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1 The League



"Nothing great without cost."

The people of The League are city-folk through and through. Competition is fierce - you might fall behind not because you have stumbled but simply because someone else is faster. Nobody is given a free ride in The League; they earn their fine lifestyles through hard work and hard dealing. You must seize every opportunity quickly if you wish to rise to become a Merchant Prince.

This is The League. The rivers that run down to the Bay of Catazar are the veins of the Empire, carrying the lifeblood of trade. The ~~four~~ five great cities are its beating heart, sending tides of wealth back and forth across the nations. In the South are Sarvos - elegant and sophisticated, cultured and refined - and Tassato - diplomatic, Machiavellian, persuasive and articulate. In the North are Temeschwar - ruthless, relentless, cold and hard - and Holberg - pragmatic, ingenious, innovative and enlightened. Now they are joined by Apulian in the East - audacious, self-assured, cunning and remorseless. Together as The League they are stronger than their parts - ~~four~~ five strands inexorably woven to produce an unbreakable bond. They are a driven people, tolerating neither sloth nor lawlessness, and from the wealthiest moneylender to the loudest street bravo, they are quick-witted and alert to opportunity and danger.

It is said that the cities of The League never sleep. By day, the powerful guilds clash over business interests and The League's mercenary Free Companies seek to find work on the Empire's borders. By night, the street balladeers perform on every corner, and rival theatre-houses fight duels where the wordplay matters more than the swordplay. The long con is as much an art form here as the politics of high office; in the coffee-houses that never close, the cant covers both.

The League is much more than ruthless business and cut-throat competition; it is the centre of civilisation in the Empire. It produces and displays great works of art while rich patrons support the theatres. There is a university in each of the ~~four~~ five cities and they champion scholastic learning and imaginative problem solving. They institutionalise charity - the Church of the Little Mother feeds and shelters the orphans of the Empire and finds them work - because they know that everyone is a citizen of the Empire, and that today's destitute orphans might rise to become the Merchant Princes of tomorrow.

1.1 Five things to know about The League

- **Life is competition, and someone is always keeping score.** Citizens of The League love to compete in everything they do.
- **The rules of the game are not to be broken.** League society has simple rules but woe betide those who break them; they are particularly ruthless with lawbreakers.
- **Keep your loyalties close, like the rings on your fingers.** The League takes loyalty very seriously.
- **Coin counts, and everything costs.** This is a land of conspicuous consumption where wealth is power and nothing worth having is free.
- **Everything is on show, like a mask on your face.** Bold, flamboyant action is the best way to publicise yourself and your services, but nobody confuses the mask with the real thing.

1.2 What the citizens of The League are not

- **Popinjays and dandies.** While appearance and charm are important, wit and panache are no substitute for actual deeds. Scratch the surface of The League and beneath you find a nation of ruthless, ambitious people absolutely committed to their goals.
- **DaVincian Inventors.** Citizens of The League are imaginative and ingenious; they solve problems with their brains not their brawn. But Empire is not a game that supports the invention of new technologies - League characters are audacious, rather than inventive.

A map? A street map! You need more than a map of the streets to navigate this city, friend. There are rules to this city; break them, and the Prince will break you.

The Steel Throne, Act II, scene iv



1.3 Further Reading

Core Brief

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

Additional Information

- History
- Leadership
- Economic interests
- Military concerns
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- Magical traditions

- Territories
- Children
- Music
- Archetypes
- Groups
- Egregore

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2 The League people

One people with ~~four~~ five souls



One people with four souls.
The five great cities of the League give the nation her spirit. Her love of culture, the appreciation for fine things, opera, theatre, art and dance come from Sarvos. The determination to be the best, savouring every triumph, ferocious competition and ruthless nerve are born of Temeschwar. The problem-solving, imagination and sheer brilliance of Holberg has led to their mastery of surgery and engineering. The childlike delight with the cunning and the clever spreads from Tassato, where words are laced with more ambiguity than meaning and every ruse conceals another stratagem beneath it. Apulian, the newest city in the League aims to bring raw cunning and daring, a willingness to risk everything to succeed combined with an unmatched lust for success.

While the character of each city can be clearly seen, it is important to appreciate that this is one nation, bound by their Egregore and countless generations of migrations and marriages. "One people with four souls" is how the League still traditionally describes itself. Apulians might correct them on the number but the idea is that individuals and groups draw their strength and their character from the best qualities of the whole nation. Citizens of the League are always proud of their city and some strive to exemplify its attributes, but it is as if the qualities were in the cities themselves as much as the people who inhabit them.

True power in the cities is in the hands of the guilds. The guilds are exceptionally varied; some are organized to supply a single product or skill while others have no common basis beyond a group of people who join together to make money. There are guilds that are mercenary companies or theatre groups and some say the churches of the League are little more than guilds. What the guilds have in common is the expectation of loyalty, their ties are every bit as strong as the closest family. Loyalty to your guild is one of the great pillars of life in the League. The guilds have no formal powers so they use their stranglehold on economic existence in the cities to rule despite that; if you want to get ahead in the League - join a guild.



Determined ambition, ferocious competition and ruthless nerve are born of Temeschwar.
The League is committed to the Empire; Imperial law has brought peace and prosperity. The opportunities and the civilisation that the Empire brings are things that many are prepared to die ? or preferably kill ? to preserve. Because the citizens of the League see themselves as the pre-eminent people of the Empire, they tend to view the Empire very possessively - as if the whole thing were arranged for their benefit.

League society greatly prizes loyalty, but scorns servility. Everyone is expected to give as good as they receive. They are relentlessly competitive in everything they turn their hands to, always seeking to outdo each other. They are not obsessed with money, as some claim, but money is a great way to judge success - a metric by which to quantify how well you have done. When outsiders point out that they seem to view life as a game they are playing then League citizens tend to agree - "someone is keeping score" is the usual response. But it is not a case of treating war, politics and trade like a child's game, it is a case of treating every game they play as seriously as if it were a war.

There is a merciless emphasis on the rules in the League. Crime is always a problem in the cities, but those who hold the reins of power regard it as a parasite, eating into their own profits. They ensure the laws are enforced with a brutal practicality and pragmatism, that stems in part from a cultural belief that those who break the rules have cheated in the game. It is not just the laws they hold in iron regard; a civil tongue, the customs of the city, her superstitions and her rules, are not to be broken. If an individual does not respect League society enough to play by the same rules as everyone else, how can you be sure what other rules they will break? Such people are not trusted and in business, a lack of trust is fatal to your chances of success.



Ambitious, driven, ruthless ... but they never forget to appreciate the fruits of civilisation.
Famed for a devotion to the arts, the League claims to have invented opera and theatre and take constant joy in the novel and the clever. They appreciate flair and wit, as signs of a sharp mind. Witty banter and verbal quips are considered fine entertainment in the League. Those who can employ wit skilfully are given more license than others to break the social rules of respect with less chance to cause a scene - or a duel.

This is not a nation of effete libertines. Innovative gewgaws and beautiful artworks are prized, but they are nothing compared to the pride these people take in the exercise of their will, their ambition and their success. A clever quip is no substitute for wealth, power, influence and the will to employ them to meet one's goals. The Merchant Prince may continue to make ironic comments when a situation turns deadly serious, but never make the mistake of thinking that they are not prepared to do what it takes to ensure the outcome they favour. More than one guest has made an inappropriate "joke" and discovered themselves ejected from someone's home - often through a first storey window.

2.1 Orcs and Humans

The League is currently the only nation in the Empire to incorporate both humans and orcs, after the Apulian Orcs successfully petitioned the League to let them join. Life in Grendel culture was tough, cut-throat and competitive. If you did well, you could enjoy luxuries and comfort, if you did poorly you would quickly find yourself carrying a pickaxe in the salt mines. Crucially, it was a long slow climb to the top, one success at a time, licking the boots of those above you then turning on them at the perfect moment. But it was a short, sharp drop to the bottom and those who crossed their betters and lost were rarely seen again. Joining the League and becoming a citizen of the Empire means that politics is no longer such a fatal game. Many Apulians may have been ambitious, with grand political goals, but they always had to tread somewhat carefully and watch out for a knife in the spine. Now, they're free to reach for lofty goals without the potential for a dagger in the night for challenging the wrong person.

The Apulian Orcs are a new addition to the League, having joined the nation during the Summer Solstice 385YE. There is enough information on the League pages to create an Apulian character, but players are welcome to read the Grendel pages if they want more detail on the background of their character before they joined the League. Anyone intending to play an Apulian Orc should make sure to also read the orc species brief to ensure they have a full understanding of the requirements and limitations of playing an orc.

Any gutter urchin might be a merchant prince one day, so you must be careful, cousin. Kick a puppy today, and tomorrow it might have grown up to be the hound that has your hand in its jaws ...

Two Gentlemen of Tassato, Act I, scene ii



The people of the League are sophisticated, civilised, and stylish.

2.2 Names in the League

Each of the five cities of the League has a different flavour. We suggest Italian names for Sarvossian characters, Eastern European names for Temeschwari characters, German or Dutch names for Holberghan characters, Portuguese names for Tassatan characters, and anglicised Scots Gaelic for Apulian characters.

Most people in the League use their city as part of their name. They may use one of a number of connecting words - "di", "de", "van" and "of" are all popular and are used interchangeably across the League - but they firmly indicate the city they are loyal to. This is usually the city of their birth, but not always. Many League citizens have cause to move from one city to another at one time and some find themselves more at home in their new city than the place of their birth.

Many individuals do not bother with a family name, although they may take some element of their name from their guild.

2.2.1 Sample names

- Elsbet van Temeschwar, of the Black Raven
- Bertolli Giacomi di Sarvos, of the Giacomi Carta
- Neave de Apulian, of the Broken Blades

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.

2.3 Further Reading

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- Egregore

3 The League culture and customs

3.1 Rules

There is a strong emphasis on rules in League society. They despise people who break the law, because they are seen as cheating and using unworthy mechanisms to take wealth and power from their more prosperous neighbours. The written rules are the Imperial Laws and breaking them is considered an act of utter desperation. To reduce an enemy to the point where they are caught breaking the law to try to keep their head above water is considered by many to be the ultimate defeat that you can inflict, the final mark of shame. Assassination, theft and murder only happen if a citizen of the League has no other card left to play, and in the knowledge that they have already lost.

The League has other rules besides Imperial laws, however. Manners are important; individuals are expected to remain polite even towards their hated enemies. While the League strives to be civil not servile, it is vital to display the respect due to those who have earned positions of importance in League society. A regard for punctuality is an element of this civility; if a party begins at sundown then you can expect to be turned away if you turn up an hour later. Breaking the general rules of civility and respect suggests you are the sort of person who cannot be trusted. If you cannot obey the small, simple rules how can you be expected to obey the important, complex ones?

3.2 Dead Reckoning

"No friend ever served me, and no enemy ever wronged me, whom I have not repaid in full"

The Epitaph of Lucius Cornelius Sulla

For centuries the citizens of the League have engaged in ruthless competition with each other. Wealth serves as a basic way of working out who is "winning" but it is a metric that lacks finesse. Ultimately, the League deals in favours and influence. Favours are more valuable than gold, because they represent the ability to influence other people in a more direct fashion than money. In the same way, every guild keeps a count of those who have worked against their interests in the past, because such offences represent a debt that is still to be repaid. This system, called Dead Reckoning, can be bewildering to outsiders, assuming it is even visible to them.

Some citizens of the League keep a physical ledger in which their favours and debts are recorded, often in the form of a personal journal or small notebook that is kept on the person at all times. Guilds do much the same, recording obligations owed in ledger books. It is very useful to know who owes a favour to whom, or who considers themselves to be owed a debt, because carefully navigating the tricky waters of the League sea of favours and debts is a key element in success at politics between the cities.



Host and guest work together to make a gathering a success.

3.3 Hospitality

?*The best of everything*? might as well be the League motto. Wealth exists partly to "keep score" but its true value lies in its ability to acquire the fruits of civilisation: beautiful things, comfortable clothes, delicate jewellery and inspiring entertainment. While outsiders sometimes criticise the League for being a den of greed and miserliness, this is largely unsupported prejudice. Wealth, after all, achieves very little if it is simply stored in a vault.

The nation is a crossroads for trade in all kinds of luxury goods, and being able to set a fine table for close friends and allies is the mark of a solid citizen, regardless of social position. It is clear, however, that such a table is by invitation only; life in the League is busy, and unexpected guests are an unwanted distraction. People wait to be invited to dine; anyone arriving at a League table with an assumption of hospitality will receive short shrift. To ensure that everyone has a chance to see the depth of their hospitality, most individuals and guilds prefer to throw a lavish party, at most once a year, to which they invite everyone they know, friend and foe alike. Balls and feasts are common, with hosts competing to offer the most lavish entertainment and finest distractions. A party is a serious business in the League because it is an opportunity to demonstrate one's wealth and social cleverness.

Citizens of the League are meticulous in recording favours done and favours owed, but when they give a gift to someone it is free of any obligation, even the expectation that the gesture will be returned. Gifts are given by the rich and powerful as a way of demonstrating their social standing but the cleverness and appropriateness of the gift is much more vital. Gifts that display insight into a person's character, or allude to their situation are more impressive than mere wealth. Gifts to political opponents are common; they carry a mark of respect and appreciation. It is the mark of a true Merchant Prince that they are as gracious in defeat as in success.

One gift that is almost never offered casually, especially to a citizen of the League, is that of a ring. Rings have powerful connotations to League citizens, and offering a ring is tantamount to asking the recipient to swear loyalty to the giver.

3.4 Bargaining

When the Apulians joined the League they brought with them many of their traditional practices for bargaining. Most have retained these traditions where they can, and they are slowly beginning to be adopted by other League citizens.

The Apulians have a traditional approach used for opening negotiations on important agreements. Firstly, both parties privately commit their opening position to paper and exchange them. If either party is happy with the other?s opening offer, it is accepted and negotiations conclude - if neither party is prepared to accept an opening offer then they meet again to open formal negotiations. This approach provides two notable advantages. First, it avoids either party having to name a price first, something the Apulians believe is always a disadvantage. More importantly, the approach makes clear that both parties expect to negotiate from an opening position, that each party has made an opening offer from which they will then haggle. It is considered irritatingly pointless to open with an offer that is so ridiculously stupid that it must be ignored, or to name an opening position and then refuse to move from it. Both represent a clear failure to understand how mediation is supposed to work - the latter in particular suggests that the other party is simply not intelligent enough to be reasoned with.



Even a duel between friends is deadly serious in the League.
When conducting important negotiations, the Apulians like to demonstrate good intent by exchanging gifts beforehand. In a deal on the sale of a few dozen ingots of orichalcum this could be something as simple as a small beverage, a slice of cake, a minor trinket or something similar. As the scale of the deal increases so too does the gift; discussion of a treaty regarding territories or wains of Bourse resources would see the gifts offered to be more elaborate; items of personal or historical significance, pieces of armour, fine clothes etc. The point is that the exchange should be roughly equal, but that it should be separate from the negotiation. It is designed to put both parties in a good mood before the haggling starts in earnest.

3.5 Duelling

Although duelling to the death is illegal, formal duelling is an accepted way of settling disputes. Challenges are usually publicized; bouts between well-known duellists can draw sizeable crowds, and particularly popular duellists may find themselves attracting a significant following. The terms of the duel are set by mutual agreement by the participants, but usually both parties will use matching weapons and fight until one party submits or is too wounded to continue. It is accepted practice for powerful and wealthy individuals to employ professional duellists to fight in their stead. It is common for a duel to be observed by a magistrate that no foul play occurs - indeed, many duellists consider the presence of a magistrate to be insurance of a sort; if an accident does take place, it is extremely useful to have as an eyewitness one of the people responsible for enforcing the law.

3.6 Performance



Image may be artificial, but it is a powerful tool.
Performance and display are important parts of life in the League. From the signs over every shop and the street vendors hawking their wares, the rumbustious displays of bravado by the Free companies and the dramatic duels between rival theatre troupes, to the ostentatious parties of the Merchant Princes and the displays of wealth and power, everything is on show in the League. Those who want to get ahead need to show everyone why they should be taken seriously; those who have achieved success want everyone else to know it.

