What is RomeWorld?

What if Rome never fell? What if the western world wasn't plunged into nearly 900 years of rebuilding and relearning what their ancestors knew? What if Rome was still the reigning world power?

RomeWorld attempts to answer this question in an RPG setting. The time may be now, but it's as good as 900 years in the future. Rome rules the world we know, and has even spread to the stars.

Chapter 1 - History of the Empire

Perhaps the first major diversion of RomeWorld from our history is that the Emperor Constantine did not "convert" to Christianity, and did not make it the state religion, from which Catholicism would grow. Also, though Constantine desired to move the capital from Rome to newly named Constinople, growing political pressure within the empire forced him to keep the capital in Rome.

That decision brought about the next major diversion from history, in that the Roman Empire was not divided into an East and West portion, which later prevented Rome from falling into barbarian hands around AD 400.

The third and final diversion from our own history came in the resurgent power of the senators in the political movement called the fasces. The members of the fasces were able to put a yoke upon the power of the Caesars, and their hand upon the seats of power would, in the later centuries, keep Rome from sliding into civil war and finally fall at the hands of barbarians.

The first major threat to Rome after AD 400 came with the invasion of the Mongolian hordes. Though Roman legions had difficulty tracking down the evasive and highly mobile Mongolian warriors, the battles helped to shift Roman forces from primarily foot soldier forces to create a few special legions of fast attack cavalry to counter the Mongolian forces. The Roman legions were able to push the Mongols back eastward, out of Roman lands.

The battle with the Mongols urged the Romans to mount expeditionary forces eastward to find and engage forces found there. Unfortunately, the expeditions ended in utter failure as the Roman forces found themselves caught during winter in the inhospitable steppes of Asia.

In the late AD 900's, Rome found itself facing a new rising nation of the Abbysians, and learned of the existence of far-away Cathay. Since the route across Asia proved to be so dangerous, expeditions began to be financed for another way to reach far away Cathay.

Romans learned from Norse sources of the existence of another land mass far to the west of Europe and merchants began to investigate ways to reach the land, hoping it to be Cathay.

In 942 AD, Roman merchants reached what they thought was a land mass just shy of Cathay. The land was savage, and little came of the discovery for another 200 years – when an off-course merchant-marine ship landed in Central America and discovered the gold there.

Around 1126 AD, several colony and war ships were sent to the Americas, and population of the continent began.

After spending the next 30 years driving back the indigenous inhabitants and pillaging the land for its riches, the Americas were fairly owned by the colonies of Rome.

Contact was finally made with Cathay around 1192, and relations began with the country. Rome was struck by how advanced the Cathay were, and due to the distance between the two nations, relations were fairly peaceful, with trade between the two nations limited to goods (such as silk) and Cathay's invention of fireworks.

Back in Rome, the material used to create fireworks was quickly developed for use in war, with primitive rocket batteries and later guns. By

1237, guns had dismounted the heavily armored warrior on the battlefield and was being replaced by the rifleman.

The industrial revolution hit around 1350 AD, and it caused all sort of problems for Rome and the rest of the world. Things began to advance rapidly in many areas, most especially travel. The first major breakthrough was the horseless carriage in 1401, which began to rapidly replace the horse as the primary means of ground transportation. In 1407, the airplane was invented, reducing the time to reach many destinations from weeks to hours. By 1429, the airplane had advanced from a creature of canvas to a metal frame and by 1443, the propeller powered plane started to be replaced with jet powered versions.

However, tensions between Cathay and Rome were building, and all out war exploded in 1438 when Cathay invaded India. India managed to hold back the Cathayian force for over two years until Rome proper came to the aid of the Brahma people and began the war against Cathay in earnest, sparking what was known as the World War.

In Europe, the Germanic tribes used the troubled time to attempt a succession from the empire, but their efforts were violently crushed.

Likewise, even as Cathay battled India in the Asian home front, it expanded into the pacific, taking numerous south seas islands, including Australia. Cathay hoped that by striking at the Americas, it could pave a road to Rome across those continents, or at the very least end the war in possession of large portions of land from Americas.

The battle against Cathay was bitter, but even though the sheer number of Cathay troops outnumbered Roman legions, Cathay soon found itself loosing ground to the Roman legions. What Cathay had started as a rapid land grab spiraled into a desperate attempt to defensively cling onto any land it

had swept into, and the casualties quickly began to mount on both sides.

By 1445, the power of the atom was harnessed. Not even mighty Cathay could now threaten Rome. However, the reverse was quite true – and Rome used its new-found nuclear arsenal to blast Cathay into submission. By the fall of the same year, the World War was over.

Much of the world spend the next 30 years in reflection and rebuilding. By the end of this time, the first computers were being realized, and the first Romans began the exploration of outer space, around 1479.

In 1520, the first colonization attempt was made of Mars, which failed miserable and inexplicably.

After this horrid failure, the space program turned inward for a while, concentrating on transatmoshere travel and short hops to the moon.

When fission engines became popular, another stab at colonizing Mars was planned, and later implemented. This time, a "lifeline" was extended towards Mars to aid the colony, and the experimental colony survived.

As the years passed, the Marsway grew, until the introduction of the Gravity drive led to several miraculous changes to the solar system. Mars was brought into synchronous orbit, as was the moon, and it enabled a great elevator to be built from the Earth to the Moon.

Chapter 2 - The Empire Today

There is practically nowhere left on Earth that doesn't have a human presence of some sort. While there are still many areas of Earth that have a sparse population – the Sahara, parts of Antarctica, the Marianas Trench in the Pacific – the Earth has a surprising number of cities in places we would find unusual.

The Emperor

Rome is ruled by the Emperor, chosen by the previous Emperor from one of seven sacred families. Supposedly, each of the imperial families draws a heritage from descendants of one of the seven original gods. While the Emperor's palace is on the Moon and the Emperor spends the majority of his time there, at least two full months are spent in the ancient palace on Earth – which is also considered the only place from which the Emperor can elicit edicts or other official orders.

The royal line is above most of the laws of Romeworld, though treason against the empire is still punishable. Royal members have the right to appoint or dismiss local officials (with the Emperor having final say over any such matter) but cannot vote in local elections. The royal line can vote in senatorial elections, and the Emperor has the ability to appoint or dismiss senators as he chooses – though such matters tend to be politically touchy affairs.

The Senate

Beneath the Emperor, responsible for the day-to-day running of the empire is the Senate. There are 100 senators per continent (excluding Antarctica), with an additional 50 senators responsible for the various miscellaneous areas – the Pacific seafloor, the Atlantic seafloor, beneath the Arctic ocean and Antarctica. Yet another 50 senators are responsible for the Plebian Isles and Senator Isles – with one senator representing the Marsway Isles and one senator representing the Venusway Isles. Finally, there are 50 senators responsible for Mars. There are currently no senators for Venus, and the space station orbiting Venus is under the care of the Venusway senator.

Senators are provide special comforts and protections under Romeworld law – for example, they are above the regulations imposed by the local bureaucracy. All members of a senatorial family are allowed to vote in senatorial elections, but not in local elections (though they can campaign for local officials).

Jupitarians

The Jupitarians are senators who have openly thrown their favor to the emperor. They tend to believe in strong, powerful governments ruled by one person and tend to believe that the delegation of power favors corruption and inefficiency. They believe that governments can handle situations better than the average person, believing citizens tend to be short-sighted and do what is best for the moment, instead of for the long run. Jupitarians, while rarely friendly with the military, tend to justify or request the use of military action against any perceived foe of the empire.

The Fasces

The second of the most powerful group of senators, the fasces believe in the power of the populace – or at least, the well-to-do. Fasces tend to believe in choice – made by the people, for the people. The Fasces also tend to favor less laws, believing people to be capable judges and arbitrators of their own actions. They also have strong opinions about the benefits of community service and every citizen taking action to uphold the community. Fasces often square off against the military, whom they tend to see as tyrannical bullies.

Romeworld

Consorts of the Empire

Consisting of companions, dilettantes and other individuals of questionable skills and worth, consorts of the empire generally hold no real power, but at the same time hold a status even above that of a bureaucrat. Any power that they wield is merely the manipulation of those with real power that the consort is associated with. Consorts often rise and fall quickly with age, and as their ability to catch and hold the attention of those in power wanes, they tend to fall by the wayside. The lucky ones become bureaucrats or senatorials themselves, but most are destined to become outsiders of the empire, peddling their declining wares to any who can scrounge the credits to pay for their services. A consort falling to become a plebian or a slave is nearly unheard of; most consorts would long commit suicide before falling so far in society.

Consorts have special protection under Romeworlds law. They can vote in local elections if they so choose (though most feel themselves above plebian politics) and for a fee, can vote in senatorial elections.

The Bureaucracy

Romeworld is home to hundred of government employees who keep the empire running smoothly (or not so smoothly).

There are several levels of government that fall beneath the level of the Senators. The topmost level is Rome Prime bureaucracy. Based in the offices that surround the royal palace, this level handles the affairs that directly affect the Emperor, the senators and their holdings. The Rome Prime sees to the payment of Senators, maintaining the properties of the Emperor and the Senators (in an official capacity) as well as arranging functions

An offshoot directly under the control of Rome Prime is the Standards bureaucracy. The Standards is in charge of printing coinage and paper money, collecting taxes and ensuring business standards including weights & measures, sanctioned practices and investigating interplanetary conspiracies against trade. The leader of the Standards bureaucracy always comes from the Polizia, and the post is approved by the Senate and Emperor. The leader of the Standards division appoints his own staff according to his own preferences, which is normally based on merit. The Standards leadership position is for life, and those in positions under the Standards leadership are generally only replaced with a new leader or by retirement of the old official.

Underneath Rome Prime are the Continental bureaucracies. These bureaucracies hold dominion over things at a continental (or undersea) level on Earth. They are in charge of the smooth running and protection of their territories, including the monitoring of the continent's economy, work ratios, defense and supply levels. The current Continental divisions are North America, South America, Europe, Asia West, Asia East, Africa, Australia, Antarctica, Pacifica (ocean), Atlantica (ocean), and Indara (Indian ocean). The bureaucrats of Rome Prime are almost always of Senatorial or royal blood and are appointed by general consensus of at least four Senators and/or Emperor. Unfortunately, The Rome Prime bureaucracy is full of faux positions created to place a Senator or royal offspring in a place of prominence with a position that has little or no real meaning.

Also underneath Rome Prime is the Planetary bureaucracies. It also includes the bureaucracy that manages Luna, Mars, The Great Elevator, the Plebian Isles, the Marsway, Venusway and Asteroid belt, each a separate bureaucracy within the Planetary division. Their duties are similar to the Continental bureaucracy. There is no Earth division – that has been broken up into the Continental bureaucracy. The leaders of the Planetary bureaucracies are appointed by Senators and approved by the Emperor. They are usually drawn from Regional leaders, but it is also not uncommon for come from exceptional members of Senatorial families. A Planetary leadership post is

reviewed every 10 years, and turnover is not uncommon. Posts underneath a Planetary leader are usually filled with friends and family or someone elevated from the County level. All underling positions expire with a change of Planetary leadership.

Beneath the Continental and Planetary bureaucracies are the Regional bureaucracies. The size of these bureaucracies is entirely dependant on the size of the population – generally 10 million citizens per division. Regional leaders are voted into office by a majority of the County leaders and usually come from applicants "proposed" to the County leaders by Senators or occasionally from County leaders who wish to move up the ranks.. Elections are permanent until the Regional leader retires or is removed from office.

Beneath the Regions is the County bureaucracy. Counties consist of stretches of manageable land of approximately 60-80 miles across. County bureaucracies typically deal in land management and homestead issues, such as managing roads, estate taxes and land development. County leaders are generally selected by Regional leaders and serve until replaced. A county leader usually fills the additional posts of his office with friends or relatives, though there are proficiency exams that must be passed to gain a post of this level. Once a post is filled, it generally remains filled until the County leader is replaced, or the individual retires.

Underneath the County bureaucracy is the City/Rural bureaucracies. These governmental posts are in charge of local oversight of a city or largely populated rural areas. City/Rural regions tend to focus on providing and maintaining services to local residents to promote a growing and successful community. City/Rural leadership posts are filled by popular vote by citizens of the region they govern, and tend to serve posts of 5 years, who serves as mayor. The mayor generally fills all posts in his area with locals – often consisting of friends or families.

Freeman

Freeman is the termed used for plebeians who have achieved a slight financial stability and "freedom" in their lifestyle. Most freeman are middle-class contractors or well-to-do employees of a megacorportion with formalized schooling and specialized skill set. They are equally mixed between renting and owning their own home and tend to have their own vehicle for transport to and from work – often some sort of company-supplied vehicle. Freeman are financially self-sustaining and do not need to rely on the government welfare program to provide sufficient food to live on – in fact, many freeman are able to engage in fine dining from time to time. Freemen tend to make up about 25% of the plebian population, and tend to be found in the largest concentrations on the Plebian Isles and along the Marsway.

Freeman have the standard protection under Romeworld law. They can vote in local elections, and the most well-to-do Freeman can pay a license fee to involve themselves in promoting senators, though they cannot directly vote for a senatorial candidate.

The Military

The military of Romeworld is headed by a circle of five generals called the Pentarchs. These generals are hand-picked by the emperor, and their appointment is approved by the other generals of the Pentarch council.

The military answers directly to the emperor; they have no ties or obligations to the senate whatsoever. In many cases, the military leadership tends to be derisive and antagonistic towards the senate.

The Pentarchs are more political figures than true military generals. They oversee the organization and approve military campaigns, but rarely involve themselves in actual battle planning or military actions.

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Beneath the Pentarchs are the battle generals. There is currently 19 battle generals – one for each of the seven continents on Earth, one for the Atlantic navy, one for the Pacific navy, one for the Plebian Isles, Grand Elevator and the Moon, five for the main Marsway stations, two for Mars itself (northern hemisphere and southern hemisphere), one for the Far Reaches beyond Mars and one for the Venus way. Within a few years, it is believed that some of the posts will be shifted; pairing down the Marsway to two generals, adding a general to the Venusway and adding two generals responsible for terraformed Venus.

The battle generals are responsible for keeping their designated areas safe from enemy attack. Each battle general has 10 legions at their disposal for these duties. In times of increased conflict, it is not uncommon for legions to be reassigned from one general to another to deal with the situation, leaving some generals with less than 10 legions and others with more. To prevent treasonous loyalty from developing among legions and generals, legions are regularly rotated to different parts of Romeworld – usually once a year. This has the added side benefit of keeping the troops experienced – quiescent legions can be moved from relatively safe and quiet territories to combat-rich areas as needed.

