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1 The Brass Coast people



The people of the Brass Coast are divided into three great tribes descended from the families of the three founders, named the **Erigo**, the **Riqueza** and the **Guerra**. Every Freeborn traces their line through their mother's family to one of the founders, and this creates their tribal identity. Each tribe is composed of a great number of extended **families**. The smallest families have only a few dozen members, the largest can have hundreds or thousands of people sharing a family name and a common purpose.

The archetypal Freeborn is forthright, honest about their actions, and unashamed of their motives. The Freeborn do not feel they owe the world anything, but neither do they feel the world owes them. They can be charitable, but only when they choose; they can be selfish, but never with their family. They are direct, notoriously frank and gloriously unabashed.

The Freeborn give freely to family, and expect the same in return. But with everyone else they would rather define a debt and know what is owed and to whom, instead of being left with an undefined obligation. They detest unspecified favours and obligations, even between friends or lovers, because there is no certainty to what is owed. An honest interaction is one where people know what they are offering, what they are getting and what it will cost them.

To the Freeborn, all things can have a price. Most Freeborn do not earn their living as a merchant, but almost all seek out opportunities to turn a profit. Even in social situations they are comfortable seeing their interactions with others in monetary terms. Freeborn hosts are not insulted by a guests' offer to pay for a meal, nor by a request to purchase an ancient family heirloom. They are no greedier than other people -- there are plenty of things they wouldn't contemplate selling -- but they won't be angry at you for asking, provided you accept their refusal.

The Freeborn are notoriously candid. Transactions that in other nations would be conducted discreetly in private are carried out openly on the Brass Coast without shame. They are perfectly comfortable with someone paying to influence a political decision, but they expect those making the decision to be unabashed of their actions. The Freeborn are fully aware that other nations do not share their values. They don't expect frankness from other nations but they don't allow others to impose their values on them.



The Freeborn are passionate people who love dancing, story-telling and performance. The best dances are energetic and exuberant, and those who aren't dancing are encouraged to join in by making music to cheer the dancers on. The best stories are bold, often bawdy and are delivered as a performance designed to involve and energize the audience. It is considered rude to boast; telling the tales of your own deeds is vulgar and if it must be done, events should always be described as if they happened to a friend. To tell the tale of another's deeds does them great honour. The Freeborn love to include the earthy parts of a story, but are always clear when they are embellishing the tale, for instance "I don't know what happened next, but I like to imagine it was like this..." The art of a Freeborn story-teller is to make even the most mundane tale become engaging or hilarious by the delivery. They particularly like to include their audience, getting them to act out the parts described or cheer and sing along at appropriate moments.

1.1 Names

Freeborn names are primarily Spanish/Mexican in flavour, with Moorish influence.

Freeborn typically have three names. The first is their given name as decided by their parents and can be as creative or as bland as their imagination. The second is their family name and the last name is that of the tribe - one of the **Erigo**, the **Riqueza** or the **Guerra**.

Freeborn names follow the pattern ?firstname? / ?family? / ?tribe?. [Hakima](#) and [Kohan](#) often drop the family name and use just their tribal name.

1.1.1 Sample names

- [Ahraz i Contero i Riqueza](#)
- [Iñes i Guerra](#) (for a [Hakima](#) or [Kohan](#) of the [Guerra](#) tribe)

1.1.2 Naming resources

- [Spanish male names](#)
- [Spanish female names](#)

2 The Brass Coast culture and customs

2.1 Family

Family is important to the Freeborn. They live in extended family groups covering several generations with a strong emphasis on helping and supporting each other. Occasionally Freeborn will extend the privilege of family membership to valued friends, long-term employees or waifs and strays - these adoptees are whole-heartedly welcomed and are treated no different from blood relations. To the Freeborn, betraying your family is unforgivable.

The responsibility that the Freeborn feel for family members does not extend to others. The Freeborn make a point of disclaiming any responsibility for the wellbeing of others. They do not regard themselves as obliged to help the poor or the sick, the dispossessed or the homeless. They may be as charitable as they please, but they refuse to accept that it is their responsibility to care for others.

2.2 Hospitality



On the Coast, food and drink is only offered freely to family. Since most Freeborn habitually avoid favours and social debts but all Freeborn enjoy hospitality, both giving and receiving, the custom is always to offer to pay before receiving refreshments. A Freeborn approaching a tent of revelry might ask the price for a seat at the table. A token price of a ring or two indicates that they are very welcome to join, a price in crowns indicates that the meeting is private and the Freeborn should look elsewhere, but an exorbitant price in thrones is a deliberate insult.

Despite the ritualized nature of the exchange, actual payment is required. To the Freeborn mind, it is the payment that ensures that no further obligation exists on the part of either party. For close friends or clearly impoverished a Freeborn might offer a fine meal for help with the dishes or even an afternoon's work. It is easy to be itinerant in Freeborn society, so long as you don't mind working for your supper.

2.3 Syrah

Syrah is the ritualized drink of the Freeborn, habitually offered to guests, business associates and drunk during family affairs. Each family carefully guards their own recipe for syrah, and there is a common belief that to give away its secret is to give some of your good luck to another. Syrah can be almost anything, a brew of coffee or tea sweetened with honey or sugar, a fruit juice or a fine wine, but should be pleasant and appealing. It is not strongly alcoholic, since it is intended to be drunk as a family and when business is being discussed. Offering Syrah before the opening of trade negotiations is considered not only polite, but beneficial to the coming talks.

2.4 Contracts



Written contracts are exceptionally important in Freeborn culture. The best contracts are short and succinct but clearly identify the obligations of both parties. To the Freeborn mind, making an agreement commits the integrity of their soul to the deal. If they contract to do something their reputation is at stake if they cannot carry out the letter of the contract. For this reason, almost all enduring contracts include fiscal clauses for default. This is not meant as a lack of commitment, but simply to avoid being a hostage to fortune should circumstances change and make it impossible for the parties to complete the deal. The Freeborn see no shame in going back on contracts provided the default bonds are paid - since such defaults are, of course, a part of the letter of the contract.

A scrivener is often employed to help make sure that a contract is clear and that both sides understand their obligations. These professionals also serve as witnesses who can help confirm the validity of a contract. Many scriveners are cambions, and there is a superstition that the blood of a cambion (usually a thumb print) upon a document of trade will bring good fortune to the signatories - or dire circumstance to one who breaks the contract.

2.5 Art

Calligraphy is highly valued along the Brass Coast. They value books but treasure those that are beautifully illuminated. To the Freeborn, every aspect of writing is an important artistic statement. The language used should be articulate and possess a lyrical quality; the letters and words should be written with bold ink strokes on beautiful paper or parchment that is then decorated and illuminated. Given their emphasis on deals, it is no surprise that the Freeborn prefer their contracts to be beautifully inked. They often display particularly fine examples on the walls of their homes, especially ones that have great sentimental or fiscal value.

