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1 Highguard

?The Empire is our destiny.?

The Highborn are a people supremely confident of their own place in history. They revere the highest ideals, to epitomize Imperial Virtues, to reflect the noble obligations of leadership and thereby to embody the very spirit of the Empire. They created Synod so that they might stand vigil over the collective soul of the Empire. Their manifest destiny is to drive the barbarians from the land and unite all humankind; they will accept nothing less.

The children of Highguard are a blazing beacon of righteousness in a dark and grimy world that too often chooses to take the easy way, to reach a compromise with vice. They stand against the tide of wickedness and say "No. This is not acceptable. We can be better." Regiments of disciplined soldiers march to battle, shoulder to shoulder, determined to take the fight to the enemies of civilisation. Their first thoughts and their last are for their beloved Empire, and they know that even if they are struck down a life of virtue will see them reborn once more, given another chance to bring humankind to its shining destiny.

The chapters, the great stone settlements in which most Highborn dwell, are scattered across the plains that lie between Urizen and the Bay of Catazar. Many are built on ancient battle sites, scenes of triumph in the historic wars that wrested control of the land from the barbarians. All are heavily fortified, with granite quarried from the southern mountains, for the Highborn will brook no expense to protect what is theirs. ?Wood burns, stone endures? is an old Highborn aphorism that says much about their perspective.

Although the First Empress put aside her nationality when she united the Empire, the Highborn consider their nation the proud parent of the Empire, and themselves to be its founders, tutors and guardians. They protect the Empire with their armies, guide its hand in the Senate and guard its soul in the Synod; perhaps most important of all, they keep the Imperial Histories to record and tell of the deeds that make the Empire great.

?This is Highguard, the birthplace of the Empire. Our people, the Highborn, are the Empire?s proud parents, devoted lovers, stalwart protectors and wise guides. We are the people of virtue, who enumerated the Virtues, and unlocked the Labyrinth of Ages. We are destined to be the conquerors of death, slayers of gods and false prophets, and the greatest hope of all humanity.?

1.1 Five things to know about the Highborn

- **We made the Empire.** The First Empress was Highborn. She pulled the scattered human nations together and enlightened them to the true faith.
- **Only actions are virtuous.** Thoughts and feelings are never virtuous or vile. It is only the actions that you undertake that demonstrate your worth.
- **The purpose of the past is to inspire the present.** We study history not to argue over the facts but to identify lessons that can inspire us today.
- **Virtue and vice are contagious.** A virtuous life leads the faithful to further righteous action but vile behaviour spreads just as easily if not checked.

- **A chapter is bound by spirit, not blood.** Amongst the Highborn family ties matter less than shared belief, purpose and vision.

1.2 What the Highborn are not

- **Zealots or Bigots.** There are zealots in Highguard but as a nation they strive to be righteous and lead by example; they are not self-righteous and condemnatory.
- **Christian crusaders.** Highguard is partly inspired by the imagery and themes of the crusades but there are major differences between Highborn chapters and the crusading orders. Most specifically Christian iconography is inappropriate here.

1.3 Further Reading

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2 Highguard people

We made the Empire.

2.1 Overview

The Highborn have always known their destiny. From the first, they brought civilisation, and carved a nation from the wilderness, driving the barbarians before them as they expanded. This civilisation, intimately connected to their notion of Virtue, has only grown and strengthened over the years, finally reaching its maturity at the birth of the First Empress and the formation of the Imperial Creed.

Most dwell in chapters, fortified settlements spread across the plains and linked by roads, rivers and canals. The chapters are united by a common purpose, a creed that defines their own subtle interpretation of the Way of Virtue. The Highborn pride themselves on the strong sense of community within a chapter. They work together and often eat together, meeting daily in the chapterhouse for prayers and to break fast.

It is said ? only half in jest ? that every Highborn, no matter what their calling, is also part-soldier and part-priest. The grain of truth at the heart of the proverb is that the Highborn are raised from a young age not to take what they have for granted, but to be constantly alert to threats both martial and spiritual.

Highguard is a distinguished nation. Their days of rapid change, hurried conquest and shifting rulerships are behind them, and their culture has reached a pinnacle of insight and stability. The Highborn are proud of their accomplishments; if they are wary of change it is because they have worked so hard to achieve what they have. This caution has served them well through the founding and expansion of the Empire, allowing them to strengthen their culture and faith without the dilution of barbarian customs. Their love for Imperial civilisation drives them to defend it from those who would diminish it ? whether invading foreigners, well-meaning Imperial converts or the sinister eternals.

With power comes responsibility.
Although the Highborn are justifiably proud of their role in creating the Empire, they are vigilant against the vices of hubris and indulgence. In Highguard, everyone must do their part to ensure the triumph of nation and Empire. Those that are raised up to positions of power are expected to do more than most. To the Highborn way of thinking, senators and the like are the servants of the Empire, hand-picked by the citizens to display moral rectitude and provide leadership. With power comes a tremendous responsibility: to be decisive and proactive, to use the power you have been given to benefit all. Those who use such positions to make themselves wealthy or idle are regarded with contempt.

A sense of history is profoundly important to the Highborn. More than the dry recording of facts, Highborn history is explicitly written as a chronicle to inspire future generations. Elements such as an invigorating narrative, a strong central character, and an enlightening lesson are considered far more important than useless ? or worse, negative ? details. Highborn scholars consider speculation over the accuracy of any given historical account (all of which are by their nature subjective) pointless, and instead focus on its relevance as a lesson to the present and future. This has been known to bring them into conflict with the Urizen archivists. The Highborn abhor the indiscriminate Urizen approach to source material and their refusal to apply a rigorous moral judgement to what they record and propagate.

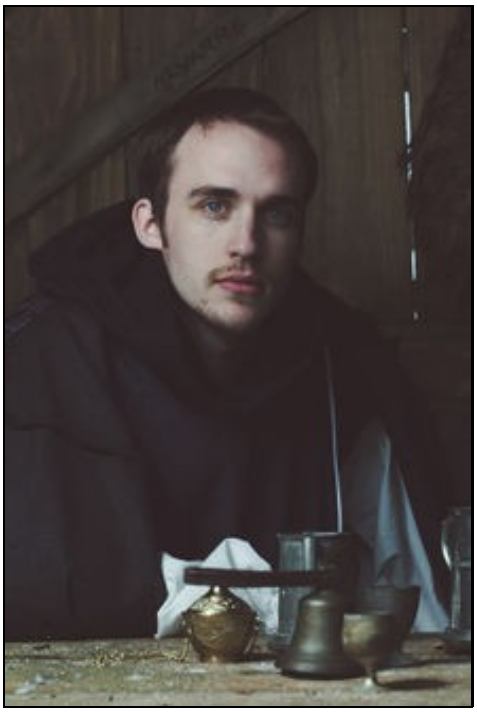
2.2 Names

Highguard first names are primarily Old Testament Biblical in flavour.

They are chosen carefully for the child in order to establish the appropriate resonance and also consideration of the surname they will bear. Within a chapter there is usually little need for a second name, where there is confusion people often identify the specific individual by referencing a notable parent, i.e. Dinah, daughter of Eli.

When being formally introduced or described to people from outside a chapter, it is customary to append the individual's chapter to their name, reinforcing that it is the community in which the Highborn is a member that is more important than matters of blood. Chapters themselves are normally named after their founder and where, or why, they were founded, i.e. Ezekiel's Guard or Rebekah's Haven.

This means a Highborn might be called, for instance, Dinah of Ezekiel's Guard or Saul of Rebekah's Haven, using the previous chapters. If the Highborn changes chapter, for some reason, it is normal to take a completely new name to represent the change of direction in the individual.



2.2.1 Sample names

Aaron, Abigail, Amos, Caleb, Delilah, Dinah, Eli, Enoch, Ephraim, Esther, Gideon, Hiram, Hosea, Ira, Jemimah, Leah, Levi, Miriam, Mordecai, Naomi, Noah, Rebekah, Reuben, Sarah, Saul, Seth, Tamar.

N.B. Whilst some names are inspired by real world names which may be given to specific genders, Empire is a gender blind setting and people of any gender choose any name they like that is appropriate to their nation.

2.2.2 Naming resources

Wikipedia has an excellent list of biblical names, along with the historical meanings.

2.3 Further Reading

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3 Highguard culture and customs

Water can also serve a ceremonial function

3.1 Washing and Cleanliness

Cleanliness is important to the Highborn. Highborn bathhouses are complex affairs with steam rooms, cold plunge pools, as well as heated baths and massage tables. A Highborn?s first impulse on arriving somewhere after a journey is to clean away the dust of the road. Small fountains, pools and fonts are commonly found outside Highborn chapterhouses, and even individual homes, so that those entering can perform a token cleansing of hands and face. Scented finger-bowls are common between courses at a meal.

In foreign lands or on campaign, cleanliness can be more difficult to maintain. If limited clean water is available, most Highborn will preserve the ritual aspects of washing, such as flicking a few drops over head and shoulders, dabbing a little on the eyes and forehead, or merely wetting the tips of fingers. If no clean water is available, symbolic gestures are performed instead; raising both hands to the face, then passing them over the head is a gesture that means ?I would wash myself if I had water.? This gesture is occasionally used to mean ?I wash my hands of this situation? and can even be used during an argument to express a sentiment roughly equivalent to ?I am tired of you and want you gone?.

3.2 Competition and Skill

Not all Highborn are warriors, but most enjoy competition, whether tests of fitness, skill or intellect. Especially popular at present is the Cathleon, a challenge based on a training regime favoured by many of the Unconquered, consisting of a footrace, javelin throws and a second footrace. The entire event is run in a single sequence, testing speed, skill and endurance. To win, the victor must run to the target, throw three javelins through a target hoop and then return to the start. There are no set distances or target-sizes; the competitors agree these details before a Cathleon begins.

Physical prowess is not the only way to earn respect from Highborn. Prestige lies in skill with tactical games such as chess, backgammon, othello, draughts, tafl and go. They also enjoy wagering on these games, although there is a general distaste for games of pure chance such as roulette or dice.

3.3 Recording History

Personal, as well as national, history is important to the Highborn. Many Highborn keep journals - diaries or collections of letters are the most common forms. These writings may be private, but it is also common for Highborn who are away from home to write short pieces intended to be shared with friends and family - reading travelogues and biographies are popular pastimes. The best writings are those that are considered to give a very personal viewpoint on events. Full of passion, they let the reader share the insights of the writer, and empathise with their emotions.

On death these personal writings are usually bequeathed either to a favoured family member or to the Stewards of the Dead, to form part of the library at the heart of the Necropolis. It is considered a great honour for an individual?s thoughts and experiences to be preserved as an inspiration and guide to future generations.

3.4 The Cowl

Before the dissolution of the Patrician Council, the tradition amongst the Highborn was that those carrying out funerary rites went hooded when doing so as a mark of respect. When the Navigator dissolved the Council, he did so hooded, a gesture believed to indicate the Council?s ?death?. Since that time, a practice has arisen amongst many Highborn, particularly those in authority, to wear hoods or cowls, usually in the colours of their Chapter. The custom has it that when the hood is down, the wearer is speaking informally as themselves, but with the hood up they speak formally, such as representing others or passing a judgement. The act of raising or lowering the hood can, in such cases, change the atmosphere in a room significantly, and there are few sights as intimidating as a group of hooded Highborn moving with purpose.

3.5 Funerals

Death is an important moment in each spirit's cycle, with an opportunity to celebrate the virtues shown in the life that has now passed and meditate on whether the spirit might at last escape the Labyrinth. Mourners customarily wear sombre veils and cowls. Traditionally the dead have their hands and face carefully washed once they are in repose. They are then veiled for a final time and each person who has something to say upon the virtue of the individual takes their turn before the will of the deceased is read aloud. Bells are tolled throughout the proceedings to carry the words to the dead.

Testaments are common in Highguard. It is normal for bequests to be made on the basis of the virtues displayed by the recipient, rather than on any ties of blood. Any remaining chattels are gathered by the Chapter itself. All of this is done with some haste so that the body may be properly prepared for internment within their Chapter's mausoleum or, if they are particularly virtuous, within the Necropolis itself. Regardless of whether mortal remains are involved every Highborn wants their name inscribed on a monument in the Necropolis.

3.6 Day of the Dead

The Day of the Dead is a memorial for those who have fallen in the year gone past.
Taking place on the second day of the Winter Solstice, the Day of the Dead is an important celebration that serves as a memorial for those lost in the preceding year. Respects are paid throughout the day with Chapters remembering those they have lost in their own traditional sombre and serious manner until dusk comes. As light fades from the sky it is common for the Highborn to begin a candle- and lantern-lit slow procession around their homes or chapterhouses. The celebrants walk in silence except for the intoning of bells or the speaking of the names of those who have passed into the Labyrinth; the procession often visits places that were important to a deceased individual in life.

Once the procession is complete, a celebration of those lives usually begins with songs and stories of the virtues of the Highborn. It is common for friends and loved ones to share anecdotes and readings from their own journals or letters, or those of the departed.

The following morning is often used to celebrate those who have been born to, or joined, the nation in the last year, with many taking the opportunity to re-swear their oaths to Chapters and to Nation. It is also a common that Highborn give small meaningful gifts on this day, the most precious ones being considered by some to be those made by the gift-giver.

In pre-Imperial times, midnight on the Day of the Dead marked the end of one year and the beginning of the next. Old Highborn documents (and some traditionalist historians) still count the Day of the Dead as the last day of the year which can occasionally lead to confusion.

The Unveiled saw their horns down to stumps to demonstrate their renunciation of their lineage.

3.7 The Unveiled

Historically, Highguard has not been a generous nation to the less than fully human. In the crudest and simplest of terms, they were perceived as being spiritually suspect. While it is undeniable that they embrace the virtues with great passion, they must continually resist the siren call of their blood, or risk corruption by their lineage. As a result those with lineage were often watched until they had proved themselves. Times are changing and now there are fewer and fewer Highborn who still regard those with lineage with suspicion for fear that they may eventually succumb, but individuals of lineage whose humanity has triumphed are still upheld as inspirational tales of how the human spirit can conquer anything.

A few Highborn cambion and changelings choose to remove or disfigure the visible marks of their lineage. Calling themselves the Unveiled, they saw their horns down to stumps. In the past this was often seen as a repudiation of lineage, but times have changed. While the Highborn no longer tolerate such discrimination, the nation does celebrate those who willingly choose to demonstrate to everyone that their immortal human souls have triumphed over the siren call of their blood as a Virtuous act of Pride.

3.8 Art

Mosaic by Luke of the Shattered Tower (Scarlett Hayler-King)
Mosaics are popular, their swirling patterns recall the winds and the tides; at their hearts, stylised representations of the heroes of old. Vast and vaulted marble domes; dusty cloisters smelling of old parchment; cool villas with fountains at their heart fill the household with the song of the water. An artistic movement has been growing over the last two decades that moves away from the traditional complex mosaics towards a simpler style involving the shaping of coloured stone to fit together in designs reminiscent of stained glass ? a more elegant and modern refinement of an ancient art.

Highborn musical traditions favour the flute and other wind instruments. On days when the wind is high, a chapterhouse resounds with the song of wind chimes, aeolian harps and bells.

3.9 Icons and Artistry

Unsurprisingly, the Highborn favour art that expresses themes of Virtue and human destiny. In contrast to the starker shades favoured for clothing, Highborn art is often brightly coloured and tends toward the abstract. They decorate everything with mosaics, sculptures, and stained glass and also enjoy art that depicts these things. A valuable book might have a cover that is a piece of stained glass, be illuminated with tiny mosaic designs, or depict a beautiful sculpture on the frontispiece.

The horse has a special place in Highborn art. Although their great steeds are gone, the horse remains an enduring image of strength, loyalty, grace - and sorrow. The First Empress fought under a banner depicting a rearing silver or white stallion on black, and the horse became an early symbol of the Empire. The other heraldic beast associated with Highguard is the basilisk, a crested aquatic lizard. It can be found drowsing in marble, curled around alcoves or uncoiling across mosaic floors. Its eyes are always depicted shut as though asleep ? except on warbanners where its crimson gaze sweeps the field for any sign of the enemies of the virtuous.

Bells are frequently depicted in Highborn iconography, and form a key part of decoration, architecture, and ceremony; they are a potent symbol of the virtue of Vigilance. A common design used to represent the nation of Highguard flag is the basilisk coiled around a bell; either the traditional black bell representing the Necropolis, or the white bell that symbolises the city of Bastion.

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4 Highguard look and feel

4.1 Overview

Regal, confident, righteous, stark, traditional, disciplined, militant, uncompromising.
The Highborn look is generally practical and restrained. Its beauty is in the small touches ? the geometric trim on the robes, the exquisite jewellery. Colours are deliberately stark and contrasting, and outfits in black and white are commonplace. Many members of a chapter choose to adopt similar garb, with the symbol of their chapter displayed prominently on the chest, shoulders, or at the breast. This is particularly true for Highborn warriors who show their solidarity and loyalty with their fellows by marching into battle decked in identical garb. Of all the nations of the Empire, the Highborn are the most inclined to uniformity, a visible display of their inner commitment to their shared faith and destiny.

Rather than displaying impractical frivolity in the cut of their garments, Highborn show their taste and wealth in jewellery, and the decoration of cloth. Jewelled and embellished trims at the hems of garments are popular, as is the intricate braiding of hair and heavy, elaborate jewellery.

Also see Highguard costumes and icons and artistry.

4.2 Breakdown

Influences
Gondor, Crusader Knights

Materials
Highborn materials are usually processed, such as wool, cotton, silk and velvet. They are typically solid and of the highest quality available as befits the rank of the wearer.

