doesn't have glass as its ceiling, rather being completely opaque. And finally for the ring itself, **Martinsbase Development District** borders The Blackway to the right and The Greenway to the left. It serves as a sort of buffer between the two, however, not very much of it has been built yet. There are plans, yes, but the Ring is really trying to get all of its other districts up and running right now, and they don't have enough time to put all their energy into this last one, they're really just waiting for some construction firm or Earthly colonization group to take a contract, but that already happened once and the group trying to do it went under. Right now, Martinsbase is home to just a few hundred people and a few hypothesized money-laundering fronts, but at least the curve in the ring is enough to block a direct view from the Blackway to the Greenway, and that's pretty much the only use Phobans see for it right now.

Very Very simple map of the Ring if you don't understand where everything is:



Aside from the Ring, Phobos has a few other old and new developments. East Side is the old largest settlement on Phobos, with its internal area measuring about the same area as just one of the Stickney Ring's districts, and it's like all six of these new districts plus more pushed into a space that small, East Side got \*crowded\* is what I'm saying, and while not entirely to Hong Kong or Kowloon Walled City levels of density, it was quite densely crammed and known to be difficult for the The Met to keep under control at times. This is why a lot of East Side's populace is moving to the new ring while most of its organized crime is staying behind in the shady, cramped corners of the older city. Stickneydon, while I've been referring to it as just the ring, also includes **Old Stickneydon**, which is the 80's original district and first settlement on Phobos, known for its older rocketi-architecture, zero-gravity buildings and tiny centrifuge.

Indeed. Old Stickneydon has lost a great majority of its initial population, first to East Side in the 2000's/2010's, and now to the new ring, it still maintains some significance as a museum and historical home of the administrators of British Phobos, while being the location where official presidents of the U.M.N.'s Phobos administration are inaugurated. The Chinese colonies on the other side of Phobos are known to be less inviting to new recruits, but are still home to a small collection of Chinese-aligned nationals from around the world - most notably, being Ethiopians, who have little to no presence anywhere outside the Earth system - the Tianmen ring is actually slightly larger than East Side's rotacity, but has been infamous for being quite "glitchy", including

one incident in 2017 where the entire ring's emergency braking systems came on for literally no reason and flung everyone and everything to the ground, injuring 447 people and forcing the entire ring's population to spend 3 months in microgravity while its systems were fixed.

Several hundred Chinese nationals used this opportunity to move to East Side and work on the Stickney ring. U.M.N. Phobos, located at the south pole, is a rotating wheel attached to the surface and the center of all the UMN's governance on the moon, which notably has less control than on Deimos. The rest of Phobos' settlements are all small, mostly-deserted ice mining towns only really populated by families who don't want to pick up and leave, or engineers and tinkerers fixing the robots that all mine the ice nowasols. Many of these towns have deep holes digging down up to a kilometer into the moon, and have underground tunnels directly connecting to other towns, as driving over the surface of the moon is expensive and kicks up loads of unfavorable dust. People going blind in these zero-gravity Phobos and Deimos colonies was one of the drivers for Aonia to push the development of bionic eyes in the 2000's and 2010's, in a race with Earth to do the same. Because cybernetic eyes are still quite expensive, these cities only have one or two individuals with them installed, who use their vision on behalf of the rest of the colony.

And finally, **Port Cabot** and the **Franz San Galli Heatsink Complex** are part of a space elevator structure bound to turn Phobos into a massive intra-martian port of its own. Port Cabot itself is a small O'Neill cylinder type structure measuring 3 kilometers in length and 2 kilometers in diameter providing a usable internal surface area of 18 square kilometers, similar to that of Nauru. The Heatsink Complex, meanwhile, is a conglomeration of massive heat sinks to cool Port Cabot and the Stickney Ring, as well as industrial complexes and a fusion reactor which should be able to power the entire moon. Right now, both Port Cabot and the Heatsink stand as incomplete frames being decked out with their shells and piping and wiring, but they should both be operational by 2030, and contractors are already getting their hands all over the properties on the inside for when the place is open.

## DEIMOS

Deimos is Mars' second and outer-most moon. It is smaller than Phobos and less metal-rich than its inner brother. Human activity on Deimos dates back to European missions in 1985, with the first human to set foot on its surface being German-national Thomas Becker, who had already spent time on the surface of Mars. Becker becomes more important in this story in a few decades, but we still have to talk about the rest of Deimos' early history.