Assisting each battle general is a Territorial Advisor. This advisor is elected by popular vote from among the soldiers assigned to the region. The position is mostly honorary, and little more than a morale/PR post to bring soldier's concerns or needs to the ear of the battle general.

Beneath the battle general is a military staff that descends through the ranks down to the individual 10-man squads of the legions. While each battle general has their own unique staffing requirements, the organization tends to follow this established organization, from top to bottom: Territory Command (one branch per territory), Field Command (3-5 branches controlling field/theatre operations), Company Command (2-3 branches responsible for provisioning and housing troops), Legion Command (1 per legion, responsible for directing overall legion activities and objectives in battle), Squad Command (10 per legion responsible for individual troops in battle).

Overall, life among the military is better than plebian life – soldiers own their own housing, are kept well-fed and generally make enough extra income to keep local economies enriched.

However, while the military has not fought a major engagement in over 50 years, there are enough skirmishes, uprisings, pirate and nippon activity to keep the military active, and make life hazardous for soldiers.

The military has its own courts and services separate from civilians. Soldiers can involve themselves in elections for military Territorial Advisor, but cannot vote in local elections or for senators.

Nearly all the posts in the military are obtained through rising in the ranks as older military officials retire or change positions. Only the Territorial Advisor position is an elected post.

The Polizia

The secret police of Romeworld, these individuals are perhaps the most feared entity in all of the empire. Hidden and mingling among all levels of society, the polizia has but one goal – the preservation of the empire, at any cost. The polizia conducts investigations in secret, but strikes with force akin to that of the military. They rarely arrest or imprison those they investigate and find guilty – execution either in the field or after interrogation is the common method of disposing with criminals for the polizia.

The polizia do not report either to the emperor nor the senate. Oddly, they have no allegiance to the emperor; there are legends that the polizia have in past even orchestrated the downfall of irrepairly corrupt emperors in the past.

They rarely involve themselves in military matters, but will investigate illegal activity or coup

plots within military circles. Polizia often occupy themselves with cases of treason, terrorism, corruption or subversion, as well as illegal trade. They generally leave petty crimes to the regular bureaucracy as the polizia are more worried about crimes of a nature that adversely affect the empire as a whole.

While the polizia main interest is to uphold law and order within the empire, they are quite above any of Romeworld's law, and can act against any individual in the empire swiftly and deliberately. The polizia does patrol its own members by spying on them and performing loyalty tests on a regular basis in an effort to prevent corruption within their own ranks. Criminal polizia never go to court; they instead tend to turn up poisoned or simply disappear.

There is no true retirement from the polizia – once and individual has been inducted into the secret ranks, they may survival to an age of inactivity, but they can be called upon at any time back to active duty, and must always be wary to keep the secrets of the polizia safe. Not even the retired polizia are immune to occasional loyalty tests to ensure they have not betrayed the secret order.

The polizia do not involve themselves in electing or appointing officials – at the individual level. The polizia may call for the removal of a corrupt official from office (if the corruption or ineptness does not mitigate assassination of the official). In extremely rare cases, often coinciding with the removal of an official, the polizia may request the appointment of a specific individual to a government post. They may never suggest the appointment of a military official.

Plebians

The majority of Romeworld consists of plebeians – the common folk who live to work within the empire.

Most plebeians are employed by one of many megacorporations throughout Romeworld. The major exception to this is the Plebian Isles. Each Plebian Isle tends to be part of a community that works for itself, contracting work out to another megacorporation, although there are some Plebian Isles that are under direct corporate control – usually through a buyout of the isle.

The majority of Romeworld's plebeians are unskilled workers who barely make enough to survive – they received either a basic government education or crafted training from their employer, they rent their home from their employer, their food allotment is supplemented by the government's welfare program, use community transportation (or live in a subsection at their work complex or within walking distance to work) and they generally only have access to communal entertainment – vidplexes, communal baths and the occasional fair or festival organized by the community.

Plebeians are protected by the law of Romeworld and are allowed to vote for local representatives. They may not vote for senators.

Plebian-X

Plebian-X is the term used for the upper middle class portion of the plebeians. Plebian-Xer's tend to be highly skilled, trained workers who perform contract work for corporations or are totally self-employed. Plebeian-Xers often have university degrees, own their own home and are generally self-sufficient financially. They most likely have their own personal vehicle for transportation, and may even have access to a space shuttle of some sort. Plebeian-Xer's tend to be most common on Earth and to a lesser degree, on Plebian Isles that are likewise populated with a high number of plebeian-X's. Plebeian-X's make up less than 10% of Romeworld's population, and they tend to congregate in small communities of their own kind rather than associate with common plebeians.

Plebeian-Xers enjoy enhanced protection by Romeworld and often garner extra perks for their status. Plebian-Xers can vote for local representatives, and often have their own representatives separate from common plebeians. For a hefty fee that most plebeian-Xers can afford, they can vote for senators.

Slaves

There are no natural-born slaves in the empire; even slaves who bear children have them taken away to orphanages rather than to be born into slavery. Still it is estimated that the number of slaves in the empire is at least twice that of the plebian population of Earth.

In Romeworld, there are two ways to become a slave, both of which are common enough to be frightening.

The first way is to commit a serious crime (usually a felony, or to be an unrepentant criminal of repeated misdemeanors). Non-violent criminals are sold into private slavery and can expect to remain in slavery for the rest of their life. Even the owner of the slave is not allowed to set a criminal slave free. Only if the criminal is exonerated of his crimes or pardoned can a criminal slave ever seek release from imprisonment. Even then, a freed criminal slave may fall to plebian slavery to pay for room and board to his former master.

Violent criminals can be enslaved, though they are generally kept as property of the state and used in hard labor projects or gladiatorial vidgames. In the latter case, it is not uncommon for them to become the "property" of a Senator and entered into their stall of prize fighters.

The second way to become a slave is to "willingly" sell oneself to a debtor. Since bankruptcy is considered a felony offense (that will make you a criminal slave), many plebeians who wrack up large debts enter into plebeian slavery with the hope of eventually buying themselves out of debt.

However, there are some masters who are adept at rigging the debt of their slave so that the plebeian can never escape slavery.

In both cases, it is illegal for the master to enslave any unborn offspring into the debt of slavery. Any offspring born, or under the age of six, while in slavery is removed from the slave and put into an orphanage.

However, it is legal to enslave the offspring of a slave who is age six or older as part of the parent's debt. The offspring of a criminal slave can never be enslaved for their parent's actions and are instead turned over to relatives, placed in orphanages or foster homes.

It is not unknown for slavers to sell off slaves to other owners, in effect transferring the debt of a slave to another person. In fact, there is a brisk business among megacorporations who do nothing but trade slaves between private owners as their primary business.

Note that by the laws of Romeworld, megacorporations are not allowed to "employ" slaves in their workforce – at least not openly or legally. However, they are allowed to offer slaves to personal individuals for private use.

Chapter 3 - Outsiders to the Empire

Aeoli

Named after the god of the wind who had many children, the Aeoli is a secretive group of renegade slave-fighters with their own mercenary agenda.

The Aeoli was started by a sociopathic gladiator in the 1100's who went by the arena name of Aeolus. Nigh unbeatable in combat, he master placed him in charge of training new recruits to his stable.

While at first Aeolus resented the chore of teaching the inexperienced to fight, his attitude slowly changed as those who survived began to look up at him.

Though Aeolus had little desire to leave the life of murder, he began to realize the power he held over those he trained. He found that through the others, he could secretly feed his own needs and desires. Furthermore, he could exert his influence to manipulate matches - not only for his own benefit, but to affect the fortunes of other Senators who bid coin and other wealth on the games.

The old Aeolus eventually passed on, but the brotherhood he created survived - though over the centuries it has fractured and taken strange twists. The organization is no longer ruled by one individual, but instead by several masterfully cunning warriors who have spread their influence beyond the arena into the world at large.

Each faction of the Aeoli have their own goals; generally to bring wealth and power to its members. Oddly enough, their biggest control is in the area of multimedia; not just over the broadcasts of the gladiatorial games, but they have also come to control other forms of entertainment and even large sectors of the news media.

Though most of the Aeoli are criminal slaves who by right have no voice in government, their control of the media has allowed them to secretly affect the political engines of Romeworld. Such is the Aeoli lords charismatic appeal that even Senators are reluctant to act against them directly, and many even attempt to woo the lords of the Aeoli so that the media will continue to show them in a positive light.

Brotherhood, The

Piracy is a lucrative enterprise for those willing to dare piloting the Marsway against the Roman navy.

Since legal ships plying the Marsway run on tightly controlled traffic bands, prepared pirates can intercept and seize the cargo of freighter ships plying the lanes, while at the same time deftly avoiding any imperial pursuers.

Pirate craft usually employ gravity mines to ensnare starcraft, sending out powerful gravatic fluxes to disrupt fusion torch engines and stun crew.

Pirates have also been known to "bait" ships – disabling one merchant craft to attract others to the area and then swoop in when the good Samaritan stops to help the first ship.

While most pirates operate on their own, there are known to be havens off the main Marsway line where pirates gather – to sell goods, repair and outfit ships, hire crew and revel in their loot. While the empire makes quick work of any they do find, there are enough scattered enclaves that destroying them all might never be possible.

Likewise, while most pirate loyalties never go beyond their own crew, sometimes these nefarious wayfarers will band together to take a single prize or unite to fight off an imperial attack against an enclave. Such brotherhoods are usually formed out of need and dire circumstances than friendship, but the loose idea that all pirates are brothers (and sisters) lurks in the myth of the empire.

There are rumors that some of the pirates are in league with the Nippon, though this seems unlikely. Perhaps closer to the truth is that several

pirates sell their stolen wares to black marketers, who then deal with the Nippon.

Hades

Hades is the first and only city built inside the core of the Earth. Bobbing in the magmatic innards of the Earth, Hades used advanced synthetic materials that are heat resistant coupled with a gravitic drive to keep the magma at a safe distance. This combines to create a city capable of housing several hundred thousand. It is reached by means of a magnetic tram maintained by Rome and Hades, with regular travel between the surface and the fifty-mile deep city three times a day.

Hades pays a yearly tribute to Rome to keep on the massive nation's good side, but for the most part, is mostly left alone. Were it not for the exotic minerals and geothermal energy that Hades harnesses and trades with the outside world, it is likely Rome would have shut off access to Hades years ago, letting it starve for its most precious commodity – food and water.

While Hades is capable of producing both water and food, it cannot produce such needed commodities in the numbers required to maintain the city's population and depends on the delivery of these goods to keep the city's population healthy. In return, Hades mines rare, precious minerals found only in the Earth's core and ships them out in trade for needed supplies. Hades also uses geothermal energies to produce power batteries and other components for gravatic space drives and power plants.

Despite its location, Hades is a rather peaceful and almost idealic city. There is very little poverty and crime is extremely low. Most of the city is automated, and a majority of citizens enjoy a mostly leisurely life in the city – though most fear to leave it and venture out into Romeworld proper. This well-to-do lifestyle and outlook is both

due to the socialist values of the people and its government, coupled with the constant monitoring of all affairs and it population by the government. While not technically a police state, there is little to no privacy to be found in the city of Hades – the city's safety and smooth running is too delicate a matter to leave to chance.

The government of Hades itself is composed of an elected-for-life council of twelve members. Rome nominally respects these council members as if they were senators, though they have no power or influence into Rome's affairs.

Jihadists

Rome has no tolerance for rebellion, and the middle east is no exception. When Islamic groups began performing terroristic acts during the late 1450's, Rome dropped three nuclear bombs on the area. Two were aimed at extremist group fortifications, while the third was dropped on a city sympathetic to the groups. The result wiped out the largest concentrations of terrorists, but ensured the propagation of more secretive and extremist groups. Most recently, this manifested itself in an attack against the Great Elevator.

Though the attempt failed, Rome responded by locating the jihadists responsible and launching the Plebian isle where the cell was located into the sun. This eliminated not only the cell, but its family members, jihadist sympathizers and what Rome still refers to today as "complacent citizenry" who Rome blames turned a blind eye to the jihadists activities (even though the individuals had no ties to the jihadists other than being in the wrong place at the wrong time). So far, no additional major attack has occurred.

Today, the cells are extremely secretive and spread out through various Plebian isles. Their attacks generally are no elaborate than a suicidal attack against a roman official, and they are extremely careful to obfuscate their place of origin. Rome has become very ruthless about not only punishing the individual responsible, but often will hunt down and imprison the family of the terrorist as well. As such, only the most desperate generally

join the jihadists – normally only those who have no remaining ties to friends or family.

Nippon Samuria

While the samurai went out of style as the lands of Nippon (Japan) industrialized, there were some who clung on to the ideals of bushido and continued to fight with the ideals of old Nippon. It was these Nippon samurai were eventually responsible for the Nippon-Rome war in 1732, and when Rome won, the Samurai were ousted from Nippon.

Since that time, the Samurai have sought a way to strike back at Rome for the indignity they long ago suffered. For a long time, they existed as only a secret society bent on returning Nippon to a world power.

With the advent of space travel, the Nippon acquired an Isle of their own from the asteroid belt and established their own base somewhere in space between Earth and Mars.

Nippon has been growing over the years, and raiding the space lanes between Earth and Mars. They are responsible for the destruction of two space stations and one Marsway Isle, but RomeWorld regions have not been able to locate their base of operations, despite the rumor that the Nippon Samurai empire's base is the size of a small moon.

Underworld, the

The underworld is nothing more than the seedier side of humanity made flesh. The underworld is not a hemogenous empire; instead it is a collection of crooks, gangs and various criminal organizations who routinely flaunt the law to do as they choose – generally for their own personal gain or profit.

Among the underworld are at least three well-known major organizations – The Black Marketers, The Underworld (Mafia) and the Jinjoku (Yakuzu).

The Black Marketers are a syndicate of merchants who deal in illegal and/or immoral items. There are a variety of individual bands under the Black Marketers, many of who covertly war against each other. However, as a group, they work well enough together to avoid drawing the attention or ire of Romeworld, and more than a few bands are under the secret protection of various senators.

