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1 Ambition



From *A Children's Primer of the Way*

1.1 Contents

- 1 The Path of Ambition
 - ◆ 1.1 Guidance on the Path
- 2 Paragons and Exemplars
- 3 Symbols of Ambition
- 4 Further Reading
 - ◆ 4.1 The Seven Virtues
 - ◆ 4.2 Religion

1.2 The Path of Ambition

Though many citizens associate the Virtue of Ambition with an eye on a senator's seat or even the Imperial Throne, this path embraces many subtler expressions also. The artisan who aspires to create something never before seen; the merchant who strives to be wealthier than any other; the youth who aspires to forbidden love ? all may be guided by Ambition to turn their dreams to reality. There are as many Ambitions as there are citizens who can dream of them, though not all possess the strength of purpose, character and will to pursue the Path of Ambition to its fullest, for the cost of doing so is often high.

1.2.1 Guidance on the Path

Through meditation on the [auras of Ambition](#), and study of the lives of paragons and exemplars, the priests of the Way have gleaned insight into the heart of the virtue and how best to pursue it. There are collections of parables, tales, sayings and teachings that distil this for Imperial citizens to learn from. The following are a handful of teachings and sayings deemed to be essential to understanding the path:

- Aim high; pursue your dreams; nothing is beyond your grasp.
- Even the most impenetrable forest may fall one tree at a time.
- Consequences are the price of Ambition; no price is too high to realise your dreams.
- It is better, by far, to try and fail, than fail to try.
- Despise the weakness that comes from pettiness and lack of vision.

1.3 Paragons and Exemplars

Recognised [paragons and exemplars](#) of Ambition include:

- The paragon [Tian](#), who legend claims ascended the highest mountain in all creation to steal fire from the sun.
- The paragon [Aldones di Sarvos](#), one of the founders of the [League](#).
- The exemplar [Atuman](#) of the [Highborn](#), who led his people to the shores of Highguard.

- The exemplar [Adelmar the Lion](#), founder of the School of Arms and an inspiration to weapon masters throughout the Empire.

1.4 Symbols of Ambition



Both the [Throne](#) and the Imperial Crown are powerful symbols of Ambition in the Empire.

One of the most common symbols of Ambition used in the Empire is **flame**. This is not only symbolic of the quest [Tian](#) undertook to steal the fire of the sun, but fire possesses many of the qualities of purest ambition. It is ever hungry and never satisfied, for the moment it is satisfied, it dies. Some pilgrims of Ambition even go as far as to burn a brand on their arm or hand in recognition of the price [Tian](#) paid or as a reminder of how dangerous Ambition can be.

In [Wintermark](#), ambition is often signified by a **rook**, while in [Varushka](#) the virtue is associated with the cunning **fox**, and (in recent times) the wily **hare**. The [rune Naeve](#), which represents hunger, is used by some magicians as a symbol of Ambition.

For obvious reasons the **throne** is a common symbol associated with ambition - indeed the physical throne that stands in the [Imperial Senate](#) is sometimes seen as one of the most profound symbols of ambition in the Empire representing as it does the most potent [Imperial title](#). For similar reasons, a **crown** (along with other regalia of high office) is sometimes used as a symbol of ambition in [Dawn](#). This image no doubt originated as a reference to the old [monarchs](#) of that nation, and later the actual Imperial crown worn by every [Throne](#) since the foundation of the Empire.

The **mountain** is also sometimes used as a symbol of ambition, or rather of the obstacles one must overcome to achieve one's goals. [Tian](#) climbs a mountain, after all, in her pursuit of fire. In [Urizen](#) the [astronomantic](#) constellation of [the Mountain](#) is sometimes used as an icon of ambition representing as it does the universal law that *things are not easy*. In a similar vein, in some parts of [the League](#), the **ladder** is used as a slightly tongue-in-cheek icon of ambition, most likely having its roots in the rambunctious street-dramas of [Tassato](#) and [Sarvos](#).

During the Spring festival celebrated in [Urizen](#), Ambition is represented by a purple flower.

1.5 Further Reading

- You can learn about the various spiritual [roleplaying effects](#) created by priests [dedicated](#) to Ambition [here](#).
- You can learn about the skills that priests can use to spread the virtue of Ambition [here](#).

1.5.1 The Seven Virtues

- **Ambition**
- [Courage](#)
- [Loyalty](#)
- [Pride](#)
- [Prosperity](#)
- [Vigilance](#)
- [Wisdom](#)

1.5.2 Religion

- The Way of Virtue
- Imperial Theology
- Imperial Synod
- Religious Skills
- Recent History

2 Auras of Ambition

This person is not illustrious, but they are cunning, competent and ambitious. Let us raise them to high office, for the betterment of us all.

Callus Strategos, "The Book of Callus"

2.1 Contents

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- 2 Anointing
 - ◆ 2.1 The Absolution of Ambition
 - ◆ 2.2 The Clear Path of Ambition
 - ◆ 2.3 The Calling of Ambition
 - ◆ 2.4 The Drive of Ambition
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 - ◆ 5.5 Hallowing of the Conqueror
 - ◆ 5.6 Hallowing of the Master
 - ◆ 5.7 Hallowing of the Navigator
 - ◆ 5.8 Hallowing of the Visionary
 - ◆ 5.9 Hallowing of the Patron
- 6 Further Reading

2.2 Overview

An **aura** is a persistent spiritual effect on a person, location or item. The auras listed here are created by priests dedicated to the virtue of **Ambition** who use the relevant ceremonial skill. A character who is **dedicated** to Ambition must pick one of the following auras when they perform the relevant ceremony. A priest of the Way may also use the **Dreams of Ambition** when they use the dedication ceremony to provide a pilgrim with a visionary **dream**.

The names used for each aura are simply the most common ones used in the Empire. For example, the **Clear Path of Ambition** may be called *The Armour of Ambition* by a **Dawnish troubadour**. This is especially true with those auras that are named after paragons and exemplars; all these auras would have had different names before the exceptional individual they are named for was recognised by the Synod. The **Hallowing of Aldones** for example was commonly called the *Hallowing of the Mountain* before Aldones' recognition as a paragon of Ambition.

Study of these auras helped the founders of the Way to create the Path of Ambition. Some lay persons assume that the **Imperial Synod** created these auras in some fashion to encourage adherence to orthodoxy, but according to theological scholars the situation is the other way around. The auras came first, then the tenets of the Path of Ambition.

2.3 Anointing

Anointing involves a short ceremony to create a **personal aura** on a mortal being. Anointing always requires the consent of the subject.

2.3.1 The Absolution of Ambition

- *You are filled with a sense that your aspirations are of primary importance. Any regret, guilt or remorse you feel as a result of actions is diminished.*

Description: The path of Ambition can require a pilgrim to speak or act in ways that, whilst furthering their ultimate goals, can weigh them down with regrets and doubts. Priests use this aura to alleviate the distress of these necessary actions, and provide affirmation of the pilgrim's virtue in holding true to their path.

2.3.2 The Clear Path of Ambition

- *You feel confident and certain of your ambitions. Doubts fall away and you feel justified in ignoring objections from others.*

Description: Ambitious pilgrims may understand what is needed to further their goals, but be held back by weakness, doubts or the arguments of others. Priests of Ambition have been able to use this aura to help quell those doubts, and bolster the virtue of the pilgrim, removing some the obstacles preventing them walking their path.

2.3.3 The Calling of Ambition

- *You feel a strong urge to prioritise the goal you named when anointed. You feel a pressure to pursue that agenda before others.*

Description: This is a contentious aura for, whilst it clearly promotes Ambition, there are fears it could be abused to make someone pursue an agenda other than their own. Others have pointed to the potential abuses of this aura in compelling others to act in potentially destructive ways, even though it can only ever be used with the willing consent of the recipient. Most priests of Ambition maintain that this aura is useful in illustrating the virtuous path, and for helping a pilgrim with multiple or confounding ambitions to focus on the one that is most important to them. Some priests also use the anointing to inspire those who would otherwise be utterly without Ambition to help them find purpose.

2.3.4 The Drive of Ambition

- *You feel driven to seize any opportunity to further your aspirations. It feels better to take a small step towards your goal than to take no steps at all.*

Description: The path of Ambition is often long and arduous. The opportunities for a pilgrim to advance their goals may seem dangerous or unattainable, and lofty goals may appear impossibly distant. Priests use this aura to help pilgrims to appreciate that the virtue of Ambition is not simply about the destination, but the journey and "even the most impenetrable forest may fall one tree at a time".

2.4 Consecration

Consecration is the ceremony used to create an **aura on a clearly defined location**. There is only one aura for each virtue, and all priests create the same one when they use this skill.

2.4.1 Dare Do All

- *You have a profound sense of destiny - of what can ultimately be accomplished by you if you strive for it. You feel nothing is beyond your reach.*

Description: This powerful aura of Ambition fills those who experience it with an uplifting sense of what they might achieve if they set their mind to it. It drives people to act, encouraging them to set aside other considerations.

2.5 Dedication

Dedication is the ceremony used to link a pilgrim's soul to virtue. It can also be used to create vivid oracular dreams.

2.5.1 Dreams of Ambition

- *The next time you sleep you experience a vivid dream concerning your ambitions and the goals you have set yourself. Your dream will often show you pursuing your ambitions, and may include challenges you face or consequences that will follow from the things you are striving for. Sometimes the vision will show you new ambitions, things that seem appealing while you are dreaming though you may not have considered them before.*

Lost time is never found.

Marcher Proverb

2.6 Hallow

Hallow is used to create an **aura on an item**, such as a weapon, implement, shield or suit of armour. It is not possible to use hallow to create an aura on large immobile objects. Hallows do not provide a source of supernatural strength, but are durable and can last for a year (or potentially forever in the case of an artefact hallowed with **true liao**).

2.6.1 Hallowing of Adelmarr

- You feel a desire to **take immediate action** no matter how convincing the reasons to delay appear.

2.6.2 Hallowing of the Masquerade

- You feel an urge to **conceal your true intentions** or agenda from those who might oppose you.

2.6.3 Hallowing of Aldones

- You feel an urge to **seek out new challenges** to expand your ambitions.

2.6.4 Hallowing of the Broken Shield

- You feel an urge to **eliminate obstacles** that stand between you and your goals.

2.6.5 Hallowing of the Conqueror

- You feel driven to **publicly defeat any enemy** who stands against you.

2.6.6 Hallowing of the Master

- You feel a desire to **use others as tools** to further your own aspirations.

2.6.7 Hallowing of the Navigator

- You feel driven to **ignore anyone who tries to dissuade you** from pursuing your goals.

2.6.8 Hallowing of the Visionary

- You feel a desire to **recruit allies and gather support** from others.

2.6.9 Hallowing of the Patron

- You feel driven to **silence naysayers**; those who tell others they cannot achieve must be confronted.

2.7 Further Reading

- Auras
 - ◆ Ambition
 - ◆ Courage
 - ◆ Loyalty
 - ◆ Pride
 - ◆ Prosperity
 - ◆ Vigilance
 - ◆ Wisdom
- Additional Information
 - ◆ Religious skills
 - ◆ The Way
 - ◆ Imperial Synod

3 Auras of Courage

There is no such thing as a courageous plan general, only a foolish one. Only that which bleeds can show Courage. People bleed, a plan does not. You on the other hand? If this plan fails, we will take some satisfaction in seeing the colour of your Courage.

Empress Varkula, the Undying

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 - ◆ 2.2 The Purity of Courage
 - ◆ 2.3 The Proof of Courage
 - ◆ 2.4 The Trial of Courage
- 3 Consecration
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 - ◆ 5.7 The Hallowing of Ashwine's Rose
 - ◆ 5.8 The Hallowing of the Cataphract
- 6 Further Reading

3.2 Overview

An **aura** is a persistent spiritual effect on a person, location or item. The auras listed here are created by priests dedicated to the virtue of **Courage** who use the relevant ceremonial skill. A character who is **dedicated** to Courage must pick one of the following auras when they perform the relevant ceremony. A priest of the Way may also use the **Dreams of Courage** when they use the dedication ceremony to provide a pilgrim with a visionary **dream**.

The names used for each aura are simply the most common ones used in the Empire. For example, the **Light of Courage** is called *The Flame of Courage* by both **Urizen illuminates** and **Freeborn sutannir**, while a **League** writer might refer to it as *The Beacon of Truth*. This is especially true with those auras that are named after paragons and exemplars; all these auras would have had different names before the exceptional individual they are named for was recognised by the Synod. The **Hallowing of Inga Tarn** for example was commonly called the *Hallowing of the Warden* before her recognition as an Exemplar of Courage (and still is in some parts of **Varushka**).

Study of these auras helped the founders of the Way to create the Path of Courage. Some lay persons assume that the **Imperial Synod** created these auras in some fashion to encourage adherence to orthodoxy, but according to theological scholars the situation is the other way around. The auras came first, then the tenets of the Path of Courage.

3.3 Anointing

Anointing involves a short ceremony to create a **personal aura** on a mortal being. Anointing always requires the consent of the subject.

3.3.1 The Light of Courage

- *You feel empowered to speak out. The more unwelcome the truth is, the more important it is to face it.*

Description: Most Priests of Courage stress that the virtue is about much more than just bravery in battle, that Courage has a vital role to play in the Empire not just on the battlefield. The virtuous are encouraged to face unwelcome truths as boldly as any barbarian charge. This aura encourages pilgrims to find the strength to speak out, so that others can find their Courage. It is popular with priests and pilgrims who find the need to make a public address in one of the political houses of the Empire, and especially with those who follow the example of **Gilda Ashwine**.

3.3.2 The Purity of Courage

- *Any uncertainty about your chosen path falls away. Fears and doubts - whether your own or those of other people - do not move you.*

Description: Fear and doubt are the natural enemies of the pilgrim on the path of Courage. Priests use this aura to help pilgrims strengthen themselves against these forces, and live their lives by the teaching that states "do not fear to act; only be shamed by inaction".



Do not fear to act; only be shamed by inaction.

3.3.3 The Proof of Courage

- *You feel an urge to face the challenge you named when anointed, no matter the dangers. Reasons for inaction or delay increasingly feel like cowardice.*

Description: This common aura allows a priest of Courage to gird the pilgrim's soul, helping them find the strength to face a particularly dangerous task. It is popular with priests and pilgrims alike, for it fulfills the common understanding of Courage - the spiritual strength to face danger. Like similar auras for other virtues, some have pointed to the potential abuses of this aura in driving others to act in potentially life-threatening ways, even though it can only ever be used with the full consent of the recipient.

3.3.4 The Trial of Courage

- *You feel an urge to seek new solutions to problems that you have failed to overcome. Where you have failed before, this time you feel sure you can succeed.*

Description: Nothing is more dangerous than defeat; failure saps the confidence of any pilgrim, making them doubt themselves and their abilities. This aura helps pilgrims who have experienced a setback, strengthening their resolve to try again. However it is also helpful for pilgrims who have not yet made the attempt but are faced with a challenge that seems insurmountable. An essential part of Courage is the self-confidence to believe that you will be able to find a way to triumph, no matter how difficult or intimidating the task appears.

3.4 Consecration

Consecration is the ceremony used to create an **aura on a clearly defined location**. There is only one aura for each virtue, and all priests create the same one when they use this skill.

3.4.1 The Sticking Place

- *You have a profound sense of conviction, an urge to do what you believe is right. You feel certain that you can change the world.*

Description: This powerful aura of Courage fills those who experience it with a powerful drive to pursue a course of action they believe to be true. It boosts confidence helping those who feel that the obstacles in their path may be insurmountable.

The craven die every day, the brave but once.

Marcher Proverb

3.5 Dedication

Dedication is the ceremony used to link a pilgrim's soul to the virtue. It can also be used to create vivid oracular dreams.

3.5.1 Dreams of Courage

- *The next time you sleep you experience a vivid dream concerning the things you are afraid of. Your dream will often show you confronting these fears, and may force you to face unwelcome truths and self-deception. Sometimes your vision will show you new enemies, forces that seem threatening even though they are not things you have encountered before. Often the dream will include you doing battle with the things you fear or may include elements that inspire you, either symbolically or directly.*

3.6 Hallow

Hallow is used to create an **aura on an item**, such as a weapon, implement, shield or suit of armour. It is not possible to use hallow to create an aura on large immobile objects. Hallows do not provide a source of supernatural strength, but are durable and can last for a year (or potentially forever in the case of an artefact hallowed with **true liao**).

3.6.1 Hallowing of Permion

- *Your **fear of death is greatly diminished**. If you are terminal or dying you may roleplay stoic acceptance.*

3.6.2 Hallowing of Irontooth

- *You feel driven to **expose cowardice and corruption** regardless of consequences.*

3.6.3 Hallowing of Inga Tarn

- *You feel an urge to **confront and defeat dangers** that threaten the innocent.*

3.6.4 Hallowing of Brass

- You feel an urge to **openly practice your beliefs** regardless of consequences.

3.6.5 Hallowing of the Bard

- You feel driven to **encourage others to act** and stop them succumbing to doubt.

3.6.6 The Hallowing of Isaella's Resolve

- You feel a urge to **do what you know to be right** regardless of consequences.

3.6.7 The Hallowing of Ashwine's Rose

- You are **filled with certainty** - attempts to dissuade you are unlikely to succeed.

3.6.8 The Hallowing of the Cataphract

- You feel driven to **challenge the overcautious** and confront those who throw up reasons for the righteous to doubt themselves.

3.7 Further Reading

- Auras
 - ♦ Ambition
 - ♦ **Courage**
 - ♦ Loyalty
 - ♦ Pride
 - ♦ Prosperity
 - ♦ Vigilance
 - ♦ Wisdom
- Additional Information
 - ♦ Religious skills
 - ♦ The Way
 - ♦ Imperial Synod

4 Auras of Loyalty

Don't ask how far are they prepared to go. Ask what are they prepared to go all the way for.

Quellcrist Falconer, Poet

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 - ◆ 5.3 Hallowing of Bolstering Bill
 - ◆ 5.4 Hallowing of the Silverlark's Tears
 - ◆ 5.5 Hallowing of the Token
 - ◆ 5.6 Hallowing of the Marked's Oath
 - ◆ 5.7 Hallowing of the Favour
- 6 Further Reading

4.2 Overview

An **aura** is a persistent spiritual effect on a person, location or item. The auras listed here are created by priests dedicated to the virtue of **Loyalty** who use the relevant ceremonial skill. A character who is **dedicated** to Loyalty must pick one of the following auras when they perform the relevant ceremony. A priest of the Way may also use the **Dreams of Loyalty** when they use the dedication ceremony to provide a pilgrim with a visionary **dream**.

The names used for each aura are simply the most common ones used in the Empire. For example, the **Eyes of Loyalty** may be called *The Oath of the Hall* by a **Winterfolk** warrior. This is especially true with those auras that are named after paragons and exemplars; all these auras would have had different names before the exceptional individual they are named for was recognised by the Synod. The **Hallowing of Bolstering Bill** for example was commonly called the *Hallowing of True Devotion* before Bill's recognition as an exemplar of Loyalty.

Study of these auras helped the founders of the Way to create the Path of Loyalty. Some lay persons assume that the **Imperial Synod** created these auras in some fashion to encourage adherence to orthodoxy, but according to theological scholars the situation is the other way around. The auras came first, then the tenets of the Path of Loyalty.

4.3 Anointing

Anointing involves a short ceremony to create a **personal aura** on a mortal being. Anointing always requires the consent of the subject.

4.3.1 The Proof of Loyalty

- *You feel an impulse to defend those you care most about. An attack on them feels like an attack on you personally.*

Description: A key facet of Loyalty is the idea of shared burdens and shared dangers. One of the great tests of the virtue comes when the subject of a pilgrim's fealty is threatened or attacked. This aura is used to bolster the strength of pilgrims to help them find the fortitude to defend the things they care about, and not just from physical threats; the anointing also inspires the recipient to defend against political or verbal attacks.

This aura has also been used by those facing a difficult decision in ensuring that Loyalty informs the choices they make. There are even a few folk tales where a wily priest has used this aura to trick people into revealing their true loyalties.

4.3.2 The Bonds of Loyalty

- *You feel an urge to keep faith with those you are loyal to, whatever it takes. It is easy to ignore qualms caused by actions you take on their behalf.*

Description: Loyalty is easy to find when the path ahead is clear and free from danger. It is much harder for a citizen to remain virtuous when the demands of Loyalty are onerous. This aura is often used to help citizens and pilgrims prepare themselves for a coming time of trial, or when confronted by a difficult decision. Some pilgrims use this anointing to stir them into action on behalf of those they are loyal to, but who know this will be to their own detriment or harm. According to some priests, the Navarr thorn Isaella was anointed with this aura shortly before her fateful encounter with [Emperor Nicovar](#).

4.3.3 The Seeds of Loyalty

- *You feel an urge to aid the person or group you declared your loyalty to when anointed. You feel each of their triumphs and defeats as if they were your own.*

Description: Some priests question the proper use of this anointing, worried that it can be misused to attempt to make someone serve a person or cause. The aura remains popular, however, and those who favour it point out that it can only be used with the consent of the target. It is sometimes used when a supplicant wishes to make a public demonstration of fealty or where they wish to shore up their commitment before facing a great danger.

4.3.4 The Eyes of Loyalty

- *You feel an urge to support those you are loyal to no matter the cost. You find it easy to accept any action they take in pursuit of their goals.*

Description: One of the hardest trials of the path of Loyalty is when the person, or persons, who are the subject of that devotion err, falter, or compromise. Standing by, or following, one who has given you unwelcome cause for doubt is where many pilgrims have strayed from the path. Priests of Loyalty have been able to use this anointing to help bolster a pilgrim's commitment and dedication to another. This has also proven beneficial in helping citizens to forgive one another and approach reconciliation, or at least be forward looking rather than dwelling on the past.

Pride in small things, loyalty to great ones.

Marcher Proverb

4.4 Consecration

[Consecration](#) is the ceremony used to create an [aura on a clearly defined location](#). There is only one aura for each virtue, and all priests create the same one when they use this skill.

4.4.1 A Peerless Kinship

- *You have a profound sense that service to a person or cause is truly worthy. Nothing extraordinary is achieved without sacrifice.*

Description: This powerful aura of Loyalty fills those who experience it with a deep sense of the significance of a life dedicated to a person or cause. Those who experience it feel a sense of the essential nobility of devoting themselves to the purpose that commands their devotion above all others. With this comes an understanding that Loyalty may require the pilgrim to make great sacrifices for the virtue demands commitment to something other than yourself.

4.5 Dedication

[Dedication](#) is the ceremony used to link a pilgrim's soul to the virtue. It can also be used to create vivid oracular dreams.

4.5.1 Dreams of Loyalty

- *The next time you sleep you experience a vivid dream concerning the people and ideals that matter most to you. The vision will often show you how your loyalty upholds and exalts them, reminding you of how these people depend on you. Sometimes you will dream of individuals or causes with whom you feel no affiliation at present, though in your dream it is clear that they need your aid. Often the dream will show you the fate that will befall those you fail to support.*

4.6 Hallow

Hallow is used to create an **aura on an item**, such as a weapon, implement, shield or suit of armour. It is not possible to use hallow to create an aura on large immobile objects. Hallows do not provide a source of supernatural strength, but are durable and can last for a year (or potentially forever in the case of an artefact hallowed with **true liao**).

4.6.1 Hallowing of the Steward

- You feel a desire to **serve your cause** without concern for your own reward.

4.6.2 Hallowing of the Banner

- You feel an urge to **challenge detractors** who criticise the object of your loyalty.

4.6.3 Hallowing of Bolstering Bill

- You feel driven to **protect those you love** from all harm regardless of the cost to yourself or others.

4.6.4 Hallowing of the Silverlark's Tears

- You feel an urge to **conceal your devotion** from others, even the object of your loyalty.

4.6.5 Hallowing of the Token

- You feel ready to **risk anything** in support of the allegiance this token represents.

4.6.6 Hallowing of the Marked's Oath

- You feel a desire to **recruit others** to the service of your chosen cause or patron.

4.6.7 Hallowing of the Favour

- You feel driven to **advance your patron's interests** by any means, especially if they gave you this item.

4.7 Further Reading

- Auras
 - ♦ Ambition
 - ♦ Courage
 - ♦ Loyalty
 - ♦ Pride
 - ♦ Prosperity
 - ♦ Vigilance
 - ♦ Wisdom
- Additional Information
 - ♦ Religious skills
 - ♦ The Way
 - ♦ Imperial Synod

5 Auras of Pride

Of all those who have sat on the Throne she may well have been the greatest. She was not named for the golden charge on her banner but because she outshone the sun.

Eddard of House Cassilon, Legend of the Golden Throne

5.1 Contents

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 - ◆ 2.2 The Experience of Pride
 - ◆ 2.3 The Wellspring of Pride
 - ◆ 2.4 The Strength of Pride
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 - ◆ 5.6 Hallowing of the Advocate
 - ◆ 5.7 Hallowing of The Throne
 - ◆ 5.8 Hallowing of the Cicisbeo
- 6 Further Reading

5.2 Overview

An **aura** is a persistent spiritual effect on a person, location or item. The auras listed here are created by priests dedicated to the virtue of **Pride** who use the relevant ceremonial skill. A character who is **dedicated** to Pride must pick one of the following auras when they perform the relevant ceremony. A priest of the Way may also use the **Dreams of Pride** when they use the dedication ceremony to provide a pilgrim with a visionary **dream**.

The names used for each aura are simply the most common ones used in the Empire. For example, the **Wellspring of Pride** may be called *The Glass Wheel* by a **Freeborn corsair**. This is especially true with those auras that are named after paragons and exemplars; all these auras would have had different names before the exceptional individual they are named for was recognised by the Synod. The **Hallowing of Richilde** for example was commonly called the *Hallowing of the Nightingale* before the **Empress'** recognition as a paragon of Pride.

