Freebooters rampage across Mars
Nazis plot New Atrocities
Criminals Steal and Murder
Slavers Kidnap Martians and Others
Savage Beasts Prey on Scientists and Colonists
Above all, The Europans loom

The Solar System Needs Heroes
Heroes to Fight the Good Fight
Heroes to Bring Hope to the Hopeless
Heroes to Explore the Wonders
To Delve into Ancient Ruins
To Push into Uncharted Space
To Name and Behold

Heroes are not Born, they Are Made
Of Blood and Sinew
Or Even Circuits and Wires
Forged in the Fires of Life
Tempered by the Travails of Adventure
And Launched Into
The Rocket Age
INTRODUCTION

Heroes of the Solar System, the second sourcebook for Rocket Age, offers you a look at the heroes of the rocket set. The focus of Heroes of the Solar System is on the player characters, though Gamemasters will still find plot hooks and episode ideas galore. This book is just filled with new ideas for familiar species, new organizations for your heroes to fight for (and sometimes against), new equipment to use in their explorations and adventures, new character traits, and new species.

That is correct, gentle reader, for Heroes of the Solar System offers not one, not two, but four new species for your Rocket Age series. These new comers to the Rocket Age are a varied lot; one species is not really a species at all, in fact it is not even organic! The long-awaited coming of the Robomen has arrived. Alongside them are the mysterious Lizard Monkeys, long-hidden Jovians, and bizarre Metisians.

SOPHONTS OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM

Rocket Age already offers thirteen different species of sophont, if you count each Martian caste as a separate species (and we do). All of these favorites are given more detail as well as new Species Traits, alternate Species Packages, Occupational Packages, equipment, and more. Will your next character be a Mutant of Io, a Female Maduri (they're bigger and meaner than the males), or a Venusian Silverback? Will your next Earthling hero be a Man or Woman from Earth wielding new rocket-based weaponry. Why play an average Chanari when you can be a Silt Sea Harpooner?

Providing more than just game information, each entry answers questions about the species and offers information that should enrich your roleplaying experience. Are all Martians lactose intolerant? I wouldn't want to be trapped in an escape pod with one with nothing to drink but milk. What sort of material culture do the Venusians have? Here's a hint: it's more than sticks and stones. How long does a Maduri live? Lately the answer would be not very, at least for those in the Kalond Canal Valley.

There is more than an expansion of our knowledge of these well loved species, for Heroes of the Solar System contains information about four new species just making their way out into the Solar System. From Venus come the Lizard Monkeys; that's right folks, it turns out that the Lizard Monkeys are sophonts. But not even the Venusians have figured this one out, largely because the Lizard Monkey's do not possess the vocal apparatus to reproduce the speech of other species. And as far as the Lizard Monkeys are concerned they already live in a paradise and have no need to make permanent tools, big buildings, or any of that stuff. What they do need to do is Name and Behold the Solar System, for their religion demands that all things must be Named and Beheld to have a soul.

The Ancient Robomen of Mars have been dug out of the sands, rebooted, and taken to other worlds. These artificial lifeforms do not have much memory of their lives amongst the Ancients, but they do have an urge to follow millennia old programming. As machines they face different obstacles, and have different abilities, than flesh and blood beings. However, they still leak fluid if pricked and have something that passes for emotions.

The depths of Jupiter have many secrets, but one more has been uncovered. The Jovians, ancient enemies of the Europans, have surfaced from their centuries-long exile. These winged aliens have long been thought extinct by the Europans, but they were just hiding and waiting for the right time to emerge. Their culture is based around competing philosophies of martial virtues and pragmatism, and they promise to change the balance of power in the Jovian System.

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Perhaps in response to the return of the Jovians, but more likely for reasons that outsiders cannot comprehend, the Europans have made a new alliance with the Metisians. These six-limbed underground dwelling cephalopods serve as the newest arm of the Europan Navy, the Metisian Guard. Warlike and encased in advanced fighting suits that both armor them and support their gelatinous bodies, the Metisians are the Europans newest strike force, the entire species having sworn oaths of loyalty to their strange masters.