Most people in the League implicitly understand the importance of image, even while they realise its artificiality. Nobody really imagines that the duels between rival actors are genuine, they understand that this is performance - indeed that is the very point of the exercise. The actors compete to be more brilliant and compelling and thereby win business for their troupe. The fights between bravos might result in broken bones, but their ultimate purpose is to demonstrate the capabilities of the Free Company they work for. The masks worn by the actors in the theatre are not real, but it is attendant on everyone to treat them as real, otherwise the play cannot proceed.

As cicisbeo Narante Garamul said in *Theatre and Politics* "Remember always that the stage lies before you, and the mask you wear is the part you play in it. Rather a virtuoso villain than a mediocre hero, better a subtle servant than a heavy-handed prince. Don?t be afraid to try on masks until you find the one that suits you best, but remember to change out of sight of the audience. Loved or hated, when the curtain finally falls for you, let them feel the world is a smaller place for your passing."

3.7 Relationships



Romance has little to do with the serious political business of marriage.
Marriage in The League is not only a matter of love or romance. By choosing to wed, two individuals are swearing an oath expressing a profound loyalty towards one another on par with the loyalty others feel for their guild, city or nation. A wedding may be a joyous occasion, but it is also a serious business. Many League citizens who choose to get married do so later in life, in early middle age, rather than in the first flush of youth. Weddings between the young, especially by those in love, are seen as ill-advised.

It is entirely acceptable for lovers to live together, or raise children, without ever being wedded. These relationships may be as casual or committed as those involved are comfortable with. However, if someone is married there is an assumption of absolute fidelity - extramarital affairs are a serious business; they destroy the reputations of both the adulterer and their paramour. In a nation where trust is important, an affair is the ultimate expression of unreliability and treachery. The only exception is the cicisbeo (pronounced kick-a-BEY-o in Empire), a professional paramour sometimes hired by prosperous and well to do married citizens.

Committed lovers often wear rings to represent their connection to one another, and a wedding almost invariably involves the exchange of these rings. Powerful symbols of loyalty in The League rings can have a magical significance when exchanged in this manner.

3.8 Libation

Many Apulian orcs are surprisingly superstitious by nature. Individual Apulians adopt many different methods to appease the fickle whims of fate, but libation is the oldest and most common of those practiced. This tradition involves pouring a liquid offering into the sea or onto the soil, depending on the location. This liquid is usually water, but in some circumstances it is appropriate to use fine wine, expensive liqueur or another valuable fluid in its place. Libations are often performed before any significant actions are undertaken; the commencement of a vital meeting, an important negotiation, a battle, or any sea journey.

A libation must be performed to someone, you are literally offering up the things you spill. An ancestor is the most common choice among the orcs, usually whichever ancestor's advice they feel would be most common in the coming circumstance, but eternals may be invoked. Most recently, with the introduction of the Way to the Apulians, there has been a marked increase in offerings made to paragons and exemplars.

The practice is considered a little scandalous among the more sophisticated and well-to-do members of the League, which has only helped to encourage its adoption as a subtle way to thumb ones nose at authority by some bravos and mountebanks.

3.9 Rings



Each ring bears a story.
Rings are a powerful hearth magic, but they also have deep cultural meaning in the League. People wear rings to demonstrate their allegiances, wearing one ring for each major loyalty they owe, be that political, economic, filial, military, or even romantic. The giving of rings is an invitation to commit oneself to the giver's allegiance, and the casting away of rings is a clear sign that an association is over. It is rare for members of a guild to wear matched rings, though that in itself would tell you something about them. Each ring worn by a citizen of the League has a story associated with it, and the rings often bear symbols or are made of materials that have a deep significance for the wearer or the target of the allegiance.

Sharing the true story of a ring with someone ? explaining the correspondences and symbols ? is a sign of trust and confidence. More than a few openly wear rings that represent hidden allegiances. If you think you know who a citizen of the League is loyal to, but they are wearing more rings than you can trace loyalties, it may be that they have a hidden loyalty, or that they felt a loyalty to someone or something in the past (an ex-lover, for example, or the memory of a dead friend).

Stealing rings is a dreadful insult ? it implies an attempt to sever the target from their allegiances and loyalties. While it is common for a dying citizen of the League to pass one or more rings to friends and family as heirlooms, they are often burned along with the corpses. The wealthiest citizens of the League expect to be buried with their rings, and robbing the rings of the dead is said to bring about a dreadful curse. There are plenty of folk tales of ?cursed rings? taken from the dead - either stolen from the tombs of the wealthy, taken from the fingers of a corpse before it is cremated, or stolen from a victim before their corpse is properly cold.

The five ring coin shows a hand wearing five rings, and it is widely believed to represent the hand of Stratocanthus, the first Master of the Imperial Mint. According to legend his rings represented his loyalty to his guild, the twin-city of Tassato, the Nation of the League, the Empire and, depending on who one listens to, his wife or his mistress. Only one of the rings was enchanted, and there is a lot of debate among historians as to which of the rings bore the enchantment, as Stratocanthus is known to have commented in an unguarded moment that it was ?the most important one.?

3.10 Reckoners

The Reckoners of the great rivers are dominated by several families with strong merrow and naga lineage. They have done much to establish the position of their lineage in League society. Initially powerful in Tassato, the merrow boatmen of that city began by ferrying citizens across the wide river that separated the twin halves of that city. Over the years, they parlayed their knowledge of the secret assignations of citizens into political and then economic power. Although the boatmen were careful never to pry into the affairs of others, they became experts at deducing some of the nature of other people's business simply by knowing where they were going and who they were talking to.

When Aldones di Sarvos brought the cities of the League together the boatmen found themselves in competition with a guild of nagas in Sarvos. This secretive guild made a living collecting and compiling lists of favours and debts owed by other guilds - and for a small price revealing the nature of those relationships. The two groups soon saw the benefit of cooperation and began to work together as the Guild of Reckoners.

Although there are now several different Guilds of Reckoners, they continue to display a great interest in secret affairs and espionage, supplementing their normal mercantile activities extensively with spying and information brokering. This suits both the merrow interest in truth and the naga interest in secrets, and serves as a lucrative sideline. As a consequence, many League citizens expect that any merrow or naga they meet will have the latest and most salacious gossip.

3.11 Funerals

The League obsession with keeping score extends past death. League wills are full of bequests to charitable institutions, endowments for public memorials and most of all extravagantly planned wakes. It is common to hire mourners and traditional for the deceased to attend their own wake, in the form of a single masked performer. Attendees at the wake are given free license to say things to the death masque that they would have liked to say to the deceased were they were alive.

It is common at a funeral in the League for someone trustworthy to be asked to play a *death guiser*. This person wears the clothes and mask of the deceased, so grieving friends and family may say a proper farewell or pass on any last words they never got the chance to say in life. The richest will also hire professional troupes to perform the highlights of their lives in theatre or music. True immortality is commissioning a play or song about your life to be performed long after you're dead. Of course, the writer may choose to subvert your memory cleverly if the actual truth doesn?t agree with the public image you wished them to portray. Immortality can be for good or ill, after all.

The majority of League citizens are cremated and their ashes cast into one of the of the four great rivers. The exception are those few souls whose virtue has gained them the signal honour of a place in the great Necropolis of Highguard, or those wealthy enough to be able to afford mausoleums or tombs. Cremation, after all, is quite cheap whereas securing and maintaining a tomb in or near one of the cities is an expensive proposition.

Each Winter Solstice, the League celebrates a particularly lavish festival with strong ties to their funerary traditions: the Masquerade of the Reaper.

3.12 Icons and Artistry

The most common device used to represent the League as a nation is a red wolf on white alongside either three or four rings. The meaning and number of the rings is a matter for heated debate - to some they represent the "core virtues" of the League. To others it represents the "first loyalties" (Empire, City and guilds with the wolf representing the Nation), while other say they simply represent the cities of the League.

Every organisation in the League has an emblem associated with it. Often these emphasise the tools and trappings of the profession for which the organization is known, but symbols that convey architecture like walls, gates, towers, bridges, doors or similar are also common. Many of these emblems using visual riddles and puns that conceal hidden meanings for those who know the history of the organisation.

The League takes artistic expression very seriously. Innovation and experimentation are encouraged, and at any given time there are many competing schools of artistic thought in the League. Tastes shift regularly and from fashion to portrait painting, there is no single style that dominates for long. This is not to say that the League is obsessed with novelty; it is common for more traditional styles to be reexamined each generation, with older forms of expression coming back into vogue before again declining in popularity as tastes change.

The four rivers that empty into the Bay of Catazar are central characters in the art and folklore of the nation. All the best art includes them in one form or another, whether as central characters, ?clowns? during the interludes, or background figures in a scene. A popular game between artists is to conceal the characters in some way, often by exploiting their association with the magical tradition of dramaturgy, and challenge the audience to locate them.

3.13 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

4 The League look and feel

4.1 Overview

Lavish, opulent, mercantile, swaggering, flamboyant, ostentatious

The League look takes inspiration from European renaissance fashion. Garments and accessories from the Italian Renaissance, the German Renaissance, and early Tudor England can form a solid foundation provided they achieve the right silhouette. The League is a nation of city-states, where citizens love to compete for acclaim, social status and power. League fashions reflect this bustling urban world where ?everything is on show? and where citizens aim to experience ?the best of everything?.

This desire for ostentatious displays of wealth creates one of the most distinctive recurring elements of all League clothing - the practice of slashing. This involves regular spaced cuts or openings in a garment to allow the fabric underneath to show through. Almost everything in the League can be slashed, even shoes! The garment underneath might be a bright contrasting colour with the outer garment, but a slashed doublet can be worn over a white shirt or blouse just as easily. Several items of clothing worn by League citizens are found elsewhere in the Empire, especially the Marches and Dawn, but in these cases it is often the decorative slashing that creates a uniquely League look and feel.

No garments are gendered in Empire. League citizens of any gender wear dresses, hose, doublets, skirts and other garments as they please, in any combination they prefer.

4.2 Aspirational

This is a long and detailed page with a lot of content because we want to be thorough and clear about what the ideal costume for the League looks like. It is important to remember that all costume is aspirational in Empire, we don't want anyone to worry that their costume is not perfect. This page is a resource you can use to help you identify what the perfect costume looks like when you are buying or making a new piece of kit for a League character. It is to show you what to aim for as you improve your costume over time.

The brief includes a number of technical terms, for materials and garments. Where possible, we've tried to explain what those terms mean, and link to an external website that provides more information. While some of these terms will be unfamiliar, using the historical terms allows us to be precise, helps you search online for garments of that kind and can be helpful if you go to any costume maker who is familiar with the terms.

4.3 Silhouette

- **Achieving the right silhouette is the key to a great League costume**

The League silhouette is about creating a contrast. An outfit with close fitting hose could be larger on the upper body, with puffy sleeves or a dramatic duelling cape. Dresses with a smaller bodice and a higher waist might have a wide, flowing skirt. Or you can create the contrast with extravagant slashing to show off different layers of fabric and contrasting colours. Below are some illustrated examples by Lampblack Art of archetypal League silhouettes.













4.4 Sleeves

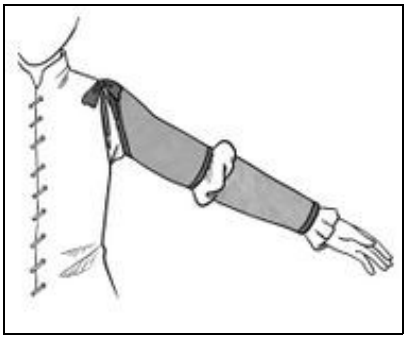
Sleeves are one of the most instantly recognisable aspects of League clothing. Sleeves of base layers such as shirts, blouses or chemises are puffed and voluminous, gathered at the cuff rather than open, loose or trailing. The outer sleeves on doublets, dresses and waffenrocks are often decorated with slashing. Sleeves are often detachable and designed to be tied on at the shoulder. There are a number of key styles. Sleeves can be identical, or can be 'mixed and matched' for an asymmetrical look.

Segmented Sleeves: These feature an outer sleeve tied on at the shoulder that has gaps at the elbow for the shirt or chemise beneath to peek through in ?puffs?. You can also choose to wear only the upper segments or lower segments.

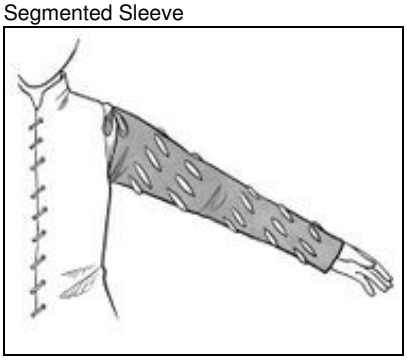
Slashed Sleeves: These can have a series of slashes or slits cut into the sleeve in patterns, or one long slit running down it, again to show off the layer underneath. Slashes can be edged in decorative trim and or beading, or other showy embellishments.

Paned Sleeves: Paned sleeves use strips of fabric to create a slotted look through which either another contrasting fabric or the shirt underneath is visible.

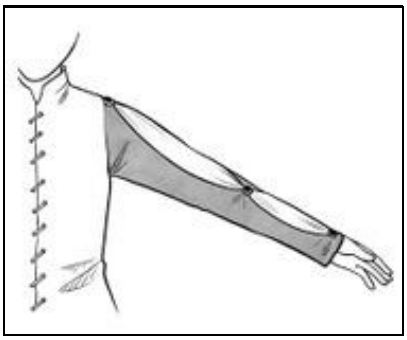
Shoulder Rolls: When the weather is warm, some Leaguers remove their outer sleeves altogether. Dresses or doublets can have padded rolls on the shoulders, so that even sleeveless, there is still plenty of decoration.



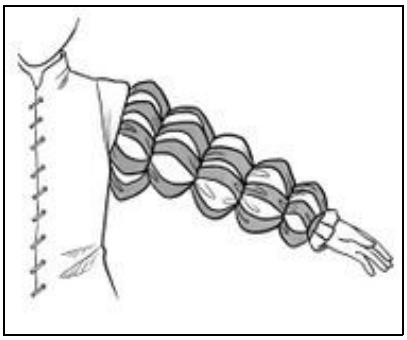
Segmented Sleeve



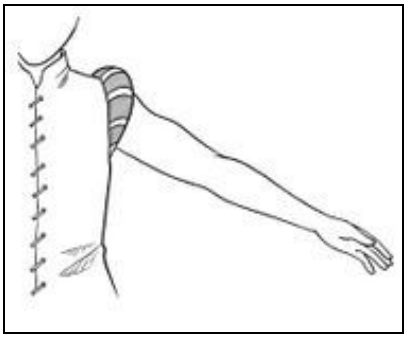
Slashed Sleeve



Slashed Sleeve



Paned Sleeve



Shoulder Roll

4.5 Garments





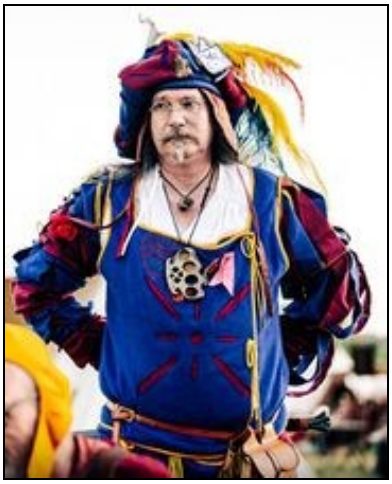


Shirt, Blouse or Chemise: League outfits are designed to be worn over shirts, blouses or chemises. These base layers can be any colour. They tend to be loose and have baggy sleeves gathered at the wrist or elbow or be puffed down the arm at intervals. They can have lacing at the neck, or a gathered neckline.

The garment may have a higher neckline to keep out the cold, but it is less appropriate to have a pointed collar, lapels or buttons all the way down in the way a modern formal shirt would. Likewise, it is less appropriate for the sleeves to trail or flare at the wrist in a ?trumpet? style, or be straight like the sleeves of a t-shirt or tight to the arm like a fitted shirt. League shirts are not worn with cravats and do not have cascading lace at the throat in a ?highwayman? or Regency style.



bodice



wams



doublet

Doublet, Wams or Bodice: A doublet is a short upper body garment, usually fastened at the front with lacing or buttons and worn over a shirt or blouse. Most doublets come down to the waist or hips. Some have short skirting or tabs at the bottom.