The Mafia is a collection of roman crime lords who generally exert control over various illegal activities in specified sections of the world. Most of these crime lords are well established and do not dare to roam into the territory of other crime lords. It is not uncommon for these crime lords to know and work with others in the nearby area, but as a whole, since they are criminals, they are not be trusted. The crime lords generally are known by some sort of appellation that refers back to Pluto, the lord of the underworld. Currently, there is believed to be one Mafia overlord controlling the organizations in Europe, two crime lords in North America (rumors vary whether the division is east/west or north/south), one crime lord controlling the Amazonian basin in South America and another controlling the rest of Central and South America. There is also believed to be a crime lord controlling northern Africa (thought to be based in Cairo) and a final crime lord who has control over all of Australia. However, their existence is hotly debated by the common folk in the empire; many think the idea of a crime syndicate boss controlling an entire continent is ludicrous and that there are many more smaller Mafia setups, while there are some in the populace who believe the rumors of continent-controlling Mafia lords.

The Jinjiko are families of Cathay descent who operate in a manner similar to, but very different from, the Underworld. Jinjinko families are generally more ruthless in their acquisition of property and wealth, and open wars between the families is actually more well-known than among the Underworld. Also, whereas the Underworld employ hitmen and thugs to carry out their sordid affairs, the Jinjinko use neoninja warriors to carry

out their affairs. These techno-loving, fear-inspiring assassins of the dark are feared by not only the Cathayan government, but are known and feared among the Romeworld senators as well, and one of the primary reason the Jinjinko have managed to remain alive for so many centuries.

Chapter 4 - Religions of the Empire

The world of Romeworld is filled with a variety of religions; the empire is generally tolerate of most religions as long as individuals are willing to work for the empire at large and accept at least the Emperor of Romeworld as a living god.

While the growth of science and interplanetary space travel has rocked many ancient religious beliefs, most have survived transition into the modern world with only minor changes. At the same time, many religions have taken a back seat to science, and there are a growing number of people who eschew religion more and more, paying lip service to religions only when such is needed.

The Imperial Religion

The official religion of RomeWorld is an updated version of the thousands-year old worship of the gods of old Rome.

While the mythical Jupiter is head of the gods, the emperor is considered a living god, with a lineage that (supposedly) traces back to Jupiter himself.

Meanwhile, the Senators of Earth supposedly can trace their own lineages to one of the other Sacred Seven; Mars, Quirinus, Janus, Vesta, Juno or Minerva. It is, in fact, a requirement one be able to draw lineage to such a god to hold such an esteemed position. However, while many of the old senatorial families can already show such lineages, new blood that enters the fray have been known to pay unscrupulous priests large sums to "discover" their mythical heritages so they may engage in political campaigns. Generally, only the foolish will challenge such claims, lest their own established claims be challenged as well.

It is a requirement of the Senators of Mars to be "anointed" and adopted by Mars himself before accepting office. More than anything else, this is a ceremonial gesture meant to ward off the anger of Mars himself for ruling "his" planet.

A similar observance is held for senators to Venus, though it consists of sacrifices of incense and goods, and there is no adoption into Venus's "family".

The advent of space travel has been hard on the religious views of Romans. While most Romans readily pay lip service to the gods, few hold strong religious beliefs and are generally dismissive of the supernatural aspects of the old mythology. For most, the belief has become that the ancient gods were active among mankind until he began to push into the stars; at that time, the gods felt mankind had "matured" and moved off deeper into space – into the nearest galaxy, many believe – so that mankind could continue to grow and expand, leaving the lineage of emperors to guide mankind into their first steps into space.

Monotheism

RomeWorld lumps the three religions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam into one heretical and outlawed religion.

While the three faiths generally have little to do with one another, Romans tend to lump members of all three faiths under the single religious nametag of Jihadists – though actually only some members of Islam actually claim to be Jihadists.

The Jews of Romeworld tend to be the most insular and quiet of the three religions. Of the three, they are the most likely to profess their faith openly, and to do so they tend to organize themselves into insular sects with little to no outside connections to Romeworld. Dwelling in what is termed "ghettos", they often appropriate areas of the empire that are under little to no scrutiny so that they may live their lives in relative peace. Each ghetto has a centralized synagogue attached with it, and a unity of belief that tends to be universal, thanks to secret communications maintained between most ghettos. Jews rarely allow outsiders into their families,

though they have been known to adopt orphans. Marriage to a non-Jew is strictly forbidden

Christians tend to be secretive in their worship, and are often secretly interspersed in a regular Roman society. Strangely, while the Jihadists have kept open the sores that make their religion persecuted, it was the acts of the early Christians in the days of Augustus Constinople that sparked the original outlaw and persecution of their kind in earnest. Of the three monotheistic branches, Christianity tends to have the most diverse and decentralized form of worship, and it is not uncommon for Christians within the same community to practice their religion in radically different ways. Occasionally, Christians will form pacts in which they secretly obtain a small section of a town, city or in rare cases, an asteroid where their own kind can gather, worship, live and work without openly revealing their existence to the Roman government at large. Of all three of the monotheistic groups, Christians tend to be the least likely to openly rebel against the empire, and instead attempt to work through the government to improve their lot in life. This does not mean that there have not been incidents of violence and/or rebellion among Christians; however, it tends to be rarest among all three groups.

Of all three groups of monotheistic worshippers, Islamics tend to present the most trouble to the Roman empire. Their faith generally requires open, regular displays of worship and open defiance of Romeworld state religion. While a good many Islamists find ways to conceal their worship without compromising their beliefs, many rankle at the paganism of the Roman empire. Their persecution has led to the growth of a sect known as the Jihadists, who seek every method to bring about the downfall of Romeworld. However, this sect represents some 5% or less of the whole of

Islam – yet their acts have, in the mind of most Romans, damned not only the Jihadists and all Islamics, but even negatively colored the views on Christians and Jews as well.

Hinduism

While maintained as a separate faith by citizens of _, this faith has been formally recognized and approved by Romeworld with the understanding that the gods of Hindu religion are in fact aliases of the Roman gods. So long as hindus accept the Emperor as a living god, there is little worry that the faith of hindism will be persecuted or outlawed like the secretive monotheistic faiths.

Shintoism

Still in practice by the Nippon, there are very few worshippers of Shintoism left within the Empire itself. Within Romeworld, it is a very minor religion, which has neither been approved or outlawed by the Empire at large. However, worshippers of Shintoism are closely watched for treasonous displays – especially should one decry the living Emperor as the mouthpiece of the gods.

Shintoism, while maintaining a lineage of gods, primarily teaches there is spiritual power in all things, and that positive spiritual power must be maintained by ritualistic and "correct" action.

Buddhism

Buddhism has invaded all aspects of life in the empire. It, like Shintoism, has neither been approved or outlawed; its worshippers simply are, and they have incorporated themselves into all the existing religions with perhaps the exception of the monotheistic religions.

Buddhism has even broached into Roman religion, though it is far from pervasive. Among those with Imperial beliefs, Buddhism is seen as a method to avoid the gray existence of Hades and retire to a pleasant afterlife. Though far from popular, and often scoffed by Imperial

traditionalists, Buddhism has slowly been growing strength in Imperial religion over the ages.

Buddhism primarily concerns itself with seeking to end the cycle of suffering through enlightenment – rising above the base needs that bind all beings to the world. When such enlightenment is achieved, it is believed that the individual can escape the unending cycle of life-death-rebirth and pass on to a peaceful existence that transcends our own.

Romeworld

Earth

Earth, the original homeworld of man, is also the most populated world in the solar system. While Earth's population has not reached crisis proportions, it definitely is crowded.

The majority of the population are plebeians – young folk who work for one of the vast workhouses based on Earth.

MegaCorps

Without the rise of democracy, capitalism took a different route in Romeworld. The old method of business revolved around apprenticeship, and that system continues today. Aspiring young workers are presented to one of various guilds and taught the ways of the business. They are housed, fed and raised by the business that takes them in. Until they pay off this debt, they belong to the business. Many never rise high enough in pay to exit this debt. Even those who could leave to start their own business do not, as they have little chance to compete against the megacorps.

Long ago, there were a great number of various guilds and businesses that one might be taken in by. However, as technology brought the world closer and closer together, the idea of the corporation began. The original Corporations were much like modern corporations – businesses banded together to produce services for a larger group of consumers, while at the same time protecting the leaders of the Corporation from personal loss. As Corporations grew in size, smaller businesses were quickly drowned down to a small handful, which became known as the MegaCorps.

The MegaCorps are so powerful that they were finally given Senatorial-like power to make governmental decisions. Giving the MegaCorps turned out to be the best way to limit the MegaCorps and reign in their power – for now they spend much of their wealth and power to cater to sway Senators to support actions that increase their profit – rather than rail against the system.

Oddly, the MegaCorps have helped to spawn a great deal of minor, family-owned businesses. MegaCorps are so vast and are so ingrained in making profits they need outside forces willing to take risks to service their own needs. MegaCorps have been known to sponsor a great many minor businesses in remote areas (such as among the Plebian Isles and the Marsway) or to contract out small businesses for shady jobs. Make no mistake – a MegaCorp won't take to being crossed nor will it endure competition – many small businesses have found themselves forcibly acquired once they began to make a steady profit.

Some of the most well-known MegaCorps are Roebuck Supplies of North America, Carnegy Construction Corporation, Lloyd's of London Insurers and Loans, Mercedes Automation of Europe, Kyoto Technology of East Asia and the Burneo Enterprise.

Rome

This is the capital of the world – at least in the sense of political power. While there are several cities that are more densely populated, all political power stems from Rome. For this reason, Rome is filled with various judicial courts and is populated by those who wish to associate themselves with power. It is also home to the Temple of the Emperor, the center of all Roman worship. It is from this Temple that all religious matters are controlled and dispensed.

Africa

Africa is perhaps the most underrated continent on Earth. While the northern arm of Africa has long been under Roman rule, the lands below the Sahara have long been under-explored, with many regions still untamed wilderness.

Below the Sahara belt still dwell a myriad of tribal Africans who do not fall under direct Roman

rule. This is contrasted by the coastal cities up and down the so-called ivory coast and on Madagascar that are under Roman rule and direction.

Unlike South America and its microcities, no real effort has been made to penetrate into the wilds of Africa's lower regions and establish a long-standing presence. For the moment, the jungles and plains of South Africa belong to the bushmen.

Europe

It took until the late 800's before Rome finally conquered all of Europe. The fighting against many of the Germanic tribes of Europe caused no end of bloody combat and resentment for years to come, and the ancient Germanic areas of Europe were under brutal Roman oppression for a number of years.

However, these Germanic tribes quickly unified under this violent oppression and rose to greatness of their own. While several of the first Germanic governors of the area were little more than tyrants sent from Rome, eventually the Germans were able to establish their own governors and built the country's economic status up to near-Rome levels.

Of course, Rome always kept a careful eye on the Germanic people, and when, in the 1500's a series of Germanic governors attempted to oust Roman control by seceding, Rome quickly stepped in and quelled the rebellion. These fascists governors, as they became to be known, spawned a cult following that exists to this day.

There are still small cults, both in Europe proper and among the Plebian isles, who seek to cede the Germanic tribes from RomeWorld and establish a nation of their own.

North America

While there never was an America, Canada or Mexico on RomeWorld, the people of North America can count themselves as distinct as the nations of Cathay once were.

The eastern half of North America is the site of the original colonies, and as such, has some of the oldest existing architecture on the continent. The eastern portion also is most like its European counterpart, while the western half tends to be a bit more free and loose. The northern portion of the continent extends high into northern latitudes, and is generally sparse in population – at least in relation to other areas of the continent.

Most of the southwest portion of the continent used to consist of large areas of desert. However, aquaducting has helped to bring water from the mountain areas down into the regions, and later terraforming techniques transformed the areas into fertile lands – with the exceptions of a few wildlife preserves.

Central America

Central America took the brunt of Rome's greed during the 1100's, and much of the native civilizations found there were methodically wiped out, all in the pursuit of riches.

However, despite the race for riches, Central America inflicted quite a toll on its invaders. Few Romans deigned to stay once they had stripped the area of its riches, and those that did eventually came to sympathize with the natives.

This sparked outright rebellions in the late 1300's, which Rome crushed with vindictive audacity. It left behind some of the cruelest governors to bring the area back into line, but the move only sparked renewed rebellion, which Rome was forced to again crush. However, having learned its lesson, Rome left behind better governors, who despite some setbacks, were able to rebuild and better the area.

Once of the most impressive projects of the rebuilding was the creation of the Panama canal. However conditions among the workers – malaria, dysentery and other problems - brought fears that

the project would never complete. When things looked the bleakest, Rome begin to send armies of slaves to take over the work and finish the canal.

The move almost turned into disaster. The slave force put the natives out of work, and several times the slaves attempted to escape en masse, or rebel. However, the local governors were able to find a solution to the problem – many of the slaves were told they would be offered freedom when the canal was built, and the system was reworked allowing the natives to take the slave in and care for them and receive compensation from Rome for their efforts.

However, the short-term solution caused a catastrophe when the canal was finally finished. Suddenly thousands of slaves were freed and the natives no longer received funds from Rome.

Once again, rebellion threatened to spark. Wisely, Rome offered passage to any of the freed slaves back to Europe, and send monetary funds to the native government to help them get their economy back on its feet.

While both measures did not quite work out as anticipated, it did prevent rebellion. The native governments of Central America were not able to retool their economy quickly enough, and the native population slowly slumped into poverty.

As for the slaves who were returned to Europe, many were sent to communities created for their "kind", where many ended up returning to a life of indentured servitude. Also, some of the returning slaves brought new diseases back to Europe with them, which caused no ends of problems in of itself.

South America

While South America was the source of early exploration, up until the 1600's most of it was untouched jungle. However,

with the advances in building contruction and terraforming techniques, portions were remodeled to better facilitate human habitation. Microcities began to spring up in areas of the Amazon basin, until Rome, pressured by various Senators sympathetic to environmentalist groups – had the area declared a wilderness preserve, which prevented new microcities from being founded and limited the existing microcity's growth.

With the current expansion into the ocean and to Mars (and with Venus to be opening up soon to colonization), much of the early growth in the Amazon Basin has not only slowed, but reversed itself. In at least one case, one of the microcities has been abandoned and is on the verge of disappearing into the jungle.

Brahma

This is the label for what is essentially India of our world. Rome conquered Brahma around 950 AD. However, it was able to keep its cultural identity for so long that Rome kept it as a sub-empire, much in the fashion of Cathay.

Brahma proved itself loyal in the World War, taking much of the initial brunt against Cathay. It was able to stagnant the western front long enough for Rome to fully develop and test the first nuclear weapons, and then use them to end the war against Cathay.

Since the World War, Brahma has been recognized as having the most elite troops in all of Romeworld. Its troops are the most loyal of all those in Romeworld, and they are known for their fearlessness in combat.