2.6 Marriages and relationships



Freeborn society does not favour men or women but tribal and familial lines are always matrilineal. Because of this while men may marry into a Freeborn family and tribe, women can not. If a Freeborn woman marries then her spouse joins her tribal family. On the rare occasion when two Freeborn women from different tribes marry, then they have to choose one tribe to belong to.

Marriage outside the tribe is relatively rare. Much more common is for Freeborn men and women to form temporary attachments. These attachments are romantic or physical in nature, but with no assumption that they will last for life. In fact with some pairings there is no assumption that they will last more than a night.

All marriages ? and indeed most extended attachments ? are formalised with a contract in which each participant lays down the parameters of the relationship. A marriage or relationship contract commonly covers matters such as the duration of the relationship, the rights and responsibilities of the participants, the expectation of fidelity and the options for marriage and relationship contracts with others, the division of shared wealth both during and after the relationship ends, and at least one clause covering how the relationship may be ended prematurely by either party. This rather cold-blooded practicality around matters of the heart is just another manifestation of the Freeborn's fiscal approach to life. These contracts ensure that both parties know the value the other places on the attachment. Not all attachments require a contract, but if a relationship is going to last for more than a few weeks, it is considered a sensible precaution against misunderstandings.

2.7 Funerals

Freeborn dead are wrapped in spice-infused wraps of black cloth and then burned. The resulting ashes are scattered on the sea, or on the winds of the plain, depending on the family's wishes.

A funeral is rarely a sombre affair. The Freeborn take joy in a life well-lived and they consider it an insult to mourn its passing. Attendees wear brightly coloured robes, and focus on celebrating the life of the deceased. It is normal for the will to be read by a Sutannir at the height of the party. The will is a last chance to share a joke with loved ones and it is traditional for it to be as humorous as possible, akin to a best man's speech at a wedding. On the rare occasion when grief is appropriate, such as with the death of a child, the grieving is much shorter but just as open and intense.

Old tradition says that those lost at sea take new form as dolphins who will guide and guard lost ships. While no-one really believes it these days, it is a stock element in many stories involving sea travel.

3 The Brass Coast look and feel



3.1 Overview

The **Freeborn** look is one of bright colours, silks, jewels, and sumptuousness. They admire ornate or bejewelled items. To the Freeborn, a brilliant craftsman is one who can make something elegant as well as sturdy. Their weapons and armour are often engraved or adorned, but they are not fatuous, and do not compromise utility for the sake of appearance. Jewellery is very common with the best pieces, like necklaces, crowns or tiaras, designed to frame the wearer's hands or face.

The image of the flame is central to the Freeborn culture; they believe it represents their spirit: wild, powerful and unchained.

Also see *Brass Coast Costumes* and *Brass Coast Icons and Artistry*.

3.2 Breakdown

3.2.1 Influences

The traditional looks of Moorish Spain, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia.

3.2.2 Feel

Free, flowing, headstrong, sumptuous, practical, exuberant, hedonistic, colourful, rich, joyful.

3.2.3 Materials

Lightweight fabrics such as voiles and chiffons, either silk or synthetic. Also silks, brocades and other rich fabrics. Leather is considered unappealing for clothing, it's a heavy material they reserve for boots and armour. Gold is prized over silver where available.



3.2.4 Colours

Bright, vibrant colours, especially the colours of flames: strong bright yellows, brilliant oranges and every conceivable shade of red as well as gold and silver. Expensive clothing is made in brightly coloured layers to convey the impression of the fire within.

Avoid Black or White. Black is considered severe and used for shrouds to wrap the dead. White is the colour of the poor, of those too impoverished to afford exotic dyes.



3.2.5 Clothing

Veils, scarves, head-wraps, pantaloons, loose shirts and kaftans, sashes rather than belts. Clothing is usually worn loose with layers of draped material.

Veils are worn by men and women to make them appear more mysterious and alluring. The ideal style is the [tagelmust](#) (preferably in bright red, orange or yellow rather than blue).

Clothing and headdresses will often be decorated with shiny metal jewellery, bells, coins and other jingly bits. Jewelry should frame the hands and face.

Ideally scabbards or pouches should hang at the waist by a silk cord that goes over the shoulder. Any tattoos should be highly intricate, henna-style.

3.2.6 Jewellery and veils

Jewellery should frame the face or hands to draw attention to them. Veils are fashionable for men and women who wish to appear mysterious and alluring.





3.2.7 Scale armour

Scale is the ideal armour, ideally in a bright golden colour, worn like mail or else secured with leather.



3.2.8 Mail armour

Mail in the jannissary style, particularly the chain helmets, is also great. Small pieces of plate or breastplates are good especially if ornate and inlaid. Armour, whether metal or leather, should have embellished edges and rich decoration, with calligraphy and ornate designs.







3.2.9 Shields

The Freeborn favour round (ideally domed) metal shields, highly decorated if possible. Gold inlay and engraving are both particularly popular.





3.2.10 Weapons

Scimitars are less common than straight swords and axes with are the preferred weapons. The Bhuj, a large heavy single-bladed spear, is the ideal pole-arm. The best quality weapons are intricately etched and engraved with complex designs.





3.2.11 Corsairs

Corsairs epitomize Freeborn daring and adventure. Javelins and bows are common but the Catazarri crossbow is also used. Many are lightly armoured, but the most bold show off their success with ornately gilded plate.



3.2.12 Children

Children are an opportunity for parents to show off their wealth, dressing their offspring in traditional Freeborn styles.



3.2.13 Sutannir

Sutannir often paint their faces and skin with designs inspired by flames and themes of fire.





3.3 Things to avoid

In defining the Freeborn look we have actively chosen to exclude some elements. Please do not use any of the images or looks given here:

3.3.1 Avoid: shemagh and agal

The shemagh and agal is a traditional arab headdress. It is explicitly excluded from the Freeborn look; please do not use it.



3.3.2 Avoid: fez and bandanna

The fez and the bandana are not part of the look and feel for the Brass Coast, they are too modern for the setting and should be avoided.



3.3.3 Avoid: turbans

Turbans, head dressing where the material is piled up and bound on the head are not part of the Freeborn look. Note that in some cases it is not the garment itself, but how you wear it. The turbans below aren't suitable for the Freeborn.





3.3.4 Avoid: sartorial hijab

Freeborn costume is designed to show off the wearer, male or female, and make them look wealthy and exciting. It is not particularly revealing but it is not intended to cover the body so that it cannot be seen. Therefore almost all sartorial hijab is inappropriate. Avoid abaya, burqa, chador, niqab, and similar looks.





Look on Google Images for the ?tagelmust? (ideally in yellow, orange or red) to get the right look for a head covering.

4 The Brass Coast history



Before the formation of the Empire, three sisters lived in **Pharos**. Members of the patrician families of the **Highguard**, each was a powerful magician in her own right. Dissatisfied with life in the city, and sickened by the chaos of the time of turmoil, they took their extended families - their extensive households - and left. They travelled to a new home on the opposite side of the **Bay of Catazar**, said to have been revealed to them by the divinatory magics of the three sisters. Freeborn storytellers still recount the epic tale of the exodus of the three tribes.