Colours
Black with a white contrast is most common but where there is colour, it is likely to be dark - bottle green, red, charcoal and midnight blue - and always set against the contrast of white or cream.

4.3 Clothing

The Highborn dress in simple, practical lines ? wearing long, layered robes and tunics in starkly contrasting colours, most often simple layers of black and white or sometimes using black or white as a contrast to different colours. Decorative mosaics and fabrics with complex geometric patterns are popular.

Some Highborn may choose to wear a dress rather than a robe. Highguard dresses are constructed along simple but formal lines in dark fabrics. They often have a high neckline or standing collar; lengthwise they always come at least to the ankle.

Veils are commonly worn by all genders both in funeral rites and on other sombre occasions. They set the wearer apart, offering anonymity and a sense of de-personalisation. They are often worn when distasteful actions, or those associated with a rank or position of authority rather than an individual, have to be undertaken

Some Highborn, particularly those in authority, wear hoods or cowls, usually in the colours of their chapter.

Highborn costume is elegant and flowing, long layered robes and tunics, dark coloured in starkly contrasting colours, most often simple layers of black and white or sometimes using black or white as a contrast to different colours. The Highborn are a militant people and this is often reflected in their dress.

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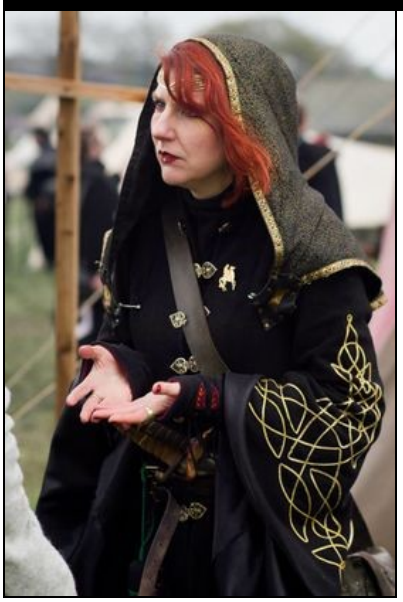
- 

4.3.1 Cowls & Veils

Highborn veils are designed to cover the face to conceal the wearers identity and project anonymity. Cowls are a common feature of Highborn costume, especially for the powerful.

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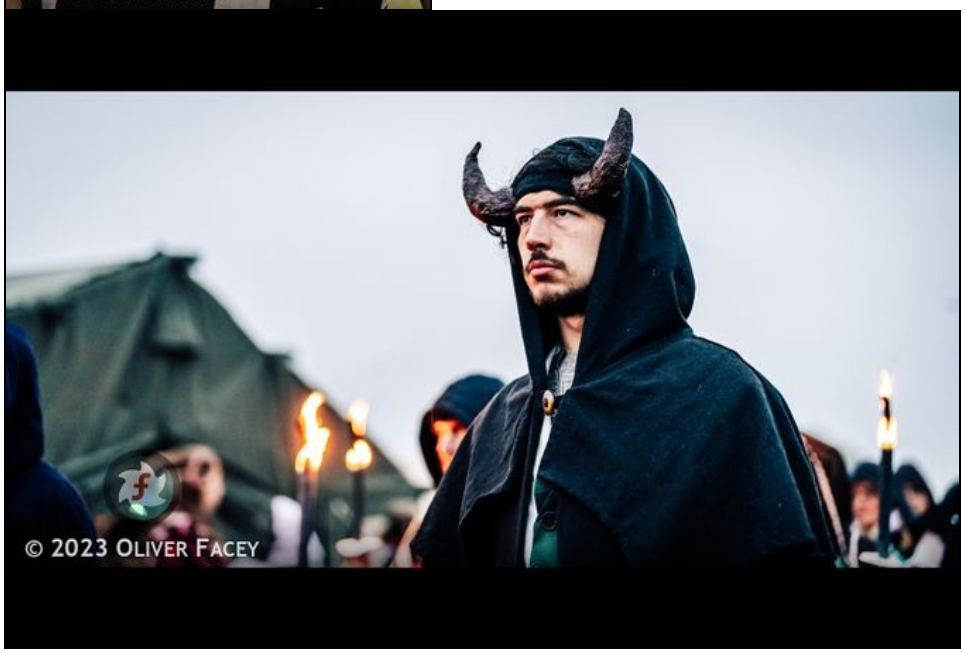
- 
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4.3.2 Jewellery

The Highborn are a people with a manifest destiny, to unite the human nations and lead them to a virtuous future. Their jewellery reflects their heritage: it is refined, elegant and regal. Gold or silver worn on the brow suggests authority.

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4.3.3 Priests

Highborn priests usually dress in white or dark robes with decoration in a stark colour to stand out.

A common element of Highborn priestly costume is a stole - a band of cloth worn round the neck and shoulders that hangs down over the front of the body. Commonly these are decorated with a Chapter symbol, and a symbol important to the character's personal faith or sect.

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4.3.4 Magisters

Magisters dress in a similar manner to priests, but they are often marked out by their magical accoutrements.

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4.4 Weapons and Armour

4.4.1 Armour

Highborn armour tends to be full length and layered or segmented. Heavy black leather is common, sometimes with pieces of plate worn over it. The unconquered usually opt for lighter armour, but cataphracts often favour as much protection as they can get. Helms are commonly decorated with wings for preference. Carved or decorated black vambraces are often worn for additional protection.

Traditional lorica in hard leather or metal can work for Highborn, particularly if the suit is tooled or decorated or the outfit incorporates a Highborn style surcoat or cloak.

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4.4.2 Shields

Large kite or heater shields are common. They are usually decorated in a uniform design with the chapter emblem in stark contrast.

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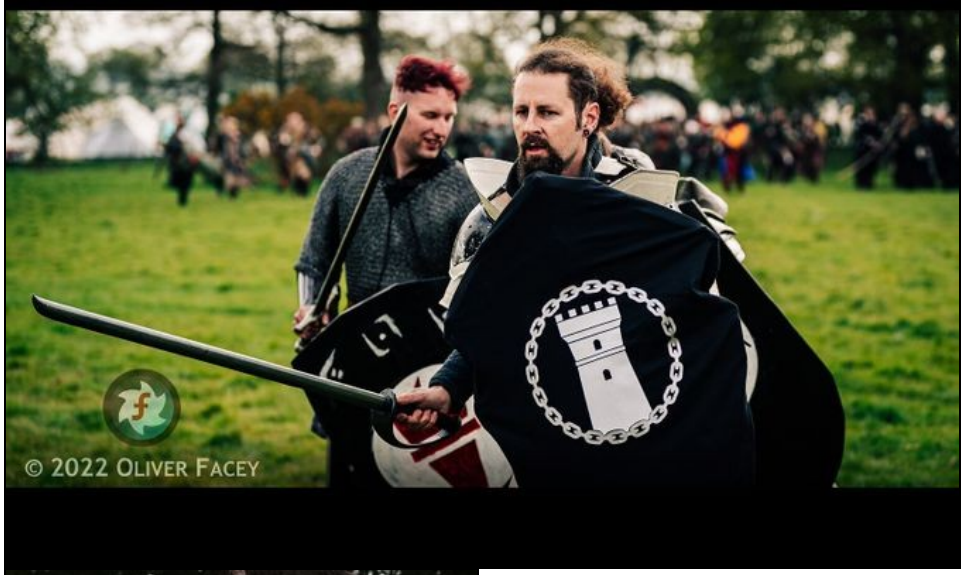
- 
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4.4.3 Surcoats

Most Highborn warriors cover their armour with a long flowing surcoat. The ideal surcoat is black or white with a design in a stark contrasting colour. The Crusader knights exemplify this tradition in real history, although an original design for a chapter?s emblem is preferable.

Uniforms for some Highborn chapters include cloaks with the chapter?s emblem repeated on each shoulder.

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4.4.4 Unconquered

The unconquered serve as scouts, often operating far behind enemy lines. Most avoid the distinctive high contrast clothing favoured by most Highborn in favour of something more concealing and many wear lighter armour or forego armour altogether.

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4.4.5 Weapons

Highborn warriors prefer to fight in close formation and prefer weapons suited to this style; short swords, spears, and bows.

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4.5 Chapters

Members of the same chapter will often adopt a uniform look using identical or matching items like surcoats. The visual unity emphasises the unity of purpose and helps a chapter project power. Even without obvious Chapter symbols, a lot can be achieved with matching colour schemes and pieces of costume. Of all the nations, the Highborn have the strongest tendency to form shield walls and fight in close-order formations.

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4.6 Children

Clothing for Highborn children is usually sombre and simple but good quality, with more elegant garments reserved until they come of age.

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4.7 Camp

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4.8 Inappropriate Costume

Whilst this look and feel page provides the ideal costume for the nation, it is important for players to familiarise themselves with the general costume rules for further guidelines, including those for inappropriate costume.

4.9 Further Reading

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5 Highguard hearth magic

5.1 Overview

In the world of Empire, formal magic is the application of learning and willpower to create supernatural effects. There is another form of magic, however which does not require the user to be a magician. Hearth magic employs the innate natural magic of the world to produce subtle but significant effects in much the same way that a compass needle always points true north. The magic is not based on the abilities of a magician, but relies on the innate mystical properties of the world. Hearth magic is usually subtle rather than potent, and where formal magic is predictable and reliable, hearth magic is none of these things.

While the principles that underlie hearth magic are common throughout the world, in Highguard, there are certain specific practices, customs, or traditions that draw on the power of the world's innate magic. Often these proud customs are nothing more than traditions - but sometimes their practice taps into some facet of the world resulting in a truly magical effect.

You can learn more about hearth magic, what it is and how it works, here.

Cowls conceal, while bells reveal.

5.2 Bells and Chimes

Bells are associated both with the dead, and with the Labyrinth itself. The Highborn hang wind-chimes in their homes and to bring back memories of those they have lost. Meditating to the sound of chimes or bells is said to allow the dead to ?speak? to the living through their memories. There are even rare accounts of Highborn pilgrims who claim to have heard a recently departed close friend or family member speaking to them over the sound of pealing bells. It is commonly held that bells can speak for those who have died, and have no voice of their own; that the memories that the sounds stir are chosen not by the listener but by the departed.

Those who have had near-death experiences often speak of hearing the sounds of bells tolling. When the ritual Whispers through the Black Gate is performed and the conjured spirit is present, the sound of bells can be intermittently heard. As the ritual magic ends, the bells peal out to call the ghost

back through the "Black Gate". Regardless of what is actually occurring with this potent Winter ritual, there is a clear connection between bells and the dead, especially ghosts.

While the sound of bells reminds the living of the dead, it also exerts an uncanny influence over the unquiet dead, especially ghosts and revenants. Restless spirits will not approach the sound of chimes - meaning many Highborn make a point of hanging them in the doors and windows of their homes - and the ringing of bells can actually cause such creatures to recoil or in rare cases even flee. Stewards of the dead theorise that these sounds not only remind the living of the dead, but remind the dead of the time when they were alive. Most people who spend any time around the dead - especially the stewards of the dead and magisters - will keep a bell on their person at all times.

Bells and Chimes in Play

Hanging wind chimes and carrying bells are simple ways to invoke this hearth magic. During a conversation, it's easy to make a point of listening to a bell ringing, or the sound of wind chimes, and using it as a prompt to talk about memories of a dead friend or family member. You can treat this as if you've been prompted to remember something they said to you, or you could even roleplay hearing their voice, depending on the drama of the situation. This is meant to be something rare, but used judiciously, at the right time it can create a powerful roleplaying moment.

When dealing with the unquiet dead, you can use chimes to try and ward and area or keep a ghost at bay. If you have a bell, you can toll it to try and overwhelm the spirit with feelings of loss, making it easier to deal with. Our NPC ghosts and unquiet dead are briefed on how to respond to chimes and bells, but it might not always be the way you expect. After all, hearth magic is rarely predictable. Experience has shown that some spirits will respond just as strongly, or in different ways, to other sounds that had special meaning to them in life. For example, a Kallavesi revenant (a dead body possessed by a ghost) might be overwhelmed by the sound of a Wintermark battle horn whereas a ringing bell might fill them with rage.

A word of warning however, not all dead things are affected by such sounds. Creatures such as the husks created by Quickening Cold Meat, or the vallorn are dead bodies animated by an unnatural force rather than by the spirit of someone who has died. They have no mortal memories to invoke so they are not affected by this hearth magic.

Bowls and bells, both for purity.

5.3 Cowls and Veils

Wearing a cowl or veil allows someone to speak from the soul. By setting aside their external appearance it reveals the wearers essential nature in its place. It allows a person to put aside distractions and to speak and act with confidence and certainty. This magic can manifest in different ways for different people - one Highborn may become calm and collected, another might speak with passion, while a third may become cruel and bitter. Paradoxically, the cowl hides the face but reveals something profound about the person wearing it.

In Highguard, donning a veil is seen as a way of preparing yourself to put aside worldly or mundane considerations to allow yourself to focus on Virtue, so veils are used when matters of great import must be discussed. When the Highborn don veils or draw up their cowls as a group, it means they are about serious business. They step away from the world for a short time and become apart from it - a tradition that leads to many Highborn circles ceremonially donning cowls or veils when they must talk of matters of justice, or frankly discuss sensitive matters.

A cowl or veil may also conceal the identity of the wearer in a more literal sense. Veiling can be particularly effective when dealing with eternals. Although mortals are rarely fooled, creatures of the realms often find it hard to identify whom they are speaking to when dealing with someone wearing a cowl or veil. Crucially beings such as the Whisper Gallery and Kimus are commonly baffled by veils when scrying; they know what has occurred but have no idea who was involved. Other magical beings such as tulpas or ghosts may be similarly affected - the Cowl of Ashes for example draws on this hearth magic to render the wearer completely invisible to a spirit summoned by Whispers Through the Black Gate.

Veils and Cowls in Play

A cowl or veil is license to change how you portray your character, and a rare opportunity to reveal your "essential nature". A veil does not completely change your character; rather it provides license to add nuance and bring out your inner personality. A relaxed and fun-loving Highborn who becomes cooler and more calculating when they wear their cowl reveals something very different than if you roleplay a greater concern for other people while veiled. As much as possible, it is good to keep the change consistent - the hearth magic of cowls and veils is meant to bring out a deeper facet of your character's personality rather than change it completely.

At the very least, donning a cowl or veil helps you put aside distractions and worldly matters and become more focused on the matter at hand. It's also a wise thing to do if you are dealing with a ghost or an eternal and don't trust them or want to take precautions against any bad intention they may have.

Roleplaying that you do not recognise someone who is suitably veiled, even though you actually know them well, can add a dramatic mystical element to any encounter on the field. Likewise, if you are involved in a secretive discussion it is entirely appropriate to veil or cowl yourself - and encourage everyone else who is present to do the same - with the understanding that this will make it harder for anyone to eavesdrop on your conversations with magic.

You don't have to cover your face entirely to evoke the hearth magic of cowls and veils. A diaphanous veil that you can easily see through is just as much a barrier between you and the world as the heaviest hood. Likewise pulling your hood up so it throws your face into shadow is fine, you don't need to literally cover your face.

5.4 Journals and Histories

Writing something down captures part of the essence of the thing. In Highguard, this hearth magic is most commonly invoked through the creation of journals. Many Highborn keep journals - diaries or collections of letters which describe important events. Creating a history of something ensures that the moment remains significant and enduring by preserving the Virtue of the moment in writing. The goal with such accounts is not to diarise every moment from a person's daily routine, but rather to focus on the most personal and most important occurrences - and to try to record them in ways that capture what was truly significant about them.

Provided the words are suitably uplifting and moving, writing can cause Virtue to bloom in even the blackest heart. In some cases, reading a particularly inspiration journal may result in someone gaining a unique spiritual aura. It's not common, but there are journals, diaries, scrolls, and collections of letters in several chapters across Highguard whose pages contain a powerful, durable aura that touches everyone who reads them. Indeed these books have a marked tendency to imbue their readers with spiritual auras in their turn. The power resides in the physical texts not just the words themselves - copies of such writing might still be inspirational but they are not intrinsically magical.

Journals and histories in Play

Creating an in-character journal can be a daunting exercise, but the idea that you only write down the most significant events in your life is the perfect justification for why your journal can be concise and be focused on events at Anvil. If you enjoy writing, there's nothing to stop your filling your journal with stories between events - it can be an interesting way to add depth to your character. But the easiest way to keep the contents relevant to play is to create short, vivid accounts of the most important moments that your character was directly involved with. Rather than a journal, a less time-intensive way to represent this hearth magic might be in writing a letter either to another player or to a fictional character. A letter requires significantly less effort

than a journal but can serve all the same purposes - allowing you to review events and creating an out-of-character prop that can be shared with other players.

You can write letters or add an entry to a journal between events - but it can also be fun to do this while in-character. Spending half an hour in the evening recording the major events of the day can evoke the Highborn hearth magic, but it can also help to go over those events and consider what they mean for your character. It can even be a communal activity - chatting with your character's friends while writing can create a comfortable, mundane scene that is immersive and fun to roleplay. Over time such writing becomes a valuable in-character artefact, and when your character is done can remain in play as the foundation for other players' roleplaying - especially if the journal contains secrets or information that might not have come out in play. For the same reason, you may want to try and keep your journal in an in-character location simply to create drama if someone else reads or steals it.

When writing you may want to think about how "future generations" might be inspired by the events you describe and frame them accordingly. The Highborn place much more emphasis on a story that exemplifies virtue than they do on recording "facts". It is more important that it be engaging and compelling than it be technically accurate.