League wams are a style of doublet that is often lower-necked, and square or v-necked, inspired by the wams worn by landsknechts. They typically close at the side rather than the centre, or have a big detachable panel on the front (called a brustfleck) which often features a pattern of decorative slashing, like this example here.

A bodice is a good alternative to a doublet, as most off-the-peg doublets are designed for someone with a flat chest. Avoid stays; anything with thin straps or visible heavy boning is less appropriate. The ideal League bodice covers the back and shoulders and resembles a doublet that laces together at the front. A bodice usually has no sleeves, but a League bodice can have sleeves that tie-on.







Trousers or Hose: League trousers, also known as hose, often features slashed decorations, or legs in contrasting colours. They may be baggy or close fitting but are often made in heavier fabrics such as wool or canvas for warmth. You can also use leggings or jodhpurs but if you use modern garments, it is best to cover belt loops and pockets with your upper body layers.

Wider trousers should have gathering at the hems or a wide band at the ankle or lower leg so that the legs form a puffy shape. Close fitting trousers may have a flap at the front which is tied on; this is sometimes lightly padded to form a discreet codpiece. Short hose, which ends above the knee, can be slashed, or have panes of fabric with a contrast fabric puffing out in a style known as ?pumpkin hose?, owing to their shape.

Dress, Skirt or Waffenrock: The ideal League dress has a seam at the waistline and a skirt that flares out below. The waistlines can be high with fabric gathered underneath the bust or can sit lower down. A split-front overdress can also be worn over a contrasting skirt. League skirts can be either full length or come to the knee and are often gathered or pleated into the waistband. Dresses can have a decorative front panel, often featuring lacing across the torso, like those featured in the paintings by Cranach the Elder.

League dresses and skirts are not worn with any hoop or cage shaped structures underneath to give skirts an exaggerated bell or cylinder shape. Hoop skirts, farthingales, bum rolls, bustles, and crinolines should all be avoided.

The League waffenrock is a full skirted tunic or short dress, often made in two or more brightly contrasting colours based on the waffenrocks worn by landsknechts. The skirt is usually full and falls to around the knee area. They sometimes feature wider, open sleeves without a gathered cuff, usually

elbow length, to allow them to be worn over armour or another garment. Be careful if you search for waffenrock online as the word refers to a wide range of garments, including many more modern garments - this is the kind of waffenrock that is right for the League.



High Waist



Low Waist



Split-front overdress



'Cranach' dress



Waffenrock



Coat



Robe



Open Robe

Coats or Robes: League robes and coats are generally long - either to the ankle or knee. They can be worn open at the front or closed with a belt or other fastenings. They are often trimmed with fur.

League coats do not have lapels, and the fastenings do not extend down the length of the garment like a modern coat. They should fasten with a belt or a few buttons or similar, at the waist or chest. Epaulettes are not appropriate. If they have sleeves, they do not have wide turned-back cuffs like a frock coat.

Capes, Cloaks or Partlets: League cloaks are usually decorated with trim, either applique, embroidery or fur. Short capes, that hang to the waist, are particularly popular with bravos. They can be worn over both shoulders, or over just one by tying under the opposite arm.



cape



capelet



partlet

A capelet is a small cape, clasping at the neck, which comes down no further than the elbow. Fur, or faux fur, is a common material for capelets, though wool or velvet edged with fur is also seen.

A partlet is a small upper body garment designed primarily to be worn over dresses. They come down to the bust and fasten at the front. They are often secured with underarm ties. Partlets are generally made from heavier, warmer, fabrics such as wool, thick brocade, velvet or suede.







4.6 Accessories

Jewellery: Rings are an important part of League hearth magic but ornate jewellery is commonplace across the nation - often with a ?more is more? mindset. Several strings of pearls worn together, or chokers worn at the same time as lower-slung necklaces, are a frequent sight. Chains of office are often worn by merchant princes and bishops to signal status and authority. Brooches are worn as often on hats as they are on garments, sometimes to pin up one side of a wide brim.

Hats, Headdresses, and Hairnets: Wearing something on your head is one of the *best* ways to complete a great League costume. A tellerbarett is a flat hat with an enormous plate-like brim that can be festooned with feathers or jewellery and worn at a jaunty angle. A dockenbarett, or landsknecht star-fish hat, has a large brim made from wide folded tabs. Both are popular with bravos and free companies and often feature slashing with contrasting colours. Coifs or headwraps can be worn under either.

Cylindrical taller hats in bright colours, similar to the capitanesca worn by the Italian Renaissance prince Cosimo de Medici in this portrait, suit the League. These tend not to have a wide brim - anything like a top hat is not appropriate. Loose, floppy berets - sometimes referred to as ?muffin? hats owing to their shape - are another iconic League hat. These can be very large, and might be pleated into the band. Others might have a short brim, like a Tudor bonnet.

Beaded snoods and hairnets are also worn in the League. These can be as simple as a crochet-style net pinned or held onto the hair. Headdresses that resemble Flemish hoods, German steuchlein and wulsthaube headdresses, or the Italian renaissance balzo headdress, all of which feature a padded roll that sits on or behind the head, are also popular.

The hats above are all iconic for the League, but a simple felt hat with a round crown and a wide brim is acceptable. Such hats are best in a bright colour, and long, plumed feathers and brooches can be used to add flourish.



Tellerbarett



Dockenbaret



Muffin hat



Tudor Bonnet



Capitanesca



Beaded snood



Flemish hood



Felt hat

4.7 Colours and Materials

Colours: Every colour is found in the cosmopolitan League; bright, strong colours, dark, sombre tones and delicate pastels are all common. Two or three contrasting colours are often used to accentuate key features of the League silhouette, for example in slashed decorations on garments. Capes and cloaks may be lined in a contrasting colour, and underskirts worn beneath split-front dresses are often a different colour to the overdress worn on

top. You might also choose to wear colours that suggest your character is affiliated with a particular League city.

Materials: League garments often use heavier fabrics for outer garments such as doublets, dresses and waffenrocks and lighter materials for the base layers, such as shirts and chemises, that go underneath. You can always use synthetic versions of any of these materials, or mixed fabrics such as wool blends and cotton velvet. Cotton, linen and wool are often blended with polyester, acrylic or viscose, and poly satins and velvets are a good budget alternative that is easily available.

Base layer fabrics: Cotton, linen and thinner satins are ideal for base layers. They can also be used to provide a pop of contrasting colour, for example as the lining to a cape or as puffs between slashed sleeves.

Outer layer fabrics: Velvet, wool cloth (rather than garments knitted using wool yarn), and heavier weight satins are ideal for any outer garments in the League.



Wool cloth



Velvet



Satin



Brocade



Jacquard

Patterned fabrics: Brocade, damask and jacquard are all ideal for the League. They are not printed - decoration is woven in as a raised, textured pattern. Flamboyant, busy patterns are common, often using metallic threads so the pattern stands out against the background colour. Popular motifs include curling foliage, stylised flowers, and diamond and lattice patterns. Avoid brocades with obvious East Asian motifs such as dragons, phoenixes, lions and storks as these are *not appropriate* for Empire.

Hard-wearing fabrics: Leather, suede and cotton canvas can all be used for characters who want hard-wearing garments.

Fur: Full garments made from fur or faux fur are less appropriate, with the exception of capelets, but fur - real or synthetic - is a good material to trim garments with.









Trim: Using embroidered trim, beading, ribbon or upholstery trim (sometimes called 'gimp trim') to edge or decorate a garment is a great idea

4.8 Gallery








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4.9 Battle

The ideal League armaments are inspired by the aesthetics of the German Landsknechts, Swiss Reisläufer, and the Italian condottieri. Even in battle, the goal is to be flamboyant. Maille may be hidden under garments such as a waffenrock in order to prioritise looking good. Alternatively, pieces of armour may be decorated with elaborate, ostentatious designs such as stylised, curling foliage like the work of Filippo Negroli or painted with bold patterns such as harlequin-style diamonds or stripes.

Armour: Padded jacks, often shaped like a doublet, but thicker, are common in the League. They may be made in the colours of a guild or free company or be decorated with a guild badge to show affiliation. A ledergollar, a jerkin made from comfortable, flexible leather, can be the basis for light armour, or worn over heavier armour simply for the look.

Plate and chain are also popular, but full coverage is rare, as League soldiers tend to favour mobility and gaps in the armour allow slashed sleeves or hose to spill through. A bishop's mantle - a chain collar that covers the chest and shoulders which can go down to the elbow like a poncho - can be worn with other armour. A brigandine - overlapping metal plates covered in fabric such as suede or velvet - is an ideal option for being fashionable and heavily armoured at the same time.

Helm: Some League citizens wear a brimmed helmet - a kettle helm, morion, or burgonet - while fighting. These are often dressed up with ribbons or plumes of feathers. Late medieval helmet styles like sallets are ideal for the League, but it is also possible to conceal a metal skullcap called a secrete inside a hat to combine protection with fashion.

Shield: Many professional free companies prefer to use pole-arms or great swords, rather than employ a shield. Those who do use a shield often use them to advertise the services of a guild or free company, or to display religious iconography. An impressive shield can be a work of art, either painted, or dressed with an intricate shield cover.

Weapons: Great weapons, such as bills, two-handed swords or pikes are the tool of choice for free company soldiers. Rapiers, side-swords and other one-handed swords usually have complex hilts to protect the hand, like the distinctive figure-8 guard of the katzbalger. Crossbows have been enthusiastically adopted by free companies, and are always preferable to bows which are *less appropriate* in the League.

Bravos: Bravos and street fighters usually favour a rapier or other light sword and pair it with a main gauche, stiletto or buckler for the off-hand. They may wear no armour, or protect only the most vital areas, such as a single shoulder piece to protect the weapon arm. Many wear a duelling cape, even when taking the battlefield.



Brigandine



Painted armour



Clothing showing through



Bishop's mantle

4.10 Religion

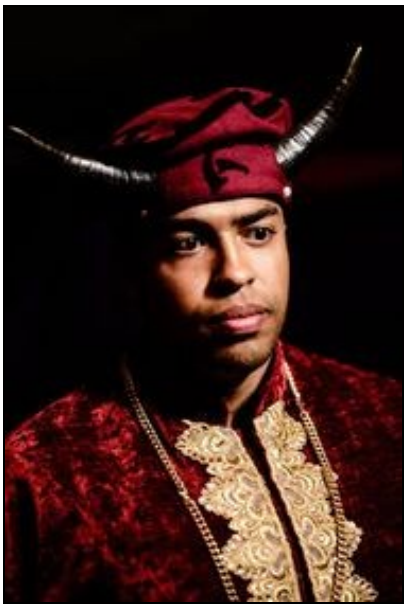
The iconic look for a League bishop involves an impressive hat, a stole, and a set of vestments. Together, these three elements help to project power and status. There is no requirement for a League priest to dress like a bishop, but people in the League understand the power of appearance. Those who adopt the garments of the Bishop find it easier to command the respect of others for their calling. Thus any League priest may choose to don any one or more of the following when they feel the need.

Hat: The ideal hat is tall and imposing. A traditional Christian mitre is less appropriate; rather than curving to a single point, the ideal League mitre has several peaks to echo a crown, like the wave-shaped mitre shown below. A boxy Capitanesca hat, or something like the magician's hat sold by Burgschneider is also great. The hat is often made of lavish fabric and may be decorated with gems or tablet embroidery.

Stole: A stole is a long narrow strip of fabric worn around the neck which hangs down the body. League bishops often wear them in a lavish fabric such as jacquard or satin, and they may be richly embroidered with symbols of their church, guild or chosen virtue. The simplest ones have the labyrinth, the universal symbol of the Way on the ends.

Vestments: Vestments are fine over-robes a priest can throw over their normal clothing when they need to convey their status, such as when preaching or performing ceremonies. These vestments can be shaped like a chasuble (either in the 'roman' or 'gothic' style), a loose, poncho-like garment featuring opulent trimmings and decorations, or a cope, a heavier outer vestment, open at the front and more like a cloak. Ideally, vestments are decorated with symbols of the virtue the bishop is dedicated to, such as chains for Loyalty. The simplest vestment is a cassock, a full-length, long-sleeved, high-collared gown which usually fastens at the front. Unlike the subdued or plainer cassocks worn by Highborn citizens or Marcher friars, a League cassock is ideally made of richly decorated fabric such as brocade. It is best worn with a tall bishop's hat and stole to convey the wearer's importance.









4.11 Magic

League magicians commonly wear the same clothing as other citizens, but dramaturgical magicians often carry the accoutrements of their profession on their person, so as to be ready to perform at a moment?s notice. This could be a mask permanently pushed up on their forehead or tied around their arm, a puppet carried with them wherever they go, or a bag overflowing with dramaturgy props for their troupe. Some magicians choose to have separate outfits for the different dramaturgical personae, and usually will have a mask for each, either individually or as a troupe. The magical tradition of dramaturgy infuses every part of the League, so even those who have made no formal study of magic may dress as the persona they wish to embody when it will advantage them.

Masks are a crucial part of League hearth magic and fashionable for everyone. League masks take influence from real world Venetian carnival masks, and typically cover the upper half of the face or all of it. People often match their masks to their outfits, and free companies or gangs of mountebanks often wear matching masks. Masks are made from a variety of materials: papier maché, ceramics, metal, leather or fabric. Plastic and resin are acceptable if painted to look like an appropriate material. Citizens who uses glasses often wear them over a fabric mask and many people use a mask mounted on a stick and held up in front of the face for comfort.

A mask is the iconic piece of mage armour in the League, often paired with pauldrons and vambraces. A magical partlet is also common, providing the same protection that a pectoral would cover. The ideal mage armour is richly embossed with stylised designs. These might be similar to the filigree seen on decorated League plate armour or be images of runes, constellations, or dramaturgical symbols like the cup, mirror or blade, picked out in gemstones or pearls. Metal is often painted a vibrant colour, or dyed if leather, so that mage armour can contrast with or complement the outfit underneath. Like a bravo's armour, League mage armour will often employ a single exaggerated piece where a pair might otherwise be worn, such as one ornate pauldron or vambrace.







4.12 The Five Cities

None of the League cities hold a monopoly on warm or heavier fabrics or garments, regardless of their climate. Whilst the southern cities of Tassato and Sarvos may experience warmer, Mediterranean temperatures, there are plenty of cold days there too, and citizens dress accordingly when they come to Anvil. Likewise, during warmer events, characters from Holberg and Temeschwar are just as likely to ditch their wools and furs for thinner, breezier clothing as players from any other city.

Each city does have leanings towards colours or certain accessories, but League citizens are free to adopt elements of any city's fashions if they

choose.

Apulian: Oranges and purples are fashionable in Apulian, as are fabrics with an iridescent sheen. Jewellery is often chunkier and makes heavy use of polished, bright gold. It's popular to wear multiple necklaces or stacks of bracelets going partway up the arm.

Holberg: Many Holberg citizens prefer luxurious fabrics in an earthier, more sombre colour palette - popular colours include browns, dark greens, olive, wine red, and greys. Leather is more fashionable for garments and armour here than elsewhere in the League, and heavier fabrics and fur trims are prized.

Sarvos: Sarvos fashions prioritise brighter colours that evoke the city's coastal region. Blues, teal, turquoise, silver and yellows are popular, as are nautical themes such as metal jewellery twisted to look like rope, strings of pearls, and pearl edging on garments. In a nod to the city's history, many citizens incorporate tiny mirrors into the trim of their garments, add pieces of mirror to their masks, or use mirror motifs in their accessories.

Tassato: Tassatans are known for their extravagance and love of showing off. Bright reds, pinks and gold are more common here, with red and gold a classic Tassatan colour combination. Tassatans are also more likely to choose outfits in vibrant clashing colours, and they enjoy wearing ribbons and bows, both on garment fastenings and in the hair. Ribbons are sometimes added to garments to mark a personal achievement when the wearer has 'won' at something.

Temeschwar: Temeschwar's fashions favour darker colours, like Holberg but starker. Black is more popular here than elsewhere along with bright reds and greys. Redwork and blackwork embroidery is a popular way to decorate shirts and chemises. Fur is more common in Temeschwar, especially on hats, capes and cloaks, reflecting the city?s Varushkan history. Where other League citizens might add fur trim to a cape, a citizen of Temeschwar might just as readily make the whole cape out of fur.