Study of these auras helped the founders of the Way to create the Path of Pride. Some lay persons assume that the **Imperial Synod** created these auras in some fashion to encourage adherence to orthodoxy, but according to theological scholars the situation is the other way around. The auras came first, then the tenets of the Path of Pride.

5.3 Anointing

Anointing involves a short ceremony to create a **personal aura** on a mortal being. Anointing always requires the consent of the subject.

5.3.1 The Affirmation of Pride

- *You feel a keen awareness of self-worth, and of the worth of other people. You find it difficult to tolerate disrespect, rudeness, or insults.*

Description: The path of Pride is not about airs and graces, but pilgrims who embody Pride expect to be treated with courtesy and respect. Crucially the path teaches that the virtuous inspire others, they do not demean them. Those who benefit from this aura feel driven to help those around them find Pride in who they are and what they do and to defend them against those who seek to belittle or tear down their fellow citizens.

5.3.2 The Experience of Pride

- *When anointed you were asked to name a personal quality which you are proud of. You feel an urge to exemplify that quality in everything you do.*

Description: This anointing can be used to help pilgrims experience the benefits of Pride, allowing them to focus on a source of the virtue within themselves. However it is also invaluable for encouraging pilgrims to embody Pride in their actions. The Way teaches that Virtue is about action not words; Pride is not about vainglorious or egotistical boasting. It is about acting in ways that make you and others proud.

5.3.3 The Wellspring of Pride

- *You feel an urge to embody the culture and customs of your home. Abandoning your traditions or compromising on your peoples' beliefs feels shameful.*

Description: The path of Pride stretches in both directions and pilgrims are often required to reflect on where they have come from, as well as where they are going to. This anointing emphasizes tradition, encouraging the pilgrim to embrace their past and defend the values of their home. It is popular across the Empire, especially among those who seek help in staying firm in defence of their traditional values in the face of calls for compromise or sacrifice. It is invaluable for helping Imperial citizens resist pressure to abandon their cultural traditions. This anointing is also called *The Touch of Kethry*, in recognition of that paragon's achievements in keeping their nation's traditions alive and inspiring others to embrace them.

5.3.4 The Strength of Pride

- *You feel an urge to do what you say you will do. Whenever you face a challenge to your commitment, you feel a surge of inner strength.*

Description: One of the key teachings of Pride is the importance of commitment. Those who strive to be virtuous must become forthright and resolute. Every pilgrim is different but those who have Pride must be clear what they stand for and they must clearly stand for it. There is no tolerance for the half-hearted, the uncommitted, or the pretender. Finding such strength of purpose is difficult, so this anointing exists to aid pilgrims giving them the strength to remain on the path of Pride by staying true to themselves.

Pride in small things, loyalty to great ones.

Marcher Proverb

5.4 Consecration

Consecration is the ceremony used to create an **aura on a clearly defined location**. There is only one aura for each virtue, and all priests create the same one when they use this skill.

5.4.1 Partner of Greatness

- *You feel a profound sense of self-esteem, that who you are and what you do is significant. You are the foundation on which the future will be built.*

Description: This powerful aura of Pride fills those who experience it with a deep sense of their own relevance. Every pilgrim finds Pride in different things, but the aura uplifts all of them the same. It reminds them of the profound importance of their actions to the fate of the Empire - and the importance of passing on the things that inspire Pride to future generations.

5.5 Dedication

Dedication is the ceremony used to link a pilgrim's soul to the virtue. It can also be used to create vivid oracular dreams.

5.5.1 Dreams of Pride

- *The next time you sleep you experience a vivid dream incorporating elements from your past that make you proud. The dream will often show you striving to improve on the achievements of the past, working to make them greater still. Sometimes your dream will show you something new, in the vision you feel proud of this thing even though you may not have experienced it before. Often the dream will involve others you know, working with you to achieve something worthy.*

5.6 Hallow

Hallow is used to create an **aura on an item**, such as a weapon, implement, shield or suit of armour. It is not possible to use hallow to create an aura on large immobile objects. Hallows do not provide a source of supernatural strength, but are durable and can last for a year (or potentially forever in the case of an artefact hallowed with **true liao**).

5.6.1 Hallowing of Lepidus

- You feel an urge to **demonstrate your worth**, inspiring others to follow your example.

5.6.2 Hallowing of Richilde

- You feel an urge to **create art**, to fill the world with wonder and exalt the souls of others.

5.6.3 Hallowing of the Inquisitor

- You feel a desire to **expose false claims**, revealing spurious and empty boasts for what they are.

5.6.4 Hallowing of the Conqueror

- You feel driven to **convert others**, and feel certain that everyone should embrace your traditions and ideals.

5.6.5 Hallowing of the Diplomat

- You feel driven to **treat people with respect**. Disrespect by others, even towards your enemies, grates on your nerves.

5.6.6 Hallowing of the Advocate

- You feel driven to **refute unwarranted criticism**, especially by those who tear down others from bias or self-interest.

5.6.7 Hallowing of The Throne

- You feel an urge to **stand by your decisions**. You sense instinctively that the choices you have made are the right ones.

5.6.8 Hallowing of the Cicisbeo

- You feel driven to **exalt your companions**; their confidence and dignity reflects on you.

The Ten Things

It is obviously down to the individual which qualities make them proud, but each of the Imperial nations can be associated with a single common idea that is often referred to as a source of Pride. The Navarr writer Cerin of Winter Trees referred to them as the Nine Things in the early years of the Empire. They were still in use over three hundred years later when the **Imperial Orc** philosopher Jakaj added her own people to the list during a speech given at the funeral of **Emperor Ahraz**. Following a recitation of the Nine Things, she appended her own people, and since then the list has been referred to by its current name.

For the **Freeborn** it is **honesty**; in **Dawn** it is **glory** (of course); in **Highguard** it is certainty; among the **Imperial Orcs** it is strength; in **the League** it is cleverness; in **the Marches** it is either practicality or stubbornness (depending who you are speaking to); among the **Navarr** it is sacrifice; in **Urizen**, **excellence**; in **Varushka** the idea of wisdom; and among the **Winterfolk** heroism.

5.7 Further Reading

- Auras
 - ♦ **Ambition**
 - ♦ **Courage**
 - ♦ **Loyalty**
 - ♦ **Pride**
 - ♦ **Prosperity**

- ◆ Vigilance
- ◆ Wisdom
- Additional Information
 - ◆ Religious skills
 - ◆ The Way
 - ◆ Imperial Synod

6 Auras of Prosperity

We did not build an Empire so that citizens might make it rich, but rather that it might bring them wealth.

Emperor Giovanni the Peacemaker

6.1 Contents

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 - ◆ 2.3 The Benevolence of Prosperity
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 - ◆ 5.8 Hallowing of Damakan
 - ◆ 5.9 Hallowing of the Zemress
 - ◆ 5.10 Hallowing of Giovanni's Retort
- 6 Further Reading

6.2 Overview

An **aura** is a persistent spiritual effect on a person, location or item. The auras listed here are created by priests dedicated to the virtue of **Prosperity** who use the relevant ceremonial skill. A character who is **dedicated** to Prosperity must pick one of the following auras when they perform the relevant ceremony. A priest of the Way may also use the **Dreams of Prosperity** when they use the dedication ceremony to provide a pilgrim with a visionary **dream**.

The names used for each aura are simply the most common ones used in the Empire. For example, the **Worth of Prosperity** is sometimes called *The Yeoman's Due* by **Marcher** farmers. This is especially true with those auras that are named after paragons and exemplars; all these auras would have had different names before the exceptional individual they are named for was recognised by the Synod. The **Hallowing of Good Walder** for example was commonly called the *Hallowing of the Sheriff* before his recognition as a paragon of Prosperity.

Study of these auras helped the founders of the Way to create the Path of Prosperity. Some lay persons assume that the **Imperial Synod** created these auras in some fashion to encourage adherence to orthodoxy, but according to theological scholars the situation is the other way around. The auras came first, then the tenets of the Path of Prosperity.

6.3 Anointing

Anointing involves a short ceremony to create a **personal aura** on a mortal being. Anointing always requires the consent of the subject.

6.3.1 The Path of Prosperity

- *You feel driven to enjoy the fruits of your hard work. You sense that this is the right time to celebrate your endeavours.*

Description: A cold beer or hot meal at the end of the day is much more satisfying if you have spent the day working. The path of Prosperity is arduous, but priests encourage pilgrims to celebrate hard earned achievements without delay. There are always those who try to delay celebration in the belief that wealth must be hoarded for the challenges to come, but the path of Prosperity reminds pilgrims that *nobody* knows what tomorrow will bring. The virtuous do not postpone their festivities because of war or famine - for doing so undermines the value of hard work.

6.3.2 The Worth of Prosperity

- *You feel a desire to ensure you receive the reward your efforts merit. Attempts to persuade you to work for free feel like theft.*

Description: A crucial element of Prosperity is the entitlement that derives from honest labour, the right of the prosperous individual to be rewarded for their efforts. While most pilgrims are strong enough to demand what they deserve in good times, when times are hard there are always calls for people to give up their rewards for the greater good. This aura helps pilgrims remember that their Prosperity is virtuous. Appeals to altruism or patriotism are often attempts to persuade a pilgrim to share what they have worked to achieve with those who do not deserve it.

6.3.3 The Benevolence of Prosperity

- *You feel an urge to reward those who have contributed to your achievements. It feels just to share your success with those whose efforts deserve it.*

Description: This existence of this aura is often used to rebut criticism that Prosperity is selfish. Priests emphasize that the Path of Prosperity is not just about ensuring that you are rightly rewarded for *your* hard work - but also about ensuring that those who help you are *also* treated fairly. The aura is also used to refute assertions that prosperity is about giving your money away, pointing out that the aura only encourages the pilgrim to share their success with the deserving, not with everyone.

The anointing is sometimes used to stir those who lack virtue into action, whether they are lazy or miserly, but it is also common for those who have achieved great success to request it, hoping to ensure that triumphs do not cause them to forget those who aided them along the way.

6.3.4 The Means of Prosperity

- *You feel an urge to work with others to achieve the goal you named when anointed. You experience a deep satisfaction from committing yourself to this endeavour.*

Description: Pilgrims on the path of Prosperity are encouraged to work with others to achieve shared goals. Cooperating with other people to produce rewards everyone can share is virtuous and should bring a deep sense of fulfillment to all involved. Sometimes the pilgrim may commit themselves to an endeavour that will not benefit them immediately, in the knowledge that the virtuous will reciprocate in the future. This aura can help a pilgrim find the motivation to work hard in such circumstances.

Although this aura requires the consent of the recipient, some priests still worry that it could be abused to try to make a pilgrim feel work towards a goal which is not their own.

Easy come, worth less.

Marcher Proverb

6.4 Consecration

Consecration is the ceremony used to create an **aura on a clearly defined location**. There is only one aura for each virtue, and all priests create the same one when they use this skill.

6.4.1 Neither Beg Nor Fear

- *You feel a profound sense of fulfillment from all your hard work has achieved. You feel no reward is beyond your reach if you strive for it.*

Description: This powerful aura of Prosperity grants a compelling sense of satisfaction at all they have accomplished to those who become aware of it. Even those who feel despondent that recent actions have not been successful will usually find that the aura reminds them of the victories they have gained. Whatever the case, it also brings an uplifting sense of what can be achieved through hard work.

6.5 Dedication

Dedication is the ceremony used to link a pilgrim's soul to the virtue. It can also be used to create vivid oracular dreams.

6.5.1 Dreams of Prosperity

- *The next time you sleep you experience a vivid dream concerning the rewards you have been working towards. The dream will often show you toiling and succeeding through hard work. Sometimes the vision will show you something new, a challenge that would appear to offer great rewards if successful, though it may not be something you have considered before. The dream will often include people you know, usually working with you to help you achieve your goals, but in some less pleasant visions you may see strangers taking what you have earned from you.*

6.6 Hallow

Hallow is used to create an **aura on an item**, such as a weapon, implement, shield or suit of armour. It is not possible to use hallow to create an aura on large immobile objects. Hallows do not provide a source of supernatural strength, but are durable and can last for a year (or potentially forever in the case of an artefact hallowed with **true liao**).

6.6.1 Hallowing of the Little Mother

- *You feel an urge to **encourage others to work hard** and to help them earn their just rewards.*

6.6.2 Hallowing of the Overflowing Cup

- *You feel a desire to **enjoy the fruits of your labour** and celebrate as hard as you have worked.*

6.6.3 Hallowing of the Shepherd

- *You feel an urge to **protect what has been justly earned** from the undeserving who would seek to take it.*

6.6.4 The Hallowing of Good Walder

- *You feel an urge to **confront and expose the undeserving** who steal from and exploit others.*

6.6.5 Hallowing of the Prudent Seneschal

- *You feel an urge to **secure thrifty deals** and to avoid profligacy and waste.*

6.6.6 Hallowing of the Lazy Orphan

- *You feel driven to **expose and punish the lazy**, especially those who take without giving.*

6.6.7 Hallowing of the Grateful Debtor

- *You feel driven to **reward others** with fair recompense for what they have done for you.*

6.6.8 Hallowing of Damakan

- *You feel driven to **pursue the work at hand**. Other matters increasingly feel like distractions you should ignore.*

6.6.9 Hallowing of the Zemress

- *You are driven to **rebuke the envious**; those who condemn the deserving for their prosperity demonstrate their unworthiness.*

6.6.10 Hallowing of Giovanni's Retort

- *You are driven to **defend prosperity** and expose the self interest of those who take the just rewards of others.*

Commentary: The idea that hard work should be its own reward, or that people should be denied their just rewards in the name of some spurious "greater good", deny Prosperity. The Prosperous may choose to share the rewards of their hard work with the deserving, but they should never be coerced into doing so. Altruism - the idea that someone should do something without expectation or reward, or give away their skills or possessions -

can be seen as little more than theft.

6.7 Further Reading

- Auras
 - ◆ Ambition
 - ◆ Courage
 - ◆ Loyalty
 - ◆ Pride
 - ◆ **Prosperity**
 - ◆ Vigilance
 - ◆ Wisdom
- Additional Information
 - ◆ Religious skills
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7 Auras of Vigilance

A soul warned is half saved.

Marcher Proverb

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 - ◆ 5.8 Hallowing of the Sentinel
- 6 Further Reading

7.2 Overview

An **aura** is a persistent spiritual effect on a person, location or item. The auras listed here are created by priests dedicated to the virtue of **Vigilance** who use the relevant ceremonial skill. A character who is **dedicated** to Vigilance must pick one of the following auras when they perform the relevant ceremony. A priest of the Way may also use the **Dreams of Vigilance** when they use the dedication ceremony to provide a pilgrim with a visionary **dream**.

The names used for each aura are simply the most common ones used in the Empire. For example, the **Preparations of Vigilance** may be called *Gathering the Spears* by a **Navarr guide**.

Study of these auras helped the founders of the Way to create the Path of Vigilance. Some lay persons assume that the **Imperial Synod** created these auras in some fashion to encourage adherence to orthodoxy, but according to theological scholars the situation is the other way around. The auras came first, then the tenets of the Path of Vigilance.

7.3 Anointing

Anointing involves a short ceremony to create a **personal aura** on a mortal being. Anointing always requires the consent of the subject.

7.3.1 The Demands of Vigilance

- *You feel an urge to probe the claims, motives, and actions of others. Refusal to cooperate inspires feelings of suspicion.*

Description: This is an anointing favoured by inquisitors, **Illuminates** and other priests who desire to get to the truth behind deception and dissembling. It is less popular with citizens who have had their privacy invaded as a result, though the innocent have nothing to fear from the Vigilant. Priests of Vigilance have also used this to help citizens question assumptions, and whether individuals or groups are actually worthy of their loyalty.

7.3.2 The Price of Vigilance

- *You feel an urge to end the threat you named when anointed. Morals and scruples feel like distractions that will prevent you from taking*

action.

Description: The threats that beset the Empire are wily and cunning, and few will ever provide absolute proof or solid evidence of their intentions before it is too late. Yet doubts about the consequences of acting, or feeling that there is insufficient information, can bedevil the pilgrims of Vigilance and discourage them from doing what must be done. Priests use this anointing to ready the virtuous and strengthen them to act with confidence and certainty. This anointing is popular in empowering priests and pilgrims to overcome other effects that cloud the mind, including malign auras.

7.3.3 The Merits of Vigilance

- *You feel driven seek the source of a threat. You feel an urge to work with those who share your certainty and bypass those who procrastinate.*

Description: This aura encourages pilgrims to try to address the source of the dangers that threaten them, rather than directing their efforts against the most visible or immediate threat. The Vigilant understand the importance of rooting out a threat to ensure that it is completely destroyed. This aura is popular with some Urizen priests who draw parallels with the [Net of the Heavens](#), arguing that the aura drives pilgrims to find the pivotal node, the most effective point to act against the danger.

7.3.4 The Preparations of Vigilance

- *You feel a need to prepare for the threats that are to come. You feel an urge to call out the complacency of those who are blind to the dangers.*

Description: Many priests of the Path of Vigilance use this anointing as a call to arms, especially for those who they feel have become complacent and are unready for the dangers that may come. Other Vigilant groups or sects may use this anointing more regularly to encourage regular drilling and practicing of skills.

You don't own it unless you can defend it.

Marcher Proverb

7.4 Consecration

[Consecration](#) is the ceremony used to create an [aura on a clearly defined location](#). There is only one aura for each virtue, and all priests create the same one when they use this skill.

7.4.1 In Deepest Consequence

- *You feel a profound desire to protect the things you truly care for. You know your decisions are crucial to ensure their safety.*

Description: This powerful aura of Vigilance fills those who experience it with a passion to protect the things they care most about. Although it can be an unsettling aura, it gives pilgrims an unshakable sense of the significance of their own role in averting danger. It is often used to create places of contemplation, a place for pilgrims to be reminded of the importance of Vigilance when making difficult judgements.

7.5 Dedication

[Dedication](#) is the ceremony used to link a pilgrim's soul to the virtue. It can also be used to create vivid oracular dreams.

7.5.1 Dreams of Vigilance

- *The next time you sleep you experience a vivid dream concerning known threats and likely dangers. The dream will often show ways in which you might take action to confront and defeat them. Sometimes the dream will show you a new threat, it appears ominous and foreboding in the vision even if you have not encountered it before. The dream will often include symbolic elements that seem to provide some hint of the source of the dangers that threaten you.*

7.6 Hallow

[Hallow](#) is used to create an [aura on an item](#), such as a weapon, implement, shield or suit of armour. It is not possible to use hallow to create an aura on large immobile objects. Hallows do not provide a source of supernatural strength, but are durable and can last for a year (or potentially forever in the case of an artefact hallowed with [true liao](#)).

7.6.1 Hallowing of the Torch

- You feel an urge to **root out and expose corruption** among the powerful.

7.6.2 Hallowing of the Bell

- You feel an urge to **rouse others** to deal with a threat or danger you have identified.

7.6.3 Hallowing of the Scale

- You feel driven to **uphold the law** to ensure the innocent are protected.

7.6.4 Hallowing of the Scout

- You feel driven to **investigate danger** to find the source of the threat.

7.6.5 Hallowing of the Archivist

- You feel an urge to **decipher secrets and unravel mysteries** to identify hidden threats.

7.6.6 Hallowing of the Unconquered

- You feel an urge to act decisively to **eliminate potential dangers** before they can threaten you.

7.6.7 Hallowing of the Arbiter

- You feel an urge to **simplify complex situations**; ultimately everything significant is either a threat or something to protect.

7.6.8 Hallowing of the Sentinel

- You feel an urge to **take strategic actions** to defend your homeland.

Commentary: Strategic actions often include things such as raising armies, building fortifications, creating large-scale **enchancements** and **curses**, hiring mercenaries, encouraging generals to remain wary for unexpected threats, and similar actions.

7.7 Further Reading

- Auras
 - ◆ **Ambition**
 - ◆ **Courage**
 - ◆ **Loyalty**
 - ◆ **Pride**
 - ◆ **Prosperity**
 - ◆ **Vigilance**
 - ◆ **Wisdom**
- Additional Information
 - ◆ **Religious skills**
 - ◆ **The Way**
 - ◆ **Imperial Synod**

8 Auras of Wisdom

We can gain a lifetime of knowledge, yet never see the wisdom in it.

Avigliana di Sarvos

8.1 Contents

- 1 Overview
- 2 Anointing
 - ◆ 2.1 The Worth of Wisdom
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 - ◆ 2.4 The Challenge of Wisdom
- 3 Consecration
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 - ◆ 5.6 Hallowing of the Magistrate
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8.2 Overview

An **aura** is a persistent spiritual effect on a person, location or item. The auras listed here are created by priests dedicated to the virtue of **Wisdom** who use the relevant ceremonial skill. A character who is **dedicated** to Wisdom must pick one of the following auras when they perform the relevant ceremony. A priest of the Way may also use the **Dreams of Wisdom** when they use the dedication ceremony to provide a pilgrim with a visionary **dream**.

The names used for each aura are simply the most common ones used in the Empire. For example, the **Worth of Wisdom** may be called *The Fork in the Road* by a **Varushkan wise one**. This is especially true with those auras that are named after paragons and exemplars; all these auras would have had different names before the exceptional individual they are named for was recognised by the Synod. The **Hallowing of Avigliana** for example was commonly called the *Hallow of the Messenger* before Avigliana's recognition as an exemplar of Wisdom.

Study of these auras helped the founders of the Way to create the Path of Wisdom. Some lay persons assume that the **Imperial Synod** created these auras in some fashion to encourage adherence to orthodoxy, but according to theological scholars the situation is the other way around. The auras came first, then the tenets of the Path of Wisdom.

8.3 Anointing

Anointing involves a short ceremony to create a **personal aura** on a mortal being. Anointing always requires the consent of the subject.

8.3.1 The Worth of Wisdom

- *You feel driven to make a decision and act on it - you are painfully aware that if you do nothing the situation can only get worse.*

Description: The Path of Wisdom teaches that "the virtuous apply what they have learned; Wisdom knows all knowledge is incomplete". Priests of the Path of Wisdom are able to use this anointing to stir those who have become mired in contemplation or the acquisition of knowledge to test and apply that knowledge and gain wisdom. This anointing has also been applied to citizens and pilgrims who face difficult decisions, or are hesitating from taking action.

8.3.2 The Focus of Wisdom

- *You feel driven to find a practical solution to the problem you named when anointed. Digressions, fanciful suggestions, and unworkable ideas infuriate you.*

Description: One of the core axioms of the virtue states that "Wisdom is not always knowing the answer; Wisdom is finding the right question". The virtue is not about accruing ever more information, rather it emphasizes the importance of using the crucial knowledge to apply practical solutions to problems. Priests of Wisdom use this aura to remind pilgrims of the importance of focussing their search for knowledge on the essential facts needed to overcome challenges.

8.3.3 The Clarity of Wisdom

- *You feel an urge to express your ideas and opinions clearly and concisely. You find it difficult to tolerate those who ignore the facts.*

Description: The pilgrim who follows the Path of Wisdom understands the benefits of sharing facts and understanding with others. As well as enabling others to act wisely, helping others gain insight may be the most effective way to use the knowledge the pilgrim has gained. However priests often remind the virtuous to "let every word you speak carry meaning; do not use forty when four will do." Effective communication requires simple, short communication of the essential ideas, not rambling or grandstanding. Priests of Wisdom use this aura to remind pilgrims of these ideas, as well as helping those who struggle to find the confidence to speak out about what they know.

8.3.4 The Challenge of Wisdom

- *You feel an urge to test your knowledge, discarding anything that falls short. A good decision depends on good understanding.*

Description: Assumptions and inherited knowledge can be dangerous obstacles on the Path of Wisdom. The Path of Wisdom teaches pilgrims to "test what you learn; only fools accept hearsay as truth". The Empire is filled with misinformation and falsehoods, often promulgated by people who have not applied critical reasoning to the things they have been told. Priests of Wisdom use this anointing to encourage pilgrims to examine the things they have heard, to try to separate the wheat from the chaff by identifying what is likely to be true from pure fiction.

Having grey hair doesn't make you wise.

Marcher Proverb

8.4 Consecration

Consecration is the ceremony used to create an **aura on a clearly defined location**. There is only one aura for each virtue, and all priests create the same one when they use this skill.

8.4.1 Dagger of the Mind

- *You have a profound sense that nothing is impossible. You feel you can solve any problem if you ask the right question.*

Description: This powerful aura of Wisdom fills those who experience it with an uplifting sense that they can overcome any obstacle if they find the right approach. The aura helps pilgrims focus on the challenges they face and inspires them to seek new solutions.

8.5 Dedication

Dedication is the ceremony used to link a pilgrim's soul to the virtue. It can also be used to create vivid oracular dreams.

8.5.1 Dreams of Wisdom

- *The next time you sleep you experience a vivid dream concerning the problems you are facing. The dream will often show those experiences and moments that revealed information about the challenges you are now facing and sometimes you see yourself acting on that information or seeking out new information. Sometimes the vision will include new problems or mysteries - these seem pressing and important in the dream even if you have never considered them before. The dream will often include individuals you know offering advice or information that helps you in the dream though it is hard to recall the details of what was said or done later.*

8.6 Hallow

Hallow is used to create an **aura on an item**, such as a weapon, implement, shield or suit of armour. It is not possible to use hallow to create an aura on large immobile objects. Hallows do not provide a source of supernatural strength, but are durable and can last for a year (or potentially forever in the case of an artefact hallowed with **true liao**).

