

The Imperial Nations

You will likely find that the Empire is a confusing place. For one, instead of a broadly unifying culture, they are split into 10 distinct Nations. Each of these Nations differs significantly to the others with regards to culture, customs and choice of clothing. They are:

The Brass Coast: similar in some ways to Faraden. They are divided into loose families, and many take to the sea as privateers hunting down pirate ships. They are known for being honest about all things, and demanding payment for even the smallest things, such as the right to be seated. They are in charge of the Empire's only navy.

Dawn: stratified into two social classes: "nobility" and "peofolk". Membership of the former must be granted by an existing head of a noble house, which normally requires the completion of some kind of test. They are heavily militarily focused.

Sighguard: the birthplace of the Imperial religion. They have the greatest number of "priests" who create insidious auras, and these priests carry a great deal of political power. They are believed to have a reasonable military.

The League: a collection of city-states, they are almost four nations in one. Many go around masked conceal their identities. They are said to keep books detailing every trade and promise they have ever made. Their armies have a certain mercenary feel to them.

The Marches: not dissimilar to the second class citizens of Dawn, these are the Empire's agricultural backbone. They appear to employ communal methods of punishment such as ostracism. They have a heavy military focus, with four separate armies.

Navarr: a nation of nomads constantly wandering the Empire in various small groups called "Stridings". They swear many oaths and then ceremonially brand themselves to symbolise their permanency. Their armies are known for being excellent scouts and making great use of ambushes.

Urizen: a remote mountain-dwelling people, who place a great emphasis on having their own space. Known for their calm natures and mastery of magic, each aspires to perfect something in their lives. Though they have but one army, it is infused with potent magic and staffed by skilled magicians.

Varushka: a highly superstitious nation, who nevertheless have strict rules of hospitality. They are proficient woodspeople, but appear to have a strong cultural fear of the dark, rarely venturing out at night. They have many armoured warriors, although one of their three armies has a reputation for battlefield atrocities.

Wintermark: three nations in one, bound by tradition more than blood. They aspire to be heroes, seeking to do great deeds to advance their own goals. Though they only have two armies, they are said to have a strong tradition of battlefield healers.

The Imperial Orcs: the orcs are segregated from humans by design. These recently-freed slaves have been given their own land with which to found their society properly; perhaps the most productive thing the Empire has done of late. They appear to be grouped into military divisions named legions, with strong social bonds as is to be expected. Unable to conduct corrupting ceremonies, their camp is perhaps the safest at Anvil.

The Capital

You will be visiting Anvil, which serves as the Empire's capital - but only for around 12 days a year, over the course of each Equinox, Solstice and the days either side. It is an almost entirely temporary affair, where influential, prominent or wealthy Imperials make their own way to a central location and set up tents and awnings in areas allocated by Nation.

A great deal of decision-making and political maneuvering will likely be going on around you. However, you should be able to find plenty of people with time to speak to you, though it may take some asking around.

The Ambassador

It is likely that the Imperial Ambassador to the Commonwealth will want to speak to you. His name is Cael Splitroot - assuming he has not been replaced by another. This is all in order, though he may need reminding that though you come on behalf of the Commonwealth, you cannot possibly represent us diplomatically, and are here merely to learn.

Laws

Much is the same as the Commonwealth: do not steal, harm others, or damage property. Cases are tried by magistrates, who swear potent oaths, and are seen as incorruptible. Imperials have a category of "religious crimes" - under no circumstances must you be seen to be preaching whilst you are there, as the protections you possess as a foreign national do not shield you from criminal trial.

If you need assistance, the Militia are the arm of the law, and should rally to your cause, if it is just. Do not, however, speak to much of "Justice", as the Imperials may interpret this religiously and decline to protect you.

Institutions

The Empire is known to have a Military Council, but its decisions affect only the movement and actions of armies and auxiliary forces. Many decisions that would be made by our Generals are in fact made by Senators, who are quasi-democratic representatives of each constituent territory, and these Senators form the Senate, which is headed by the "Imperatrix" (Empress), Lisabetta.

There is also a Bourse, which deals with economic matters, a Conclave, that deals with magical matters, and a Synod, which deals with religious matters. Because of this multi-centred political system, the Empire is reputedly quite fractious, with these different institutions working against each other.

Currency

You have been granted a small stipend to fund your visit. Imperial currency is fairly simple, if strangely counted: the base unit is "rings" (actually a coin), and 20 of these form a "crown" (still a coin). 8 of these crowns makes a "throne" (still represented by a coin), which is therefore 160 rings and is thus fairly well divisible.

Though there is no need to return with any of your stipend remaining, you should be cautious with what you have. Do not be tricked into handing over more coin than necessary - people may expect payment in exchange for hospitality, but do not be persuaded into funding any ventures beyond this.