Socially, Brahma lacks modernization on a large scale, and there is a huge gap between the technological haves and have-nots.

Cathay

This is the name for what is essentially China and the far east on Earth. It includes earth-based Japan and south seas culture, but not the Nippon.

Cathay was, in ancient times, Romeworld's biggest contender for rule of Earth. The two

superpowers spawned an ancient conflict now referred to as the World War, a bloody, though rather one-sided war between ancient Cathay and Rome. When the dust of nuclear weapons settled after the World War, Rome was clearly the victor.

For the next hundred years, the remnants of Cathay slaved under Rome rule. During that time, mostly spurred by the Nippon's embrace of growing technology, Cathay rose from the ashes and rebuilt itself even stronger than before.

However, rather than dissenting with Rome, Cathay became a favored enclave, and both because of cultural differences and as a bow of respect to its rebuilding efforts, was allowed to treat itself as a sub-empire.

This move greatly angered a subset of Japan's culture, known as the Nippon, who wanted blood and wanted to get even with Rome. The Nippon, in secret, escaped Romeworld to build their own empire somewhere deep in space.

In the meantime, Cathay has been developing nicely. It has a strong work ethic and seems to be able to grasp technology at a quicker pace than the Roman rulership. There are more plebians among the Cathay than among the Romans, but the relation between the government and its people seems to be stronger.

Cathay fields its own armies, though they are under direct supervision of Roman commanders. Among the Romans, Cathayian armies are considered rabble – lacking the discipline and dedication of the Roman armies despite the exceptional tech they are armed with. However, when put to the test, Cathayian troops are far more ruthless and efficient than Romans believe – their loyalty is to Cathay, moreso than Rome.

Chapter 5 - The Plebian Isles

The Plebian Isles are a series of former asteroids that have been towed into orbit around the Earth. They range in size from 1 to 5 miles in diameter, and have been completely terraformed.

The inhabitants of the Plebian Isles are usually freeman who live and work from their small communities. Others may be ethnic communities established out of a desire to promote and retain ethnic ideals. It is not uncommon for a Plebian Isle to contain employees of the same company, with their own living places, shopping areas and other commodities. Most of these companies are computer-based, transmitting their product to orbiting satellites which are then dispensed to their customers.

Since the Plebian Isles has so many well-educated freemen living on it or are composed of ethnic splinter groups (some of which have turned out to be Jihadists) Rome keeps a close eye on the Plebian Isles, and has made more than a few military lockdowns on the isles

There are 5,263 Plebian Isles currently in place. One Plebian Isle was destroyed in 1997 when it was launched into the sun to destroy a Jihadist cell. Approximately 10 Plebian Isles have been hauled into the Senatorial Isles, and 1 Senatorial Isle has been hauled into the Plebian Isles – which is now deserted.

Chapter 6 - The Senatorial Isles

The Senatorial Isles are a "chain" of asteroids hauled into place in the space between Earth and Moon, along the corridor occupied by the Great Elevator. They are the homes to the various Senators and their families of Romeworld.

The Great Elevator has numerous "stations" installed on it that allow those who dwell on the isles to use the elevator for transport – either personal transportation to Rome or Remus or to transport cargo from either two cities.

Most members have access to aerospace vehicles for direct travel between their home isles and the Earth or Moon, and travel on the Great Elevator must be arranged beforehand, so the stations are generally used for cargo transport or to receive visitors.

There is one island for every current Senator, meaning there are currently 750 Senatorial islands.

In general, senatorial isles are roughly oblong, about one mile long, and a quarter mile wide and thick. Sealed but elegant structures dot the outer surface, giving a grand look down to the Earth and up to the moon. These structures are the primary housing areas of the senatorial families and contain living and entertainment quarters for the Senatorial family and its relatives.

The internal rock of the asteroid is generally carved out for storage, control centers and servant quarters. Most Senatorial isles have at least one mine within them, where the rare minerals are extracted at a slow pace to keep up the Senator and his family's wealth.

Most senatorial isles have been family-held for decades, if not centuries. When a senatorial isle must be vacated to make room for a new Senator, the surface structures tend to be stripped, but most of the interior asteroid's contents are left behind, considered to be "state property". This includes any internal mines – when a Senator loses his or her position, access to the mine is sealed off by Imperial decree and posted guards to prevent it from being stripped by the leaving family members.

In at least one case in the past, a disgruntled Senator had the surface structures wiped from the Isle, but had the passages to the internal sections of the asteroid sealed so as to not be fined or charged for destruction of state property.

Chapter 7 - The Emperor Isles

The Emperor Isles are asteroids dragged into place around the moon that are home to the imperial family. There are also several "retreats" amid the islands – specialty islands for the personal use of the imperial family and those they specifically invite only.

Exactly how many of these islands exists is kept a state secret – though there is at least 13 known islands, one of which exists on the far side of the moon. There are many rumors about the "Dark Side" Isle, many of which include tales about the dark and despicable acts of the emperors of old that legends tell were performed on the isle.

The Emperor Isles are constructed in a fashion similar to the Senatorial Isles, but instead of housing multiple family relations, Emperor Isles are crafted to house one family line apiece, and several are dedicated to warehousing artifacts and other objects precious or important to the Emperor. Also, at least one the isles acts as graveyard to past Emperors and their families, and another houses the Imperial Guard – elite soldiers who answer directly to the Emperor himself, both to keep him from harm and to secretly conduct war against the enemies of the Emperor.

Chapter 8 - The Great Elevator

The great elevator is a technological marvel made real. When the moon had been put into synchronous orbit around Earth, it became possible to erect a massive four-car "elevator" that runs from the Earth to the moon.

The massive structure took ten years to fully erect and test, and has become the primary method to move goods between Earth and the moon. While there are stations erected along the elevator to allow access to the Senatorial isles, it is not the primary method to access the space-borne isles.

Because it was targeted shortly after its creation by Jihadist terrorists, the whole length of the great elevator has been armed with remote turrets designed to deter attacks or trespassers.

The Great Elevator is composed of quarter-mile long tubular sections that in turn house four elevator tubes. The sections are powered by their own microfusion generator that produces power for the anti-grav units, powers the internal mechanisms for the elevators and powers the remote turrets (the latter being an addition since the Jihadist attempt to destroy the Great Elevator).

The tubes are spaced at regular intervals and kept in place by a sophisticated computer system. The elevator works by launching an elevator car from one tube section to the next in line. The cars have their own backup propulsion systems to compensation for any vagaries between tube sections.

Every few hundred miles a rest/monitor station has been put into place. The stations monitor the sections beneath them (Earth is considered "down"), provide safe stopping points for elevator cars, and access points to and from the Senatorial isles.

The Great elevator is anchored on earth on the isle of Cyprus, and anchored in the Sea of Tranquility on the moon, a few miles away from the Emperor's palace.

One of the more interesting stops in the Great Elevator is the Café Midway Emporium, a massive tourist trap maintained halfway between Earth and the Moon. Known colloquially as "The Midway", it was originally a parts and repair shop for the Great Elevator that has been expanded and converted into a mall, food court and red light district. While no one is allowed to maintain a residence in The Midway, there is a nearby "abandoned" Senatorial isle that has become home to the populace that plies the Midway. The Midway is open 24 hours a day and can accommodate a population of nearly a half a million at any given time, though the "night" hours (relative on Earth where the elevator is anchored in Cyprus) tend to be less populated and more adult-orientated.

Travelling the length of the Great Elevator takes on average 4 hours, barring any delays for off-loading or on-loading senators or packages.

Due to the gravometric microengines in each turbocar, there are no weight limits per car for objects transported via the Great Elevator. Of course, size tends to be limiting factor – nothing larger than 500 ft. square can fit in a single car. Most passenger turbocars tend to be multileveled – usually no more than 3 levels high total. This latter limitation is due mostly to the time involved in loading/unloading passengers from such cars.

Chapter 9 - The Moon

The moon has been completely terraformed, and has become the location for the new Emperor's palace.

By the Emperor's decree, development of the moon has been greatly restricted. While it is possible for a great multitude of Earth's population to visit the moon and its beauty, only some of the richest individuals live there. While the Moon sports several amusement centers and malls for the masses, there are only a few private estates and no skyscrapers on the moon. No corporate buildings are allowed to be built on the moon, and those stores that exist outside of the visitor malls are small, specialized shops for the wealthy citizens of the moon. There is an usually wide variety of golf courses and memorial parks, but most of the moon is dominated by a wildlife sanctuary that showcases a variety of earth's native wildlife in its "natural" surroundings.

Chapter 10 - The Hypergun

The hypergun is a project under the guidance of one of Romeworld's most eccentric senators. The idea behind the hypergun is to provide quick interstellar transportation.

The hypergun is located in a secret sector of space just beyond the moon - or Jupiter; it's exact whereabouts are known only the emperor, the senator behind the project and a handful of individuals working on or associated with the project – perhaps some 100 people or less in all. The hypergun has some of the most stringent security in the entire solar system, and is rumored to be located within strike range of a naval starship yard in case the hypergun should come under siege by enemy forces.

Using a network of gravity drives like a rail gun, the hypergun rapidly accelerates a ship to near-light speed in a short space of time. The goal is to reach 99% of the speed of light or better in 2 seconds (a speed of about 297 million meters per second). This would make a travel from Earth to Mars last a mere .3 seconds, and travel to the edge of the solar system about 6 ½ hours.

Unfortunately, while rapid speed is easy to obtain by the gun, organic creatures surviving the rapid acceleration has not been conquered. So far, no acceleration-dampening gravity drive has been produced that can react quickly enough to counteract the rapid acceleration necessary to make the gun 100% successful. Even non-living cargo (and therefore the surrounding capsule) has not managed to survive being fired through the gun.

Also, deceleration is a problem; the current thinking is to devise decelerators at the destination point and "fire" the gun at the deceleration point or "net".

Chapter 11 - Outworld Colonies

Space is vast, and Romeworld, despite the technological leaps, can't be everywhere at once. Thus, independent miners who have grouped together have, on occasion, been able to thumb their collective noses at Romeworld's Emperor.

With sufficiently large gravity drives, miners can drag asteroids to a point of their choosing and start their own colony. Terraforming the interior of small mined asteroids is possible within a few years and within the budgets of a handful of interested parties, and has produced no less than 30 rogue colonies funded by splinter groups wishing to flee the tyranny of Romeworld.

While few colonies can survive beyond a generation without submitting themselves to Romeworld rule, some colonies resort to raiding and find themselves quickly under counter-attack by the Romeworld military.

As of 2004, five outworld colonies have sought and received Romeworld aid, becoming full-fledged far-flung colonies.

The Black Rock

Little more than a rumor, The Black Rock is a top-secret prison where the scum of the scum is kept locked away. These prisoners are kept alive for one reason, and one reason only – torture, interrogation and eventually death. Only the polizia knows for certain if The Black Rock is even real, what it looks like or its true location.

Rumors and legends place The Black Rock not far from Mars Costa, allowing easy and well-guarded transport from "the gilded cage" to "the black demise".

Janus Prime

A recent addition back to Romeworld, Janus Prime was an outworld colony that recently came back into the fold of Romeworld around 2004. This former mining asteroid colony was established above the Sol planetary plane back in 1984. The colony was erected around a mini-belt of asteroids with high gold content, and became very successful as it smuggled its gold (and other minerals) into the Romeworld market. In 2002, the colony came under attack by a pirate armada whom had discovered its location.

Reluctantly, the colony called for Romeworld assistance, promising a significant cut of the mined gold in return for protection. Romeworld dispatched a battleship and cruiser detail to the colony, quickly driving away the pirate assault before any of the mining operation was threatened. Even after the attack was thwarted, Romeworld kept a garrison at the colony to prevent future attacks and protect its interest in the mining operation. As news quickly spread of the existence of Janus Prime, a flock of would-be miners and attendant merchants and "entertainers" descended on Janus Prime, nearly tripling the population of the colony.

By 2004, the colony was offered a senatorial position in return for full citizenship and official integration into Romeworld. There has been little to no opposition to the integration, and in fact most of the residents seem to prefer rejoining with Romeworld.

Mars Costa

Mars Costa is best known as the "Prison of Sol". It is home to former senators, dissidents and other troublemakers of Romeworld that the government wishes to put out of reach, yet dares not act against and possibly make the offender into a martyr.

It isn't difficult to find Mars Costa, as the prison planet emits a constant beacon warning passing vessels to keep clear. The travel into Mars Costa is one of the most heavily mined and defended areas in the galaxy, with good reason.

While there certainly isn't a soul here who wouldn't leave in a heartbeat, it can't be said that its prisoners are in kept in bad shape; in fact some complain that the prisoners here live better than even senators. The reason for this is simple – few people will sympathize with someone kept in a golden prison.

However, underneath the golden lacquer, there exists a hidden side of Mars Costa – prisoners who refuse to put forward the innocent face Romeworld demands undergo brutal torture and secret prison rooms only hinted at in unproven, whispered rumors.

Minerva Station

Once an abandoned secret military base, Minerva station became an outworld colony in 1873 when it was unintentionally recolonized following a terrible solar storm. It was in that storm that the RMS Claudius sought berthing at the base – a ship filled with nearly 200 miners and their family.

In the days that followed, the RMS Claudius's fission reactor was badly damage by the solar storm. Though it was shut down in time to prevent a major catastrophe, it was damaged beyond repair, stranding the occupants on Minerva Station. Likewise, the storm had permanently destroyed the station's only transmitter, preventing the miners from sending a signal for rescue.

For the next thirteen years, the miners struggled to make Minerva Station their home. Nearly 84 people lost their lives the first year as the miners battled to make the station rehabitable.

However, late in the thirteenth year, a rogue pirate vessel arrived at Minerva station. The pirate vessel had learned of the abandoned base and had sought to investigate it for any abandoned loot, only to find the miners ready to defend it.

Oddly, an agreement was eventually reached with the pirate leader and the miners, and a third of the populace was transported back to Romeworld in secret. The pirate vessel in turn never returned to Minerva station afterward, having received a payment of abandoned weaponry found in the station in return for its deeds.

It was nearly twenty years later before Romeworld officials learned of the existence of the Minerva station colony when the weapons from the pirate vessel were auctioned off by the retiring pirate lord and traced back to where they had come from.

Upon being found by the Romeworld military (who had dispatched to reclaim the base), the colony was forcibly overtaken. An inquiry into the colony's existence was undertaken, and eventually the colony's inhabitants were absolved of blame and allowed to join the Empire as full citizens in return for integrating with Romeworld.