By the time the Empress began her crusade to unite humanity beneath her banner, the Freeborn were much as they are today ? a disparate people of sprawling, extended families spread over three tribes, with each tribe tracing an unbroken matrilineal line back to one of the founders. While each family and each tribe treasured their individual freedoms, they were bound together into a loose nation by a shared heritage and by carefully negotiated contracts and treaties.

Initially the tribes were suspicious of the Empress and hostile to the interests of the powerful Highborn priests who backed her. After a long negotiation between the Empress and prominent tribal leaders, they agreed to join the nascent Empire. The Freeborn negotiators were instrumental in slavery being outlawed and it was at their insistence that each nation would set the means to select their own Senators. Their most significant contribution was the creation of the Egregores, ensuring that every nation was able to preserve its traditions. They were unable to convince the priests of Highguard to acknowledge the central role of honesty in a virtuous life, but they are enormously proud that their influence ensured that their ideas of individual freedom and responsibility became a central part of the Empire's identity.



Since that day, the Freeborn have been able to present themselves as traders backed by the full weight of the Empire. It is something they use, sometimes shamelessly, to their advantage when dealing with foreign powers. The stability provided by the Empire has allowed the Freeborn to sail far beyond their territories, bringing in great wealth to all the nations.

There has only ever been one Freeborn Emperor, **Ahraz i Contero i Guerra**, who freed the orc slaves and was instrumental in bringing them into the Empire. The Freeborn believe that it is in the Senate that true power lies, and that the best Emperors have accepted this and served as figureheads and administrators rather than policy makers. Popular prejudice paints the Freeborn as poor politicians ? a slur that several of them embrace. Their blunt frankness combined with a tendency to want to get to the point of any argument does not endear them to their political opponents, but they make up for this directness with a tendency to produce powerful and impassioned orators.

5 The Brass Coast leadership



The Freeborn are traditionally cautious when it comes to the idea of authority and control. They value loyalty and even discipline, but they are an informal people who have little regard for titles and status and even less for those who think such positions make them more important than their fellows.

By tradition, each Freeborn family is represented by a dhomiro. Their role is to represent their family's interests to those who seek to deal with the family as a whole. Choosing a dhomiro is not a political decision, most families simply select the most suitable individual. They are usually chosen on account of their ability to organize or communicate, and they have great influence but little formal power. Any dhomiro that put on airs or graces would be ridiculed and dhomiro that are not effective in furthering their family's interests are quickly replaced.

The reality of this loose-weave community is that towns, villages and trade wagons are effectively governed by the wealthiest, most influential family who dwells there. This can lead to fluid but infrequent shifts of power as familial fortunes wax and wane. When more formal agreements are needed, the dhomiro of each family involved will negotiate a formal contract.

Freeborn society is not so much controlled as nudged in a beneficial direction by the families with the most power and influence. There is little leadership beyond the dhomiro. There is a presumption of cooperation between different families that are part of the same tribe, but this presumption only makes the inevitable rivalries more fierce. When this rivalry threatens to get out of hand, it often falls to the **hakima** the magical custodians of the Freeborn tribal legacy to step in and try to mediate some sort of peaceful conclusion. While the hakima have no formal authority over the dhomiro, their advice and magical support can help turn a strong family into a truly great family. The hakima stand outside the traditional Freeborn family structure, placing their tribe above all other loyalties. Their official role is to guide the decisions the families of the tribe make. This neutrality makes them an essential part of the political structure and most are highly respected.

To outsiders it is a chaotic and unstructured form of governance, but to the Freeborn it is as natural as breathing. When an outsider finds themselves frustrated trying to work out who is in charge, the traditional Freeborn response is the wind. A less metaphorical response might be to ask why does someone always have to be in charge? When a decision needs making that affects a number of families, the Hakima and the families gather to discuss the issue. To outsiders this a wild affair of drink and revelry, but the informal atmosphere of the gather in no way undermines the severity of the discussions. The exchange of coin, scripts of trade and goods eventually leads to a common opinion and subsequent decision, usually formalised through a contract.

5.1 Leading a territory



Despite this, Imperial rule requires that the Freeborn select Senators. The Freeborn solution is simple; wealth and influence dictate many things in Freeborn life and they see no reason why senatorial seats should be any different.

When Senatorial seats become vacant, individual families present purses of money to the Civil Service in an effort to secure Senatorial positions. The family that presents the richest purses gets first choice of available seats and so on until all available seats are allocated. The choice of who claims the Senatorial seat is left to the victorious dhomiro. Those who are not successful in claiming a seat reclaim their purse, and the money paid by the winners is pooled and distributed between all families present who bid ? in proportion to the amount they bid.

While outsiders may be offended by the way in which the Freeborn auction off important Imperial positions, it is a matter of pride that there is comparatively little duplicity in the political achievement of the Freeborn Senators. To the Freeborn way of thinking their approach is honest - while the politics of other nations can be devious and underhanded, the Freeborn are forthright and open in the methods employed.

Jonquil got to his feet, smoothed his robes and clasped his hands behind his back. Around him the usual murmur of the senate fell quiet, eagerly awaiting the next great clash between the two orators. Clearing his throat, Jonquil gestured to where Aramaste sat atop a magnificent silk cushion, nibbling daintily on a candied sweetmeat.

?My friend?? he smiled, but not warmly, ?I have heard it said that the Brazen ? my apologies, the *Freeborn* ? will put a price on anything. Is that true??

Aramaste chewed thoughtfully before answering, ?It is the custom amongst my people, yes.?

?So, in the spirit of enlightening this august body,? Jonquil leaned in, sensing blood, ?Just how much, exactly, would an enemy of the Empire have to pay you to betray your oaths of office??

Indrawn breaths, muttering and gasps of outrage circled the chamber. Jonquil?s smile stretched larger, yet was none the more pleasant for that. Aramaste?s eyes glittered as he slowly brushed the crumbs from his hands and rose to his feet. ?Ordinarily we Freeborn would say something like 'Every Coin in the Empire', or some other suitably dramatic and impossible sum.?

Jonquil interrupted, ?But surely, once you have set a price, we are merely haggling over details? You?d agree that you would betray the Empire for coin? I would submit that the amount is immaterial.?

?For you, Lord Jonquil, I choose a different price. I choose all the money your mother can earn in a year of whoring on the docks of Siroc.?

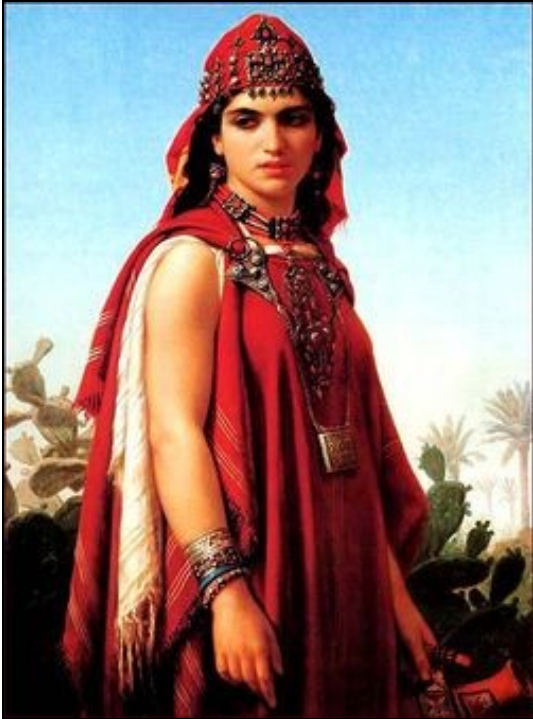
Jonquil?s smile quickly turned to a deep scowl, his face becoming an ugly puce.

