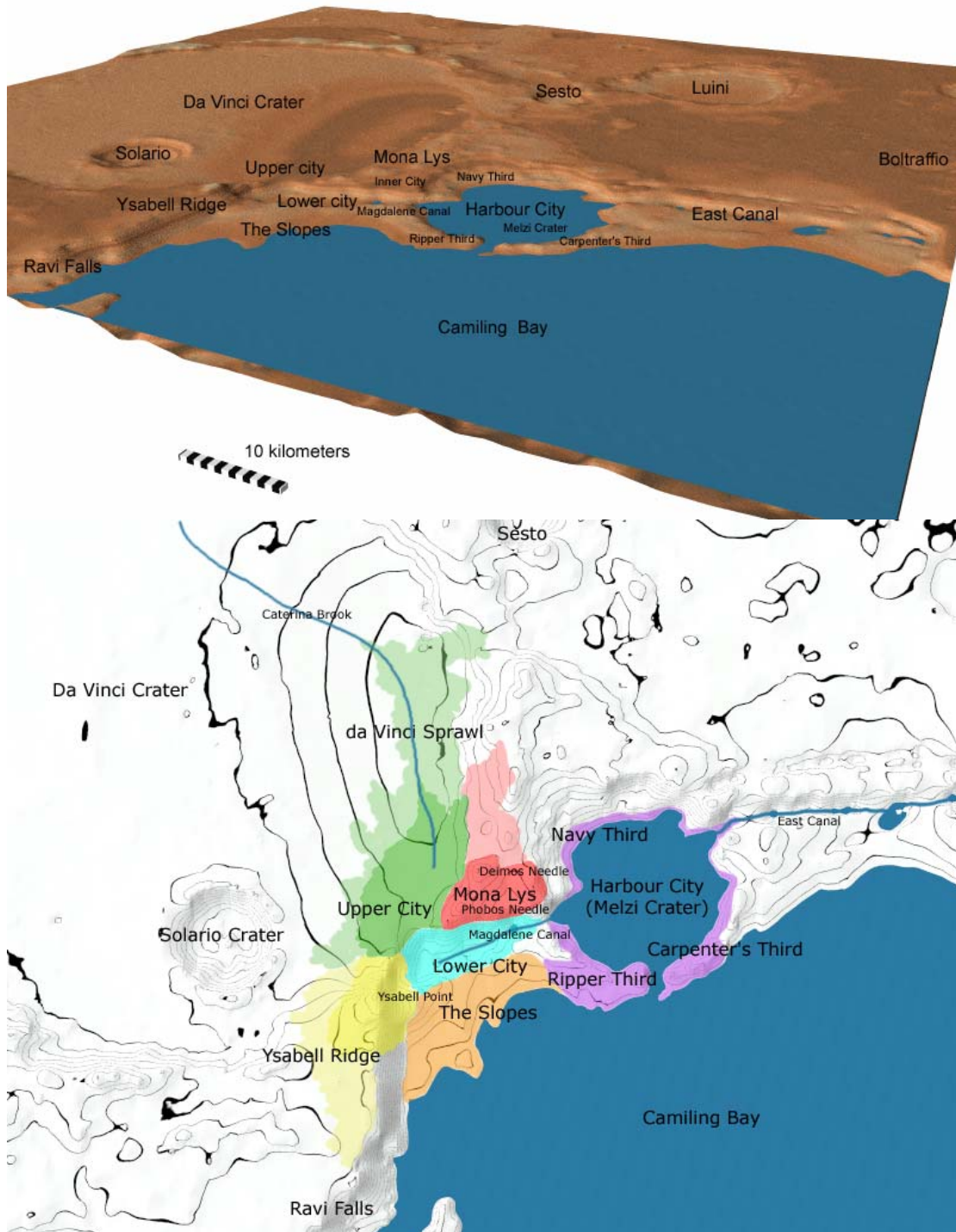


New Chryse and the Provinces

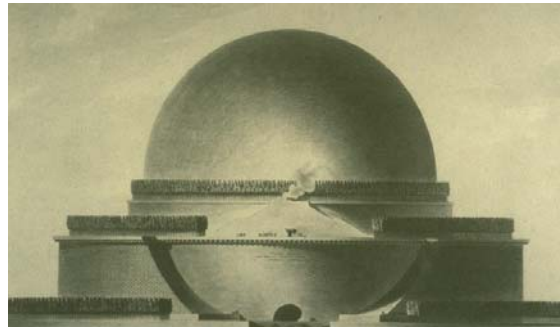
New Chryse and environs



The city of New Chryse is actually several connected cities. The Upper City is located on a break in the crater rim, looking down past a steep rock to the Lower City. Inside the da Vinci crater rim lies the

Inner City, also known as the Old City – Red Era tunnels and cave shelters, as well as several nanocomposite towers and cupolas on Mona Lys Ridge looking down on the lower parts of the city. The Lower city lies in a valley sloping down to the Harbour City, which fills a crater 20 kilometres to the East. The Harbour City crater is connected to Camiling Bay and the sea through two canyons and is very well protected from both wind and ice. South of the Lower City and Harbour City lies The Slopes, a straight slope into the sea that is covered with sprawl and slums.