8.6.1 Hallowing of the Questor

- You feel an urge to **question received wisdom** and determine how trustworthy that information is.

8.6.2 Hallowing of the Strategist

- You feel an urge to **appreciate the bigger picture**. The needs of individuals pale besides the greater good.

8.6.3 Hallowing of Chastisement

- You feel an urge to **chastise fools**, and those who spread folly or use hindsight to criticize others' wisdom.

8.6.4 Hallowing of the Volhov

- You feel driven to **find problems to solve** and to ignore anyone who tells you to mind your own business.

8.6.5 Hallowing of the Stormcrow

- You feel an urge to **listen to others** when they speak about the things they know.

8.6.6 Hallowing of the Magistrate

- You feel a urge to **trust your judgement**, and act according to the information you have now.

8.6.7 Hallowing of Avigliana

- You feel a desire to **spread ideas**, sharing your experiences, knowledge, and insights with others.

8.7 Further Reading

- Auras
 - ♦ Ambition
 - ♦ Courage
 - ♦ Loyalty
 - ♦ Pride
 - ♦ Prosperity
 - ♦ Vigilance
 - ♦ **Wisdom**
- Additional Information
 - ♦ Religious skills
 - ♦ The Way
 - ♦ Imperial Synod

9 Bishop



Bishop Luká? Vý?niaus i? Temeschwar of the Church of Enduring Flame

9.1 Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Religious Heritage
- 3 Creating a bishop
- 4 Playing a bishop

9.2 Introduction

Bishops represent the clergy and religious leaders of League society. They have embraced the truth and power of [The Way](#) and the [Imperial Synod](#). Each has a church and is responsible for the spiritual guidance of a congregation of lay citizens, as well as playing an active part in the Synod.

9.3 Religious Heritage

Religious heritage in the League is both derived from, and a rebellion against, the more inflexible and stuffier approaches of [Highguard's chapters](#) and [wayfarers](#). Whilst still respecting, and recognising, the importance and reality of Virtue, the bishops of [The League](#) understand the importance and reality of power too.

There are many routes an individual may take to become a bishop. For some, they simply follow in the footsteps of their parents with their congregations learning to respect their wisdom, much as they have done for generations before. Other more entrepreneurial bishops have invested in a location, perhaps having identified a holy place or relic, and used their charisma and connections to draw a congregation to that location. Some such bishops are even given support by a guild.

Regardless of how the status is attained, it is fiercely and jealously guarded. bishops understand that perception is everything, and so many ensure to present themselves in the finest manner, with civility and style - though of some bishops it has been said that their compliments can sometimes cut more deeply than a bravo's blade. In the sea of the imperial faith, the bishop is a shark.

If you give me six lines written by the hand of the most honest of folk,
I will find something in them which will hang them.

Bishop Armand of the League Assembly



Bishops are powerful and influential figures.

9.4 Creating a bishop

Bishops are powerful and influential figures who are responsible for the spiritual leadership of congregations of League citizens. The best way to play a bishop is to select a religious downtime resource which will represent a church, tomb, pilgrimage site or other holy location wherein the bishop can administer guidance and direction to the laity. These congregations can be in any part of the League, even if the bishop elects to travel extensively leaving day-to-day matters to junior clerics.

There is no actual requirement for a bishop to know any of the liao ceremonies, as such rituals are not actually required to give sound counsel. Some bishops elect to sell the liao allocated to their holy site so that they may use the funds to further the worth of the faith in more practical ways. Others find that the liao ceremonies are an important part of exerting social pressure.

Bishops may operate alone or as part of a larger group. Within a group of bishops, one or more is usually nominated as their leader or spokesperson given the title of archbishop. Such groups may also include junior priests, who know liao ceremonies but have no congregation, as well as other League folk who have dedicated their lives to The Way.

A Bishop may choose to graciously grant their patronage to a guild or a free company, though never as a common member or bravo. Doing so is usually a calculated act. Such a patronage can enhance the status and reputation of both the group and the bishop, provided that the conduct of each reflects well on the other.



Bishop Ynez di Caricomare

9.5 Playing a bishop

For a bishop of the League, perception and reputation are important concerns. The clergy of the League are no less competitive than any bravo or merchant prince, but success is measured by profile and influence. A celebrated bishop is far more likely to be asked to conduct a state funeral or be consulted by senators. Yet, for all that they are a prominent part of a Faith that extols individual Virtue, bishops of the League are perhaps more likely than most to take a pragmatic approach to the Virtues, accepting that - sometimes - the ends justifies the means.

It is possible to play a less-competitive bishop with no interest in politics, machinations and status. Such bishops are important to the more politically-minded and may be courted for the support and resources they can provide. After all, a bishop who commands the attention of other bishops, whether courting or courted, must indeed be a force to be reckoned with.

For inspiration of figures who have walked the tightrope of religious credibility with political acumen and ruthlessness, some good examples are Jeremy Irons' portrayal of Rodrigo Borgia, various interpretations of Cardinal Richelieu from *The Three Musketeers*, and Abbot Hugo from the *Robin of Sherwood* TV series.

10 Citizens, priests, pilgrims and dedication

10.1 Citizens, Priests, Pilgrims and Dedication

For the average citizen of the Empire, it is simply enough to know of the **seven Virtues** and how they apply to their lives. There is no requirement to honour one above another for all seven are part of the Way and will guide their spirit through the Labyrinth of Ages.

Priests of the Way have made greater study of the mysteries and **doctrines of the faith**. They provide guidance to citizens about how to live virtuously and have learned ceremonies that enrich the lives of virtuous citizens and enhance an individual's understanding of the Virtues.

The **liao ceremony** of **dedication** allows a human to more sharply focus their spirit onto one particular Virtuous path. This focus enables a dedicated priest to perform other ceremonies that provide greater insight and illumination into the Virtue. Consequently, dedication is reasonably common amongst priests who wish to provide ministry and guidance relating to a specific Virtuous path, whilst other priests choose not to dedicate and so represent all seven Virtues equally.

Dedication is regarded as being of little benefit to the average citizen as it is not believed to aid reincarnation by itself. However, some layfolk do choose to become dedicated for their own reasons. Such individuals are called pilgrims and are said to walk in the path of the paragon. A few pilgrims even go on to be recognised by the Synod as exemplars of the Virtue, whose words and deeds are an inspiration to others.

Despite some claims to the contrary, the evidence is that whilst a pilgrim or dedicated priest may continue to respect all Virtues, a spirit can only be dedicated to one Virtue and attempts to dedicate to more than one results in a loss of focus and, consequently, dedication. The individual is then free to seek to dedicate themselves anew.

10.2 The Paths of Virtue

Imperial **doctrine** currently states that there are seven paths of Virtue that make up the Way. These are:

- **Ambition**
- **Courage**
- **Loyalty**
- **Pride**
- **Prosperity**
- **Vigilance**
- **Wisdom**

10.2.1 Further Reading

- **The Way of Virtue**
- **Imperial Theology**
- **Imperial Synod**
- **Religious Skills**
- **Recent History**

11 Courage



From *A Children's Primer of the Way*

11.1 Contents

- 1 The Path of Courage
 - ◆ 1.1 Guidance on the Path
- 2 Paragons and Exemplars
- 3 Symbols of Courage
- 4 Further Reading
 - ◆ 4.1 The Seven Virtues
 - ◆ 4.2 Religion

11.2 The Path of Courage

Courage is a popular virtue amongst the soldiers of the Empire who must face bloodthirsty foes and the spectre of death. However, the Virtue of Courage has lessons for those in all walks of life. Courage calls for citizens to stand firm in the face of all that would cause them to falter. The senator whose conscience compels them to vote against the populist measure; the proud leader who must face the shame of a secret exposed; the general who must pass on ill news to their people ? all of these must draw on the Virtue of Courage in their time of trial. It is easy for many citizens to pay lip service to the Virtue of Courage but harder to cling to when the challenge finally comes.

11.2.1 Guidance on the Path

Through meditation on the [auras of Courage](#), and study of the lives of paragons and exemplars, the priests of the Way have gleaned insight into the heart of the virtue and how best to pursue it. There are collections of parables, tales, sayings and teachings that distil this for Imperial citizens to learn from. The following are a handful of teachings and sayings deemed to be essential to understanding the path:

- The Virtuous face unwelcome truths as boldly as any barbarian charge.
- Do not fear to act; only be shamed by inaction.
- Cleave to what you know is true, even where others wish you to doubt.
- Never accept defeat; adapt your strategy and try anew.
- Despise cowardice which steers the spirit to weakness and inaction.

'I shall despise the cowardice that steers me to weakness and inaction. I shall face unwelcome truth as boldly as any barbarian charge. I shall not fear to act; only be shamed by inaction. I shall never accept defeat; I shall adapt my strategy and try again. I shall cleave to what I know to be true even when others wish me to doubt.'

A Highborn Litany of Courage

11.3 Paragons and Exemplars

Recognised [paragons and exemplars](#) of Courage include:

- The oldest recorded paragon, [Korl](#), whose legendary learned the secrets of metal in the darkest places of the world and used them to craft the first axe, with which he drove back the dark forest and slew the beasts who dwelt within.
- The exemplar [Permion](#) of the [Highborn](#) who opposed the wicked power of the corrupt Patrician's Council and empowered the Assembly of the Virtuous in its place.
- The exemplar [Gilda Ashwine](#) of [Dawn](#) whose fortitude and commitment freed her family and brought down the corrupt [earl](#) who had enslaved them.
- The exemplar [Inga Tarn](#) of [Wintermark](#) whose fearlessness and forthrightness inspired generations to seize the opportunities life presents.

11.4 Symbols of Courage

Common symbols of Courage across the Empire are those associated with the iconic tools or weapons of favoured paragons and exemplars. One of the most common and prevalent is the **axe**. This is symbolic of the axe created by [Korl](#) as both a weapon and a tool with which to tame the wilderness and overcome obstacles. Axes and hatchets are popular weapons among priests and pilgrims dedicated to the path of Courage for this reason. The **hammer**, the iconic weapon of [Inga Tarn](#) is likewise favoured as a weapon by pilgrims, and is especially popular among those dedicated to Courage in the southern Empire especially [the Marches](#) - a common saying is that a pilgrim in the south is much more likely to encounter problems that can be solved with a hammer than with an axe.

In [Wintermark](#), courage is often signified by a **jackdaw**, while in [Varushka](#) the virtue is associated with the strength of the **boar** and the **bear**. [Jotra](#), the [Rune of Battle](#) which represents challenges to be overcome, is used by some magicians as a symbol of Courage.

Those who take a less martial approach to the virtue use the **Blue Rose** as a symbol, in honour of [Gilda Ashwine](#). During the Spring flower festival celebrated by the [urizen](#) by contrast, crimson and scarlet blossoms are associated with this virtue, perhaps representing shed blood.

11.5 Further Reading

- You can learn about the various spiritual [roleplaying effects](#) created by priests [dedicated](#) to Courage [here](#).
- You can learn about the skills that priests can use to support the virtue of Courage [here](#).

11.5.1 The Seven Virtues

- [Ambition](#)
- **Courage**
- [Loyalty](#)
- [Pride](#)
- [Prosperity](#)
- [Vigilance](#)
- [Wisdom](#)

11.5.2 Religion

- [The Way of Virtue](#)
- [Imperial Theology](#)
- [Imperial Synod](#)
- [Religious Skills](#)
- [Recent History](#)

12 Eater-of-Hope

12.1 Contents

- 1 Overview
- 2 The Spirit
- 3 Origins
 - ◆ 3.1 The Third Visionary
 - ◆ 3.2 The Intruder
 - ◆ 3.3 The City of Emrys
- 4 The Axos Connection

12.2 Overview

At the Spring Equinox 383YE, *Caleb of the Cenotaph*, Minister of Historical Research, instructed the historical research department to look into the origins of the Eater-of-Hope, the malign spirit that had tormented the Empire in recent years until it was permanently exorcised by Solas, High Exorcist of the Empire using a dose of true liao during the Winter Solstice 382YE.

Headed by Octavia Stream's Source, the Department of Historical Research was unable to find much of relevance to the creature or its origins. However, as the findings were being prepared for wider publication, a chance encounter with a visiting Axou scholar provided some additional information.

12.3 The Spirit

The Eater-of-Hope is the name given to a specific malign creature, similar to a ghost but apparently in possession of significantly greater spiritual power and guided by a malign intelligence not generally associated with the apparitions and phantoms familiar to Imperial priests and scholars. It seems that the spirit escaped from the Labyrinth during a performance of *Whispers through the Black Gate* cast on Cardinal Ynez di Caricomare. The creature was driven off at the time, but attached itself to a number of Imperial conflicts where it may have somehow fed off or worsened the situation. There are rumours that the creature was involved in the destruction of Embersfall spire in Zenith during the Autumn 380YE. Interestingly these stories claim that both the High Exorcist and the heavily pregnant Theodosia of Canterspire - then host to the Urizen egregore spirit - were both present. The spire was consumed in fire, and not a single magician of the spire escaped the flames. At the time, the area surrounding the spire was shrouded with a spreading aura of supernatural sadness; at the time the destruction of Embersfall was ascribed to the magic and given that the Druj invaded less than a year later the facts of what happened there will likely never be known.

The Eater-of-Hope was not heard from again until the eruption of the Black Plateau during the Battle of Solen's Doubt in early 382YE. The spirit was apparently drawn to Spiral by the terrible aura of despair and fear that covered the territory. It apparently fed on the hopes and dreams of the unfortunate inhabitants, both human and orc, whose minds had been shattered by the swirling nexus of Night magic spilling forth from the Plateau. The Eater-of-Hope rallied these tragic victims, driven to violent madness by a combination of the Plateau and the spirit's attentions, creating an army of murderous killers that threatened both the Empire and the Grendel before a large force of Imperial heroes from Anvil were able to defeat them.

The spirit was driven off by exorcism once more - it had attached itself to a Grendel warlord who functioned as the leader of the chaotic horde - but it was clear it would return swiftly. At the Winter Solstice Solas was granted a dose of true liao by the Empire so that he could deal with the menace permanently. The spirit was eventually tracked down to Semmerholm and the High Exorcist and his followers confronted the spectre for the final time.

In an encounter worthy of the great tales of history, the High Exorcist confronted his nemesis and finally drove it from the Empire for good.

In response to concerns raised to the Department by Solus, High Exorcist of the Empire, we seek to utilise one of the two available research commissions to investigate the origin of the Eater of Hope. The focus of the research will be ritualistic practices, possibly associated with torture and punishment, of the late Terunael historical period, especially associated with the city of Emrys (ruins in southwest Sköld.) We seek to cross-reference this matter to the following significant people: Merenael, Fallahd, Tegwen of the Hammer. These names have come to light during the destruction of the Eater of Hope. We seek to understand how this entity was created so that we can be vigilant against the significant spiritual threat that it represents should other such creatures be identified.

Caleb of the Cenotaph, Minister for Historical Research, Spring 383YE

12.4 Origins

Octavia of Stream's Source was assigned to **carry out the research** into the origins of the this creature, with a focus on the ritualistic practices, possibly associated with torture and punishment, of the late Terunael historical period, especially associated with the city of Emrys (ruins in southwest **Sköld**). Her research found little specific to the Eater-of-Hope, but she did uncover some details of encounters between Imperial citizens and similar creatures.

12.4.1 The Third Visionary

Octavia carried out a swift review of available records and tales to find accounts of other dark spirits or similar entities but was unable to turn up any leads that merited further investigation. What she did find were two fragmentary accounts of past life visions all of which made reference to the presence of a third entity in the vision, in addition to the visionary and their guide priest.

The oldest account concerns a **Varushkan wise one** called *Nellakov of Pyetr's Vale*, but more commonly referred to as Old Nell. They were granted a dose of true liao by **Empress Aenea**, apparently in gratitude for the wise one's support in the **Imperial Senate** and took *Father Anatoli Karov* as their guide priest. In the vision Nellakov was leading a group of missionaries in foreign lands when one member of the group was either murdered or executed, the details are not clear. There is relatively little information about the vision, the account seems more concerned with the ghost encountered by the guide priest.

According to Karov, the spirit was present in the area from the beginning of the vision, though it was clear that neither the visionary nor any of the other participants could see it. Indeed he appears to have been the only one present able to interact with the spirit in anyway. According to Karov he initially assumed the thing was benign in some way, even wondered if it might be some **exemplar** or other inspirational figure, but he quickly reversed his opinion. Conversation between Karov and the wraith convinced him that its intentions were entirely malevolent, he was left with the overwhelming impression that the thing was deliberately encouraging the scene to turn violent and intimidating in some way.

By the time vision ended, Karov, was left witless with terror and remained that way for the best part of an hour during which time he was unable to do much more than shake and cry piteously for help. Attempts to **anoint** him failed but eventually it was determined through **insight** that he was suffering from a powerful spiritual aura that was breaking his spirit and leaving him cowed and terrorised. Once the **aura** was broken, the priest recovered and was able to tell his story.

At the time it was speculated that one of the two visionaries may have brought this spirit with them into the Labyrinth when they consumed the true liao. Nellakov was a very active priest who regularly used the **Sentinel Gate** to investigate matters of **heresy** and **blasphemy** in the Empire and earlier that year they had been involved in a series of confrontations with a heretical cult operating in **Karsk** that were in league with a **sovereign** referred to as the Night Terror. Nellakov had been left deeply shaken by her encounter with the Night Terror. The suggestion was that some fragment of this fell creature had infected her soul and been taken into the Labyrinth and it was that that the priest had encounter. However no proof was ever found for this idea though every imaginable investigation was carried out up to and including a question to the **eternal Leviathan** and the idea was eventually ruled out in favour of the belief that the thing must have been present in the Labyrinth at the point where the visionaries entered.

12.4.2 The Intruder

The later account concerns a **Marcher beater** called *Nedry Fletcher* who purchased his dose of liao from the **Bourse** public auction during the rule of **Empress Mariika**. Nedry's guide priest was a **friar** called *Margery Vintner*, **Cardinal of Ambition**. The vision seemed straight-forward enough with Nedry called on to advise a Marcher **yeoman** called *Simon Fisher* on whether to enter a wickerman or not. In the end Nedry chose instead to **shrive** the character he met in the vision, but as that was taking place, a mob began to form nearby of people apparently seeking to attack the culprit.

At this point a third character entered the vision, Margery described it as shaped like a tall figure dressed in a dark billowing cloak. The creature addressed Margery directly challenging her right to be present and belittling her in ways she described as numerous and profane. Nedry appeared to be unable to see the figure, indeed he reported nothing of interest after the vision. Margery claims that she circled the vision three times, exchanging insults with the creature, as her temper grew. By that point the vision had grown increasingly disturbed, with people breaking into the chamber to confront Nedry and Simon. One of the intruders attacked Nedry with a knife, stabbing him twice, at which point Nedry's vision ended.

Margery however remained behind. She is adamant on this point, that she was still present in the vision, despite the fact that Nedry was nowhere to be seen. What she witnessed then was the mob turn on Simon and butcher him, all while egged on by the disturbing spirit. Margery's experience of the vision ended at the point where Simon died - with the evil spirit clearly still present and apparently mocking her.

12.4.3 The City of Emrys

To date, Octavia has been unable to find any historical accounts or even stories that link the Terunael City of Emrys to the Eater-of-Hope in any way, beyond the claims recorded in volume three of **Echoes of the Labyrinth**. According to the account of guide priest Allegra of Shatterspire contained in that

book, the past life vision of Iulian of Shatterspire involved both the northernmost Terunael city and the appearance of a creature that may well be the first contemporary incident of the Eater-of-Hope.

Likewise there are some accounts of enemies of the Terunael being tortured for information or punishment, but there are no records of any kind of this being linked to the Eater-of-Hope in anyway. This doesn't mean the two things are not linked of course - merely that Octavia has been unable to find a link.

She was able to find one reference to the production of embittered ghosts through the practice of torture. She found a disturbing account written in the time of *Emperor James* by a *Dawnish knight-errant* named *Arthoor of Moors Top*. Arthoor was captured by the *Druj* while fighting as part of the *Gryphon's Pride*. He was brutally tortured by the *Druj*, both physically and mentally, as inch by agonising inch, the skin was flayed from his body and the bodies of his companions. Each day a vile concoction of herbs was rubbed into raw flesh, not to heal but to aggravate the wounds still further.

The camp was attacked by brave heroes from Anvil, who were able to drive off the *Druj* and rescue Arthoor and some of his allies, but not before three of them had succumbed to their ill-treatment at the hands of the *Druj*. Arthoor was adamant that they had not died of their wounds, but rather they had succumbed mentally and spiritually to the torture. He seemed certain that his fellow *yeofolk* had simply lost all hope and given up. Of relevance to this research is that Arthoor is certain that in each case where one of their number died, a black ghost like entity appeared shortly after. The shades were dressed in black robes, but each time their face was a twisted mirror of the compatriot who had passed away.

The *Druj* seemed fearful of the shades and gave them a wide berth, but they were clearly not surprised by their appearance. In fact Arthoor was convinced they were expecting them, if not actively creating them in some way through their evil. The heroes who assaulted the camp described encountering a number of black shades, who threw curses at those who attacked the camp and were difficult to kill.

In the view of Octavia, this line of research does not offer any productive leads for further investigation. Whatever the Eater-of-Hope is or was, its origin and nature are not well known in the Empire.

12.5 The Axos Connection

Shortly before the Autumn Equinox 383YE, a well-respected professor in the faculty of natural philosophy at the Citadel of Maykop in *Axos* - *Mistress Isephenia* - proposed that the Empire might offer formal invitation to Axou students to apply for places at Imperial centres of learning. As part of a *treaty* presented by *Ambassador Tarquinius*, the *Imperial Senate confirmed a warm welcome* for Axou students, and laid the groundwork for the establishment of a campus intended to serve these foreign students. As part of the discussion around where the campus would be located, *Mistress Isephenia* visited several Imperial universities and colleges. It was during one of these visits that she gave a short lecture on these malign spirits - based apparently on work recently compiled in Maykop in response to a request from *Ambassador Tarquinius*.

While *Mistress Isephenia* has no specific information about the Eater-of-Hope, it seems to belong to a class of entities familiar to Axou *necromantia*. Called variously wraiths, spectres, lemuré, manés, phantoms, shades, daimon, phantoms, and gaolers. They are entities of pure spirit similar to ghosts and spirits but uniquely malign in intent. There is an order of historians in Maykop dedicated to tracking evidence of the better known lemuré and chronicling their various appearances. This school is confident that encounters with apparently unconnected spirits are actually meetings with a comparatively limited handful of the entities - although this may be wishful thinking on their behalf.

Like any ghost, these beings cannot exist in the mortal world without anchors. If these anchors are identified and destroyed, spiritual creatures of this kind are invariably drawn back into the Labyrinth. Unlike a true ghost, these entities are generally not connected to anchors related to their time as living mortals. Indeed, some *necromantia* believe these gaolers never *were* living mortals and are somehow products of the Labyrinth itself - formed by the Creator (who the Axou consider to be *innately jealous of humanity*) to torment the living and the dead alike. Rather, the anchors of a wraith that allow it to persist in the world of the living are believed to come in two forms.

The first are created when the spirit emerges from the Labyrinth, and as such will be related to the circumstances surrounding its escape. The entities seem to draw some of their purpose or identity in the mortal world from other spirits, which apparently tend to be consumed in the process in some fashion - speculation among *necromantia* suggests that they are only able to emerge into the world "through" an existing ghost, using it as a gateway and destroying it in the process. The *Ilarch* stresses that this is purely speculation, however.

There is a story about an entity that the *necromantia* call the *Vasiliás Tustavrodrómi* who emerged in Issyk just over a century ago following a poorly-thought-out ritual. During the ritual, one of the magicians that raised it suffered a fatal seizure and the "Crossroad King" manifested as if it were the spirit of the dead magician, anchoring itself to his body, his rod, and his *Necromantic Crown*. The creature then set about attempting to take control of Issyk, but was exposed and driven back into the Labyrinth before it could inflict too much damage on the Citadel.

The other way that anchors can be created is through the use of *Autumn magic*, as if the entity were a normal ghost. The item that is to be the anchor must still have an emotional, spiritual, or symbolic connection to the entity, and both must be present. The ritual is not straightforward - it would require multiple *necromantia*. *Mistress Isephenia* is not an accomplished *necromantia* herself and so is unaware of the specifics of such rituals.

As there are two ways to create anchors, the *necromantia* of Maykop say there are two known ways to deal with the spirit. The first, as with any spiritual entity, is to destroy the links to each of its anchors. The most reliable way to do this is through the ceremony of exorcism - simply destroying the physical item may work but there are known to be circumstances where even a piece of the anchor was enough for a ghost. Any spirit that lacks anchors can remain in the mortal realm for only a very short time - a matter of minutes usually but this varies dramatically. A few spectres are said to have endured for a handful of hours after their anchors were destroyed, and spent those last few hours relentlessly hunting down the people they thought were responsible for the destruction of their tethers to the mortal world.

The general consensus however is that destroying such anchors is a temporary solution. The entity is thrown back into the Labyrinth, but it can return again later. It cannot leave the Labyrinth merely by willing it - a gateway must be opened for it - but eventually it will return.

Destroying anchors can also be ineffective due to the inability to be absolutely certain that one has secured all of them. To be absolutely the spirit is dealt with, as many anchors as possible must be dealt with and the spirit itself confronted and subject to a ceremony of exorcism using a ceremony of puissant power. In Imperial terms, through the use of a dose of true liao. The Axou have no imperial liao of their own - instead they rely on a fatally toxic substance that is apparently fatal to any priest who consumes it. As a consequence necromantia and priests alike eschew its use except in the most absolutely dire situations. It has *been* used in the past however on two separate occasions and there is plenty of evidence that rather than being simply thrown back into the Labyrinth to await another chance to emerge, an entity subject to such an empowered ceremony is annihilated - its spiritual being torn apart and scattered to oblivion. Regardless of whether one accepts this assertion, the Axou are certain that Imperial Liao will certainly sever it from any anchors that have not been accounted for.