4.13 League Orcs

We recommend gloves rather than painting the hands for League orcs, but you can do either. If that makes it difficult to wear rings on your fingers, it is fine to wear them on a ribbon or chain around the neck or hanging off the wrist or belt. You could even pin a ring to your costume to wear as a brooch if you prefer. It is helpful to hide the joins where your orc mask and/or gloves meet your skin. Gaudy chokers or thick necklaces are ideal, but a bright infinity scarf, worn up or down, is a good alternative.

If you are not comfortable wearing a League mask over an orc mask, you can use a mask held in front of the face with a stick.

4.14 Outside The Brief

To define the ideal look and feel for The League we have deliberately chosen to exclude some themes. This is important because it helps to create a clear visual aesthetic for the nation. The goal is to make members of the nation visually distinct from the other nations in play and to ensure that the costume guidelines don't become diluted by including ideas for costume from similar sources. We explicitly define some costume ideas and inspirations as not part of the brief for The League to make what definitely does fit the brief clearer and more distinct.

Most things that are not part of a nation's brief are considered to be less appropriate as they are not not strictly part of the costume brief. This means that you can still use them if you need to but they are not something that you should actively aim for when you are creating or buying something for your The League character. Creating a costume is always a compromise as time and money are limited, so it is sensible to use a garment or prop that is less appropriate if you already own it, if that allows you to focus on improving other parts of your costume.

A few things are explicitly defined as inappropriate. These are things that you should not use when you are in-character at an event, because of the real-world connotations or imagery associated with them. We have deliberately omitted these elements because they are so striking and memorable that it is impossible to see them without thinking of the themes associated with them.

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.

4.14.1 Less Appropriate

The look and feel of the League is heavily inspired by the historical costumes worn during the European renaissance and the early Tudor period. The brief does *not* stick to a tight historical period because we want to ensure there is a good range of costume that people can feel comfortable wearing and still be on brief, but some of the distinctive looks of clothing from later periods is outside the brief and should be avoided where possible. When choosing a bodice or dress, it is helpful to read the guidance on corsets on the main costume page.



Avoid ruffs and oversized collars that flare out around the head
Leagueish shirts are not worn with cravats and do not have cascading lace at the throat in a ?highwayman? or Regency style. They can have a higher neckline to keep out the cold but tend not to have pointed collars, lapels or buttons all the way down in the way a modern formal shirt would. The ideal sleeves are not tight to the arm, and long trailing sleeves that flare to a trumpet or bell shape at the wrist or dagged sleeves are less appropriate in the League, as they are iconic for Dawn.

The 'robin hood' style bycocket, along with long-tailed hats like a liripipe or chaperon, are ideal for the Marches and Dawn but less appropriate in the League. Pilgrim hats and the kind of tabards worn by Dumas' musketeers are also less appropriate as they are outside the brief for Empire. You can wear a wide-brimmed felt hat provided it has a rounded crown. Anything with a shaped crown is less appropriate - a modern cowboy hat is inappropriate for Empire. It's fine to pin one side of the hat to the crown, but don't pin two or more sides of the hat as this will make it look too much like a tricorn which is inappropriate for Empire.

The ideal League skirts or dresses do not have any artificial support, so a farthingale, (often referred to as a bum roll), is less appropriate, as are bustles, crinolines, and hooped skirts. Ruffs at the neck and wrists are less appropriate for Empire, and the famously large ruffs and huge upright collars of the Elizabethan era are inappropriate and should be avoided.

A classic Regency dress is less appropriate in the League. They can be improved by replacing the arms with iconic sleeves that are slashed or puffed and by wearing a shirt or chemise underneath.



Inappropriate Y-shape cross

4.14.2 Inappropriate

Frock coats, greatcoats, tailcoats and Spencer jackets are all from a much later period than the inspiration for the League. They are not appropriate for use in Empire. Likewise, military jackets such as the ones worn by hussars with elaborate gold braid or epaulettes. Elaborate powdered wigs like a peruke that were made popular by Louis XIII are not appropriate.

Our look and feel for League priests draws inspiration from the garments worn by Christian clergy, but you should avoid anything with uniquely Christian symbolism. Please ensure your priest costume does not feature Christian or Celtic crosses or christograms such as ?IHS? or the Chi Rho. If you are using any commercially made or second-hand vestments, please make sure they don't incorporate any real-world religious iconography. If you are wearing a chasuble in the 'gothic' style, which is loose and flowing, you must not wear one with decorative strips on the body of the chasuble that form a Y-shape, which resembles a Christian cross when the arms are held open.

A codpiece, a shaped piece of material covering the crotch area attached to the front of hose, is acceptable, provided it conceals rather than emphasises the shape. The ideal codpiece is streamlined and discreet, not protruding. It is intended for covering an area, not drawing attention to it. If you are wearing hose with a codpiece, it should match the hose it is worn with - eye-catching decoration should be avoided. Codpieces must not violate our conduct rules on sexualising the environment.

4.15 Further Reading

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5 The League 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 the League 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.

5.2 Debts

Everyone in the Empire knows that bad things happen to those who break their word. There is power in obligations and even more so in those that are laid down and recorded.There are countless stories in the League of people who suffered a catastrophic decline in their fortunes after refusing to pay what was owed. The League practice of Dead reckoning, of recording every significant debt and favour owed or owing, makes this hearth magic more powerful.

In the League, the wealthy often trade in favours - if someone does you a service then you owe them a favour in return. Citizens of the League keep track of the favours they have done for people, no matter how meek their place in life. After all, who knows when they will be in a position to repay such a debt? Some also record every time a rival acted against them - for this too creates an obligation that must eventually be repaid in kind. When calling in a favour, it is important to ask for something of equal significance - otherwise the hearth magic is void.

Memory alone can be unreliable, so the wise consider it prudent to keep a ledger or a journal in which debts can be recorded. An individual might keep their own journal, or sometimes a guild will run one ledger for all their members, appointing one of their number to keep the records straight. Such ledgers can be a potent talisman when performing a ritual to bring down a curse on someone who has overstepped the mark. While there have been significant criticisms of this practice from the Synod in the past, claiming it is akin to the invocation of dangerous spiritual forces, the General Assembly recently agreed that the practice of seeking recompense for transgressions against an individual is not contrary to doctrine.

Debts in Play

Employing this hearth magic means treating all significant debts and favours as important. It can be to your advantage to track every debt you are owed, but it's important to lean in to the magic around *owing* someone a favour. Having a debt with someone is a little like a curse in some respects, it's rarely in your character's best interest - but owing a favour to another character can create huge amounts of roleplay for you if you embrace it.

Writing debts down makes it easier to keep track of them and underlines their importance. When calling in debts, being able to present an in-character record can add to the drama of the situation. A group might have a member whose job is to keep the dead reckoning ledger up to date, but any individual in the League can keep their own journal or scroll detailing what is owed if they want. The key thing is to record the debts, favours, and grudges that are significant and have drama - your ledger is a list of things that are *important*, it's not a sales ledger. Two League characters comparing debts, or entering an important debt into their respective lists, can provide a fun roleplaying experience.

To legitimately call in a favour, you have to specify something of equivalent value to the favour you received. How you reckon that is partly up to you, but the best requests are ones likely to create engaging roleplaying for your debtor - you're more likely to get something valuable if what you have asked for is also enjoyable to roleplay with. When calling in debts, everyone is encouraged to embrace the drama that flows when someone cannot or will not settle a debt or repay a favour. Such a refusal threatens arrangements that are part of the fabric of League society and should be treated as significant by all who hear of them. League stories are full of curses that befall those who default, so if you default on a debt it can be fun to ascribe every misfortune that subsequently befalls you to the power of this hearth magic.

Some players may enjoy agreeing to owe debts that predate the start of the game, giving them connections to other groups or individuals before they enter play. Owing a powerful League prince a favour or two can be a good way for a new character to get started in Empire; putting yourself in another character's debt creates the potential for drama when you're called on to pay those debts.

5.3 Masks



Masks conceal the identity, or allow a new identity to be presented.
Masks are used extensively in the League, in theatre productions, in masked dance, and in the performance of ritual magic. But League citizens will don a mask at the drop of a hat, and many maintain a selection of masks expressing different personalities. Choosing an appropriate mask can make it easier for you achieve your goals, while observing which mask your rival is wearing can provide crucial insight into their intentions. Donning a mask can cause you to assume elements of the identity that the mask represents. These qualities vary between individuals - two League citizens who don a wolf mask will not necessarily experience the same urges - but the masks associated with the dramaturgy personae have particular resonance for everyone in the nation.

There are plenty of accounts from the League of masks gaining an identity of their own, especially those that are used prominently in front of large audiences. Usually this affects masks employed by dramaturgy troupes but there are some stories of masks worn consistently by politicians or others in the public eye beginning to take on a power of their own. Someone who dons such a mask will find their performance grows in conviction, but those who lack the strength to rule the mask often report losing themselves in the role. There are cautionary tales of actors who discovered they were unable to remove their mask when the performance ended. Stories of actors who had no personality of their own left when their mask was removed are generally dismissed as children's tales, but none-the-less every League troupe takes great care to store their masks carefully and ensure they are well-protected. It is believed to be dangerous to destroy or dispose of a powerful mask, so the oldest ones are often hidden away in vaults and brought out only for very special performances.

Masks should be worn with care when dealing with creatures of the realm. Some eternals are fooled by masks - and some do not understand masks in the way a mortal does viewing a mask more like an title or position of authority, as if the mask were a personality whose interests the wearer were representing.

Masks in Play

Masks are common in the League, anyone can wear one. When you do, this hearth magic explicitly gives you an in-character reason to change how you play your character. The personae of dramaturgy are a great place to start when looking for inspiration, but a mask may also have a personal meaning to your character that changes how they act. It is entirely acceptable to spin a story about your mask that explains why it effects you the way it does. It can also be fun to create a character whose personality seems to undergo a marked change when they don a mask - effectively allowing you to play a pleasant or mild-mannered character most of the time except when you don your mask of the Witch and become a mysterious scheming riddler or mystic.

It can also be fun to play up the idea that someone in a mask can be difficult to identify. The tropes of opera or theatre, in which someone wearing a mask is unrecognisable to their closest friends and family, may seem foolish but in Empire they can be a magical consequence of donning a disguise of this nature.

5.4 Mirrors

Mirrors reveal the truth. Usually, they show what is physically present, but they can also provide unexpected insight. Anyone looking in a mirror may see hidden truths about themselves revealed, either things they have concealed from others or from themselves. Mirrors can reveal someone's true nature

to them, or hint at their true feelings. There are accounts of murderers caught because at a crucial moment they were startled to see their reflection covered in blood, or the image of their victim standing accusingly behind them. Mirrors are subtle in their effects - and these truths are intensely personal. A League citizen contemplating treachery might see themselves perfectly reflected except for the striking absence of a crucial ring.

Some inhabitants of the League have adopted a Holberg tradition that encourages those with worries or wracked with guilt to confide their problems to their reflection - engaging in imaginary dialogues as they work through the concerns of the day. Thanks to the hearth magic involved, it is not unknown for a reflection to speak back to someone using it in this fashion, making a comment that encourages them to confront or accept their true intentions, or even offering advice on how to deal with their problems. As with more visual effects, only the person looking into the mirror hears the words.

There are occasional accounts of people seeing revealed truths about other people in mirrors, but these are obviously impossible to verify. They are a staple of fiction and theatre across the League, but most people would take claims that someone is a murderer because a mirror revealed it with a pinch of salt.

Mirrors in Play

The only person who can tell what you see when you look in a mirror is yourself, so you are free to roleplay that your reflection shows you some terrible secret truth if you wish. Even if your character has no dark past, they might still be cautious about telling a lie while looking into a mirror out of a genuine concern that their falsehood might be revealed or rebound on them in some fashion if they do.

You might use a mirror to gain unusual insights; regularly studying people or objects in a hand-held mirror can create an interesting character trait especially if other players lean into it. If you are roleplaying that you cannot identify someone in a mask, bringing out a mirror to study them and "reveal" their true identity can add to the drama of the situation as well as drawing out the culture of the League in an enjoyable way. A little League flavour can be given to the use of any skill that provides information by incorporating a mirror. When you perform the insight ceremony for example you might study your subject in a mirror, while a detect magic spell can be given a little extra flair by insisting on studying the target's reflection in a mirror rather than examining it directly.

The practice of talking with your own reflection can actually work as a useful dramatic technique for getting into character - as well as allowing you to talk about things you would never discuss in public with the possibility that someone might overhear and lead to interesting complications on the field.

5.5 Rings

A ring may induce the wearer to honesty, integrity, or fidelity when dealing with those to whose loyalty the ring symbolises. Sharing the true story of a ring with someone ? explaining the correspondences and symbols ? is a sign of trust and confidence. More than a few openly wear rings that represent hidden allegiances. If you think you know who a citizen of the League is loyal to, but they are wearing more rings than you can trace loyalties, it may be that they have a hidden loyalty, or that they felt a loyalty to someone or something in the past (an ex-lover, for example, or the memory of a dead friend). Stealing rings is a dreadful insult ? it implies an attempt to sever the target from their allegiances and loyalties.

While it is common for a dying citizen of the League to pass one or more rings to friends and family as heirlooms, they are often burned along with the corpses. Rings that were being worn at the time the wearer died are known to become repositories for death and ill fortune. The wealthiest citizens of the League expect to be buried with their rings, and robbing the rings of the dead is said to bring about a dreadful curse. There are any number of accounts of grave-robbers stealing rings that later bring them who quickly come to bad ends. It is generally considered safe to wear a ring that was explicitly passed to a new wearer by the previous owner in person or in their will, but there are some who refuse to take the chance and insist on wearing such *grave rings* on chains rather than on their fingers.

Choosing to wear a ring should not be taken lightly. If someone betrays their loyalty, then the ring may take on a lasting curse that bring misfortune to anyone who wears it. There are several accounts of rings that draw the shades of the betrayed to drive a villain mad, or that weakened a traitor at a key moment to ensure that they reap the rewards for their treachery.

The five ring piece shows a hand wearing five rings, and it is widely believed to represent the hand of Stratocanthus, the first Master of the Imperial Mint. According to legend his rings represented his loyalty to his guild, the twin-city of Tassato, the Nation of the League, the Empire and, depending on who one listens to, his wife or his mistress. Only one of the rings was enchanted, and there is a lot of debate among historians as to which of the rings bore the enchantment, as Stratocanthus is known to have commented in an unguarded moment that it was ?the most important one.?

Rings in Play

Rings are a great addition to any League costume; they don't need to be expensive or ornate to help represent your personal history. The easiest way to evoke this hearth magic is simply to ensure you have a set of rings, and that you know what loyalty or allegiance each one represents. You may be open about what a ring means, or keep it to yourself but just making a mental note of the significance of each one can be an excellent way to get into character and remember what is important to you. This is especially true if you "rank" your rings in some way. In-character, subtle cues like studying or

twisting a ring while dealing with topics related to it can help focus your attention or provide cues to those interacting with you that something is important. The power of rings makes it easier for you to maintain your allegiances, so shifting your roleplaying after turning one of your rings can be one way to evoke this hearth magic.

Rings can make significant and dramatic gifts for an in-character friend or subordinate. Accepting or refusing the offer of a ring is one way to add drama to any scene where characters are making agreements, making promises, or committing to a course of action. There are plenty of magic items that can take the form of rings, and any ring can be hallowed - getting an aura of pride, ambition, or loyalty attached to a ring that represents a key loyalty or oath is an excellent way to further reinforce the power of his hearth magic.

