

SANDS OF MARS



A two disk game for the Atari
800/ XL/ XE computer
from

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Requires 48K of memory

SANDS OF MARS

by J.B. Michaels

CAPTAIN OF THE STARSHIP HERMAN

There is a slight pause and your mother's face appears on the telescreen. "You've finally done it; my son's a captain," she beams from the Modex, "and you'll have your very own starship!" . "Yes, mom my very own," you mumble. Mothers can be very embarrassing at times. "I've got to leave now," you add hastily, your fingers hanging longingly over the disconnect button. "but son, now you be careful and don't forget to . . ."; bleep - your eager finger has lost control and Mom is now invisible and 4000 miles away; a nice safe distance. Well, now it's off to the J.F.R. Spaceport to see for the first time the vessel that will be your home for the next 10 years - the Starship Herman.

As you arrive, you find a note left by the admiral who was supposed to brief you and see you off. Like many of the higher officers, he has grown lazy and impatient and has left even before the time you had scheduled to meet with him. As you read your until now Secret assignment, your eyes feel as if you must hold them in to keep them from popping out of your head. Just to be sure there are no toys in your attic, you begin mumbling the note out loud to yourself.

"... and after assuming command of the Starship Herman, you are to select a crew and equip her for your mission which will be explained in a few lines. You will be given a list of things to buy and people to hire, from which you must choose the proper amount and combination of items and people for the survival of yourself, your crew, the mission, and most important of all, Herman. On the bridge you will manually control takeoff from Earth and head for Mars. Oh, yes, I almost forgot you are on a mission to Mars. Since this is your first mission, I guess I should warn you. It is very possible you will encounter pirates, asteroid swarms, and much, much more! Only your own quick thinking and reactions will save you and your crew from destruction and enable you to fulfill your mission.

Several previous missions, Explorer I and Explorer II, have failed to report back from their own missions on Mars. Dr. Grady, our top archaeologist, on the Explorer II was reported to have descended into some type of labyrinth while the crew members waited at the opening above ground. That was the last transmission received from that expedition.

Your mission is to find Dr. Grady and rescue the other survivors if there are any. Also several Martian inscriptions were left undeciphered. They are similar to early Phoenician or Cuneiform. Why is there a similarity in these glyphs? What did Dr. Grady discover before his disappearance? Why was the radio transmission suddenly cut off? The answers lie hidden beneath the Sands of Mars."

Finding yourself a little taken aback, you stuff the note into your thermasuit pocket; you are anxious to get to your ship. On closer examination you find a small report on the bottom labeled "History of Lemuria." The title page says: A summary of inscriptions taken from Mars and partially deciphered by Dr. Grady... Santi people - giant bee hive cities - Mudra... mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm... and you begin to read the report.

HISTORY OF LEMURIA

Due to carbon dating, we know that the oldest of the inscriptions found on Mars seem to date back about 2 billion years ago. This seems to be a reference to the struggle between two cultures: the Zanti and the Meshim. The translations can't be considered any better than rough. We have attempted to make a few conclusions about these species, but at best it is only guesswork. The Meshim were a race of reptilian creatures who lived beneath the sands in vast subterranean tunnels. The Meshim although fairly intelligent never developed writing or any type of religion. Due to a genetic mutation, these lizardmen were able to run at fantastic speeds across the desert. They frequently raided the Zanti hives and stole food and eggs.

The Zanti, who according to descriptions, looked like giant beetles lived in huge towering hives of fused rock. Unlike the Meshim, the Zanti developed quite an advanced form of culture and a system of writing. The Zanti passed through three stages of life; first, eggs were laid by the Zanti Mudra (which will be explained later) in hexagonal chambers under the surface. These chambers served as perfect incubators and the eggs hatched into larve rather quickly. Next these larva were transported to larger chambers deeper underground, devoid of all light. Here they ate and grew until they were 20 times their original size. They were resealed into larger chambers once more and in a short while emerged as Kendra. The Kendra were similar in function to the worker ants here on earth. They also doubled as warriors should the need arrive.