The first permanent settlement on Deimos, **Hauptstadt**, was founded in 1986, and quickly became a popular stopover destination for incoming and outgoing Martian spacecraft. And then in 1988, East Africa blew everyone away by landing a man on Deimos and founding Maji Base as Deimos' second settlement, though Japan would respond to this by founding the colony of Taiyo just two kilometers away. Taiyo and Maji Base would have somewhat of a legendary (at the time) rivalry throughout their early histories in the late 80's and early 90's, with copious

amounts of espionage and even pitting the two nations' martian administrations on the edge of conflict at one point.

In 1995, however, this period ended as Japan and Eastafrica decided to merge their Deimos administrations into one, forming the **EastAfrica-Japan Deimos Administration** (EAJAPA). In the wake of the Martian Moons Treaty of 2000, Deimos was placed under the administration of the United Martian Nations - and Deimans, already quite used to international cooperation since the creation of EAJAPA, were quite lenient towards the UMN and its administration, essentially handing themselves over to its governance. In practice, while Deimos is an administration of the UMN, and while its bases are de jure under the administration of their Earthly builders, Deimos itself functions as a wholly-autonomous body from both of them.

Up north, **Orb City** was founded as a city splitting the pie between public and private interests, and generally grew into what most Deimans consider the "weird corporate cyberpunk city where everyone's blind", oh that last part? Orb City is almost entirely zero-gravity inflatable habitats with stacked rocket architecture on the interior, meaning its original residents have gradually lost their vision over time. To sol, a lot of them have cybernetic eyes. A lot of the blind community has migrated to the new spheres up in space in the last few years, but many of them see Orb City as their and their families' forever home, which they themselves built, and have decided to keep their roots deep in the ground. Orb City was the original zero-gravity manufacturing hub of Deimos, and it still does that to sol, but the vast industrial complexes of the ring have overshadowed its industrial capacity and the city has had to venture into other fields, mostly the entertainment sector.

Between 1995 and 2000, Hauptstadt and Taiyo raised 5-kilometer tall space elevators on antipodes of Deimos, still generally called the "Double Spires" to this sol, even if the structure as a whole now has a different name. It wasn't long before someone envisioned a ring around the moon connecting the two. This was the beginning of the **New Deimos Project**. The project called for connecting the two points of the Double Spires with a ring encircling the equator of Deimos, and connecting other equatorial cities to the ring. The ring would not rotate, rather, structures and stations which could rotate would be attached to the ring, as well as zero-gravity bubbles and industrial zones, all connected together with a high-speed maglev train on the non-rotating backbone.

Later on, the New Deimos Project, spearheaded not only by new yuppie millennials, economicists, and spacers, but also the earliest residents of Deimos, such as Thomas Becker, the New Deimos Project only really received opposition from residents of The Orb, who feared it would shift the economy away from non-polar areas, or even the entire surface of Deimos. This opposition was not strong enough to diminish the widespread support for the project (Now renamed to the **Shinra Project**), and construction would begin on the inner layer of the ring in mid-2002, and on a rather prospective timescale the backbone of the ring, as well as its two Oninsky Spheres - **Scylla** and **Charybdis** - on the peaks of each of the Double Spires, was completed in 2007. From 2008 to 2017, the rotating O'neill cylinder-city of **Voltaire** was constructed to the east of Scylla, while the smaller connected stanford-torus cities on the peaks

of each double spire were constructed between 2009 and 2014, providing millions of square feet for Deimans to live and work.

On the opposite side of Scylla, the **Asaph Hall Industrial Park** was developed by various Mars-centric manufacturing firms, tosol being a three-kilometer long economic powerhouse with dozens of factories and hundreds of warehouses. Space elevators connecting to every major equatorial city have made mining the moon easy, and indeed, both sides of the elevator have been connected by the Messina Gap, a tunnel bored through the center of Deimos connecting both elevators to create one massive mass-transit mass-cargo line connecting both sides of the moon. The two Onsinsky Spheres, Scylla and Charybdis, while having small rotating wheels within them, have provided a large living area for zero-gravity folks from across Areonesia, and the two spheres have the most visually-impaired friendly infrastructure in the entire Martian system, which is surprising, since everyone living here has to operate in three dimensions.