**HEROIC ORGANIZATIONS**

No hero can do it all alone; you’re going to need help. While your fellow party members are the best and closest help you have, sometimes you need a little outside aid. *Heroes of the Solar System* offers up a plethora of organizations for characters to belong to, struggle against, or have as part of their backgrounds. Will your hero be a member of the elite United States Rocket Corps, maybe part of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, or possibly work for the Interplanetary Comintern? The organizations presented here are common throughout the Solar System and their agents can be found on any planet or in the depths of space.

**CHARACTER TRAITS**

Heroes are a cut above the rest, and with these new character traits you can take your hero even higher. Not just game statistics, character traits add new dimensions to the role-playing experience. Are you an Ace or did you Wash Out? Do you get Space Sick, are you Socially Inept, or possibly have Dependents back home counting on you? Maybe you travel with a Boon Companion who is a Sharpshooter that is a Wanted Man or Woman. The possibilities are nearly infinite, just like your imagination.

**A Note on New Traits**

Throughout this book, new Traits denoted with a * can be found in *Blood Red Mars*, and Traits denoted with a ** can be found in this book.
Our Solar System is home to a wealth of intelligent species, some of which have yet to be discovered by fellow sophonts. This chapter details the well-known sophonts, such as Earthlings, Venusians, Martians, Europans, Ganymedians, and loites. Each species is given a deeper description than the overview provided in the Rocket Age Corebook, as well as new species trait that only they can have, Occupational Packages, and alternative Species Packages.

For those of you looking for a name for your Venusian, Europan, or Ganymedian (as well as the others), a handy guide to naming conventions rounds out each chapter.

Environmental Tolerances and Dietary Needs
In the species descriptions in this chapter there are lists of environmental tolerances and dietary needs, as well as other biological data. These are given largely for setting depth and role-playing purposes. For the most part the Vortex System doesn’t care if the ambient temperature falls a few degrees off a character’s preferred range. Likewise, as beans and bullets are not closely tracked, it can be assumed that a character can find the appropriate foods. The use of this data should be to add drama to the story.

Alternative Species Packages
Some of the species listed below have alternative species packages given. These alternates do not replace those founding the Rocket Age Corebook, but are provided for the use by those who want a specialized, rather than a generalized, package for their characters. Both the standard and alternative species packages may be used in a game, and used side by side as desired. However, in case it needs
to be stated, no character may have more than one species package.

**Alternative Species Traits**

Many of the species in this chapter have alternate species traits listed. These traits are species traits, they cannot be taken after character creation and certainly cannot be taken by anyone not of the associated species. These alternate traits are taken in addition to any traits granted by a species package. In all other ways they act like any other character trait.

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**A NOTE ON PRONOUNS AND GENDER**

English does not have a good pronoun for an alien whose sex is unknown or doesn’t fit readily into the binary male–female paradigm. This is why with regards to Europans who haven’t declared a sex or gender, and to all Ganymedians (as they have the sexual organs of both male and female, and have no concept of gender) the only neuter pronoun in English, ‘it’ is used. However, this same pronoun when used to label a transgendered person, both in the real world and in fictional universes is inherently derogatory and highly offensive. There is no intent in our usage of the word ‘it’ to be offensive or derogatory, this is simply an artifact of the English language.

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**EARTHLINGs**

- **Homeworld:** Earth
- **Height:** 1.3 to 2.1 m
- **Weight:** 45 to 113 kg

**Phenotypical Variation:** High, with great variation in skin, eye, and hair color as well as texture.

**Preferred Environmental Range:** 1G standard gravity and 1 standard atmosphere, but can tolerate some variation as well as contaminated atmospheres. Temperature range also varies, with Earthlings being comfortable at temperatures as low as 4°C and as high as 43°C.