If the Kendra survived the hard work and rigors of constantly defending the Zanti cities, at the end of 100 years they would be entombed, using an elaborate ritual, in the Chamber of the Ages. Before entering this chamber, they were given a narcotic drug which put them into a deep sleep. Only one in five thousand would ever be reborn. The metamorphosis, the change from a Kendra to a Mudra, took more than 1,000 years.

Upon emerging from it's cocoon it immediately was faced with a life or death struggle. Seeing there could only be one Mudra, if the last Mudra were still alive, the two engaged in a fight to the death. The loser of the combat (usually the older Mudra) was then eaten by the victor in an elaborate ritual. To be a Mudra and to be eaten was called the 4th Rebirthing. It was the Zanti's equivalent of Christian salvation.

The job of the surviving Mudra was to become the mother of the next generation of Zanti. Being transexual, the Mudra simply laid eggs and let the Kendra do the rest. That is, until another Mudra was born. In addition to this function, the Mudra was responsible for recording the history of the Zanti. With each successive Mudra an additional chapter was written into the Archives. The Mudra was also required to know by memory the entire history of the Zanti race. It was the only member of the race who could write.

The following are transcripts of translated inscriptions by Dr. Grady who was present on both the Explorer I & II expeditions.

... Anton did not give us abundant Sasquati and Degwat for our Kendra to eat today... there was much sadness... sand everywhere... the crops are failing... the tunnels of great Lemuria fill with sand... more than Kendra can remove... some Kendra have been executed for breaking the sacred oath forbidding eating the dead bodies of Meshim... s. Ulmane

... came to raid us again... we fought bravely... many Kendra's life fluid spilled up the desert Kurmat... there seemed no end to the Meshim... they came in waves... many valiant Kendra fell to the power of the Laar... many Meshim carried away prisoners who were chopped into pieces using Hutam... consuming their flesh and then, as an insult donning their shells as armor... s. Crombona

... wrath of the Vorog seem to slay more of our Kendra than even the Meshim raids... there are not enough to bury dead and sweep away the dreaded sand... moving around our great city is rough... when Anton grants us darkness... the Vishni now begin to attack while in the day we must eat our own... I have made a drink to ease the burdens of our Kendra souls... I will call it Skishi after our former Mudra whom I sent to the 4th Rebirthing... I grow so very tired of the fighting... s. Lukrudia

... I have shut myself away in the caves to the north as protection from the Meshim... these evil beings can not survive the cold to which I am accustomed... Meshim have broken into the Chamber of the Ages; eaten our sleeping Kendra... the last Kendra is now dead... I have grown enough Degwat for myself to eat... I feel a great loneliness because there are no Kendra... I cannot go on this way much... s. Xerman

End of Manuscript Transcription now translated.

ZANTI GLOSSARY

ABRABA - Ancient magical incantation.

ANTON - Zanti God of the Sky.

ATZLAN - The first earth colony founded by descendants of the Meshim in 3 million B.C.

CANALS - Remnants of the ancient Martian irrigation system. Some still have water.

CHAMBER OF THE AGES - Moon like terrain with many deep pits and craters.

DEGWAT - Desert vegetation similar to cactus. Edible for humans.

GEESH - A large amoeboid type creature.

HUTAM - Meshim sword.

KATEOMEOW - Race of cat-like beings which are telepathic and have great affinity for man.

KELLAC - Meshim armor made from the exoskeleton of the Zanti.

KENDRA - The worker and soldier class of the Zanti.

QUICKSAND - An area of loose and treacherous sand pits filled with a substance similar to quicksand.

LAAR - A Martian laser.

LEMUR - Ancient city of the Zanti resembling a gigantic anthill.

MESHIM - A half-reptilian, half-man carnivore. Subterranean, nocturnal, and highly carnivorous. Because of special genetic adaptations, they are able to move at fantastic speeds across the desert. Also they are able to burrow and disappear beneath the sand then threatened.

MUDRA - Title of the Zanti ruler also the name of their most powerful deity.

REBIRTHING - The process by which the Zanti passes from one stage of life to the next.

SASQUATI - A Martian vegetation semi-poisonous to humans.