13 Freedom Heresy

13.1 Roots of the Freedom Heresy

In 324YE Crescencia i Marusa i Riqueza a Freeborn priest of the briar lineage began to preach the heresy of freedom. Taking advantage of the closing months of the orc rebellion, she acquired several followers despite the overt opposition of the Synod. Her particular take on the false virtue of freedom was that individuals should be free to do whatever they wanted without regard to the wishes of others.

The heresy attracted a large number of followers, many of whom were of the briar lineage. After several months the heretics began to openly call for the briar people to live apart from the rest of the Empire in their own state or nation.

13.2 Rebellion

In 325 YE, Crescencia and her followers including a Dawnish general named Lord Geoffrey of House Casillon, seized control of several castles on either side of the eastern border between Semmerholm and The Barrens. They intended to use the castles to establish a briar free-state. Their coup was bloody, resulting in the deaths of many soldiers who refused to support the heretical cause.

Reprisals were swift and bloody. An Imperial force led by Lady Marthe de Cervise attacked the briars and drove them out of the castles. They retreated into the Barrens, establishing a tiny kingdom there called Montane and calling for briars, secessionists and "lovers of freedom" from across the Empire to join them.

While the Synod and the Dawnish and Highborn senators pushed for a major military campaign against the briars, other voices were less convinced. The Navarr in particular argued successfully for restraint claiming that the problem would correct itself given time. For two years there was a flood of disaffected individuals, mostly briars, travelling to Montane, while the Senate and the Synod were at an impasse on gaining a resolution on how to resolve the problem.

13.3 The fall of Montane

In Winter 328 YE, the orc barbarians assaulted Montane. It soon became clear that the briars were unable to withstand the orc armies, and several entreaties were sent to the Empire pleading for assistance. All were refused and within two years the occupants of Montane who were not killed were carried away as slaves. Crescencia and several of her closest followers were caught while fleeing to Dawn. Their trial and execution on charges of heresy and blasphemy in 329, signalled the end of the Freedom Heresy.

In the aftermath, teams of exorcists from the Synod were dispatched into Montane to cleanse the area of auras summoned by the blasphemous cult. This included banishing auras from buildings and tainted relics, as well as liberating citizens who had been possessed. The findings reported by the exorcists were that the situation in Montane had deteriorated even before the orcs attacked. Under the influence of so-called freedom, liberty had swiftly turned to licence, and discipline and vigilance had waned. One Troubadour claimed that, given another year, the rebels would have been no better than barbarians themselves.

14 Good Walder

He raises up his gnarled old hand

And blesses all the friendly fields

Then raises up his gnarled old club

And beats the robber 'til he yields. Good Walder and the Bandit, traditional

14.1 Contents

- 1 Virtue
- 2 Biography
- 3 Signs
- 4 Good Walder in Play
 - ◆ 4.1 Good Walder's Orchard
 - ◆ 4.2 Orders
 - ◆ 4.3 Further Reading

14.2 Virtue

Good Walder was recognised as a **Paragon of Prosperity** in the reign of the First Empress, during the period when a number of **friars** took a pilgrimage to **Bastion** and returned to build the first monasteries in **Mitwold**.

14.3 Biography

Good Walder exists primarily in stories. His tales have been told in **the Marches** since the foundation of the Empire, and many can be traced back to the first decades after their departure from Dawn. Today these stories are known throughout the Empire, often with a particular spin appropriate to the nation where they are told. As the stories of Good Walder spread through the early Empire, so the wealth of the Marches grew. **Urizen** historians suggest that this is coincidence - as the Empire was consolidated the markets for Marcher food expanded. On the other hand, some priests are equally adamant that as reverence for Good Walder and his lessons of virtuous reward spread far and wide, the fields of the virtuous began to return bumper crops. In the modern Empire, the image of a smiling man with a sack of fruit and corn, and fat money pouch, leaning on a stout cudgel, is a common symbol for Prosperity.

All the stories have common elements.

The stories agree that Good Walder was an itinerant Marcher with a profound connection to the virtue of **Prosperity** - even before the virtue was recognised by the formation of the **Imperial Synod**. Accounts vary as to the nature of this bluff, good natured traveler. In some stories he is a traveling merchant or peddler, in others he is a pilgrim seeking spiritual truth, in yet others he is simply a restless man prone to hearing the siren call of the road and the horizon.

Most stories follow a similar pattern. Good Walder comes upon a village - usually either during the early Spring planting, or in Autumn before the harvest is due to be gathered - and speaks to the residents. Sometimes he comes in the guise of a traveling labourer, looking for work. If he judges these people to be good and virtuous, their fields flourish, their labours succeed and they know health and happiness. If he finds them small-hearted and miserly, a misfortune befalls them that exposes their laziness or greed, often at the hands of Good Walder himself - and his oaken club.

In earlier tales especially, Walder presents himself to a village as a stranger, usually a mendicant or peddler looking to exchange labour for food and a night's lodgings. If he finds folk who are willing to offer work and share their prosperity with an outsider, he leaves behind gifts when he departs. Later stories can be identified as those in which the village folk already know of the legend of Good Walder and are therefore encouraged to demonstrate their virtue either for virtue's sake or for fear of the consequences.

There is almost always one character in each of these stories who mistreats the stranger either by demonstrating miserliness or meanness of character, by tricking Walder, by trying to steal from him. Worst are those who take advantage of his hard work and then refusing to feed and lodge him - denying him the reward earned by his hard work. In most tales, Good Walder takes the matter into his own hands and the unvirtuous are thoroughly beaten with Walder's oaken club. Despite his apparently innocuous appearance, he is described as having supernatural strength and paranormal prowess with his cudgel, arising as a result of his virtuous commitment to Prosperity.

Some variants often have these characters suffer mishaps which lead to their penury and ruin and place them at the mercy of the virtuous among their fellows, rather than being punished directly by Good Walder. These later stories fall in and out of favour - they are sometimes criticized for suggesting that some nebulous concept of Virtue or universal fairness, rather than the actions of folk, punish the wicked and exalt the virtuous. Others point out that the bounteous harvests that reward those who recognise hard work and the importance of rewards being shared by all who have earned them (and the misfortunes suffered by the wicked), are *miraculous* rather than heretical.

There are also a few darkly comedic tales in which Good Walder chastises those who try to offer him charity. He rarely uses his club to do so, and the most common (especially popular in the Brass Coast and League) revolve around a disguised Good Walder accepting the charity and then refusing to move on, becoming increasingly indolent and demanding until the charitable soul sees the folly of giving unearned rewards to the undeserving.

While Good Walder is usually presented as a human man, there are a few variants in which Good Walder is presented as female. Scholars suggest that these stories likely represent a different individual whose tales were accidentally combined with those of Good Walder - indeed an analysis of the earliest stories reveals key elements that suggest that this version of Good Walder is actually a [Navarr broker](#).

There is also one story, not held to be canonical, where Good Walder arrives at a village appearing to be of [briar lineage](#) and punishes the residents for their lack of hospitality - refusing to allow him to work in their fields. This story is considered borderline heretical, and those who tell it are considered suspect especially in the wake of the [Freedom Heresy](#).

Amongst the fields and meadows,
Down the shady lanes of spring,
Comes a walking old Good Walder,
Prosperity for to bring.

When I found him by my village,
Sat on't ground beneath a tree.
He was quietly contemplating
The activities of a bee.

The little creature moved about
Through the blossoms of the tree,
Never halting, never ceasing,
Gath'ring nectar for his fee.

I took a seat beside him
And I said "good day to thee."
He smiled and he nodded,
And he pointed to the bee.

"See him work his little wings off,"
"For to prosper kin and tree."
"He'll get his fair portion mind,"
"That's the way of things, you see?"

I nodded and I asked him,
"Will you join me at the plough?"
He nodded and we stood and
Worked the day through, and how.

That night we took him in
Fed and watered him as we
An'so he had his portion
Just like the little bee.

As harvest came upon us,
Down the lane Walder had gone.
But the crops were full and bounteous,

Our prosperity was won. Walder, Highborn poem from First Century YE

14.4 Signs

The Assembly of Prosperity cited the following signs as proof that Good Walder was a paragon.

- There is no doubt that Good Walder is a virtuous **Inspiration**. He teaches that hard work deserves reward, and that all those who take part in the work deserve a share of the rewards. Likewise, he demonstrates that the lazy and the greedy merit punishment, and these two tenets are seen as central parts of the Imperial understanding of Prosperity underlining both "*The Prosperous are not selfish; all that is worthwhile is shared with those who deserve it.*" and "*Despise ... those who take without giving.*"
- The travels of Good Walder from village to village, rewarding the virtuous and punishing the wicked, are held as a spiritual **Pilgrimage** of Prosperity that culminates in his visit to **Bastion** - although there are few reliable reports of Good Walder's activities outside the Marches they do exist.
- Both the encouragement to share rewards equally with all who have worked for them, and the swelling of harvests which accompany Walder's visits to the virtuous, are a recognised sign of the Paragon's **Benevolence**.
- Walder's punishment of those who thief and hoard often result in those people seeing the error of their ways (after a deserved and thorough beating) and thus they provide **Salvation** to those unvirtuous individuals.
- Several priests of Prosperity to carry an oaken club, in recognition of the weapon associated with Good Walder that is his **Legacy**. What was believed to be his original club - a stout shillelagh that delivered punishing blows to the undeserving and the greedy - is currently unaccounted for; it disappeared in 142YE along with Naeve Farwatcher, the Navarr Cardinal of Prosperity at the time, who is believed to have lost her life to brigands somewhere in southern **Kallavesa**.
- Good Walder's presence swells harvests for the virtuous, and brings misfortune to the wicked in a fashion widely held to be **Miraculous**. There are also stories of other supernatural rewards bestowed by Good Walder - in some tales he also cures an illness or debilitation for those who treat him fairly.
- There have been no recorded visions of Walder's life through his own eyes. Several stories end with a suggestion that after a particularly important lesson, Good Walder takes a secret road "out of the world, where he walks still" which seems to be a metaphor for some sort of bodily ascension. Either way, the sign of **Liberation** is assigned to him,

14.5 Good Walder in Play

At his core, Good Walder teaches the importance of hard work, but also the importance of ensuring the deserving receive the rewards for that hard work. Stories of Good Walder sometimes have a scurrilous undercurrent - they include suspicion of "bosses" who employ others and do not give them fair wages. There are several more modern stories that are thinly veiled critiques of **the League** and **Dawn** where a privileged few can sometimes be seen as exploiting those who work for, rather than alongside, their leaders. As such his stories are told less often in these nations - and in **Urizen** where the basic concepts of agricultural labour for fair payment are somewhat alien to the national mentality.

While Good Walder is most popular in the Marches he is known and respected throughout the Empire. It is common to hear a story with obvious Marcher roots re-imagined to make it more relevant to people of another nation. Some of these stories focus less on the importance of rewarding hard work, and more on the importance of concepts of hospitality - especially in Wintermark, Varushka, and **the Brass Coast**. The latter often involve the itinerant Good Walder earning a place at a family table with hard work, during which he provides a valuable piece of gossip or wisdom that leads to profit for the family who has welcomed him.

14.5.1 Good Walder's Orchard

In the **Golden Downs**, just south of the town of **Hay** in Mitwold, near the Mourn border, there's an **old stand of trees**, mostly apples. There's been a local legend, an old story, an old **munmers'** tale, that maybe the biggest and oldest apple tree of the lot of them marks the grave of Good Walder. Certainly the local **friars**, have always claimed it was though to be fair dozens of villages across the Marches have a stand of trees that allegedly marks the grave of the paragon. The **Keeper of the Orchard** is responsible for overseeing and protecting this important site of pilgrimage.

14.5.2 Orders

Three significant orders have been dedicated to the legacy of Good Walder in the course of Imperial History. **Sodalities** that take Good Walder as a patron generally cooperate with one another, focusing their attention on encouraging Prosperity, hard work, and recognition of deserved rewards rather than on rivalry with each other. They tend to have very loose organisation, even for religious sodalities, and these orders lack any complex hierarchies - one becomes a member by taking part in the behaviour promoted by the sodality and eventually being recognised by other members.

The **Fellows of the Stout Stick** focus principally on dishing out punishments - direct or otherwise - to those who are deemed undeserving. **Testimony**, and the occasional **Excommunication**, are seen as valuable tools in their arsenal. They are also quick to employ traditional Marcher practices of **rough music** and **shunning**, and the Imperial Synod power of **Condemnation** to expose the lazy, the miserly, and those who steal the hard work of others. Their common symbol is a stout cudgel.

The **Order of the Sack** by contrast see a sacred responsibility in ensuring the good deeds of the virtuous are recognised and rewarded. They use skills such as **Testimony**, **Hallow**, **Anointing**, and **Consecration**, though use of the Synod power of **Rewarding** is also popular for obvious reasons. Another method of recognition and reward - especially popular among **Wintermark** and **Dawnish** adherents - is the creation and performance of songs or stories that praise prosperous deeds. Some members are also magicians - they may supplement either or both of these methods with ritual **enchantments**. Their common symbol is a sack overflowing with fruit, vegetables, and coins.

The **Virtuous List** tended to be more scholarly and are fewer in number than the other two sodalities. These dedicated priests are primarily responsible for testing the faithful to determine their virtue through observation, gathering evidence, and guile. Of the three guile is the most popular - turning up in a village as a stranger and seeing how one is treated, much as Good Walder once did. The Virtuous Lists were vastly reduced in number in the years following the reign of **Emperor Nicovar** and have never really recovered - some point to opposition from the Vigilance assembly as a key factor in the decline of the Virtuous List.

14.5.3 Further Reading

- **Keeper of the Orchard**

Highborn poem by Oliver Godby

15 Guides: Synod

15.1 Contents

- 1 An Introduction to the Synod
 - ◆ 1.1 Duties
 - ◆ 1.2 Rights

15.2 An Introduction to the Synod

Membership of the Imperial Synod is an important calling and carries with it a number of Duties and Rights. This guide is intended to aid new members of the Synod in fulfilling their duties, and remind them of the purpose of the Rights.

15.2.1 Duties

As a member of the Synod you have the following duties:

15.2.1.1 I ? Appoint a Cardinal for your Virtue Assembly

- Your Virtue Assembly is determined by your Virtue Dedication or, if you are Undedicated, you are considered a member of the Assembly of the Way
- If the Assembly has no Cardinal, you should ensure that your voice is heard in the appointment of the Cardinal
- If the Assembly has a Cardinal, you share in the responsibility for the judgements and decisions they make as part of the Assembly of the Nine
- If you feel that the Cardinal is not representing the Virtue or The Way in the manner they should, it is your duty to take action

Consult with the Functionaries of the Synod on how to take necessary actions in relation to this duty. This can include identifying a Cardinal if they are unknown to you.

15.2.1.2 II ? Exercising of Judgement

- As a religious leader, it is accepted that you are possessed of good and virtuous judgement
- Your duties including passing judgement on matters presented to the Synod Assemblies
- There are no formal meetings at the Synod, as you are expected to spend time attending to the needs and wellbeing of the lay citizens
- You should check in at the Synod across the day to check with the Functionaries if any matters have been presented for your judgement
- In time, you will get a sense for when to visit. If in doubt, we recommend once every three hours for a few minutes as a guideline.

Consult with the Functionaries of the Synod on seeing the judgements and how to register your own.

15.2.1.3 III ? The Spiritual Wellbeing of your Nation, and the Empire

- As a religious leader, you already minister to the spiritual wellbeing of several Citizens from your home nation.
- Within the Synod, you are a member of three Assemblies: Virtue, National and General
- Your duties within these Assemblies are to ensure that the Empire remains virtuous and that any corruption, idolatry, heresy or blasphemy is identified and dealt with
- You have access to a number of powers to take action against threats you have identified.

If you wish to use any of the powers of the Assemblies to oppose wickedness, consult with the Functionaries of the Synod as to what options are available to you, and what may be the easiest way to access them.

15.2.2 Rights

As a member of the Synod, you are afforded various Rights to ensure that you are able to carry out your crucial role in the Empire:

15.2.2.1 I ? Witness

- As a member of the Synod, you have the right to enter any common space within the Empire, including the Military Command Tent, to observe that all citizens are behaving virtuously
- If you are prohibited from exercising this right, you may notify the Synod Functionaries or the Judiciary
- This right exists only whilst you are maintaining a discreet presence. Causing a disruption, or disturbance, forfeits this privilege in that time and place.

15.2.2.2 II ? Sanctuary

- If you are in the Synod tent, or on consecrated ground, and an individual asks you for Sanctuary from the Imperial Law, you may grant it for the turn of an hourglass
- This right is intended to ensure that the Imperial Law is being enforced with reference to the Seven Virtues.
- The turn of the hourglass is so that the individual may either gather the proof of their innocence, or confess their crime and the virtues that informed it
- You, or a fellow Synod member, may appeal to the Judiciary for an extension of the hourglass

15.2.2.3 III ? Confession and Clemency

- Where an individual has been granted sanctuary in the Synod, or on consecrated ground, you may take their confession.
- The confession will be in relation to the crime for which they have sought sanctuary
- Having taken confession, you may accompany the individual to the Judiciary and appeal for clemency on the grounds of the virtues that informed the crime
- Be warned, this right is not to be taken trivially or abused. If the individual offends again in the future, it will reflect poorly on you and charges may be brought.

15.2.2.4 IV ? Judgement

- As your duties include giving your judgement on matters before the Synod, you too may call on your fellow Synod members to pass judgement
- Judgements can cover a range of matters including inquisition, revocation of Imperial positions, reward of virtuous acts, changing doctrines of the faith and more
- The Functionaries of the Synod can advise you of the options available to you, and effective ways of accessing them.
- When a judgement is put before the Synod Assemblies, a deadline will be set by which Synod members will be expected to have expressed their judgement.
- After the deadline, the Functionaries of the Synod will tally the judgements of the Synod members and document the Judgement of the Synod.
- Although the Synod is not required to meet, some Synod members have found it advantageous to explain the judgement they seek to make to their peers to ensure their support during the judgement process.

If you have any questions or require further clarifications regarding these Rights, it is advised that you consult with the Functionaries of the Synod regarding their interpretation.

16 Imperial theology

We are Travellers on the Way.

Our spirits are immortal;
They have endured before and will again.
We follow in the footsteps of the paragons,
Who showed humanity the Paths of Virtue.
By uniting the Paths and creating the Synod,
The First Empress showed us The Way.
Across the Labyrinth of Ages, the Virtues guide our spirits.
We shall not surrender our destiny to inhuman powers.
Death is not the end of our journey.
With each generation, Virtue makes us stronger.
Until as paragons we shall conquer Death itself.

The Creed of the Winds of Virtue Chapter of Highguard

16.1 Introduction

For the average citizen of the Empire, it is sufficient to know the seven Virtues and how they apply to your life so that your passage through the Labyrinth of Ages can be swift and assured and you can be reborn stronger. Even simple lay preachers of the Way need not concern themselves with the subtleties and complexities of the Imperial religion.

However, for many senior priests within the Synod, as well as keen scholars, the foundations of the faith are a source of much discussion, debate and analysis. Senior clergy of the Synod may be asked about their opinion on key points of contention.

16.2 Index

- [Liao](#)
- [The Doctrines of the Faith](#)
- [Signs of the paragon and exemplar](#)
- [Schisms and Heresies](#)
- [Schools of thought regarding paragons and exemplars](#)
- [Investigative Theology](#)
- [Citizens, priests, pilgrims and dedication](#)

16.2.1 Further Reading

- [The Way of Virtue](#)
- [Imperial Synod](#)
- [Religious Skills](#)
- [Religious Crimes](#)
- [Recent History](#)

17 Investigative Theology

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

17.1 Investigative Theology

The Imperial religion is not the product of one text or one teacher, but the accumulated wisdom of many investigative theologians. The first to refer to themselves as such were the Scions of Atun Chapter from Highguard's history. It was the Scions who thoroughly investigated the properties of liao and its various states, and constructed the first gateway. From there, they - and other investigative theologians - have studied the effects of liao and the visions, learning about the nature of humanity, virtue, the Labyrinth and history.

Under Imperial and Synod law, investigative theologians are permitted to consider alternatives to the doctrines of the faith, but are not permitted to teach these as truth. Doing so without having amended the doctrines through the General **Assembly** is heresy and a threat to the unity of the **Imperial Synod** and the Empire. The truth, it is maintained, has its own authority and will be recognised by the General Assembly of sound spiritual leaders.

It has been necessary in Imperial history to remind some investigative theologians that their studies are on, and in relation to, the soul of the Empire herself, and are not merely academic in nature.

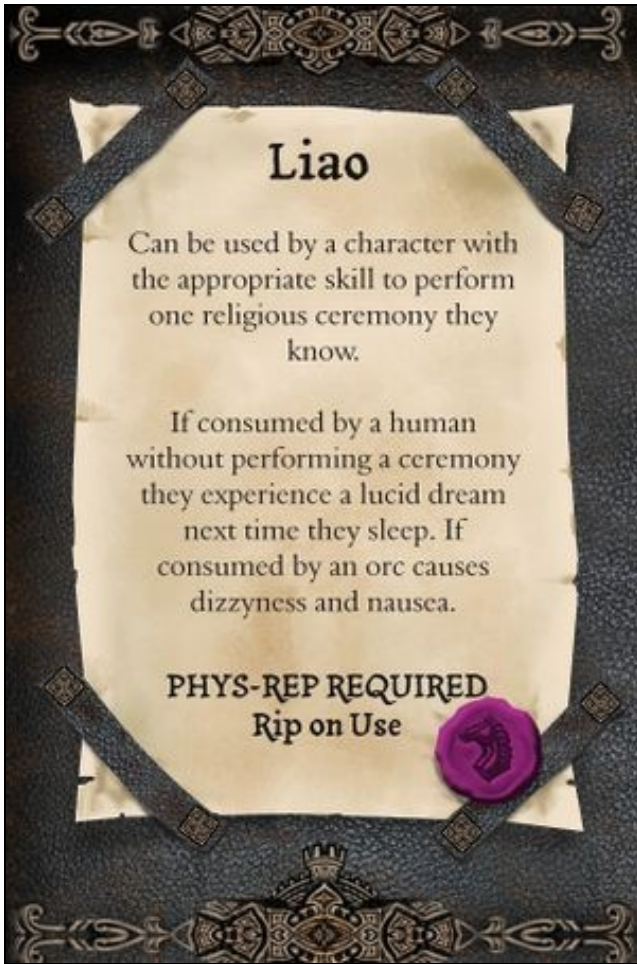
Nevertheless the following are the most commonplace strands of investigative theology:

- **Visionary Theology** - The discovery of pure liao was a revolutionary breakthrough for theology, and many investigative theologians pursue it ardently. Others seek to replicate similar discoveries through other non-liao means.
- **Archaeology** - It was the discovery and analysis of sites and relics of the past that confirmed that pure liao visions were rooted in truth. Consequently, there are several investigative theologians who seek funding for expeditions to battlegrounds, known locations of paragons, and other key sites. In some cases, this is an essential part of confirming whether a virtuous person was truly an exemplar or even a paragon.
- **Comparative Theology** - Although clearly backward and ill-informed, the various Foreign nations have their own religious traditions which have arisen without the insights that the Empire possesses. Whilst the Synod guards the Empire against idolatry and blasphemy, some investigative theologians also believe that study of foreign religion may yield insights in the Labyrinth of Ages. Equally, there may be foreign paragons or exemplars of Virtue whose qualities have gone unrecognised in their homelands.
- **Theology of Reason** - The doctrines of the faith are founded on the analysis of the phenomena collected and observed by past theologians. This analysis is rooted in the sound judgement of the members of the Synod. The Synod is required to defend the doctrines of the faith but, within the Synod itself, they may be discussed more robustly to refine and purify mortal understanding of the spiritual world.

17.1.1 Further Reading

- **The Way of Virtue**
- **Imperial Theology**
 - ◆ **Liao**
 - ◆ **The Doctrines of the Faith**
 - ◆ **Signs of the paragon and exemplar**
 - ◆ **Schisms and Heresies**
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18 Liao



18.1 Contents

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- 2 Cards
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- 3 True Liao
 - ◆ 3.1 Assignment
 - ◆ 3.2 True Liao in Play
 - ◆ 3.3 True Liao and Ceremonies
- 4 Further Reading

18.2 Overview

Liao is a purple powder that is used in [ceremonial rites](#) performed by Imperial priests.

Liao is made from *vinum*. Vinum is a white sap that was discovered by the [Navarr](#) to form a chewable confection that aids with deep, restful and dreamless sleep; and was often used to treat nightmares and night terrors. Refining vinum to produce liao is a costly and time-consuming process. In the Empire, the civil service purchases large amounts of vinum, and processes it to create liao which is then provided to everyone who ministers to a [congregation personal resource](#). Thanks to centuries of experience and improvement the civil service are able to produce liao quite efficiently for a fraction of the cost that any individual could make it.

18.3 Cards

- Liao is indicated using a card

- **Rip the card on use**

Liao is indicated by a small card (85mm x 55mm), printed by Profound Decisions, that indicates the presence of the liao and includes the rules for using it.

To use liao to perform a ceremony, it can be:

- burned as incense and inhaled
- mixed with oil and used to anoint someone
- mixed into liquid and imbibed
- mixed into a small capsule and consumed

An appropriate phys-rep for liao is a small bottle or vial, such as might be used to hold a dose of liquid or powder.