5.5 Corruption and Purification

There is a pernicious hearth magic that impairs things that are corrupt or impure and makes them liable to fail. A sword caked with mud and grime is more prone to shatter or bend while food quickly spoils if it is not kept clean and dry. Rust and rot are infections that will quickly spread if left unchecked. The mortal body is no different, any impurity can quickly lead to disease or weakness unless it is removed. Worse, corruption (like virtue) can be contagious. Soiled hands soil whatever they touch.

Purification removes this taint, cleansing and restoring something. Both water and fire are known to be effective means of purification. While fire will destroy things if left unchecked, metal objects can be purified with an open flame, and many surgeons will purify their tools with ceremonial fire at the start of the day. Water is especially important to the Highborn, who make extensive use of washing to keep impurities from the body. The Highborn traditions around washing and cleanliness draw on this hearth magic - even when only employing a few drops of water. Performed correctly they provide a degree of protection against baleful magics that bring poison or disease. This can be crucial when fighting enemies such as the Druj or the vallorn.

Highborn who feel they have acted unvirtuously may symbolically wash themselves before beginning to make amends for their behaviour. It is a common metaphor to talk of washing to purify the soul, but you cannot wash away unvirtuous deeds with water or fire. Purification cannot exculpate vice from the soul - only virtuous deeds can remove such a stain. Most Highborn priests encourage washing to prevent disease or sickness as an act of Vigilance, and many encourage their congregation to use their time washing to consider how they can overcome their failings and be more virtuous in the future.

Corruption and purification in Play

You might keep a bowl of water or a jug in your tent, so people coming in can wash their hands. Likewise, when you visit people in other nations, asking for a little water to wash your hands can remind them that you are Highborn. You can also carry a water skin or similar when you are away from home to make use of it to wash your hands at dramatically appropriate times. If the first thing you offer a stranger is a little water to wash their hands, it highlights the emphasis the Highborn place on cleanliness. If people choose *not* to avail themselves of this opportunity to wash, you can react accordingly to their decision not to cleanse themselves.

Fire can be more challenging to use - but you might still draw on this hearth magic by meditating with a candle, for example, or by ensuring that a document containing wicked slanders or heretical thoughts is burned to ash before it can infect anyone else. Likewise, you might call for the dead bodies of those who succumbed to pestilence or curses to be burned to ensure that they do not contaminate the living.

This can be a particularly important hearth magic if you are tending the sick or wounded. If you are a chirurgeon you might wash your hands, or those of your patient, before you examine them. If you use metal chirurgeon's tools you might make a show of passing them through an open flame for a moment as you are preparing to go to work on a patient - although obviously be aware of the safety of yourself and your fellow players! This hearth magic is primarily about cleansing and purifying things to prevent the spread of sickness or physical corruption. The germ theory of disease does not apply in Empire - the source of such ailments is the pernicious hearth magic of corruption.

It is also important to stress that the spiritual dimension of this hearth magic is purely symbolic, nobody believes that sickness results from a lack of virtue. Washing someone removes corruption from the body, it does not remove vice from the soul, so there is no tradition in Empire of burning people to purify their souls. This caveat aside, spending a moment to ceremonially wash the hands or face before embarking on some important activity, or engaging in a liao ceremony, can not only brings out Highborn tradition but also allow you a few moments to collect your thoughts and prepare for the roleplaying to come.

5.6 Further Reading

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- The people
- Culture and customs
- Look and feel
- Hearth magic

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6 Highguard history

Flight, civil war, and the standard of Virtue. The Highborn never forget where they came from.

6.1 The Founding

Seven centuries ago, the Highborn arrived on the Bay of Catazar. Seventeen great vessels carrying pure souls crossed the sea from the south looking for new lands. They left behind a land and people slowly being consumed by corruption and darkness. They were steered by the legendary navigators, a pair of visionary twins named Atuman and Atun who were later acknowledged as an Exemplar of Ambition and a Paragon of Wisdom respectively.

Upon landing, Atuman founded the city of Pharos at the mouth of the river Couros. Atun ? following a vision of her own ? took the flagship, bade her brother farewell and set sail, never to be seen again. The navigators of the first vessels formed a Patrician Council to advise Atuman the Navigator. The Highborn armada was made up of seventeen ships, three were lost and one was navigated by Atun and Atuman, so the Council was made up of thirteen members.

Some scholars question whether the use of the word "ships" is correct at all - it is more likely that rather than individual vessels the term applies to a number of ships owned by an extended family and led by an individual that came to be called a "navigator". They point to the difficulties of imagining an entire nation coming into being from just thirteen ships' worth of people. Regardless of the questions around precisely how many vessels came to the Bay of Catazar, the number of people on the Patrician Council is not contested.

The horses of Highguard

The Highborn fleet carried with them a great herd of horses. These legendary beasts embodied noble virtues of loyalty, strength and dignity. Mounted on their mighty warhorses, the Highborn were unbeaten in battle and the creatures became the iconic symbol of the nation, reflecting the martial spirit of the people. The venal ways of the patricians caused the herds to dwindle until none remained and since the dawn of the Empire they have passed into legend. Highborn parents tell their children the tale of the loss of their horses to teach them never to take blessings for granted.

6.2 The Rule of the Patricians

After Atuman's death his eldest daughter, Acenath, took the title of navigator and ruled in his place while the patricians also named heirs from amongst their offspring. The council ruled wisely for many years but as the generations passed the navigator and the patricians became increasingly focused on preserving their power and their bloodlines and their rule fell victim to self-interest and corruption.

Each patrician (and the navigator themselves) was responsible for appointing their own successor, usually one of their own children, almost invariably a close blood relative. Wealth and power in Highguard was primarily concentrated in the hands of the patrician councillors and their families. Those Highborn with a familial connection to a member of the Patrician Council could usually count on the Council's patronage and support bringing them benefits and privileges unavailable to others. These extended families are also referred to as patricians in many documents of the time, the term being used to refer both to the thirteen members of the Patrician Council who advised the navigator, and to the entire class of nobility descended from them. Some modern historians attempt to differentiate between the two by referring to the patrician councillors and the patrician class to avoid this confusion.

Beyond the ruling council and their immediate families, an entire class of patrician nobility grew up over time. These noble families were wealthy and

well-connected but were essentially disenfranchised; in theory any of them might inherit a seat on the Patrician Council but in practice never did. Most members of these families vied for the favour of the Council, supporting them in the hope of gaining favour. Those who openly opposed the Council risked persecution, financial ruin or even arrest.

Throughout early Highborn history, the power of the Patrician Council waxed and waned. Sometimes the navigator was able to wield more power than the Council; at other times the councillors effectively ran Highguard. The last navigator, Permion, came at the end of an extended period of domination by the Patrician Council, perhaps giving some explanation as to why the Council's response was so extreme. By the end of the civil war, the majority of the councillors were dead and those who survived were either executed, exiled, or bound to dire oaths to set aside their claim to rule Highguard. The genealogies of the patricians were destroyed, and for several decades it was a mark of shame to claim to be able to trace one's line of descent back to a patrician family. Today, even the names of many patrician families have been lost.

6.3 The Diaspora

After establishing themselves in Pharos, the Highborn expanded west into Casinea and north into Bastion. The patricians claimed great swathes of land, using the protection they granted to the people who lived in these new frontiers to further cement their position as the rulers of Highguard. Wherever they encountered orcs, they drove them from their lands, put them to the sword, or enslaved them. Some pressed even further north into what is today Reikos, but there the Highborn encountered a powerful and vicious orc nation, their numbers bolstered by the clans that had been driven from Pharos and Bastion, and northern expansion slowed and eventually stopped.

In theory the rule of the Patrician Council extended throughout Highguard, but in practice it was concentrated in Pharos - the city where the Council lived and met. The further from Pharos you travelled, the less concerned with its machinations and edicts people became. Those who were least in favour with the Council were often at the forefront of the nation's expansion, as they sought to establish themselves and prosper away from its corrupt rule. Two such disgruntled families, the Saravos and Tassata, led expeditions as far from Pharos as they could, establishing the towns that still bear their names, in Sarvos, Mestra, and Regario.

Later still, amid first stirrings of the political turmoil that would become the Highborn civil war, three influential patrician "sisters" - known today as Riqueza, Erigo, and Guerra - spoke out against the corruption of the age. They decided to leave Highguard entirely and gathered their households around them resolving to find a new home. In time they, and those who heard their offer of a new life free from the stifling traditions of Highguard, established themselves on the western shores of the Bay of Catazar and founded the Brass Coast.

6.4 The Revelation and the Civil War

During this time, trade with the Navarr introduced the Highborn to vinum, a herb which was used medicinally and recreationally. However, the Scions of Atun, a group of ascetics and mystics, discovered a process of refining into a substance called liao. They used liao to experience visions, and in other ceremonies, that revealed the Labyrinth of Ages. This enlightenment, about the immortal nature of the human spirit and the power of virtue, sparked a period of time now referred to as the Revelation.

The Revelation stirred a spiritual yearning within the people and swept across the land, awakening many to a new and profound understanding of life. This awakening was further fuelled by widespread disillusionment with the venal ways of the patricians. The Scions and other groups born of the Revelation left Pharos, sickened by the corruption that riddled the city. Along the borders of the nation they built their own communities, called chapters, each dedicated to teaching a profound way of living inspired by the Revelation and guarding against corruption.

As the chapters grew, the patricians became jealous of their influence and passed laws to try to control them. Things came to a head in the time of the Navigator Permion, who later generations would call the Lawmaker ? a navigator who strove to serve the people rather than his own interest. Permion sought to reach out to the leaders of the chapters, starting with the most influential, Lepidus of the Seven Stars. Lepidus is now acknowledged as a Paragon of Pride. He taught Permion about the greatness of the Highborn, what they had been and could be again, and helped him find the will to oppose the wickedness of the patricians.

Permion the Lawmaker's judgements and actions brought the patricians into conflict with him and also with each other. Rather than allow the nation to fall into anarchy, Permion declared martial law and dissolved the Patrician Council. In its place, he invited the chapters to form an Assembly of the Virtuous to advise him.

The response of the Patrician Council was swift and bloody, and a bitter civil war ensued. Permion was assassinated, along with his wife and three of his four children. Various patricians tried to claim the title of navigator, and chaos reigned. Eventually the Assembly was forced to act. After mobilising the military strength of the chapter-houses it crushed the remaining patrician forces and assumed the governance of the nation, although in the process the city of Pharos - the scene of the final battle of the civil war - was burned to the ground. This tumultuous time in the history of Highguard is remembered in countless stories and songs, and gave the victorious Assembly of the Virtuous many of their new paragons and exemplars including Permion, Exemplar of Courage; Lepidus, Paragon of Pride and Ruth, Exemplar (or perhaps Paragon) of Loyalty.

6.5 Rebuilding

The Assembly of the Virtuous elected to turn the ruins of Pharos into the Necropolis, a great mausoleum to house the bodies of all those slain in the war. They also ordered the construction of Bastion, a new city which would serve as a civic and religious centre for the Highborn thereafter and vowed that no Highborn would ever war with other Highborn again.

Over the next few decades, the Assembly united the people of Highguard and reached out to the exiles in Sarvos, Tassato, and the Brass Coast. The city-dwellers had chosen to secede from Highguard during the civil war, claiming independence. To their surprise, a loose alliance of western émigrés banded together to resist Highborn attempts to bring them back under the aegis of the Assembly. In time, treaties were signed and peaceful trade established, but it would be many years before the Highborn finally accepted that the western nations would not see the wisdom of reuniting with their parents.

There were other conflicts; with the orcs to the north-east, with the enigmatic magicians of Urizen to the east, and with the people of Dawn who had established themselves on the shores of the Semmerlak far to the north. Many Highborn chafed at their inability to expand their nation further, to conquer their human neighbours and crush their orc opponents. In the end, however, the Assembly of the Virtuous achieved a different kind of victory as

missionaries and wayfarers slowly spread the true faith of the Way to the neighbouring nations.

6.6 Imperial History

The First Empress was Highborn, and the last to ride a legendary Highborn steed. After taking liao, she revealed that all human souls are reincarnated on the same wheel, regardless of whether they were Highborn. Therefore, to preserve the future of Highguard and enlighten all worthy human souls, it was essential to unite all of humanity under a single banner, such that Highborn reborn elsewhere would still come to know their heritage and the Way of Virtue. From Highborn faith, the Empire came into being, changing the face of the world forever.

As a consequence, many Highborn view the Empire as their child; a wilful child that often does not know what is best for it. They were instrumental in helping to establish and build the powers of the Synod, most notably during the time of Empress Teleri where Highborn priests and cardinals worked alongside the Navarr Throne to help define and exercise the powers of the faithful. They have worked hard over the centuries to keep the fragile alliance of nations together through the Senate, and resolutely supported the expansion of its borders by the Military Council. Likewise, Highguard has worked hard to keep the Conclave focused on its role as protector of the Empire - in particular a significant number of prominent grandmasters of the Sevenfold Path order, and archmages of Winter have been Highborn. Perhaps the only place where their influence has been blunted is in the Bourse; the natural Highborn suspicion of economic factors has often left them frustrated that the ruthlessly pragmatic wealth-seeking nature of the Bourse does not perform more virtuously.

6.7 Highborn on the Throne

Aside from the First Empress herself, two other Highborn have occupied the Imperial Throne.

Empress Aenea was appointed in 103YE, and instituted a wide-scaled program of public works. Among other things, her reign saw the creation of the Lyceum - the Empire's premier college of magic; the creation of many roads and highways still in use today; the construction of several fortifications; and a general overhauling and refinement of the Bourse, the Senate, and Imperial law. Her reign is also marked by conflict - she had little interest in foreign affairs, being focused entirely on building and strengthening the Empire.

Emperor Barabbas took the throne in 180YE, and like his predecessor he focused on strengthening and expanding the Empire. Unlike Aenea, whose interests were very much in the land and its structures, he was fascinated by the sea. An ambitious and charismatic man, he had a vision of an Empire that dominated the entire Bay of Catazar. He is best known today for the manner of his death - lost at sea during a terrible storm along with the great armada he had nearly bankrupted the Empire to create. While modern historians are not kind to Barabbas, the Highborn are often quick to point out that his reign was also a time of great Imperial Ambition and a period of expansion and improved emphasis on securing diplomatic relations with foreign powers.

6.8 Archivists

Highguard looks to the past to understand the present and predict the future. Its scholars, priests and wizards thirst for tomes and artefacts that reflect on the Empire. There is a roaring trade in books, scrolls and tablets, the more obscure the better. While relics of the holy prophets or antique magical articles are valuable in and of themselves, high prices are also paid for tangible evidence of past life experiences.

Archivists collect the histories of Highguard, and of the Empire. They see history as a story that exists not to record dead facts, but to inspire the living. As a consequence, facts that undermine the central truth of an event or the life of a historical character are actually dangerous. A new fact that suggests a wise historical judge never existed, or that a brave general was actually a coward, could do irreparable damage. It could destroy the faith of the living in the individual hero but also undermine the very idea of learning the lessons from history. Destroying or discrediting such lies is as important as revealing the facts that encourage and inspire the living.

This means the Highborn archivists are often at odds with their counterparts in other nations, especially the Urizen seers and torchbearers. In recording and publicising ?facts?, without applying any moral judgement, Urizen historians deny the inspiration offered by history and its role in making the present and the future better. A common rumour suggests that Highborn archivists maintain hidden storehouses of knowledge deemed too dangerous for the common people. This rumour is baseless. If a piece of information uncovered is considered dangerous to the Empire, it is destroyed so that no future generation can be harmed by its rediscovery.

Archivists are romantic figures in Highguard. While the truth is that many of them are quiet scholars and scribes, the popular image is of them as active, energetic people who go to dangerous locations to retrieve valuable information or artefacts for the good of the nation and the Empire as a whole. They face danger frequently, and often have to work against those who want to foolishly spread dangerous information or unleash deadly magic.

6.9 More Highguard History

- Horse - Discussion of the Highborn horses.
- On the Doctrine of Human Destiny - Historical research relating to the origins of the Doctrine of Human Destiny that also discusses some Highborn history
- Origins of the Highborn - Document compiled by scholars visiting the Sarcophan Delves regarding the origins of the Highborn people.

6.10 Further Reading

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7 Highguard leadership

Exarchs provide civic and moral leadership to their chapter

7.1 Overview

Most Highborn live in or near one of the chapters, the great walled settlements, that are spread across the plains that surround the river Couros. Each is a fully functional community incorporating families and individuals from all walks of life, who share a common set of beliefs in the form of a creed.

Each chapter chooses one of their own, called an exarch, to provide the chapter with civic and moral leadership. The exarch is most commonly the one who best embodies the chapter?s creed; a priest or one who has been schooled in philosophy and faith is usually chosen. As a result, most Highborn who are politically ambitious begin by seeking training as a priest. Highborn history clearly shows the perils of choosing a leader who is not virtuous, so they make no apology for placing this criterion above any other.

The holy city of Bastion is the capital of the nation. Every chapter maintains a hostel of some kind there, so that members who make the pilgrimage have somewhere to stay. At one time the Assembly of the Virtuous would meet there regularly to decide the business of the state. When Highguard agreed to join the Empire, the Assembly of the Virtuous was used as the cornerstone for the Imperial Synod, becoming the Highborn Assembly wholesale, and spreading the mandate to watch for any sign of moral decay in the soul of the Empire.

Most political business moved to the Senate after the creation of the Empire so those members of the Highborn Assembly interested in politics now meet when the Imperial court meets, the better to appoint Highborn senators. Bastion is no longer the seat of government of the Highborn nation, but it remains the spiritual home of the Way of Virtue and pilgrims from all over the Empire travel there.