Aramaste grinned. ?With one small caveat, of course, I would prefer it changed into larger coins; I doubt I?d want to carry around that many pennies??

With a cry of rage the Highborn senator leapt at the smaller man, ready to tear out his throat with his bare hands.

?Order, order!?!? cried the speaker as the senate guards moved to deal with the encroaching riot?

6 The Brass Coast economic interests



Money is the most versatile tool in existence. Every Freeborn is to one degree or another looking to ?make their fortune? because wealth brings status and luxury and it gives you a freedom that is denied to the poor.

Freeborn traders go beyond the frankness that is normal for everyday Freeborn and strive for a degree of honesty that would shame a priest. They regard it as a matter of skill to obtain the best possible price while being utterly open about the goods they sell. This probity is not driven solely by moral concerns, but also practical ones. The Freeborn have achieved an extraordinary reputation for not cheating their customers - a reputation that drives business to their door. Any Freeborn trader who stoops to lying about their merchandise for the sake of a better deal, puts the prosperity of all Freeborn at risk. As a result they protect this reputation very aggressively. Freeborn traders who do seek to twist a deal or sell a light load are dealt with without mercy.

When an outsider thinks of a Freeborn trader, they are often thinking of the proprietor of a parador. Brass Coast towns always have at least one parador, a communal social house of music, story-telling, drinking and dance. At the end of a hard day of work the people of the Freeborn can often be found here discussing their latest ventures or telling extravagant and grand tales of their ancestors, friends and relatives.

As with most Freeborn businesses, a parador is traditionally owned by an extended family which may maintain more than one structure, or operate a ?travelling parador? akin to a circus or fair. In addition to the services and entertainments they provide, the best paradors are places of trade. While a lot of formal business takes place at the bazaar, the parador is where merchants go to relax and it is often where the real business of complex trade takes place. The parador is where merchants can informally come to an agreement concerning more risky ventures, bulk deals and investment opportunities over chilled fruit and wine.



When it comes to making financial agreements more complex than a direct exchange of goods, Freeborn are most comfortable dealing through **contracts**. As a consequence, Freeborn merchants usually seek out the services of a professional **scrivener** to formalise their relationships. A discreet, neutral scrivener can work out and witness a contract that satisfies both parties, and they are very much in demand. Combining the skill to express ideas simply and clearly in writing with a talent for arbitrating between individuals to help them express what they actually want, these scriveners are the backbone of Freeborn economic life.

The Freeborn prefer to abide by the letter of a contract, rather than the "spirit". Arguments about what was "meant" by the contract are inevitably circular and unhelpful. Where the meaning of a contract must be discussed or clarified, it is again to the professional scrivener that the Freeborn merchant turns. The best scriveners are also artists, or employ someone capable of making their contracts look attractive and professional with fine calligraphy and colourful flourishes. A disproportionate number of scriveners are of the **cambion** lineage. Common superstition suggests that their connection to the Autumn realm helps them to instinctively understand how to frame a contract, and their blood marked on a document is traditionally held to grant good fortune to the enterprise involved.

The Freeborn are not the strongest military in the Empire, but there is one area where their strength is uncontested – on the open seas. Every Freeborn tribe includes dozens of families who make their living as corsairs, sea-borne raiders who prey on barbarian shipping passing through the Bay of Catazar. The Freeborn detest piracy, but they regard privateering as a perfectly legitimate form of warfare, albeit a highly profitable one.

Corsair groups are usually Freeborn families who own one or more seaworthy vessels. Corsairs are not just privateers, they commonly engage in foreign trade. A common saying suggests that the only difference between a privateer and a merchant is that the privateers get their goods cheaper.

Regardless of how they choose to interact with foreigners, corsairs are often a source of goods unobtainable within the Empire. If the Freeborn applaud the triumphs of their corsairs, and enjoy the wealth and plunder they bring back, the Empire tolerate it because the corsairs are effective in dissuading the barbarians who dwell across the bay from attempting a naval invasion. Only the fear of the power of the corsairs keeps the southern coasts of the Empire free of invaders.

The only things the Freeborn do not buy or sell are slaves. Slavery of Imperial Citizens is illegal in the Empire, and the Freeborn take no part in the trade even when overseas. While the Freeborn do not hold with slavery, they approve of the idea of hard work as punishment, treating the wages a criminal might have earned doing a job honestly as payment towards the resolution of their crime. Deep mines sunk into the Kahraman mountains tap veins of precious ores and gemstones, and are worked by gangs of convicted criminals.

7 The Brass Coast military concerns

While the Freeborn nation supports two Imperial armies, organized along traditional lines, most Freeborn families encourage their children to practise some martial skills. The Freeborn remember a time when the families were responsible for their own defence and they try to remain prepared in case that day should come again. Those Freeborn that are not career soldiers are by day tradesmen, farmers and labourers, only turning to martial matters when required, though all are ready to do so.



Many families maintain a small dedicated fighting force, usually family members who have shown a capacity for martial excellence. These warriors protect Freeborn caravans and settlements from bands of raiding orcs or adventurous bandits. Families take pride in equipping their warriors with the best equipment they can afford. These family warriors often train to fight in heavy armour in close formation.

Centuries ago, the **hakima** began to gather Freeborn who had been disowned and turned them into a fighting force. By serving their tribe the Freeborn were able to find a way to redeem themselves. These groups were called **kohan**, meaning without family, and their number has grown considerably over the years. Although they still accept men and women who have been cast out, most kohan are volunteers, individuals who find such joy in battle that they cannot give it up. They fight for the joy of battle, flinging themselves into combat with a blood-thirsty relish that can easily dispirit an enemy. Kohan often adopt flamboyant costume and grotesque body paint, the better to unnerve their enemies. When they are not fighting they are usually found celebrating their continued survival with that same intensity.



Groups of kohan usually form loose bands of soldiers who live and fight together, the group serving as a surrogate for the family they have left behind. Groups of kohan are driven by very different reasons but the traditional ones pledge their service directly to the hakima of their tribe. They regard this devotion as a higher calling and see their path as a spiritual one. A 'family' of kohan is generally quite loose, and its membership fluid, although they are always of the same tribe. Kohan who cannot fight due to pregnancy or injury generally return to their birth family either until they are ready to fight again, and sometimes kohan choose to rejoin their original family permanently.