5.6 Further Reading

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6 The League history

6.1 Origins of the League

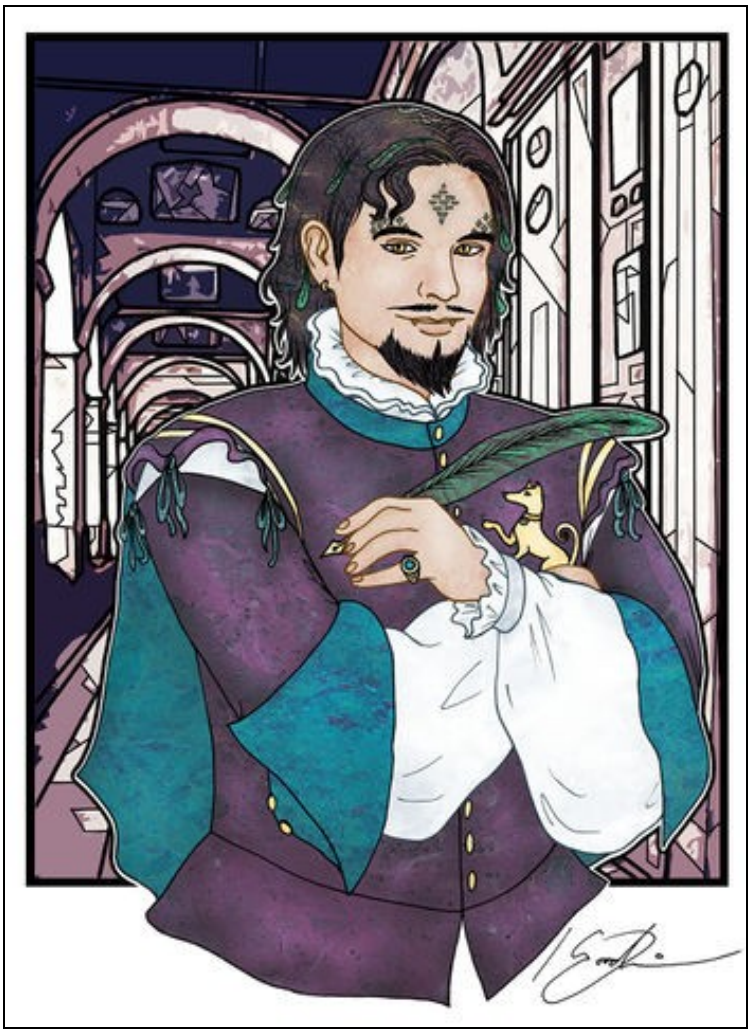
The four cities that would eventually become the League had very different origins. The oldest of the four, Temeschwar, began as one of the westernmost vales of Varushka; there is evidence that a settlement has existed on the site of the city since before the union of the Vard and the Ushka. Ruled for centuries by a succession of powerful boyar, it was considered part of Varushka right up until the foundation of the League. To the surprise of many, it chose to join the two southern cities in a political alliance rather than remain Varushkan. There are some dark suggestions that the choice was affected by the influence of a powerful sovereign that still influences the city to this day - but modern citizens consider such a suggestion to be a matter for lurid fiction rather than actual historical fact. The more likely reason is that the Temeschwari burghers correctly identified that their city would have much more influence as an independent city state of the League than as a city in the territory of Karov.

Sarvos is the next oldest; along with Tassato it was founded by Highborn colonists spreading west along the shores of the Bay of Catazar. The Saravos family who gave the city their name were largely ostracised from Patrician society due to their open disdain for the insular and stratified nature of Highborn life at that time. They travelled west seeking opportunities for profit and advancement that were not open to them at home. As their town became more prosperous, and grew in size, they increasingly distanced themselves from their Highborn relatives and, when the chapters and the patricians went to war, they quietly seceded from the nation. After the violence, when the assembly of the virtuous was consolidating its hold over Highguard, attempts were made to return Sarvos and Tassato to the fold - but both cities resisted. An abortive attempt to conquer the city fifty years after the burning of Pharos was thwarted by the combined forces of the two former Highborn cities - much to the surprise of the virtuous.

Tassato shares the same roots as Sarvos - primarily founded by Highborn colonists along the banks of the Vassa. The story of Regario and Mestra, feuding siblings who each sought to establish a settlement here is well known and often credited with being the source of the conflict between the two halves of the city. Some scholars suggest that another source of this discord lies with the fact that the population of Regario grew as it absorbed the steady flow of emigrants from Highguard, while Mestra swelled with an influx of Marchers seeking a new life of prosperity away from the land. When the assembly of the virtuous reached out to "bring home the lost children of Highguard", Mestra and Regario unsurprisingly sided with Sarvos, fighting the Highborn army in Riposi, Foracci, and Madeiras to preserve their independence. League scholars believe that it was the threat of Highborn conquest that first forced Mestra and Regario to work together, and ultimately led to the two towns becoming a single entity in the years that followed. They remained fierce rivals of Sarvos - except where one city or the other was threatened by outside forces. A number of treaties between the two, and with the Freeborn to the south-west, ensured that the Brass Coast and the two city-states would fight together to oppose any would-be conquerors.

Holberg is the youngest of the four cities. The city was founded by the same settlers that eventually established the nation of Dawn, but isolated from them by the Semmerholm mountains the settlement pursued its own path, growing until it dominated the surrounding plains and marshes. It prospered from the profitable mines dug into the mountainsides; from rich caravans that travelled back and forth between the city and the other nations of humankind; and from waves of new settlers who came to the area to seek their fortunes. When Semmerholm was finally conquered by Imperial forces in 52YE, the burghers of Holberg were invited to join the Empire as part of Dawn but all approaches were rebuffed; they preferred to remain independent. Content to trade with the Empire via the Gate, they showed little interest in actually becoming Imperial citizens secure as they were in their massively fortified town. The city continued to grow in wealth and power, supported by a burgeoning trade with the distant Commonwealth that brought accompanying cultural and economic ties. The eventual conquest of the territory in 132YE, and their petition to join the League, are often held up as an instructive tale about the complexities of Senatorial politics and the danger of making assumptions.

6.2 Founding the League



Aldones di Sarvos was the Merchant Prince of Sarvos when the Empress and her supporters began their crusade. Conveniently for her, legend claims he was also the richest person in the world at that time and his silver flowed everywhere the Empress and her troops went. But Aldones was faced with a clear problem; the Sarvossians might consider themselves to be the most important people in the world, but the truth was a single city - even one with the power of Sarvos - could not compare with the power of the nations that were drawn to the Empress' banner. There were whispered suggestions among the Empress' supporters that Sarvos should become a Highborn or Freeborn territory.

Aldones met with Barell, Merchant Prince of Tassato, the fierce rival of Sarvos on the Bay of Catazar and with Maria Ivanova, Boyar of Temeschwar, the greatest city of Varushka into which all the riches of that nation flowed. He introduced them to the Empress, and together they persuaded the two that their future lay with the Empire. But Aldones' plan was much more ambitious than even this. He convinced them that as the greatest cities of the world, they had more in common with each other than with the nations that surrounded them. His proposal went beyond the mere suggestion that become part of the Empire; Aldones proposed that they join together into a single League and thereby create an entirely new nation.

With their backing it was impossible for any of the Empress' supporters to gainsay Aldones' ambition and the League was recognized as the eighth nation of the Empire. The newly created egregore helped to bind the cities into one, allowing them to adopt the best of each other's customs. Their immense geographical separation means that each city still keeps something of its own character, despite the link to the Egregore. As far as the League is concerned this is part of what gives them their strength; each city has a vital spirit of its own - they see themselves as strands of rope woven together for strength, distinct from each other but capable of pulling together when they choose.

In the years that followed, the Empire consolidated its control of the lands around the Bay of Catazar, driving the orcs into the wilderness. The cities of the League worked tirelessly to advance the Empire, but despite military successes the League were unable to identify any cities that shared their enterprising approach in the lands being conquered. They prided themselves on being first amongst equals in the Empire, but they began to whisper to each other about their loss of influence as other Nations gained new territories and senators.

As Dawnish forces pushed eastward they came to the walls of Holberg, a city so heavily fortified that it had never fallen. League forces offered to put the city under siege whilst the Dawnish armies pushed on, eager for glory in battle against the orcs that populated the surrounding lands. The League army encircled the city, but rather than starve them out and storm the walls, they began secret negotiations with the burghers who ruled the city. By the time the Dawn had completed their conquest, the clever words of the League's ambassadors and the gifts that accompanied them had been enough to

convince Holberg to open its gates to the Empire. The city that has never fallen joined the Empire without a single life lost - as far any citizen of the League was concerned it was the greatest military triumph of the age.

Never before had the Senate been split over which nation might lay claim to a territory. The Merchant Princes seized this opportunity and with the help of an envoy from the city of Holberg they convinced the Senate to declare the city to be part of the League. The nobles of Dawn were incandescent with fury, regarding the territory as rightfully theirs by virtue of the blood they had spilled to conquer it. They denounced Holberg swearing that they would never lift a finger to aid the territory. Centuries later, the resentment still simmers - as Holberg lost land to the barbarians, there were never quite enough Dawnish Earls able to spare the troops to help the city - the political divisions of the past destroying the Empire's future - according to the League.

6.3 Newcomers

The Senate ratified a peace treaty with the Grendel during the Autumn Equinox 383YE that saw the Empire cede regions in both Spiral and Feroz to the Grendel. Salt Lord Kaliact qiuckly established herself as the new, almost reasonable, ruler of Spiral. Over the next year the new inhabitants of Spiral engaged with the Empire, helping to create the position of Spiral Envoy to encourage trade with the people of Apulian. The Senate voted against ratifying a treaty with Kaliact that would see the territory treated as a separate entity to the rest of the Broken Shore.

Undeterred, Kaliact tried again and a season later, in Spring 385YE, the Senate voted to ratify a historic treaty that ceded the territory to the Empire and saw it claimed by the Wolves of War shortly after. During the Summer Solstice 385YE Merchant Prince Kaliact and the rest of the Apulians swore to Guise and joined the League as full Imperial citizens. Not unlike when Holberg joined the Empire, the move provoked sharp criticism from some parts of Urizen who saw the loss of their home as a betrayal.

It remains to be seen if the Empire can hold on to Apulus and Spiral. Some Urizeni have not accepted these new developments, and it seems near certain that the Grendel have not relinquished their claim on the territory.

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7 The League leadership

If you cross a bravo they might break your fingers; cross a merchant prince and they?ll ruin you.



The League recognises an obivous metaphor when it sees one.
The League cities are administered by the Empire, but they are run by the guilds. These economic affiliations draw members from every section of League society united by common interests and a desire to work together to acquire wealth. The earliest types of guild were formed as confraternities of workers. They were organized in a manner something between a trade union, a cartel, and a secret society. Today only a few guilds limit themselves to just one craft; most have expanded to include merchants and traders and thereby cover any economic activities they can draw profit from.

Each guild is headed by a merchant prince - an honorific title for the most economically powerful individuals that harks back to pre-Imperial times. The title is the same for all genders, a mark of respect for Aldones di Sarvos, the League's first merchant prince. Together the most powerful merchants choose their senators but beyond this they usually leave the administration of the cities to the civil service, allowing them to concentrate on increasing the wealth of their guild.

The guilds are not merely a matter of shared interests, but also of oaths and loyalties. Membership of a guild represents one of the most important loyalties a citizen of the League can hold. It is considered at least equal in importance to the loyalty owed to the League, the Empire and one's city. Those who betray their guild find every door closed to them and face exclusion from society and economic life. This is a short road to ruin in the League, a fate that most citizens will do anything to avoid. It is their ability to apply these sanctions that gives the guilds much of the power and influence they wield.

In the League, people wear rings to demonstrate their allegiances, wearing one for each major loyalty they owe.



7.1 Leading a territory

Each city in the League is a territory of its own and so sends one Senator to the Senate. Any citizen of the League can have a say in the identity of their Senator - provided they are prepared to work for it. The Civil Service compiles and maintains records of what investments are owned by an individual, and they are allocated a number of votes based on the value of the properties they own in that city.

These votes are represented by official "bonds", which are distributed to all electors at the start of the summit. Senatorial candidates must convince the electors to give them their bonds to show their support. At the point where all the bonds have been counted and the election has been officially declared as ended, the candidate with the largest amount of support as represented by the value of their combined bonds, becomes the Senator.

While the process itself is quite above board, that does not prevent a fair degree of politicking both in front of and behind the scenes. For example, it is not unknown for an individual to claim to be collecting bonds on behalf of one individual, only to then hand them over to another, or at the final counting for an obviously losing candidate to negotiate handing their stack of bonds over to another candidate so they can win.

Residency is important - a citizen only receives bonds if they own a business in the contested territory. Citizens who move from one city to another are eligible to vote in the new city only once a year has passed since they last voted in a senator election.

The senators for each Imperial territory are re-elected at specific equinox and solstices during the year. The senator for Holberg is elected at the Spring Equinox, the senators for Sarvos and Spiral are elected at the Summer Solstice, the senator for Tassato is elected at the Autumn Equinox, and the senator for Temeschwar is elected at the Winter Solstice.

7.1.1 Tallying the Votes

Each League citizen whose business resource is in the contested territory receives votes in the election of a senator for that territory. Each character receives ten votes, plus two additional votes each time they have upgraded their resource. Bonds are issued to each character by the civil service, and are usually included in the player's character pack at the start of an event where a Senatorial election is scheduled to take place.

7.1.2 Incumbent

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

- Holberg - Kaspar Yakovich von Holberg
- Sarvos - Laurencio Lemmini di Sarvos
- Spiral - Genoveva Barossa d'Apulian
- Tassato - Narciso Sybilo di Nessuno
- Temeschwar - Giuseppe Sanguineo von Temeschwar

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8 The League economic interests



Doctor Beatrix Amalia von Holfried zu Holberg
The League is rich, and the cities have always been a centre of trade within the Empire. Anyone prepared to work hard who has any level of moxie or chutzpah can amass a respectable pile of coin. There is a poor underclass in all the cities of the League, but there is a widespread perception among many that these people are poor because they ?choose? to be. If they had any get-up-and-go they would join a guild and make something of themselves.

League entrepreneurs have expanded the Empire?s knowledge of foreign lands and even gone so far as to establish embassies and trade delegations outside the borders of the Empire. The Synod has expressed concerns about these embassies on more than one occasion, but the benefits they bring to the Empire have so far outweighed any danger peaceful relations with foreigners might represent.

The League is entrusted with the Imperial Mint based in Tassato, which produces all Imperial coins. At the Empire?s birth, every nation used different coinage, and trying to consolidate exchange rates and manage investment across the Empire was an economic nightmare. Issuing a new coinage was a way to support both economic growth and ensure a level of stability, and making that coin out of steel prevented coin clipping as well as strengthening the power of the Empire. The mint is run by the Civil Service, but defended by League troops and control of the Mint and its guards is a powerful political position.

The League was also ultimately responsible for the creation of the Imperial Bourse, which oversees and controls the distribution of bulk goods throughout the Empire. While they do not have a monopoly or control over this institution, more than any Nation save perhaps the Brass Coast they appreciate the opportunities for influence that the Bourse represents. Many merchant princes make a fortune in steel playing the Bourse, while others gain great influence within the Empire through clever manipulation of the markets.



League entrepreneurs constantly seek new opportunities to exploit.
The downside of the vast wealth of the League is that it breeds schemes to redistribute it and not everyone is prepared to play by the rules. There is always some up and coming individual prepared to risk hiring a few Bravos to extort a little money and there are always rumours of people who will do more for money than just threats and a beating. Those that want to be accepted into society make an effort to distance themselves from such methods as far as possible - the guilds have no time for organized crime and they work closely with the Imperial Magistrates to ensure that those involved are caught and punished. There is no sympathy for those operating outside the rules that everyone else chooses to abide by and a belief that tolerating lawbreaking undermines the fabric of League society.

To help the magistrates enforce the law, the cities employ professional thief-takers. These groups operate to identify and capture criminals, in return for bounties offered by the magistrates or by wealthy guilds and individuals. The first thief-takers were Temeschwari, but the advantages of the system spread across the League once the benefits were understood.

If the League has no truck with violent crime, they do have a love affair with confidence tricksters. Imperial law contains no protections for merchants or those who buy from them and in the League the art of the swindler is much admired. The best usually have some skill with magic and are called mountebanks, after the traditional theatrical character. They are part of League folk lore, selling the fish from an empty net to a wealthy priest or persuading a merchant prince to part with a fortune for a worthless glass bauble. Surprisingly, such deeds are perfectly acceptable within the rules of Dead Reckoning ? with one very important caveat - be careful who you tell. A merchant prince may applaud your ingenuity, provided her reputation is intact, but a mountebank who makes a fool of her in public had better have some very powerful friends.

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9 The League military concerns



We were soldiers once, and young ...