Mona Lys Ridge is a mixture of palatial estates surrounded by gardens, imposing official imperial buildings and towering ancient structures used by the highest ranks of the Empire. The central imperial administration and especially the Council is housed in the Deimos Needle, a diamondoid tower that together with its sibling the Phobos Needle dominate the skyline. Escalators allow swift and discreet transport down to the lower levels of the city, and can easily be defended by the police force. North of Mona Lys lies a secluded garden city for higher administrators, guild officials and lesser nobility.



The Inner City is to a large extent part of Mona Lys, although most of the inhabitants of Mona Lys do not care much for the dusty old tunnels and hidden vaults – that is left to the Guild of Antiquarians who maintain and protect it. Some regions of the Inner City are famous meeting places, such as the Museum of Mars, the Chryse Gallery or the diamond-walled Panorama.

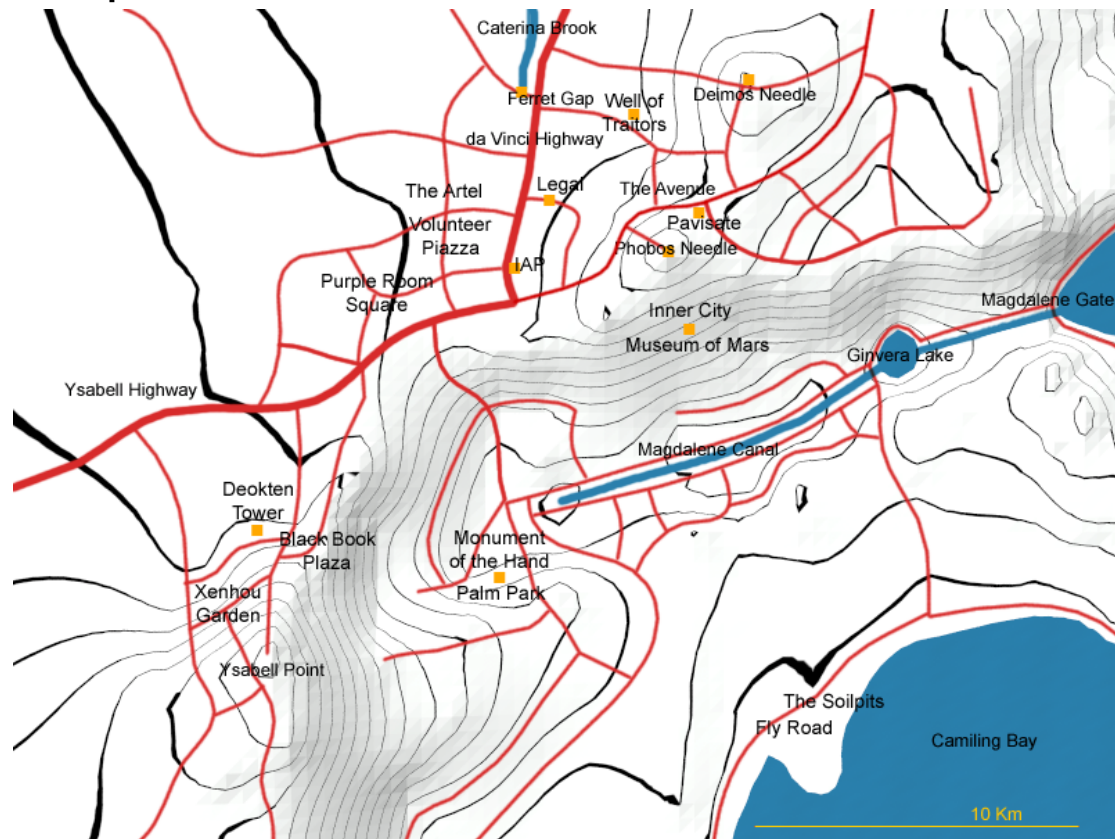
The Upper City is a prosperous middle class district, home to many of the lesser guilds, mid-level executives, schools and well-off minority neighbourhoods. To the north it turns into a sprawl extending into the farmlands of da Vinci along the Caterina Brook almost as far as da Sesto crater. To the west lies the terraced Ysabell Ridge, covered with small farms/gardens and taverns.

The Lower City is less well off as the Upper City, but the inhabitants still regard themselves as honest citizens. This is the main working class district, a jumble of small streets between endlessly rebuilt brick building sprouting towers, extra floors and rickety bridges in the often narrow valley. At the bottom the Magdalene Canal is used to ship goods in and out from the city. The piers around Ginvera Lake are the traditional market district; here lies the big markets for imported goods and trade offices of the guilds, merchant houses and noble families.