8 The Brass Coast religious beliefs



The Freeborn believe their people are shaped from the elements of dust, fire and glass. The eternal wind-blown dust of the plains is their history, the loyalty for family and continuity of their people. The ferocity of fire is their burning passion for life and their bright and unquenchable spirit. The purity of glass is their soul, the reflection of their transparency and once broken can never again be mended. Dishonesty and wickedness shatter your soul and pieces of it are lost with each act of deception.

This belief underpins a very personal relationship with matters of faith and the spirit, one that is rarely articulated directly outside of poetry or song. From the outside the Freeborn seem impious and disrespectful. However the Freeborn have great respect for the Paragons and the Way of Virtue, but they have little time for the priests and Synod that exist to mediate or dilute their message. The Synod, with its Doctrines and Heresies, is often seen as being full of pomposity and self-importance, whereas a truly faithful person understands what is true and what is false in their soul. There is a Freeborn Assembly, but it generally has no formal structure outside of the Synod, being more a collection of individuals. The Freeborn Assembly only tends to come together when there is a matter serious enough to warrant the use of its powers.

As a result Freeborn religious ceremonies tend to place their emphasis on celebration rather than sermons. They celebrate sacred festivals with entertainment, feasting, parties and dancing. Many families include a devout priest or spiritual family member who can be relied on to oversee these indulgences, but for the largest and most important festivities the Freeborn seek out the services of a sutannir.

A cross between a professional priest and a party organizer, sutannir conduct important ceremonies such as the coming of age or a wedding, and see to the spiritual needs of the Freeborn as a whole. Before the ceremony many paint their face and limbs with stylised flames in bright colours and dress in flamboyant costumes. A good sutannir will keep their words short and evocative, knowing audiences prefer to be inspired to virtue rather than lectured. When not speaking they manage the entertainments to make sure that everyone attending is drawn into the celebrations. While it may be the festivity that the Freeborn remember rather than the ceremony, the best sutannir are able to provide religious instruction and support without labouring their point.

Coal-walking, fire breathing, fire dancing and other symbolic performances that represent the Freeborn passion for life are always popular at Freeborn religious celebrations. Lone sutannir will hire sufficient entertainers and artisans skilled at these activities to fill the night's entertainment, concentrating on managing their performances to ensure the best overall impact. Sutannir groups usually include numerous talented performers in their ranks who can cover most of the skills most commonly in demand.

Sutannir also perform funeral ceremonies.

The only festival the sutannir do not perform is the Feast of the Broken Wheel, known by many as Fool's Day. On this day, the Freeborn turn virtue on its head and celebrate the contrary. The festival takes place on the second day of the Autumn Equinox, and starts at sunset and lasts until midnight. The proud become humble, ties of loyalty may be ignored, the prosperous become ascetic and the wise act as fools. It is a time of foolishness, pranks and trickery that begins with a symbolic chase, where seven effigies of the Paragons are chased from the camp in a gleeful and chaotic parade. Everyone is encouraged to try harmless skills like juggling and music - the more terrible the performance the more it is applauded. The festival usually ends in a drunken stupor. On Fool's Day, even the most moral Freeborn try their hand at telling untruths and lies - often with comical degrees of success.

The festival is considered blasphemous by some in the Imperial Synod but, to date, the Freeborn Assembly has done little to discourage it, or penalise those involved. Some have argued that, by permitting it, it helps the Freeborn embrace The Way more readily for the rest of the year.

Last night, Ramak invited me to what he said was a religious ceremony. This morning, my head is pounding and I will never eat again. We did not talk about Courage, but we danced on fire. We did not contemplate Prosperity, but we enjoyed the finest things from many lands. We did not read about Pride, but sang the songs of our homelands till our throats were hoarse. I can attest the Freeborn care deeply about the fate of their souls - but they just do not speak of it as we do.

Elina the Wayfarer taken from Epistles to the Winds of Virtue, 24BE

9 The Brass Coast magical traditions



Magic is a source of wonder and pleasure to the Freeborn. They expect people performing magic to entertain, and many Freeborn magicians will enhance their rituals with stage magic tricks simply to please the crowd. Many Freeborn learn a handful of non-magical sleight-of-hand tricks or illusions while a few entertainers specialize enough to develop a whole act.

Within a family there is often at least one individual who has made a more serious study of magic. These individuals accept a responsibility for teaching relatives who are interested in learning a few magical knacks, and use their magic to help their family and harm their enemies as well as try to scry the vagaries of fortune and fate. These magicians tend to be practical, and often combine their study of magic with crafting or medicinal lore.

The more powerful and organised magicians in Freeborn society, the **Hakima**, view other magicians as unsophisticated dabblers at best, and ignorant meddlers at worst. Hakima are organized along tribal lines, drawing members from the most skilled and promising individuals from every family that is part of that tribe. The Hakima are highly skilled practitioners of ritual magic and custodians of magical lore handed down to them by the founder of their tribe. They are dedicated to preserving not only their own tribe, but the integrity of the nation as a whole.

The Hakima of each tribe bring a unique perspective to their magical arts. The Riqueza perform ritual magic using loud, rhythmic, energetic drumming; the Guerra prefer physical movement combined with fire and light. The Erigo use a less energetic style, often accompanying their rituals with soothing, harmonious music. Most groups of Hakima prefer to work magic at night, in the open air, in the same way their founders did. They practice a tradition that says ritual magic is the act of building up power from the participants and creating a connection to the Realms, rather than the more traditional assumption that the magician draws power down from the Realms to the world. As such, all their rituals attempt to include their bystanders as participants whether that is chanting, clapping or singing.

More than being just magicians, the Hakima exemplify a connection to the founders of the tribes and the history of the Freeborn. They are traditionally held to be wise, able to perceive the larger picture more effectively than most Freeborn who are anchored in more mundane activities. They may be consulted when important decisions need to be made within a family, or when magical assistance is sought. They rarely wait to be consulted however ? a Hakima is likely to be poking around any important business ready to offer a suggestion as to what to do next.

They are especially cautious about preserving the traditions that make the Freeborn what they are, and about preserving the links to the founders that form the underpinning of tribal identity. They have little time for dabblers and charlatans who debase the legacy of the Founders, and offer advice that claims to be based on divination but is as often as not made up on the spot.

10 The Brass Coast hearth magic



10.1 Coins

Coins have power on the Coast, as a portion of the luck and prosperity of their owner rubs off on the coins they carry. Many Freeborn traders keep a coin from a lucky deal, either in perpetuity or as their last coin, and they enjoy telling stories of how they acquired certain coins. There is a long-standing belief that giving a coin of note or significance to a person who is down on their luck will improve their fortunes.

10.1.1 Clothing

Any clothing that is worn for a few years or more becomes invested with a person's soul, carrying a portion of their identity with them. Old worn clothes are usually burned, rather than given to the poor like in other lands, to avoid a person's self being lost or stolen. The exception is with children where families may keep a particular precious veil, or rich robe to deliberately pass on the spirit of a respected elder to a young family member.