After the military removed any remaining military tech from the colony, Minerva Station was reopened to traffic and trade with the empire and has steadily grown into a affluent colony. Oddly enough, it's chief business is in the construction and refitting of commercial vessels.

Pluto's Demense

An antecedent colony world in Earth's orbit, Pluto's Demense was one of the first outworld colonies established by individuals seeking to escape Romeworld's domination.

The tiny asteroidal colony lingered for nearly a hundred years, barely surviving from one generation to the next and only occasionally gaining new colonists from those individuals who, fed up with Romeworld, were able to decode its secret location. For the most part, Pluto's Demense was forgotten by the empire, and in return, had ignored the empire at large.

However, after nearly a hundred years as a backwater colony that largely ignored Romeworld, a charismatic young leader emerged. Calling himself Pluto, he organized the colonists of Pluto's Demense with a bitter anger against Romeworld,

blaming the empire of tricking them to the isolate asteroidal world.

In six month's time, the false Pluto garnered a fleet of piratically inclined ships and with the assembled armada, struck at Romeworld herself. However, Pluto's armada was quickly outgunned and forced to flee back to its asteroidal complex, with the military hot on its trail.

Pluto planned to make a last stand at his demesne, but disillusioned officers in his own ranks instead beheaded the demagogue and turned his remains over to the Romeworld military in return for leniency in their crimes. While the leaders were executed for treason, Romeworld spared the remainder of Pluto's Demense and brought it back into Romeworld fold.

After a long analysis of Pluto's Demense, the military renovated the colony in order to minimize the chance of future rebellion. Supplementary sub-asteroids were brought to the area to provide a sufficient agriculture to the base as well as military barracks and merchant quarters for visiting travelers. While the military barracks have mostly been abandoned now, the other asteroids have long been expanded and upgraded.

Pluto's Demense has become a far-flung colony for those who wish to escape the majority of the tyranny of the Empire, yet still remain within its comfortable bounds. While the living at Pluto's Demense is considered subsistent by the Empire at large, it is likewise known as a haven where Empire influence is at its weakest.

Sitra Major

Bored into an asteroid five miles across, Sitra Major is the largest outworld colony in existence. The colony is two months counter-orbit from Earth. Freighters make regular trips to the colony, keeping a constant stream of goods moving from Sitra to Earth. Sitra's main claim to fame is being a shipyard for the creation of commercial ships and warships for Romeworld. It is home to some of the best shipbuilders in the solar system, and pays reasonable wages to its workers, as well as providing spacious dwellings for those willing to live so far from "the rest of civilization."

Sitra Major has been the target of Jihadist and Nippon attacks, all which have been repelled so far thanks in part due to the fleet or warships kept to guard the base and the colonies own internal defense systems.

Terra Minor

Sometimes called "Pleasure Central", this asteroidal outward colony has made its name by being a retreat for Senatorial families seeking a wide variety of pleasures. Terra Minor does its best to retain an upstanding reputation while still being able to provide pleasures for the seedier side of humanity's desires. Terra Minor is only accessible to Senators and their families, Consorts and Plebian-Xer's and its location is kept a well-guarded secret, especially considering recent Jihadist activities.

Other Colonies

As stated before, there are over 30 independent colonies outside the influence of Romeworld. Most have a population under 1,000 individuals, and they are primarily found in the beltway between Earth's and Mar's orbit, though either antecedent or precedent to the planet's own path, making travel to them difficult at best, if they can even be located.

It should be noted that each of these independent colonies is considered deserters or traitors to Rome, and the discovery of their location can mean a visit from the Romeworld military if they are found. As such, most such colonies are self-sufficient or surreptitiously trade with Romeworld merchants at best.

Chapter 12 - To Mars

In 1854 the Emperor approved the massive test of a chain of gravatic inductor engines that would put Mars into a synchronous orbit with Earth, facilitating colonization. Two years later, the gravatic inductor engines were assembled on Mars, the planet temporarily evacuated, and the engine switched on. The project was a success, and Mars orbit was moved to coincide with Earth's, facilitating the establishment of way stations leading to Mars, and the eventual mass colonization of the planet.

Terraforming of Mars was undertaken a mere year after Mars was brought into synchronous orbit, but it would take nearly thirty years for the "Bridge to Mars" to be put into place, which would become the lifeline to Mars.

The first successful independent colonial city on Mars was established in 1897, and faced the awesome task of surviving on the still-difficult world. Had not the Marsway been established to allow rapid transport of goods and materials, the colony would not have survived the first few years.

Now, Mars is over 90% terraformed, with only the southern ice pack left untouched. What was once a red planet is now a blue and green marvel, with microcities dotting its surface.

Because it is approximately 55 billion meters to Mars, it takes a standard ship approximately 5 weeks to travel the distance. (25 days for a straight burn with no stops, and as little as 2 weeks for certain military vessels).

Because of the vast distances and dangers involved, Mars has managed to remain aloof of the RomeWorld empire. At this point, it is still much a frontier world, but it is slowly growing into its own –

something that the senate and the emperor fret about constantly.

The Marsway

The Marsway consists of a variety of terraformed asteroids placed at regular intervals, spaced approximately one week's travel apart. Between these Isles are minor space station outposts, staggered between one to three day's travel apart. Not only does the Marsway present a lifeline between Earth and Mars, but it also presents a causeway for travel as well as act as a defense for travels on their way to Mars.

As one travels farther along the Marsway towards Mars itself, the Isles are generally more aloof towards RomeWorld, and the space stations become smaller and further between. The Marsways has become an excellent place for those wishing to distance themselves from the hustle, bustle and oppression of RomeWorld.

There are 24 known Marsway Isles spaced along the main thoroughfare, and 15 major space stations on the path to Mars.

Marium Primus

The "first" major space station on the Marsway, Marium Primus is also the most lush. Marium Primus exists approximately 8 million km beyond Earth orbit. Commercial ships traveling to Mars from Earth receive their routing directions from Marium Primus, and commercial ships transporting goods from Mars are required to check in at Marium Primus to have their cargo inspected – outgoing ships from Earth have no such requirement. There is a standing battalion of Romeworld elite troops protecting Marium Primus proper, and a nearby military spaceport that is the primary touchpoint for military transportation between Earth and Mars.

Marium Secundus

Marium Secundus is the second Marium station and is approximately 16 million km from Earth orbit, but is the first stop for those ships attempting to make a "hurried" trip from Earth to

Mars. As such, it is one of the busiest space stations on the Marsway.

Marium Tritus

The midway point between Earth and Mars, the Marium Tritus contains a permanent military presence aboard and a nearby spaceport for military vessels. It lies approximately 24 million km from Earth and 31 million km from Mars. It has the most pleasure centers of all the Marium stations, many of which cater to bored military personnel assigned to the station.

Marium Quadrus

Ships performing a long jump usually use Marium Secundus and Marium Quadrus as their touchstones between Earth and Mars. It lies approximately 31 million km from Earth and 24 million km from Mars. As such, this station tends towards no-frill restocking, repairs and resupply. There are few entertainment centers, but they are well-used.

Marium Quintis

Of all the Marium stations, Marium Quintis is perhaps the most lawless. It lies approximately 16 million km from Mars. It is a touchstone for pirates who work both the Marsway and rogue miners from the asteroid belt who seek to sell their minerals without imperial interference.

Marium Sextus

Closest to Mars, at about 8 million km from Mars itself, the Marium Sextus space station has a strong Roman influence, with a nearby military base to protect Martian interests. Marium Sextus controls traffic passing from Mars to Earth, though unlike Marium Primus, it does not scrupulously scan every commercial vessel traveling from Earth to Mars, though it does do random inspections to keep smugglers and pirates on its toes.

Marium Sextus also controls all traffic passing between Mars and the Asteroid belt, and many smugglers know the easiest way to sneak cargo past Romeworld officials is to purport a destination to the asteroid belt (while Carnegy Mining Central is out of alignment) and then double-back to Mars.

Chapter 13 - Mars

The first attempted colonization of Mars occurred in 1520, before even any of the Marsway was conceived. Needless to say, the colonization was an utter failure – and the fate of the original colonists (some 200 in number) is still unknown, and much debated as it is wrapped in myth. The ruins of the colony's biodome still exists in the wastes of the Martian desert, but not enough of the structure remains for archeologists to have discovered the cause of the colony's failure in some 400 years of investigation.

The second attempted colonization wasn't begun until some fifty years later in 1570, and was little more than a series of interlinked biodomes that were erected on the planet and maintained until the 1620's. Mass colonization of Mars was not actually started until the first three Marsway bases had been built in the 1750's and automated terraforming of Mars had begun. The first true, still-existing non-biodome colony on Mars was established in 1797.

With the lifeline of the initial three Marsway bases in place by 1806, the colony averted several initial disasters, but had to be abandoned several times and restarted. However, since Mars was not yet in synchronous orbit, travel to Mars was extremely perilous, and more than one ship was lost on the 8+-month journey to the red planet.

As time passed, the Mars colony grew only slowly, while the Marsway went into full development. Peculiarly, the stations in the Marsway were put into synchronous orbit with Earth, allowing them to always be in contact with the home planet, and thus within generally easy reach of supplies. Mars, on the other hand, could generally only expect to receive aid from Earth when the tail end of the Marsway came within a one-month travel time arc from the planet.

In 1758, the invention of the graviometric engine revolutionized the Marsway. First, it allowed ships to be built that could travel the circuit quicker from Earth to Mars, cutting normal travel time from an 8-month average down to about 6 months.

As time progressed, the Carnegy Corporation began to use Graviometric ships to mine asteroids beyond Mars. It soon became easier and safer to haul asteroids out of the asteroid belt to mine them. Finally, someone got the idea of strapping graviometric engines directly to the asteroids and hauling them back to Earth to live (and mine) on.

This occurred over a period of approximately 93 years, and in 1851, the plan to put Mars into synchronous orbit with Earth was put forth to the government.

It would take 10 long years of bitter political, religious and ecological bickering before the plan was put into place. With the final decree of the emperor, the plan was put into place.

The colony on Mars was evacuated while titanic graviometric engines were brought and installed on Mars. In all, six major engines and seventy-two minor engines were put in place just under Mar's surface to put the plan into action.

When the operation was engaged, just shy of a conjunction with Earth, it went off without a hitch. Within a few scant hours, Mar's orbit now matched Earth's precisely.

The entire system, short the two main engines at the poles and a few minor engines, was disassembled and brought back to Earth for the next major project – the synchronization of the Moon with Earth in preparation for building the Great Elevator.

With the new synchronous orbit and the Marsway leading straight to Mars front door, colonization of the world began to grow at a rapid pace, as did development of its surface. By 1897, Mars had its first permanent city population that exceeded one million, and was growing by leaps and bounds.

Romeworld

Now, the Mars of 2010 looks much more like a copy of Earth, with a vast ocean, several landmasses and a thriving ecosystem.

GeneEnhanced wildlife is being carefully released into new Mars ecosystem and being constantly monitored. So far, there have been few problems aside from the ill-conceived rockfish that have taken up residence in the planet's upper crust.

Chapter 14 - To Venus

One of the greatest problems in reaching Venus is that the planet hasn't been brought into synchronous orbit with Earth. Still, the Venusian Way, the string of asteroid-isles and space stations that trace the path between Earth and Venus, have been put into place to aid the efforts of the engineers who work on the near-abandoned project of terraforming Venus.

One of the greatest difficulties in maintaining the Venusian Way has been staggering the Isles and space stations in a way to facilitate the transfer of equipment between Earth and Venus. While Romeworld learned its lessons from creating the Marsway, there is still a vast amount of space to be covered. Because it takes too much power to constantly adjust the positions of the stations and isles, the Venusian Way is instead currently staggered in the orbit between Earth and Venus. There are six main approaches along the Venusian Way, with either space stations or isles in position along the way to aid in the effort to terraform Venus.

However, the staggering is terribly inefficient, and each of the six ways is only effective as a branch point for about three months out of the year. Depending on the position of the Earth and Venus, supply crew may have to hop to additional stations or wait at supply stations for months before they reach either planet.

Chapter 15 - Venus

Venus is still a primeval planet of boiling wind and crushing atmosphere. It is currently surrounded by a ring of satellites using lasers and other methods to slowly cut through the thick cloud layer and allow terraforming equipment to be brought to the surface.

Unfortunately, the Venus project has suffered from a myriad of bandit, jihadist and Nippon attacks, the likes of which could never have been perpetrated against the Mars project. Whether or not Romeworld will continue to invest in the over-budget, under-realized project will continue is under heated discussion.

The current plan calls to have Venus ready for colonization in as little as ten years, if the project can prevent further delays due to raiding and vandalism.

Venus

As stated above, Venus is still in a primordial state. At the present time, it is impossible to land craft on the planet directly in all but the highest Venusian peaks.

The reason for this is the cloud cover that encompasses Venus itself. The boiling hot clouds create enormous pressure as one descends towards the surface. This pressure is coupled with crippling heat, causing any Earthly metal to be crushed and melted by the time it would reach the Venusian surface.

Since it is not possible to bring atmospheric processors (or graviometic devices) to the planet, a series of satellites has been set up just outside the atmosphere to begin the initial terraforming of Venus. These satellites use a combination of solar-powered lasers to superheat the upper atmosphere in an attempt to "burn it off" and reduce the overall pressure.

Likewise, special cargo ships from beyond Mars have been collecting super-chilled gases from Jupiter and dumping it into the Venusian atmosphere in an attempt to cool the planet down for further terraforming. The process has been painstakingly slow; so far the planetary temperature of Venus has only been lowered by 4° Celsius from it's original temperate of 460° Celsius.

Chapter 16 - The Asteroid Belt

The asteroid belt has been a treasure trove for the Carnegie Corporation since about the 1600's. While the asteroid belt houses a couple of the most remote stations short of the Jovian project, it has the potential to make one the richest – or deadest citizen in all of RomeWorld.

Three stations have been established in the asteroid belt as home mining operations for the Carnegie Corporation. While these three stations are the only "official" stations for Carnegie employees, the asteroid belt is so vast that it houses a variety of prospector substations spread through the area – each one generally concentrated in a area reachable well within a month's travel from one of the main mining bases.

The Carnegie Corporation has free reign in controlling the mining operations in the asteroid belt. The major mines are controlled and worked directly by Carnegie employees, but several freelance prospectors are "allowed" to work the drifting fields collecting scrap materials for sale to the mining corporation.