SKENOL - A type of fuel alcohol which is used in Martian space crafts.

SKISHI - Martian whiskey.

USERMAN - The last of the great Mudras before the fall of the Zanti civilization.

VISHNI - Half-rodent, half-plant creatures. They are carnivorous and nocturnal.

VOROG - A perilous sand storm. Sometimes picking up rocks of over 10 lbs.

J.F.R. SPACEPORT

After your slight detour to the bridge, you are now back in the Spaceport all ready to equip your ship. At the requisition desk you are informed that you have a certain budget with which to complete this task. The clerk hands you a list of things you may order and their price per unit. Among these items are the obvious like food - Q3, water tanks, salt tablets, etc. Other less common items warrant an explanation. *Thermasuits* are essential for anyone to venture onto the Martian surface. If you find yourself without water, the *Hydrolizer* is used to pull that precious commodity out of the air. Q3 *lightpacks* will be used to shed light on the situation once you get underground (hopefully). *Grafitron* is your fuel for Ion propulsion; can't go anywhere without that now can you! When the food runs out you may need *Hydroponics* to synthesize your own. Also to glide across the Martian sand you may want the use of an *Astrosled*. A *Gravipak* will simply hold you down so you don't trip as much. Most importantly of all, you must get yourself an ample supply of *Astracrystal*. This allows you to warp, fire lasers, and power your shields, a must for long range space travel. Oh yes, you can't forget your crew. Most of their functions are self explanatory, like *Laser Gunner* is needed to fire the Lasers and so on. Probably at one point or another in your mission you will need almost the whole assortment of people to be in your crew, so I advise you not to get more than one of anyone. Some of their functions might not be clear so explanations follow. The *Botanist* is to tell what different plants and animals are. The *Programmer* programs your computer to guide you on your voyage. The *Mountain Climber* will allow you to avoid going around the mountains. Having an *Archaeologist* with you will allow you to know more about the culture, city planning, etc. With the *Philologist* on board, when and if you find some Martian writing, he will decipher it for you. Finally the *Explorer* acts as your guide. "Hope you choose your crew and supplies well, sir. We wouldn't want you to get stuck up there!" you hear from behind. Gently you turn, say "thanks" to the clerk, bend down on the clerk's desk and begin filling out your tedious form . . .

After what seems like days, you pick yourself up from your crouched position and begin to hand your form to the clerk, but no such luck. It seems you still have to punch this information into the computer. so you waddle your tired body over to the terminal, press B for Buy and input your choices. First and last letter of the cargo, then the amount you want. Finally when you've completed that task you type S for See Cargo and check

all your purchases. At long last it's time for countdown so you type C and the computer summons your crew, loads your supplies, and gives you time to run to the bridge before anyone else gets there . . .

LIFTOFF

The last orders left by the admiral were for you to make a manual lift off. Sitting in your command console you watch your crew assemble into their stations while you think over the procedure for lift off. "Let's see, first we've got to turn these knobs here back to zero. Oh! Look at all the buttons! I don't remember those from the simulators. Now we check the old engines. Alright now, which button does what to which knob. OH, here it is, know 0 is set to "angle of ascent", button 0 is fire them ol' retros, knob 1 controls how many hundreds of pounds of fuel per 20th of a second, and button 11 will . . . Alright, I got that straight. I guess it's time to get going. Oh yes, what was it the physics professor said at the academy? If I don't set a proper angle for ascent and I try just a straight up loft off a couple of things will happen. Now what the hell were they . . . ah, it uses more fuel and I get going so fast I can't into orbit before shooting off into space. They tell me there's a space station up there I can dock with, so let's see, what's a good angle? Now, what am I leaving out? Of course, can't forget that we must reach 18,000 m.p.h. to go into orbit and 29,000 m.p.h. to break out of it. Whew! If I forgot that, we might pass the 100-110 mile orbit right into space and not be able to dock with the station. If I remember right we can pick up some extra fuel there. Sounds like a great deal for all the trouble I have to go through! OK, set an angle - that looks pretty good - now press them thrusters and blastoff!"

