

# Conclave Review

## Winter 2016



One of the key strengths of Conclave is its inclusivity. it has the lowest bar for participation of any House.

### Overview

This represents a summary of the changes to Conclave we're planning to implement for E1. We're through the extensive design discussion, and we'd like to throw them out for some public consultation. Any feedback would be appreciated, of course. You can send it to [matt@profounddecisions.co.uk](mailto:matt@profounddecisions.co.uk). Ideally we'd like feedback before February 15<sup>th</sup>.

Please bear in mind this is not intended as a document for general dissemination – so while you can chat it through with a few friends please don't spread it around or post it online or send it to random people.

Cheers,  
Raff

### Identifying Problems

Last year we solicited some feedback about the way the Conclave was running, as well as attending a few sessions ourselves. From that, we've identified several key concerns:

- Conclave seems to take too long, and includes several extraneous elements that are not fun
- Gambits and Order vaults are not working to create game
- Eternals remain too much in the control of plot, with limited opportunities for players to proactively interact with them.
- The Orders are now feeling much more like distinct bodies, and we should take action to support that

Consequently, we are planning several changes to the way Conclave sessions operate; to the role of the Orders; and to the powers of the Grandmasters.



A significant challenge to Conclave design is that it needs to provide fun game experiences for people who take many different approaches to LRP

# Conclave Sessions

## ***Remove any ability that allows someone to talk in the Conclave for free.***

At the moment, every grandmaster has one “free minute” on every proposal which costs them nothing to use. This means that for every declaration raised in the Conclave, there are potentially six minutes of discussion that is cost-free. This quickly adds up.

We are still discussing the ability that several titles have to add things to the agenda for free. More things to talk about in Conclave should be positive, but free things are by their nature suspect. There also seems to be a qualitative difference between powers that allow one to make a general free agenda item (such as those of the grandmaster, or the open ended free address of the Archmage) and things that let a title perform a very specific declaration (such as the Dean of the Lyceum's Interdiction/Imperial Lore declarations).

## ***Encourage smoother running and minimize disruptions***

At the moment, the Civil Servants who run the Conclave are doing a good job of keeping things rolling along, but there are a few hiccups.

One of these are the pauses that seem to have crept in – the ability of grandmasters to “pause” the conclave session to discuss surprise developments. This explicitly conflicts with the Veil of Night, which is intended specifically to surprise the Conclave with declarations, for example.

We intend to formally remove these pauses, but give the Civil Servant some ability to throw disruptive influences (especially disruptive Heralds) out of the Hall of Worlds.

We are discussing discouraging plot writers to run plot that involves sending Heralds into the Hall of Worlds during conclave sessions to reduce the number of disruptions. The IC explanation for this would be “politeness” - meaning that plots involving Eternals whose "goal" is to disrupt Conclave would still be valid.

## ***Streamline precedence by calculating it before the start of the event***

At the moment precedence is established via a lot of counting at the start of every Conclave. In future, we will simply run a database query before the event and work out how many magicians booked for the event are members of each order, setting precedence based on those numbers. This will allow us to do away with all the counting.

The mana in the Font will be split based on these numbers, receiving a portion based on how large a fraction of the total number of magicians in Orders each order represents. This means magicians who are not part of an Order will not count toward determining the shares. We will make precedence public knowledge during the Winds of Fortune phase.

In addition, this has the advantage that magicians who don't like Conclave don't have to come to Conclave to “count” as members of their Order, but also encouraging members of Orders to actively recruit new members.

## ***Refine the Conclave Address***

The addresses serve a useful function in the game, but they take up an inordinate amount of time. As a consequence, we are going to remove the “debate” element of an address. The speaker makes their address, and then the conclave moves on to the next topic on the agenda. Anyone wanting further information is encouraged to speak to the person making the address after the session.

We are considering changing the way that all addresses are dealt with at the start of the start of the session, and treating them like any other part of the agenda – resolved in the order they come in.



Another challenge is that there are only two Conclave sessions each event - and that the nature of the Conclave (anyone can participate, open ended agenda) makes it tricky to break those sessions down into more manageable chunks or restrict duration.

# Grandmasters

## ***Give the Grandmaster the contents of their Order's "vault"***

At the moment, it is hard for the Orders to feel like they "own" the contents of their vault. We've placed a hurdle between them and their resources in the form of gambits.