The asteroid field is a resource-rich area. With the aid of special graviometric ships nicknamed "Minemakers", the field is an even greater goldmine than normal. These Minemaker ships drift through the asteroids, using lasers, graviometric fluctuations and using other secret methods to transform some of the baser asteroids into more marketable materials. The ships are constantly sweeping through the belt to find rocks to transform, and they are generally tailed by prospectors looking to find transformed asteroids overlooked or left behind as insignificant by the Carnegie ships.

Carnegy Corporation Mining Headquarters

Located just outside the main asteroid belt, this huge space station has extensive docking facilities with which it measures and appraises all ore shipments coming out of the asteroid belt. The mining corporation has divided the belt into three sections; the preceding section which is "ahead" of the headquarters' orbit, the antecedent section which follows the headquarters' orbit and "farside", which is opposite of the headquarters' station.

Trojan Mining Station

Located among the deepest portion of the asteroid belt, the Trojan mining station controls ingoing and outgoing traffic for the "preceding" section of the asteroid belt. The station controls the influx and outgoing miners, survey ships and ore ships. While the Trojan mining station contains sufficient berthing for the station personnel and a small contingent of miners either moving into the sector or moving out, there is not sufficient space for non-employed personnel such as merchants or entertainers, thus the base tends to be rather Spartan.

Centurion Mining Station

The Centurion mining station is the primary processing station in the antecedent section of the asteroid belt. It is the most recent of the primary stations, and contains a more efficient, experimental processing center. The mining station is designed to hold overflow from the nearby farside and precedent sections of the asteroid belt.

Titan Mining Station

Located in the depths of the farside section of the asteroid belt, this base is similar to the Trojan mining station, though generally the most Spartan of the three space stations.

Chapter 17 - The Jovian Project

With the taming of Mars, the moon and soon-to-be Venus, the emperor has cast his vision ahead to the next planet out from the sun – Jupiter, lord of the planets.

Currently surveyor ships have been analyzing Jupiter to determine whether or not it is feasible to transform the gas giant into a second sun, allowing habitation of the planets further out towards Pluto.

While it is still in the planning stages, the current thought is that a sun could be created if both Jupiter and Saturn are collided and an artificial fusion reaction started.

Just as the synchronization of Mars started heated debate so many years ago, so too has this project, though it appears the Emperor is ready to cut through the argument to push the plan forward despite the controversy surrounding it.

Jupiter

Jupiter is a difficult planet to approach for two reasons. The first is the heavy gravity of the planet; those ships that wish to approach need a graviometric drive to offset the intense gravity field. Further, Jupiter is surrounded by a deadly field of radation and it requires specially coated hulls to transport living creatures near to Jupiter.

The Hypergun

Chapter 18 - Beyond the Empire

While the discovery satellites of the Voyager missions have allowed Romeworld to map the planets as far out to Pluto, travel beyond Mars is not something that the citizens of Romeworld even considers. No reputable reports of alien life has been contacted yet, and the Voyager missions have so far shown that all the worlds beside Earth are barren of native life.

However, dark tales have filtered into Romeworld of alien creatures colloquially called Gargoyles. Supposedly, these ugly humanoids stand over 2 meters tall, have skin as tough as stone and a demonic appearance to boot – quite reminiscent of the creatures of legend they have been named for. The Gargoyles have been blamed for several attacks on the shipping lanes and the disappearance of colonists on at least one outpost along the Marsway, but in every case no solid evidence of the existence of these Gargoyles has turned up. Most believe Gargoyles are some sort of Spacer's tale, while a few other individuals believe that Gargoyles may be some sort of genetic spawn that has escaped captivity. Romeworld officials seem the most skeptical, and many believe that the tales are nothing more than paranoia, or at worst fear of the dangers of genetic manipulation – like the stories of Promethius's Monster in the 1200's.

Chapter 19 - Technology of the Empire

Androids

Also known as replicants, androids are fusion-powered synthetic creatures designed to emulate humans. Their construction and use are highly regulated by RomeWorld, but it is also known that creation has a wider acceptance among the Nippon, who have an odd fascination with technology.

There are actually very few replicants in existence – they generally cost as must as a starship (due to their complex hydrogen fusion engines), and thus are not something to be wasted.

Common uses for androids are to replace lost loved ones (in a more malleable or undying fashion, as opposed to cloning) or as decoys in matters of state (such as filling in for a senator at events where there is concern there might be an assassination attempt) – again this is a use where, although clones would be cheaper, their use is forbidden.

Some criminal organizations (and the government, though it wouldn't admit it) use androids as troubleshooters or assassins in cases where it would be too risky to use flesh-and-bone agents.

At least one rogue colony world is rumored to have an "elderly" android in charge of the colony – tales vary as to whether the android is a tyrant or a benevolent ruler, as does the name and location of the rogue colony.

There are no *known* free-willed androids under Romeworld jursidiction – such abominations that are encountered are shut down as quickly as possible.

Android: HD 4d10; hp 22; Init +2; Mv 30 ft; BAB +2; Gpl +4; Atk Slam +4 melee (1d6); Full Atk (same); SA none; SQ DR 5/-, low-light vision; SV Fort, Reflex, Will; Str 15, Dex 14, Con -, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 8. Cost: WC 50; Restriction: Restricted (+2)

Clones

Clones are genetic duplicates of an individual. They may, or may not, share the memories of the orginal donor body. Clones are exceptionally cheaper to create than androids, but their use is actually much more restricted.

By the rules put down by the Emperor, clones cannot be created without the consent of the owner – in most plebians case, this is not only the plebian himself, but the company he is indebted to. Also, while it is possible to copy the memories of the original into the clone, doing so is forbidden while the original still lives.

Most of these rules were put into place to prevent MegaCorps from cloning their current workers and using them as a slave-bred force; if the MegaCorps were allowed to do so, they would destroy the economy as millions of plebians would quickly be out of work. As such, Romeworld is diligent about investigating even rumors of cloning by any MegaCorp or its associates. However, this doesn't mean they don't try, and there are yearly cases of some company being quietly forced to destroy a clone here or there created for slave labor.

Clones are grown to use for medical purposes (such as to replace a lost arm or other failing organ), to bring back to life a dead person (generally, those over age 35 make poor candidates for cloning, and doctors are unwilling to clone anyone whose body age is over 75. In addition, while cheaper than making an android copy, cloning is beyond the monetary means of plebians and most freeman.

Also, while clones can easily be grown, they cannot be rapidly aged without also risking rapid deterioration and loss of function. Organs must be pregrown for about 2 years before they can be harvested, and growing a full clone takes 20-25 years for it to mature properly, making it a poor choice to replace the dead.

Rumors abound that the Nippon have been using clones to create their own army to face off against Romeworld and to increase their own population. Futher, many rumors claim the Nippon have discovered the secret to quickly age their clones to adulthood, providing quick replacements to lost troops. Whether these rumors are true or not is not known.

Chrometech

This is an emerging field of science exclusive in Romeworld (though the Nippon are eager to learn its secrets).

With chrometech, biometric nanobots are merged with unfertilized eggs to create a synthetic humanoid, known as a Chromium. Chromiums are part human, part machine, with half their chromosomes being actually bioengineered nanotechnology.

Chromiums are essentially experiments for further uses of chrometech, are currently programmed to grow to adulthood within a few months, and programmed to "burn out" after 14 years. Chromiums are currently only found in military circles, and are being used to advance the field of A.I. machines – so far their work has created the Scutum Tri-walker and the Drusus Automated Battle Suit (D.A.B.S.).

It is expected that Chrometech will be used to create new, programmable species designed to replace a variety of creatures that have become extinct over the years – without the ability to interface with machines. It may also produce a line of creatures able to modify their molecular structure on the fly – like a doppledanger. However, there is much concern over the latter use, in much the same vein as the concern over clones and androids.

GeneEnhanced

The GeneEnhanced are generally creatures or beings who have benefited from gene manipulation, to one of varying degrees.

The most well-known among the GeneEnhanced are the senatorial families. Since the first days of gene enhancement, it was always the wealthy and/or powerful who benefited from gene therapy, and the senatorials are no exception. In their case, they generally received enhanced physical attributes, resistance to disease and toxins and minor tweaks to the senses to make them more acute – as well as some aesthetic manipulation to make the senatorials generally more "handsome".

Some MegaCorps in the early years of gene enhancement serripticously enhanced their workers without the plebians permission. After several cases of fatal side effects, the secret testing was revealed by government inquiry and stopped. However, several family strains did end up benefiting, again with enhanced physical attributes, though most have become watered down throughout the years.

Gene enhancement is available currently for anyone willing to pay for the treatment, though it is generally a costly procedure. Gene therapy can be used to enhance strength, endurance or make the recipient more tolerant to disease or toxins, or a host of other changes that generally strengthens the body.

Radical gene enhancement is also available allowing adaptation to hostile environments or radical modifications (such as the growth/attachment of a 3rd arm) to the body. However, such radical enhancement is generally looked down upon, and it is rare to find individuals who look less than human not working in the arenas or circuses.

Oddly, the Nippon look down on gene therapy, except among a few radicals who generally prefer to seek out physical enhancement. Radical therapy among the Nippon is banned.

Gene Enhancement, Burst (GE-B): This is a subdermal injector that when correctly tapped, releases chemicals that provide a short boost to an

ability score. The placement of a BGE is usually marked by a temporary tattoo. Physical boosts are usually stored on the inside of the left arm, while mental boosts are usually stored on the left side of the neck, just below the ear.

Gene Enhancement, Temporary (GE-A): Allows for the increase of one physical or mental attribute. This is an injection that must be renewed weekly to keep the enhanced ability from degrading. If the recipient has been under the effect of the temporary enhancement for a month or more, if he does not receive the injection he begins to go into withdrawal within 24 hours after the first missed injection. If the individual has been receiving treatment for five years or more, withdrawal can be serious enough to kill.

Gene Enhancement, Permanent (GE-X): Using nanobots and gene therapy, the subjects DNA is reprogrammed to strengthen and enhance the body. It takes 1 month of treatment for the enhancement to remain permanent.

Fission/Fusion Devices

Fusion is the preferred method of powering any device. Romeworld has had access to fusion power for over 250 years, and has had access to Fission since 1495.

Fusion devices are considered to be "clean-power" devices, and do not produce the vast amounts of dirty radiation that fission devices do. Also, fusion devices have a tendency to implode, creating a much smaller area of devastation than the outward-extending explosions from faulty fission devices.

Finally, fusion devices are nearly self-perpetuating – a single fusion device powered by 1 cubic inch of hydrogen can feasibly generate enough fusion power to last a single household for 1000 years.

Fission devices are far rarer, generally only legacy devices who have not yet outlived their useful life. From about 1497 to 1893, Romeworld used fission devices to power anything of significant size – space stations, war machines, even power plants – were all fission powered. The power plants were devised to generate continuous power for hundreds of years – and many still function, though most have been powered down and/or disassembled.

Most of the primary devices were replaced with fusion in the years between 1870 to 1923, but some starships and space stations still use fission devices to generate power. Also, in some of the most remote areas of the world – mostly in the backbone of Asia and Mars, fission devices can still be found.

Gravitometric Devices

Gravity-inducing technology is a moderately new science, and the miniaturization of these devices is still a long way off.

Gravitometric devices work by accelerating particles in a cyclotron and siphoning off the graviton particles and storing the excess in a neutronium coil. As the coil gains extra gravitons, it begins to exert its own gravity field, which is used to propel objects or negate external gravity fields. This allows hovercars, space vehicles, anti-gravity stations and a variety of vehicles and vessels to be devised. However, powering the cyclotron requires an external force, and as such the devices are not used to produce power – in that field, fusion devices are still the king.

The cyclotron is generally powered by a fission or fusion engine, and must be shielded against the effects of the gravitometric engine. The cyclotron is generally a large hoop or oval ranging in size from 8 feet across (at the smallest) to over 5 miles long (for ones used to power the Mars graviometric engines that brought the planet into synchronous orbit)

Kobolds

Genetech has not only benefitted humans over the years, but it has likewise had applications on plants and animals for many years before use on humanity. While it became popular in the late 1600's to use genetech to manipulate pets for better breeding, eventually gene research led to the creation of entirely new species of customized pets and animals.

One of the most successful pets to develop from genetech research was the kobold. Based on chimpanzee genes, mixed with dog and reptilian sequences, the kobold is a child-sized creature with great cunning and dog-like loyalty. A kobold has a dog-like head and a gangly humanoid body with greyhound-like legs that end in five-fingered paws. The entire creature is covered in lizard-like scales, with a horse-like mane. Most "purebred" kobolds are rust-colored with green eyes and black nails, but thanks to gene manipulation they can be found in an assortment of colors. The kobold usually moves around on all fours, but it is capable of standing or moving slowly in a bipedal formation. Likewise, it can use its hands to grip and manipulate tools. With some effort, they can be trained to open doors and even be potty-trained. Their friendly demeanor and playful nature makes them great playmates for children, and the creatures are capable of living around 40 years, meaning most adults keep their kobold pet for the majority of their life – which can create strong emotional bonds between owner and pet.

Kobolds cannot speak, instead having a yap-like bark. They can understand a large number of words and can be trained to use simple sign language, but they don't develop a mentality much greater than a 3-4 year old child.

Minis

While standard cloning is heavily restricted, there is a more common and cheaper form of cloning available – that of the mini. A mini is a gene-altered replicant of a person about ½ the normal size of the individual. They do not have the programmed memories of the person they emulate, though they tend to innately develop a personality and tastes similar to the original person.

Minis are used by the well-to-do as workmates and servants, performing menial tasks for their master to ease their way of life. Other minis are simply for show, and are treated as little more than favored pet. Nearly all Senatorials have minis and among the upper echelons of society, they are quite fashionable and paraded about for others to see.

Nanobots

The field of nanotechnology in RomeWorld is still in its infancy. Though the Nippon clearly have managed to advance this field of science by leaps and bounds, in RomeWorld, the use of Nanobots is still exceptionally rare.

Nanobots are primarily used in the medical field, as their tiny size, at this time, prevents them from carrying on-board self-power systems. Thus, they must rely on an outside source for their power – in the case of current nanobot technology, organic bioelectric current.

Further, nanobots are extremely sensitive to electrical overload and EMP – something as simple as a taser can destroy all the nanobots in a given individual's body. MRI or powerful magnets can also disrupt and destroy nanobots, and medical science has found it impossible to transport nanobots on ships powered by gravity inductor drives (including the Great Elevator). Thus, transporting nanobots into space can only be performed by fusion-powered ships with no artificial gravity.