MAIDEN VOYAGE TO MARS

As in Galactic Quest, there are 7 main command modules (0-6). These may be utilized by inputting the appropriate corresponding number. A "0" when in the first level of any command mode will always return you to the menu and Master Command Level. Many of these modules contain subdivisions and are broken down as follows. When in a sublevel, pressing "space" or "0" will return you to the menu for that sublevel.

I. NAVIGATION

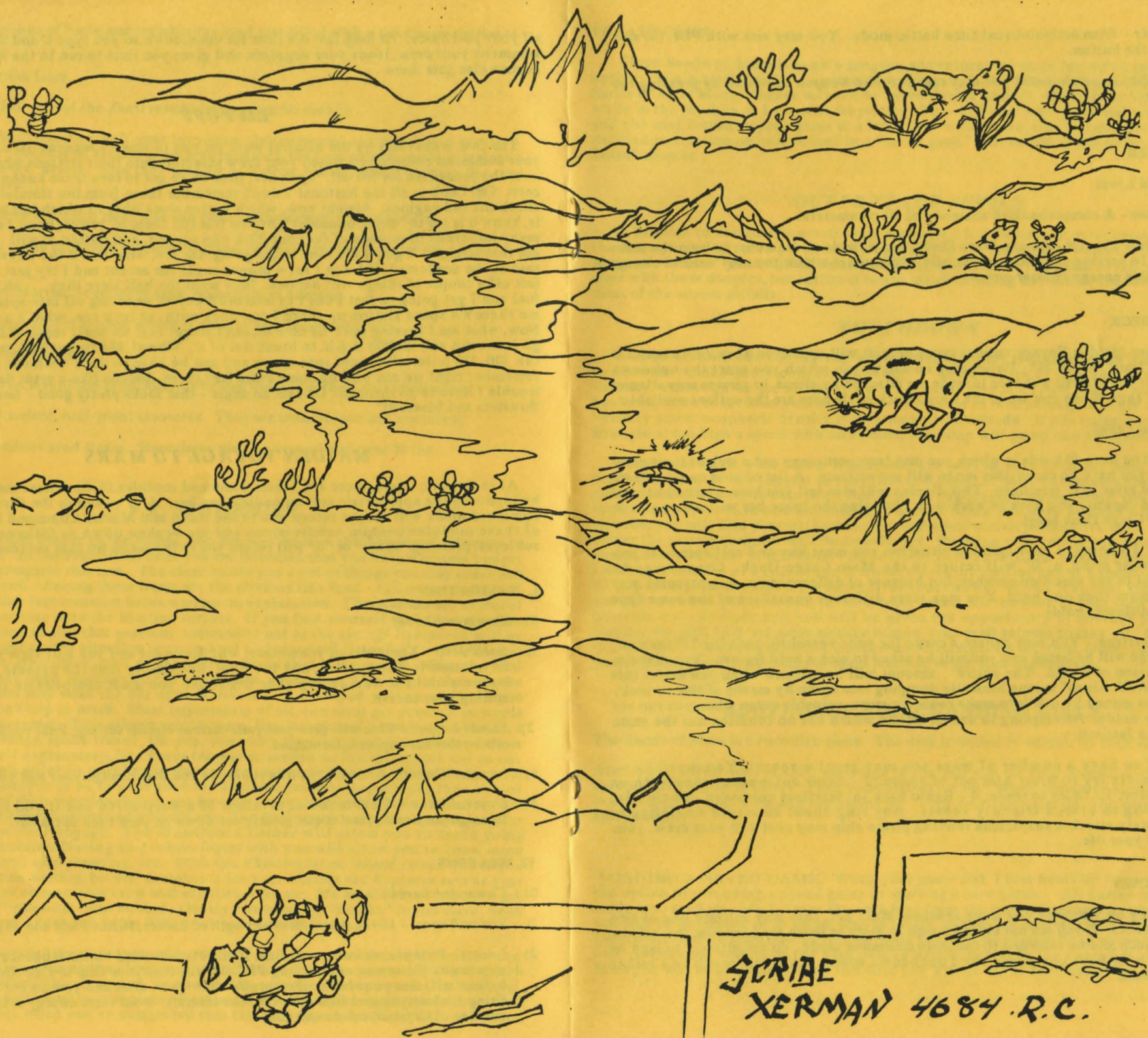
0) Command Level

- 1) *Solar Map* - The walls of your vessel will disappear and you will view your position in relation to Earth, Mars, and the Sun. Remember that the planets continue to rotate about the Sun during your flight and you must compensate for this when setting your course.
- 2) *Status Report* - This will give you your current course setting, Fuel consumption, and other relevant engine information.
- 3) *Impulse Gravitron Power* - In this submode you may change your and burn rate.
- 4) *Crystaldrive* - This is the equivalent of a warp drive and if you have had the foresight to buy Crystal it can greatly cut down on your time in transit.

II. WEAPONS

0) Command Level

- 1) *Status Report* - Gives the current strength of Lasers, Rifter Pods and shields.
- 2) *Lasers* - Puts player into a real time PDL (0) controlled battle sequence. A crosshair appears on the screen and turning PDL (0) will turn your ship to face the enemy. The button will fire your laser. Be careful that when attacked you do not begin wildly firing (unless you just like watching the lasers!). Your laser energy is limited by the amount of Crystal you are carrying.



SCRIAE
XERMAN 4684 R.C.

- 3) *Riter Pods* - Also activates real time battle mode. You may aim with PDL (0) and fire with the button.

In these last two submodes you may return to the weapon submode by pressing the space bar.

III. COMPUTER

0) *Command Level*

- 1) *Ship Status* - A comprehensive summary of all parameters.
- 2) *Redistribute Crystal* - Lasers, Warp Drive, and Shields all take energy from the main Crystal. In varying situations, especially while under attack you may want to change your shields energy or laser power.

IV. CARGO DECK

During your Maiden Voyage various types of craft will appear on your viewscreen. If you wish to "Hail", press "4". Depending on the way in which you greet the unknown vessel, you may be offered a chance to trade, be attacked by aliens, or pirates may attempt to board your ship. When you are in the Cargo Deck mode here are the options available:

0) *Command Level*