18.3.1 Effects

Consuming liao without the use of a **ceremony** causes a human to experience vivid, striking dreams the next time they sleep. An **orc** who consumes a dose of liao merely becomes dizzy and unwell, and often throws up shortly afterwards.



18.4 True Liao

- **Also known as *pure liao* and *Imperial liao***

During the maturing process that turns vinum into liao, around one dose in ten thousand matures to a radiant purple. This has come to be known as true liao, or Imperial liao. True liao is extremely rare, powerful, and valuable. The amount of pure liao produced each season varies; it has proved impossible to predict which doses of liao will mature into true liao. The most common use for true liao is to provide a human with a special vision of another time and place, which is held to be one of their **past lives**. There are several other uses, however. It can also be used in place of ceremonial liao to significantly empower the effect of a **religious skill**, or used in the creation of an **inspirational location**, for example.

Normal ceremonial liao is well known to make orcs mildly unwell and produce no notable spiritual effects that anyone has ever been able to distinguish. True liao, as essentially a stronger version of ceremonial liao, is likely to produce stronger side effects: whether these would be sufficient to kill the orc or simply make them very unwell is not known, nor has anyone ever seen fit to use a dose of the rarest substance in the Empire for such a potentially fatal investigation.

18.4.1 Assignment

The amount of true liao produced each season varies but it is the rarest substance in the Empire. **The Throne** is given the first portion as one of their **Powers of Virtue**. The second portion is auctioned to the highest bidder as part of the **Auction of the Seats**; the proceeds are added to the **Synod's Virtue Fund**. A third portion, available through the auspices of the **Lepidean Library**, is distributed by the Imperial Synod using the **judgement of Rewarding**. All additional portions are allocated by the **Gatekeepers**, representing the **Virtue assemblies** of the **Imperial Synod**.

Upon receiving the right to a dose of true liao, either through winning the auction or by acclaim of the gatekeepers, the dose can be claimed directly from the **Tribune of the Synod**. As soon as the dose is claimed, it becomes the rightful property of that citizen; they can do what they wish with the dose.

Some actions taken with True Liao remain illegal, however - the Senate **outlawed** trading the sacred substance with non-Imperial citizens, and uses of it can still be condemned as **abuse of powers** by the Imperial Synod.

18.4.2 True Liao in Play

- **True liao is required to create a past life vision**
- **Some commissions require a dose of true liao to complete**
- **A dose of true liao can be used in any ceremony**
- **Occasionally opportunities require a dose of true liao**

Under most circumstances, the phys-rep for true liao is provided by Profound Decisions. It is identifiable as a purple bottle bearing a *true liao* special item ribbon. The phys-rep should be returned to GOD once the item is used.

One of the most common uses for true liao is providing someone with a **past life vision**. If the owner wishes to use the dose for a vision then it should be given over to the Tribune of the Synod at least one event in advance.

The permanent auras created by the use of true liao can exert a powerful and long-lasting influence. Certain permanent religious structures, such as the **inspirational location** of an exemplar or paragon, require a dose of true liao to sanctify them. There may additionally be **opportunities** that arise via the winds of fortune that can only be fulfilled by the use of a dose of true liao.

18.4.3 True Liao and Ceremonies

- **Any aura created using true liao is both **durable** and **strong****

True liao can be used in place of common liao to perform any **liao ceremony**.

Anointing

You can use true liao in place of normal liao to perform an anointing ceremony. This will create a **true aura** which can only be removed using true liao and is **durable** - it will last at least as long as the character is alive and perhaps even longer than that.

Consecration

You can use true liao in place of normal liao to perform an consecration ceremony. This will create a **true aura** which can only be removed using true liao and is **durable** - it will last at least as long as the enclosure is intact, and perhaps even longer than that.

Dedication

You can use true liao in place of normal liao to perform a dedication ceremony. In this case, the dedication is still permanent, but it cannot be removed or replaced by another dedication using a ceremony that does not also include a dose of true liao. it is exceptionally rare - almost unheard of - for true liao to be used in fashion.

Excommunication

You can use true liao in place of normal liao to perform a true excommunication. This resulting excommunication is equivalent to a **true aura**; it cannot be removed except with an effect that also includes a dose of true liao or substance of equivalent potency.

Exorcism

You can use true liao in place of normal liao to perform an exorcism ceremony. In this case, the exorcism is automatically powerful enough to banish any spirit, possession, or haunting presence, even when wielded by a single priest.

Theory suggests that a ghost with anchors that is subjected to a true liao exorcism will find it extremely difficult to reform, and is likely to be greatly weakened, but there has been little opportunity for experimentation to prove this one way or another.

Hallow

You can use true liao in place of normal liao to hallow an item. This will create a true aura, it can only be replaced or removed using true liao or something of similar power. An *artefact cannot* be hallowed except by using true liao to create a *true aura*.

A true aura on an item allows the character carrying the item to make use of one additional dose of liao whenever they perform a ceremony, allowing them to create effects with greater *strength*.

Testimony

It is possible to use true liao to create a true testimony. The testimony is exceptionally vivid - it is more prominent than any other testimony and the fact that it has been performed with true liao is evident to anyone using the *insight* ceremony. Some priests theorize that a true liao testimony will continue to follow the target through all their subsequent lives (in one form or another), but there is no reliable proof for this conjecture not least because true liao testimony is incredibly rare.

You can also use true liao to remove *all* spiritual marks from a target's soul or aura. If true liao were used to perform a ceremony on an orc or human, this would also remove any spontaneous spiritual marks or marks that were not created using the testimony skill.

18.5 Further Reading

- The Way of Virtue
- Imperial Theology
 - ◆ Liao
 - ◆ Past life vision
 - ◆ The Doctrines of the Faith
 - ◆ Signs of the paragon and exemplar
 - ◆ Schisms and Heresies
 - ◆ Investigative Theology
- Imperial Synod
- Religious Skills
- Religious Crimes
- Recent History

19 Loyalty



From *A Children's Primer of the Way*

19.1 Contents

- 1 The Path of Loyalty
 - ◆ 1.1 Guidance on the Path
 - ◆ 1.2 Paragons and Exemplars
- 2 Symbols of Loyalty
- 3 Further Reading
 - ◆ 3.1 The Seven Virtues
 - ◆ 3.2 Religion

19.2 The Path of Loyalty

It is easy for citizens to claim Loyalty but, as with many of the virtues, its proof lies in the testing. For those that claim to be loyal, or to inspire Loyalty, all may seem well in times of peace and prosperity. It is in hardship, when errors are made, that temptation arises, if not to betray, but to doubt and undermine. Time and again, history has shown that when Loyalty is needed most, it is most scarce. The Empire stands on the foundation of the Loyalty of its citizens. If they be not loyal, then the Empire surely cannot stand. Day-to-day loyalty is seen in the student to their teacher, in the soldier to their commander, between lovers and spouses, and between the citizens and the Empire.

19.2.1 Guidance on the Path

Through meditation on the [auras of Loyalty](#), and study of the paragons and exemplars, the priests of the Way have gleaned insight into the heart of the virtue and how best to pursue it. There are collections of parables, tales, sayings and teachings that distill this for Imperial citizens to learn from. The following are a handful of teachings and sayings deemed to be essential to understanding the path:

- Know your heart and what commands its devotion above all else.
- Even the wicked can be loyal when times are prosperous and judgements are unfailing; the truly virtuous are loyal even through hardship and misfortune.
- Loyalty is not displayed by words or deeds alone, but by the unity of both.
- The Virtuous build up their fellows; they do not tear them down.
- Despise treachery; even the strongest may err, but deceivers will lie again.

19.2.2 Paragons and Exemplars

Identifying the paragons and exemplars of Loyalty has taxed the theologians of the Synod and the Highborn before them for they rarely act alone. Furthermore, in some incarnations the paragons and exemplars inspire great Loyalty; in others, they demonstrate exceptional Loyalty to another. Recognised [paragons](#) of Loyalty include:

- [The Marked](#).

Recognised **exemplars** of Loyalty include:

- Lady **Elayne Silverlark** of Dawn.
- **Bolstering Bill**, a character generally believed to have been a **Marcher** - if he existed at all - who appears in a number of comic songs, stories and poems in various parts of the Empire. He (or very occasionally, she) is presented as a simple yet well-meaning soldier, usually wielding a polearm, whose companions encounter any number of amusing or hair-raising scrapes and who survive or triumph with the aid of their companion, Bill combines good humour, honest camaraderie and more than a little tough love with an absolute commitment to never leaving a friend behind. While the truth behind these tales is contested, the character of Bolstering Bill is often considered to be an **exemplar** of **Loyalty**. Even the critics of the Bolstering Bill stories note that it is likely that many of them recount the adventures of real people, and have simply been ascribed to Bolstering Bill by later generations of storytellers to make them more accessible to their audiences. (see also the **Good Neighbour**, a polearm occasionally called a *Bolstering Bill*).
- **Cora Holdfast**, a Navarr **Brand** (and later guide) who was instrumental in establishing the **Anvil Hospital and the Imperial School of Medicine**. Her no-nonsense approach to the problems she found in Anvil in the aftermath of **Empress Britta**'s death made her a powerful agent of change, and where a challenge was greater than she could handle, she organised others to join her. After her account of a traumatic Pure Liao Vision, she attracted pilgrims of Loyalty faced with hard choices. She was murdered only a few years into this work, but her work lives on at her **Inspirational Shrine** at **High Chalcis**.

One figure whose status is somewhat unclear is **Ruth of the Seven Stars** - a paragon of Loyalty in pre-Imperial Highguard, possibly recognised as an exemplar in 82YE, but who has never been officially included on lists of inspirational figures.

19.3 Symbols of Loyalty

The Path of Loyalty has many symbols across the Empire, but one of the more common is a **chain**. This symbolises not only the humble origins of the **earliest paragon** as a slave, but is composed of single links given length, strength and purpose by being inextricably linked to others. Along similar lines, a **rope** of many strands is a common symbol. Some priests and pilgrims dedicated to this path wear chains around their necks, or either a chain or rope around their waist indicating their ties. Although the exact description of the slave tattoos of the Marked is lost to time, several priests and pilgrims will be tattooed, often with some reference ? obvious, oblique or symbolic ? to that which holds their Loyalty.

The chain and the rope are sometimes a matter of contention for the **Preachers** of the **Imperial Orcs**, being too closely representative of the slavery they and their ancestors endured at the hands of the Empire. Some have adopted the **horse** (especially the horse skull) to represent Loyalty, while others favour the **clasped hands** (a common expression of respect between individuals).

In **the League**, the **ring** is a strong symbol of Loyalty, tied inextricably as it is to both custom and **hearth magic**. indeed gifts of rings have become a powerful symbol of Loyalty throughout the Empire, and are often used as part of a ceremony where someone undertakes an obligation for another, or as a part of marriage vows. **Interlinked rings** - usually two but sometimes three (especially in **Wintermark** and **the Brass Coast**), or seven - represent bonds between individuals in a similar fashion.

In **Navarr**, **thorns** are sometimes used as a symbol of Loyalty, and the blood they shed is seen as a reminder of the price of sacrifice (an idea that many Navarr consider to be closely tied to the virtue as well as to their own nation's history). Thorny briars are a common feature of the tattoos used to mark oaths.

In **Wintermark**, the **hawk** and the **falcon** are symbols of Loyalty, while in **Varushka** the virtue is associated with the **hound**. Some magicians use the **runes Lann**, which represents equitable bargains, to symbolise Loyalty.

Some **Urizen** point to the **astronomantic** constellations of **the Chain** and **the Three Sisters** as manifestations of this virtue - albeit with different, nuanced interpretations. During their Spring festival, they represent Loyalty with blue flowers.

It is more shameful to distrust your friends than to be deceived by them.

19.4 Further Reading

- You can learn about the various spiritual **roleplaying effects** created by priests **dedicated** to Loyalty **here**.
- You can learn about the skills that priests can use to support the virtue of Loyalty **here**.

19.4.1 The Seven Virtues

- **Ambition**
- **Courage**

- Loyalty
- Pride
- Prosperity
- Vigilance
- Wisdom

19.4.2 Religion

- The Way of Virtue
- Imperial Theology
- Imperial Synod
- Religious Skills
- Recent History

20 Malign spiritual presences

Tomas moved to pick up the sword. Sensing something wrong, I cried out a warning, but it was too late. I could see the change in him immediately. I instructed him to put the weapon down. He refused and told me that he no longer had to do what I told him. I knew then that I would have to exorcise the vile force that controlled him now, but first I would have to separate him from the cursed blade - and for that I would have to fight him.

The Shadow of Crescencia



Sects dedicated to a malign spiritual presence, such as the [Whittle folk](#), can prove a major threat to the stability of the Empire - and the souls of the virtuous.

20.1 Contents

- 1 Overview
 - ◆ 1.1 False Virtues
 - ◆ 1.2 False Gods
 - ◆ 1.3 Phenomena and Phantasmagoria
- 2 Examples of Malign Spiritual Presences
 - ◆ 2.1 Hope
 - ◆ 2.2 Peace
 - ◆ 2.3 Anarchy
 - ◆ 2.4 Vengeance
 - ◆ 2.5 Fear
 - ◆ 2.6 Hatred
 - ◆ 2.7 Further Reading

20.2 Overview

Although there are seven virtues that are known to empower the human soul and guide it through the Labyrinth of Ages, there are other spiritual forces that are present in the world. These malign spiritual presences can arise from false teachers, barbarians, foreigners, or even simply by circumstance. Amongst the duties of priests of the Way is cleansing and purging the malign spiritual presences utilising an appropriate [liao ceremony](#).

Malign spiritual presences have a number of known sources and manifestations. These include:

20.2.1 False Virtues

There are some malign auras that initially appear harmless, even beneficial, but which were ruled as un-virtuous and excluded from the [Doctrine of Seven](#) by the early Synod. Consequently, the promotion and propagation of these auras and presences is regarded as blasphemy under Imperial law.

Nevertheless, some blasphemous cults still arise and either explore these auras in secret, or seek to change the Doctrines of the Faith to press for their inclusion.

20.2.2 False Gods

In their ignorance, some barbarians and foreigners encounter spiritual auras and manifestations and, instead of understanding that they are echoes from the Labyrinth of Ages, see them as the presence of gods, demons or other supernatural entities. Priests of these false gods may even believe that they are invoking the power of some divine being through their warped approaches to religious ceremonies.

20.2.3 Phenomena and Phantasmagoria

While the propagation of blasphemous cults and the worship of false gods is carried out via mortal agencies, there are occasions where malign spiritual presences can seem to occur as a natural, or indirectly occurring, phenomenon. For example, a house in which a horrific crime is committed may attract a malign spiritual aura related to the nature of that crime. Additionally, it has been known for vile and wicked spirits - condemned to wander the Labyrinth of Ages for all time - to break loose and seize control of mortal hosts.

20.3 Examples of Malign Spiritual Presences

The following are a few of the spiritual presences that have been excluded from the Doctrines of the Faith and so whose accepted presence constitute at least blasphemy if not also idolatry.

20.3.1 Hope

Seemingly benign, this aura has also been referred to as Fortune or Fate and generally conveys that there are greater supernatural forces at work, and that these forces are benign and can be trusted. This seductive aura has been deemed by Synods past as being anathema to all the virtues for it discourages effort and striving by mortals. It is also an aura often associated with false gods for it encourages faith in greater powers, which is idolatry.

20.3.2 Peace

Another apparently benign aura, Peace has also been known as Tranquillity and Harmony. It was ultimately deemed dangerous for promoting passivity and being in conflict with virtues such as Ambition, Courage and Vigilance. At its worst, Peace promotes apathy, indifference, and compromise in the face of challenges that confront, even threaten, the Empire. The restful nature of Peace auras is alluring and, some claim, mildly addictive, which is a quality that has been exploited by blasphemous cults and false gods.

20.3.3 Anarchy

Auras of Anarchy - sometimes called Freedom or Liberty - stir mortal souls against structures and order and were recognised at an early stage as self-destructive forces as well as a threat to the unity and heart of the Empire. Less prone to spontaneous manifestation than some malign presences, Anarchy has been known to take root in blasphemous cults that seek to tear down all the Empire has sought to build. This false virtue was extensively preached during the [Freedom Heresy](#).

20.3.4 Vengeance

Auras of Vengeance - occasionally called Justice - are one of the malign spiritual presences that seem to crop up through all agencies in almost equal measure. The aura has been known to manifest in areas of sudden violence and, as such, is commonly associated with hauntings. Equally, there are false gods and blasphemous cults that utilise auras of Vengeance to steer souls down dark paths. These destructive auras were deemed unvirtuous by the early Synod for fuelling cycles of violence and goading citizens into action, often in defiance of Imperial law, which is both disloyal and unwise.

20.3.5 Fear

Auras of Fear, like auras of Vengeance, are well known for arising spontaneously, as well as through false gods and blasphemous cults. In the case of the latter two, it is not that Fear is venerated but more that it is used as a means to goad and control other mortal souls. The unvirtuous nature of these auras is apparent in the manner that they stand in direct opposition to virtues such as Courage and Ambition.

20.3.6 Hatred

There was some significant debate within the early Synod before auras of Hatred were deemed unvirtuous. Its proponents argued that it was a powerful

and motivating force that spurred mortal hearts into action. It was ultimately ruled to be in conflict with the more widely recognised and respected virtue of Wisdom, being irrational and indiscriminate in its nature. However, there are false gods and blasphemous cults that still seek to use these auras as a means to control mortal souls. Recent interest in learning more about this wicked spiritual presence led to the [Minister of Historical Research](#) commissioning further investigation, summarized in the report [Maude, and the nature of Hatred](#).

20.3.7 Further Reading

- [The Way of Virtue](#)
- [Imperial Theology](#)
- [Imperial Synod](#)
- [Religious Skills](#)
- [Recent History](#)

- [Eater-of-Hope](#)

21 Monastery



Monks and friars tend to the spiritual wellbeing of the people of the Marches.

21.1 Overview

A monastery is more than just a religious building - it is a community of priests in the Marches, wielding power in both the [Imperial Synod](#) and the day-to-day lives of the Marcher folk. The first monasteries were founded by pilgrims returning from [Highguard](#), and formed the foundation for the [Marcher Assembly](#).

Monasteries are usually surrounded by fertile farmland that is owned and worked by the monks. This ownership of land allows monasteries to wield political power in the same way as a [Marcher household](#). No abbot has yet become the senator for a March ? and to date few households have pledged their loyalty to a monastery - but such a development is not outside the bounds of possibility.

A few monasteries are formed purely of scholars who take little part in warfare, but the majority include capable warriors who will don armour when battle is due. ?*You don't own it, unless you can defend it.*? is a Marcher saying that applies even to monasteries, and the abbots have just as much reason as any household to want to protect what is theirs. Some monasteries extend the right of sanctuary to anyone who comes to them, and warriors are occasionally needed to ensure that right is respected.

21.2 Monks

Monks divide their time between study of the Imperial Faith and working the farmlands claimed by the monastery. Monks minister to the spiritual welfare of the folk around their monastery, largely ignoring Household boundaries. They combine the teachings of the Imperial Faith with respect for Marcher tradition, and are generally adept at employing the custom of [shunning](#) to discourage un-virtuous behaviour. Where necessary they may also try to encourage the use of the [rough music](#) against an individual who refuses to mend their unvirtuous ways, although given the highly informal nature of that custom this can be quite a challenge.

Monks usually refer to one another with familial titles (cousin among monks of the same generation, uncle or aunt when talking to an older monk, nephew or niece when talking to a younger monk).

Monks of any gender wear plain garments, not unlike priestly robes in Highguard, though often simpler and less ostentatious.

21.3 Creating a monastery

A monastery is a good choice for a religious group from the Marches. The costume is highly distinctive, and beside the obvious roles for priestly characters, the power wielded by abbots can make them powerful participants in the politics of the nation.

In addition to priests, a monastery may have martially minded characters who serve as the defenders of the monastery, but unlike the cataphracts of **Highguard**, these are likely to be armed and armoured monks who have more in common with the yeomen who fight for the Marcher households.

When building a monastery group, there are some difficult choices to make with personal resources. To have influence in the Marcher Assembly and the Imperial Synod, and access to the precious liao which is vital to some religious ceremonies, your group will need characters with religious personal resources. To have influence in the Marches, however, the monastery will need some characters to control personal resources in the form of farmland - which has the advantage that it will also provide money to the monks that own them.

22 On the Doctrine of Human Destiny

To conduct Historical Research into the context, politics, rationale and personalities pertinent to the formulation and ratification of the Doctrine of Human Destiny

Announced by Severin von Holberg, Minister for Historical Research, Winter 383YE

22.1 Contents

- 1 Overview
- 2 Foreword
- 3 Introduction
- 4 Pre-Imperial
- 5 The First Empress
- 6 The Patrician War
- 7 The Foundation of the Way
- 8 Further Investigation

22.2 Overview

This report was put together in Spring 384YE by the [Department of Historical Research](#) at the behest of the [Minister of Historical Research](#), Severin Teyhard von Holberg. It looks into the origins of the [Doctrine of Human Destiny](#), one of the [Doctrines of the Faith](#) that help guide pilgrims along the Way. This particular doctrine has proven increasingly controversial since the [Imperial Orcs](#) became part of the nation, and has also fuelled conflict with the [Sumaah Republic](#).

The document begins with a foreword written by Leontes the Scribe, with the rest being written by a Wintermark scholar named Siward the Beacon, a lecturer at Holberg University.

22.3 Foreword

I spent quite a bit of time looking at this question - of how the Doctrine of Human Destiny came about - and the problem is that there isn't a lot to go on. I can say with certainty that the first time the Doctrines of the Faith appear with the wording we recognise today is in 73YE. I can say that the most well-known commentary on the Doctrines - the one many school children are familiar with - wasn't actually written until 106YE by a [bishop of the League](#). None of that will help with the fundamental question of where the Doctrine of Human Destiny came from.

So I made the decision to invite Siward the Beacon, a scholar from [Hahnmark](#) who lectures at [Holberg University](#), to write this document. He's spent considerably longer than three months reading, writing, and thinking about the Doctrines. He's also a devout [dedicate of Wisdom](#). We have to delve into speculation, and I'd rather have someone who I know is passionate and well-informed about the subject do that speculation.

But when you grab a duck in the dark, you have to stick with it.

Only human spirits reincarnate, therefore humans are the greatest of all beings in creation for only human spirits gain strength, knowledge and enlightenment through rebirth. The paragons not only personify Virtue but the full potential of humanity.

The Doctrine of Human Destiny

22.4 Introduction

The Doctrine of Human Destiny was enshrined in the years before the Empire was founded. This is a period that is clouded in mystery, with much of the historical records having been destroyed. While we're all familiar with [Emperor Nicovar's legacy](#), it is important to stress that it looks strongly like his decision to destroy as many of the original contemporaneous documents as possible, was not the only act of sabotage. The records of the early years of the Empire show signs of being tampered with, both before Nicovar's time and since. The department are experienced at identifying the more obvious distortions, but it is impossible to speak with certainty about what went on during this period. This is our best effort to collate and present the events of the period and in particular the context and politics that led the first [Imperial Synod](#) to adopt the Doctrine of Human Destiny.

22.5 Pre-Imperial

To fully appreciate the crucial role of the Doctrine of Human Destiny, it is essential to be clear on the political and historical context that predates it. After the fall of Terunael, humanity was split into a dozen different nation kingdoms. Some of those nations may well have been descendants of the Terunael:

there is speculation that the **Urizeni** were once part of Terunael, and the **Navarr** almost certainly were. However these appear to be the only direct descendent of the Terunael Empire that survive to this day, despite the fact that we know that nation was extensive and covered much of the lands that form the modern Empire. That raises the rather obvious question of what happened to them.

It is possible that other Imperial nations are also descended from the survivors of the Terunael disaster, but historians of those nations argue strongly, and with substantial evidence to back them up, that that is not the case. There's good evidence to suggest that the Highborn came to these lands, long after Terunael fell. **Dawnish** historians likewise trace their ancestry back to foreign shores, while the **Steinr and the Vard claim to have fallen from the sky**. While that is clearly allegorical, it is presumably a mythic retelling of an arrival here from *somewhere*.

The point of this meandering is to demonstrate that there was a patchwork of human kingdoms scattered across the geographical lands of the modern Empire at this point, none of which had any basis, historical or otherwise, for cooperation. Indeed some of them such as Dawn and **the Marches**, or **the Brass Coast and Highguard**, had solid reasons for not cooperating. Modern citizens often assume that these nations enjoyed harmonious relations with each. Everyone knows that they were engaged in an existential war with the various orc powers that threatened them. Urizen, for example, came close to being wiped out by the **Grendel** and by the **Druj** on separate occasions. What is far less commonly appreciated is that these human kingdoms fought brutal wars with each other. Highborn **cataphracts** rode into battle against the Dawnish with the same fervour and the same frequency that they attacked the Druj.

So it's quite wrong to think of this period as being constituted of human nations threatened by orc powers, in fact the period is more properly characterized by a back and forth of hostilities between a dozen rival powers, all of whom were vying for supremacy over all of those who surrounded them. To understand the significance of the Doctrine of Human Destiny you first need to appreciate that the average Highborn citizen of that era would likely have treated a Dawnish folk or an Urizeni with the same distrust with which we might look upon the Grendel or the **Thule** today.

22.6 The First Empress

The moment that changes history is the arrival of the **First Empress**, specifically with her revelation that she had undergone a **true liao** vision that demonstrated conclusively that she was the reborn soul of someone other than a Highborn citizen - perhaps she was Dawnish, or Navarri or a **Suaq** in a previous life. The details are frustratingly absent, curiously so given the importance of what she had to say.