Appointing a Senator

Every Highborn character with a congregation is automatically a member of the National Assembly but only those whose congregations are in the territory in question can participate in the vote for a senator. They do not use their full Synod voting strength; instead, each character receives ten votes, plus two additional votes for each time they have upgraded their resource. Only the actual rank of the congregation counts in this calculation. Imperial titles, enchantments, curses, penalties or bonuses for downtime effects and so on have no effect.

Like any other enchantment, the ritual Mantle of the Golden Orator specifically does *not* provide any additional votes when participating in the Highborn senatorial election.

These votes are the same as those wielded by priests in the appointment of a national Bourse seat such as the Vigilant Swan.

7.2 Leading a territory

In the days before the Empire, the exarchs were subject to the approval of the Assembly of the Virtuous to ensure that chapters were led by devout individuals. That power lapsed generations ago; now, only the senators come before the Assembly for ratification.

The Highborn Assembly selects senators by interrogation. Each chapter whose chapterhouse is in the contested territory may put forward a single candidate for consideration by the Assembly. Chapters are assumed to have sufficient wisdom to be able to select their most virtuous member. On the rare occasion where a chapter is unable to pick a single candidate, they forfeit their right to be considered during that election.

Candidates come before the Highborn Assembly where they are expected to answer questions designed to assess their moral rectitude. The Highborn egregore, as a representative of the collective will of the people, chairs these inquisitions. The Assembly does not exclusively select priests to high office, but it is clear that those who have priestly training have a considerable advantage in answering the moral dilemmas and philosophical questions put to them. After examining the candidates, each member of the Assembly who resides in the territory secretly votes to indicate which candidate they felt was least virtuous. Only members of the Assembly who have not voted in another Highborn senatorial election in the past year may participate in the vote. The candidate with the least votes against them is then declared the winner. If two or more candidates receive equal fewest votes, then all other candidates are eliminated and another round of voting takes place.

If only a single candidate is presented, there is no election; the candidate automatically becomes senator at the point it becomes clear there is no contest.

The senators for each Imperial territory are re-elected at specific equinoxes and solstices during the year. The senator for Reikos is elected at the Spring Equinox, the senator for Bastion is elected at the Summer Solstice, the senator for Casinea is elected at the Autumn Equinox, and the senator for Necropolis is elected at the Winter Solstice.

Ira, of Felix's Watch

7.2.1 Incumbent

The current Highborn senators are listed below - see the individual territory pages for a full election history for each position.

- Bastion - Merari Navigators of Virtue
- Casinea - Asael
- Necropolis - Kish of the Flame Beneath the Earth

- Reikos - Solomon

7.2.2 History

The way that the number of votes a given priest might wield was calculated has changed several times over the years. As a representative of the will of the Highborn, the egregore has been responsible for overseeing these methods. Following the aftershocks of the Yaelian schism, and the debates around foundationalism that followed, many of the people of Highguard began to question the methods used to determine the votes used in the appointment of the senators. In the end, the consensus was to get back to basics - that every priest's voice should be based on their congregation, not on whether they could afford politically-significant enchantments, or be subject to the vagaries of malicious rituals.

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8 Highguard economic interests

?The pursuit of wealth is the foundation of suffering.?

The Prosperous are not selfish; all that is worthwhile is shared with those who deserve it.

8.1 Overview

There is a deep-seated distrust of the pursuit of wealth for its own sake amongst the Highborn. Highguard is founded on the concept that only action can be virtuous, and their culture rewards assiduous effort and self-improvement. ?Wealth? by itself is a passive force; usury ? charging interest on a loan ? is considered despicable because the lender has no active role in what transpires.

In place of the moneylenders common elsewhere, the Highborn are proud of their benefactors. Often older merchants, benefactors make their wealth work for themselves and others. They try to encourage virtue by acting as patrons to other merchants. They may help a young trader get established, or participate in a risky but ambitious venture that has potential benefits beyond purely economic ones. Rather than lending money and charging interest, benefactors invest in enterprises and in individuals, sharing the risk ? and sharing the profits.

Gambling on games of chance is as dubious as usury, since there is no action the participants can take to improve their chances of winning other than to cheat. That said, the Highborn love to wager on contests of skill, whether they are participating or not. Professional book-keepers collect wagers and distribute winnings, taking a small percentage for their service; some specialise in organising contests and competitions specifically to encourage wagering.

Permanence is a civic virtue in Highguard and there is no doubt that the nation produces the best architects and masons in the Empire. The quarries of Casinea produce a breathtakingly beautiful marble that absorbs heat when it is warm and exudes it when cold, making it the ideal building material. Other crafts include the creation of decorative mosaics and fabrics with complex geometric patterns. The Highborn also produce fine quality paper and coloured inks, used extensively to record the histories and archives of the nation.

8.2 Benefactors' Council

- **The Council of Benefactors can direct up to twelve wains a season to any commission**
- **The donations are currently going to the Grand Inspiration of the Way,**
- **The Council of Benefactors meets at 11:00 on Saturday and Sunday of the summit**

Since the death of Britta, the Council of Benefactors has played an important role in the nation, pooling the resources of some of the most wealthy Highborn citizens and providing backing to crucial projects that might otherwise have gone without. The donations were initially arranged to [[provide white granite for the Grand Inspiration of the Way. However, they were Inspired by Emperor Vesna's exemplary Vigilance and Ambition and now the wealthy Highborn who support the decisions of the Council are prepared to provide whatever support is needed, donating up to twelve wains to any single commission identified by the Council of Benefactors each season.

There are two formal meetings of the Benefactors' Council at each summit, at 11:00 on Saturday and Sunday morning. They are likely to be held in the main tent of the Shattered Tower. If the Council want to change where their nation's donations are going, then they must ensure that their egregore is present when they make the decision. The egregore will make a note of the decision and pass word on to the other benefactors in the nation. If there is some debate over the decision, then the egregore will expect a decision to be taken by a simple majority vote of those present who are well known for their role as benefactors. The egregore will check the Highborn records if there is any doubt about a citizen's status.

Any character with the benefactor archetype may vote on the decision. Whichever commission is chosen, the people of Highguard will donate twelve wains towards it, each season, until it is complete. They will continue to support that commission until the Council of Benefactors nominates a new commission to receive the support of the nation.

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9 Highguard military concerns

9.1 Overview

Guardians, cataphracts, and unconquered fight together to protect their nation, and to safeguard human destiny.
Highguard has a military heritage of which it is justly proud. Most Highborn serve with one of the three Highborn armies as part of their ?coming-of-age?. This service is considered necessary to the formation of Highborn character and maintains the connection between the people of today and their warrior ancestry. Most skills can be put to use in a military context, although those serving as medics, quartermasters and ancillary troops do not earn as much respect as their more warlike colleagues.

9.2 Guardians

Most Highborn return to their chapter after leaving the army. The most skilled soldiers become part of the elite guards that protect the chapter against barbarians and other threats. These warriors, called guardians, train daily with their comrades learning to fight as a unit in close formation. Chapters outfit their guardians with weapons and armour and most provide a surcoat adorned with the chapter?s heraldic device, usually in black and white or similarly contrasting colours. Some groups of guardians choose to specialise, training to become cataphracts or unconquered, in line with the oldest martial traditions of the Highborn.

9.3 Cataphracts

In the earliest days of Highguard, the cataphracts rode into battle on mighty war horses, devastating their enemies with shield and lance. Today the horses are gone, but the cataphracts remain, embodying a warrior tradition that embraces the highest virtues of the Imperial Faith. Heavily armoured, they serve as living standards, encouraging and supporting those who fight alongside them with their commitment to achieving victory. The best of them burn with fervour, filling them with righteous fury when they face the enemies of the Empire in close combat. Likewise, when an army must fall back, it is the cataphracts who guard the retreat.

9.4 Unconquered

The counterpart to the cataphracts are the unconquered. These skilled warriors undertake scouting missions, employ sabotage and terror as weapons to weaken their foes, and seek out specific targets on a battlefield. In contrast to the archers and skirmishers of many other nations, the unconquered favour medium armour and short bows, and are not shy about engaging in close combat with hand weapons if the tides of battle make retreat-and-fire an unappealing option.

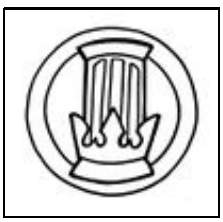
The unconquered are used to operating with a high level of autonomy, often behind enemy lines or in unknown territory. Despite this independence, the best of them know that they operate as one part of a larger plan, that their duty is to ensure that the forces they accompany achieve victory. Unconquered who arrogantly assume they can win the day all by themselves generally meet unpleasant ends.

9.5 The Vigilant War

Highborn generals and soldiers alike embrace the concept of a vigilant war. This principle teaches that strong defences and preemptive strikes are the most effective way to curtail an enemy?s ability to be an aggressor, minimising the impact on civilians, and making it the most practical and moral solution to the matter of war. On the battlefield their troops work together to utterly overwhelm their enemies as quickly as possible, cataphracts driving them from the field while the unconquered deny them any chance to regroup and counter-attack.

9.6 Imperial Armies

Highguard fields four armies: the *Granite Pillar*, the *Seventh Wave*, the *Valiant Pegasus*, and the recently raised *Pilgrim's Defiance*.



9.6.1 The Granite Pillar

The guardians of the Granite Pillar are usually arrayed in heavy armour with shield and sword, supported by cataphracts and martially inclined magisters. They practice tactics designed to emphasise their discipline, and are always accompanied by military chaplains who dedicate themselves to supporting and blessing the soldiers, helping them to remain focused on the battlefield and highlighting the virtues of Loyalty, Courage and Pride.

The first Highborn general leads the Granite Pillar army, and is appointed (or re-appointed) at the Summer Solstice each year.

9.6.2 The Seventh Wave

While the core of the Seventh Wave is heavily armoured guardians, it is supported by a number of unconquered, scouts, skirmishers and magicians. The army makes great use of mixed-arms tactics, supporting shield-and-sword with bow, or bow with polearm and pike. They are adept scouts, capable of quickly sizing up their enemies and giving clear reports on all elements of the military campaigns in which they are involved. Shortly before the Summer Solstice 383YE, the Seventh Wave became a large army.

The second Highborn general leads the Seventh Wave, and is appointed (or re-appointed) at the Autumn Equinox each year.

9.6.3 The Valiant Pegasus

The Valiant Pegasus has served for almost a decade; mustering was completed in 378YE. Initially, the force incorporated some of the finest Highborn siege architects and was well prepared both to take advantage of Imperial fortifications and bring down barbarian strongholds. Following the opportunity offered by the celebration of Empress Lisabetta, the Valiant Pegasus refocused its efforts to the preservation of life on the battlefield, supported by many apothecaries. As a new army, it has yet to establish a particular identity or reputation for itself.

The third Highborn general leads the Valiant Pegasus, and is appointed (or re-appointed) at the Spring Equinox each year.

9.6.4 The Pilgrim's Defiance

The Pilgrim's Defiance were raised during the Spring Equinox 387YE. Raised from the grey pilgrims who had returned to Highguard following the call of the Highborn Assembly, the mustering of the army was quickened by the assigning of regalia to the generals of Highguard. Mustering completed in just six months, shortly before the Autumn Equinox 387YE. The army was named for the return of the grey pilgrims, and endorsed the army's focus on devotion to virtue.

The fourth Highborn general leads the Pilgrim's Defiance, and is appointed (or re-appointed) at the Winter Solstice each year.

?We are the thunder on the earth, we are the steel tide that drowns the foe.?

9.6.5 The Thundering Tide (Defunct)

The venerable Thundering Tide was composed of the descendants of the old Highborn light cavalry units. They adapted their mounted tactics as best they could, becoming experts in manoeuvrable, fluid tactics designed to outflank their opponents. Many soldiers of the Thundering Tide were trained to fight with pole-arms - an echo of the lances they once used to ride down the enemies of Highguard.

The army was disbanded by Empress Mariika as part of the sweeping changes she made in pursuit of saving the Empire from bankruptcy. The last general of the Thundering Tide, Abishai of Judah's Evasion, took his own life after. Many of the unconquered and cataphracts that used to belong to this army would go on to join the Seventh Wave.

9.7 Army Orders

- **Highborn armies can take the *Protect the Innocent* order when attacking**

Following the end of the final crusade, the Highborn Assembly embraced the opportunity to protect the innocent.

Protect the Innocent

- **Casualties inflicted by this army are reduced by a tenth**
- **The ability of this army to capture territory is reduced by a tenth**
- **Any orders to an allied army in the same territory that increase casualties are changed to balanced attack**
- **The presence of an army fighting to protect the innocent in a territory is always obvious to other armies in the same territory**

Any Highborn army instructed to protect the innocent will still push forward, but they will do so cautiously and with a focus to ensure that innocent bystanders are not to be harmed. The general's orders will identify who the army is seeking to protect, but provided they are clear, then the force will do everything it can to save the lives of those the general ordered spared - even if that means stopping an allied Imperial army from attacking. This will inflame tensions between the two forces, but they will not come into armed conflict. Imperial discipline will be sufficient to prevent one Imperial soldier cutting down another - just.

Progress will be slow, because of the sacrifice needed to ensure that the innocent on all sides are protected. The army and their allies will kill less of the enemy, simply because of the abundant caution shown by the soldiers. Any allied force in the same territory that submits the following orders Merciless Onslaught, Whatever it Takes, Triumphant Charge, Make them Pay, Cut Them Down, Poison Thorns, Fire in the Blood or any similar order that increases casualties inflicted will be replaced with a balanced attack.

Trying to protect the innocent does not prevent *enemy* forces from issuing orders to spread bloodshed and mayhem, but it will help to mitigate some of the worst effects.

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10 Highguard religious beliefs

?Virtue is contagious; so is vice.?

The Highborn know it is vital to preserve the Imperial Faith.

10.1 Overview

Bastion is the birthplace of the Way of Virtue and the Imperial Synod was founded here. In the days before the Empire was founded, chapters like the Winds of Virtue sought to take the Way to other nations. This in turn led many pilgrims to travel to Highguard seeking to experience their past lives. During the early decades of the Empire a constant influx of visitors came to the great city, many of whom engaged in discussion with the Highborn priests and each other before carrying the seeds of the Way of Virtue back to their own nations.

Highborn priests are dedicated to the Way of Virtue, and in ensuring that it does not become corrupted by outside forces. Through virtue, the Empress was able to forge a union of the disparate human nations. It is that same virtue that keeps the Empire strong to this day. Highborn priests at home, in the Synod and throughout the Empire continue to preach the Orthodox Imperial Creed, ever vigilant for heresy that might undermine it.

The Highborn National assembly is the oldest gathering of priests dedicated to the Way in the Empire. Founded shortly after the Highborn civil war, the assembly serves as the model for the gatherings of priests in other nations to this day. The assembly is supported by the Speaker of the Highborn Assembly, an Imperial title charged with chairing the meetings of the National assembly, encouraging the priests of Highguard to vote on judgements of the Synod and express the will of their congregations, organising the Day of the Dead memorial, and serving as custodian of the Basilica of Seven Doors.

10.1.1 Wayfarers

Highborn priests know that the strength of the Empire is intimately bound to the Imperial Faith. This has led to the tradition of the wayfarers - priests who act like missionaries, travelling the Empire to encourage the people to actively embrace not only the Imperial faith but the ideals of the Empire itself. They often make a close study of the people they move amongst, reminding them of their own heroes and virtuous exemplars.

Wayfarers tend to wear a wide sash of braided black and white cloth as a symbol of their office. It is usually worn over a traditional Highborn robe with a heavy cowl or veil. They try to help people make up their own minds and come to their own conclusions, through careful questioning and

encouragement to examine motivations, actions and beliefs.

10.1.2 Grey Pilgrims

Grey pilgrim is the name adopted by the devout Highborn who over the course of 381YE chose to join the Navarr walking the trods. Spurred to action by claims that the vallorn traps the souls of those who fall under its influence, they seek to free those souls that have been caught, unable to move on to the Labyrinth or cross the Abyss. As the nascent pilgrimage was beginning the Highborn seized the opportunity to encourage the pilgrims to also spread The Way across the Empire. By rooting out heresy and blasphemy as they walked the lands; and by proselytising the faith to foreigners they can save more souls than just those trapped by the vallorn. The desperate need to weaken the vallorn by walking the trods defines the physical nature of the pilgrimage, but it has become a spiritual crusade, aiming to renew the Way throughout the Empire.

Highborn priests are ever vigilant for heresy that might undermine the Way of Virtue.

10.1.3 The Inquisition

Highborn history teaches the dangers inherent in the senate system. When the Patrician Council turned from serving the good of the nation and became self-serving, it nearly destroyed Highguard. Ever mindful of the dangers, Highborn priests are vigilant for treason, hypocrisy and corruption. They watch the Imperial Senate for warning signs that it has become corrupted, and are prepared to take action to ensure it remains the servant of the Empire and not its master. They also look closely at outside influences ? foreigners, eternals, so-called ?free thinkers? and the like.

The Highborn know how important it is to preserve the purity of the Imperial faith, and the Empire as a whole. Highborn priests ensure that the Imperial Synod retains the powers of Inquisition and Revocation, and actively use those powers to ensure the Empire thrives. Priests who embrace an inquisitorial role often use the image of the Basilisk Awake ? a lizard with terrible red eyes that legend says can strike the unworthy dead with its piercing gaze.

The Synod has occasionally debated requesting the Senate authorise the formalisation of an official Imperial Inquisition, to give it additional binding powers. Support for this is mixed; some priests argue that enhanced powers would make the Inquisition more effective, others argue that the duty of vigilance and inquisition is one that all priests should exercise - that it should not be restricted to members of a separate body. All attempts to create a formal body have foundered in the past - instead there have been countless unofficial groups, often acting in secret, who have dedicated themselves to the spirit of Inquisition, looking to root out heresy and those guilty of less-than-virtuous behaviour.