- 1) *Cargo* - You have 10 holds in which you may transport cargo and a weight limit of 50 tons. If you have no cargo, this mode will not activate. A list of your cargo will be displayed after any purchase. This display will also tell you how much additional space and capacity you have to work with. Pressing the space bar will return you to the main Cargo Deck level.
- 2) *Barter* - To improve your Quinton situation you must buy and sell cargo. If you change your mind, a "0" will return to the Main Cargo Deck. Carogs may be purchased in any specified number, but because of differences in weight, some may occupy more than one hold. You may store different quantities of the same type cargo in different holds.
- 3) *Use of Jettison* - You may utilize a cargo for your vessel by pushing "1" for use. Your cargo will be listed and you will be asked to pick a hold for use. You may not use a portion of a hold. The entire amount will be utilized when you select this option. A "Jettison" means basically dumping into space by means of the air lock. All that is gained by this is to make room for more valuable cargo when you run out of empty holds. Attempting to use an article which has no function has the same effect as a Jettison.
- 4) *Hail* - You have a number of ways you may greet a vessel. You may: 1 - Immediately try to blast him out of space; 2 - Send out a scout ship with an ambassador; 3 - Offer to trade; 4 - Radio back to Starfleet command. Obviously, attempting to blast a friendly vessel may ring about an attack or failing to immediately attack a suspicious looking pirate ship may cost you your crew, your ship, and your life.

V. TOUCHDOWN

Depending on whether you have reached Mars yet, this may initiate one of two landing sequences. If you are not close enough to Mars or Earth for a landing you will be informed of such and be returned to the main command mode. do not attempt to land on Mars or Earth without going into the Touchdown mode. This will result in a rather spectacular crash.

VI. SAVE GAME

Since Sands of Mars is such a lengthy adventure, we were forced to include this option. You may either save a game when you are in the Maiden Voyage Mode or the Sands of Mars Mode. Games may not be saved during takeoff, while at the Spaceport, or while in the Meshim or Lemurian labyrinths. This will save your game and position as is and you may return to your game at a later time without having to start all over. More detailed instruction on how to load in a "saved game" will be discussed in the "Changing Disks" chapter.