Finally, as a safety precaution, nanobots are designed to break down quickly when they do not receive power. Thus, if they escape a host body, or the host body is slain, they tend to break down quickly. Usually, within less than five seconds of

removal from the body, the nanobot is useless (though its remains can still cause problems, such as befouling organs or clogging blood vessels).

Meanwhile, the Nippon have managed to find a way to overcome most of these hurdles. They can transport their nanobots via gravity ships, but the nanobots are still subjective to massive electrical overload – such as from a medical crash cart or other forms of electrocution (Tasers, however, won't kill Nippon nanobots).

While it is easy to kill nanobots, there is a serious side effect to doing so – most nanobots travel the body via the bloodstream, and the dead nanobots can clog arteries, causing strokes or other such medical conditions, unless they are destroyed in a controlled manner by a medical or mechanical technician.

Robots

Robots are the poor cousins of androids – faceless and subservient to humanities needs. Robots differ from androids in the fact that little is done to make them look human, and they are rarely intelligent. They are designed for a specific task, and that task alone. Often their form is built to best fulfill their function, leading to some rather bizarre looking contraptions.

Robots do not make good player characters – they are designed for one function (generally leaving them only one class skill), and suffer a –5 penalty to all other skills. Heroic robots may be able to overcome these shortcomings, but it is a difficult road indeed.

Also, like androids, robots are possessions – a robot found without an owner will be likely shut off, sold or destroyed.

Although robots can be encountered across RomeWorld, their numbers appear to be greatest among the Nippon, who have been known to use remote robot workers to accomplish tasks Nippon does not have the human resources to waste on. Likewise, the Brahma have a dim view of robots, and refuse to use them in their military operations. Finally, the Jihadists abhor robots, and will often go out of their way to destroy them – though sometimes fanatical groups will use the "soulless" robots in their plots.

It should also be noted that RomeWorld and Nippon have been working immense robot warriors, termed Mechoids, to use on the battlefield. These essentially huge androids are still in the testing phase, and they are both very rare and very costly units to field in battle.

Starships

Most "commercial" interstellar craft are actually owned by the MegaCorps; very few private citizens can handle the enormous costs of keeping a personal starship running.

Starships generally run on one of two primary power sources – fission engines or gravometric induction engines. Fission drive ships are generally smaller, but lack artifical gravity. Gravometric ships are normally large due the size requirements of the drive and cyclotron. Some ancient starships or small craft are run on solid fuel rockets; however, such devices are not well-disposed to planetary travel and are costly to operate between planetary bodies and space – they are generally used for interasteroidal travel.

Most modern starships are not designed to transfer from space to planetary atmospheres; the stresses greatly shorten the lifespan of such ships and as such specialized planetary shuttles are generally used for transport between starships and planetary bodies.

The average lifespan of a commercial ship is a mere 15 years of continuous service. Often, ships undergo a complete overhaul every 5 years, and according to Romeworld government decrees, must be decommissioned after 20 years of service. However, pirates and smugglers have managed to continue operating ships well beyond this safe margin – the oldest recorded starship in service

lasted for 150 years (before it's untimely demise when the fusion reactor blew).

Decommissioned ships are normally brought to a shipyard where they are powered down, meticulously disassembled and the hulls melted down to fashion new ships. Fusion engine cores and computer cores are often salvaged, overhauled and returned to service in other ships, since they tend to have longer working lifespans that the ship's hull (and do not have regulations against their reuse). In rarer cases, ships that break down in transit, and are beyond repair may simply be left for scavengers to salvage or be recovered by military patrol vessels (or used as target practice). It should be noted, however, that it is a crime that carries a heavy fine for a ship to be left adrift within a travel corridor where other ships may collide with it; abandoned vessels (and any associated debris) should always be towed or otherwise removed from the space lanes to avoid trouble with authorities.

War Technology

grav-mace (super-heavy head when you swing)

kinetic fist (arm-lenth tube that sends a heavy weight slamming down from the top to the bottom via hydraulics or other methods - generates one hell of a punch)

nanobot blade/club (surface of the blade is covered with nanobots that detach to attack the victim)

genetic destructor (glove covered with special sensors that analyzes the victim's cellular structure on first contact. On subsequent contact, it delivers a viruliant poison to the victim that only affects their genetic makeup)

power fist (low-tech version of the kinetic fist - uses hydraulics or myometers to augment user's strength)

biokinetic taser (user's movements charge a glove that emits an electrical shock on contact to an enemy)

crystal singer blade (vibro-weapon with a crystal blade; the blade creates an ultrasonic wave around itself that does the cutting)

biometric adaptive device [B.A.D.] (a biometallic compound that is smeared onto the user; reacts to user's thoughts to shape itself into any desired basic weapon of the user's choice of materials - can also create protective barriers like shields or tools in the right hands)

organic offensive organism [3O] (a genetically engineered organism designed to serve as a living weapon (using chrometech). Most are chitinous creatures resembling blades, while some others possess more fantastic abilities - some can generate plasma beams akin to lightsabers, some use sonic abilities, some double as ranged weapons, some carry young that also detach and fight)

Ground Weapons (Named after weapons)
Spartan Light Hovertank (80 mm cannon)
Spetum Land Walker (A.I. tripod, experimental) (4x .50 cal machineguns, 2x 80 mm cannon)
Gladius Battle Suit (9mm anti-infantry, 2 LAW missiles, .50 cal sniper cannon)
Scutum Heavy Tank (105 mm turrented cannon)
Pilium missile tank (50 missile carrier)
Scorpio assault tank (missiles, 150 mm turrented cannon, lesser batteries)

Fascina hover missile carrier
Hasta medium tank
Iaculum gravity gun tank
Sica laser tank
Parma shield hovercraft

Aerospace Fighters (Named after generals or mythical heroes)
Marc Anthony Fighter
Scipio Fighter

Battleships (named after war gods)
Atlas class superheavy battleship (4 main guns, 12 midrange, 32 small guns)
Jupiter class superheavy battleship (4 main guns, 6 midrange, 48 small guns)
Mars class heavy battleship (3 main guns, 4 midrange, 12 small guns)
Hercules class heavy battleship (3 main guns, 4 midrange, 4 small guns, 12 fighter bay)

Minerva class destroyer (2 main guns, 4 midrange, 6 small guns, 1 missile launcher)

Vulcan class carrier (6 small guns, 1 micromissile launcher, 4 launch bays holding 86 fighters)

Diana class carrier (4 small guns, 6 launch bays hold 92 fighters)

Transports (named after merchant gods)
Mercury class heavy freighter
Ulysses class light freighter
Ceres class medium freighter

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Starships	Size	User	Class	Def	HP	Hard	Init	Handle	Tac Spd	Grapple	Crew	Pur DC
Rig Veda Heavy Battleship	G	Brahma	Hv	11	450d20 (9,000 hp)	30	+4	+5	4,000 ft (8 sq)			
Han Heavy Battleship	G	Cathay	Hv	11	450d20 (9,000 hp)	30	+4	+5	4,000 ft (8 sq)			
Nobungu Carrier	H	Nippon	Hv	11	500d20 (10,000 hp)	30	+6	+5	3,000 ft (6 sq)			
Raiden heavy Battleship	G	Nippon	Hv	11	400d20 (8,000 hp)	30	+5	+4	3,000 ft (6 sq)			
Diana Carrier	G	Rome	Hv									
Vulcan Carrier	H	Rome	Hv									
Nippon Battle Cruiser		Nippon	Hvy	11	450d20 (9,000 hp)	30	+4	+5	4,000 ft (8 sq)			
Nippon Heavy Transport		Nippon	Hvy	7	350d20 (7,000 hp)	30	+2	+3	3,000 ft (6 sq)			
RomeWorld Battle Cruiser		Rome	Hvy									
RomeWorld Heavy Transport		Rome	Hvy									
RomeWorld Tanker		Rome	Hvy									
Brahma Corvette		Brahma	Lt	7	40d20 (800 hp)	30	+4	+5	3,500 ft (7 sq)			
Brahma Frigate		Brahma	Lt	11	60d20 (1,200 hp)	30	+4	+5	3,000 ft (6 sq)			
Cathay Corvette		Cathay	Lt	7	40d20 (800 hp)	30	+4	+5	3,500 ft (7 sq)			
Cathay Destroyer		Cathay	Lt	11	80d20 (1,600 hp)	30	+4	+4	3,000 ft (6 sq)			
Cathay Frigate		Cathay	Lt	11	60d20 (1,200 hp)	30	+4	+5	3,000 ft (6 sq)			
Cathay Hauler		Cathay	Lt	7	36d20 (720 hp)	20	+2	+3	2,500 ft (5 sq)			
Nippon Corvette		Nippon	Lt	7	40d20 (800 hp)	30	+4	+5	3,500 ft (7 sq)			
Nippon Frigate		Nippon	Lt	11	60d20 (1,200 hp)	30	+4	+5	3,000 ft (6 sq)			
Nippon Hauler		Nippon	Lt	7	36d20 (720 hp)	20	+2	+3	2,500 ft (5 sq)			
Shogun Destroyer	H	Nippon	Lt	11	80d20 (1,600 hp)	30	+4	+4	3,000 ft (6 sq)			
Mercury Bulk Freighter		Rome	Lt		16d20 (320 hp)	20						
Minerva Destroyer	H	Rome	Lt									
RomeWorld Corvette		Rome	Lt									
Romeworld Frigate		Rome	Lt									
RomeWorld Hauler		Rome	Lt									
Cathay Bulk Freighter		Cathay	Med	7	125d20 (2,500 hp)	20	+2	+3	2,500 ft (5 sq)			
Nippon Bulk Freighter		Nippon	Med	7	125d20 (2,500 hp)	20	+2	+3	2,500 ft (5 sq)			
Nippon Cruiser		Nippon	Med									

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Starships	Size	User	Class	Def	HP	Hard	Init	Handle	Tac Spd	Grapple	Crew	Pur DC
Nippon Strike Cruiser		Nippon	Med									
Hercules heavy Battleship	G	Rome	Med									
Khali Destroyer	G	Rome	Med									
RomeWorld Bulk Freighter		Rome	Med									
RomeWorld Cruiser		Rome	Med									
RomeWorld Strike Cruiser		Rome	Med									
Ameratzu Superheavy Carrier	C	Nippon	SuH									
Atlas Superheavy Battleship	C	Rome	SuH									
Jupiter Superheavy Battleship	C	Rome	SuH									
Nippon Star Freighter		Nippon	Sup									
RomeWorld Star Freighter		Rome	Sup									
Katana Fighter		Nippon	Ult									
Julius Bomber		Rome	Ult									
Marc Anthony Fighter		Rome	Ult									
RomeWorld Merchant Escort		Rome	Ult									
Scipio Fighter		Rome	Ult									
Senatorial Courier		Rome	Ult									

Starship Engines

A starship's engine determines how fast the ship moves, and it's handling class in combat. The more efficient the engine, the faster the ship can move, and the more expensive it is. In addition, low-tech engines such as thrusters burn fuel that must periodically be refreshed.

Thrusters, Basic

Thrusters propel a ship through a planetary atmosphere and land it safely on a planetary surface. Thrusters also serve as secondary engines when primary engines fail or shut down. Thrusters are usually installed on starfighters, shuttles and aerospace fighters.

A ship equipped with thrusters can perform one orbital entry or escape or maneuver in a battle at a x1 speed multiplier for 60 minutes. Each additional speed multiplier increase the fuel usage by a like amount.

Minimum Ship Size: Huge
Tactical Speed Bonus: +0 feet
Handling: +4
Purchase DC: 10 + one-half the base purchase DC of the starship.

Thrusters, Improved

As regular thrusters, but providing quicker response and generally lasting longer.

A ship equipped with thrusters can perform two orbital entries or escapes or maneuver in a battle at a x1 speed multiplier for 120 minutes. Each additional speed multiplier increase the fuel usage by a like amount.

Minimum Ship Size: Huge
Tactical Speed Bonus: +500 feet
Handling: +6

Purchase DC: 12 + one-half the base purchase DC of the starshp.

Fusion Torch

This engine consists of a fusion reactor with one wall of the magnetic bottle missing, directing the thrust in the form of super-heated plasma. The fusion torch is intended for space only applications; its exaust stream would melt anything it landed on and incinerate everything within a few hundred yards of ground zero; it also expels a tremendous amount of radiation. Many ships fitted with fusion torch rockets use thrusters for atmospheric travel. Otherwise, they must remain permanently in space, relying on shuttlecraft to reach a planet's surface. The fusion torch uses hydrogen for fuel.

A ship using a fusion torch as its primary source of propulsion must refuel after 180 minutes of combat or three planetary entries/exits. Fusion torch fuel has a purchase DC of 23.

Minimum Ship Size: Huge
Tactical Speed Bonus: +500 feet (+1 square)
Purchase DC: 15 + one-half the base purchase DC of the starship.

Fusion Torch, Improved

As fusion torch, but the fuel burn is more efficient, allowing the hydrogen fuel cells to last longer.

A ship using a fusion torch as its primary source of propulsion must refuel after 300 minutes of combat or five planetary entries/exits. Fusion torch fuel has a purchase DC of 23.

Minimum Ship Size: Huge
Tactical Speed Bonus: +500 feet (+1 square)
Purchase DC: 18 + one-half the base purchase DC of the starship.

Induction Engine, Basic

This is the primary engine available to most military starships at this time. The basic induction engine is a hybrid fusion/gravity drive that uses fusion to power a cyclotron that produces artifical

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gravity as well as thrust and incredible maneuverability. The induction engine must be refueled with hydrogen cells.

A ship using a basic induction engine as its primary source of propulsion must refuel after 300 minutes of combat or five planetary entries/exits. Hydrogen fuel has a purchase DC of 23.

Minimum Ship Size: Gargantuan
Tactical Speed Bonus: +1,000 feet (2 squares)
Purchase DC: 20 + one-half the base purchase DC of this starship.

Induction Engine

Hands-down the best engine available at this time, the induction engine uses artificial gravity to provide incredible thrust and maneuverability. The induction engine requires no fuel and produces no exhaust; it's ideal for atmospheric, orbital, or deep-space work.

Minimum Ship Size: Gargantuan
Tactical Speed Bonus: +1,000 feet (2 squares)
Purchase DC: 22 + one-half the base purchase DC of this starship.

Starship Armor

A starship can have only one type of armor installed.

Alloy Plating

Alloy plating is made of advanced metal alloys engineered for high resistance to attacks at relatively low weights.