Ceremonies such as the Day of the Dead procession reinforce the idea that the living have a responsibility to the departed.

10.1.4 Stewards of the Dead

Some priests become stewards of the dead. Dedicated to recording the deeds of heroes of the Empire, they maintain the tombs and mausoleums of the Necropolis. Their calling means they do more than simply tend graves ? they collect stories and histories of the dead, and use these stories as a method to encourage and inspire the living. They officiate at funerals in Highguard, generally an entombment of the body, but regardless of whether mortal remains are involved every Highborn wants their name inscribed on a monument in the Necropolis.

By tradition, every dead emperor and empress should be entombed in the Necropolis, and the stewards take this responsibility very seriously. They also ?collect? the bodies of heroes of other nations, and offer to inter them in the Necropolis which serves as a reminder of the deeds of heroes.

It is also the role of the stewards to deal with the excursions of dead spirits. Usually this takes the form of a shade or spirit with pressing business that reaches out towards its living relatives in a terrifying manner. The stewards are charged with interceding and laying the spirit to rest. At the same time they work with the magisters to ensure that the occasional ambulatory corpses that appear in the necropolis are dealt with respectfully but effectively.

The stewards generally dress in simple robes in the style of whichever chapter they belong to. They often carry a book to record the deeds of heroes, and at festivals recite tales to bring to life the memory of those who have gone before. They ring bells and speak to the accompaniment of wind-chimes, allowing the breath of the dead to add their own contribution to the tales of their deeds.

Stewards of the Dead are often tasked with laying unquiet spirits to rest.

10.2 Peerless Kinship

Highguard stands ready to aid its Imperial siblings.

- **The Highborn Assembly can use a statement of principle to invoke their peerless kinship with another nation in the Empire**
- **The Assembly can't select the same nation two seasons running**

The Highborn Assembly remain keen to work with their fellow nations, looking for ways they might express their peerless kinship to identify an opportunity to support the nation. As a result, for the foreseeable future, the Highborn Assembly can use a successful judgement to invoke their peerless kinship with another nation. The Assembly can choose any nation to help, provided they don't choose the same nation two seasons running. Asking Highguard to find ways to help a fellow nation will be bound to fail if they had already identified all the ways they could help the season before.

Where possible, Highborn citizens will talk to the nation to find out what help would be most welcome. The statement of principle that the Assembly passes may try to identify a specific problem that they think is most urgent or they could guide that conversation by indicating a single statement of principle passed that season or last by the peer nation's Assembly. Provided that statement *passed* the Assembly - indicating it had the support of the people of that nation, then attempts to provide peerless kinship would, where possible, focus on the issue identified in the statement.

This ability will remain available for the foreseeable future, at least until anything drastically changes the current situation. If two or more judgements

invoking peerless kinship both pass the Assembly, the one judgement with the highest margin will take effect.

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11 Highguard magical traditions

Highborn magic is often worked while veiled and cowled.
Priests who work to master magic are called magisters in Highguard. The early magisters studied methods of communicating with the dead and uncovering the secrets of the past. The Highborn Magisters strive to be the foremost masters of Winter magic in the Empire. Most operate out of hostels based in the Necropolis, where the silence and contemplative atmosphere of the city of the dead lends itself perfectly to measured and contemplative study.

While there is no doubt they possess powerful magic, the magisters are still considered to be priests. They study virtue alongside magic, and many work hard to try and inspire virtuous behaviour in wizards of other nations ? or an understanding of magic in other priests.

Magisters tend to be cautious of the Eternals, as they are not only powerful, but they clearly seek to use that power to influence humanity. The Highborn believe that as masters of their own destiny, humans should seek to outwit Eternals wherever possible, seizing opportunities to take their strength and harness it in service to the Empire. Eternals are clearly monstrous and inhuman. It is a source of continual frustration to the magisters that other wizards fail to recognise this, no matter how seriously the magisters try to educate them in their dealings with other realms. The magisters treat most often, and most comfortably, with the Eternals of Winter, who they see as more open and honest, as they do not try to deny or conceal their evil nature. The Eternals of the other realms are equally dangerous, but present a pleasing and deceptive face, which many accept without scrutiny.

The magical tradition of Highguard combines movement and sound. The slow beating of drums, the sonorous chime of bells and the recitation of ceremonial passages form the basis of their ritual magic, often accompanied by stylised and graceful gestures.

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12 Highguard territories

12.1 Overview

Highguard dominates the southern Empire. Bastion is the heart of their nation, a civilised and well-settled land of wide plains dotted with well-tended woodlands. Wherever they go, the Highborn bring civilisation - even the sparsely populated forests and fields of Necropolis are liberally scattered with chapterhouses that protect the people from threats internal and external alike. Their cities lie along the length of the river Couros; from the Necropolis at the river?s mouth, past the rich and fertile fields and plains to the holy city of Bastion, and then up past High Chalcis to the very eaves of the Great Forest of Peytaht.

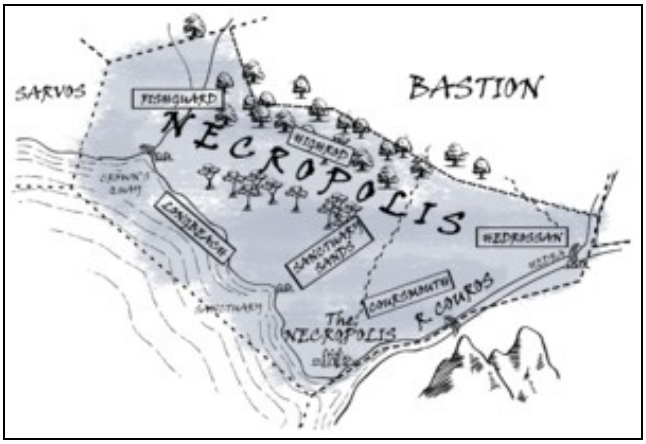
12.2 Bastion

Bastion presents the calm, serene visage of the Highborn to the world. After the civil war, the White City was built on the banks of the Couros as the heart of a reborn nation.Bastion is also seen as the heart of the Way; followers all over the world look to it for guidance and it is a place of pilgrimage for the faithful. Faith, politics, and the manifest destiny of the Highborn are all bound up in the fabric of Bastion.

During the founding of the Empire, Bastion very nearly became the "official" capital of the Empire in 3YE; at the last minute the Senate decided to hold their quarterly gatherings in Anvil instead. Outside its walls, beautiful rolling plains are dotted with woodlands and carefully maintained parks. When Reikos fell to the Druj, Bastion suddenly found itself on the front lines. Many of the chapterhouses in the northern regions in particular still have a strong military aspect, although now that Reikos has been liberated this may change.

12.3 Casinea

In Highguard's northwest, Casinea is an old and wealthy territory. It is the site of the town of Anvil, the political heart of the Empire. In the past Casinea was threatened by enemies both human and otherwise - only with the foundation of the Empire was peace assured. That peace is fragile, however - the vallorn of neighbouring Brocéliande stirs in its slumber, and the recent occupation of Reikos by the Druj sent a stark message of the dangers of complacency. The wealth of Casinea lies in its hills and their rich mines and quarries, and in the timber and rare materials found in its western forests.



12.4 Necropolis

The first Highborn settled along the coast of the Bay of Catazar here, driving out the orcs to conquer the territory. They called the territory Pharos, and built a great city here to serve as their capital. That city burnt to the ground during the civil war, and was then rebuilt as a memorial to all that had been lost. Today, the great cemetery holds the mortal remains of some of the greatest Imperial citizens who ever lived - the heroes and Thrones who built the Empire and continue to defend it.

Necropolis is a land of sorrow, first and foremost. Poets wax lyrical about the sad grandeur of the landscape, but even the least sensitive sometimes have to suppress a shiver at the realisation of their own mortality. Yet the sorrow of Necropolis is tempered with the knowledge that all things pass - that sorrows teach valuable lessons, and that loss is part of life. Even the most bustling chapterhouse in Necropolis will contain some memento mori, some little touch that is ignored consciously but that subconsciously reminds them every day that people die.

12.5 Reikos

This formerly peaceful stretch of the Couros river was once known for its pleasant gardens, gentle parks, and beautiful countryside. It became wealthy thanks to the bounty of stone and wood from the Vigilant Swan and the Great Forest; herbs from the Gardens of High Chalcis; trade with Therunin and Morrow; and from the beauty that made it a favourite place for Imperial citizens from across the Empire to convalesce after illness, or to spend time away for the cares of everyday life. Then the Druj came, and after them the merciless rejuvenating power of the eternal Llofir, and the face of Reikos was changed perhaps forever.

Today Reikos is in flux. The chapters that fled are returning, those that weathered the storm are rebuilding. The parks and gardens are gone, overwritten with new forest or drowned in blood during the war and subsequent liberation. A malign miasma still clings to the hidden places where the Druj performed their abominable rites, while the desperate spirits of those who fell to their blades continue to haunt the living. Perhaps the beauty of Reikos

may be restored, tempered by the knowledge of how fragile it is. Perhaps the new Reikos will be a darker place forged in bitterness and loss.

12.6 Highborn Territories in Play

Every Highborn chapter is located in a single territory. During character creation, you select your home territory - the territory where your personal resource is located - and under normal circumstances this would be the territory where your chapter is based.

Highguard elections for its senators are based on territory. The senator for each territory is decided by the Highborn of the territory with a congregation.

You don't need to declare which region you live in, but it's often useful for your group to define the location of your chapterhouse for purposes of plot, and for making the game world feel more real. You might live in or near one of the established settlements, but your chapterhouse could be built anywhere in the territory - the named villages and towns are by no means the only settlements in Highguard! Your character background, or your group background, can include a few details about your home if you like, and many chapterhouses come with their own small settlement that looks to them for protection and guidance.

Each of the four territories has certain themes, which are often used as a starting point when plot writers create plot. Furthermore, certain personal resources lend themselves to certain territories better than others. These are suggestions, however, rather than hard and fast rules. In particular, the personal resources of congregation and military unit are appropriate to any of the four Highborn territories - although it's still a good idea to flavour your resource to reflect the individual character of your home territory.

12.6.1 Being from Bastion

Bastion is the heart of Highguard, and has themes of **faith** and **destiny**. The most important settlement is without doubt the city that shares its name with the territory - the White City of Bastion. There is something of an echo of the real-world Vatican about the White City - it is the centre of a worldwide faith after all. It's also a politically charged place - the Highborn see themselves as the shepherds of human destiny, but not everyone agrees as to where that destiny might lead.

Outside the city, this is a very civilised territory. It is widely settled, and even its woodlands tend to be reasonably safe. Bastion is not much troubled by bandits or monsters, for example. The key conflicts in Bastion are likely to come through disagreements with fellow Highborn, or with people of other nations who question the assumption that Highguard should guide the future of the Empire.

Bastion is a good place to be from if you intend to be involved in the politics of Highguard, regardless of your personal resource. The White City is full of priests, and makes an excellent place to maintain a congregation, while the chapters along the border with Reikos have had a lot of recent experience fighting the Druj and might lend themselves to an interesting background for a military unit. Farms and businesses alike make sense here, and the carefully cultivated woodlands would be an excellent site for a forest resource.

12.6.2 Being from Casinea

Casinea has themes of **tradition** and the **vigilance** required to protect those traditions. The most important settlement in Casinea is without doubt Anvil - the political heart of the entire Empire - which contributes to the undercurrents of conflict and suspicion in the territory. It is easy for visitors to forget that Anvil is by no means a truly Highborn settlement - and several of the chapters here look askance at the unvirtuous behaviour that takes place there during the seasonal Summits. There are deep divisions beneath the surface of Casinea - between the prosperous chapters of the east and the insular chapters of the west, as well as between the traditional, insular chapters and those who embrace the benefits of being part of the larger Empire. Historically, Casinea is where the Highborn fought other humans - the people of Dawn, the Navarr, even the Marchers on occasion.

Casinea is a good choice for chapters that are interested in sources of raw materials - especially mines but also forests. This is also a territory with a long history of trading with other nations. With the proximity of the League, the regular influx of traders and travellers heading to Anvil, and the completion of the Blood Red Roads it makes an excellent choice for a character or chapter interested in business.

12.6.3 Being from Necropolis

Necropolis has themes of **sorrow** and also **mystery**. The Necropolis itself is the heart of the territory, and a reminder of the dangers of a lack of Vigilance can lead to. After all, the Necropolis was once Pharos - the capital of the Highborn - until it was destroyed by a civil war that grew out of corruption, indolence, and arrogance. The barriers between the living and the dead are thin here, and this means that of all the Highborn territories it is perhaps the most magical in nature. It's also where the Highborn first settled, and is steeped in history - a character who wants to explore the complex relationship between Highborn history and truth could find an appropriate home here.

The territory is sparsely settled, and has a slightly exaggerated reputation for being full of ghosts. The Necropolis itself is strongly associated with the

study of Winter magic, and this is an excellent territory for a chapter that is interested in magic to be based. A magister will be right at home here, and there is plenty of space to maintain mana sites. As with Bastion it is also a good choice for a congregation. In the case of Necropolis, however, the priests have a tendency to be more practical than political in nature - their congregations are more important for allowing them access to the liao they need to practice their ceremonies than for the votes they provide in the Synod.

12.6.4 Being from Reikos

Reikos is about **loss** and **new beginnings**. The largest remaining settlement in Reikos is High Chalcis, but it is a shadow of its former self. For fourteen years, it was occupied by the Druj orcs - orcs known for their cruelty. The people were mercilessly dominated, enslaved, forced to work until they dropped, and slaughtered if they showed the slightest sign of rebellion. Hundreds were killed as an example, or a threat, or on a whim. The territory itself was ravaged from one end to another, ruined, and rebuilt in as a corrupt mirror of what it had once been. After the liberation, the signs of the occupation were washed away by the tide of Llofir's magic, but the scars on the souls and memories of those who experienced them first hand will not be healed so easily.

Without a doubt, Reikos is the best for a chapter or individual interested in herbs and herb gardens. The presence of the Gardens of High Chalcis gives an immediate benefit to anyone who maintains a herb garden. Thematically Reikos was not only a place of healing but was occupied by the Druj - experts in herb lore. it is also a particularly good fit for a martial chapter - the double threats of the Forest of Peytaht and the vallorn of Brocéliande are both good reasons for the captains of military units to take an interest in Reikos.

12.7 Further Reading

Core Brief

- Introduction
- The people
- Culture and customs
- Look and feel
- Hearth magic

Additional Information

- History
- Leadership
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- Religious beliefs
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13 Highguard children

The children of Highguard are heirs to the nation's great heritage.

In Highguard every child is considered a precious blessing.

Highguard is not a populous nation and every child is considered a precious blessing. Although children are forbidden by Imperial law to use liao before they come of age, they are expected to study and embody the virtues from a young age. As heirs to the great heritage of the Highborn, children are encouraged to push themselves to live up to the heroes of the past.

Children are encouraged to question what they see and experience, especially where the Virtues are concerned. They are encouraged to talk about the things they have seen with their parents, especially the actions of others which they could not see the Virtue in. This allows them to gain a better understanding of the Virtues by asking their parents to explain how they apply in everyday life, as well as helping their parents to be vigilant against any corruption in their children's lives.

Children who have a solid grounding in the Way are often given a purple ribbon or seven pointed star by the priests, so that they can help other children learn about the Virtues.

13.1 Things every child should know

- **Know the Seven Virtues.** Try to be as virtuous as possible and inspire the same in those around you.
- **Learn about the Paragons and Exemplars.** Study their lives and follow their example, you may yet become one!
- **Be vigilant!** Look for signs of corruption and report them to a trusted adult, so that they can take appropriate action.
- **Practice makes perfect.** Look for opportunities to perfect your arguments by trying them out on people, challenge your friends to races or competitions, never pass up the chance to test yourself and hone your skills.
- **If you don?t understand something, ask.** It?s the only way you?ll learn. It?s an adult?s job to be able to explain things.

From a young age, Highborn are expected to study the virtues, and to embody them in all things.

13.2 Further Reading

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14 Highguard music

Choristers of Cantiarch's Hold.

14.1 The Music of Highguard

14.1.1 Style summary

Highguard's music draws its inspiration from Western church choral music, plainsong and shapenote music (also known as Sacred Harp). Of these, the last probably best exemplifies the musical style - Highguard music is robust and enthusiastic, and accessible to all levels of talent. They enjoy rich harmonies and proudly devotional texts, although amongst themselves a wicked sense of humour occasionally emerges in some soldiers' songs and there are also some surprisingly tender lullabies.

14.1.2 Commonly known songs

- Virtues Anthem - usually led by one singer with everyone joining in the refrain
- Circle March - very easy repeating song
- Hymn to Vigilance - usually led by one singer with everyone joining in the refrain

Popular with all strata of Highguard society, these three songs are heard in chapters, the necropolis, and the fields. It is when the army marches to war with its battle choir, however, that the full majesty of Highguard music is best displayed.

Highguard's music is robust and enthusiastic, accessible to all levels of talent.

14.1.2.1 A musical tradition

The Highguard Battle Choirs are a great imperial tradition - no nation marches to battle with the same holy fervour in their singing. Usually accompanied by a single drumbeat, the sound of the Highguard army in full voice is an awe-inspiring and intimidating sound. Often a small number of more confident singers lead the chant in a call-and-response pattern. At least in this context the choirsters are warriors first and musicians second - the singers need not be particularly talented, as it is holy fervour and their indomitable will that characterises the battle choir.