**Age Ranges:** 0-24 months infant, adolescence at 13, adulthood by 21, with senescence beginning at 50, and maximum lifespan at around 100 years.

**Reproduction:** Male (45%) and female (55%) sexes. Internal fertilization and gestation by the female for nine months followed by live birth.

**Circadian Cycle:** 24 hours, with eight hours of sleep needed. Primarily diurnal, but can adjust to nocturnal or even polyurnal with some effort.

**Dietary Needs:** A mixed diet indicative of a consummate omnivore. Earthlings vary as to tolerance of certain proteins and other common nutrients, but in general can consume a wide variety of foods, provided the foods are properly prepared. The perfect Earthling food, though its use is not widespread, is the humble quiche.

**Notes:** The information provided below as to Earthling psychology, physiology, and material culture was not written by the author, but was dictated to him by noted Europan xenologist Hulgo III.

**PSYCHOLOGY**

The mental processes of Earthlings can only be fully described once the work of our emissaries is complete. Based upon current data their main psychological drives resolve around violence and reproduction. While it is true that Earthlings are capable of artistic, scientific, and other intellectual pursuits, these tend to be focused on things that will cause lasting harm to others or improve one’s chances of gaining a mate. This is true from the most advanced Earthling cultures (more on this concept later) to the most primitive (keeping in mind that when discussing Earthlings advanced and primitive are relative to each other, not to our glorious selves).

This propensity for violence seems to be based on a concept of other that includes nearly the entire sophont population of our Solar System, even other Earthlings. Their mental landscape divides even their own species into diverse cultures, but at the same time holds an individual’s own cultural group to be superior, especially in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. These groupings are almost always at war with each other, and shift alliances with amazing ease.

Consider this, only a short time ago, less than the lifespan of most of the August Council of Europa, the groups calling themselves the United States of American and United Kingdom were mortal enemies who fought two wars against each other, and threatened to go to war over territorial rights several times. Yet today, these groups are allied against the efforts of the groups calling themselves the Germans and Italians, as well as the Soviets.
Despite the findings of their most noted psychologists, many Earthlings deny that their primary motivations are based upon violence and reproduction. They have dozens of assumed motivations that on the surface have nothing to do with violent behavior or the securing of reproductive acts, however, these surface motivations often lead to the very behaviors that Earthlings claim to not consider worthy of their full attention. For example, it has been observed that those seeking to “further the boundaries of knowledge” often engage in violent activity of some sort during their explorations, and expect to be lauded with social and material currency upon their return, currency that is used to prove fitness for mating.

**PHYSIOLOGY**

Earthlings have a simplistic physiology, as one would expect from such a primitive species. Most of their organic systems have only one pathway, and those are rudimentary at best. That such a coarse and rude organism would be capable of surviving long enough to evolve intelligence, or at least a close approximation thereof, is amazing. Earthlings lack redundant organs (aside from a few exceptions), claws, fangs, venom, or any other useful defensive or offensive weaponry. While it is true they are capable of forming a blunt striking member out of their hands, this takes some skill to properly use and risks damage to delicate bones.

Earthlings are superior to other primitives in two areas, their resilience and reproductive systems. While it is true that Earthlings are susceptible to a broad range of pathogens and environmental poisons, they are incredibly able to suffer extreme amounts of damage. An Earthling can function quite readily after the loss of a limb, or even damage to one of their organic systems. In addition to this great degree of hardiness, Earthlings are a prolific group. As noted above in the discussion of their psychological makeup,

Earthlings are inordinately concerned with reproduction, and use the reproductive act as a form of recreation. Indeed, Earthlings will attempt to mate with other sophonts, even though it is well known that cross-species pairings will not result in offspring. This incredible reproductive drive has led Earthlings to fill their planet with their own offspring, overpopulate their environments, and spread to other worlds. In short, Earthlings are very fertile and have no concerns about curbing this trait.