What we do know is that her revelation had an enormous effect on Highguard - it transformed their understanding of the world. As far as we know, before the First Empress vision, the common assumption of the Highborn was that each of them was the reincarnation of a previous Highborn soul returned to this world. While it seems difficult to credit, there are some reasons why they might have thought this. We know that the First Empress was particularly well travelled. She is known to have visited many lands, so she would have been familiar with the clothes, the culture, the customs, when she encountered them in a vision - she would have recognized them for what they were.

Before her, if a Highborn citizen had a vision of being a **Kallavesi mystic** on the edge of **Rundhal Marsh**, they might have assumed that they were witnessing something from Highguard's past, from centuries earlier. They might have simply ignored the details that made no sense to them when they reported the vision. They may even have lied about what they saw - it sounds outrageous, but it's easy to imagine there might have been social pressures to recount a vision of yourself as a Highborn scion. The modern **Faraden** for example still claim that reincarnation only takes place along family lines.

22.7 The Patrician War

To understand the significance of this, we need to consider the social impact of the Way and the broader context of the Patrician War. As far as we can tell, a central tenet of Patrician society was that their leaders could trace their ancestry back to the foundation of their nation. Effectively the claim was one of a historical right to rule through this link to the navigators and the great figures of Highborn history, of **Atuman** and **Atun**. This seems so astonishing to our modern sensibilities, honed as they are by the Way, that it is easy to discount the importance of it. But rank and privilege were central to Highborn life at that time, and they were predicated not on Virtue, as the modern Empire does, but on birthright. Those who could claim a link to Autuman ruled, those who did not or could not prove such a link were, by inference, lesser, and were ruled over.

The revelations of the Way and the facts of reincarnation inevitably led to the Patrician War because they demonstrated that any one of us might have been one of Atuman's navigators in a past life, *or we might have been nobody*. Reincarnation transforms your world view, because it creates a more powerful link between the present and the past. How can your right to rule be based on your line of descent from Atuman, if I can prove that I was Atuman in a previous life? Reincarnation undermined the justification for Patrician rule - and it led to their downfall.

The people who cast down the Patricians, the people we think of as the modern Highborn, chose to replace patrician rule with a system of governance based on virtue. Rather than birthright, they would chose their leaders based on their Virtue. This new approach was built on the ruins of the old, on a rejection of the idea that anyone had a right to rule over the others by dint of their birth. This sentiment comes through very clearly in one of the early speeches attributed to Miriam of Hardin's Waters one of the earliest firebrands to denounce the Patricians (and who was brutally executed for her efforts).

"The Patricians tell us that they were born to rule, that their authority is given to them by Atuman. We know this now for a lie! Our bonds are not brother to sister, not mother to child, but rather one soul to another. Any one of us could be the reincarnation of Atuman. I could be Atun or you - or you - or you. The truth is that we are all High Born."

The chapters cast down the Patricians, but they didn't just replace a venal aristocracy with rule by the Virtuous, they discarded the idea that people were born different, born special. They replaced it with the idea that everyone was High Born, that everyone in their nation should be seen as part of one great family, the basis for which was the simple fact that in a previous life I might be your brother, your father, your sister or your daughter. The souls of the Highborn were one great river, flowing down to the sea.

And then the First Empress provided unequivocal proof that it was **not** just all Highborn who were born from one great family, souls moving through the world endlessly reincarnating. That in fact all humanity are united by this simple fact.

22.8 The Foundation of the Way

There is no evidence of any kind to suggest that the claims made by the Doctrine of Human Destiny are based on a careful weighing of evidence. There's nothing to suggest that the First Empress and her friends had access to any information than we now lack - in fact all the evidence is to the contrary. The First Empress may be the greatest human being who ever lived, but we have vastly more learning and understanding available to us than she possessed, not by dint of our Virtue, but by weight of accumulated years.

The people who founded the Way, who enshrined the Doctrine of Human Destiny didn't do so on the basis of a careful assessment of how great each species was. Rather it was a leap of faith, brought about by the First Empress' revelation that all humanity is united through the bonds created by our countless lives across the generations. Crucially it was a statement made at a time when a Dawnish noble or Urizen mage would have no more reason to consider a Highborn Empress to be an ally than they would a Druj *buruk tepel* or a Thule warlock. The Empress wanted to end the constant wars between the human nations, she wanted to unify them *politically* because she understood that they were one people *spiritually*.

The modern Imperial Synod presents the Doctrines of Faith as metaphysical statements of reality, but the historical context for these claims was that of a burning need to spread revelation to all humanity, to make bold inspiring statements that opened people's eyes to the truth, to convert them to the Way. The Doctrine of Human Destiny isn't a cold statement of facts about the nature of the human soul, it's a inspirational call to Virtue based on the commonality of the Human condition. It states that human being are the greatest of all beings in creation, not because the founders of the Way concluded that on the basis of the facts available to them but long since lost, but because they wanted all human beings to put aside their differences and unite behind this lofty *Ambition*.

The founders of the Way did not create the Doctrine of Human Destiny to convince humans everywhere that orcs or trolls should be seen as lesser. Their words might have had that effect, but there's precious little evidence to suggest that they gave those species any real thought at all. What the founders cared about, what they wanted was for Dawnish people to stop thinking of themselves as better than the Highborn, for the Highborn to stop thinking of themselves as better than the Winterfolk. They wanted human beings in every land that we now think of as the Empire to see themselves as part of one great whole.

22.9 Further Investigation

In Summer 384YE, shortly after this report was compiled, *Cardinal of the Way* Skywise Tulva directed the *Silent Bell* to investigate the provenance of the document. They provided the *cardinal* with a report, but the contents are not at this time a matter of public record.

23 Past life vision



The human spirit is immortal. It inhabits mortal flesh for a span within the world before being liberated again, having gained knowledge and enlightenment. It traverses the Labyrinth of Ages before returning to mortal life through new birth. - [the Doctrine of Reincarnation](#)

23.1 Overview

By far the most common use for a dose of [true liao](#) is as part of the ceremony that grants a past life vision. This ceremony is usually administered with the assistance of the *Attendants of the Gateway* (a dedicated department of the Civil Service) but it is possible for any character with the [dedication](#) skill to attempt it. Doing so without the assistance of the Civil Service is likely dangerous and highly irregular - but it is not impossible.

Preparing true liao for this ceremony is a long and exacting task, but it is not a secret; anyone with the [apothecary](#) skill could do it in theory - assuming they had a dose of true liao. The process is painstaking and takes a season to complete. Applying the resulting infusion takes two minutes of appropriate roleplaying and requires a [referee](#). It must be done at a time that has been prearranged with the plot team. In-character, the infusion is time-sensitive in a similar fashion to some other apothecary preparations such as [poisons](#).

The ceremony has one main target, called the *visionary*. It may have one secondary target at no additional cost, usually referred to as the *guide*.

Visionary

The visionary must be human. They will experience a vision in which they experience events from the perspective of another. They frequently experience [side-effects](#) once the vision ends.

Guide

The guide must be human. They must have the [dedication](#) skill. They will experience the same vision as the visionary, but as an invisible and silent observer. During the vision, they can only be heard by the visionary. They may experience some side-effects once the vision ends.

23.2 Contents

- [1 Overview](#)

- 2 The Vision
 - ◆ 2.1 Safety Tools
 - ◆ 2.2 Awakening
- 3 Interviewing the Visionary
- 4 Scheduling the Vision
- 5 The Ceremony
- 6 Further Reading

23.3 The Vision

Upon completion of the ceremony, the visionary and guide feel as if transported to another time and place: they experience a short scene as if physically present. At the end of the scene, they wake up again in the place of the ceremony.

Out of character, TIME FREEZE is called by the referee at an appropriate point in the ceremony: the target(s) are shown into an encounter tent or other prepared space by crew, where they will participate in a vision. At the end of the vision, TIME FREEZE is called and they are returned to the place where they took the liao. During this time, the bodies of the target(s) lie still as if they were dead.

23.3.1 Safety Tools

Past life visions are a deliberately intense experience from which your character cannot immediately retreat without consequences, but at the same time it is absolutely not our intent to give the players a bad experience. If at any point during the vision it is too intense for you then you can call **OC STOP** or otherwise drop out of character. We will pause the scene immediately, work to make things right to the best of our ability, and together we will work out how to proceed in a manner that is comfortable. There are no in-character consequences for doing this.

23.3.2 Awakening

Under typical circumstances, the process of awakening from a vision is similar to awakening from a dream or a nightmare. The Attendants of the Gateway will return the visionary and the guide to **Anvil** as quickly as they can. It is normal practice for one of the attendants to remain with them until they are delivered back to their fellows, in case of delayed side-effects. The attendant usually remain until the formal question, "citizens, have I done my duty?" can be answered with an affirmative. They then return to the Gateway to prepare it for the next ceremony.

Past life visions sometimes have unforeseen side effects. The most common effects are **spontaneous auras**, usually **personal** to the visionary and/or guide. In a very small number of cases, one or both of the participants have died in the course of their vision. It is popularly believed that a character's behaviour during the vision affects these side effects.

The Civil Service offer advice on best practice during a vision as part of the procedure, but while they have performed many of these ceremonies, they do not know everything. The simplest piece of advice is this: the visionary should act as if they are truly present, and the guide should not.

Nonstandard visions

Due to the nature of these visions, which are delivered as immersive roleplaying experiences by the encounter team, we ask that any player with the intention to receive a vision by a nonstandard method contact the **plot team** as soon as possible, in order to arrange the logistics of this vision. You will need to let us know before downtime closes so that we can prepare the vision no matter how your character is planning to consume the true liao. We will do our best to help with any out of character logistical constraints, but in character actions are outside of our control.

You **must** notify Profound Decisions even if you are planning to keep your plans secret from the Civil Service and indeed anyone else. The more the plot team knows about your intentions, the more interesting they can make the consequences.

23.4 Interviewing the Visionary

The Attendants of the Gateway make best effort to interview visionaries before beginning the preparation of the true liao, in order to explain what is going to happen. The more details they have, the easier it is to tailor the preparation to the participants. This optional step to the process is normally carried out either on Saturday evening or on Sunday during the summit before the vision is scheduled to take place. If a visionary has not been interviewed by midday on Sunday, they are advised to attend the Hub to arrange an interview. The visionary is not yet required to have selected a guide, and the guide is not interviewed in this way.

Out of character, this is the point at which information regarding any **accessibility** requirements is gathered. This information is verified again at the beginning of the event where the vision is to be held. We will always commit to ensuring that the vision is as accessible as possible to both visionary and guide, even if these requirements change.

23.5 Scheduling the Vision

During the event that the vision is scheduled to take place, the visionary and their chosen guide should visit the Hub at 7pm on Friday, or send a representative to arrange for an alternative time. This meeting is where the scheduling of the visions is communicated to the visionaries and their guides, and the Civil Service provide a briefing on best practice and are available to answer any questions they may have.

23.6 The Ceremony

The Way does not teach a slavish following of ancient procedures, and the exact nature of the ceremony has not remained fixed over the centuries. One of the most solemn duties of the head curator of the Attendants of the Gateway is to produce their ceremonial script, which is a reflection of their own understanding, drawing upon the traditions of the past. As the current curator is [Highborn](#), the ceremony has a distinctly Highborn feel, but it contains elements drawn from a variety of Imperial traditions.

The true liao ceremony itself is performed by three civil servants. The visionary and guide are conducted into a Civil Service facility a short distance from Anvil, known as the Gateway: they are asked to bring minimal possessions with them. During the ceremony, they are asked to reaffirm their identities, origins, virtue and loyalties in the form of a series of oaths. They are provided with a robe and a hood in a ceremonial [armouring](#) against perils of the Labyrinth of Ages. They are given a final summary of what it is that they are about to do, what is going to happen, and what it is that that might mean. They are then given the true liao.

23.7 Further Reading

- Ceremonial Skills
 - ◆ [Anointing](#)
 - ◆ [Consecration](#)
 - ◆ [Dedication](#)
 - ◆ [Excommunication](#)
 - ◆ [Exorcism](#)
 - ◆ [Hallow](#)
 - ◆ [Insight](#)
 - ◆ [Testimony](#)
- Additional Information
 - ◆ [Auras](#)
 - ◆ [The Way](#)
 - ◆ [Imperial Synod](#)
- [The Seer of the Gateway](#) has a number of responsibilities relating to past life visions.
- [The Tribune of the Synod](#) disburses doses of true liao and maintains appropriate records as part of their duties.

24 Pride



From *A Children's Primer of the Way*

24.1 Contents

- 1 The Path of Pride
 - ◆ 1.1 Guidance on the Path
- 2 Paragons and Exemplars
- 3 Symbols of Pride
- 4 Further Reading
 - ◆ 4.1 The Seven Virtues
 - ◆ 4.2 Religion

24.2 The Path of Pride

Some may believe that Pride is simply senators in fine clothing praising the qualities of their Nation, but this is only a tiny part of the path. National Pride is, quite rightfully, important to many citizens and is the reason for the creation of the [egregores](#). Yet the Virtue of Pride exists to inform the small parts of life as much as the large. From the servant who keeps their mistress' cups clean, to the craftsman who holds all their work to the same high standard, to the general who remembers the name of every soldier who died under their command ? all demonstrate Pride and know what it is that they serve and strive for.

24.2.1 Guidance on the Path

Through meditation on the [auras of Pride](#), and close study of the stories of paragons and exemplars, the priests of the Way have gleaned insight into the heart of the virtue and how best to pursue it. There are collections of parables, tales, sayings and teachings that distill this for Imperial citizens to learn from. The following are a handful of teachings and sayings deemed to be essential to understanding the path:

The Ten Things

It is obviously down to the individual which qualities make them proud, but each of the Imperial nations can be associated with a single common idea that is often referred to as a source of Pride. The Navarr writer Cerin of Winter Trees referred to them as the Nine Things in the early years of the Empire. They were still in use over three hundred years later when the [Imperial Orc](#) philosopher Jakaj added her own people to the list during a speech given at the funeral of [Emperor Ahraz](#). Following a recitation of the Nine Things, she appended her own people, and since then the list has been referred to by its current name.

For the [Freeborn](#) it is [honesty](#); in [Dawn](#) it is [glory](#) (of course); in [Highguard](#) it is certainty; among the [Imperial Orcs](#) it is strength; in the [League](#) it is cleverness; in the [Marches](#) it is either practicality or stubbornness (depending who you are speaking to); among the [Navarr](#) it is sacrifice; in [Urizen](#), [excellence](#); in [Varushka](#) the idea of wisdom; and among the [Winterfolk](#) [heroism](#).

- Pride conveyed by words alone is vain boasting; proclaim it by how you conduct every part of your life.
- Do not be complacent; ever strive for excellence in that of which you are proud.

- Embrace your past; never be ashamed of it.
- The Virtuous inspire others to greatness; they do not demean them.
- Despise the half-hearted, the uncommitted and the pretender.

24.3 Paragons and Exemplars

Across history, the paragons and exemplars of Pride have been amongst the easiest to identify for they are, by nature, rarely reclusive and withdrawn. Recognised [paragons and exemplars](#) of Pride include:

- The legendary paragon [Kethry](#) of the Kesh kept her peoples' ways alive and ultimately inspired the conquering nation to embrace them.
- The paragon [Richilde](#) inspired the people of the Empire to celebrate their culture and history, and was the first paragon recognised in the modern era.
- The [Highborn](#) paragon [Lepidus](#) kept the spiritual heart of his nation alive during the dark days of the Patrician Council's corruption.

24.4 Symbols of Pride

Priests of Pride teach that the best symbol of the virtue is the open display of whatever it is that the pilgrim is most proud of. The **flag** and the **banner** are ways of displaying such symbols, as is the **livery** of a [Marcher household](#), or the **heraldry** of a noble or [Noble house](#) in [Dawn](#).

As a more unified symbol of the virtue itself, rather than of the individual's personal Pride, the [Imperial Synod](#) often favours the **sun**. The sun shines brightly, without shame, open for all the world to see. By so doing, it allows others to see as well - and while it may occasionally be occluded by clouds, when the clouds pass the sun's light is undiminished.

In [Wintermark](#), the **eagle**, the **heron**, and the **swan** all symbolise Pride. The eagle is also a popular symbol of the virtue in [Varushka](#) where it is joined by the **deer**. Some magicians use the [rune](#) of [Majesty](#), **Feresh**, which represents glorious splendour, to symbolise Pride. These magicians point to the way that Feresh only enhances attributes that are already present as a particularly telling parable about the nature of Pride.

During their Spring festival, the [Urizen](#) represent the virtue of Pride with pink blossoms.

24.5 Further Reading

- You can learn about the various spiritual [roleplaying effects](#) created by priests [dedicated](#) to Pride [here](#).
- You can learn about the skills that priests can use to inspire the virtue of Pride [here](#).

24.5.1 The Seven Virtues

- [Ambition](#)
- [Courage](#)
- [Loyalty](#)
- **Pride**
- [Prosperity](#)
- [Vigilance](#)
- [Wisdom](#)

24.5.2 Religion

- [The Way of Virtue](#)
- [Imperial Theology](#)
- [Imperial Synod](#)
- [Religious Skills](#)
- [Recent History](#)

25 Prosperity



From *A Children's Primer of the Way*

25.1 Contents

- 1 The Path of Prosperity
 - ◆ 1.1 Guidance on the Path
- 2 Paragons and Exemplars
- 3 Symbols of Prosperity
- 4 Further Reading
 - ◆ 4.1 The Seven Virtues
 - ◆ 4.2 Religion

25.2 The Path of Prosperity

To the one without virtue, Prosperity is oft misunderstood as the pursuit of wealth and luxury, yet neither the wealthy miser, gluttonous sot, or lucky gambler can truly be called prosperous. True Prosperity is the culmination of effort and labour, sweat and toil, and celebrating the fruits of that labour. The prosperous are: the farmer who toils to bring in the harvest and enjoys their bounty; the magician who strives to master a magic and then uses their newfound art; the merchant who competes fiercely for each coin they earn and then spends it in celebration. True Prosperity enriches those around them as well as the individual, and so what may seem the pursuit for the sake of the self is to the benefit of the many.

25.2.1 Guidance on the Path

Through meditation on the [auras of Prosperity](#), and careful study of the tales of paragons and exemplars, the priests of the Way have gleaned insight into the heart of the virtue and how best to pursue it. There are collections of parables, tales, sayings and teachings that distill this for Imperial citizens to learn from. The following are a handful of teachings and sayings deemed to be essential to understanding the path:



Enjoy the fruits of your labour today; nobody knows what the morrow holds.

- Strive, toil, and claim the just rewards of your labours.
- Enjoy the fruits of your labour today; no one knows what the morrow holds.
- There are three things that should never be made: Food that goes uneaten, coin that goes unspent and magic that goes unused.
- The Prosperous are not selfish; all that is worthwhile is shared with those who deserve it.
- Despise the thieving bandit, the lazy wastrel, the grasping miser, and those who take without giving.

25.3 Paragons and Exemplars

Paragons and exemplars of Prosperity are considered reasonably easy to identify owing to their efforts and labour, and how they use - or share - the fruits of those labours. Recognised [paragons and exemplars](#) of Prosperity include:

- The legendary paragon [Good Walder](#) of the Marches.
- The exemplar known as [The Little Mother](#), whose tireless work helped to establish the importance of charitable deeds in [The League](#).
- The exemplar [Long Tom Goodfellow](#), the healer and brewer whose legacy still encourages pilgrimages today.
- The exemplar [Zemress](#), the Blade of the Isles, who not only encouraged hard work and investment but also the importance of taking-up of arms to defend what is yours.

25.4 Symbols of Prosperity

There are a great many symbols of Prosperity across the Empire but one of the most common is the **wheatsheaf**. Strongly symbolic of harvest time, it represents both the hard work that has gone into ploughing, sowing, and tending the field and the reward for that labour. Priests and pilgrims of this path often have a stalk of wheat or other grain upon them. There are a number of other popular symbols along the same lines, associated with different harvests and different forms of work - the **apple**, the **grape**, the **fishing net**, the **wagon**, and the **merchant ship** for example.

Likewise, the **coin** is a popular representation of Prosperity - sometimes an Imperial [crown](#), sometimes a gold or silver coin stamped with another symbol of prosperity of some sort. As a symbol the coin has grown with prominence through the Empire's history, and is very popular with those whose hard work involves trade or the practice of a profession rather than manual labour. By a similar token a set of **artisan's tools** are sometimes used as a symbol of the virtue - and in [the Marches](#), a **spade** or a **shovel** may stand as a slightly tongue-in-cheek symbol of Prosperity. Another popular symbol in the Marches is the **handshake**, often used to seal an agreement that will bring Prosperity to both parties.

The **cup** (along with the **wineskin** and the **waterskin**) has a long tradition of being associated with Prosperity. Sometimes it is a cup of water used to quench thirst brought on by hard work, sometimes it is a cup of wine or beer drunk as a reward for a job well done. It is quite common for priests and pilgrims of the Path of Prosperity to carry waterskins, or bear fruit or other food, to enjoy or share as virtue guides them.

A less common symbol of Prosperity is the **stout club** or cudgel. Possibly a reference to [Good Walder](#), it represents the will to defend what one has earned against the greedy. In some old versions of this symbol, the club is wound with ivy or with thorned berry-bearing briars.

In [Wintermark](#) Prosperity is symbolised by the **magpie**, while in [Varushka](#) the virtue is demonstrated by the industrious **bee**. Some magicians use the [rune of Wealth](#), **Pallas**, which is said to represent an apple tree, as a symbol of Prosperity.

During their Spring festival, the [Urizen](#) use yellow or golden flowers to represent Prosperity.

25.5 Further Reading

- You can learn about the various spiritual [roleplaying effects](#) created by priests [dedicated](#) to Prosperity [here](#).
- You can learn about the skills that priests can use to support the virtue of Prosperity [here](#).

25.5.1 The Seven Virtues

- [Ambition](#)
- [Courage](#)
- [Loyalty](#)
- [Pride](#)
- **Prosperity**
- [Vigilance](#)
- [Wisdom](#)

25.5.2 Religion

- [The Way of Virtue](#)
- [Imperial Theology](#)
- [Imperial Synod](#)
- [Religious Skills](#)
- [Recent History](#)

26 Template:Religion Further Reading

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26.2 Further Reading

26.2.1 Core Brief

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- Imperial Synod
- The Seven Paths of Virtue
 - ◆ Ambition
 - ◆ Courage
 - ◆ Loyalty
 - ◆ Pride
 - ◆ Prosperity
 - ◆ Vigilance
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26.2.2 Rules

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- Performing liao ceremonies
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26.2.3 Additional Information

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 - ◆ Conscience of the Senate
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- Imperial Theology
 - ◆ Liao
 - ◆ The Doctrines of the Faith
 - ◆ Signs of the paragon and exemplar
 - ◆ Schisms and Heresies
 - ◆ Investigative Theology
- Religious Crimes

27 Schisms and Heresies

The information below relates to ongoing controversies facing the Synod and the Imperial faith. Some have been used as a foundation for inquisitions and condemnations of **religious crimes**, or as the basis for attempts to add, remove or amend the **doctrines of the faith**, which would make explicit what is, or is not, heresy.

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- 1 Schisms and Heresies
 - ◆ 1.1 The Yaelian Schism
 - ◆ 1.2 The First Empress
 - ◆ 1.3 The Unitarian Heresy
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 - ◆ 1.5 The Humanist Heresy
 - ◆ 1.6 The Transcendant Heresy
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 - ◆ 1.9 The Krydadian Blasphemy
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 - ◆ 1.19 The Realmist Heresy
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27.2 Schisms and Heresies

Although the Doctrine of Seven is accepted as orthodox, there are many disputes and schisms amongst theologians. Some of the doctrines are disputed. Elsewhere, the Synod has sought to create a doctrine but been unable to build a consensus amongst the clergy.



27.2.1 The Yaelian Schism

In 379 YE, [Yael](#) of Felix's Watch, a [Highborn](#) theologian, returned from a [true liao](#) vision. An account of the vision was recorded by the [Seer of the Gateway](#) and became public knowledge as part of [Volume 3](#) of *Echos of the Labyrinth*. Her statements were supported by her guide priest, Isaac of [Sarvos](#) - a close friend, fellow scholar, and member of the [Courage Assembly](#). She claimed to be the [First Empress](#) reborn, possessed of a Paragon soul returned from a place beyond the Labyrinth, which she called the "Land Without Tears", a golden land without pain and suffering.

Both these beliefs were considered highly contentious in some quarters. After receiving initial support in the Synod, opinion began to turn against Yael. By the summer of 381 YE, two years after her original vision, only the Highborn Assembly still stood by what she called her 'revelation', although she had pockets of support across the Empire. The General Assembly condemned her of heresy with a greater majority - she pled guilty, asked no clemency, and was executed by her Exarch's own hand.

OOO Note: The process of the Yaelian Schism is covered in a series of Winds of Fortune, including [The Courageous Priest](#) (Spring 380YE), [Rebirth in Reikos](#) (Summer 380YE), [Pilgrimage](#) (Autumn 380YE), [Matter of faith](#) (Winter 380YE), [A spiritual prism](#) (Spring 381YE), [Death is not the end](#) (Summer 381YE), and [Unable to see](#) (Autumn 381YE).

27.2.2 The First Empress

It is widely accepted that the First Empress was a paragon. However, to date, there has been no consensus as to which Virtue she followed to escape the Labyrinth of Ages. There are priests and pilgrims from each of the seven paths who claim that the weight of evidence supports that the First Empress was a paragon of their favoured path. There have been several attempts to identify archaeological evidence to settle this debate once and for all.