The Harbour City is isolated from the rest of the city by its own crater (usually just called the Harbour Crater, but properly called Melzi). Access to the city is through the Magdalene Gate, which is open all sol long but guarded by zealous customs officials. The city is split into three neighbourhoods by the water and canals. To the North lies the Naval Third, where the Imperial Navy is stationed. This is also where the main customs offices, various imperial ships and other VIP facilities are located. Above it towers the highest peak of Mona Lys, where the Air Fleet is headquartered in the Phobos Needle. The Southwestern third is known as the Ripper Third and is the main port, used for loading and unloading and trade outside the city limits. It is hilly and contains several canyons, housing cheap hotels, brothels and the typical seediness found in a harbour district. The eastern third is known as Carpenters Third, and contains docks, shipyards, construction facilities and engineering shops. It is notably dominated by Arabian and Margaritiferian immigrants.

The Slopes were once farmland and then turned into a garden city but as Xanthe has grown and more people moved to New Chryse they have gone downhill. The Slopes are now home to the slums of the city, some disagreeable industry like soilbrewing, foodplastic and tanning and the seediest entertainment districts. The slope, high level of erosion and smell give the region its nickname “The Runs”.

Transportation



The canals, especially the Magdalene Canal, carries much of the goods to and from the harbour, as well as many passengers who prefer the canal barges to the bustling streets through the canal bazaars.

New Chryse is famous for its aerial cableways, bringing people and goods up from the Lower City to Ysabell, the Upper City and Mona Lys. The cableways form a complex net across the central city, suspended by ancient steel pylons whirring with gears. The cars themselves are cast iron construction with ornate, jugend-style gridwork and plastic windows. The cablesystem is regulated from the Cable Lookout, a building hanging precariously on the cliffs with a complex and highly visible semaphore system on top; conductors on the streets signal back with their own semaphores.

To get up from the Lower City without cableway there are many winding stairs along the cliffs, interspersed with occasional building perched on the cliffs with cafés and shops. The view is excellent, but the traffic is heavy.

Places

Mona Lys

The Avenue

The central road through Mona Lys, a broad avenue flanked by statues and ceremonial buildings at regular intervals. During the days it is a busy thoroughfare for people involved in the highest echelons of the empire. Along its sides lie small cafes and restaurants catering for formal luncheons. During the night it is usually nearly totally empty, except for the military patrols keeping things safe and quiet. "To be on the Avenue" implies that one has become important and busy.

The Mansions

The Ten Families and other influential groups have their mansions here, surrounded by extensive parkland. Some, like the Tyndareus and Ravi Vallis mansions, have been extended for centuries into complex labyrinths. Others have a more restrained architecture, such as the airy and open Icaros mansion (it was built after a fire destroyed the previous in 104) or the Tsao Red Era geodetic cupola.

Deimos Needle

A 3 kilometers high Red Era skyscraper, tapering to a fine point. The lower two thirds are office space, housing the central imperial administration and the Imperial Council.

Phobos Needle

A twin of the Deimos Needle. Military headquarters, especially for the airfleet. Usually there are many zepts anchored to the building.

The House of the Earth Children

Originally a small bunker complex constructed during the Crash to house non-combatants. Over time it became a religious orphanage; children were raised by the terranics, a small religious order seeking the spiritual return to Earth. Their role has vanished over the years but the House remains with many strange rituals. Children left at the House are raised to become professional servants, doctors and assistants. Earthchildren are sought after, since they are both traditionally viewed as better than ordinary servants and being walking “spiritual protectors” of a house. They are often called the Lucky Children.

The Pavisate

Large domed hall near the Phobos Needle, famed for its gold and glass ornaments. Used for concerts and gala events by the empire, it is the official place to see or be seen. It is surrounded by a gallery of exclusive clothing shops and botiques aiming at the uppermost echelons of New Chryse society; being a pavisate implies that one regularly frequents the place.

Inner City

Museum of Mars

Enormous museum/archive complex in the Inner City, both a popular tourist attraction and academic institution. The museum covers all of Martian history, with an emphasis on the heroism of exploration, colonisation and progress. In the central Hall of Explorers the original Viking and Pathfinder probes are shown, together with statues of the great explorers such as Magellan, Thekkeparambil and Violete Icaros. From this central hall several wings branch out into the Inner City. The Earth Wing covers the history and culture of Earth, with many ancient artefacts and artworks. It adjoins the Institute of Intraplanetary Culture, a remnant of the MTN diplomatic section that now acts as archivists, archaeologists and experts on Red Era history.



The Wing of Sciences is a technical museum, depicting the road from flint tools to terraforming. It is not just a museum but also a commonly used metaphor in Exnerism about how to advance the empire; many political speeches and announcements are done here. It has many ties to the New Chryse School of Technology.

The Wing of Art contains art, both from Earth and Mars. Here are reproductions of ancient masterpieces or some of the pieces themselves such as Botticelli's *Mars and Venus*, Larya Remton's *Manrise* and Xue-Lond Tsao's *Hexagram 4*.