14.1.2.2 One for the kids

- Circle March - very easy repeating song

14.1.2.3 Songs about notable people and entities in Highguard

- Enoch and Levi - romantic ballad, Highguard style...
- Pride of the Highborn - anthem of Adina's Charge
- Silent Tide- anthem of the Chapter of the same name.
- Anthem of Cantiarch's Hold
- Vigilance Guide Our Faithful Watch -A song commemorating the founder of Felix's Watch.

14.1.3 Further examples

14.1.3.1 Songs

- For Once I Was A Young Man - cautionary tale about the virtuous life
- The Ritual for the Departed - haunting funerary song
- Gone - another song for partings and funerals
- Virtues Anthem - shapenote song with chorus
- The Navigators - shapenote song, medium
- Circle March - very easy repeating song
- Hymn to Vigilance - medium call and response plainsong
- Idumea - medium shapenote song about reincarnation
- O Oriens - easy plainsong
- Virtue Never Falter - rousing song with chorus, also popular in the Brass Coast

- Least of my Kind - stirring battle song
- Farewell Farewell - rousing funeral song from Highguard but also popular in the Brass Coast due to boat references
- Highguard Go To War - Battle anthem
- All Come Listen - a well known, simple song that can be sung as a round
- The Waystone Anthem - a song celebrating Virtue and The Way
- The Solace of Bells - a choral piece of remembrance; written for the Day of the Dead

14.1.3.2 Instrumentation

- Highborn musical traditions favour the flute and other wind instruments. On days when the wind is high, a chapterhouse resounds with the song of wind chimes, aeolian harps and bells.
- Trumpets and bugles are often blown before a battlefield charge.

14.1.3.3 Other performance traditions

14.1.4 How to adapt your repertoire

- If singing in harmony, try to sing in consecutive 4ths or 5ths. This gives a fantastic 'plainchanty' sound perfect for Highguard. An example is Circle March (arranged by Katy Cooper) which starts in unison then goes into 4ths before full harmony.
- Many songs can be made to sound plainchanty by just pulling the rhythm all over the place. Have a listen to some church psalms and simply substitute your own lyrics.

14.1.5 Our sources

Shape note/Sacred Harp singings (Northern or Southern Harmony), any plainchant choir,

Here is a youtube playlist of appropriate or inspiring music.

14.2 Further Reading

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15 Category:Archetype

15.1 The Brass Coast

Dhomiro	A dhomiro is a member of a Freeborn family who is chosen by the family to be their representative to the wider world; sometimes as a leader, sometimes as an emissary.
Kohan	Kohan are groups of volunteer and outcast warriors-without-family, who traditionally pledge loyalty to a group of hakima.
Sutannir	Sutannir perform inspiring religious ceremonies for the Freeborn, and encourage people to exemplify and celebrate Virtue.
Hakima	Hakima are highly-organised groups of magic-users whose loyalty is to the nation, not their family. They are taken to be wise.
Corsair	Freeborn corsairs are traders and privateers who deal with - and raid - barbarian shipping in the Bay of Catazar.
Scrivener	Scriveners are Freeborn contract-writers who help traders frame the terms of their deals, and then decorate them with artwork and calligraphy.

15.1.1 Dawn

Earl	The Earl of a Dawnish Noble House is the House's leader, who leads the House in all its great achievements and who sets its conditions of membership.
Knight-errant	Knights-Errant are engaged in their Test of Mettle. Still technically yeofolk they are expected - and are questing - to prove themselves glorious.
Questing knight	Questing Knights are those Knights who have proved themselves worthy in their Test of Mettle and have chosen to keep on questing for ever-greater glory.
Troubadour	A Troubadour is a priest who learns all the stories of their Noble House, past and present, and tells them in poetry and song to inspire their people to greatness.
Witch	Witches are Dawnish magic-users. In noble houses, they fight alongside the House's warriors. Most others belong to Weaver Cabals, independent groups of ritual witches which accept both yeofolk and noble members.
Guiser	Itinerant entertainers who often combine magic with their performances and practice dramaturgy. They are often (sometimes justly) accused of being spies, tricksters and mountebanks as well as performers.
Enchanter	Some Earls who have studied magic choose the title "Earl-Enchanter" or simply "Enchanter". Most learn ritual magic to benefit their people; some build relationships with powerful Summer Eternals.
Seneschal	A Noble House's Seneschal is a trusted yeofolk who oversees its financial affairs, arranging deals and trades and keeping the House solvent.
Advocate	Dawnish Advocates are yeofolk politicians who navigate the murky waters of Senate politics for their noble masters.
Retainer	A yeofolk Retainer is a Dawnish Noble's most trusted attendant, who works closely with a particular Noble, or sometimes for the whole House.

15.1.2 Highguard

Exarch	The Exarch, or Exarchs, are those who are appointed by a Highguard Chapter as their leader(s) as determined by the Chapter's creed, or by embodying its principles.
Guardian	Guardians form the core of Highborn military, taking on a range of roles in defence of their Chapters, and in prosecuting vigilant warfare.
Unconquered	The Unconquered are Highguard's elite guerrilla troops. They are prone to using ruthless tactics, even operating behind enemy lines, to destroy the enemy's capacity to make war.
Cataphract	Cataphracts are Highguard's elite heavy warriors, who once rode horses into battle but who, in modern times, represent a resolute and unbreakable wall of steel.
Wayfarer	Wayfarers are Highborn priests with a long-standing tradition of teaching the truth of The Way to the ignorant, and seeking out Exemplars and Paragons born in other lands.
Inquisitor	Highborn Inquisitors are zealous defenders of The Way from those that would threaten it, whether mortal or supernatural.
Steward of the Dead	Stewards of the Dead dedicate their lives to preserving the legacies of the worthy. This includes the interring of remains as well as the preservation of legacies and tales.
Magister	Magisters are the master magicians of Highguard, often with an affinity for Winter Magic. They shape magic using movement, sound and the chime of bells.
Benefactor	Benefactors are affluent Highborn merchants and tradesfolk who do not pursue wealth for its own sake, but who sponsor individuals, great works and endeavours.

Archivist	Archivists are a unique class of Highborn scholar dedicated to preserving the essence, or truth, of history, over and above accounts and evidence that may seek to undermine that truth.
Grey pilgrim	Grey pilgrims are a recent phenomenon. They walk the trods in a crusade to free the souls believed to be trapped between life and death by the vallorn, but they also oppose heresy and idolatry, convert foreigners to the Way, and seek to guide the other human nations of the Empire toward enlightenment.

15.1.3 Imperial Orcs

Warlord	Legions chose their own commanders, called warlords, with individuals chosen for their ability to provide clear effective leadership in battle, according to the traditions of the individual legion
Pitfighter	Professional fighters of the Pits in which the Orcs hone their combat skills; trading on the reputation for skill and strength that they have built up in previous fights, pitfighters build their careers until their notoriety means that other orcs begin to seek them out and actively challenge them.
Shaman	Most orcs only experience communion with the ancestors when battle is upon them but a few individuals - called shamans - are able to hear the voices more frequently; they are almost incessantly surrounded by the constant input of ancestral advice much of it bearing a contradictory or even hostile message.
Preacher	Those Imperial Orcs who embrace the Way and become priests.
Warcaster	The highly physical traditions of the Wintermark runesmiths has appealed to some orcs who adopt a similar approach and become Warcasters.
Oathwright	Oathwrights believe that the bond between an item and a person affects them both, items may gain worth by being owned and bonded to the right person and the right item affects an individual?s hopes of becoming an ancestor.
Bonesetter	Usually trained apothecaries, physicks or both, Bonesetters are expected to attend to the physical needs of the legion, but their remit runs well beyond this.
Thief-taker	Working closely with Imperial Magistrates, Thief-takers earn their income by collecting bounties on criminals who have fled the law and more rarely by taking payments from private individuals looking to identify perpetrators of crimes.
Reaver	Soldiers of the Legions who become dedicated to raiding and mercenary work.

15.1.4 The League

Merchant Prince	A Merchant Prince is the head of a Guild, the tight-knit mercantile organisations which define the shape of League society.
Bravo	Bravos are the members of the mercenary Free Companies, as rough and rowdy off the battlefield as they are disciplined and professional on it, and immensely proud of their Companies.
Bishop	The Bishops of the League are its high priests, who provide Virtuous guidance to any who can afford it, and who compete using the size and influence of their congregations.
Troupe Magician	Troupes are bands of actors who often go masked while performing, and when performing ritual magic. To them, magic is a commodity like any other.
Mountebank	Mountebanks are street magicians whose tricks may be sleight of hand or genuine magic, many of whom skirt the edges of the law playing short-cons and rigging street games.
Cicisbeo	A Cicisbeo is an expensive professional paramour, the only exception to League culture's absolute prohibition on extramarital relations.

15.1.5 The Marches

Steward	A steward is the chosen head of a Marcher household. However a steward leads their household only with the consent of the other yeoman.
Beater	Beaters are a roaming informal police force, learning every part of the land, watching for thieves, vagrants and other ne?er-do-wells. Beaters are often instrumental in settling land disputes between neighbours and they have a vital role in the tradition of beating the bounds. Most are skilled foresters or hunters.
Yeoman	The yeoman is to many the archetypal inhabitant of the Marches. They are a hard people, who own their own land and are well accustomed to a long day working it. Military service is a proud tradition in the Marches, and the majority of yeomen are also soldiers.
Monk	Monks minister to the spiritual welfare of the folk around their monastery, largely ignoring household boundaries. They divide their time between study of the Imperial Faith and working the farmlands claimed by the monastery.
Friar	Friars work their own land and provide spiritual advice and counsel to their fellow yeomen in their household. Many also serve as scholars for their community, acting as a chirurgeon, and teaching letters and history to young children.
Landskeeper	

	A landskeeper is a figure from the Marches magical tradition, who supports the territories or the nation as a whole. Landskeepers can use a variety of methods, from hearth magics and good practical advice to rituals.
Mummer	Itinerant entertainers who combine theatrical performance with magic using the techniques of dramaturgy. They attend fairs, markets and other regular gatherings performing plays and feats of skill but are often greeted with suspicion and (sometimes unfairly) accused of being tricksters and mountebanks.
Alder	Alders are the appointed leaders of market towns, and are the rough equivalent of the yeomen. In most cases these are wealthy merchants of the town, but often they include prominent town folk such as a friar or blacksmith who lives in the village.
Smith	A skilled crafter who has used a lifetime's experience selling their wares to become a canny trader and experienced negotiator.
Thresher	A thresher dedicates their life to tracking down those who use magic for nefarious purposes and finding ways to punish them.

15.1.6 Navarr

Brand	Navarri who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, who work tirelessly to aid others without fee. They might be from any profession - Thorn, Vate, blacksmith, tanner, it doesn't matter. They are named for the brand burned into the skin on their left cheekbone.
Dreamspeaker	Philosophers, visionaries, and activists who aspire to make dreams into reality.
Thorn	A Navarri sworn to service in battle - usually, but not necessarily, a warrior. Always tattooed, they often wear warpaint into battle.
Guide	A Navarri who follows the path of the Virtues, and takes it upon themselves to ensure that members of the Empire have found the place in society that they are best suited to.
Broker	A Navarri who serves as an intermediary between a buyer and a seller, usually claiming some sort of payment from the deal.
Vate	The magical practitioners of Navarr. Often called upon to perform rituals in service of the nation and the Empire, they are the Navarri most trusted to meet with eternals or their heralds.
Vine	A Navarr who has dedicated themselves to healing the wounds caused by the vallorn.

15.1.7 Urizen

Arbiter	An arbiter is the elected leader of the spires, citadels, and temples of Urizen. They are often called on to resolve disputes within a community or to represent it to outsiders.
Architect	Architects are interested in economics and how money moves around and the influence it exerts on the world.
Illuminate	Illuminates use their understanding of the Net of the Heavens to perfect the world; focusing on building up the virtuous... and removing the unvirtuous from prominence.
Mage	Mages are magicians motivated by politics. Ambitious and potentially ruthless, a mage understands that all magic is inherently political.
Seer	Seers believe that perfect understanding is they key to unlocking the Net of the Heavens. They seek out opportunities to get the right information to the right people so they can make the right decisions.
Sentinel	Sentinels study the art of war with dedication and commitment that matches that of any magician.
Stargazer	Stargazers are scholars of magical lore who love magic in all its forms; they are the theoreticians and debaters who push knowledge to its limit.
Sword scholar	Sword scholars are warrior priests with a passionate commitment to reason and wisdom. They exhort others to test what they have learnt.
Torchbearer	Torchbearers are dedicated to ensuring that as many people as possible know the truth. They work to keep fellow citizens informed about current events and abhor falsehoods and secrets.
Questor	Questors consider the Way of Virtue to be an unfinished work and the Doctrines of the Faith as incomplete. Questors are radical priests who are willing to tear apart the Way in their quest for perfection.

15.1.8 Varushka

Boyar	A Varushkan Boyar is the hard heart of a Varushkan community, whose first duty is as a strong protector of their people. Second to that, they arbitrate and govern their vale in council with their Wise Ones.
Warden	The Warden brotherhoods are heroic warriors who employ magical protection along with their armour and weapons to hunt down the terrors of the Varushkan wilderness, and to uphold Imperial Law.
Schlacta	The Schlacta are Varushka's well-organised bands of soldiery, who provide defence to a place or an employer.
Wise One	Wise Ones are the true hearts of Varushkan communities. They are the thinkers who deal with those problems which cannot be dealt with by strength, and who look through the appearance of things to discover the threats lurking beneath.
Volhov	A Volhov is a Varushkan who studies magic, particularly warding magic (so necessary to Varushka's safety) and divination, to uncover threats before they grow too great to deal with. They often find it necessary to deal with Eternals, and sometimes even to pacify

	Varushka's deadly Sovereigns with rituals or bargains.
Cabalists	Cabals are teams of ritual magic users, who often act as individual groups, independent of their vales. Each Cabal is different from each other, but their magical might grants them considerable influence.
Storytellers	Varushkan Storytellers are the nation's ragged priests, often itinerant, around whom entire communities will gather to hear news, entertaining tales, and spiritual messages told well.
Stzena	The inheritors of a tradition of night sentries, Stzena are bands of musicians who perform at local events.
Wagon raider	Opportunists who seek their fortunes by launching forays into barbarian lands to grab whatever riches can be found.

15.1.9 Wintermark

Thane	The leader of a Hall in Wintermark, a Thane settles disputes that lie outside the law and provides civic and military leadership.
Banner-Bearer?	Warriors whose purpose is to raise the morale and fighting spirit of their companions. Banner-bearers often literally carry their warband's banner.
Stormcrow	The ragged priests of Wintermark, who act as guides, witnesses and confessors, and who provide spiritual and moral inspiration and guidance for the Winterfolk.
Runesmith	Artisans who specialise in the magic of the old runes of Wintermark, who create engraved weapons and armour, or scribe warding marks to protect people or places.
Icewalker	The cunning mages of the Suaq, who use their magical skills and their knowledge of the Ice as part of their hunting tradition.
Mediator	A Wintermark merchant who specialises in negotiating weregild between aggrieved parties.
Maggot	A scavenger, a looter on the battlefield; "Maggots" are seen as scum by most Winterfolk.
Mystic	Deeply spiritual Kallavesi who make predictions about the future and advise their fellows on the wisest course of action. Often a magician, but some do it with hearth magic and intellect.
Scop	The professional entertainers of Wintermark, Scops are known for their mastery of saga and song, and their skill with alliterative poetry. They are responsible for granting an adult name to a child coming to adulthood.
Grimnir	The battlefield doctors and healers of Wintermark, Grimnir swear an oath to stay clear of the front lines.

16 Highguard groups

This is a placeholder page for content that PD are actively working on.

16.1 Overview

There are many important chapters in Highguard. Despite the number, only a comparative handful are involved in the affairs of the Empire (that is, attend the seasonal summits at Anvil). Their influence can wax and wane, and involvement in Imperial affairs is not always a reflection of their prominence within the nation itself. This page presents in-character information about the groups that attend, or have attended, Anvil ? the kind of thing that someone who asked about them might uncover from talking to their peers. In each case, the information is provided by the players and edited before being put on the wiki.

The majority of groups listed here are made up of player-characters. You should not create a character who is part of a group, or has personal history with one, without first clearing it with the appropriate players. You should also check before including other players' groups in your background. The background team are unlikely to approve a background that significantly impacts or involves another player character group without their permission.

16.2 Chapters

16.2.1 Chapters of Bastion

16.2.1.1 Balthazar's Vineyard

Balthazar's Vineyard

- **Location:** The Elms
- **Colours:** Purple and gold
- **Virtues:** Prosperity
- **Exarch:** Ada of Balthazar?s Vineyard

Balthazar began his adult life as a poor merchant on the River Couros, trading in the wares of the common person. Though his existence was less-than-affluent, he saved enough to move away from the coast and buy a plot of land on the edge of the Elmwood Forests of Bastion. Trading in the shadows of the wealthy, he noticed that money rarely changed hands without a glass of wine at the table. Therefore, wishing to seek his fortune by providing what the rich desired, Balthazar used his land to plant a vineyard.

Balthazar thrived in his new setting, and it was not long before the affluent members of Highborn society were jovially referring to him as the 'Lord Vintner of Bastion'. Whilst it was rumoured that the outrageous bounty of his land was an upshot of contracts he signed with Autumn eternals, Balthazar?s customers cared little for such hearsay and continued to purchase his produce by the wagon load. At the end of his life, having no heir to which he might pass his fortune, Balthazar contacted his most trusted associates and instructed them to use his financial legacy to establish a chapter on his land that would continue his devotion to the virtue of Prosperity and benefit the Empire for generations to come.