In future, we will abandon the idea of an Order vault and simply give each Grandmaster the resources of their Order in their packs at the start of their event. Anyone who wants to access those resources will need to roleplay with the Grandmaster.

We will couple this with a responsibility/expectation that a Grandmaster should use their resources to pursue the goals of their Order but are otherwise free to do what they want.

The contents of the vaults will be public information – magicians will know what resources each Grandmaster is getting from their vault – and will be made public information during the Winds of Fortune phase.

Mana purchased by the Grandmaster using their "Funding the Order" power goes directly into their pack – it is not split up through the Fount – but still considered to be "property of the order".

We think this has numerous advantages – instead of gambits players who want assistance go to the grandmasters and/or their orders and roleplay with them. The contents of the vaults feel like they "belong" to the Grandmaster and the Order. The process is automated and just part of pre-event setup rather than requiring CS to handle it in the field.

## ***Make Grandmasters accountable to their order***

We will give all members of an Order the ability to raise a vote of no confidence in their Grandmaster. This requires a simple majority of Order members to go in person to the Hub and register their vote with a civil servant. The civil servant will check they are all members of the order. The number required is set by the precedence determined before the event.

If the vote of no confidence successfully sought, it is announced at the next conclave session, and an election for Grandmaster is triggered after that conclave session. It follows all the normal rules for a Grandmaster appointment.

The Grandmaster election already has a check to cut down on shennanigans – if you were eligible to vote for a different Grandmaster, you can't legally (IC) vote in a Grandmaster election until a year has passed. This still allows space for election fraud, but makes it a much more serious offense if someone is caught doing it.

At the moment the only way to remove a Grandmaster is the nuclear option (Declaration of Balance or Empress dissolving entire Conclave). This is not ideal because it effects every magician. Neither is a good fit for helping an Order to deal with internal problems - we're not keen to create any structure that lets members of other Orders have a direct say in who the Grandmaster of another Order is.

## ***Remove Gambits***

Giving the Grandmasters control of the Order vault means we will be removing the raising and resolving of gambits.

We had a certain design space in mind with Gambits – that they would create conflict as Grandmasters were loathe to part with their resources. In this we feel they have largely failed. They aren't something a significant number of Conclave members appear to care about, and they feel very much like an unnecessary hoop for Grandmasters to jump through to get access to "their" resources.

# Archmagi

## ***The Archmagi gain a power of Eternal Authority.***

Removing the Gambits removes a significant political power from the Archmagi. This suits our ongoing design that the Archmagi represent magical power and the Grandmasters the political power of magicians.

Instead, the Archmagi gain the power of “Eternal Authority” similar to that possessed by the Ambassadors. When an eternal wants to deal with the Empire formally, they do so by talking to the appropriate Archmage and the Civil Servant help make the Hall of Worlds available for such undertakings.

More importantly, each Archmage has the power to issue an “invitation” to a named Eternal of their realm asking them to attend an audience with the Archmage.

The invitation goes into a queue, and we commit to resolving them in the order they are received, at least one each event (but potentially more as our resources allow). An Archmage can change their invitation, but when they do it goes to the back of the queue.

*For example, if Bob archmage of Summer gets in first with a request for Eleonaris, then Kate archmage of Spring requests Siakha, then Alex archmage of Autumn requests Basileus Flynt, we will create the responses in that order. We might do one an event, or we might do two or three if we know what is going on.*

The audience of the Archmage is timetabled publicly, and takes place in the Hall of Worlds. The expectation is that the Eternal will dispatch a formal delegation or ambassador rather than turn up themselves... but they might if we think we can do a good enough job.

This power allows the players a tool to move forward or resolve relationships with eternals, as well as allowing them to express the interests of the Conclave and try to forge relations with eternals we are not necessarily actively running plot with.

## ***Access to vis***

Archmagi represent their Realm in the Empire. We are aware that by removing the gambits we're reducing the ability of the Archmagi to support the magicians who focus on their Realm. Consequently, we plan to add an ability to the Archmagi to purchase the appropriate realm *vis* during downtime – similar to the power of the Grandmaster to purchase mana crystals. In conjunction with their existing regalia, this gives the Archmagi a reserve of magical power to draw on either personally, or for the good of the Empire.

Unlike the Grandmasters, there is no responsibility to use this *vis* for the benefit of the Empire or the Conclave. It is a “perk” that reflects their position as pre-eminent magician of a specific Realm.