Black cloth is the garment of the dead in Freeborn society - it carries you safely into death. Bodies are wrapped in black shrouds when they are burned but black cloth is dangerous to the living. A black gift is any gift of clothing or costume that is black in colour; it is sent as a calculated insult or curse to the recipient. Individuals who offend Freeborn sensibilities beyond the pale find black ribbons, the remains of burned shrouds, nailed to their door, or even worse attached to their clothes, a sign that others wish them dead.

11 The Brass Coast lineage and species attitudes



Cambion have a special place in Freeborn society, a tradition that dates back to the murky prehistory of the Freeborn. According to legend a particularly clever cambion (whose origin is usually tied to the teller in some way) convinced the founders to sign a cleverly worded trade agreement. This binding oath is allegedly what has kept the Freeborn together as a people. This story has created a superstition that the blood of a cambion (usually a thumb print) upon a document of trade will bring good fortune to the signatories. As a result Freeborn cambion often study to become scribes.

The calm nature of the **merrow** is at odds with the fiery Freeborn way of life. Merrow rarely find themselves comfortable in Freeborn society and there are few to be found. Many Freeborn parents of a merrow child will take that child to a spire in **Urizen**, where the child will find a better life. There is no shame in this; the Freeborn recognize that a merrow will struggle to find a life in the tribes and encourage the parents to make a decision that is seen as being in the best interests of the child.

The Freeborn Emperor, Ahraz i Contero i Guerra, freed the orc slaves and was instrumental in bringing them into the Empire. As a people, they have a great deal of time for the Imperial Orcs, encouraging them to make a place for themselves. On the whole the Freeborn prefer to deal with people - whatever they may look like - honestly and consequently they are amongst the folk most likely to treat a non-human individual as an equal.

12 The Brass Coast territories

12.1 Overview

The Brass Coast is wealthy in vineyards and orchards that produce fortified wines and flowers from which they make rich dyes. The people enjoy strong trade links with foreign nations, allowing them to bring luxuries and commodities to all the people of the Empire (for a price of course!). Textiles, wines and ales from far-off places are prized treasures, but wood is a thing of beauty to the natives of the Coast. Theirs are lands of rolling plains, fertile lowlands with lush vineyards. Although there are orchards of exotic fruit trees the land is devoid of large areas of forest. Early in the history of the Coast they cut down most of their hardwood to build ships and settlements, and the fruit trees that remain are more suited for burning than building. Since fine quality wood is a valuable commodity, dwellings tend to be piled high with rugs, cushions and furs.

The towns of the Coast are sprawling, disorganised affairs almost inevitably built around a bustling bazaar. Everything from steel to spices changes hands in these trading hubs and they are festooned with brightly coloured fabrics, gaudily painted signs and exotic wares. Contracts of trade, seals of endorsement and bonds of marque are proudly displayed by vendors who hawk their goods to the people who fill the plazas and streets at all hours. In and around these cosmopolitan bazaars, the wealthiest families maintain sprawling estates. Often plain from the outside, Freeborn structures are alive with ostentation within and lined with ornate tapestries and finery. The most influential Freeborn thread their homes with running water and glittering fountains, sculptures and artefacts crafted from precious materials, beautiful rugs, carpets and hangings, the scents of incense and the sound of music. It is important that a home be beautiful, as well as secure, 'Your home,' as one ancient poet put it, 'should be a comfort to your body, and a balm to your soul.'

12.2 Madruga

Madruga of the Jewelled Isles is the easternmost territory of the Brass Coast, running from the Kahraman mountains down to the Bay of Catazar. Down the coast of Madruga and Feroz the corsairs and merchantmen raise their sails, running goods to Bastion and Sarvos, trading with foreign powers, and fighting off barbarian incursions. [Siroc](#), the Sapphire, the City of a Thousand Sails, is acknowledged as the pre-eminent city of the Freeborn. It lies in Madruga close by the border with Feroz. Brightly-coloured tents extend Siroc out far beyond the small cluster of stone buildings that make up the heart of the city. Sails of all shapes and sizes fill the sheltered bay, which is guarded by a series of iron woven nets and chains bought at great expense from the forges of [Wintermark](#).

12.3 Feroz

Feroz is the southernmost territory of the Brass Coast, and like Madruga has both isles and coastline. Here the climate is warm and humid, perfect for the cultivation of different plants. This is the home of the fabulous gardens of Feroz, a source of great revenue for the people of this territory. The seas are more treacherous here, and to the south and the west the barbarians constantly threaten by land. As a result many armed merchantmen patrol the seas, and groups of young warriors journey along the borders and into lost Segura, fighting skirmishes with the ever-encroaching foes.

12.4 Kahraman

The mountains of Kahraman rise from the great grasslands of Soroche to the south and the forest of Mourn, on the Marches' border, to the north. It's a treacherous land of broken rock and barren mountainside. Fast-flowing streams spill down deep jagged-edged valleys. There's precious little in the way of vegetation, only scrub that clings to the slopes. However, there are riches in the mountains; here the Freeborn find precious metals and minerals, often as sediment lying in the streambeds. Scattered settlements shelter in the valleys, with the remains of stone fortresses and watchtowers decaying on the heights above, remnants from the days before Empire when the Freeborn warred with the Marches.

To the south of the mountains of Kahraman lie sweeping grass plains, a seemingly desolate landscape dotted with strange rock formations shaped by the wind. Here the Freeborn graze the bulk of their herds of goats and sheep. The wind from the west, the Delés, is constant and bitingly cold at night. As a result, for shelter, Freeborn communities settle in bowl-shaped depressions cut from the earth, their tents sunk below the plains surface.

12.5 Segura (Lost)

Segura was once a centre of trade for the Freeborn. Like southern Kahraman, it is a land of rolling grass plains where herds once grazed; however, on the south-western border stood the town of Anduz, a settlement built on the ruins of a much older city. In Anduz, the Freeborn rubbed shoulders with foreigners of three other nations, and there they acted as a trade gateway for the Empire. Unfortunately in 363 YE a great force of barbarians moved in from the west and took Anduz, scattering the foreigners and the Freeborn and burning much of the grassland. Now Segura is a battleground; every year the Freeborn will try to reclaim ground and be fought back.

13 The Brass Coast children



Children on the Coast are often given a piece of over-sized clothing that belonged to someone from an older generation, usually long since departed. The clothing, designed to be grown into, carries the memory of the lost relative and is believed to help the child develop wisdom, audacity and courage of their forebear. The clothing is usually tied up in some way, to ensure it does not drag in the mud.

Freeborn like children to learn the value of money. Those who are not poor give their children a Ring every morning, to carry with them during the day. The child is expected to give the Ring back at night, or to justify why they spent the money if it is gone. Any money that the child makes using their Ring is theirs to keep.

If a child loses their parents, they will always find a home somewhere among their extended family. However, because of the strength of Freeborn family bonds, if a child is truly orphaned without another family member to take them in, they may end up destitute and face a grim future unless taken in by another family, a [Navarr](#) Striding or the Church of the Little Mother.