Alloy Plating is usually reserved for trans-atmospheric vessels and starfighters.

Hardness: 20
Tactical Speed Penalty: -500 feet (-1 square)
Weight: one-eighth the weight of the starship (rounded down).

Polymeric

Polymeric armor is made up of advanced polymers such as carbon fiber and high-grade fiberglass. It is relatively cheap and light, but doesn't offer tremendous protection.

Most commercial freighters in Romeworld use Polymeric armor.

Hardness: 20
Tactical Speed Penalty: None
Purchase DC: 10 + one-half the base purchase DC of the starship.
Restriction: Licensed (+1)

Vulcanium

Interlocking plates of light vulcanium alloy absorb a respectable amount of damage and are easy to mold to a starship's hull. This is the preferred method of armoring a military ship's hull in RomeWorld.

Hardness: 30
Tactical Speed Penalty: none
Weight: One-eighth the weight of the starship (rounded down)
Purchase DC: 10 + one-half the base purchase DC of the starship.
Restriction: Licensed (+1)

Chroneptium

This is an artificially fashioned material created by taking several metal alloys and artificially compressing them by the use of gravity-inducing machines. The result is an extremely heavy, dense and near impenetrable material.

Chroneptium is used for most destroyer-class and larger military spaceships.

Hardness: 40
Tactical Speed Penalty: -500 feet (-1 square)
Weight: One-quarter the weight of the starship (rounded down)
Purchase DC: 15 + one-half the base purchase DC of the starship.
Restriction: Military (+3); not available to Nippon

Ablative

This silvery, reflective armor is amazingly thin, yet has tremendous tensile strength and the ability to absorb damage better than most kinds of armor plating.

Currently ablative armor is only being fielded by a few rare Nippon units. Legal Romeworld vessels encountered with ablative armor will be military vessels using stolen Nippon technology. Commercial or personal vessels with ablative armor will be seized by Romeworld authorities, and the crew of said vessel may be charged with treason – generally assuming that the alloy was garnered by trade with the Nippon.
Hardness: 40
Tactical Speed Penalty: none
Weight: One-tenth the weight of the starship (rounded down)
Purchase DC: 22 + one-half the base purchase DC of the starship
Restriction: Military (+3); not available for sale to Cathay, Brahma or Rome

Starship Defense Systems

Armor does an admirable job of preventing damage to the superstructure of a starship, but it is really only the last line of defense. Since the late industrial age, aircraft have been equipped with an ever-increasing array of devices designed to prevent damage to the ship's hull - or to repair it before catastrophy occurs.

Autopilot System

An autopilot system "kicks in" whenever the pilot is unable to fly the starship. An autopilot system isn't as good at avoiding attacks as a living pilot, but it's better than nothing. Larger vessels have more adaptive autopilot systems than smaller ships (although this increased sophisitication doesn't outweigh the penalties associated with the ship's larger size).

An autopilot system provides an equipment bonus to the starship's Defense based on the rating of the autopilot system, ranging from +1 to +5. This bonus applies only when the autopilot system is engaged, and replaces the Pilot's Dexterity bonus to defense.

Purchase DC:
+1: 5 + one-quarter the base purchase DC of the starship.
+2: 7 + one-quarter the base purchase DC of the starship.
+3: 9 + one-quarter the base purchase DC of the starship
+4: 11 + one-quarter the base purchase DC of the starship
+5: 13 + one-quarter the base purchase DC of the starship.
Restriction: +3: Military (+1), +4: Military (+2), +5 (Military +3).

Damage Control System

A starship equipped with a damage control system can perform damage control as a move action. With a successful Repair check (DC 15), the ship regains a number of hit points depending on its type as shown below.

Damage Control cannot be performed if the ship has been reduced to negative hit points.
+1d10: 5 + one-quarter the base purchase DC of the starship.
+2d10: 10 + one-quarter the base purchase DC of the starship.

Magnetic Field

The magnetic field is a primitive energy shield. It uses vast amounts of power to surround the ship with potent lines of magnetic force. Missiles and weapons that deal ballistic damage fired at a starship with a magnetic field take a –4 penalty on attack rolls. A ship with a magnetic field activated cannot fire Missile or ballistic weapons at

opponents without dropping shields. Dropping or raising shields is a move action.

Each round that a magnetic field is active drains 1 minute of fuel from the ship.

Purchase DC: 5 + one-half the base purchase

Restriction: Military (+3)

Point-Defense System

A point defense system serves two functions: it targets all incoming missile fire and allows starships to make attacks of opportunity against enemy ships passing through its threatened area. The point-defense system consists of batteries of automated weapons programmed to fire when either of these two conditions are met.

A point defense system does not fire upon mines, cannot be controlled manually by the crew, and cannot be used to make normal attacks.

Destroy Missiles: A point defense system has a 20% chance of destroying any incoming missiles. A destroyed missile deals no damage to the ship.

Make Attacks of Opportunity: a starship equipped with a point-defense system threatens the spaces it occupies and all adjacent spaces. When making an attack of opportunity, the point-defense system rolls 1d20 and adds the ship's targeting system bonus on the roll. If the result equals or exceeds the enemy ship's Defense, the point-defense weapons deal energy damage based on the ship's type.

Purchase DC: Varies by ship type

Restriction: Licensed (+1)

Starship Type	Point Defense Damage	Purchase DC
Ultralight	1d12x10	31
Light	2d12x10	34
Mediumweight	3d12x10	36
Heavy	4d12x10	38

Superheavy	5d12x10	40

Firing a point-defense system drains one 6-second unit of fuel from a starship.

Radiation Shielding

Radiation shielding protects a ship's crew and passengers against the harmful radiation of neutron stars, solar flares, and other external causes. All personnel aboard a ship gains a +5 circumstance bonus on saves to resist the effects of radiation poisoning.

Purchase DC: 5 + one-half the base purchase DC of the starship.

Restriction: None

Scuttle System

A scuttle system can only be used aboard a fusion powered vessel. It uses the ship's own fusion reactor to create an explosion that destroys the ship. Nearly all ships larger than fighters are equipped with these devices to prevent the ship's capture or to eliminate it when it is too badly damaged to operate.

Scuttle systems are usually on a timer and allow sufficient time (around 20 minutes for commercial vessels, 5 minutes for military vessels) for crew to abandon ship and move to a minimum safe distance. Military versions are usually kept under lock and key in a secured room and can only be accessed by two special personnel working in conjuction (usually the captain, first mate and/or chief engineer). Commerical scuttle systems are usually kept locked and have a code that must be entered in, but can be activated by anyone with the key and code.

The scuttle system is usually activated directly from the engine room. A scuttle system cannot be used if a ship is disabled or already breaking apart.

A scuttle system deals only damage to those in the same space as the scuttled ship. A DC 15 pilot check reduces the collateral damage by half.

A ship destroyed by its own scuttle system cannot be salvaged for parts.

Purchase DC: Varies by starship type

Special: Scuttle systems do not count towards the maximum number of defensive systems a starship may have.

Starship Type	Purchase DC
Ultralight	15
Light	20
Mediumweight	21
Heavy	25
Superheavy	50

Self-Destruct System

This is a more deadly scuttle system designed to not only destroy the ship, but to take out nearby starships as well.

A self-destruct system can be programmed to activate only under specific conditions – usually the voice authorization of the ship's commander, and usually only after the crew has sufficient time to evacuate.

The self-destruct system obliterates the starship (killing all still aboard) regardless of how many hit points it has remaining. A starship destroyed by its own self-destruct system has no salvagable parts.

The starship's self-destruction triggers an explosion of shrapnel that deals collateral slashing damage to all other ships in its fighting space; mediumweight, heavy and superheavy ships also deal collateral damage to ships in adjacent squares. A successful pilot check (DC 15) reduces the damage by half.

Purchase DC: varies by starship size.

Restriction: Military (+1)

Stealth Screen

Available only to Nippon ships, this is an improved sensor jammer that consists of electromagnetic transceiver capable of detecting incoming electromagnetic energy from radars, ladars, and other sensor devices. When it detects such energy, it responds by generating an electromagnetic interference pattern. In addition, it monitors the ship's own EM emissions and cloaks them in a similar manner. Finally, the stealth shield masks the ship's mass signature.

Sensor checks made against a ship with an active stealth screen take a –10 penalty.

Additionally, a deployed mine has a 50% chance of not detecting the screened ship as it enters or leaves its detonation area.

Finally, a ship with an active stealth screen gains one-half concealment against all attacks (20% miss chance).

However, a stealth screen chews up tremendous amounts of energy – consuming one 6-second unit of fuel for every round it is active. Also, a ship with a stealth screen active can only use passive sensor systems, as the stealth screen would be rendered useless if active sensors were used.

Purchase DC: 10 + one-half the base purchase DC of the starship or mine.

Restriction: Military (+3) Nippon only.

Light Fortification

The starship's structural integrity is reinforced so that the ship can shake off attacks that would cripple it otherwise. Light fortification converts 25% of all critical hits into regular hits.

Installing light fortification requires a Craft (Structural) check instead of a Craft (mechanical) check

Purchase DC: 10 + one-half the base purchase DC of the starship.

Restriction: Licensed (+1)

Redundant Systems

The starship has several back-up systems installed in case of a crippling attack is made on the ship. Redundant Systems allows a ship to ignore the first critical hit it receives in combat, converting it automatically to a regular hit.

Purchase DC: 5 + one-half the base purchase DC of the starship
Restriction: Licensed (+1)

Decreased Signature

The ship's hull is shaped in a manner to make it more difficult to detect by sensors; signals are harmlessly scattered rather than refracted and the hull produces a signature that most sensor operators will be unable to discern from debris matter.

A ship equipped with decreased signature gains a +1 to +5 equipment bonus to increase the difficulty of being detected by sensors.
Purchase DC: 5 + one-third the base purchase DC of the starship.
Restriction: Military (+2)

Starship Sensors

Passive Sensor Array

This is the most primitive of sensor arrays, relying on incoming signals to detect objects. It uses primarily enhanced video and intercepts sensor probes made against it. It is the only sensor system that can be active while a Stealth Screen is in operation.

The following can be determined with a passive sensor array

- Ascertain the direction (but not distance) of a ship using scanners in the area
- Determine the type of sensors being used to scan the ship
- Visually identify ships on the battlefield.

Purchase DC: 12
Restriction: None

Class I Sensor Array

Class II Sensor Array

Class III Sensor Array

Targeting System

A computerized targeting system helps starship gunners aim weapons and track enemy ships. A targeting computer provides an equipment bonus on attack rolls based on the quality of the system.

Bonus	Purchase DC
+1	18
+2	23
+3	28
+4	27
+5	32

Starship Comm Systems

Radio Transceiver

Laser Transceiver

Starship Weapons

Beam Weapons

Fusion Beam

Laser

Laser, Heavy

Mass Cannon

Plasma Cannon

EMP Cannon

Projectile Weapons

Ballistic Cannon

Ballistic cannons are extremely rare sights; they still use a chemically propelled shot to hurl a solid core munitions at the target. In space vessels, they require a special, pressurized firing compartment to be used. Their only advantage is they do not require system power to use. Ballistic cannons are primarily used by civilian vessels with licensed defensive weapons, some starfighters and poorer pirate vessels.

Gauss Gun

The gauss gun uses a magnetic coil to hurl a large explosive munition at a target. They are similar to ballistic cannon, but do not require an internal atmosphere to fire and have little to no recoil. Guass guns are primarily used by most military vessels larger than a starfighter.

Rail Cannon

A rail cannon uses a graviometric device to hurl a load of shrapnel at a target. Because they generate a gravatic field when fired, they are considered to be high-recoil weapons. Likewise, because they depend on a load of shrapnel to hit and damage targets, their effectiveness tends to decrease as range increases and the shrapnel spreads. Rail cannons are generally reserved for Battleships of the Romeworld military. They are generally considered secondary weapons and because of recoil concerns are generally fired from stationary vessels.

Kinetic Energy (KE) Cannon

The KE (Kinetic Energy) Cannon is sometimes also called the "shotgun cannon". It uses a magnetic coil to fire a projectile composed of hundreds of tiny submunition darts that spreads open over a wide area. It is a deadly weapon for close-range combat, but rapidly loses its effectiveness as range increases and the micro-projectiles scatter.

Unlike most other projectile weapons, KE cannons have only five range increments, and lose one dice of damage for each range increment past the first.

Missiles

Missile, CHE

A CHE (Chemical High Explosive) missile is a fusion-powered unmanned starcraft with an explosive warhead. CHE are only effective in an atmosphere or if they penetrate the hull of an enemy vessel. They are primarily used for planetary attacks or as finishing weapons against vessels that are venting atmosphere. CHE missiles are generally only used for orbital strikes or primitive starfighters or pirating vessels.

Missile, KE Submunition

A KE (Kinetic Energy) missile is a fusion-powered unmanned starcraft that uses its impressive weight to damage enemy craft. KE missiles are generally designed to break apart on impact so that they cannot be repurposed by an enemy and redirected back at the firer. KE submuntion missiles are generally the primary missile weapon in use across RomeWorld.

Missile, Nuclear

Nuclear missiles are specialized unmmaned starcraft with unstable fission reactors, designed to explode. They deal massive damage, rending objects with superheated plasma. Unfortunately, they also tend to irradiate the target, and thus are generally only used against targets the attacker has no desire to capture or salvage. Due to their generally cheap nature and frightening side effects, they are favored by Jihadist for terrorist actions. Normally, only archaic Romeworld military craft employ these weapons, and only on "Slash and Burn" missions. There are strict ban against the use of these weapons on planet-side targets.

Missile, Plasma

Romeworld

Plasma missiles are specialized unmanned starcraft loaded with hydrogen fusion warheads. They explode with a deadly blast of plasma that adheres and burns through ship armor. It is also especially devastating when detonated within an atmosphere, feeding off the atmosphere to nearly double its damage capability. Plasma missiles are generally used as secondary weapons on Battleship and larger vessels in the Romeworld military.

Missile, KE Thrustkiller

A KE (Kinetic Energy) Thrustkiller missile is a specialized unmanned starcraft designed to lodge itself into an enemy craft and use various thrusting vents to slow and/or misdirect an enemy vessel. Thrustkillers are fairly rare and are often used by pirating vessels or patrol craft that seek to disable or retard an enemy vessels ability to escape an engagement.

Mines

Mine, Fusion

Mine, Gravity

Fire-Linked Weapons

Weapon Batteries

Grappling Systems

Grapplers

Alloy Plating