
Optimization of Phobos mission with hybrid propulsion returning to the Earth

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The article considers the problem of optimizing the spacecraft recovery space flight to Phobos. On the one hand, this task is confined to a real mission to Phobos, which the Russian Federation plans to accomplish in the coming years. On the other hand, the development of techniques for optimizing the spacecraft interplanetary trajectories is the question of present interest. Usually, in such tasks, the circumplanetary legs of trajectory are neglected and there is no end-to-end optimization of the entire mission. The paper shows a technique for constructing Pontryagin extremals in similar problems, taking these features into account, using the example of an expedition to Phobos. The positions of the Earth, Mars and Phobos correspond to the ephemerides DE424 and MAR097. Gravitational fields of the Sun and Mars are considered to be central Newtonian. Spacecraft is equipped with high- and low-thrust engines. The problem of cosmodynamics is formalized as an optimal control task and then it is solved numerically by shooting method. The paper shows the particular constructed trajectories, estimates the possible gain due to using hybrid propulsion instead of only high-thrust engines.

Keywords: low-thrust, hybrid propulsion, end-to-end optimization, interplanetary flight optimization, spacecraft trajectory optimization, Phobos, flight to Phobos, Phobos mission, Mars mission, cosmodynamics problem

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