9.1 Overview

Most citizens of the League who seek a military life look instead to the free companies and it is here that the nation excels. The free companies are the mercenary units for which the League is famous. Threats are considered downright rude, but most guilds still employ mercenaries; only a fool relies on the rules alone to protect their interests. After all, not everyone *in* the League is *of* the League.

Joining a free company is a serious undertaking. A free company is like a guild; members are expected to show the same loyalty, and that loyalty will be tested on the field of battle. Although free companies are renowned for their discipline on the battlefield, they are equally notorious for their riotous behaviour on the streets. Not for nothing are their members called bravos, fighting by day and drinking through the night. When two free companies are housed in the same city then rivalry easily spills over into violence. Brawls and duels abound and running battles in the streets are not unknown. The leaders of the free companies turn a blind eye as long as the bills for the damage do not mount too high, and as long as civilians are left out of the conflict. The Imperial authorities turn a blind eye provided nobody is reported killed.

If the League lack military numbers, they strive to make up for it with competent generals. League tacticians are a byword for brutal brilliance; shrewd people prepared to contemplate the unthinkable to achieve victory. General Anke Carsten von Temeschwar infamously stated ?*I am an artist, the battlefield is my canvas*? when called before the Synod to justify the cruel tactics she employed against the barbarians.

Crossbows are very much in favour with the League ? anyone from wealthy merchants to street bravos might tote one of these exquisitely made devices and the free companies have taken them up with great enthusiasm. While they may lack the range of a Marcher longbow, they are just as effective at short range. Crossbows are easy to produce and simple to master. Once the crossbow is cocked and ready, physical strength is irrelevant. There are not many bow users in the League, and it is considered more of a "hunting weapon" than a weapon of war.

9.2 Imperial Armies

At the height of the Empire's power the League was able to field two armies, but when the territory of Holberg fell under the control of barbarians, the need for soldiers to defend the city absorbed what military strength they could spare. When the League reclaimed Holberg they rebuilt the Towerjacks army and now once again two League banners fly over the battlefields of the Empire. It is a constant frustration for many Merchant Princes that they cannot match the military strength of nations like the Marches or Dawn. However, the structure of Imperial forces does not appeal to many citizens of the League and attempts to find additional volunteers have come to nought.

The League fields two armies: the *Wolves of War* and the *Towerjacks*.

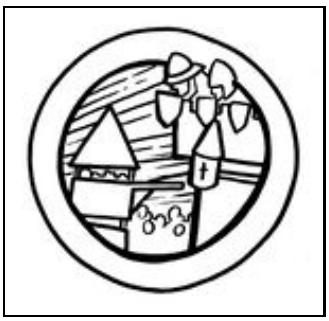


9.2.1 The Wolves of War

The Wolves of War are an extremely versatile fighting force. Many of the soldiers in this army are bravos from the roughest parts of Temeschwar and Tassato, supported by talented engineers from Holberg and Sarvosian scouts. They are also adept at working with mercenary troops, taking advantage of the great wealth of the League to employ specialist units to help them on campaign.

In Autumn 378YE, the Dawnish Archmage of Autumn, Maurice de Gauvain, took clever advantage of a rare conjunction to gather the ilium needed to place a permanent Bound by Common Cause enchantment on the Wolves of War. This enchantment greatly enhances the ability of the army to work with Imperial military units. It coincidentally means that the General of the Wolves of War is subject to a powerful magical influence, but it remains to be seen how far-reaching this effect will be.

The first League general leads the Wolves of War army, and is appointed (or re-appointed) at the Autumn Equinox each year.



9.2.2 The Towerjacks

The second army of the League, the Towerjacks, is expert in siege warfare. They were disbanded in 346YE after the fall of Holberg, when its officers and soldiers dedicated themselves to the defence of their home territory. A core of the army still existed and had honed their skills through a generation of holding the walls by the time the city was liberated. With the lifting of the siege, the officers of the Towerjacks let it be known that they were prepared to return to active duty, provided they could be returned to full strength. A motion before the Senate during the Summer Solstice 379YE gained permission to reinstate the Towerjacks. Their resupply and recruitment were completed in Winter 379YE and a new general was appointed.

The second League general leads the Towerjacks army, and is appointed (or re-appointed) at the Winter Solstice each year.

We, the Mercenaries of The League, exist to serve the leaders of the Empire, and bring glory to our nation. Through patronage, we arm ourselves. Through leadership, we gather in companies, and perfect our fighting styles. Through experience, we chart a bloody course across the battlefield, marching not as soldiers, but as heroes. Each nation is a crucible in which champions are forged. The apothecaries and artisans of many nations give up their wares gladly, but The League would never ask such a thing of its citizens. We value their work, and pay them a fair price for it. In turn, we ask for an honest wage, to strengthen our forces, and bring honour to our patrons.

While the civilians of the League will lay down their quills and raise arms against the barbarians, the Free Companies lead a life of perpetual warfare,

travelling as one, fighting as one, and willing to die as one, if the Empire demands it. It is this life that our wages pay for, an endless round of marching, drilling and combat.

Our patrons - the noble princes of the League, and the wise Generals of the Empire - need only tell us where and when, and we muster, armed and armoured according to their wishes, and equipped for the enemies that face us. When battle comes, we stand united, fearless against our foes, strengthened by the knowledge that one soldier can show weakness and confusion, but a Free Company will hold the line, and march to victory.

A Mercenary Doctrine, Jakub the Unruly, Signeur of the Red Company, 156YE

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10 The League religious beliefs

Virtue made the Empire strong, *we* made it *great*

Bishop Gilde van Holberg, Address to the Assembly of Prosperity



Preaching is only one way for a League priest to serve their community.

To the eyes of an outsider, religion in the League seems a little transactional. Many religious buildings and celebrations seem to exist to take money or goods from the citizens in the most splendidly showy way possible. This certainly isn?t to say that priests here are not fervent or devout in their beliefs. They simply recognise that they provide a service and should be recompensed appropriately. Competition amongst priests for provision of lucrative religious services, such as the marriage of a merchant prince or the funeral of a wealthy merchant, is fierce. The priesthood make an effort to provide a spectacle for such events, ensuring that they earn their wage.

The League quality of competition is as strong in matters of faith and spirituality as it is in every other aspect of life. A bishop of the League may be as pious as any priest of Highguard, but they can also be as ruthless and mercantile as any merchant prince. Where the guilds keep score with coin and favour, the bishops use the size and notable membership of their congregations. The most powerful include artisans, tradesman and in some cases mercenaries or dedicated soldiers as well as priests and layfolk. The bishops of the League together form the League Assembly within the Imperial Synod, and when united on a common purpose their political acumen can make them a potent force.

The cambions? instinctive cunning and ambition mean that many of them find a spiritual home in the League. They are especially encouraged to enter the priesthood, and many consider it fortunate to have a cambion bishop perform important ceremonies. The most successful often follow the fashion of capping their horns with bejewelled gold to display their wealth.

In addition to preaching The Way of Virtue, many of the churches in the League also operate on the basis of providing civic functions paid for by donations, often from the people they have helped. Some employ soldiers to patrol the streets and keep them free of muggers and pickpockets, while others operate schools and hospitals. Others look beyond the borders of the League, actively soliciting donations to help them in their "good works," seeing their city, their nation or even the whole Empire as their congregation and its defence and improvement their responsibility.

10.1 Church of the Little Mother

The most famous League church is the *Church of The Little Mother*. Originally based in Sarvos, churches dedicated to the Little Mother, an Exemplar of Prosperity and the matron of children and orphans, are found in all League cities and in some parts of other Nations as well. The Little Mother takes in orphaned or abandoned children, ensuring that they receive a chance in life. Children are taught basic numeracy and literacy before being apprenticed to a master in the city. The Church sustains itself with donations, often made by former beneficiaries, and is well respected by the Imperial authorities and League people. It can also wield a surprising amount of political power, as many influential people owe their start in life to the priests of the Little Mother.

10.1.1 Aldones di Sarvos

A key figure in the religious life of many citizens is Aldones di Sarvos, who many look to as the founder of the League, and is recognised by the Imperial Synod as a Paragon of Ambition. Aldones started life with nothing and through his labours, fierce competition, skill and swordsmanship, created the first guild and declared himself a Merchant Prince. Aldones did many great deeds throughout his life, but all inspired by the love he bore his city. Aldones' legacy was affirmed when, through his vision and influence, he united the cities of the League, and helped forge a Nation. He disappeared - or ascended - shortly after his keynote speech to the newly-united League, and the final words of his address are inscribed on his memorial in Sarvos to inspire his successors to pursue their goals: "*In Highguard, they build castles and call them towns. We will build cities, and call them a nation.*"

10.1.2 The Apulian Qualities

The Apulians already believed in Seven virtues before they joined the League, they just weren't neccessarily the same seven virtues that the Empire has. Eager to embrace the practices of their new home, and ensure that they stated the right side of the law, the Apulians asked the Synod for clarification on how they should treat the spiritual qualities such *Audacity*, *Cunning*, *Fidelity* and *Retribution*.

Both the Pride and Ambition assemblies upheld judgements that recognised *Audacity* as part of that virtue. Most Apulians decided to refer to *Audacity* as Pride, since it got more votes and someone with the sobriquet "d'Apulian" raised the Pride judgement. The Loyalty and Prosperity assemblies both claimed *Fidelity* was part of their virtue and that has split the Apulians. A slim majority are referring to *Fidelity* as Loyalty since it is one of the more important virtues in the League and they are keen to be accepted by their peers. More more than a few favour the idea that Prosperity and Fidelity are some equivalent, so the debate continues.

The quality of *Cunning* was neither denouncing nor accepted. The ever pragmatic Apulians have assumed talking about *Cunning* to be fine pending further commentary by the Synod. However the traditional quality of *retribution* was denounced as part of the false virtue of Vengeance. As a result, most Apulians no longer mention *Retribution* in public, preferring to embrace the more traditional League custom of Dead Reckoning with some gusto.

Most Apulians are eager to move on and embrace their new lives in the Empire, but there are a few recidivists who still hold to the traditional values practiced in the Grendel religion. If any human citizens of the League have found value in these beliefs, they have wisely kept such dangerous views to themselves.

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11 The League magical traditions



Troupes of magicians compete for the patronage of the most powerful guilds.
Theatre is a vital part of League society, and theatrical groups called troupes are common. From the most bombastic performances in lavish theatre houses to the simplest productions performed in the streets themselves ? the citizens love spectacle and little is more spectacular than League theatre. In part this is due to the common use of magic by a troupe?s performers. Some of this magic is simple stage tricks, but skilled performers use can weave quite literally enchanting performances. Quite how many members of a troupe can perform formal magic is a closely kept secret. A troupe demands every bit as much loyalty as any guild and discretion about the abilities of the members is considered just another part of the rules. Whether producing a performance of Scillio?s "*The Fallen Herald*" or attempting a dangerous ritual by command of a Merchant Prince, every member of a troupe plays a part.

To the League, magic is a commodity like any other. Although Urizen lays claim to the secrets of grand power and treat it with great dignity, in the League it is the money of a wealthy patron that pays for that dignity. As such, the show a troupe puts on is as important to their reputation as the results they produce. The performers weave knots in time as well as space, drawing influences from the past to spread their patron?s influence in the future. They must make a show of invoking symbols of ambition, loyalty and prosperity, as much because a merchant prince enjoys watching a bravura

performance as because of their importance to the ritual.

Most troupes wear masks when they perform ritual magic, and guard these masks carefully. The notion of taking on a character for the purposes of ritual is well established. When one knots the ties on a mask in order to perform enchantment, one does not simply wear a piece of cloth or leather or paper, one is wearing the combined weight of all the stories told about that character - and all the stories that can yet be told. The most famous masks in the League are in the Armetto Theatre house, in Sarvos. These masks are old and, in some cases, nothing special to look at, but they are exceptionally potent in the hands of a skilled performer.

There is also a belief that these masks not only empower the ritual, but also ensure that any malign influences or backlash will fall on the mask, rather than the wearer because they conceal the identity of the magician. As a consequence, some masks are believed literally to be cursed items - items that cannot be destroyed because to do so is to cause the weight of the malign energies contained within to be released. Several stories - and indeed plays - tell of cursed masks and the trickery that causes their wickedness to be released on the undeserving. (see also masks in Hearth Magic).



Artwork by Joanna Bendle

Rivalry between troupes is famously intense, and long-standing feuds are commonplace. Troupes compete for the patronage of the most powerful guilds, and performers have even been murdered for changing troupe or giving a bad performance. Open violence is rare, but public duels between performers are an important part of advertising and promoting a troupe's plays - especially when an opening night is approaching. Such matches always draw a fine crowd as performers are expected to retort and riposte while they fight; the eventual victor will be the one who most entertains the crowd the most rather than the one who strikes the winning blow.

11.1 Mountebanks

The troupes of the League would like to believe that there is no other tradition of magic in the cities, but this is far from true. There is an underclass of street-mage known as mountebanks - a derogatory term first used by the troupes that many of these street mages have claimed for themselves as a badge of pride. Their rough magic is more immediate and improvised, rarely for the benefit of a patron, and often performed on street corners. Many mountebanks are part conjurer, part con-artist, with a widely-held reputation for being crooks and scoundrels - or so the troupes would have you believe. While not all mountebanks are confidence tricksters, enough of them are that their entire profession is viewed with some suspicion.

Many mountebanks combine an understanding of incantations with a little ritual magic, and supplement their understanding with trinkets and even potions and elixirs. They tread a fine line between entertainer and criminal, and those who step over the line are in danger of the serious repercussions that face anyone who cannot follow the rules in League society.

The archetypal example of the mountebank con is the shell game, playing on the greed and hopefulness of their victims to trick them into making a wager they cannot win.

11.2 Realms

Grendel Realms	
Day	Sky
Spring	Sea
Autumn	Sand
Winter	Salt
Summer	Stone
Night	Fog

The Apulians have their own names for the realms and most have refused to drop them. Using the correct names for the realms helps to better understand what they do, and in their view, their names *better* capture the essence of a realm's power. Winter magic isn't actually about the season of *Winter* after all, so many Apulian orcs see the name as somewhat foolish. Nobody imagines that Salt magic is about salt either, but Salt much more accurately conveys what the realm does. Salt corrodes and destroys, but it can also be used to preserve. Most traditional human magicians in the League regard these new names with some disdain, but a few mountebanks and troupe magicians claim they have been useful when performing magic.

The Apulians present the six realms as a hierarchy, a practice that definitely hasn't caught on. They claim the most important realm is the Sky - from which information and enlightenment flows. They also prize the uncontrollable Sea, the source of wild storms and violent winds, and the fountain of life. The realm of Sand is valued for its many economic benefits, sand is mutable and workable, ordered and measured, though it can shift suddenly beneath you. Apulians disagree on whether Salt is more important than Stone or vice versa, but most agree that Fog is the least significant of all the realms.

The most common of the magical traditions practised by the Apulians are Goetia and Astronomancy. They have long engaged in the practice of paying lip service to any belief or religious ceremony that will grant them even the slightest advantage; they would happily pour out wine for *Lord Isso Mãos de Ouro* in the morning before a trade discussion and then offer a prayer to one of the *Seven Crowns* in the evening. This readiness to accept the power of anything that might tip the scales has led to a willingness to take on the aspects of certain eternals when performing rituals. Eternals such as the Mother of Wrecks and the Unblinking Eye are often beseeched for aid when performing rituals that align with their interests. The other common tradition is Astronomancy, which is unsurprising given their history as a naval power and the use of stars in navigation. Certain constellations are invoked more often than others; the Key, the Door, and the Stallion are three of the most commonly called upon.

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12 The League territories

The city is the mirror of the world. If we cannot master the city, how can we master the world?

Gidea di Sarvos, Reflections

Each territory in the League represents the land that extends around a single great city. Surrounding lands are tightly parcelled into estates, each of which is traditionally worked hard but may also be sculpted for maximum beauty. Commonly country estates are kept for show, but a Merchant Prince will only really relax when at their townhouse in the city, surrounded by the fruits of civilisation. The League is small in terms of landmass compared to some other nations, but it still manages to have a sizeable population.

Each city of the League has something of a character of its own. League citizens from that city may strive to exemplify what they see as the strong qualities of their city, but the truth is that all these characteristics are present in every citizen in the League. The physical city itself seems to have some effect, citizens from one city who move to another often find themselves reflecting the mood of their new home. How much an individual character or group chooses to emphasise the city of their birth - or the city they live in - is entirely up to the player.