13.1 Things every child should know

- **A little lie makes a lot of strife.** If you tell a lie, you lose a little bit of your soul. Be truthful to yourself and to others.
- **Your family is your greatest treasure.** Family is the most important thing there is. Always be there to help your family and they will be there to help you.
- **Words are fine jewels to be picked up and shown off.** Tell stories and find stories, and if you hear an interesting tale or rumour, make sure you tell it to your family.
- **Each small thing is worth a Ring.** Never do anything for free, unless it's for your family. You need not be paid in coin -- people often have more interesting things to trade.
- **Only sell your own goat.** You must never trade something which isn't yours.

14 The Brass Coast music

14.1 The Music of The Brass Coast

14.1.1 Style summary

Like the Freeborn themselves, their music is rhythmic, vigorous and fiery. Waily reeded or brass instruments, rich vocal harmonies and the strumming of strings resound in counterpoint with the ever-present syncopation of drums, tambourines and claves. It is said a Freeborn will make an instrument out of anything - hands, cutlery, tables and crockery are all used to enthusiastically accompany performers. Their vocal tradition involves not only the singing of complex melodies and accompaniment, but also encourages others to join in ululating harmonies, drones and chants. The overall impression is vibrant, noisy and enthusiastic - music, like everything in their lives, is to be savoured to the utmost.

Brass Coast music draws on the real world inspiration of Corsican music, Spanish Pilgrim songs, Italian lauda, and New World sea shanties. Although they are a seafaring nation, more traditional English shanties (such as Poor Tom Bowling, The Mermaid etc.) would be better suited to the musical tradition of the Marches.

14.1.2 Commonly known songs

- [Riqueza's Dream](#) Telling one version of the tale of the [founding of the Brass Coast](#) this song is popular in taverns and Alcazars. It has sparked off several diplomatic incidents by 'accidentally' offending Highborn visitors.
- [Sail Away Across the Sea](#) This popular song expresses the Freeborn's joy in a seafaring life.

14.1.2.1 A musical tradition

Various kinds of performance are inherent to the practice of magic in the Brass Coast. See [Brass Coast Magical Traditions](#) for more information.

14.1.2.2 One for the kids

14.1.3 Further examples

14.1.3.1 Songs

- [Fire Maringo](#) - easy call and response song
- [Riqueza's Dream](#) - medium call and response song
- [Sail Away Across the Sea](#) - medium call and response song
- [Stella Nuova](#) - TO DO: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yQkJ9aaZKg>
- [Inez y Guerra](#) medium call and response about a famous Captain
- [Wagon song](#) medium difficulty travelling song with chorus accompaniment
- Corsican song - TO DO
- [Lost Segura](#) - plaintive lament for lost territory.

14.1.3.2 Instrumentation and tunes

High percussion e.g. tambourines, shakers, clapping, high drums; reeded woodwind (especially if a bit waily and 'snake charmer' sounding); high metallic pipes/penny whistles; jangly bouzoukis or guitars.

14.1.3.3 Other performance traditions

- Dance/fire dance, a huge part of [Brass Coast Magical Traditions](#).

14.1.4 How to adapt your repertoire

- Never perform without giving your audience a way to join in. Get them clapping or stomping, or tell them to cheer or repeat when they hear certain words. If you are ambitious teach them a simple ostinato to go under the song. It's all about the participation!
- Rhythms could be much lighter than other nations, keep them syncopated (off beat), and on tambourines, castanets, shakers, or light drums. Keep your playing light and bouncy!
- Don't be afraid to ornament when you are singing, have a listen to some waily Spanish or Arabic medieval music and copy the style into the songs you are choosing.

14.1.5 Our sources

- Instrumental: Susanna Seivane,
- Song: Severa Nazarkhan, Corsican chants (sourced from Northern Harmony), Spanish Music of Travel and Discovery (CD), various pilgrim songs arranged by Katy Cooper of Glasgow Madrigals, Martin Codax's Songs of Friendship, Marie Kerouz (Maronite liturgical music), Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (urdu-pop)
- Good list of sea shanty lyrics (stick to the Spanish sounding ones): <http://www.boundingmain.com/Lyrics.htm>

A [Brass Coast youtube playlist](#) to get you in the mood! To add to this get in touch with Daisy or post your own.

15 The Brass Coast costumes

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

Note: The tone and style of this page may need editing. All costume advice pages should be written in third person voice, using verbs that make clear that this page is advice, not direction.

15.1 Overview

The Brass Coast offers a chance to create some flamboyant and really expressive costumes. The Freeborn attitude to life is all about individuality, passion and luxury, and this is expressed best through their dress. Success is measured in wealth, and what better way to demonstrate that wealth than by wearing it openly? Fine fabrics like silks and brocades are perfect for the Brass Coast, and no Freeborn costume would be complete without plenty of jewellery.

?Life is short ? let it never be dull!?

The Freeborn abhor the mundane and common. Costumes should be as individual as possible and brightly coloured, layered and ever-changing.

15.2 Fabrics

The Freeborn look is one of bright colours, silks, jewels and sumptuousness. Midweight silks and brocades work very well for sumptuous base layers. Most costumes should also feature very light top layers, in fabrics like voiles and chiffons, to create movement; the Brass Coast lives for dance and music and the best costumes express this, even when their wearer is at rest.



Layers of light fabrics over heavier ones, in different or even contrasting colours will give a wonderful range of shades which alter as the wearer moves. For example, layered yellow and orange chiffon scarves over a turquoise silk shirt would create some deep green shades in places. Another way of creating changing and colourful outfits is to use ?shot? fabrics, also called ?changeant?. These fabrics change colour as they move and look incredible in flowing robes, scarves and skirts.

Indian and Pakistani clothing and fabric shops, and charity shops near to major Asian areas are great places to look for Sari / Saree fabrics, which are usually lightweight and highly decorated, but often reasonably priced. Sari fabric is often beaded or embroidered, with metallic patterns and sequins being popular. These fabrics can be used to make robes and scarves or worn as they are to make simple wrap around garments. Saris worn the traditional Indian way (wrapped around the waist and draped over the shoulder) are not within the brief for the Freeborn and are better avoided.

Leather is considered unappealing for clothing; it?s a heavy material the Freeborn reserve for boots and armour.

