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1 The Throne

1.1 Overview

The Throne is the most powerful political position in the Empire. It is the formal title for the position of the head of the Imperial state, be they emperor or empress. The occupant heads the Imperial Senate, the Imperial Synod and the Imperial Military Council and serves as a rallying figure for the entire Empire.

1.2 Role within the Empire

The Throne holds a unique power; as a head of state, an Emperor or Empress is the only person who can have simultaneous influence in the Senate, the Synod and the Military Council. This gives them a signature ability to help provide unity of vision to the entire Empire and to guide it towards its manifest destiny.

1.3 Entry requirements

Any Imperial citizen may seek election to the Throne but appointment requires a constitutional vote by the Imperial Senate. If successful, the individual becomes emperor or empress once their coronation is complete.

1.4 History

There have been nineteen Emperors and Empresses since the Empire was created.

1.5 Powers and functions

1.5.1 Ratification of constitutional changes

If a constitutional vote in the Senate is successful then the motion is passed but does not become law until it is ratified by signature by The Throne. This means that it is not possible to make any possible alterations to the constitution unless they are ratified by The Throne. The Throne may choose whether to ratify constitutional changes or not. Any constitutional changes which are not ratified remain in suspension and may be ratified by a future occupant of The Throne. One of the first jobs of a new Emperor or Empress is usually to ratify several outstanding constitutional changes.

1.5.2 Power of veto

The Throne may veto any motion that has been passed by the Imperial Senate. Unlike the power of veto exercised by the Synod, this power can be used any number of times without limitation. To veto legislation, The Throne must be present when the vote is taken and must exercise the veto immediately after, otherwise the motion cannot be vetoed by The Throne.

1.5.3 The mercy of the Empress

The Throne may present an appeal for clemency on behalf of any Imperial Citizen who is being sentenced. The citizen must have pleaded guilty during their trial and The Throne must present the appeal on Virtuous grounds. Any appeal for clemency by The Throne carries the greatest possible weight.

1.5.4 Defender of the Empire

The Throne may remove any general from their position on the Imperial Military Council. The occupant of The Throne automatically assumes responsibility for and control of all military resources controlled by that general, until a new general is appointed. While holding the responsibilities of the removed general, The Throne cannot remove any further generals from their position.

1.5.5 Exclusion from the Senate

The Throne may order a single senator removed from the Senate for the duration of a vote. They are not required to present a justification for this action. Unlike the Speaker, they may only remove a single senator during a session and only for the duration of a single motion. Traditionally the Speaker uses their power to exclude senators whose behaviour is disorderly while The Throne acts to remove senators whose behaviour is considered to go against the best interests of the Empire.

1.5.6 The gift of liao

The first portion of pure liao that is produced by the Synod in each season is given to The Throne. The Throne may dispense with this portion of liao as they choose.

1.5.7 Master of magic

The Throne may dissolve the Imperial Conclave once a season. If this occurs then all the positions of the Imperial Conclave become vacant and must be refilled as soon as possible. The Throne cannot remove individual citizens from their position in the Imperial Conclave, they can only dissolve the entire Conclave.

1.5.8 Declaration of war

The Throne can declare war on any foreign power at any time. Unlike the Senate, they are not able to end a state of war with another nation.

1.5.9 The hand of the chancellor

Up to one third of all taxes collected by the civil service for use by the Imperial Senate are accessible by The Throne. They may take these funds and dispose of them as they choose. Any funds not removed from the treasury by The Throne remain available to the Senate as normal.

2 The Way

Seven Paths.
Seven Virtues.
One Way.

2.1 Overview

The **Way of Virtue** ? often simply known as The Way ? is the dominant and pre-eminent religion of the Empire. It found its birth amongst the **Highborn** and was adopted across the Empire at the Founding, though its roots go back to the very dawn of time, and it is one of the forces that binds the Empire together.

At its core, The Way of Virtue teaches:

- Human flesh is perishable but human spirits are immortal. After death, the spirit must traverse the **Labyrinth of Ages** before being reborn through reincarnation.
- The journey from death to rebirth is not instantaneous, and passage through the **Labyrinth of Ages** is influenced by how virtuous a soul is.
- The Way of Virtue comprises the **Seven Paths of Virtue**, each of which prospers the individual in life, enhances the purity of their spirit, and speeds their reincarnation through the Labyrinth of Ages.
- The Way teaches that all laudable human qualities are rooted in the Seven Virtues. For example, the **Freeborn** commitment to Truth is actually an expression of Courage and Pride.
- Outside of the Seven Virtues there are spiritual forces, or qualities, that are **malign** and which The Way teaches actively hinder a soul in life and the Labyrinth.
- Individuals who have attained sufficient purity of spirit, predominantly through perfection of a Virtue, pass through the Labyrinth of Ages unhindered to **Enlightenment** and are never again reborn. These individuals are called **Paragons**.
- Individuals who embody, or illustrate, a particular Virtue, or Virtues, are called **Exemplars** and are considered to be strongly on the path to becoming a Paragon, if indeed their spirit is not already ready.
- There is no expectation that every Imperial Citizen be an Exemplar or Paragon, though that is the eventual goal of The Way. For the majority it is sufficient to be aware of the Seven Paths of Virtue and how they influence your life so you can pass through the Labyrinth of Ages.
- There are some **priestly ceremonies** that require dedication to a single Virtue. As a result, dedication is only normally practiced by some priests and individuals who aspire to be Exemplars of that Virtue.
- Only human spirits reincarnate. As a consequence of this, humans ? especially the citizens of the Empire who follow The Way of Virtue ? are the greatest agents in creation and are inherently superior to non-humans.