12.1 Territories

- Tassato
- Sarvos
- Temeschwar
- Holberg
- Spiral

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13 The League children



Sarvosan bishops of the Church of the Little Mother (with orphan)
The arrival of a child in a family is a time for great celebration and as a result, for the first few years of their lives, children are feted, celebrated and looked after by their family and older siblings; in the more affluent sections of society they are often bedecked in finery and brought out on show at balls and public events. While infants in League cities are treasured and cooed over, and every babe will have a dozen adopted aunts or uncles, older children are very much treated like miniature adults. Smart youngsters in League cities are apprenticed early and expected to learn the basics of how to thrive in League society.

Apprenticeship is very important in League cities. One will see young people in livery serving at the tables of a Merchant Prince or working as guides and messengers. It is expected that education will come as part of one?s apprenticeship. The master one works for will also be responsible for teaching letters and numbers, or arranging tuition. In return, the child is expected to earn their keep. It is understood that League children must be kept busy; else they turn to the fine League tradition of Making Trouble.

The Church of the Little Mother is famed for drawing its members from the orphans of war who might otherwise be reduced to begging on the streets. The Church will take in children whose parents have been killed on the borders or at sea, offering apprenticeship. Many influential leaders of the League began as orphans in the care of the Little Mother.

13.1 Things every child should know

- People will expect you to do jobs for them. This is good ? keeping busy is fun and lets you see lots of different things. See how you can help.
- Lots of people have money and they should give some of it to you. You are working hard and deserve to be paid!
- A good price for a little job (such as running a message or carrying heavy things, or laying a table for a feast) is one Ring ? so ask for two!
- Keep your ear out for gossip. People like to know interesting things and some pieces of information might be worth money.
- Know who?s in charge ? they?re normally the people with the most money.
- Be polite ? you can get a lot further with people that way; and good manners are worth their weight in gold.

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14 The League music



League songs are laced with innuendo and hidden meaning.

14.1 Style summary

The League is a combination of different cultures and its performance traditions reflect that. High art in all its forms, theatre and songs laced with innuendo and hidden meaning, characters who delight in cunning and trickery, flamboyance, opera and baroque/classical stylings accompanied by flutes, guitars, and even brass, themes of playfulness, loyalty and ingenuity. Low culture: comedy song, street magic, and clever rhyming, often poking fun at someone or something.

For the high art of the League, look to European and Spanish-influenced classical music, particularly Italian and German including arias, lieder, and classical instrumental music from Argentina. For low art concentrate on songs with the theme of deals, cunning, trickery, flamboyance, or loyalty and instrumental music with an Italian, Spanish, or Mariachi sound.

14.2 Commonly known songs

14.2.1 Songs about notable people/entities in the League

- Marching to Victory - a song about Senator Cesare.
- A Fool in a Crown - a comedy
- The Night of a Thousand Torches - a song from Temeschwar
- Holberg Wine - a tragedy

- Reuben's Brethren - popular with the mercenary companies
- Uncle Vyig - funny song about organised crime, very popular in Temeschwar, usually not sung in other League cities.

14.2.2 One for the kids

Tower Song - a silly round demonstrating League competitiveness.

14.3 Further examples

14.3.1 Songs

- Treggajoran Wartha - song about rings and trickery
- Say Gentle Ladies - medium difficulty Mozart aria. A lovely English language arrangement is available to buy here
- Flower duet (Google it)
- Lovely Joan - medium song with a moral
- Tower Song - a funny round demonstrating League competitiveness.

14.3.2 Instrumentation and tunes

- Recorders, flutes and whistles, classically played guitar or stringed instrument, violin, classical accordion.
- Elizabethan recorder music which played on any classical instrument would be appropriate for The League.

14.3.3 Other performance traditions

- Theatre and acting. There is a lot more information about this in The League brief, in particular the page on Troupes.

14.4 How to adapt your repertoire

- For 'low culture' sing in a tongue in cheek way, have a game or a joke with your audience.
- For 'high art' sing in an operatic way, up the drama! Have a listen to some Portuguese fado songs and copy the style.
- When playing folk tunes, try to pick ones that are a bit classical or baroque sounding, a good example is The Gale by Susan Conger

14.5 Our sources

Italian or German opera, Argentinian tangos and other S. American accordion music (cf. The Oxford Concert Party), classical poetry, Portuguese/Brazilian fado songs, Alejandro Toledo & The Magic Tombolinos

Here is a youtube playlist of appropriate or inspiring music.

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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 The League groups

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

16.1 Overview

There are many important guilds, cartas, troupes and more in the League. 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. There are also a handful of prominent NPC groups included for completeness, but they are not intended for use by player characters.

It was originally compiled by The Harlequin and Gabriel Barossa, after the Autumn Equinox of 381YE.

16.2 Guilds of Temeschwar

16.2.1 Ashen Tower

Formed by Drogon and Dante Morisini around 350YE, the Ashen Tower was originally formed by citizens who had migrated from Highguard, which is still shown in their stark black and white heraldry. They also still cleave to the Highborn principle that Virtue can and will redeem your soul. Brought to the League by the brothers, the Tower sought to rid Temeschwar of the Vyig threat, before focussing their efforts on the liberation of Holberg. A number of prominent members were lost fighting for the city. Despite these losses, the Tower grew, with their valour attracting many of the dispossessed and orphaned of the city into their ranks. As one of their bravos put it "we are a home for all the young minds wishing to pull themselves out of the gutter and in some cases down to it."

Now known across the Empire for its military prowess, the Tower remains a guild where which many claim you can find redemption, Virtue and family, whilst watching over the League.

- **Motto:** Ever Vigilant

16.2.2 Bloody Butchers

The Bloody Butchers Guild has played a crucial role in Imperial affairs for centuries. Legends as well as their boasts tell that it hosted a sumptuous banquet for Aldones de Sarvos, Barrell of Tassato and Maria Ivanova von Temeschwar at which they formed the League and worked with the First Empress to found the Empire. This magnificent 'First Feast' continues to inspire a tradition of fine feasting today.

They claim their guildmaster was a close aide of the First Empress and her quartermaster general. She called him 'The First Butcher' in recognition of his logistical prowess in supplying cured meat for the Empire's armies. Many songs which they have commissioned are sung of his cunning which was said to be as sharp as his cleaver, and of his courageous death in battle beside the First Empress.

As the Guild's power and influence grew over the years, it diversified into many varied businesses, whilst never forgetting its bloody beginnings in butchery. One of its greatest Master Butchers about a century ago became known as 'The Gold Butcher', for her work serving the Empire as Master of the Mint. She used the Guild's wealth to help finance the Empire, issuing Butchers Bonds to raise funds. In doing so she founded the Butchers Bank and coined its famous motto.

In recent times, following the death of Empress Britta, the Butchers Guild became fabulously prosperous by dominating the Bourse and founding the League Trading Company. With its great wealth it has funded many great works for the Empire, including the Colossus of Sarvos, the Bloody Theatre of Temeschwar, the Blood Red Quays Art Gallery of Sarvos, the Blood Red Museum of Tassato, the Lorenzo Legacies of Virtue and, most impressively of all, 'The Butchers Benevolence: The Blood Red Roads'.

- **Motto:** Blood is our bond

16.2.3 The Church of the Enduring Flame

The Church of the Enduring Flame was formed in the town of Tagliona near Tassato by Umberto Lucito di Tagliona during the Second Interregnum in around 285YE from the non-militant wing of the now defunct Church of Burning Avidity.

Preaching the Virtue of Ambition, the sect's membership are not bound to a single guild but drawn from dedicants from across the houses and cities of the League, acting as a bridging point on matters of faith and ambitious competition. Historically, the sect has been known to both fan the flames of disputes between guilds and to facilitate reconciliation of old scores, largely dependent upon their own inscrutable interpretation of the Virtues.

The sect is known to possess a number of historical relics significant to Ambition within the League, not least one of the surviving torches from the Night of a Thousand Torches in Temeschwar that has been on display in their cathedral in the city (with very reasonable price of admittance).

Since the death of Empress Britta, the Church of the Enduring Flame has swelled in size, welcoming members from both the priesthood and laity. They have found a number of successes within the Synod, most notably spearheading the effort to have Ratibor of Temeschwar recognised as an exemplar. Their links to this ancient boyar also saw them continuing his legacy with their involvement in the recent efforts to purge League cities of the Vyig.

16.2.4 The Sea Wolves



Sea Wolves
The Sea Wolves are a mercenary free company from Temeschwar formed from the original crew of the Cerberus who helped them reclaim the ship from Asavea. Tragedy had allowed debt collectors to wrench the black and gold barquentine from them. Unwilling to accept this, they swore oaths of loyalty and executed an elaborate heist. They succeeded, but have since avoided Asavean waters; resentment towards the nation runs deep amongst them.

On the battlefield, the Sea Wolves pride themselves on professionalism: they are a mercenary company, not just some mercenaries. Their black and gold uniform is not just about appearing identical, but a reminder that they are to fight identically and as one. There are no heroes in the Sea Wolves, so the banner is heroic. This discipline has defeated disorganised foes that outnumber them many times.

Off the battlefield is another story. When at licence, the bravos are politically-savvy, financially-dominant, and behaviourally-irresponsible. The Sea Wolf ?Bar-vos? are a law unto themselves and they party as hard as they work.

Their oath reflects their fierce commitment to loyalty, to their financial success, and to their independent lifestyle aboard the Cerberus. There is a rumour that their oath finishes with ?don?t touch our stuff?, but this is obviously beneath them.

We pledge our Loyalty to the Sea Wolves, we are one crew.
We pledge our Loyalty to the Cerebus, we are one ship.
We pledge our Loyalty to Temeschwar, we are one city.
Through our Loyalty we will achieve Prosperity.

Sea Wolves motto

16.3 Guilds of Holberg

16.3.1 Adelaarsgilde

Adelaarsgilde was founded in the wake of the liberation of Holberg in 379YE by the grandchildren of Hippoliete van Holberg and their spouses. The

guild's twin raison d'êtres are to improve the quality of discourse around religion, magic, trade and politics within the Empire, and to introduce their young children to the ways of Anvil, so that they might better become virtuous and clever citizens.

The most famous Adelaarsgilde venture is The Great Debarcle, a conversation café in Holberg which combines home baked Holbergian delicacies with academic debates. The Great Debarcle is home to Adelaarsekte, which has strong links to the university and has been influential in encouraging Holberg's citizens to extend their hospitality to the Sand Fisher orcs. In Holberg, the café is frequented by both local and visiting priests. Adelaarsgilde is financially supported by a number of businesses, including importers of victuals and fabrics, a bank and trading house, with the latter two being notable for their open policies on pricing. The conversation café is further supported by the family?s bakers, who produce a variety of savoury and sweet goods.

All members of Adelaarsgilde are trained in dramaturgy, exploring the liminal spaces between Night and Day, and of particular note are their rituals performed through the apprenticing of younger members of the guild - often chaotic affairs replete with mishaps, setbacks, and mayhem.

16.3.2 Holberg Haudegen

The Holberg Haudegen are a halberd company, well supported by all the various sutlers and logistical base you could want for a large, campaigning free company. Founded by the canny Otto Friedrich Von Holberg, the third son of one of the richer burghers of Holberg, the company is known for its discipline on the battlefield. As well as travelling the length and breadth of the empire, this free company has also fought in the distant battlefields of Axos and Faraden.

Arising from the numerous tradespeople who support the soldiers, the company has among its numbers a lot of surprisingly influential business owners, and several senatorial candidates have been surprised at the influence they wield.

Though their bravos, soldiers, and other followers can be a bit rowdy off the field, the guild has a strong tradition of giving great rewards to those who have proven their worth. Entertainment is often hired in for soldiers who have proved their worth and they are paid "on the drum". Visitors to their camp have often been impressed by the graceful dancing of Haudegen soldiers, moving in stylised formations that are more than slightly reminiscent of their disciplined movement on the battlefield.

Every member of the company is given a wage when they sign on and walk under the halberd arch, as well as extra rewards for those who live to be veterans - these being marked by cards worn on hats and equipment. The company is for hire to most bidders in the Empire for the right amount, considering themselves reassuringly expensive.

- **Motto:** Last in, first out, get paid

16.3.3 The Feasting Crow

The Feasting Crow Tavern and Theatre was formed when a group of Navarri from the Summer Crows striding decided to settle and spotted business opportunities in the newly liberated city of Holberg. Lacking the funds for the major renovation their cellar bar required, they joined with a merchant prince of Holberg and a theatre troupe to work on the project. Group members include Caerwyn Von Holberg, retired senator for Therunin, who has served as proxy senator for Holberg.

- **Motto:** We're not going back!

16.3.4 House of Seven Mirrors

The House of Seven Mirrors was originally founded as a private political salon by Lisabetta Giacomi von Holberg. It would be a place where those gathered might seek to increase their knowledge through discussion of new ideas and ways in which to put those ideas into practice. The guildhouse in Holberg contains seven specially-commissioned mirrors which each represents one of the seven Virtues, and draw on the hearth magic of Holberg to encourage all those present to reflect the Virtues as they speak. The guild first came to Anvil in Winter 378YE, and soon after hosted luminaries of Anvil at a public salon evening in Holberg.

Following the election in 380YE of their prince as the twentieth Empress, the guild continues to support the Imperatrix in her duties. But each member of the guild also has their own sphere of excellence and influence at Anvil; ranging from economic, political, magical, and religious, to the sartorial and social. As a result, the House has considerable knowledge of the inner workings of Anvil and the wider Empire, and members have held, and continue to hold, a variety of Imperial titles.

Lisabetta acquired the famous Ledger Domain business following the liberation of Holberg, to enable the House to expand its publishing activities in the realm of political and informational works. The most notable is ?The Book of the Empire? - a substantial and handsome volume which draws on Imperial Civil Service records to provide the most useful information for those interested in statecraft. The guild also publishes the highly-regarded ?Anvil Almanac? each season: this is a compendium of current Imperial concerns, and includes a full listing of the holders of Imperial titles.

16.4 Guilds of Sarvos



Compagnia de Rossi

16.4.1 Compagnia de Rossi

The Compagnia di Rossi has been a powerful force in Sarvos since the end of Britta?s reign. Its mercantile interests include wain and ilium trading, Imperial commissions, and commercial applications of magic. It has always had deep involvement with many civic projects within the city, including Our Lady of Pride and the Great Chains. It is a member of the Sarvosian Dockside Alliance and includes amongst its membership leaders within the Anvil Library, Red Raven Holdings, Ash & Embers Coven, and prominent members of the Bourse.

The Compagnia is led by a Signeur, who is first in a company of equals and has opulent headquarters near the Alivetti Estates in the heart of the city. Further interests include a flotilla of merchant vessels based in the Caricomare, Scarlet Feather Cisisbeo House, Signori d?Argento Duelling School and Lucrezia?s Sweets and Schnapps.

16.4.2 Carta Di Vergo

- **Motto:** By sword and song

The Di Vergo family claim that the Di Vergo Playhouse has been in Sarvos for centuries, potentially predating the Empire. Whether this is actually true or not is entirely lost to the flames of the Sack of Sarvos. The guild, however, was founded recently, and members and associates of the guild are diverse indeed. From members of the Di Vergo Playhouse in Sarvos, the Brothers Blythe of Tassato, a vast number of healers, alchemists, and even a bakery, the guild has a great deal of talent to its name.

Members of the guild are oath-bound to do good and be moral people, and many of their efforts are based on investment in community projects as well as the prosperity and culture of the Empire. Another priority is helping defend the Empire from both domestic and foreign threats. Any aspirant members of this guild are encouraged to take a strong moral stand on issues facing the Empire, and be, or aspire to be, good.

16.4.3 Carta Rosa D'Ora

An old trading camorra from the docks of Sarvos, the Carta Rosa D'Ora briefly saw scandal when the eldest two children, Cesare and Nerezza, vanished. Rumours spread that Nerezza, a draughir, had killed her own brother. The camorra's leadership was practically wiped out during the sacking of Sarvos. Its prince, Gioninno, was killed and his wife and daughter - Christina and Leticia - have lived in Tassato since.