On the surface, the worst fears of The Orb were kind of proven to be true, but maybe not \*their\* worst fears. The Orb diversified its industries, got into the rocket fuel manufacturing business and connected to the Messina Gap well enough, but it was the other cities of Deimos that the Shinra Project really killed - the Ares Orbital Fuel Manufactory (AOFEMA), Azumabesu, and of course the original cities were just barely able to scrape by, while older towns like Axiom and Flag Base were outright abandoned, with their infrastructure merged into larger cities or the ring itself. Deimos' remaining cities aside from The Orb can look up to the sky and see the megastructures that lie in the sky, to always be reminded of what turned them into ghost towns.

Anyway! Not to be such a downer, what about the people on Deimos? Well, it's a mixed bag alright, aside from the original Japanese, East African and German folks over here, there's not really a major ethnic group other than a quite sizeable Indonesian minority, mostly hailing from the old Indonesian base of Berbukitya, which, like the others, has turned into a ghost town ever since the construction of the ring. Deimos' highest concentration of Indonesians can be found in Voltaire, specifically in its **Lampu** district. Other notable ethnic groups present on Deimos include **Deiman Australians**, **Deiman Somalis**, and **Deiman Pakistanis**, and of course the zero-gravity adapted folk from all across Areonesia, which some are starting to an ethnic group - all of these number in the thousands. A curious minor ethnic group on Deimos is that of former Chicago gangsters. Chicago cracked down on a lot of its gangs of the South and West sides starting in the early 2000's, and many of these former gangsters trying to flee the cops took their chances in space. The first one of these to stay on Deimos attracted the second, and then those two attracted four more, and then it kinda just snowballed from there, and Deimos has this weird Chicago gang subculture, most present in some of the more shady districts of Voltaire. Though contrary to popular belief and what Earthling media would like you to think about Deimos, they haven't really formed new gangs in Voltaire, rather, most of them have left the tough life of crime and are trying to make it by in little niches like laundromats, small restaurants serving some strange Chicago-Japanese fusion dishes, or sanitary services, despite being still discriminated against.

In 2015, before Voltaire was completed, another smaller o'neill cylinder's construction began near the top of Hauptstadt's space elevator. On July 12th, 2017, a 71-year old Thomas Becker, now the head of Deimos' engineering commissary, was overseeing a group of 32 construction and maintenance workers on a zero-gravity "spider" elevator in the middle of what was then called "Thalman Bay", named in honor of the-then administrator of Deimos, Liam Thalman. A fault in the elevator's electrical systems, and an almost impossible failure of all of its backup safety systems to activate forced an elderly Becker to give his last coin to Deimos, sacrificing himself to make a coin flip spacewalk in a desperate attempt to restore the elevator's electrical systems. Against all odds, he managed to get the power back on, but the elevator's lack of an independent airlock system meant he could not re-enter, and his suit's emergency oxygen supply ran dry. Becker's sacrifice was revered across Deimos, and a push to rename the cylinder to Becker Bay succeeded against protests from Liam Thalman, who was elected out in the next election cycle. Becker Bay reached operational capacity in 2023, and is still being fitted out with furnishings and businesses, with only about 1,000 people living in the station as of 2025. Becker had previously wished for no grand monuments or statues when he was to die, and the people of Becker Bay have respected those wishes, only erecting a rather quaint memorial and grave for him in the station's central park. On the opposite side of Deimos, a second structure to the same specifications of Becker Bay is under construction, and is expected to be completed by 2032.

Deimos is almost always the first thing a colonist to Mars will see after their short stay up in Lagrange. Your liner doesn't care where you go from here, they're here to take you from Lagrange and that's it, wherever you go from here is up to you. As a colonist, you'll most likely stay on Deimos for a few sols if you already have business set up down on the surface of the red planet, or stay for a few weeks if you need to organize anything. However, it would be a lie to say there aren't people who stay on Deimos forever, whether they just prefer the cushy zero-gravity spheres and Voltaire's nice clean rotating houses, or they got stuck up here because they somehow weren't able to get a spot down on the surface, whatever it is, this is the origin of many a Deiman immigrant, of course there are also people that have dreamy visions of going to Deimos specifically instead of going down to Mars, may be because they want to live the rich life and see the red planet instead of living the hard life down on the surface, but whatever it is, these number fewer than those who decided to stay or got stuck up here.