The Way of Virtue is promoted and protected by **The Imperial Synod** and is shaped by **Imperial Theology**.

2.2 The Seven Paths of Virtue

The following are the Seven Paths of Virtue that make up the Way:

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

2.3 Further reading for religious PCs

- **The history of the Way**
- **The Labyrinth of Ages and the Paragons and Exemplars**
- **Citizens, priests, pilgrims and dedication**
- **Liao ceremonies**
- **Idolatry, blasphemy and heresy**
- **Malign spiritual presences**
- **Symbols, icons and trappings**
- **The Way and the non-human**
- **The Imperial Synod**
- **Imperial theology**

3 Imperial Law

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

3.1 Overview

Imperial Law is the body of law which has been created by the [Imperial Senate](#) and which extends the principles laid down in the [Imperial Constitution](#). The law is prosecuted by magistrates, members of the [Imperial Civil Service](#) who are trained in Imperial jurisprudence. Magistrates act as judges during trials, determining guilt and sentencing and are able to deputize individuals to help them enforce the laws. The Throne and members of the [Imperial Synod](#) may appeal for clemency on behalf of the accused to obtain a reduced sentence.

3.2 Magistrates and trials

The implementation of the Law is overseen by the magistrates. They instigate an investigation into any potential crimes they are aware of; any character who believes a crime has been committed may bring the matter to the attention of a magistrate. The magistrates have far-reaching legal powers to allow them to go anywhere in the Empire and demand an audience with any citizen, similar to those possessed by the Synod. The magistrates may also deputize citizens to act on their behalf, either to gather evidence or to arrest a suspect.

Trials are [inquisitorial](#) rather than [adversarial](#). There are no juries and no barristers. Trials are conducted by the magistrate who weighs the evidence and determines guilt and the accused is expected to speak in their own defence. The magistrate has the authority to silence anyone from speaking in their court and will use this power to ensure that trials remain short and dramatic.

Modern legal frameworks do not apply. There is no right to silence; if the accused refuses to answer a question, the magistrate may take that as evidence for guilt. Hearsay and circumstantial evidence are admissible. If a person has been murdered late at night, reports that the accused is known to dislike the accused will be weighted as evidence.

If the magistrate finds the accused guilty then they will proceed to sentencing. If the accused has pleaded guilty, a member of the [Imperial Synod](#) may submit a plea for clemency on their behalf. The plea must be based on Virtuous grounds; that is they must establish that the accused was acting virtuously, albeit illegally, when they committed their actions. The seniority of the priest will be taken into account when determining the impact of their plea for clemency: seniority is a priest in the Synod, followed by a member of the [Assembly of Nine](#), followed by the Emperor or Empress.

Magistrates have considerable power but are known to be bound by powerful magical oaths to uphold the spirit of the Law. As such they are considered to be above reproach. Their decisions may be incorrect - they are not infallible - but they are known to be absolutely impartial and honest.

3.3 Purpose

The point of the Law is to attempt to create a game in which there is a strong effective legal sanction against theft and murder. The goal is to create a convincing, compelling and original setting and also to encourage the majority of player-vs-player activity in the game to remain political rather than murderous. By making murder difficult to get away with, we hope to ensure that it is the least attractive option open to a player in dealing with their political enemies, rather than the most attractive option. The goal of Empire is to focus on a high degree of political interaction between players but have the balance of combat take place between players and monsters.

All magistrates will be NPCs, so that they work solely towards the goal of making the Law be trustworthy and effective. Any player character in this role would be minded to have other in-character considerations, other than to promote the game. The magistrates are also briefed to ensure that trials remain short and sweet, rather than running on interminably which is common in situations where they are not rigorously controlled.

Because the magistrates primary role is to make the law effective, they will *never* be used to run plot around corruption or other themes. They can be swayed by clever or charismatic testimony but they cannot be bribed, blackmailed or browbeaten.

3.4 Additional Information

The specific wording of the Law is still being written. We will add it to this page when the work is complete.