The camorra might have collapsed at this point, but Nerezza returned and claimed the princeship. She declared the camorra to be affiliated with both the Dolcezzas, through blood, and the Ashen Tower. The ruins of the camorra's house now form the foundation of the building housing the Ashen Tower of Sarvos.

16.4.4 Church of The Little Mother

- **Motto:** Share all that is worthwhile with all who deserve

The most famous League church is the Church of The Little Mother. Originally based in Sarvos, churches dedicated to the Little Mother, an exemplar of Prosperity and the matron of children and orphans, are found in all League cities and in some parts of other nations as well. The Little Mother takes in orphaned or abandoned children, ensuring that they receive a chance in life. Children are taught basic numeracy and literacy before being apprenticed to a master in the city. The Church sustains itself with donations, often made by former beneficiaries, and is well respected by the Imperial authorities and League people. It can also wield a surprising amount of political power, as many influential people owe their start in life to the priests of the Little Mother.

Led by the Mother Bishop, no matter the gender, the position has been held by strong leaders, most notably the late Ynez di Caricomare, known as 'the mother to many, helping guide people along their path'. She even held the position of Cardinal of Prosperity for a time, being a strong voice on the Council of Nine. Sadly however, Ynez and several others were cut down in the line of duty.

Lately however the church has seen a revival under its new mother bishop.

16.4.5 Carta Notturno

Granted their charter in the early years of Emperor Ahraz's reign, the Carta Notturno was founded by street mages, traders, and madames in an effort impose some order on the infamous night markets of Sarvos' Piazza della Notte. Due to its humble beginnings and relatively recent formation, the Carta is traditionally seen as an upstart guild with a shady image. Their reputation as barely legitimised mountebanks and tradespeople on the make has clung on over the years and, combined with a knack for making the best of bad situations, attracts a certain amount of resentment from more established Sarvosian guilds. The sinking of the Caricomare brought the guild a large influx of refugee members, whose efforts have enhanced its prosperity significantly. The Carta operates a diverse network of business concerns, and their fleets can be found trading across the known world (backed by powerful magic, if rumour is believed).

Though their fortunes have risen and fallen over time, a recent leadership change has allowed the Carta to shake off a decade of stagnation and resurface on the League political scene. When the Interregnum started, the guild's leaders scented opportunity and ventured to Anvil for the first time. Bringing the vibrant spirit of the Piazza della Notte with them, they operate from the brightly lit and multi-coloured Peacock's Tale cocktail bar, sending their diverse membership out to pluck the threads of influence across all the great chambers of the Imperial State.

Belying its dubious reputation, the Carta Notturno was the primary investor in rebuilding the Caricomare district of Sarvos, probably due to their history of re-homing refugees. Since then they have become known for putting both money and fundraising efforts into public works across the Empire and are regularly visited by people wishing to promote ideas for improving the lives of citizens.

16.4.6 Accademia dell'Arte

- **Motto:** There is both Pride and profit in mastery of one's art

A new guild in its infancy, The Accademia dell'Arte brings together independent artisans, artists, magical actors and playwrights, alchemists, poet-philosophers, and free thinkers. Why? There are philosophical reasons, sure, but mostly it is for delectable, delicious and deplorable *profit*.

...that, and the scandalous parties. The *alleged* scandalous parties. "But what can one expect from the antics of debauched artists?", asks the eccentric founder of the guild, Giacomo de'Geni. "Those who seek their muse at the bottom of a cup of wine; in the arms of another's lover; in the dregs of an alchemist's draught. They are flighty, that muse. Who knows where they will appear next!"

Originally based in Tassato, now relocated along with its founder to Sarvos.

16.4.7 Golden Chalice

- **Motto:** Ambition through Prosperity

The Golden Chalice claims a long and storied history that no one can verify, but the ancestral "carta" with the guild seal looks legitimate enough. Under poor lighting. While drunk. Regardless, the modern guild is centred around a handful of dock-houses and one cock-fighting ring on the Caricomare docks, with members in the other cities.

The Golden Chalice is dedicated to furthering ambitions that are "grand, benevolent and leave a lasting legacy", and is active in trade, politics and magic to that effect.

16.4.8 Prospero's Chosen

Based in the Sarvos docks, Prospero's Chosen has many fingers in many pies. A hybrid trading and mercenary company, the group turns itself to anything to earn coin, in the past dabbling in mercenary work, trading, and rumoured to be involved in other, less savoury activities. Members have been known to duel for the honour of the band, and any slight is answered with cold steel.

The symbol of the group is a skull, with the letter "P" on the forehead, and their chief colours are black and gold.

16.4.9 First Spark Carta

- **Motto:** Sparks Ignite!

Founded at the start of 384YE, the First Spark Carta is a guild with two missions:

The First Mission is to seek out those who come to Anvil for the first time and help them to navigate the heart of Imperial Power.
The Second Mission is to promote engagement and competition and in doing so oppose complacency, stagnation and corruption.

Founded by Estella Lucati, Prince-Bishop of Ambition, the carta is passionately devoted to The Way and how it intersects with the two missions. Resplendent - and easy to find - in their distinctive blue-and-yellow colours, members of the First Spark Carta are always keen to meet those new to Anvil and hear their stories, provide insight, advice or signposting or render aid where needed.

16.4.10 Carta Bellamarina

- **Motto:** By Blood and Brine

The Carta Bellamarina is reputed to be one of Sarvos' older guilds and are rumoured to have been involved in maritime services for centuries. Once in possession of significant property in the Caricomare district of Sarvos, they were hit severely by its flooding and their influence has waxed and waned considerably since then. Their guild palace was rebuilt on piles out in the waters of the Caricomare and was, for a while, only reachable by gantries or a chain ferry.

16.5 Guilds of Tassato

16.5.1 Printers' Guild

- **Motto:** With Courage and Vigilance we spread the truth

With the charter changing hands less than ten years ago, the recent infamy of the Printers? Guild has eclipsed the historic successes and scandals. In just a few short years they have become famous both for the benevolence with which they have given to the Empire's museums and sinecures, as well as the questionable virtue with which they have antagonised eternals, heroes, and villains.

When the Senate and the Conclave refused to retrieve the Imperial Crown from Bas Celik, the Printers? Guild stepped forwards to fill the void and reclaimed this priceless relic. Safely stewarding it for three years, the jealousy of smaller souls saw it sequestered by the Conclave. Within a season it was lost. Pilfered from supposedly sealed vaults by the Silver Mask (one of their notorious former members) and given to the Sumaah Republic.

The passion of the prince of the Printers? Guild is the Pledge - a newspaper that divides the Empire. In his words, "many cry out it contains lies, but when pressed all they can find is the hard hitting truths that make them squirm." Although the guild has offices in all the League cities, it is the home of the Pledge in Tassato Mestra with which they are most often associated.

Famously, the guild boasts a range of involvement in the Synod that no-one else can match, since their members include both cardinals and those who have been excommunicated, along with everything between. They even believe that they are preaching to their readers.

Never shy, always controversial, they boast that if you are planning on attending Anvil and have an opinion that you want spreading far and wide then make friends with the Printers? Guild and write for The Pledge.

16.5.2 The Gilded Horn Carta

Signed in Mestra before the formation of the Empire, the Gilded Horn Carta was founded from the diverse strands of the already powerful Rezia family, which had its various stakes in the city since antiquity. From Mestra it has spread to the rest of the League, and has played an active hand in its

development since those early days.

The heart of the Gilded Horn?s operations is the Street of Pleasures in Mestra. Newcomers could be forgiven for thinking the Carta owns the whole street, but their rivals point out the other guilds between the brazen frontages of businesses owned by the Gilded Horn. For those in search of enjoyment, luxury, or the finer things in life, the Gilded Horn is a good place to start, though a critic would whisper that this Carta has something of an unsavoury reputation for debauchery.

Naturally, with such strong holdings on the Street of Pleasures, its members are often entertainers, singers, actors or cicisbeos. The Carta has one of the largest Autumn covens in the Empire, and has found renown in casting a permanent enchantment upon the Wolves of War; the largest known permanent ritual in recent times.

The Rezia family that runs the guild is largely of Cambion blood, but the Carta is no camorra; they will take the time to explain that the Carta recruits only the most promising candidates, and the most capable and driven individuals are married or adopted by the family. The Gilded Horn has always been politically active, but since the death of Britta it is common to find one of their membership seeking election in Senate, the Synod and the Conclave.

16.5.3 Camorra Barossa

- **Motto:** Steel guard my body, Virtue guard my soul

The Camorra Barossa, better known as the Crimson Foxes, are an old family from Tassato Regario, with roots going back pre-Empire. Members are all part of the Barossa line by birth, marriage or adoption.

Many of the camorra have been noted actors and playwrights and commonly have a love of dramaturgy, both for rituals and entertainment. They only have limited involvement in League politics, but are closely allied to the Empress Lisabetta.

Since the Interregnum, members of the camorra have served in numerous imperial positions, but are probably most well known for their martial and Bourse interests. The family regularly sends soldiers to support the armies and have given the League two generals, in addition to numerous exploits via the sentinel gate. Enemies of the camorra are quick to joke about the tragic litany of deaths in battle they have endured, but the Foxes point with pride to the victories those deaths have won. One such death was Nicolo Barossa, the exemplar of Prosperity, who was the first Master of the Imperial Mint after the death of Britta and one of several members of the family to sit on the Bourse since.

16.5.4 Jolly Jackdaw Cartel

- **Motto:** On laughter, we soar!

The Jolly Jackdaw Cartel pride themselves on their humour and razor wit. Though far from the most powerful or wealthy of the Leagues cartels, the Jackdaws try to make up for this with their numbers and connections. The Jackdaws make no secret of their willingness to recruit any bravo. No matter their experience, wealth, or standing in society the cartel will take them in.

There is no recorded beginning of the cartel, but it is believed they were born from the rivers. The myriad servants and vagabonds that travelled between the great cities, working for richer and mightier folk. They all shared high ambitions, and by joining together they found strength and purpose. Enough to help lift one another from the gutter.

Their guild house, the Rookery is located in the riotous streets of Tassato Mestra. Yet the Jackdaws travel both through the League and across the Empire, looking for work and often managing to cause trouble in equal measure, safe in the knowledge that the flock will be there to aid if need be.

Due to the Jackdaw?s tendency to travel each leader of the Guild holds the title of Count of Vagabonds. In battle, The Jolly Jackdaws fight as a "*flock*"; relying on skirmish tactics and teamwork to achieve their objectives.

16.5.5 Carta Della Trama

- **Motto:** Through deed or scar, leave your mark

The Carta Della Trama is made up mostly of mariners, traders, and craftsfolk with a strong focus on the production of magical items through artisans. Members of the Carta have been engaged in dealings for several years, often meeting in establishments across the League to share a drink and exchange resources, items, and money. They would also share stories and rumours about threats or opportunities from around the Empire, thus providing each other with the most valuable of resources; information.

As time passed and members of this little network grew in affluence, they eventually found their way to Anvil and in the company of the most influential figures from across the Empire. It was then they realised that in order for each of them to achieve their fullest ambitions, they should band together in loyalty to take a more coordinated approach. From there, in the summer of 384YE, the Carta Della Trama was forged.

With their founding Prince, Antonio Benedito Altassato, hailing from Tassato Mestra, the Carta lists that as the location of their headquarters. Truth be told, the Carta Della Trama proudly boast of having prominent members and houses in all four corners of the League and see that as a strength from which to draw.

The Carta?s first big project was the launching of the League Assemblage of Artisans, and they are always actively looking to build connections with other artisans and traders alike. With ambition as the wind in their sails and the fire in their forge, the Carta Della Trama continue to seek to work with those of a similar mindset.

16.6 Guilds of Apulian

16.6.1 The Crimson Reapers

- **Motto:** Reap what you sow

Formed in the harsh winter of 379YE by Prince Drogon, the name of the Free Company was chosen as a gift to the Reaper itself during the festival that bears its name.

As a Free Company, the Reapers are noted for their high proportion of battlemages alongside hard-bitten bravos. For the right price, they will carry their blades in support of any nation of the Empire and are often called upon to pay the prices the Winter realm demands in return for powerful battlefield rituals.

Recently, they have committed themselves to the protection and cultivation of the League?s fifth city, Apulian. Their military units were among the first to follow the Wolves of War in the ?conquest? of the territory.

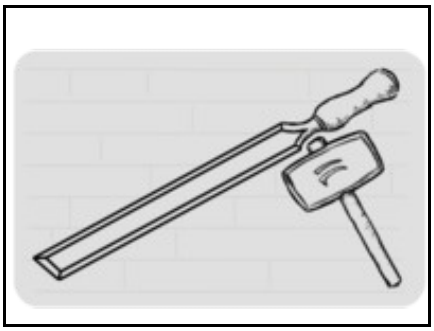
Although they cultivate a dark image with their associations with death and the brutal reputation of their bravos, inside their own camp they pride themselves on offering a warm welcome. Their guests can see past the masks to find ambitious citizens driven to protect the Empire.

16.6.2 The Glass Atelier

- **Motto:** The mirror sees, the blade remembers.
- **Princes:** Bishop-Prince Leonora Albertina van Holberg, Witch-Prince Magdalena Alagna di Sarvos, Captain-Prince Sorcha d'Apulian

Formed by the three editors of popular fashion/society periodical The Looking Glass, the Glass Atelier is a guild that seeks artistic and cultural excellence in all forms. Although formally incorporated in the city of Apulian, the Glass Atelier has a presence in every city of the League. The guild is notable for its unusual leadership structure, with the editors collectively forming the Three-Part Prince, as well as its long-running conflict with the eternal Skathe, whose loathing of the Looking Glass is well-known.

16.6.3 The Edificers' Guild



Edificers' Guild

- **Motto:** Build and surmount greater heights.

The Edificers' Guild of Apulian was chartered during the city's entry into the League, drawing together some of the stonemasons, architects, and engineers whom the Merchant Prince *Mahiri Kaliact di Apulian* had employed to transform the city before her defection.

The Guild protects the interests of those within their trade, and ensures a steady stream of work by constantly working to enrich the city one infrastructure project at a time. There are many keystones across Apulian that bear the Hammer and Chisel mark of the Guild's handiwork, and that number only grows.

The Edificers' Guildhouse dominates Stonecutter's Yard, a plaza of workshops and architectural offices ringing a shared masonry yard near the docks.

17 League Egregore



The egregore spirit of the League is complex and multi-faceted, revelling in politics and subtlety.

17.1 Guise

Guise is the egregore of the League, and like many things in that nation their identity is complicated with layers of masks and riddles. There are usually multiple egregores, usually one for each of the cities - but rarely if ever do all of them gather in one place. Each host wears a mask and takes an archetypal title in place of a name. Collectively they are referred to as being ?Guise? yet none directly answer to that name - nor to the name they held before bonding with the egregore spirit.

While each egregore tends to feel a connection to one of the League cities, they nonetheless represent the nation as a whole. It is traditional for those undertaking an important action to discuss their intentions with the egregore, and it is understood that anything shared with the egregore in confidence will go no further.

Those currently regularly observed at Anvil have also been the Contessa, the Harlequin and the Reckoner. The Harlequin is a rogue and a charmer, who claims to have but recently overcome the ban on public action placed on him by the other aspect of Guise ? though this is disputed. Whatever the truth, wherever he goes, there is gossip, drama, and a social whirl.

17.2 Current Hosts

17.2.1 The Reckoner

Originally from Vardstein Vale near the League and Varushkan border Alexis left home as soon as possible to experience the big city. Falling in with some bravo's they joined the Wolves of War for a short period before finding it not at all to their liking.

Moving back to Temeschwar and seeking to start again they soon joined a little known Reckoners Guild made up of ex-soldiers. Despite using magic they favour a much more mundane methods of balancing the books over magical ways and Alexis regularly finds themselves at odds with other guilds and approaches.

Since the shattering of the City of Mirrors in 383YE by the Hag Queen, Alexis has been seen in Anvil wearing the Reckoners mask. The pragmatic and rougher nature of their home city can be found in the advice and approaches that they give. This can jar somewhat against expectations of the 'less rustic' Southern cities of the League

17.2.2 The Harlequin

Is a scamp.

17.2.3 The Innamorta

Is ultimately a significant scamp.



The Harlequin



The Reckoner



The Innamorata

17.3 Former Hosts



The Contessa



The Duke of Joy and Sorrow

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