

ARS, the third planet from the Sun, is the oldest world in the whole System. The crimson sphere has an ancient history that antedates that of any of the other planets.

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Scientists agree that human civilization rose on Mars long before it did so on any of the other worlds. Planetary archaeologists calculate the date of the first appearance of real civilization on Mars as at least 290,000 B.C., reckoning by Earth chronology. That date marks the beginning of the First Dynasty -- the era of the first kings who ruled over all the known, inhabited parts of the red planet. Our information concerning the first five dynasties of Martian rulers is very vague. We know that even in that prehistoric time Mars was a drying, desert world, its life maintained only by the periodical melting of its polar snow-caps. Scientists speculate that the sharpening of adverse conditions probably stimulated the first real upburst of Martian scientific progress. That atomic power was known by the time of the Fifth Dynasty is a fact of which we are certain.

The Sixth Dynasty, circa 234,000 B.C., is known in history as that of the Canal Builders. It was the great kings of that regime who initiated and carried to completion the vast project which doubled the habitable area of Mars by bringing the water of the snow-caps carefully far south and north in underground aqueducts. Even with the primitive atomic power they possessed, the project must have been one of Herculean undertaking.

Next followed a period of prosperity in which occurred the most glorious epoch of Martian history -- that of the Seventh Dynasty. Known to legend as the Great Kings, those rulers reared titanic structures and cities whose remnants in the desert now form ruined cities which still awe the curious interplanetary traveler. Martian scientific progress reached its peak during the Seventh Dynasty.

The Land of Storms

The Eighth Dynasty, of the Lesser Kings, attained a magnificence unrivaled by previous generations. It was during the reign of the Lesser Kings that Martian exploring expeditions were sent to Jupiter, Saturn and other worlds of the System. So was inaugurated the first period of interplanetary commerce and travel. This period lasted for a few centuries. Then, unaccountably, it faded and was completely forgotten until the Earthmen, long later, re-opened the space-ways.

It was in the Ninth Dynasty that disaster interrupted Martian progress. Out of the unknown reaches of the area in the south called the Land of Storms -- a vast region considered impenetrable because of the terrific sandstorms which scourge it -- came a mysterious race of invaders,

the Wallus.

We know very little now about the Wallus. We do know that they were not of human stock at all, but an alien race evolved in that hidden land who developed a strange science of war.

The Wallus sacked Rylik, the legendary capital of the Great Kings then, within ten years, they drove the Martians back north of the equator. A half century later, the Wallus were supreme over the Martians, unhuman masters ruling the human Martians as slaves.

The Wallus are listed as the Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasties in the formal chronology of Mars. They were overthrown about 198,000 B.C. by the human Martians, who set up a new capital at Syrtis, near the equator. The remaining Wallus fled back into the mysterious Land of Storms and are supposed to have died out there, though there are legends that they still exist in the unconquerable recesses of that unexplored region.

The Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Dynasties of the Martians all reigned from Syrtis. Attempts were made to revive Martian scientific progress, with partial success, but the glory of the science of the Great Kings was never attained.

The Polar Kings

The Sixteenth Dynasty is called the Polar Kings. They were usurpers who seized control of the canal system in the north polar region, and by cutting off the flow of the precious water forced all northern and equatorial Mars to bow to them. A revolution brought the rule back to Syrtis, in 145,230 B.C. The attempt to revive scientific progress continued during the Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties.

This constant attempt at a renaissance ended in strange catastrophe. Mechanical inventions multiplied so rapidly toward the end of this period that there rose a following, the Cult of the Machine. They maintained that machines could not only work more efficiently than men, but could also think more efficiently. They devised unbelievably

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intricate and semi-intelligent, conscious mechanical robot brains, who were to give impersonal analysis and advice on every problem.

The system worked well at first. But toward the end of the Nineteenth Dynasty, the machine-advisors, who had constantly sought to intensify their own intelligence and powers, calmly took over active rule of the human Martians. The machines crushed all opposition and dispassionately directed all human activities, as rulers.

These Machine Kings, who rank as the Twentieth Dynasty, seem actually to have ruled their human subjects with utter efficiency and justice. On the other hand, men

could not and would not remain subservient to such cold, alien mentalities.

End of the Thinking Machines

There was born in the Martians a passionate hatred of their mechanical masters. It was fostered by the wild prophet Dorotho, a half-mad visionary whose so-called "Chant of Dorotho" contained some amazingly accurate prophecies as to the future decay of all Martian civilization and the coming of strange new races.

The Martians rose finally and, in a surprise coup, destroyed the Machine Kings. The constructing of additional robot-brains was forbidden. Machines were still used, of course, and from the next dynasty dates the wonderful Machine City of the south which is the most striking relic on Mars -- a city whose mechanisms still operate perpetually, long after their makers' deaths. But the prohibition on thinking machines was always kept in mind, for fear they would attempt to seize power once again.

The next five dynasties of Mars mark a rapid decline of Martian science and art. A last attempt was made to revive the old glory of Mars in 109,445 B.C., under Kames the Restorer, at a rebuilt Syrtis. But with his death the effort flickered out, the empire split into small warring nations and then into half-civilized desert tribes who roamed the banks of the great canals.

By 100,000 B.C., Mars was a desert world of fighting

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tribes who dwelled among the mighty ruins and near the scant oases along the canals. A number of cities, notably Syrtis, did survive and keep some of the old Martian traditions and knowledge alive. But such places were few.

It is believed that the Jovian civilization which flourished about 88,000 B.C., Earth chronology, sent explorers in crude rocketships to Mars, and that the Jovians gained much of their own ephemeral glory of science from study of Martian relics. But the Jovian magnificence was even shorter-lived than the Martian.

Landing of the Earthmen

It was not for nearly a hundred thousand years later that organized space-traffic began again. Then the vigorous new civilization of Earth, rising with unprecedented rapidity, sent forth its first explorer, the immortal Gorham Johnson. When he landed on Mars, an epoch was ended and another epoch began. Since then planetary archaeologists from Earth and other planets have unraveled many of the mysteries of the ancient, mighty Martian civilization, though there are even more enigmas at which we cannot even guess.

The Martians are, even now, perhaps the most strange people psychically in the whole System. Consciousness of a mighty past, a lost greatness, makes them tend to look

down on other races with a scorn perhaps not unmixed with envy. The great ruins of the past that dot Mars incite them to brood too much upon the dead glory of their race. Inherited ability, perhaps, explains their remarkable aptitude for scientific research. Their art is severely geometrical and functional, lacking the aesthetic sense of the Venusians. Similarly, their music is a complicated harmonics that other planetary peoples are inclined to consider soulless.

They live on their world, enwrapped in the past. And whoever has traveled to Mars and stood at night, in the desert, and seen the two moons of Phobos and Deimos hurtling low over the mighty ruins of the Martian cities of hundreds of thousands of years ago, must feel with them the grandeur and sadness of their planet's history.