The most interesting part about Earthling physiology is the amazing level of diversity in not just phenotypical traits, but in biological chemistry. This degree of diversity is unprecedented amongst the sophont species of our Solar
System, and far exceeds that of our much superior species. Hair, eye, and skin color is highly variable, as is height and build. Minor variations in body chemistry can cause allergic reactions to various substances, as well as improve or degrade resistance to toxins and disease.

**MATERIAL CULTURE**

We will discuss the heights of Earthling material culture, for as in most things Earthling there is a great deal of variation. Looked at as a whole, Earthling technology is rather primitive and represents a level of understanding of fundamental sciences that our own species surpassed centuries ago. What this does not take into account is the speed with which the Earthlings have managed to pull themselves up out of the mud and into space. Less than ten years ago the Earthlings lacked even simple unmanned satellites, yet today they have rocket ships capable of taking them to the furthest reaches of our Solar System, and perhaps even beyond into the Great Unknown.

Our species took eight centuries to advance from the ability to control electricity to our first Grand Exploration of Jupiter. We had still not managed to make much progress towards exploring beyond the Jovian System before the first Earthling rocket ship was launched. I fear what, especially given their motivations towards violence and reproduction, the Earthlings will invent in the next decade. In conclusion, although they offer a rich and exciting subject for study, I recommend the immediate disintegration of Earth and extermination of all Earthlings. Such overly violent thoughts are abhorrent to this council, as they are to me, and so I must inform you that I will be immediately reporting for biological termination and psychic sterilization.

Earthling fashions have largely remained the same for the past decade, at least for the common resident of the developed nations. Men wear suits and hats, women dresses and hats with wrist-length gloves. Working class people are more likely to don functional clothes related to their job, with denim being the mark of the common Laborer, farmer, or factory worker.

One major change has been the abundance of precious metals and jewels coming from Mars. This has caused a drop in the market which means that diamond earrings are within the means of even the lowest of the working classes. Not cheap, but an achievable goal. This has caused a backlash amongst the upper classes that no longer can rely on such adornments as means of demonstrating class and wealth. Instead, the wealthy sport rare gems from Venus, Ganymede, and the asteroid field.

Clothing on Earth has long been heavily segregated by ethnicity and gender, with certain styles being, at best, frowned upon, at worst illegal for certain groups to wear. Not so with the more egalitarian rocket set. A woman wearing a dress or skirt in a rocket ship is asking for trouble, especially during microgravity conditions. Amongst those who travel the space lanes, functional clothing has become popular, and denotations of wealth tend to be made with equipment rather than clothes. On Earth, this style is being aped in the most fashion conscious circles with rocket clothes, outfits inspired by space suits with bagging cuts and plenty of reflective material.

**Anatomy Book**

This is a textbook on the basic anatomy of a specific species, very handy when performing cross-species medicine. While it cannot be used during an Action Round (though if hard pressed a character can find the necessary information in 5 Action Rounds minus the degrees of success on an Awareness + Ingenuity roll) it does allow the doctor to carefully research the subject, and recall that Martians do not have spleens. Use of an anatomy book gives a +2 bonus to Medicine or Science (Biology related) skill rolls.

**Hand Grenades**

Earthlings have long used thrown weapons, beginning with rocks and moving on to explosives. Hand grenades come in a variety of shapes and styles, but all mostly do the same thing, blow up and hurt or damage people and things.

**Rocket Launchers**

By far the most promising of conventional weapon designs are the plethora of rocket launching systems coming out of the laboratories and armories of the Great Powers of Earth. Radium fuel allows for smaller and more powerful rockets to be made, improvements in rocket design have made these weapons more accurate, and advances in chemistry have allowed for more bang with smaller warheads. As robobrains are too large and too expensive to be used as a guidance system, rockets are generally unguided. This reduces their accuracy, but doesn’t detract from the awesome power of these weapons.