A large section contains different exhibitions. For the moment (mid 153) the main attraction is the exhibition *History of Computing: From Rock to Diamond*, sponsored by the Guild of Numbers and Infomerchants. The exhibition of Marinerian art was recently closed after complaints of its crudity.

The Chryse Gallery

Adjoining the Museum lies the Gallery of more contemporary art.

The Panorama

Restaurant and meeting place within the Inner City, with an enormous diamond window-wall showing the great panorama of the city.

The Depth

A huge cylindrical chamber within the Inner City with a spiralling ramp encircling it. It connects the different parts of the Inner City. At the bottom is an artificial lake with fountains.

Ysabell Ridge

Deokten Tower

University, specialised on economics, trade, liberal arts and mathematics. The tower is a spiralled blue sapphire spire from the Red Era, in itself little used except as a bell-tower, but surrounded by a sprawling complex of high buildings. The Deoktenians are easily recognized by their prominent tower scarf.

Garden of Xenhou

A sloping garden/park with a snaking stream meandering through meadows with small bridges across. A popular promenade and picnic location, surrounded by inns and garden theatres. It was named after its architect, the ambitious and controversial merchant Ser Venenpro Xenhou.

Black Book Plaza

A small plaza overlooking the Lower City. Named after an old bookshop that burned down long ago.

Ysabell Point

The highest point on Ysabell ridge and in the city, with a grand view of the entire city. A popular tourist spot.

Upper City

The Artel

The part where most guild headquarters are located. While the highest echelons meet at Mona Lys, most of the real work gets down in the offices of the Artel. At the centre of the Artel lies Volunteer Piazza, surrounded by famous waterworks and a popular place for guild marketing and recruitment.

Uzbai Trade Association House

Bioist Temple

Legal College

Elementary school, usually just called "Legal". This is the place where the upper classes send their children in addition to private tutoring so that they get the chance to learn together. An imposing brick and stone building complex near the stairs to Mona Lys.

Purple Room Square

A small square dominated by a hollow purple stone cube with a small entrance. The cube was originally a bunker/guardhouse from the First Dark Era, and later used for a variety of purposes – guardhouses, equipment storage, as a home for a selected derelict. Currently it is a kind of speakers corner, where people make speeches and lecture.

Institute of Applied Parapraxy

Important research and planning institute. The IAP studies the deployment of technological/social systems and how they can be handled in the best way. While not an official government body it overlaps heavily with the various planning departments, exnerist technoarcheological schools and guild think tanks. The directors have significant power in government with their advice.

Well of Traitors

A deep, apparently bottomless hole in the ground surrounded by a parapet on the western edge of the Upper City. It is commonly used to get rid of refuse and sewage. The name comes from the widespread story that it was used to execute the worst traitors; they either were killed by the fall or had to subsist for the rest of their lives amidst the garbage. Many people swear they have heard weak voices from below, either the ghosts of past traitors or their horrid descendants. In reality it was a transport shaft for the rocks dug out during some of the Red Era construction projects beneath New Chryse.

Ferret Gap

Caterina Brook is used for much agricultural shipping using barges from the inland. The canal vanishes into Ferret Gap, a large early imperial era concrete sinkhole into the underground drain system.

Lower City

The lower city is built in a fairly steep valley with the Magdalene Canal at the bottom. Northside is steeper and “better”, with serpentine stairs leading up to the Upper City and several markets. Southside is more residential.

Temple of the Hungry God

Tunnels to the Slopes

Magdalene Canal

Monument of the Hand

An enormous (16 meter high) open hand of stone set on top of a plinth in Palm Park. Originally sculpted by Toregan Ktasei to celebrate the victory over Eos, it has become a symbol for conquest and growth.

The Slopes

The Soilpits

Parts of the NC sewer system pour out in dams here, adding to the odour of the region. This is the traditional haunt of the soilbrewers and soiltraders. The soiltraders arrive with carriages to haul the preprocessed waste away for farming, along “Fly Road” to the southwest.