Over the last eight decades, Balthazar?s Vineyard developed into a prominent chapter in Highguard, becoming famous for its alehouses, meaderies, and band of warrior-pilgrims known as ?The Blades of Balthazar?. Most notable among the chapter?s modern-day traits is the presence of many siblings born in Imperial nations other than Highguard. Seeing no division between those of different bloodlines or lineages, Balthazar?s Vineyard welcomes all into their ranks.

16.2.1.2 Emberclad

Emberclad

- **Location:** The Elms
- **Colours:** Black and red
- **Virtues:** Vigilance and Pride
- **Exarch:** Godfrey of the Emberclad

The Emberclad are an old chapter, renowned for their unyielding defence against Druj incursions. Over time, they dwindled to a handful of members until they were revitalised in 381YE.

They are dedicated to defending the Way, protecting the innocent, and guiding those who seek a path. They teach that Pride must be guarded with Vigilance and that certainty is the foundation of all Virtue. Their imposing black-stone chapterhouse, ?the Crucible?, stands close to the border with Reikos. Though severely dilapidated, its three towers remain, each housing a bell. Beneath the central tower, a flame burns, watched over in an unceasing armed vigil.

The Emberclad include inquisitors, archivists, and wayfarers, but few magisters. They try to offer guidance, shelter, and strength to those seeking certainty. Their strict approach to doctrine rejects compromise, and means they do everything in their power to root out corruption. The chapter's goals are clear: defend the Way, safeguard the innocent, and ensure those seeking a path have the strength to walk it with certainty.

16.2.1.3 Jachin's Legacy

Jachin's Legacy

- **Location:** Bastion, Bastion Rounds
- **Colours:** Maroon and black
- **Virtues:** Ambition
- **Exarch:**

Forged among the chaotic conflict of the reconquest of Reikos, Jachin's Legacy are a young chapter dedicated to Ambition and based in the White City of Bastion itself. They take in the unfortunate and ill-equipped and inspire them with the Ambition to go on to achieve greatness. This is the core tenet of the oath of Jachin's Legacy - to help others help themselves to achieve their Ambitions (although naturally as pilgrims themselves they each have their own Ambitions to pursue as well).

Though the founding members came from all walks of Highborn life, these days the Legacy are more focused towards providing a band of unconquered, as well as supporting magic with Spring rituals on the battlefield, tactics learned from fighting against the Druj for so long.

In Anvil, they are, unsurprisingly, most dedicated to preaching the virtue of Ambition in the Synod, although there are members with interests in almost every aspect of the Anvil summits.

16.2.1.4 The Navigators of Virtue

Navigators of Virtue

- **Location:** Bastion, Bastion Rounds
- **Colours:** White and gold
- **Virtues:** Ambition and Loyalty
- **Exarch:** Sister Micah

A relatively new chapter founded in 382YE, it made its presence in Anvil known at the Winter Solstice of that year. Founded by Brother Luke, who became disillusioned by his previous Chapter, he set out to create a place inspired by the original Navigators - Atun and Atuman. A place that acknowledged and recognised the past, but sought to enter into the unknown, to search for new ways of making the Empire a better and more enlightened place, rather than clinging to history.

Joined by others from his previous Chapter and new Highborn alike, the Chapter swiftly became recognised as a force that would question and stand against the status quo, speak for their beliefs and be unafraid to challenge those within and without Highguard. They have a distinctly diplomatic streak; actively seeking to work with those outside their nation and beyond, believing cooperation and diplomacy are just as important and significant as military might. Located within the walls of the White City, the Chapter welcomes and houses pilgrims, visitors, tourists and refugees alike.

Despite its young age it already holds a prominent place among the Chapters that attend Anvil, with attendees recognised in almost all spheres, notably, Conclave, the Synod, the battlefield and the Anvil Hospital. Their chapter is always open; offering a space for rest, recuperation, and debate during the festivities. The chapter also serves as the headquarters for The Fellowship of The Burning Rose.

16.2.1.5 Reumah's Redoubt

Reumah's Redoubt

- **Location:**
- **Colours:** Red, white and black
- **Virtues:** Loyalty
- **Exarch:**

The founding of Reumah?s Redoubt occurred during the Patrician War. Reumah, daughter of Atunama, was a notable patrician who, according to chapter history, sided with Permion instead of the Council. When the killers came for Permion and his family Reumah offered sanctuary but only one of Permion?s children made it to the home of Reumah. The rest of the Council besieged the home in order to take the child and Reumah by force ? fortunately, the response of the chapters was swift and during the battles for Pharos an escape was effected to a more fortified position near what is now Bastion and affectionately known as the Redoubt.

From here Reumah, her family and friends, fought against the Patrician?s Council alongside the chapters, notably providing weapons and armour for those in need, until she fell in battle herself during the destruction of Pharos. Her cousin, Abarrane, formally founded the chapter with oaths said in front of the other exarchs present ?To provide for the war?. Since then that is all the chapter has striven for, to provide for the nation and chapters. Sometimes members of the chapter have asked whether the oath has been fulfilled already ? often the question is dismissed as being caused by a lack of understanding of history.

16.2.1.6 Sepulchre of the Red Sun

Sepulchre of the Red Sun

- **Location:** The Elms
- **Colours:** Black, red, and white
- **Virtues:** Vigilance & Courage
- **Exarch:**

The Sepulchre of the Red Sun are a chapter consisting mostly of a force of cataphracts, reborn from the Unbound Steel Hall of Lost Chapters during the war to liberate Zenith 384YE. Embracing what history has been left after the Sepulchre?s destruction during Emperor Nicovar?s madness, they strive to provide a vigilant and courageous force of warriors dedicated to defending their nation and the Way. The Sepulchre itself remains in part a ruin, with catacombs and crypts shrouded in mystery, still yet to be fully rediscovered by its new inhabitants.

Hidden on the far side of the Elms in Bastion, the chapter hosts a number of military units and congregations and also operates a lucrative mercantile network spanning down the river Couros and beyond the Empire. With siblings dedicated to Vigilance and Courage, they often seek out opportunities to protect Highguard from heretics hiding among the populous and engage threats looming beyond the Empire's border.

16.2.1.7 Scions of Ravensfell

Scions of Ravensfell

- **Location:** The Elms
- **Colours:** Green, white and black
- **Virtues:** Courage, Vigilance, and Loyalty
- **Exarch:**

Ravensfell is situated north of the city of Bastion near the Reikos border, on a rocky outcrop overlooking the river Couros.

The chapter takes its name from the battle of Ravens Fell. Shortly before the Patrician War. Balthazar, a young cataphract commander, was sent on a suicide mission to take a barbarian stronghold known as the Raven's Crest. The crest had repeatedly held out against the Highborn due to its steep slopes, rocky outcrops, and deep ravines, which had prevented the cataphracts' war horses from being effective. Balthazar ordered his troops to dismount and fight on foot and although the brutal tactics of the orcs inflicted a high price, the Highborn were ultimately victorious.

Five and half centuries on, the Scions of Ravensfell chapter house stands on the ridge once thought impossible to tame, extending its protection across north-western Bastion. Its white granite hall and imposing battlements glimmer in the sunlight and shelter a vigilant martial community founded by the survivors, bound together in an unbending approach and a resolve in the salvation of the Virtues.

In recent years Ravensfell has been on the front line of the defence of the Empire, serving as a refuge for Highborn driven from Reikos and preventing Druj incursions down the river Couros to Bastion city. The chapter now operates a wayhouse for Imperial citizens on pilgrimages to Bastion.

We are the Scions of Ravensfell - Courage, Vigilance, and Loyalty empowered Balthazar the Unbending to drive the Orcs from the Raven's Crest. We will uphold the Empire in faith, in steel and in blood and protect it from enemies both within and beyond its boundaries.

16.2.2 Chapters of Casinea

16.2.2.1 Adina's Charge

Adina's Charge

- **Location:**
- **Colours:** Blue with silver/white trim
- **Virtues:** Pride and Loyalty
- **Exarch:**

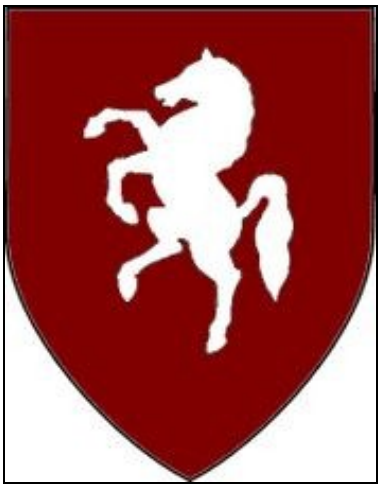
Adina's Charge was founded by the defection of a cavalry regiment during the Patrician War. It has long remembered this proud history, and retains many of the traditions of the old regiment.

Today it has a large contingent of historians and archivists, declaring that to build a proper future, one must do so on the foundations of the past. "We shall build our future in stone."

The chapter suffered a major military defeat in 374YE, in which the majority of her forces perished holding a ford in Reikos, many from drowning.

They have been rebuilding ever since, and the survivors of the Daintree have banded together with a fierce Pride and Loyalty to one another.

16.2.2.2 Cantiarch?s Hold



Cantiarch's Hold

- **Location:** Mareholm
- **Colours:** Red and white
- **Virtues:** Loyalty, Courage, and Pride
- **Exarch:**

Cantiarch's Hold took their name during the Patrician War, before then they were The Greys and can trace their heritage back to the Founding.

The red colour scheme comes from Magister Cantiarch's sacrifice for his chapter, where he brought down a rock fall in the hills to protect the rest of the chapter from the patrician army, losing his life in the process - reminding the chapter of his Loyalty, Courage, and Pride.

The main chapterhouse is still south-west of Anvil in the hills of Casinea.

16.2.2.3 Felix's Watch

Felix's Watch

- **Location:**
- **Colours:** Black and gold
- **Virtues:** Wisdom and Vigilance
- **Exarch:**

The chapter was founded a generation ago by Felix (once Felix Yagoda of Varushka) and Shelomit, daughter of Obadiah, with a focus on protecting the Empire from internal threats. Felix was not comfortable with the 'compromises' (as he saw it) that were necessary to survive in Varushka and came to Highguard to live. Shelomit was a wealthy and charismatic woman from Bastion who brought with her several years of senatorial experience, as well as an ancient relic, the skull of the horse Susa.

The chapter house was built high up on Mount Uphaz, utilising the isolation of altitude while remaining close to the heart of the Empire. The buildings cling to the edge of the mountain, surrounded by deep crevasses and precipitous drops to the plains below.

Within a short time, the chapter also became a hostel for those who require guidance according to the chapter's particular take on virtue and life in general. A 'probationer' system was put into place to allow people to join the chapter for a temporary period, combining hard work with an opportunity to study. This then expanded to offer some probationers the option of joining the chapter permanently.

Felix's Watch is politically active and, since the death of Britta, have been regular visitors to Anvil. Militarily, the chapter is small but focussed on emulating the 'cavalry' of years long gone, waiting for an opportunity, striking hard and then withdrawing in good order to repeat the process.

Since coming to Anvil, the chapter has become more involved with magic and the Conclave, working hard to protect the Empire from dangerous behaviour within the Hall of Worlds and trying to encourage greater Wisdom and Vigilance in dealings with eternals.

16.2.2.4 Storm?s Fury

Storm's Fury

- **Location:**
- **Colours:** Burgundy and black with white accents
- **Virtues:** Loyalty
- **Exarch:**

The chapter that would become Storm's Fury started around the same time as many of the original chapters that left the city of Pharos. They initially built their stronghold in Syrwatch but the resulting events after the assassination of Permion the Lawmaker led to one of the high-ranking chapter members attempting a coup, as they planned to side with the patrician forces against the chapters.

The other leading members of the chapter, including the exarch, killed the one responsible for the coup and the chapter members who sided with him. Any chapter members tricked or forced into helping the coup were allowed to rejoin the ranks. That stormy battle was when Storm?s Fury was born: the shouts of the chapter loyalists could be heard over the sound of the roaring thunder, and their armour shining brightly in the lightning.

As a result of the coup the chapter?s name, beliefs, structure, and doctrine were changed, and Loyalty became the most important virtue to the chapter. Even to this day, potential initiates are judged on their views on Loyalty. The chapter abandoned their home following the assassination of Permion and the capture of the eastern regions of Casinea and moved to Greatwood to join with other chapters. Details regarding the chapter which Storm?s Fury originated from have been deliberately lost (including the chapter name) in an attempt to forget who they were before becoming strengthened by lightning.

The chapter now resides in Casinea. They attend the Anvil summits as often as possible; members sometimes take on extra roles and responsibilities if some members cannot make the summits. The chapter welcomes anyone interested in becoming a chapter initiate so long as they show that they hold Loyalty as an important ideal.

16.2.2.5 Woodwych Harts

Woodwych Harts

- **Location:** Woodwych
- **Colours:** Grey, white, and black
- **Virtues:**
- **Exarch:**

Hailing from Casinea?s great forests, the Woodwych Harts are a fairly reclusive chapter with a hazy history. There are few large towns in Woodwych - most people choosing to live in self-sufficient homesteads - and no great cathedrals. Members of the chapter tend to the lightly-armoured unconquered, true to their forest roots, and are from the lower end of Highguard civility. They have a reputation for being reserved, yet are friendly when approached, and tend to focus on the job in front of them rather than concern themselves with grand philosophical questions of the Empire.

Their current exarch was once a fierce fighter but a serious injury curtailed his military career. Resentful about his own perceived lack of use to the Empire if he cannot contribute on the battlefield he withdrew from Anvil summits and has only recently been convinced to send envoys back to engage with the Empire as a whole.

16.2.3 Chapters of Necropolis

16.2.3.1 The Cenotaph

The Cenotaph

- **Location:** The Necropolis, Coursmouth, Necropolis
- **Colours:** Blue and white
- **Virtues:** Wisdom and Loyalty
- **Exarch:** Caleb of the Cenotaph

The Cenotaph is based within the city of Necropolis and is primarily a chapter of stewards of the dead. The chapter was originally founded after the death of Emperor Barabbas and was dedicated to recovering his body and recording his story. The Cenotaph?s remit has now widened to collecting the stories of those worthy of being counted heroes and helping the unquiet dead move on to the Labyrinth. Many members of the Cenotaph are skilled in priestly skills such as exorcism, or investigation magic.

The chapter considers themselves more outgoing than most based in the Necropolis, and as such try to position themselves as the first port of call when someone at Anvil wants a loved one to be buried in the Necropolis.

The more military-minded members of the chapter tend toward following the unconquered style of fighting and most of the chapter do their military service in the Seventh Wave as scouts, combat exorcists, and magisters.

16.2.3.2 Chantry of the Silver Skull

Chantry of the Silver Skull

- **Location:**
- **Colours:** Blue and silver
- **Virtues:**Prosperity
- **Exarch:**

The Chantry is an old chapter, established shortly after the burning of Pharos. Dedicated to Prosperity, the priests of the Chantry act as stewards of the dead, providing lavish funerals and interments to those who merit it. The chapter also displays marble tombs, preserved remains, and related grave goods to inspire the many visitors to Necropolis. The Chantry is notable for taking in orphaned or abandoned children, including lineaged, tutoring them in the ways of Virtue. It is home to an original Virtue Theatre, and maintains a strong musical tradition.

While the chapter itself remains immaculate, the ancient tombs and catacombs are now so sprawling that it is nigh impossible to keep track of all their contents. There is a fair population around the Chantry, most connected to either funeral services or maintaining the chapter. The local traditions are extremely Prosperity-based, and outsiders can sometimes find this a little unnerving as residents will both give and expect generosity as a matter of course.

At one time the Chantry was quite a powerful chapter, but over time it became more insular and began to withdraw from political affairs. Upon the recent death of Exarch Agatha the Chantry Council moved to begin attending Anvil again for the first time in a generation.

16.2.3.3 The Couros River Penitents

- **Location:** Hedrossan
- **Colours:** Pink, sapphire, and black
- **Virtues:** Prosperity and Wisdom
- **Exarch:** Arlais, Daughter of Mari

The Couros River Penitents are a Highborn chapter based in Hedrossan, Necropolis. They teach that repentance should be demonstrated through action, and that wrongdoing creates an obligation to make restitution. Their maxim is ?No Absolution Without Restitution.?

The chapter has strong mercantile interests and owns the Couros River Trading Company docks in Hedra. The docks are modest, but the company is overseen by a board drawn from several nations of the Empire, with particularly strong ties to the League.

The Penitents regard wealth as a means of meeting obligations, supporting worthwhile endeavours, and creating lasting value. They have consequently developed a reputation for involving themselves in questions of finance, trade, and public works. They are particularly interested in what the Empire chooses to build, how such works are funded, and who ultimately bears the cost.

16.2.3.4 Dauntless Light

Dauntless Light

- **Location:** Sanctuary Sand
- **Colours:** Blue and yellow
- **Virtues:**Vigilance and Wisdom
- **Exarch:**

The chapterhouse of the Dauntless Light stands on the coast of Necropolis, just south of Sanctuary. The focal point of the chapterhouse is the lighthouse at the top of the cliff but there is a small town and docks at the bottom, where most of the chapter lives. The lighthouse is rumoured to be one of the first structures built when the Highborn arrived in the Bay of Catazar. Traditionally, the lighthouse was surmounted with a fire brazier, but fifty years ago this was replaced with an immense Urizeni lightstone and cunning mithril mirrors.

The chapter's founders remained somewhat neutral during the Highguard civil war, providing aid to those who had lost their homes and livelihoods rather than focusing on the war with the patricians. This focus on the wellbeing of the innocent made them natural custodians of the lighthouse; today the main purpose of the chapter is to keep the lighthouse running to guide ships around the rocky waters at the coast of Necropolis. They also provide

ship burials to the rare few Highborn who wish to be interred at sea rather than in a tomb. The chapter is a mixture of stewards of the dead and fleet captains but anyone is welcome to join. They attract a lot of followers of Vigilance, but there has been a recent push to include more devotees of Wisdom to mitigate a problem with over-zealous members who see threats at every corner.