Modern rocket launchers fall into two general groups: shoulder-fired and vehicular. Rocket ships have carried rocket pods since 1932, and these are considered common spaceborne weapons. These same pods can be made smaller and lighter for use on vehicles, such as aircraft and tanks, and are seeing deployment in the constant battles raging across the face of Mars. These range in size from scaled-down rocket pods to rocket rifles that fire a single projectile, though one that is often better aimed and stabilized.
Shoulder-fired rocket launchers are threatening to turn the tide in the tanks versus infantry race. These powerful, lethal weapons are capable of being carried and operated by two-man teams, meaning that the shooter can hide in cover and pop up to fire at an armored vehicle’s weak points, usually the rear armor of tanks and the legs of war walkers. Some of the latest models are being manufactured cheap enough to be disposable, the rocket and launcher form a single weapon that is tossed aside after firing. A word of caution to those employing shoulder-fired rockets, the back blast from the rocket launch can be very hazardous, especially with radium-fueled rockets.

**Back Blast**
The item projects a stream of flame from its rear when used. Any characters or objects within 4m of the rear of the weapon suffer 3/6/9 damage on a failed Difficulty 12 Coordination + Athletics roll.

**Burst**
A weapon with this trait affects a larger area than a single target. All targets within a certain radius (in meters) must make a reaction against the attack. The number following the Burst trait in the weapon’s stat line determines the radius.

**Shaped Charge**
The weapon uses an explosive penetrator, high-energy setting, or other means to defeat armor. However, this is not always effective; explosives fail to detonate properly, the armor has a slope to it that deflects the shot, or the shot is not dead on. The user of a weapon with the Shaped Charge trait may spend a Story Point to activate the trait after a successful hit. This causes the weapon to act as if it had the Armor Piercing trait and to ignore Hardened Armor. If the target has Hardened Armor, treat the armor as normal, i.e. it is reduced by 4 points before damage is applied.

**Ranged Weapons Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weapon Name</th>
<th>Damage</th>
<th>Range in Meters</th>
<th>Traits</th>
<th>Ammo</th>
<th>Weight (Kg)</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hand Grenade (fragmentation)</td>
<td>2/4/6</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>Burst 2, Fragmenting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand Grenade (anti-tank)</td>
<td>2/4/6</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>Burst 2, Shaped Charge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Rocket Launcher</td>
<td>4/8/12</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Back Blast, Burst 2, Crew 2, Cumbersome, Shaped Charge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Rocket Launcher</td>
<td>5/10/15</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Back Blast, Burst 4, Crew 4, Cumbersome, Shaped Charge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relations with Other Species:**

*John Franks, a sanitation worker in New York City, talks about aliens:*

**Europans:** “Weird ones, that’s for sure, and up to do good.”

**Ganymedians:** “They’re plants, right? How’s that supposed to work?”

**Ioites:** “Wait, they’re not some kinda space dog of somethin’?”

**Jovians:** “A what?”

**Lizard Monkeys:** “Oh yeah, my aunt saved up and bought one as a pet. They’re kinda cute and can learn to use the john.”

**Martians (Chanari):** “I heard they was like the Indians.”

**Martians (Julandri Courtesans):** “I saw a picture of one of them, those princes got some life, you know?”

**Martians (Julandri Laborers):** “No way, not in this city, we have unions here.”

**Martians (Kastari):** “We have our god, they have theirs, makes sense, right?”

**Martians (Maduri):** “Nasty works, glad our boys are killin’ them all.”

**Martians (Pilthuri):** “Ain’t they like some kinda Martian store keeper or somethin’?”

**Martians (Silthuri):** “Yeah, we gotta beat them princes and bring freedom and stuff to the Martians.”

**Martians (Talandri):** “Ain’t they some kinda blacksmith slave like thing?”

**Metisians:** “Them Europans have their own army now. That can’t be anythin’ good.”

**Robomen:** “Yeah, I heard of them. Like these machines that think and work. We gotta union here, we ain’t goin’ to see no Robomen.”