## **MILLENNIUM & SVARGA**

Millennium and Svarga are oddities among the Martian system. They aren't natural moons; both of them orbited in the Asteroid Belt, and were moved to Areonesia. The nearer and more important of the two, Millennium, was discovered in 1983 by a telescope in the Earth-Sun L2 Point. The object's relatively small size and monolithic nature made it the target of an American study in the early 1990s exploring asteroids which could be moved to Internesia/Areonesia for mining and living. Millennium was chosen as one of the best targets for relocation to Martian orbit, and a project was initiated in 1996 to do so. By 1998, American astronauts had landed on its surface and equipped the body with nuclear rockets, which would send it on a trajectory to intercept Mars. By September 2000, Millennium reached Areonesia, and was given its current

name shortly thereafter. Immediately, developments to mine metal and water-ice began, although limitations would be placed on mining industries following the initiation of the **Pioneer Plan** in 2006.

The Plan posed to build a ring around Millennium, which would (hopefully) turn the asteroid from a small, short-lived mining station to a full-blown orbital residential complex and a port to rival the natural moons by building an artificial ring around the asteroid. The Project also happened to coincide with an American program to bring colonists from the Caribbean Federation to Mars, with the vast majority of CF colonists coming from Jamaica. Once these colonists reached Mars, although many of them opted to stick with their original plan and go down to settle in Ares, a significant portion of them stayed in orbit, finding work as construction workers on the Pioneer project. The Gravitrons were built as very small rotacomplexes spinning to generate artificial gravity at Martian levels; these were the most densely populated parts of the asteroid back in the day. Bridgeway and Tyrone's hill were both created at the anchor-points of Millennium's three space elevators (the third elevator being in The Gravitrons), while Likkle Kingston was built as a zero-gravity worker camp later in the ring's construction; tosol, it remains the largest surface colony.

The Ring itself was completed in 2014, as the asteroid was spun up to create 0.4G's, with the surface cities getting about 0.1 G's. It didn't take long for high-income families from Mars, Areonesia, and even some from Earth to start moving into the Ring. Laid out with apartment complexes, living spaces, and malls surrounding a central "valley" with small ponds and rivers, the Pioneer Ring is among the closest you can get to an Earthlike city in the Mars sphere. It's also said to have a very cold war retrofuturist flair to it. But the Jamaican workers remained; while some went down to Mars, most of them had built their lives around this tiny moon and decided to stay. Still, most of them are stuck in the low- or zero-gravity bases on the surface, although a fair amount managed to move to the ring.

The Ring's spaceport complexes have taken some business away from the big moons, and is especially busy when the other two are on the other side of the planet and Millennium isn't, but expansions to Phobos and Deimos really dwarf Millennium's spaceport complex, so it hasn't completely taken over the business.

Meanwhile, **Svarga** was moved into Areonesia by India in 2005. The object is smaller than Millennium, at just 401 meters at its widest point, and it's also less influential. Metal-mining projects were halted by the Indian government as the military desired a large orbital military base, but this didn't really pan out either. Now, the government, Indian space companies, and the military are putting all their cards into what they call the "Svarga 2045 Project". The plan is to build a giant Onsinsky sphere, add a spaceport, and use yet-to-be-developed Dyson Tree technology to turn the asteroid into a green paradise. It's gonna cost a billion rupees, and take another 10-20 years, so only time will tell if it pans out.

## The Lagrange Points

Outside the neigh-useless lagrange points a few hundred meters above Mars' asteroid-moons, the planet has the usual five lagrange points with the sun.

What are lagrange points? Well, if you don't already know, a lagrange point is essentially a region in space where the gravity of two large objects cancels out, allowing an object there to essentially orbit nothing. The Mars-Sun L3 point "Counter-Mars" sits on the exact opposite side of the sun to Mars. This point is so far away from Mars that the three stations there (one European, one Mexican, and one Soviet) are entirely disconnected with Mars, and the point has more connections with Earth or Venus because they actually pass closer to it than Mars ever does on a regular basis. Anyway, the L3 point is really boring, so let's move on to the other points.

The L4 and L5 points sit 60 degrees ahead (L4) or behind (L5) of Mars on its orbit. These points are far more stable and far larger than the others, and in fact, it would be inaccurate to call them "points", as they're shaped more like elongated beans many millions of kilometers long - as such, objects positioned here can be very far apart at times.