Harbour City

Magdalene Gate

Naval Third

Ripper Third

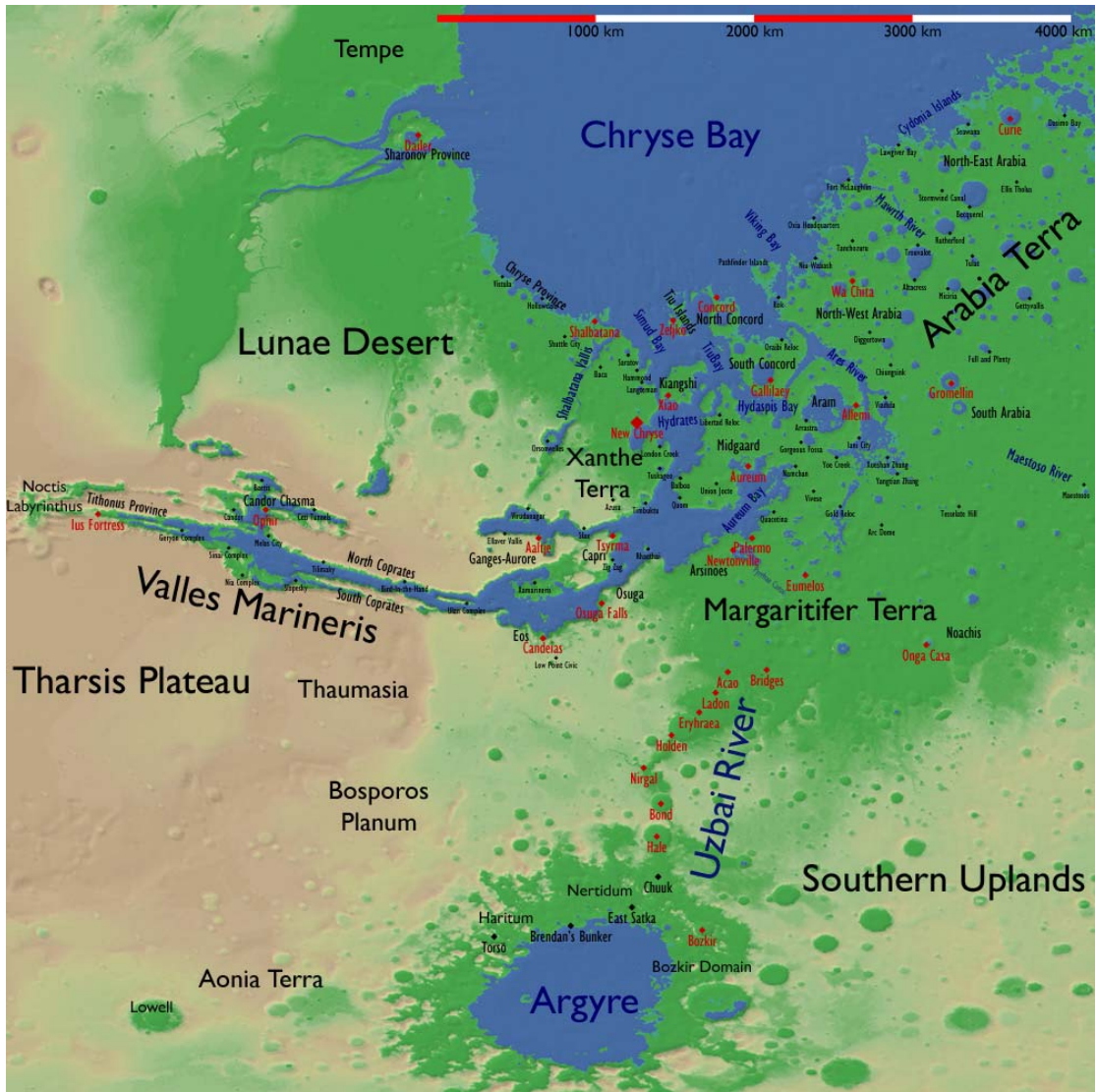
Carpenter’s Third

East Canal

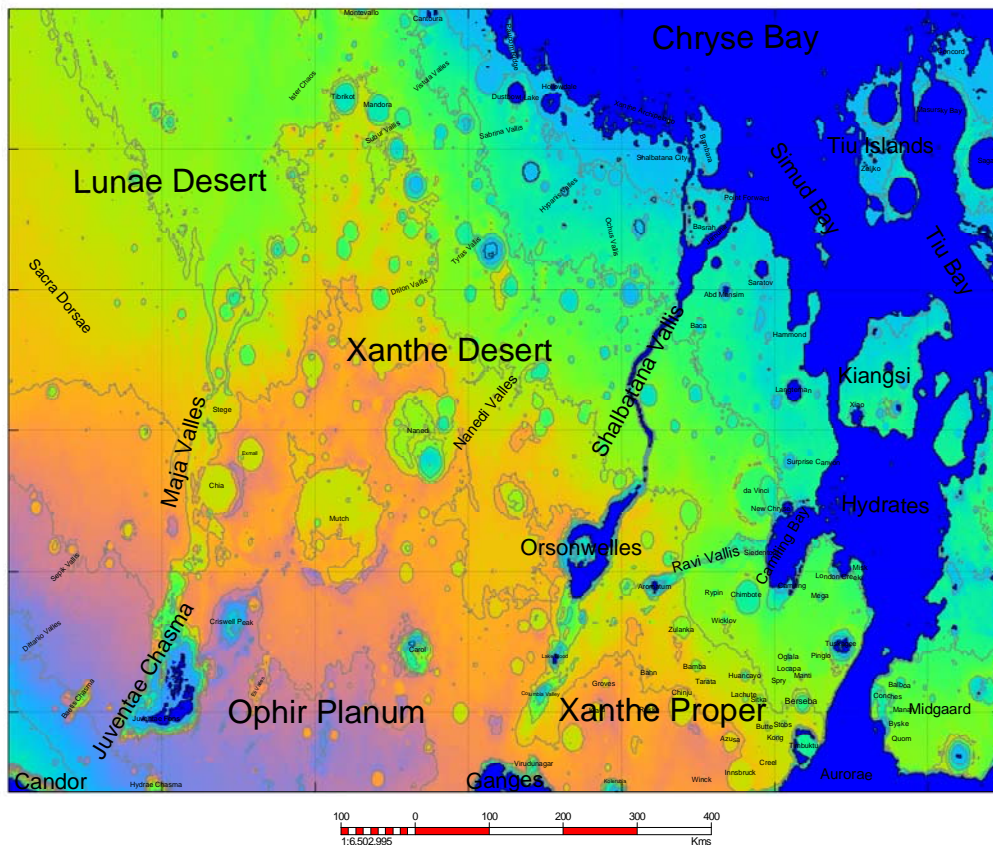
Ricangon

A valley sloping down from the plateau near Boltraffio with a small stream and a road. The stream ends up in a series of waterfalls near the northeast shore of Melzi, with the road entering the Naval Third. Important transport route for export goods and military equipment, guarded by a series of small watchtowers.

The Provinces



Xanthe proper



Xanthe is the heartland of the empire and the home to “the ten families”.

It is a somewhat dry plain with forested craters and steep slopes into the sea to the south and east. Westwards it becomes drier, merging into the Lunae desert beyond Shalbatana Vallis, the traditional demarcation line.

South of da Vinci the Ravi Vallis River thunders into the sea along an escarpment. The river valley is the original home to the Ravi Vallis family, one of the Ten Families and the most influential in the Plastics Guild. It is a verdant and pleasing valley, dominated by the ancestral bunker complex of the Ravi Vallis clan and the castle that has been added above it. On the southern side on a hill near the cliffs lies Siedentopf, one of the army garrisons for protecting the heartland.

The Ravi Vallis river begins in Aromatum, a small lake district with hills used for winemaking, holiday villas and rustic life for the wealthy city people. It runs east until it drops over magnificent waterfalls into Camiling Bay

On the south side lies the city Camiling in a canyon valley sloping down to the sea. It is an important shipping town but still central. Much of the goods to central Xanthe are imported here rather than in New Chryse due to lower customs, which earns the Rypiné family (who controls much of the harbour) a tidy profit.

To the northeast of New Chryse lies Surprise Canyon, a narrow canyon reaching down to the sea and providing an alternative port.

The western border of Xanthe Proper is Shalbatana Vallis, a huge vallis stretching from Orsonwelles to Chryse Bay in the north, 600 kilometers long and in most places several kilometres wide. At Orsonwelles it forms a large crater lake surrounding the mountainous Orsonwelles peninsula in the west (the city of Orsonwelles is located on the steep eastern coast, climbing up to the Xanthe plateau). To the north the vallis continues up to the island Basrah, where it splits into the easterly Jamuna and the westerly Bambara. It is sailable by oceangoing ships all the way to Orsonwelles and a major