27.2.3 The Unitarian Heresy

Unitarians dispute the Doctrine of Seven, claiming that the Seven Paths are One Path. Unitarians point to the First Empress as a clear example of a Paragon of All Virtue. However, Investigative Theologians point to the inability of humans to Dedicate to two Virtues without loss of focus and that the consensus is that each Paragon followed a single path.

27.2.4 The Recollectionist Heresy

Recollectionists dispute the Doctrine of Reincarnation. They maintain that the visions granted by pure liao are not past lives, but are ancestral memories. That is, the vision is of the person's distant genealogical relative rather than of the individual's spirit reborn. One unproven byproduct of this claim is that exemplars would be reborn within family lines.

27.2.5 The Humanist Heresy

Humanists dispute the Doctrine of Reincarnation. They interpret pure liao visions as being from a pool of racial memories stored within human nature. This pool of natural memory is available to all humans and that there need not be a direct link between the vision and the one experiencing it.

27.2.6 The Transcendant Heresy

Transcendentalists dispute the Doctrine of Reincarnation by claiming that there is no Labyrinth of Ages. The human spirit, upon death, transcends the mortal and mundane to merge with other human spirits who have died. This merging of spirits is believed to form some kind of Great Spirit, a psychic entity that exists outside the mortal realm. They claim liao puts a person in contact with this Great Spirit and grants access to its store of memories and knowledge. Some claim that this psychic entity may even be the Creator Spirit itself, though this view is arguably Idolatry.

27.2.7 The Atuman Controversy

Atuman of Highguard, one of the legendary Navigators who steered the Highborn to this land, was held for several generations to be a paragon of Ambition. However, this claim was undermined by Aldones di Sarvos, one of the founders of the League, who described having a past life vision which revealed that he was Atuman reborn. Aldones later went on to be recognised as a paragon of Ambition. Some Highborn priests have claimed that Aldones lied about the vision to deny Atuman's paragonhood and spite Highguard, however League Bishops strongly decry this smear on Aldones' legacy. There have been several attempts to settle this controversy through archaeological or visionary means.

27.2.8 The Abraxian Schism

In life, [Abraxus](#) was a respected Pilgrim of the path of Wisdom and held by some to be an exemplar. However, he became a controversial figure when he claimed he had learned how to use pure liao to not only contact his past lives, but those he was yet to live. A large number of cryptic and prophetic scrolls are attributed to Abraxus. These are scattered and still highly sought after today.

27.2.9 The Krydacian Blasphemy

An Orc named Bloodhammer Krydak once famously claimed to be the reincarnation of Tian, paragon of Ambition. He was decried as a Blasphemer, for denying Tian's paragonhood and exalting his own inhumanity, but many who met Krydak found his words compelling. The Synod were pressured to meet with Krydak to evaluate his claim, but he was assassinated before this happened. Krydak remains a controversial figure to this day.

27.2.10 The Scourger Heresy

Scourgers dispute the Doctrine of Human Destiny and claim that the non-human races, such as Orcs, may be reincarnations of human spirits, but who have been warped and deformed by lack of Virtue and too long lost and wandering in the Labyrinth of Ages. They believe that those who sin greatly in life and lack virtue risk rebirth in an accursed and damned form.

27.2.11 The Lucidian Blasphemy / Auran Idolatry

Lucidianism arose in the spires of Urizen and believes that the creation of virtuous auras, through means such as consecration and anointing, actually interfere with the objective and rational pursuit of a Virtue. Some Lucidians go so far as to claim that such auras represent a form of Idolatry and are as inclined to exorcise a virtuous aura as a malign spiritual presence. This opposition to manifestations of Virtue has led other Priests, especially Highborn Wayfarers, to accuse Lucidians of Blasphemy against the Virtues. To date, the Lucidians remain a minority in the Synod.

27.2.12 The Eternal Schism

There have been several attempts by various Synods to craft a Doctrine relating to the Eternals and their Realms, but each has failed to build a consensus. The biggest divide is along Inclusionist and Exclusionist lines. The Inclusionists hold that the Eternal Realms are part of the wider Creation and that contact with Eternals is inevitable and unavoidable, and must be carefully managed, not unlike a plague or forest fire. The Exclusionists hold that the Eternal Realms exist outside of the true Creation and are akin to parasites attached to the mortal world. They claim humanity will never be truly free to realise its own destiny until all ties are severed.

27.2.13 The Progenitor Idolatry

Progenitorians dispute the Doctrine of the Creator by claiming the seeds of human destiny were deliberately planted by the Creator Spirit. They claim the Creator Spirit desires humanity to grow and reach its full potential so that they can commune with the Creator Spirit, and that paragons who have escaped the Labyrinth of Ages may do precisely this. This sect has been accused of skirting on the edges of Idolatry for implying that The Way of Virtue can be seen as the worship of the Creator Spirit.

27.2.14 Miracles

Tales of the earliest paragons contain some miraculous claims, such as Tian taking fire from the sun, and Korl cutting down an entire forest with a single axe. Some Priests maintain these tales are literally true and speak of the full potential of human destiny, whilst others maintain that the tales have grown in the telling whilst still providing insight into the ingenious application of virtue for prospering humanity.

27.2.15 Egregores

When the First Empress sought the creation of the **Egregores**, she consulted the Synod. As Eggregores are the manifestation of human consciousness and culture, they were deemed as being human magic, and so the Synod were entirely in favour. It was further recognised that Eggregores owe their existence and form to the human nations and were thus subordinate to humans. Finally, it was concluded that as the Citizens embraced Virtue, so too the Eggregores would mirror this and display virtue. The only dissent came from Exclusionists who hold that once the Eternal Realms are banished, so too must the Eggregores depart.

27.2.16 The Purification Heresy

Purifiers dispute the Doctrine of Seven. There have been several Purification Sects across Imperial History, each of whom have sought to have all Citizens of a Nation Dedicate to a single Virtue. Included amongst various rationales has been a desire to see an Eggregore of a Nation also be a magical Avatar of a Virtue as it reflects the Dedication of the Nation. Historically, Purification Sects have attained brief popularity before either imploding or losing momentum.

27.2.17 Vitalism

Vitalists believe that the qualities that aid one in the Labyrinth of Ages are not purely spiritual ones, and that physical qualities are important too. Part of the argument for this is that liao itself is a substance that is consumed, therefore what is consumed can have an impact on the soul. Vitalists do not always agree which physical qualities are the special ones. There are a number of variant regimens - a mixture of diets and/or exercises - which are held by those who follow them to aid the passage of the spirit through the Labyrinth of Ages. Vitalism only becomes blasphemy at the point that the practices are held as an alternative to living a virtuous life, instead of as a supplement to.

27.2.18 The Excessionist Heresy

Excessionists claim that too much of a Virtue can be as bad as too little. This conflicts with the Orthodox teaching that the Virtues are pure and the key to human destiny. The charge is levelled against Excessionists that they are making excuses for their own shortcomings and failings in embracing the virtues in their strongest and purest senses.

27.2.19 The Realist Heresy

Realism is the belief that the Labyrinth of Ages is actually a **Realm** akin to Night or Day, albeit one that is not accessible via the Hall of Worlds in any known manner. Some have even expected that paragons actually go on to become Eternals of this spiritual realm. In response to Realists, the Synod created the Doctrine of the Labyrinth which refutes this teaching.

27.2.20 Further Reading

- **The Way of Virtue**
- **Imperial Theology**
 - ◆ **Liao**
 - ◆ **The Doctrines of the Faith**
 - ◆ **Signs of the paragon and exemplar**
 - ◆ **Schisms and Heresies**
 - ◆ **Investigative Theology**

- Imperial Synod
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- Recent History

28 Signs of the paragon and exemplar

28.1 Contents

- 1 Signs of the Paragon and Exemplar
 - ◆ 1.1 Liberation
 - ◆ 1.2 Recognition
 - ◆ 1.3 Benevolence
 - ◆ 1.4 Inspiration
 - ◆ 1.5 Miracles
 - ◆ 1.6 Pilgrimage
 - ◆ 1.7 Salvation
 - ◆ 1.8 Legacy
- 2 Further Reading

28.2 Signs of the Paragon and Exemplar

The Synod is tasked with the **recognition** of **paragons and exemplars**. Over time, the learned assemblies have identified signs that can be used to identify **paragons and exemplars**. Of these signs, exemplars are expected to have demonstrated four signs. Paragons will have been recorded as having completed at least six, and traditionally not have contradicted any of the others, which may have gone unrecorded.

The signs are:

28.2.1 Liberation

This sign is unique to paragons. The virtuous souls of true paragons are able to navigate the Labyrinth of Ages and depart it. Some claim this enlightenment allows them to enter the presence of the Creator; others that they move on to a higher form of existence in the heavens or another world. Evidence for this comes in part from no other mortal ever having had a past life vision from the perspective of a known paragon. A contentious variation of this sign is Ascension, which holds that some paragons have attained Liberation whilst alive and have disappeared before their followers, such as Aldones di Sarvos.

28.2.2 Recognition

This sign applies to paragons and exemplars. The journey of the human soul toward enlightenment and transcendence can take several lifetimes. It is widely understood many paragons were exemplars in former lives, and many exemplars were either paragons or heroes in former lives. Consequently, identifying that a person was a hero, notable figure, or even an exemplar in a former life is one of the Signs that they may be an exemplar in this life, and are on the way to becoming a paragon. For this reason, many pilgrims eagerly seek to take True Liao in search of support for their own exemplarhood.

28.2.3 Benevolence

This sign applies to paragons and exemplars. Any citizen may illustrate a Virtue in a pure, yet self-serving, manner. However, the deeds of the paragon or exemplar prosper their whole people, such as Tian bringing fire from the sun, Kethry's salvation of her people, or the First Empress founding the Empire. In the age of the Empire, the sign of benevolence is one that benefits the Empire; in whole or in part.

28.2.4 Inspiration

This sign applies to paragons and exemplars. Paragons and exemplars are inspiring figures who make an impact on those they meet in life and who often attract students, followers or imitators. Sometimes these followers will found orders, societies, chapters or other groups to retain and pass on the teachings of their mentor, teacher or leader. These groups go on to do great works in the paragon or exemplar's name.

28.2.5 Miracles

The legends of some paragons and exemplars attribute great and miraculous deeds to them, such as **Tian** stealing fire from the sun, the power of **Good Walder** to reward the virtuous, or the incredible strength of **Inga Tarn**. It is said that the ability to perform superhuman feats, namely miracles, without using magic, is a sign of a soul approaching transcendence.

In recent times, there has been a widespread belief that miracles were unique to paragons, but it is difficult to entirely reconcile this with all the evidence. Inga Tarn, for example, performed miraculous feats of strength, but is an exemplar. Even quite recently there have been many credible witnesses to incidents where powerful spontaneous auras have formed around people, places, and objects with no intervention from practitioners of *liao* ceremonies, for which there is no easy explanation.

The issue remains fiercely debated with some priests refusing to *recognize* miracles as a sign of exemplar while others take a more pragmatic approach.

28.2.6 Pilgrimage

This sign applies to paragons and exemplars and dates back to the origins of The Way in Highguard, when spiritual leaders, pilgrims and scholars travelled from many nations to Bastion to learn of The Way. This included, so it is claimed, many exemplars and paragons, for whom it was a necessary catalyst for their soul's purification. In the age of the Empire, this has been understood to be a journey to the heart of the Imperial Faith, though that has been interpreted as a physical and spiritual journey.

28.2.7 Salvation

As well as inspiring those already inclined to virtue, a true paragon or exemplar will have a significant success in reducing the number of the un-Virtuous in the world. While citizens may do this by sending their souls back to the Labyrinth in droves, a paragon will convert a significant group of people from their unvirtuous ways. In the days of the Empire this can include foreigners and barbarians, but may also extend to the salvation of Imperial Citizens who have lost their way, such as being seduced by blasphemous or idolatrous cults.

28.2.8 Legacy

This sign applies to paragons and exemplars. Akin to the sign of Inspiration, this sign relates to that which a paragon or exemplar leaves behind them. The most common form of legacy is in the form of a relic or relics, such as Irontooth, the legendary axe of *Korl*, or *the Imperial Throne* left by the First Empress. Less common, but no less valid, are other enduring legacies, such as the great edifices of the Sentinel. These legacies are usually an integral part of the paragon's legend, serving as proof of their truth and as an inspiration to others.

28.3 Further Reading

Core Brief

- *Assembly*
- *Cardinal*
- *Judgements*
 - ◆ *Appointment*
 - ◆ *Challenge*
 - ◆ *Change of Doctrine*
 - ◆ *Inquisition*
 - ◆ *Mandate*
 - ◆ *Recognition*
 - ◆ *Revocation*
 - ◆ *Rewarding*
 - ◆ *Sanction*
 - ◆ *Statement of Principle*
 - ◆ *Veto*
 - ◆ *Writ of Excommunication*
- *Member of the Synod*

Additional Information

- *Synod Positions*
 - ◆ *Conscience of the Senate*
 - ◆ *Gatekeeper*
 - ◆ *Tribune of the Synod*
- *Religious Crime*
- *Imperial Theology*

- Inspirations
 - ◆ Paragons and Exemplars
 - ◆ Known Exemplars
 - ◆ **Signs of the Paragon and Exemplar**
 - ◆ Schools of Thought
 - ◆ Inspirational Location

29 Symbols of the Way



The labyrinth is a common symbol of the Way

29.1 The Way of Virtue

The Way of Virtue has several symbols to represent it across the Empire, but there are two that are widely used by the Imperial Synod, and priests of the Way may have items or regalia marked by such symbols.

- **The Seven-Spoked Wheel** ? The wheel is a symbol of the journey that each spirit must make and each of the spokes represents one of the Virtues all of which converge on a single point, that of rebirth.
- **The Labyrinth of Ages** ? The Labyrinth is depicted in a number of ways, but usually within a circle. Most designs favour seven co-centric circles or other elements to represent the seven virtues. Some symbols represent a labyrinth with only one path through from the outside to the centre, while others favour a labyrinth with multiple routes, depending on the attitude of the artist to the virtues.

As the Way is concerned with the journey of the spirit from birth-to-death-to-rebirth, some priests and pilgrims carry or adorn themselves with items and regalia of travel.

29.2 Contents

- 1 The Way of Virtue
- 2 The Paths of Virtue
 - ◆ 2.1 Ambition
 - ◆ 2.2 Courage
 - ◆ 2.3 Loyalty
 - ◆ 2.4 Pride
 - ◆ 2.5 Prosperity
 - ◆ 2.6 Vigilance
 - ◆ 2.7 Wisdom
- 3 Images
 - ◆ 3.1 Further Reading

29.3 The Paths of Virtue

There are a great many symbols associated with the individual **Virtues**, and no exhaustive or definitive list exists. Many are drawn from well-known stories or parables about the virtue, while others are associated with long-held traditions such as the **bird imagery** of **Wintermark**, the **virtuous animals** of **Varushka**, or even the magical **runes** said to have an association with each virtue.

29.3.1 Ambition



Both the **Throne** and the Imperial Crown are powerful symbols of Ambition in the Empire.

One of the most common symbols of Ambition used in the Empire is **flame**. This is not only symbolic of the quest **Tian** undertook to steal the fire of the sun, but fire possesses many of the qualities of purest ambition. It is ever hungry and never satisfied, for the moment it is satisfied, it dies. Some pilgrims of Ambition even go as far as to burn a brand on their arm or hand in recognition of the price Tian paid or as a reminder of how dangerous Ambition can be.

In **Wintermark**, ambition is often signified by a **rook**, while in **Varushka** the virtue is associated with the cunning **fox**, and (in recent times) the wily **hare**. The **run** **Naeve**, which represents hunger, is used by some magicians as a symbol of Ambition.

For obvious reasons the **throne** is a common symbol associated with ambition - indeed the physical throne that stands in the **Imperial Senate** is sometimes seen as one of the most profound symbols of ambition in the Empire representing as it does the most potent **Imperial title**. For similar reasons, a **crown** (along with other regalia of high office) is sometimes used as a symbol of ambition in **Dawn**. This image no doubt originated as a reference to the old **monarchs** of that nation, and later the actual Imperial crown worn by every **Throne** since the foundation of the Empire.

The **mountain** is also sometimes used as a symbol of ambition, or rather of the obstacles one must overcome to achieve one's goals. Tian climbs a mountain, after all, in her pursuit of fire. In **Urizen** the **astronomantic** constellation of **the Mountain** is sometimes used as an icon of ambition representing as it does the universal law that *things are not easy*. In a similar vein, in some parts of **the League**, the **ladder** is used as a slightly tongue-in-cheek icon of ambition, most likely having its roots in the rambunctious street-dramas of **Tassato** and **Sarvos**.

During the Spring festival celebrated in Urizen, Ambition is represented by a purple flower.

29.3.2 Courage

Common symbols of Courage across the Empire are those associated with the iconic tools or weapons of favoured paragons and exemplars. One of the most common and prevalent is the **axe**. This is symbolic of the axe created by **Korl** as both a weapon and a tool with which to tame the wilderness and overcome obstacles. Axes and hatchets are popular weapons among priests and pilgrims dedicated to the path of Courage for this reason. The **hammer**, the iconic weapon of **Inga Tarn** is likewise favoured as a weapon by pilgrims, and is especially popular among those dedicated to Courage in the southern Empire especially **the Marches** - a common saying is that a pilgrim in the south is much more likely to encounter problems that can be solved with a hammer than with an axe.

In **Wintermark**, courage is often signified by a **jackdaw**, while in **Varushka** the virtue is associated with the strength of the **boar** and the **bear**. **Jotra**, the **Rune of Battle** which represents challenges to be overcome, is used by some magicians as a symbol of Courage.

Those who take a less martial approach to the virtue use the **Blue Rose** as a symbol, in honour of **Gilda Ashwine**. During the Spring flower festival celebrated by the **urizen** by contrast, crimson and scarlet blossoms are associated with this virtue, perhaps representing shed blood.

29.3.3 Loyalty

The Path of Loyalty has many symbols across the Empire, but one of the more common is a **chain**. This symbolises not only the humble origins of the **earliest paragon** as a slave, but is composed of single links given length, strength and purpose by being inextricably linked to others. Along similar lines, a **rope** of many strands is a common symbol. Some priests and pilgrims dedicated to this path wear chains around their necks, or either a chain or rope around their waist indicating their ties. Although the exact description of the slave tattoos of the Marked is lost to time, several priests and pilgrims will be tattooed, often with some reference ? obvious, oblique or symbolic ? to that which holds their Loyalty.

The chain and the rope are sometimes a matter of contention for the **Preachers** of the **Imperial Orcs**, being too closely representative of the slavery they and their ancestors endured at the hands of the Empire. Some have adopted the **horse** (especially the horse skull) to represent Loyalty, while others favour the **clashed hands** (a common expression of respect between individuals).

In the **League**, the **ring** is a strong symbol of Loyalty, tied inextricably as it is to both custom and **hearth magic**. indeed gifts of rings have become a powerful symbol of Loyalty throughout the Empire, and are often used as part of a ceremony where someone undertakes an obligation for another, or as a part of marriage vows. **Interlinked rings** - usually two but sometimes three (especially in **Wintermark** and **the Brass Coast**), or seven - represent bonds between individuals in a similar fashion.

In **Navarr**, **thorns** are sometimes used as a symbol of Loyalty, and the blood they shed is seen as a reminder of the price of sacrifice (an idea that many Navarr consider to be closely tied to the virtue as well as to their own nation's history). Thorny briars are a common feature of the tattoos used to mark oaths.

In **Wintermark**, the **hawk** and the **falcon** are symbols of Loyalty, while in **Varushka** the virtue is associated with the **hound**. Some magicians use the **rune Lann**, which represents equitable bargains, to symbolise Loyalty.

Some **Urizen** point to the **astronomantic** constellations of **the Chain** and **the Three Sisters** as manifestations of this virtue - albeit with different, nuanced interpretations. During their Spring festival, they represent Loyalty with blue flowers.

29.3.4 Pride

Priests of Pride teach that the best symbol of the virtue is the open display of whatever it is that the pilgrim is most proud of. The **flag** and the **banner** are ways of displaying such symbols, as is the **livery** of a **Marcher household**, or the **heraldry** of a noble or **Noble house** in **Dawn**.

As a more unified symbol of the virtue itself, rather than of the individual's personal Pride, the **Imperial Synod** often favours the **sun**. The sun shines brightly, without shame, open for all the world to see. By so doing, it allows others to see as well - and while it may occasionally be occluded by clouds, when the clouds pass the sun's light is undiminished.

In **Wintermark**, the **eagle**, the **heron**, and the **swan** all symbolise Pride. The eagle is also a popular symbol of the virtue in **Varushka** where it is joined by the **deer**. Some magicians use the **rune** of **Majesty**, **Feresh**, which represents glorious splendour, to symbolise Pride. These magicians point to the way that Feresh only enhances attributes that are already present as a particularly telling parable about the nature of Pride.

During their Spring festival, the **Urizen** represent the virtue of Pride with pink blossoms.

29.3.5 Prosperity

There are a great many symbols of Prosperity across the Empire but one of the most common is the **wheatsheaf**. Strongly symbolic of harvest time, it represents both the hard work that has gone into ploughing, sowing, and tending the field and the reward for that labour. Priests and pilgrims of this path often have a stalk of wheat or other grain upon them. There are a number of other popular symbols along the same lines, associated with different harvests and different forms of work - the **apple**, the **grape**, the **fishing net**, the **wagon**, and the **merchant ship** for example.

Likewise, the **coin** is a popular representation of Prosperity - sometimes an Imperial **crown**, sometimes a gold or silver coin stamped with another symbol of prosperity of some sort. As a symbol the coin has grown with prominence through the Empire's history, and is very popular with those whose hard work involves trade or the practice of a profession rather than manual labour. By a similar token a set of **artisan's tools** are sometimes used as a symbol of the virtue - and in **the Marches**, a **spade** or a **shovel** may stand as a slightly tongue-in-cheek symbol of Prosperity. Another popular symbol in the Marches is the **handshake**, often used to seal an agreement that will bring Prosperity to both parties.

The **cup** (along with the **wineskin** and the **waterskin**) has a long tradition of being associated with Prosperity. Sometimes it is a cup of water used to quench thirst brought on by hard work, sometimes it is a cup of wine or beer drunk as a reward for a job well done. It is quite common for priests and pilgrims of the Path of Prosperity to carry waterskins, or bear fruit or other food, to enjoy or share as virtue guides them.

A less common symbol of Prosperity is the **stout club** or cudgel. Possibly a reference to **Good Walder**, it represents the will to defend what one has earned against the greedy. In some old versions of this symbol, the club is wound with ivy or with thorned berry-bearing briars.

In **Wintermark** Prosperity is symbolised by the **magpie**, while in **Varushka** the virtue is demonstrated by the industrious **bee**. Some magicians use the **runes of Wealth, Pallas**, which is said to represent an apple tree, as a symbol of Prosperity.

During their Spring festival, the **Urizen** use yellow or golden flowers to represent Prosperity.

29.3.6 Vigilance



The Lantern lights the path of the Virtuous through the Labyrinth.

The **tower** is a common symbol of Vigilance, representing the ancient works of the **Sentinel**. The watchtower allows one to see great distances and prepare for coming threats, while a fortified tower or a **castle** allow one to protect that which is precious. Along similar lines, other tools of warding and warning are common symbols of the path, especially the **bell**, the **barred gate**, and the **beacon**. Priests and pilgrims of the Path of Vigilance will often carry a bell or whistle for precisely the purpose of alerting others to danger they have identified. A **lantern** is another popular symbol of Vigilance, as is the **candle** - both can be used to provide aid in dark places and to signal warnings to others.

Mystically inclined **Urizen** favour the **unblinking eye** (an eye without lids). The eye has a great deal of **hearth magic** significance, and is often painted onto surfaces such as gates, doors, and the base of **heliopicon** towers as a reminder of the need to stay alert. During their Spring festival, they represent Vigilance with green flowers or sometimes wreaths of green leaves. The image of the unblinking eye can also be seen in the **basilisk**, a common symbol for unsleeping Vigilance among the **Highborn**.

In **Varushka**, eyes or grim faces are often carved into lintels or trees to keep watch over a vale; there are several stories of warnings being delivered in dreams to those who sleep in a house guarded by these peculiar icons. A similar role is played by the **scarecrow** (and to a degree the traditional **poppet**) in the **Marches**.

The **spear** also stands as a symbol of Vigilance, especially among the **Navarr** where it has strong connotations of protecting against outside threats.

Among the people of **Wintermark** Vigilance is represented by the loud **jay** and by the **goose**. The goose is also used as a symbol of the virtue in **Varushka**, alongside the wise **spider**. The spider also serves as a symbol of Vigilance among some covert **sects** in **Urizen**, specifically as the **astronomantic** constellation of the **same name**. The law of the Spider - *things are watched by a hidden eye* - is both a statement of the need to be constantly alert for danger and a reminder that others are always watching. Some magicians use the **runes of Revelation, Ophis**, as a symbol of vigilance.

29.3.7 Wisdom

One of the most widely accepted symbols of Wisdom is the **scale**, used to weigh and measure the world. Other tools of measurement, evaluating, and recording knowledge are also popular including the **abacus**, the **quill**, and the **rolled scroll**.