### LAGRANGE 5

L5 is home to Chinese, Indonesian, and Japanese stations, and the largest human presence in the territory is located on the asteroid of Eureka. While the first probe sent to Eureka was Soviet, and the first flyby was of South American origin, and the first to have a significant interest in landing on it first were the Oceanians, the true first settlers wouldn't be part of any of these. The first settlers of Eureka would actually be of Chinese and Japanese origin in the 2000's, when both landed on it in 2002. To avoid conflict and a potential war over a tiny asteroid in the middle of nowhere, the two powers agreed to share the asteroid as the joint **Mandate of Eureka**. Eureka still exists in this form in the modern sol - now home to a modern small Rotacity (More like Rotatown), Eureka boasts a population of about 7,000 people, with 2/3rds of them being of Chinese descent and the rest being of mixed Japanese and Filipino ethnicities. Eureka serves as a small trade and refueling point for crafts travelling between Mars, Earth, and the Asteroid Belt, which in rarer cases can also include passing cyclers, giving periodic (and predictable) economic boosts to the colony. The other asteroids of L5, three dozen of which have been discovered, are sparsely inhabited by solar-powered robots and their operators, mining ice and shipping it back to Eureka to be made into oxygen, water, or rocket fuels.

### LAGRANGE 4

The L4 point, meanwhile, has just nine large asteroids instead of three dozen. The largest of these, Haleakala, measures just less than a kilometer, while the second-largest measures just 370 meters. Haleakala's human presence is limited to a small Soviet colony and refueling depot, founded in 2005 with a population shifting between the hundreds and never climbing above 2,000. Its tiny refining and rocket fuel manufactory gives it a small economy as a stopover for

asteroid belt craft. Like L5, cyclers also pass through L4, but these are usually millions of kilometers away on the other side of the point, and Haleakala is so small that cyclers don't interact or contribute anything to its economy.

## **LAGRANGE L1 & LAGRANGE L2**

Mars L1 and L2 points are far more interesting. The Mars-Sun L1 point sits about one million kilometers "in front" of Mars, closer to the sun, while the Mars-Sun L2 point sits the same distance "behind" Mars, farther away from the Sun. In the 1980's and 1990's, the L1 point was colonized primarily by the Mars Lagrange Program, at first an international program between the US, UK, and ESA, the program expanded to East Africa, the FSS, Eastern Europe, India, and to a lesser extent, Oceania and South America throughout the 2000's. The growth of cyclers around the same time, which pass through the L1 point on a regular basis, gave a massive economic boost to the region, however the raw number of stations at the point flattened out at 22 by 2010.

The presence of passing cyclers has restricted the placement of asteroids at the L1 point, meaning the entire economy is based off cycler trade, actually, some context; Cyclers don't really "dock" anywhere, they don't stop, they're always moving, instead of docking they send out small ships to dock at Lagrangian stations, which in turn send their own small ships (likely from the last cycler that passed through) back, with their own cargo to be shipped to Earth. These ships refuel at Lagrangian stations, and begin a month-long journey down the gravity well to drop off their cargo down in actual Martian orbit. The largest stations in L1 are Mars Gateway, a 1-kilometer wide Stanford Torus "Donut" station governed by the United States in its Mars Orbit Territory, and Anatolia 2, a smaller mixed wheel-zerogee station under the Euro Stations. The rest of the stations here are smaller zero-g or very small rotating wheels, and while the two big ones are home to a combined population of 20,000 people, these combined are only home to about 10,000, giving the L1 point a combined population floating around 30,000.

Before we move on to the L2 point, we have to take a moment to talk about the Lagrange Society. Remember that Mars Lagrange Program I mentioned earlier? In the 2000's, that program morphed into a non-westphalian pseudo-state, pseudo-nation, pseudo-alliance present in 4 out of the 5 Lagrange points, known as the Lagrange Society. The Society has its greatest influence in the L2 point, where its capital is located, and where it has the most direct governance over cities and stations; its influence in L1 is limited to being a large international alliance with many stations functioning sort of as condominiums between the Society and their respective Earthly governors, and indeed, the Society usually has more influence over local governments than nations on Earth do. In L5 and L4, the Society is limited to an alliance with little, but existing influence. There are many stations which without it would be wholly-independent and sovereign bodies, but due to their membership are considered territory of the Society, explaining the lack of independent stations in the Martian lagrange points.