**Venusians:** “Big hairy brutes, look more like monkeys and gorillas than people.”
THE MAN OR WOMAN FROM EARTH
(Species Major Good)
Prerequisite: Earthling

Earthlings are the most widespread of all the sophont species; there are Earthlings in nearly every corner of the Solar System. Even places that are supposed to be off the map, unexplored, and unknown often have an Earthling wandering about, poking its nose into things. After all, it’s Earthlings that started the Rocket Age, and it’s Earthlings that will determine the era’s destiny.

Effect: A character with this trait is used to finding her fellow Earthlings wherever she goes, in fact she can depend on it. Once per episode, the character may declare that she is activating this trait and has come across at least a trace of a fellow Earthling, no matter how remote the location. The character makes a Difficulty 12 Awareness + Presence roll. On a Success the NPC is treated as a Friend (Minor Good), the trait increases to Major with a Good success, and Special with a Fantastic success. A Failure indicates that only a trace of an Earthling’s passing can be found, such as discarded equipment, rumors amongst the locals, or written messages. A Bad roll indicates the other Earthling is a foe and is treated as the Adversary (Minor Bad) trait, and this increases to Major Bad level with a Disastrous result.

EUROPANS

Homeworld: Europa (Jovian Moon)
Height: 1.8-2.3 meters.
Weight: 70-85 kg.

Phenotypical Variation: Europans display almost no phenotypical variation, and one Europan is nearly indistinguishable from another.

Preferred Environmental Range: Europans can breathe the same air and are suited to the same gravity ranges as Earthlings. Their immunity to toxins allows them to function in contaminated atmospheres. Their preferred temperature ranges runs from 7 °C to 33 °C

Age Ranges: The Europan lifecycle is unknown, but some emissaries have hinted at a partially amphibious life stage.

Reproduction: Europans are known to have male (25%) and female (25%) sexes, but have also exhibited additional sexes, including a neuter (25%) and two unclassified sexes (25%). Their reproductive habits are unknown, as is the internal make up of their reproductive systems. All applications of male or female designations have been made entirely on external genitalia. There are no secondary sexual characteristics shown by any Europan encountered to date.

Circadian Cycle: Europans operate on a strict 24 hour cycle which is at odds with the 84.24 hour long rotational period of their homeworld. They sleep exactly eight hours unless woken up, and do so in much the same manner as Earthlings.

Dietary Needs: Europans can eat a wide range of foods thanks to their immunity to toxins. However, unlike the loites, Europans find fermented foods distasteful. Emissaries are willing to try new foods, sometimes too willingly. It should be noted that Europans tend to seek out foods high in acidic content, and avoid seafood whenever possible.

Names: Europans do not normally use their own names when working as emissaries. Instead, they come up with a name that allows them to blend in, or at least one that they assume would be appropriate. Often this results in either a farce of a name, or comes across as being somewhat patronizing, after all no one is going to think Bob Robertson the Europan welder is just one of the guys, he’s three meters tall and purple! The names listed below are ones the Europans use for themselves without regard to the sensibilities of others.

Example Names: Creeee-Tar, Critanars, Espolonin, Euranadat, Krangtop, Masornoik, P’Taltorith, Portana, Sebasil, Shmati, Yelolo

Psychology

Aside from the emissaries, who tend to be overly enthusiastic, most Europans come across as cool and aloof. It is obvious that they have great deal of disdain for what they consider lesser sophonts, but at the same time they are easily confused by the behaviors of those that Europans claim to be superior to. Often Europans come across as somewhat naive, especially when dealing with non-technological matters.

When amongst their own, Europans tend to be very quiet, no doubt due to the abundance of psychically active Europans. That they seem to prefer to communicate telepathically with each other leads some to believe that Europans may not have a true sense of self. Europans have been observed acting in close tandem, finishing each other’s sentences, and having extreme difficulties with languages that use personal singular pronouns.