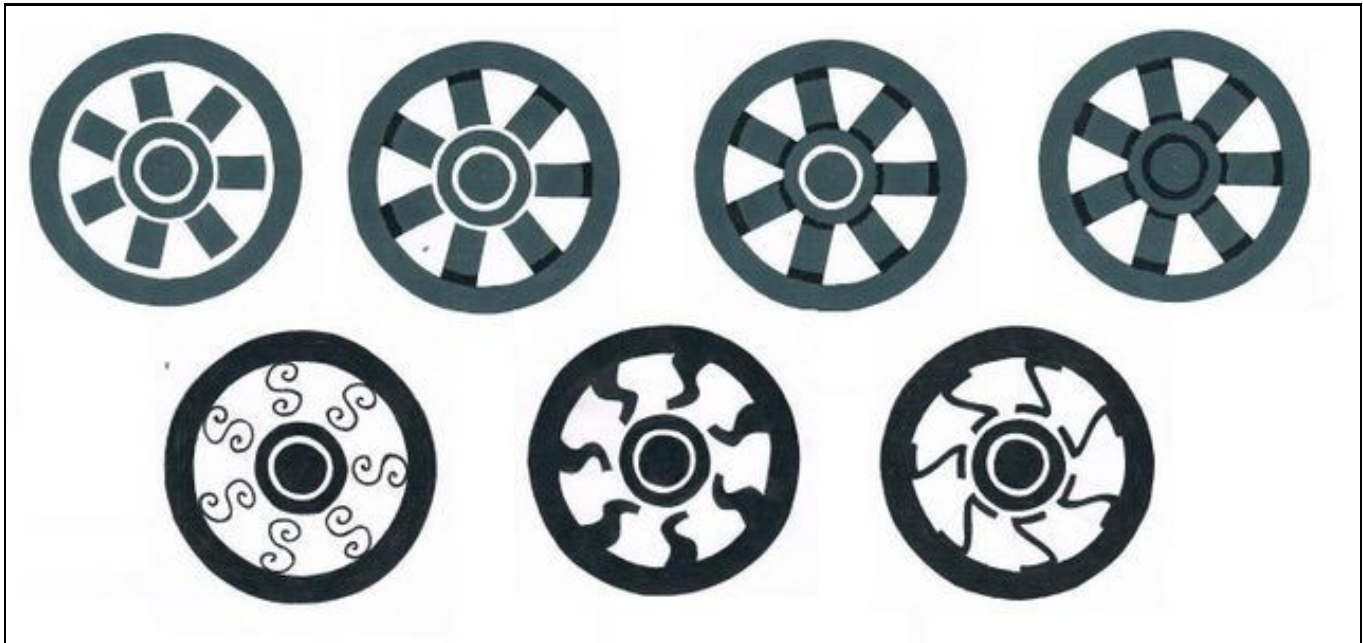
Things that create light and illumination are also popular icons of Wisdom, and there is some crossover with the symbols of **vigilance** in this regard but the meaning tends to be subtly different. The **lantern**, the **candle**, and the **torch** allow the virtuous to see clearly, and to understand things as they actually are, as well as to provide the opportunity to take action (such as when **Isenbrad** used a lantern to illuminate the cave in which he carved his **runic** secrets). Many priests and pilgrims of the Path of Wisdom often carry sources of light or the means to provide such, along with the means to record such knowledge and wisdom that they encounter.

Before the formation of the **Imperial Synod**, Wisdom was often represented by animals of one type or another, perhaps in recognition of the mastery of animals practiced by **Zoria**. The early Synod discouraged this practice; especially among the **Highborn** it was argued that beasts are inferior to humans - although understandably this attitude did not sit well with the people of **Wintermark** or **Varushka** who largely ignored it.

The **raven** symbolises wisdom in **Wintermark**, while in **Varushka** they prefer the **squirrel** and the vigilant **spider**. Unsurprisingly perhaps some magicians use the **rune Irremais**, which represents a certain kind of wisdom.

During their Spring festival, the Urizen represent Wisdom with white or silver flowers.

29.4 Images



The seven-spoked wheel represents the journey each spirit must make



The seven Virtue Assemblies, the Assembly of the Way, the ten National Assemblies, the General Assembly, and the Assembly of the Nine together make up the Imperial Synod.

29.4.1 Further Reading

- The Way of Virtue
- Imperial Theology
- Imperial Synod
- Religious Skills
- Recent History

30 The Doctrines of the Faith

30.1 Contents

- 1 Overview
- 2 Doctrines of The Faith
 - ◆ 2.1 The Doctrine of Reincarnation
 - ◆ 2.2 The Doctrine of Human Destiny
 - ◆ 2.3 The Doctrine of Seven
 - ◆ 2.4 The Doctrine of The Paragons
 - ◆ 2.5 The Doctrine of the Creator
 - ◆ 2.6 The Doctrine of the Labyrinth
 - ◆ 2.7 The Doctrine of the Howling Abyss
 - ◆ 2.8 The Doctrine of the Ancestors
- 3 Further Reading

30.2 Overview

The history of the Doctrines of the Faith, which guide pilgrims along the path of the Way, is not especially straightforward. Historians disagree about their precise origins, with the [Department of Historical Research](#) agreeing that the wording of the Doctrines as they are recognised today were first recorded in 73YE. The most well-known commentary on the Doctrines - the one many school children are familiar with - was written somewhat later in 106YE by a [League Bishop](#). It speaks about the "underpinning" of each of the doctrines known at the time, although some priests disagree with its conclusions.

Two of the Doctrines - the [Doctrine of the Howling Abyss](#) and the [Doctrine of the Ancestors](#) are *much* later additions. Proposed by Bonewall Rek and Bonewall Cole of the [Imperial Orcs](#), they were recognised in the Empire as the result of a [Change of doctrine](#) during the Winter Soslstice 380YE. They proved somewhat controversial, especially with the *prāster* of the [Sumaah Republic](#) who have still not accepted them and continue to [debate their implications](#).

During the Spring Equinox 384YE, [Historical research](#) commissioned into the [origins of the Doctrine of Human Destiny](#), which may also provide some insight into the way the Doctrines were codified.

30.3 Doctrines of The Faith

The doctrines of the faith represent the orthodox understanding of the Way. Each Doctrine is the product of experimental theology that has been debated, analysed and formally recognised by the Synod. Teaching doctrines that are at odds with, and thus undermine, the Doctrines of the Faith are regarded as [heresy](#) and are a [crime](#) under Imperial law.

30.3.1 The Doctrine of Reincarnation

The human spirit is immortal. It inhabits mortal flesh for a span within the world before being liberated again, having gained knowledge and enlightenment. It traverses the Labyrinth of Ages before returning to mortal life through new birth.

Commentary: The Doctrine is underpinned by discovery and analysis of pure liao which, it has been concluded, provides visions of a person's past lives. This is further supported by the discovery of archaeological evidence that matches the content of some liao visions.

30.3.2 The Doctrine of Human Destiny

Only human spirits reincarnate, therefore humans are the greatest of all beings in creation for only human spirits gain strength, knowledge and enlightenment through rebirth. The paragons not only personify Virtue but the full potential of humanity.

Commentary: This Doctrine is underpinned by the discovery liao has no effect on orcs and, by assumed extension, other non-human beings. Additionally, it is also broadly accepted that the miracles and achievements attained by the paragons are deemed to be superhuman in nature and the eventual destiny of all virtuous humans.

30.3.3 The Doctrine of Seven

There are seven Virtues that guide the spirit through the Labyrinth of Ages. These are Ambition, Courage, Loyalty, Pride, Prosperity, Vigilance and Wisdom. Other qualities may benefit humanity, but lend no aid through the passage of death to rebirth, and some may hinder it.

Commentary: This Doctrine is underpinned by extensive study of legends, relics, pure liao visions and priestly ceremonies to determine the truth and power of qualities. The seven Virtues are acknowledged as the consistent recurring pattern and proof of paragonhood and exemplardom. A byproduct of this Doctrine is that some figures of note were dismissed as being false paragons. The law of blasphemy was introduced to protect citizens from the teachings of false paragons.

30.3.4 The Doctrine of The Paragons

A truly virtuous spirit, one who is a paragon of Virtue, is capable of freeing itself from the Labyrinth of Ages through transcendence. A paragon spirit can be identified for having completed at least six of the eight signs of the paragon, after which it can be recognised by the Imperial Synod.

Commentary: The Doctrine is underpinned by the belief that some of the most virtuous spirits in history have never been the subject of a past life vision. The **signs of the paragon** were devised as a series of tests to ascertain which were true paragons and which were exemplars. The Doctrine of the Paragons is an extension of the Doctrine of Human Destiny.

Among Imperial priests, there are a number of **schools of thought** regarding the meaning, role, and qualities of exemplars and paragons, and the role of the signs that define them.

30.3.5 The Doctrine of the Creator

Human destiny is our own. The Creator, whose hand can be seen in all patterns of nature, seeks no dominance of, control over or communion with human spirits.

Commentary: This Doctrine stems from the principle of seeing design in the patterns of creation, and prompted several experimental theological attempts to contact the Creator. The most common results of such experiments have been silence, which has been taken as proof neither one way or the other. A small number of experiments have resulted in the scholars involved losing their sanity from which mixed conclusions have been drawn. Some have held that the Creator Spirit is currently of a nature beyond comprehension ? save, perhaps, by a Paragon or Exemplar ? whilst others maintain that the strain of effort was too great.

30.3.6 The Doctrine of the Labyrinth

The Labyrinth of Ages is a place of pure spirit and beyond the true comprehension of any but a paragon. Flesh and blood may not enter, only that which is of spirit may traverse into and out of it, and it has no peer.

Commentary: The Doctrine of the Labyrinth was created by the Synod as a response to two, quite different, beliefs. It asserts the reality of the Labyrinth of Ages from those who doubt its existence, or believe it to be metaphor. It also seeks to refute the teaching of **Realmists** who speculate that the Labyrinth is a magical realm akin to day or night.

30.3.7 The Doctrine of the Howling Abyss

Orcs live only one life. After death, the orcish soul either is lost to the Howling Abyss or crosses it to become an Ancestor who can guide and advise living orcs.

History: The Doctrine of the Howling Abyss was created by the Synod during the **Symposium of Revelation** during the Winter Solstice 380YE. It was proposed by the **Imperial Orc preacher** Bonewall Rek, and **accepted** by the General Assembly as part of an attempt to better understand the nature of the orc soul, and the place of the Imperial Orcs in the Way. The **Howling Abyss** is a feature of **orc** belief shared by both the **Imperial Orcs** and the barbarians, as far as is understood.

30.3.8 The Doctrine of the Ancestors

To cross the Howling Abyss an orc must be known for their deeds. Though there may be other ways to cross, embracing the Seven Virtues leads an orc to the Great and Inspiring deeds that make an Ancestor and a Virtuous Ancestor can guide future generations on the Way.

History: As with the Doctrine of the Howling Abyss, the Doctrine of the Ancestors was created during the Symposium of Revelation. It was proposed by Bonewall Cole, and supported by the General Assembly. The belief in [ancestor spirits](#) is a key feature of the beliefs of many orcs, both Imperial and barbarian.

30.4 Further Reading

- [The Way of Virtue](#)
- [Imperial Theology](#)
 - ◆ [Liao](#)
 - ◆ **The Doctrines of the Faith**
 - ◆ [Signs of the paragon and exemplar](#)
 - ◆ [Schisms and Heresies](#)
 - ◆ [Investigative Theology](#)
- [Imperial Synod](#)
- [Religious Skills](#)
- [Religious Crimes](#)
- [On the Doctrine of Human Destiny](#) - A report from the [Department of Historical Research](#) about the origins of the [Doctrine of Human Destiny](#)

31 The history of the Way

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

31.1 The History of The Way

Priests and Scholars of The Way have unearthed myths and legends of Exemplars and Paragons that go back as far as any history or saga. Belief in reincarnation pre-dates understandings of the Labyrinth of Ages and can be found in multiple disparate cultures.

The Way of Virtue first began to take shape during a period of Highguard history called The Revelation. A Highborn Chapter called The Scions of Atun found a way to unlock the potential of Vinum, a herb previously used by the Navarr for medicinal purposes.

Through a complex system of refinement and maturation, The Scions of Atun created Liao which, when used, opened up a person's mind to the Labyrinth of Ages. In its rarest form, known as True Liao, it grants humans clear visions. During this time, another Highborn Chapter - The Distant Shores - uncovered proof that the visions were of events that had truly happened by matching up archaeological evidence and historical record with the visions witnessed. This was the spark that ignited The Revelation in Highguard. Further study by the Scions, Shores and other Highguard Chapters uncovered other secrets, such as the nature of the Labyrinth of Ages, the Seven Virtues and the identities of some Exemplars and Paragons.

Having taken root in Highguard, several Chapters - most famously the Winds of Virtue - carried The Way to the other Nations. As they did so, they learned about Exemplars and Paragons that had manifested in those lands, taught the people of the Labyrinth and the Virtues, and invited pilgrims to come to Highguard to experience the truth of The Way through the True Liao visions.

The spread of The Way amongst the nations preceded the rise of the First Empress, with pilgrims coming to Highguard in search of pure liao visions and to learn liao ceremonies. Yet The Way truly became dominant when the Empire was founded and the Empress formally recognised The Way as the religion of the Empire in the Imperial Constitution. This included the creation of the Synod and the granting of its powers.

Since the founding of The Empire, the combined insights of priests, holy mystics, scholars and wise ones from all nations have further informed the understanding of the Virtues, the Paragons and the Labyrinth of Ages. Further study of liao has also revealed it has applications in ceremonial rites that can facilitate or hinder a spirit's passage through the Labyrinth of Ages as well as demonstrating and aiding the power of Virtue in this lifetime.

31.1.1 Further Reading

- [The Way of Virtue](#)
- [Imperial Theology](#)
- [Imperial Synod](#)
- [Religious skills](#)
- [Recent History](#)

32 The Labyrinth of Ages and the Paragons and Exemplars

32.1 The Labyrinth of Ages and the Paragons and Exemplars

The Labyrinth of Ages is the name, coined in [Highguard](#), of the twisting realm of pure spirit that is integral to the cycle of reincarnation. The name is something of a metaphor for no mortal has been there to witness it. However, it is understood that the journey from death to rebirth is neither simple nor instantaneous. Indeed, some spirits are said to wander between lives for years, even generations, before being reborn. Some are condemned to wander lost forever.

The Way of Virtue teaches that living a virtuous life holds the key to successfully traversing the Labyrinth of Ages swiftly, safely and with the purity of spirit that strengthens ties to past lives. This is supported by insights gained from the Liao Ceremonies conducted by priests of The Way. These same insights revealed the nature of the Seven Virtues and the presence of powerful individuals throughout history who have burned with Virtue and been legendary heroes known as Exemplars. A few, rarer still, have been recognised as Paragons, possessed of such a state of Virtue that they have transcended the Labyrinth of Ages and never again need to be reborn. This is held to be the ultimate destiny of humankind.

Although the Way teaches the supremacy of the human spirit and rejects false gods, there are some superstitious corners of the Empire in which simple folk venerate the transcendent Paragons. The Synod tolerates this idolatry by affirming that prayer to the Paragons achieves nothing more than meditating on their example for inspiration on how to take action oneself.

The Synod, and the Highborn Chapters that pre-date it, have found evidence of exemplars and paragons going back to the dawn of history, preserved in myths and legends. To many are attributed wonders and miracles that have helped raise up humanity from darkness and primitive superstition, laying the groundwork - in their own way - for the Empire and the Way. It is also widely held that the First Empress was herself a paragon, though there is some debate as to which virtue she may have been a paragon of.

32.1.1 Further Reading

- [The Way of Virtue](#)
- [Imperial Theology](#)
- [Imperial Synod](#)
- [Religious Skills](#)
- [Recent History](#)

33 Troubadour



A Dawnish **priest** who brings **glory** to the living and the dead.

A troubadour is a Dawnish **priest** who uses poetry, storytelling and song to recount the deeds of glorious heroes, both living and dead.

There exists an informal relationship between troubadours and the people, and generally fairly little ceremony between them. The tales recounted by troubadours often include reference to their hero or heroine's mistakes, follies, and even defeats before they reach the conclusion. A good troubadour wants their audience to identify with the subject of the verse and if they romanticize the tales a little, the goal is to make their subject seem glorious, not perfect.

Troubadours in the largest Dawn **houses** tend to study the history of their house's own heroes alongside the tales and legends of the paragons. The best are adept at creating recitals that leave the listener in no doubt about the divine provenance of the house's heroes. Some in the **Imperial Synod** consider this mix of personal history with official canon to be nothing short of blasphemous, but the Dawnish vigorously defend their traditions and their troubadours are careful to avoid ever explicitly claiming paragon status for a hero without the sanction of the **Synod**.

34 Vigilance



From *A Children's Primer of the Way*

34.1 Contents

- 1 The Path of Vigilance
 - ◆ 1.1 Guidance on the Path
- 2 Paragons and Exemplars
- 3 Symbols of Vigilance
- 4 Further Reading
 - ◆ 4.1 The Seven Virtues
 - ◆ 4.2 Religion

34.2 The Path of Vigilance

The Virtue of Vigilance is popular amongst those charged with ensuring the safety of things precious; from the inquisitor who seeks out treacherous cultists, to the scrivener who scrutinises their dhomiro's records against fraud and theft, to the shepherds in the fields. The threats to the Empire and its citizens are many and varied and all must be prepared for, guarded against and actively opposed lest they tear down civilisation. Not all threats carry arms like the barbarians; some come with smiles and lies, like false-faced eternal, or even lie in the hearts of weak citizens. Through diligence, detail, and dedication in all things does one person's Vigilance safeguard another from harm.

34.2.1 Guidance on the Path

Through meditation on the [auras of Vigilance](#), and by studying the lives of paragons and exemplars, the priests of the Way have gleaned insight into the heart of the virtue and how best to pursue it. There are collections of parables, tales, sayings and teachings that distill this for Imperial citizens to learn from. The following are a handful of teachings and sayings deemed to be essential to understanding the path:

- Seek out the poison in your neighbour's fields, lest your own crops be blighted.
- Be alert to all dangers; within and without.
- Seek out falsehood and expose the truth.
- Prepare for malice, yet thwart malice before it strikes against you.
- Despise that which threatens what you watch over, whether by malice, lies, folly or carelessness.

34.3 Paragons and Exemplars

Attempts to catalogue paragons and exemplars of Vigilance have met with mixed success. In some cases, the disaster they prevent or the catastrophe that goes averted results in their heroism going unsung. More notable are those who publicly expose traitors, infiltrators, and black-hearted villains. Recognised [paragons and exemplars](#) of Vigilance include:

- The legendary paragon known as [The Sentinel](#), who is credited with building many ancient towers and fortresses that still stand today.

- The paragon **Vardas** the Witch-Hunter of **Varushka**, who dedicated his life to tracking down and bringing to justice the criminals who preyed on his people.
- The exemplar **Berechiah** who exemplifies the often unpopular idea that the vigilante should be prepared to do whatever is necessary to protect their people from outside threats.

34.4 Symbols of Vigilance



The Lantern lights the path of the Virtuous through the Labyrinth.

The **tower** is a common symbol of Vigilance, representing the ancient works of **the Sentinel**. The watchtower allows one to see great distances and prepare for coming threats, while a fortified tower or a **castle** allow one to protect that which is precious. Along similar lines, other tools of warding and warning are common symbols of the path, especially the **bell**, the **barred gate**, and the **beacon**. Priests and pilgrims of the Path of Vigilance will often carry a bell or whistle for precisely the purpose of alerting others to danger they have identified. A **lantern** is another popular symbol of Vigilance, as is the **candle** - both can be used to provide aid in dark places and to signal warnings to others.

Mystically inclined **Urizen** favour the **unblinking eye** (an eye without lids). The eye has a great deal of **hearth magic** significance, and is often painted onto surfaces such as gates, doors, and the base of **heliopicon** towers as a reminder of the need to stay alert. During their Spring festival, they represent Vigilance with green flowers or sometimes wreaths of green leaves. The image of the unblinking eye can also be seen in the **basilisk**, a common symbol for unsleeping Vigilance among the **Highborn**.

In **Varushka**, eyes or grim faces are often carved into lintels or trees to keep watch over a vale; there are several stories of warnings being delivered in dreams to those who sleep in a house guarded by these peculiar icons. A similar role is played by the **scarecrow** (and to a degree the traditional **poppet**) in **the Marches**.

The **spear** also stands as a symbol of Vigilance, especially among the **Navarr** where it has strong connotations of protecting against outside threats.

Among the people of **Wintermark** Vigilance is represented by the loud **jay** and by the **goose**. The goose is also used as a symbol of the virtue in **Varushka**, alongside the wise **spider**. The spider also serves as a symbol of Vigilance among some covert **sects** in **Urizen**, specifically as the **astronomantic** constellation of the **same name**. The law of the Spider - *things are watched by a hidden eye* - is both a statement of the need to be constantly alert for danger and a reminder that others are always watching. Some magicians use the **runes** of **Revelation**, **Ophis**, as a symbol of vigilance.

34.5 Further Reading

- You can learn about the various spiritual [roleplaying effects](#) created by priests [dedicated](#) to Vigilance [here](#).
- You can learn about the skills that priests can use to safeguard the virtue of Vigilance [here](#).

34.5.1 The Seven Virtues

- [Ambition](#)
- [Courage](#)
- [Loyalty](#)
- [Pride](#)
- [Prosperity](#)
- **Vigilance**
- [Wisdom](#)

34.5.2 Religion

- [The Way of Virtue](#)
- [Imperial Theology](#)
- [Imperial Synod](#)
- [Religious Skills](#)
- [Recent History](#)

35 Wisdom



From *A Children's Primer of the Way*

35.1 Contents

- 1 The Path of Wisdom
 - ◆ 1.1 Guidance on the Path
- 2 Paragons and Exemplars
- 3 Symbols of Wisdom
- 4 Further reading
 - ◆ 4.1 The Seven Virtues
 - ◆ 4.2 Religion

35.2 The Path of Wisdom

There are many citizens of the Empire who believe themselves, by nature, to be filled with the virtue and it comes easily to them, yet the truth is ? like all the virtues ? Wisdom is a journey and must ever be striven for. Only the fool believes their journey is complete. Wisdom in the Empire takes many forms and what might benefit you in the Wintermark could as easily be your ruin in Varushka. Wisdom?s natural enemies are folly and complacency who steal the wit and desire for understanding and enlightenment. There is also dispute amongst the wise as to the extent that knowledge should be shared with the unready lest it imperils them.

35.2.1 Guidance on the Path

Through meditation on the [auras of Wisdom](#), and careful analysis of the stories of paragons and exemplars, the priests of the Way have gleaned insight into the heart of the virtue and how best to pursue it. There are collections of parables, tales, sayings and teachings that distill this for Imperial citizens to learn from. The following are a handful of teachings and sayings deemed to be essential to understanding the path:

- The Virtuous apply what they have learned; Wisdom knows all knowledge is incomplete.
- Let every word you speak carry meaning; do not use forty when four will do.
- Wisdom is not always knowing the answer; Wisdom is finding the right question.
- Test what you learn; only fools accept hearsay as truth.
- Despise folly and chastise the fool that spreads it.

35.3 Paragons and Exemplars

Recognised [paragons and exemplars](#) of Wisdom include:

- The legendary paragon [Zoria](#) learned the names of all the creatures of the wild; bird and beast, fish and fowl and using their names, commanded them to serve her.
- The paragon [Isenbrad](#) of the [Steinr](#) was known for practicality, good judgement and wise counsel, and is said to have been the first [runesmith](#)

- The paragon **Atun** of the **Highborn** steered the ships that bore the Highborn through unknown waters to their new homeland.
- The exemplar **Avigliana di Sarvos** of **League** encouraged others to take note of the world they lived in and put the truth of it in writing.
- The exemplar **Kala** codified a system of weights and measures that are still in use today and provided much of the foundation for modern Imperial scholarship.

35.4 Symbols of Wisdom

One of the most widely accepted symbols of Wisdom is the **scale**, used to weigh and measure the world. Other tools of measurement, evaluating, and recording knowledge are also popular including the **abacus**, the **quill**, and the **rolled scroll**.

Things that create light and illumination are also popular icons of Wisdom, and there is some crossover with the symbols of **vigilance** in this regard but the meaning tends to be subtly different. The **lantern**, the **candle**, and the **torch** allow the virtuous to see clearly, and to understand things as they actually are, as well as to provide the opportunity to take action (such as when **Ilsenbrad** used a lantern to illuminate the cave in which he carved his **runic** secrets). Many priests and pilgrims of the Path of Wisdom often carry sources of light or the means to provide such, along with the means to record such knowledge and wisdom that they encounter.

Before the formation of the **Imperial Synod**, Wisdom was often represented by animals of one type or another, perhaps in recognition of the mastery of animals practiced by **Zoria**. The early Synod discouraged this practice; especially among the **Highborn** it was argued that beasts are inferior to humans - although understandably this attitude did not sit well with the people of **Wintermark** or **Varushka** who largely ignored it.

The **raven** symbolises wisdom in **Wintermark**, while in **Varushka** they prefer the **squirrel** and the vigilant **spider**. Unsurprisingly perhaps some magicians use the **rune Irremais**, which represents a certain kind of wisdom.

During their Spring festival, the Urizen represent Wisdom with white or silver flowers.

Wisdom is not short hand for 'action I'd like you to take?', and foolishness is not synonymous with 'outcome I wish you had not provoked'

Cardinal Agnetha De Rondell, Spring 378YE

35.5 Further reading

- You can learn about the various spiritual **roleplaying effects** created by priests **dedicated** to Wisdom **here**.
- You can learn about the skills that priests can use to enlighten others to the virtue of Wisdom **here**.

35.5.1 The Seven Virtues

- **Ambition**
- **Courage**
- **Loyalty**
- **Pride**
- **Prosperity**
- **Vigilance**
- **Wisdom**

35.5.2 Religion

- **The Way of Virtue**
- **Imperial Theology**
- **Imperial Synod**
- **Religious Skills**
- **Recent History**