transport route in Xanthe. It also acts as a border to the deserts to the west; frequently dust storms roar in from the west and become trapped by the vallis.

South of Orsonwelles the vallis continues as a valley towards Lake Blood (a salt lake often colored deep red by desert dust) and Columbia Valley. It is a dry place, with small farmsteads struggling against the desert. The highway from Orsonwelles continues southward until it reaches the Virudunagar valley and city, the gateway to the Ganges chasma.

Ganges-Aurore

(Southwest of Xanthe, capital Aaltje)

Elaver Vallis contains the sizeable Elaver River, which descends into the sea near Qianxuesen through a series of waterfalls and rock pools. The Qianxuesen falls produce a fine fog of water, creating amazing rainbows and reflections in the equatorial sun. This fog is known as the Sexfog, and is reputed to have amazing aphrodisiac and fertility-promoting properties. People seeking help from sexual ailments (especially impotence) and infertile couples bathe and make love in the sexfog. There is also a thriving market for bottled sexfog, where bottles are left to collect water from the mist and then sealed and sold as aphrodisiacs. During holidays large groups congregate and “scenes of nearly Argyrian excess and licentiousness” take place. The authorities have several times tried to stop the practice, but old traditions are hard to stop and the locals are staunchly against any change.

Capri

(island mesa between Ganges and Eos, capital Tsyрма)

Famed for its pleasant climate and oranges.

Zig Zag, a town a few miles south of Tsyрма, is the headquarters of the Capri Horticultural Association. The CHA wields notable influence over the region through its quality measures and regulations of fruit trade. While not a constitutional guild, it wields nearly the same amount of power here.

Eos

(Eos strait, southern shores, capital Candeias)

Low Point Civic

Low Point Civic is a small town on the edge of the desert. Infamous for its sand and storms, but also the amazing rock formations surrounding it. A Red Era teocenter was built here, and later became a Stargazer era Infomerchant Bazaar. When Xanthe conquered the area the Infomerchants fled and left the empty and ruined buildings. Since they did not take with them many of their treasured books (and would never have destroyed them), they must have been hidden nearby. Countless adventurers have tried to find the treasure with no luck.