Citizens are full-members of the Lagrange Society, who vote and contribute to political matters, hold passports and Society documents, and participate in Society meetings. To become a

Society member, you must first submit an application, and if you are deemed to be a well-meaning individual, citizen of a Lagrange station, over the age of 25 who has contributed greatly to your local community, you might be invited to the Society Capital, Primus, a small rotating wheel in the L2 point. Primus is the home of the House of the Lagrange Society, where you will be interviewed by a council numbering 23 of the highest members of the Society, and if you pass the interview, you go home and wait anywhere between a few sols and a few months to see if you have been accepted into the Society. You will then likely travel to Primus again to be taught the ways of the Society and meet its members.

Membership of the Society opens the doors for great political and cultural influence in the Lagrangian regions, as Society members are highly respected around the points and in the lower parts of Areonesia. Indeed, many of the highest Lagrangian politicians and the most known celebrities are Citizens. Even though so many Citizens of the Society live around the Lagrange Points, only the 100 highest members live full-time on Primus itself; of these, the "Inner 23" is the highest body in the Society - and indeed all of Lagrangian society - here, you will find retired politicians and celebrities who have had great and extensive careers dating back to the first human settlers, as seen by the fact that the first person to go to Mars-Sun L2 is a member of the Inner 23.

This should not be treated as a wholly "secret" society, however. The inner operations of the Society may be confidential and politicians are intertwined at the highest levels, especially the 100 people allowed to live on Primus, but the Society and its members are still greatly respected among Lagrangians, Areonesians and Martians themselves. The Society is a sovereign entity in the Martian Alliance, doubling as an international mediating body as well as a sovereign state with its own territory and citizenry.

The Mars-Sun L2 point, aside from being where Primus is located, is also the home of half a dozen relocated asteroid-belt objects used for mining cheap metal in space. While the inner L1 point depends on trade between Earth and Mars via cyclers, the outer L2 point lacks a cycler industry, as objects beyond Mars would make for years-long non-viable cycler orbits. Instead, trade leaving and entering the L2 point, primarily to and from asteroid belt objects, entirely consists of small self-propelled crafts jumping between bodies in the belt, meaning aside from rocket fuel depots for erratic asteroid belt spacecraft, or spacecraft coming from Mars to go to the asteroid belt, trade is second to asteroid mining in the L2 point. As for the people here, L2's earliest colonizers came in the early 1990s, and its colonization wave ended in the early 2010s. People here hail from various non-western nations such as Brazil, the FSS, Japan, Indochina, but the vast majority come from India, while the only truly western country to colonize the point was the United States, with two out of the point's fourteen stations. The US' two stations also happen to be the last free-orbiting stations in the point, as the rest have all since been attached to the aforementioned six asteroids. L2 as a whole has a population of about 8,000, and although there have been Earthly proposals to build "Dyson Trees" out of the asteroids moved here, right now it's a sleepy far-flung part of the Mars system.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the colonization of Mars represents a new era of human history, and constitutes the largest extent of the general colonization of the cosmos beyond Cislunar Space. Over less than five decades, from the triumphant time in which the first people in history stepped foot on another planet, to the modern day, has seen Mars become not just a colony, but its own civilization. In the 1980s, explorers built the first cities & charted the land. In the 1990s, Exonationalism brought the first independent nations to Mars and solidified it as, truly, its own world. In the 2000s, Mars' fresh civilization continued to grow with international efforts paving the way for future generations by building large-scale global infrastructure, while the first people born on Mars reached adulthood, beginning to bear their own children. In the 2010s, the tentative international community began to fracture with the creation of new, rival alliances, and Mars had its first true armed conflict in the form of the Blacksand War.

The 2020s has seen Mars' continued population growth as international cooperation continues via global civil infrastructure projects, although global politics are as divided as they have ever been. The future of Mars has the potential to go down a wide variety of paths, although most anticipate that its population will continue to grow through the second half of this decade, and into the two decades thereafter, before stabilizing as colonization may shift to other bodies in the solar system. People do not predict the current political division will lead to a major war; instead, futurists believe that the alliances of Mars will come together again, and that the UMN will remain a global body of influence.

No matter what happens, Martian civilization, for a long time to come, will be a burning Fire in the Sky.