OUTER SPACE PERILS

In addition to hostile spacecraft there are quite a few dangers in outer space. Some of the ones you need to be particularly cautious of are Asteroid Swarms, Black Holes, Magnetic Storms. It would take some of the surprise out of the game to tell you how to cope with these dangers, but suffice it to say, quick thinking and action can save you from most of the severe pitfalls.

TOUCHDOWN

As you descend into the Martian atmosphere there are two parameters that you need to become immediately concerned about: 1 - Your angle of descent, and 2 - Your velocity. Although we are not great mathematicians here at Crystal Vision, some attempt has been made to include a consideration of friction in relationship to angle of descent, velocity and atmospheric density in relationship to altitude. If you come in at too steep an angle at too high a speed with no shields, your ship will go up like a magnesium torch.

Before you begin your actual touchdown you will be able to select from 5 levels of landing difficulty. We suggest in your first few Sands of Mars adventures you select the easiest one. Don't try to be a hero; that level is challenging enough until you master the intricacies of fuel burn rate and angles of ascent. Once you have reached a low enough altitude, you will find yourself looking down at a full screen perspective map. As you get closer the terrain features will become larger. By using your retros you must clear the mountains and land in the desert or you will collide into the next mountain range. Landing within 1/4 of a mile of the X which marks the landing site at a speed of less than 50 m.p.h. will be considered a successful touchdown. If you feel that your angle of descent or velocity is incorrect, increase your speed, lift the nose of your ship which will increase your altitude and you will be given the opportunity of another pass. Upon landing you will find, for some strange reason, your craft refuses to take off. If you have remembered to bring sufficient oxygen and thermasuits for your crew, you will find yourself standing on the Sands of Mars ready to begin your exploration.

BOOTING UP AND CHANGING DISKS

The Sands of Mars is a two-disk game. The disk included is written on both sides.

Atari 800 - Insert your BASIC cartridge in the left slot on your computer (800XL/XE automatically load BASIC). Turn your disk drive on. When the drive stops spinning, insert the game disk with side one facing up. Turn your computer on. The game will load automatically.

LOADING A SAVED GAME - When your game disk 1 first boots up you will be given the option of reloading a saved game or starting a new game. All games in whatever mode are saved on Disk 1. Once the variables from the previous game have been loaded you will be prompted as to which disk to insert, so you can continue where you left off. Immediately after your touchdown on Mars you will be prompted to put in the second disk (the second disk is on the back side of disk 1) and push the space bar. On leaving Mars you will be prompted. Only this time you will be asked to re-insert the 1st disk.

DISEMBARKING FROM THE SHIP

Once you have landed you are ready to leave the ship. If you have forgotten to buy oxygen or thermasuits, you will have to take off again and hope you can run into a merchant from which you can buy them.

BASIC MOVEMENT

All movements are controlled on the planet by using the number keys 1-9. If you are in the 3D maze they function a little differently.

Regular	In Maze
1 - Moves Up/North	Moves Forward
2 - Moves Right/East	Turns to Right
3 - Moves Down/South	Reverse Direction
4 - Moves Left/West	Turn to Left
5 - Fires Laar	Fires Laar
6 - Displays Items	Displays Items
7 - Drops an Item	Drops an Item
8 - Uses an Item	Uses an Item
9 - Picks up an Item	Picks up an Item

You may also use, pick up, or drop members of your crew. Don't expect them to be in the same place you left them when you return to the same location. When entering a labyrinth be sure to look closely for different shaped objects or be attentive to strange noises . . .

TERRAINS AND TERRORS

Upon landing on Mars you will find yourself in the middle of a Martian desert. In the distance to the north and south are two ranges of mountains. The high peaks to the north are covered with snow at an elevation of 4,000 feet, and are almost impossible to cross. Sloping hills in the south are barren and lifeless. They are more like gigantic sand dunes than mountains.