Osuga

(Cap: Osuga Falls)

The Osuga Province is the largest wheat producer in the empire. Infamous for being staid and boring, with the exception of the occasional Thaumasia storm which might destroy buildings and harvests.

Arsinoes

(Capitals Palermo and Newtonville)

Arsiones bay is an important trading nexus, receiving goods from all directions. Palermo and Newtonville on the west and east side are the competing capitals of their provinces. Each is capital for one year each.

The Temple of Light

An ancient building on the cliffs near Palermo built from enormous blocks of transparent quartz, reflecting and refracting sunlight in wondrous ways. The original use of the building has been forgotten, but it is used as a shrine to the divinity of light and beauty. A small order of aestheticist priests maintain the building, making a living of selling art inspired by the internal light and donations. It is said that an Aeolian architect once visited the temple and was so enraptured by the beauty that he exclaimed “after this, nothing can compare!” and died on the spot.

South Coprates

Capital: Coprates

North Coprates

Capital: Bird-In-the-Hand

An important mining site.

Candor

(north of Coprates, cap Ophir)

Tithonium (westernmost Marineris)

(capital Ius Fortress)

The ruins of Knossos remain an imposing sight: enormous glass-covered canyons, pylons extending a mini-worldhouse and Red Era architecture jutting out from the rock. Today the area is still inhabited, but the destruction of most of the infrastructure and ecology in the labyrinthian wars have made the region poor except as an exporter of ancient raw materials.

Margaritifer Province

(Capital: Eumelos)

The large Margaritifer province were once ruled by many different nations, but they were all conquered, subverted or voluntarily joined the empire as provinces. While not truly heartland, the Margaritifer region has become well integrated with the imperial order. While some old families still carry grudges and some regions still practice their own customs, in practice the Margaritiferians are loyal citizens.

Margaritifer is mainly agricultural, with heavy trade with the Uzbai region. Across Margaritfer there are many agricultural celebrations, especially the wine feasts when the grapes are harvested. These celebrations are all said to honour Bacchus, although few take the religious aspect seriously (the main exception is Marinerian farm workers, who venerate Bacchus as the friendly face of the God of Feast and Famine, and participate energetically in the celebrations).

The border between the Empire and the Uzbai Trade Federation is marked by Cohen Land, a vast swamp north of Ladon and Lorica where the Uzbai meanders through lowland before emptying in the Ares River to the north at Eumelos. Near Eumelos is also the Pyrrhae Canal, linking it to the Marineris. Cohen Land is not particularly hospitable and forms a natural border. A few trading stations, barge inns and poor farms form the only population.

Noachis Province

(hinterlands / uplands, cap Onga Casa)

The southwestern borders are undefined and just fade into the uplands. Law and order similarly fades into a wild west of wandering lawmen, barbarian vendettas and plain emptiness.

Midgaard

(Cap Aureum)

Aureum is a sprawling, well-off city enjoying a pleasant climate and beautiful surroundings. It is sometimes called the “Second Golden City” (the first is New Chryse).

Aureum Bay is a rich source of fishing, kelp and salt. Midgaard produces many spices such as pepper and saffron that are exported. It is a rich rural area with prosperous farms and some of the most beautiful gardens on Mars. Many of the noble families keep holiday chateaus here.

12 Kilometers north of Aureum lies the Equatorial Biodiversity Reserve (the Eqoneil), a complex of Red Era diamondoid domes housing several biospheres with equatorial climate ecology. It has been maintained by the Eckbire clan since time immemorial (they joined Xanthe voluntarily in exchange for continued stewardship under the Environmental Administration). While many species once housed within the reserve have died out, the reserve still keeps many rare and exotic plants and animals. New greenhouses and enclosures nearby house plants and animals from all corners of the empire. It is both a zoo, a gene bank, ecology/biology university and a symbol of Midgaard.

Midgaard Tiles: Midgard produces decorative tiles which are widely used across Xanthe and elsewhere.

Aram Province

(Allemi)

Allemi is known as the City of the Dark Wave. The name comes from the occasional bore waves along the Aram Vallis caused by weather shifts that move the water of Aram or the Ares. These waves are dangerous but also described as having a terrible implacable beauty, “as Death gliding by”.

South Concord

(south of Sagan, capital Gallilaey)

North Concord

(Capital: Concord)

The Pathfinder Islands to the north were once an important sea power, but after the defeat of Arabia they acquiesced and joined the empire. Pathfinders are still somewhat insular and sceptical of the empire, only grudgingly accepting its authority.

Tiu Islands

(cap Zeljko)

The Tiu Province mainly consists of islands north of New Cryse. It is administered together with Northern Concord by the Ubangui of Concord family. The main business is fishing and clam farms. The Navy uses the province for many exercises and have important bases in certain crater-bays.