They pride themselves on having a number of friends across the Empire. In particular, they have good relations with the Eternal Family in Navarr, who are regular visitors to the docks below the lighthouse.

16.2.3.5 Harken's Vigil

- **Location:** Harkenvale, Longbeach
- **Colours:** Dark blue & yellow with red & black accents
- **Virtues:**Vigilance, Loyalty, and Courage
- **Exarch:** Jediah

Harken's Vigil formed as a bulwark against raiders from the sea who sought to plunder Highguard?s coast, taking the namesake of their home and its founder as a declaration that they will stand watch eternally over their shore and their siblings.

During the calmer months, when the horizon is empty and no raiders encroach on the baleful light of the walls and watchtowers, a cadre of the chapter travels to the Anvil to build and strengthen alliances, aid siblings in their ventures, and gather resources to maintain their defences in preparation.

16.2.3.6 Raven's Watch

Raven's Watch

- **Location:** Sanctuary Sands
- **Colours:** Purple, black, and white
- **Virtues:**Ambition
- **Exarch:**

An old chapter based in Sanctuary Sands in a chapterhouse atop the cliffs, Raven's Watch is a chapter dedicated to Ambition.

The chapter had been in decline for many years until it was recently revitalised by new blood: assorted refugees from settlements in Reikos joined up with Raven's Watch, making a new start for themselves and the chapter.

Raven's Watch specialises in Winter realm magic, offering rituals to the local area and to those in Anvil.

Their warriors support the groups of other Highborn chapterhouses on the field and their priests and traders do what they can to assist the Highborn and the Empire politically and economically.

16.2.3.7 The Silent Tide

Silent Tide

- **Location:** Silent Tower, Coursmouth
- **Colours:** Blue and white
- **Virtues:** Loyalty
- **Exarch:**

The Silent Tower (the chapterhouse of the Silent Tide) stands on a remote rocky island at the mouth of the River Couros.

Their chapter enshrines Loyalty as their focus, and holds a number of key tenets as being paramount - the idea of redemption through ordeal, and enlightenment through suffering. The Silent Tide profess that those who fall from the Way can be brought to the Tower and returned to the Way of Virtue.

Their chapter oath - "*Loyalty, Steel, Judgement, Death; Drowned man's oath my final breath*" is considered a little grim by some but encapsulates their focus and their esoteric teachings.

16.2.4 Chapters of Reikos

16.2.4.1 Athaliah's Handiwork

Athaliah's Handiwork

- **Location:** Toil's End, Grey Charge
- **Colours:** Yellow, black and white
- **Virtues:** Prosperity and Loyalty
- **Exarch:** Athaliah

The siblings of Athaliah's Handiwork build, by their own hands, a chapter that is more than the sum of its parts. Its siblings believe that Prosperity is greater when the link between work and comfort is stronger. Therefore, to maximise their Prosperity, each member of Athaliah's Handiwork involves themselves with as much of the communal labour as possible, and also much of the work that goes into the production of items they own and use.

A sibling who wears a woollen hood might have sheared, dyed, woven or sewn the wool. Hence their motto: "By our own hands". As can be imagined, every member of Athaliah's Handiwork is skilled in some craft, they may be an artisan, but they are certainly familiar with the basics of all trades.

The chapter was founded in 381YE when Athaliah, daughter to a chapter lost in the Druj invasion of Reikos, along with a kinship of directionless and chapterless Highborn finished constructing the great hall of the chapterhouse (now known as "Toil's End"), nestled between the fair trees of Grey Charge, and feasted within.

Many of its present siblings are those who had lost everything, including those enslaved during the Druj occupation. While the chapter is united around Prosperity, it welcomes dedicants of all Virtues and commits itself to the wellbeing of its siblings and the protection and reconstruction of Reikos.

16.2.4.2 Ebon's Hall

Ebon's Hall

- **Location:** Ebon's Hall, Broken Ride
- **Colours:** Green, black and white
- **Virtues:** Loyalty and Vigilance
- **Exarch:** Candress Silva

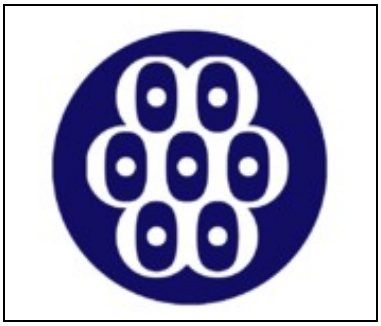
Ebon?s Hall was never meant to rise again. Once a forgotten chapterhouse, it lay buried in time?s silence, abandoned after the Druj invasion of 367YE. Those who could not fight fled to Bastion. The rest stood, bled, and died, nameless in the wilds. When the Druj set their torches to the great weirwood tree at the heart of the Hall, its burning marked the chapter?s end.

For years, only memories inhabited the crumbling stonework. Then, in 379YE, the Empire reclaimed the land. Spring magic washed away the poison, but the venerable Hall remained empty ? watching, waiting, until a new generation refused to let it sleep. And in 384YE, the first few travelled to Anvil, carrying the weight of the past and the fire of what could be. The weirwood still stands: A husk. A warning. Ebon?s Hall was never meant to rise again.

And yet, it did.

To seek, guide, and never yield.

16.2.4.3 The Eyes of Reikos



Eyes of Reikos

- **Location:** The Eye, Tamarbode
- **Colours:** Navy, white, and black
- **Virtues:** Vigilance
- **Exarch:** Demetrius

The Eyes of Reikos remain vigilant over the most northwestern border of Reikos. Their chapterhouse, known as The Eye, is situated within Tamarbode?s forest bordering Brocéliande.

The chapter formed in recent history as a collection of refugees from Reikos returned to their homeland after being evacuated as children during the Druj invasion.

Returning as seasoned warriors, priests, and dedicated professionals to their craft and trade, they seek to keep a watchful eye on Reikos. Their foremost attention has drawn their vigilant gaze to the threat of the vallorn and the remaining Druj.

16.2.4.4 The Flame Beneath the Earth

The Flame Beneath the Earth

- **Location:** Riverwatch
- **Colours:** Purple and green
- **Virtues:**
- **Exarch:**

On the outskirts of Riverwatch is the chapter now known as The Flame Beneath the Earth. During the Druj occupation, a few survivors from chapters across Reikos fled and found shelter in the basements of chapter house ruins.

The disparate group concealed themselves beneath the earth in sprawling tunnels, trying to outlast the occupation on very little food and supplies. They were down to their last candle, thinking they would soon be plunged into a darkness that might never end when the Vigilant Swan was liberated and the nearby chapters were freed.

Now bound together by their ambition to survive, they formed a new chapter and named themselves for the time they spent underground, preserving the flame of virtue through the occupation.

16.2.4.5 Nakir's Haven

Nakir's Haven

- **Location:** Tamarbode
- **Colours:** Green, white, and black

- **Virtues:** Loyalty
- **Exarch:** Damian

Nakir's Haven was founded by those who believed that lineage did not alter or conflict with their dedication to their nation, the Empire, or The Way. They built a structure that blended with the natural features around it; a great pool sits inside the walls of the keep, vines twist over the walls, and a canopy of trees maintains a cool shade year-round. The wave of Spring brought by Llofir has tipped the balance in favour of nature, for now at least.

At first, when the Druj swarmed into Reikos, it was of little consequence. Behind strong ivy-covered walls, and with the protection of Night magic, the group simply increased their defences and waited. This wait was in vain, however, as the Druj continued to bring destruction closer and closer to their door. The chapter lost many in the years that followed, including their former exarch.

16.2.4.6 The Pilgrims? Guard

Pilgrims Guard

- **Location:**
- **Colours:** Purple and white
- **Virtues:** Courage, Vigilance, and Loyalty
- **Exarch:**

Pilgrims? Guard was formed with the call for Highborn to walk the trods on a great pilgrimage and in response to the need to protect the grey pilgrims who dedicated themselves to it. The Pilgrims? Guard was founded by a group building a chapterhouse near Tamarbode to guard against the eternal that dwelt there. Great effort had gone into the construction, but when word reached the chapter of the great pilgrimage they decided to devote themselves instead to the protection of the pilgrims.

Once construction of the chapterhouse was completed, with fine furnishings installed, the chapter sealed the doors with stone and made an oath to only open the building again once the pilgrimage was complete. The chapter?s old name was erased from all writings and they formally adopted the name of the Pilgrims? Guard.

16.2.4.7 The Shattered Tower

The Shattered Tower

- **Location:**
- **Colours:** Black and green
- **Virtues:** Vigilance and Loyalty

- **Exarch:**

The Sentinels Tower, a chapter of High Chalcis which traced its formation back to the Revelation, was virtually wiped out during the fall of Reikos in 367YE. A handful of refugees and chapter members who were not present at the destruction of the chapterhouse came together at the chapter's hostel in Bastion. There they swore a new oath, under the leadership of Exarch Ishmael: to retake Reikos; to prevent it from falling again; and to root out the corruption that led to the fall. They named themselves the Shattered Tower.

For over a decade, the chapter operated out of Bastion, before reclaiming a ?changed? chapterhouse, the so-called ?Shining Towers? as their home, when Reikos was retaken.

Unlike some Highborn traditionalists, the chapter frowns upon the practice of unveiling, instead relying on an obscure principle called bonding to help its lineaged achieve a truly virtuous life.

The chapter espouses a martial bent, fielding a significant force of cataphracts (dubbed 'The White Death') supported by various auxiliary unconquered and battle magisters.

16.2.4.8 The Suns of Couros

The Suns of Couros

- **Location:** Haros, Haros Water
- **Colours:** Black and white
- **Virtues:** Vigilance and Loyalty
- **Exarch:**

The Suns of Couros was for centuries an institution and safe haven for draughir, so that those who were given up, cast out, or unwanted could find refuge with others like them and pursue Virtue in meditation and isolation from the world. Under non-lineage leadership for most of its history, it was a secluded chapter situated in Haros at the northern end of the Couros river, only really known to some informed magisters as having an extensive library of Winter magic and several mana sites nearby.

When Reikos was first invaded by the Druj in 367YE the chapter endured countless raids and sieges, with many of the original soldiers and leaders falling in its defence. In the crucible of war a new generation of leaders arose, many of them the formerly meditative draughir. The chapter is made up of the surviving original residents and refugees who refused to abandon Reikos any further, bound together through years of hardship and taciturn determination.

With Reikos reclaimed, the chapter is once again a sanctuary for lineaged but also for any outcast or dispossessed residents of Highguard. Still based in Haros, the chapter is noted for its focus on Winter magic, its pursuit of Vigilance and Loyalty, and the ruthlessness with which it opposes the Druj and other enemies of the Empire.

16.2.4.9 Tian's Return

Tian's Return

- **Location:** Chalcis Mount
- **Colours:** Burgundy, grey, and black
- **Virtues:** Ambition
- **Exarch:** Amos

In the hills of Chalcis Mount, on the outskirts of High Chalcis sits a small granite sanctum. Much of it is overgrown; its once grand pillars and lintels shattered by the invasive roots of Llofir?s green tide. Above the threshold is engraved a faded but unmistakable symbol; two hands bearing forth a ball of flame to all who would seek shelter there. Within the plant-choked building a central triangular courtyard is covered by a large, if somewhat disarrayed, mosaic that tells the story of Tian, paragon of Ambition. When the sun is at its zenith the unusually shaped courtyard casts the shadow of a mountain down upon the mosaic, and at its peak is a metal basin tarnished by years of ash.

This was once the chapterhouse of Tian?s Return, a modest chapter dedicated to bringing the ever-hungry flames of Ambition to the Empire at large. Their primary mission: impress upon the new pilgrims of the Way that anything can be possible with enough hard work and dedication. The chapterhouse and its siblings fell beneath the Druj incursion in 367YE, and the building stood empty as it fell to ruin when Llofir?s spring magic washed across the territory in 380YE.

Now, it stands rebuilt and the chapter journeys to Anvil to spread its simple message: ?nothing is impossible if you are only prepared to pay the price?.

16.2.4.10 The Unbound

The Unbound

- **Location:** Tabernacle, Riverwatch
- **Colours:** Black with red accents
- **Virtues:** Pride
- **Exarch:**

The Unbound chapter was formed in 377YE from a group of disparate Highborn banded together for survival after escaping the Druj's conquest and destruction of Reikos. The Unbound sought temporary accommodation in Casinea where they worked tirelessly towards the liberation of Reikos.

After the liberation of High Chalcis, the Unbound relocated to Tabernacle in Riverwatch where they settled as a permanent chapter and started the reconstruction efforts including the Hall of Lost Chapters commemorating all the chapters destroyed by the Druj.

The chapter, dedicated to Pride, remains one of the strongest voices against trusting the eternal realms and in favour of exclusionism.

16.3 Unconquered and Cataphracts

16.3.1 Cataphracts

16.3.1.1 Cohort Of The Winter Bear

Cohort of the Winter Bear

- **Location:**
- **Colours:** Blue and black
- **Virtues:**
- **Exarch:**

The Cohort is a military unit dedicated to the defence of the Empire. Citizens join from all over Highguard, leaving their chapters and families for a life of war with the cohort. They have no settlement to call their own with the exception of Bear's Hold, which is the chapterhouse in which they are officially based. This is a crumbling ruin of an old fortress built into the wall of the White City itself, granted to the Cohort for their service in times past.

The Cohort was formed in the early days of The Way - before the founding of the Empire - when Bastion first began to draw pilgrims from across the land. A group of cataphracts who had come to Bastion swore to remain and defend the pilgrim routes around the city. Since then the area has long become safe but the Cohort has remained, instead defending the Empire itself as the home of The Way.

16.3.2 Unconquered

16.4 Contributing

Any player character group in Highguard can submit an entry for this page. The entry should come from the out-of-character group leader and be emailed to plot@profounddecisions.co.uk.

It should contain the following information:

- Group archetype (chapter, unconquered, or cataphracts). If your group doesn't have one of these archetypes, it will be listed in the "other" section.
- Territory and region where the groups lands are physically located. Chapters are based around chapters, but cataphracts and even unconquered will be tied to a physical location that serves as their base of operations.
- If your group has specific colours, you can mention them here.
- If your group is centred around a specific Virtue
- The name of your exarch if you are a chapter. If there is someone in your group that serves as the in-character leader of the group, you can mention them and their title here

You should also include up to 250 words of description, detailing the kind of things that other characters might know about your group. Have a look at the description for a chapter, or at the archetype pages for unconquered and cataphracts for ideas on the kind of information that is useful. You must also include a few sentences of history, especially around the circumstances of the group's formation or origin.

Some other questions to consider include:

- Are there one or more particular archetypes the group is particularly associated with? Obviously groups of cataphracts will contain cataphracts, and unconquered are expected to have unconquered among their number, but is there a noteworthy archetype that might be unexpected or has a special role?
- Does your group have a particular ambition which helps unify your members?
- Is there anything notable about the lands you claim, or about the physical buildings that serve as your home?

Things to avoid include:

- Too much worldbuilding detail ? this represents information other characters may know about your group. It's not a place to define elements of the game world
- Lists of character names ? this isn't a place for getting your name on the wiki
- Too much emphasis on the past ? while it's useful to have a few lines of history, what matters in Empire is what your group does on the field at events

It's possible to update the information on this page over time (for example if your boyar changes) with an e-mail to plot@profounddecisions.co.uk.

17 Highguard egregore

The egregore spirit of Highguard embodies virtue, strength, and knowledge.

17.1 Escon

Escon is the Highborn egregore, and has three primary interests: to embody the Imperial faith and commitment to Virtue; to promote the martial spirit of the Highborn; and to expand the knowledge of the nation. The spirit often encourages competition, but always as a way to promote and encourage Highborn pursuit of excellence and the virtue of Ambition. Escon often helps people make up their own minds and come to their own conclusions, through careful questioning and encouragement to examine motivations, actions, and beliefs. Most of all, Escon encourages the Highborn to embrace their history and pursue Virtue with every part of their being.

When the egregore spirit bonds with a citizen of Highguard, they traditionally preface their name "Escon, who was X". This reminds the Highborn that while they may look, and often act, the same as they did before they bonded, anyone who speaks to them is speaking with the spirit of the nation. As long as they are bonded, they are Escon first, and the person they were before, second.

17.2 Current Hosts

17.2.1 Elisha

Elisha is a Steward of the Dead.

17.2.2 Diadrah

Escon who was Diadrah

Escon who was Elisha

17.3 Former Hosts

17.3.1 Micah, Child of Dinah, of Accolade's Fall

As Zenith fell to the Druj in Spring 382YE, the armies of Highguard attempted to stem the Druj tide and allow the safe retreat of Urizeni refugees. Fighting with the Seventh Wave was Micah of Accolade?s Fall, an unconquered from a chapter based in Greatwood. Cut off as they tried to evacuate a refugee camp, and stranded behind enemy lines, Micah became host to Escon as they used all their skill and training to escape back to Imperial-held territory, arriving in Anvil in Summer 382YE. Escon who was Micah is in Anvil to inspire action and virtuous deeds amongst the Highborn and is keen to fight alongside the heroes of the Empire.

Ehud, Son of Leah, of Reumah's Redoubt

Escon who was Micah

17.4 Further Reading

Core Brief

- Introduction
- The people
- Culture and customs
- Look and feel
- Hearth magic

Additional Information

- History
- Leadership
- Economic interests
- Military concerns
- Religious beliefs
- Magical traditions
- Territories
- Children
- Music
- Archetypes
- Groups
- Egregore