To the west according to reports from Dr. Grady there are entrances to the peerless Meshim labyrinths. To the south, beyond the mountains, it has been reported that there are still functioning canals and a huge hive-like city made of fused rock.

Then appear the winding prismatic corridors of this city once called Lemuria by the long dead Zanti. It is written that alien creatures still guard the sleeping Kendra.

MOUNTAINS - Although on Earth there are some mountain ranges which appear fairly jagged, the martian mountains because of low gravity are much steeper and sometimes even resemble cave stalagmite formations. At times they form spires of solid crystalline substance, whose points are razor sharp. One might think that low gravity would make things easier, but the Martian mountains are extremely treacherous. Without an experienced mountain climber they are impossible to cross. It is suspected by Dr. Grady that, in a secret cave somewhere in the mountains, the last Mudra Uxherman still waits to guide adventurers to the hidden Chamber of the Ages in Lumeria.

SASQUATI - The Sasquati is one of the native flora of Mars. It may grow to a height of 18 feet, and in many ways resembles terrestrial cactus. Although it grew wild for millions of years, during the final development of the Meshim civilization it was cultivated and used as a food substance. Because of a peculiarity of the growth and metabolism of the Sasquati plant, it utilizes chromium in large quantities. It manufactures a molecule using chromium as a central atom which is highly toxic to human systems; also it contains an extremely high mercury concentration, so it is unsuitable as human food. Ingestion of Sasquati results in paralysis and death within a matter of minutes. It would be wise to bring a Botanist with you on your expedition to avoid such mishaps.

CRATERLANDS - In several areas Mars has been particularly damaged and pitted by unrelenting meteor showers. Some of the projectiles are as small as a pea, some as large as a mountain. These areas resemble the moon's surface, giving one a sense of loneliness and desolation. Nothing on Mars could ever seem to survive in the craterlands; no water, no vegetation, no life.

CANALS - The Martian canals are remnants of a culture predating both the Zanti and the Meshim. At one time the now barren Sands of Mars were a tropical paradise. The canals irrigated thousands of miles of Sasquati, which to the early Martians was a staple similar to wheat or corn. Now most of the canals are overgrown by a toxic crystal substance which rises, often some hundred feet, toward the Martian skies. All the Martian canals lead to Lumeria, the capital city of the ancient Zanti.

DESERT - Martian deserts are much harsher than those of Earth, with temperatures rising over 200 degrees in a day and below 100 degrees at night. Because of the high mineral salt concentration, Martian sands are extremely corrosive to all types of equipment and cause severe skin irritation. They are lethal if swallowed. Due to the lesser gravity and extreme temperature changes, the Martians in their inscriptions spoke of a peculiar weather disturbance called a Borog. Martian rocks as large as one's fist were hurled at speeds of greater than 100 m.p.h. In a particularly savage Borog an entire mountain could be, and often was, literally sand-blasted away. Because of these rugged conditions and the fact that the martian atmosphere will not support human life, thermasuits must be worn and oxygen supplied if you wish to leave the ship with your crew.

KATEOMEOW - The race which preceded the Meshim and the Zanti was a highly developed culture of telepathic cat-like creatures. Since they never evolved a real thumb or true color vision, they were not able to become the master race. It is still a mystery how, with only paws, they built the Martian canals.

LAND OF THE VISHNI - In ancient Martian evolution there was a plant very similar to Earth's Venusian Fly Trap. This planet, named the Vis by the ancient Zanti, produced a highly stimulating nectar and a large orange blossom. Because of the harsh climate, the insects of Mars quickly perished after only a few million years. A type of rodent called the Hnue began using the Vis as a hiding place and source of food. Over millions of years the two organisms united in a symbiotic relationship. As the seasons changed the Hnue would migrate carrying the plants with them, and eventually they became a single organism, half plant, half rodent. These animal-plants are only mobile at night and can be highly carnivorous. If one is traveling through a territory occupied by Vishni one should always do so during the daytime when they are fairly harmless.