Kiangsi

(Capital Xiao)

Xiao, sometimes called “Muddy Harbor City” for its silt-clogged harbour, is a strongly sloping city built on the slopes of the island mesa. Its blue-painted houses are wildly connected by stairs and bridges that are also home to the fierce red Kiangsi cats. It is known as a difficult place to visit due to the very firm conduct regulation maintained by the local exnerian orders and police. It is said that even Exner himself would have been fined here – but the joke is never told in public.

Chryse Province

(Capital Shalbatana)

The Chryse Province is narrow strip of arable land between Chryse bay and the western desert. It is the poorest of all the provinces, mostly important for maintaining lighthouses and zep depots along the coast. “Being governor of Chryse” is an expression of having a thankless, pointless job.

The Bazaar Priveb lies on the outskirts of Shalbatana. The Bazaar is an educational/administrative institution among the Xanthe InfomERCHANTS and sees a fair amount of traffic. While the official headquarters are in New Chryse, this is the de facto centre of the InfomERCHANTS. The Bazaar is an imposing fortress-like construction built largely from materials scavenged from Shuttle City, with large antennas on the roof and internal gardens.

In the inland of Chryse lies Shuttle City. Here a large contingent of CSRE landed and made their homes among the shuttles during the evacuation of orbit. The shuttles remain and have been an important source of recycling in the past, but now little useful remains and the once prosperous Shalbatana is a total backwater.

Sharonov Province

(Capital Dailer)

The inland inhabitants call themselves the Kasei and pride themselves on their descent from Kasei Base. They have a noticeable exotic white fur and are very skilled at survival in the deserts, hunting with bows and finding their ways around the inland. Their “iceart” of surviving in cold climates is nearly mythical in Xanthe; they are said to not only be able to predict the weather and know how to survive, but skilled practitioners are said to be able to survive blizzards without any protection at all, fight using ice knives and control their metabolism totally.

One of the stranger mental illnesses of Mars can occasionally be found here, the Truthers. Truthers (sometimes called Badauds) have an autism-like genetic condition that prevents them from deliberately lying. They can omit information and even bend the truth a bit, but they are unable to conceive of how to actually say something that is not based on their experience or belief. They are similarly handicapped in detecting lies – they cannot imagine how others construct imaginary worlds as if they were real, despite being aware from experience that they do. Truthers give a slightly naïve and unimaginative impression, and are usually fairly handicapped in dealing with normal people. From time to time Truthers have been hired for special jobs in Xanthe, such as acting as witnesses or inspectors, but invariably the attempts have failed. Most Truthers in Sharonov live simple lives far from other people, preferring not to reveal their nature.

Northwest Arabia

(Capital Wa Chita)

Southwest of Wa Chita lies the famous Mirror Lake. It was not named for the tranquillity of its water, but for the immense reflecting object beneath, The Great Mirror of Wa Chita. The Mirror appears to be a huge diamondoid construct of uncertain origin and purpose. It makes the lake reflect light in amazing ways, sometimes appearing to shine, sometimes as a perfect mirror or an infinite blackness. It is a popular tourist attraction and many aesthetes like to bathe in its light, which is said to give inspiration and help contemplation.

Northeast Arabia

(Capital: Curie)

South Arabia

(Capital Gromellin)

Airy Crater is the location of the official zero meridian, and an old Red Era sapphire monument marks the exact spot inside the crater lake. The Meridian Pillar is locally reputed to be magical, granting the wishes of whoever manages to scale the glass-smooth stone and reach the summit to witness the sunrise.

The eastern border was until recently roughly set by the Maestoso River, but the current chrome rush has pushed it beyond and involved the local garrison in a series of minor insurrections from Dikanka radicalists stirring up adventurers and outlaws. The official local prefecture is the garrison city Maestosos in the southern Meridianum Planum. Maestosos is a wild frontier boomtown, a mixture of Klondike and Vietnam.

The Maestoso River drains much of the Noachis uplands. It is a highly seasonal river that officially begins in Mädler Crater, where a number of smaller rivers merge. It flows north through Airy and merges with the Schiaparelli/Brazos River from the east on the western edge of Meridianum Planum. From there it bends towards the west, reaching Gromellin and then the Gromellin channel leading it to the Ares in the West. The river is rarely usable for boats east of Gromellin; either it is a raging torrent or a dry bed filled with rocks.

Bakhuysen Protectorate

Bakhuysen is nominally a part of Xanthe. The chief of the Freeland Bakhuysen, Jinifera Rejk-Ponomarevalya, called upon Xanthe in 2942 to save the land from invaders from the Scylla-Charybdis rift valley (allied with her former husband). Xanthe sent in a small air force and saved Bakhuysen. The reason for the move remains unclear to most people; the crater is enormously distant and holds little value other than as an outpost in the Far East. It is remote and isolated, halfway to Hellas and suffers from frequent dust- and ice-storms.

Bakhuysen is an eerie experience: a vast, ruined city from the Red Era, with buildings half hidden in dunes or vegetation. Amid the ruins live various upland tribes, nominally ruled by the imperial administration and the chief in the central arcology complex.