SAND PITS - There are areas of Mars where there are super fine scarlet crystals of an iron mercury compound. Rock pits filled with this substance are very similar in action to quicksand. Some of these pits are hundreds of feet deep. An entire expedition may vanish within a matter of seconds without leaving a trace. The way to recognize these sand pits is to look for their characteristic purple and green glitter. One must be especially careful during a Borog when everything is obscured by flying Martian rock.

DEGWAT - Degwat is a semi-fungoid material, which in texture, taste, and food value is very similar to the mushroom family. It grows wild in uncultivated areas and can withstand enormous temperature fluctuation. Although it does not contain sufficient food nutrients to be used as a staple food, it may be eaten. It cannot be stored or carried, as it decomposes at a tremendous rate after it has been severed from the mother plant. For you Botanist, Degwat is only the class name and there are many species and sub species. It also possesses amazing healing properties and may be used to numb pain. It may be carried and replanted. They germinate almost instantly and reach full size within a matter of days.

TERRORS

In addition to treacherous terrain there are many mutant creatures in the Martian desert. Some say that there are remnants of the Meshim race, which still guard their sacred tunnels; or Kendra warriors who lurk about the Chamber of the Ages, and that somewhere in the mountains the last Mudra Uxherman waits in dreamless sleep, having been undisturbed for 3 billion years.

THE MESHIM LABYRINTHS

The Meshim being cold-blooded and reptilian lived far beneath the surface of Mars in an intricate labyrinth of tunnels with triangular doors. There are approximately 3 levels to these tunnels, and they are still guarded by mutants of the original Meshim race. In this mode you will no longer be looking down from above, but will assume an eye level view of your surroundings. Please note the basic command differences described in Embarking before attempting to explore the tunnels. If you did not have the foresight to bring a light you may end your adventure rather quickly by lumbering into a pit or Meshim trap.

The Meshim tend to be quite a bunch of pack rats. In some places there are large caches of Zanti treasures, ill-gotten by raids on Lemuria. Remember, treasure in not for human consumption and carrying treasure uses up energy. The empty shell-like exoskeletons may be scattered about in quite a few places. These may be picked up and used as armor. They are quite light and very effective for that reason.

LONG LOST LEMURIA

Towering over the desert sands of Mars rises the lookout and entrance of Lemuria, capital city-state of the Zanti. One could liken the Zanti to a cross between an ant and bee civilization. The entire structure is made of a hexagonal hollow crystal which the Zanti named Zircom. Deep below the sands of Mars were mines where Zircom was excavated from rich deposits and shaped by the use of Kendra saliva. The chemical secreted by the Kendra was almost identical to an 18 molar solution of H_2SO_4 . Dr. Grady in his reports had the suspicion that the entire Zanti city was actually pure emerald; some of the chambers were filled with diamonds the Kendra used for boring tunnels.

As the Zanti was an insect-like colony, some chambers were used for food storage and others as hatcheries. Dr. Grady reported an overwhelming ammonia odor as he first entered the city tunnels. He reported countless hieroglyphics scrawled across the walls of the chambers and, at times, seemed to hear some type of skittering movement behind the walls. There are four entrances to the Zanti city and there is a distinct possibility that the Geesh, which once patrolled the tunnels, are still there. The Geesh were ameoboid-type organisms, domesticated by the Zanti and used to keep the tunnels free of debris and invaders. Their one purpose in life was to digest everything in sight, except the Zanti, of course.

In your exploration of the Zanti Hive you would do well to jot down the inscriptions if you wish to solve the mystery.

WINNING THE GAME

You must do a lot more than get to Mars and back to win Sands of Mars. There are also varying degrees of accomplishment.

As you recall, if you have read the Legend, your mission is to find the Explorer II party; especially Dr. Grady. You have not been guided to Mars by the hands of fate just to check out the terrain. Your presence there may prove to be a very important prologue to Martian history and the survival of the Zanti as a civilization. You must find the Mudra and Dr. Grady. With these two now accompanying your party, you must use their skills to find the entrance to some secret locations. Oh, well, enough for the clues. Once you have succeeded in all of this, you must manage to get Dr. Grady back to earth - which is not exactly an easy task. Good Luck, Captain!