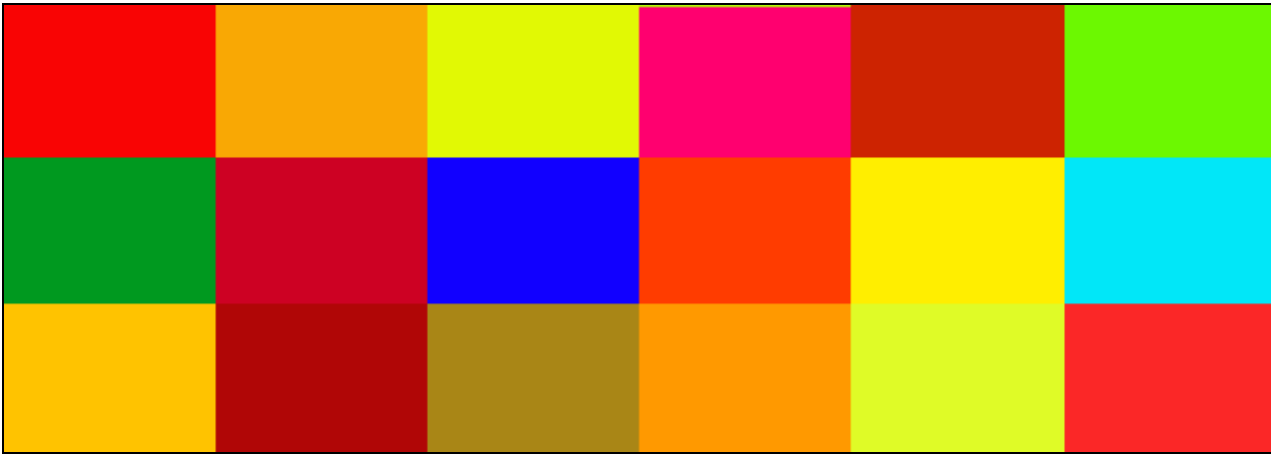
15.3 Colours

With the flame being the central symbol for the Freeborn, it?s no surprise to find them most frequently dressed in strong bright yellows, brilliant oranges and every conceivable shade of red as well as gold and silver. Expensive clothing is made in brightly coloured layers to convey the impression of the fire within.

The Freeborn love all bright, vibrant colours, however, and turquoise, magenta, emerald green and peacock blue will all make an appearance in costumes.

Some creativity with colour will make for the best Brass Coast costumes, using a mixed palate of similar tones alongside one or two strongly contrasting colours for a dramatic effect.

Black is a colour reserved for the dead, and should be avoided in your costumes. Similarly, white is only worn by the very poorest in society and should also be avoided.



15.4 Similar nations

15.5 Inspiration

The Brass Coast, while primarily a fantasy nation, does draw from Arabic and North African cultures, for example Moorish, Bedouin, Moroccan, Algerian and Tunisian costumes. There are a number of differences between the Freeborn and these real-world cultures, though. Primarily this involves headwear and modesty concerns, and the following are not suitable for the Brass Coast;

- Shemagh, keffiyeh (patterned tea towel worn on head) and agal,
- Fez and bandanna.
- All high turbans such as the classic Islamic or Sikh turban.
- Everything defined as sartorial hijab by wikipedia - burqa, niqab, etc.

Belly-dancing costume is also not encouraged in the Brass Coast, though there are a number of similar options for dance and costume from Egypt and the Middle East which would be perfect. This [SCA guide to belly dancing](#) details some of the dances and costumes which would work well for the Freeborn. Also try looking at the [Persian dance scene](#) from 'Alexander' for inspiration.

15.5.1 Pinterest Sites

- <http://pinterest.com/laserkatt/empire-sirro/>
- <http://pinterest.com/delvy/empire-sirro/>

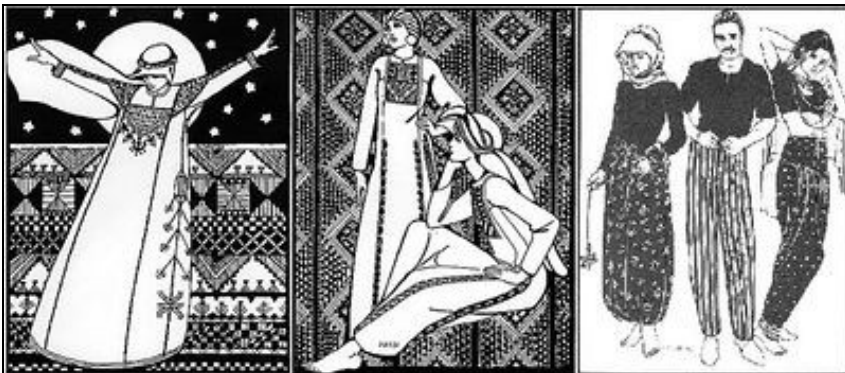
15.5.2 Films and TV

Some of the films you can look to for inspiration are:

- [The Last Legion](#)
- [Kingdom of Heaven](#) (cosplay details for Sybilla available [here](#))
- [Prince of Persia](#)
- [Sinbad](#)
- Also, look at the Medjai from [The Mummy](#) (cosplay details available [here](#).)

15.6 The Clothes

Freeborn society is completely gender blind and their clothing reflects this, with men and women wearing much the same clothes and jewellery. Generally, an outfit will consist of trousers, top, a robe of some sort and a head dress, or a robe and head dress alone. Tunics and robes should be belted with fabric sashes, which can be tied and left long and hanging to the front or side. Clothing is usually worn loose with layers of draped material and will often be ornate and decorated with shiny metal jewellery, bells, coins and other jingly bits. Jewellery should be considered to be part of this costume rather than an accessory. Suitable jewellery can be found very easily through belly dancing suppliers, and coin necklaces, beaded head dresses and hand jewellery are suitable for men and women. Many suppliers also sell the coins, bells and metal discs separately so that you can create your own or decorate your clothes. Ideally scabbards or pouches should hang at the waist by a silk cord that goes over the shoulder. Any tattoos should be highly intricate, henna-style. Brass Coast costumes are easy to make as most of the garments are very simple shapes. Folkwear make a range of patterns for North African and Arab style garments which are all perfect for the Brass Coast, for men and women. [Patterns 101, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 119, 132](#)



Folkwear Patterns

If you are looking to purchase your costume, tunic tops can be bought through most LARP suppliers in suitable colours. Traditional Arabic, Indian and North African clothing shops, either online or in Asian areas of most cities are usually inexpensive and easy to find. Most major cities have a few suitable shops selling sari fabric, shalwar kameez and Arabic style robes, although London and Birmingham have the best variety of these sorts of shops. Charity shops in areas with sizable ethnic populations are also a fantastic place to look for these sorts of clothes. Most robes you'll find in Arab clothing stores will be white or pale beige. If you can find these clothes in cotton, however, they will easily accept dyes which can be applied simply using your washing machine! The internet is your friend here, however, and all of the clothes mentioned are available on dozens of websites, plus ebay and etsy. For women's clothing, belly dancing suppliers can be a good place to start your search, but remember to steer away from modern dancing styles like coin bras, loincloths, etc.



Harem pants

Men and women's trousers are loose and flowing, and generally gathered into the ankle. They can be full length, or end just past the knee, open at the sides to reveal part or all of the leg and can be of various designs, resembling harem pants, or Indian shalwar trousers.

- [Making harem pants](#)
- [Making pantaloons](#)
- [Making shalwar trousers](#)
- [Video instructions for harem pants](#)
- [Pattern for shalwar kameez](#)

The tunic top is very commonly worn over the trousers, and falls anywhere from the hip to the calf. Again, the Indian shalwar kameez outfit for men and women is a good model to start from. The tunic can be made the same as any other t-tunic, but should be highly decorated around the neck, and slim fitting. Women may wish to make their tunic a 'princess line' style for better fit.

- [How to make a T-tunic](#)
- [Online pattern for a Kameez](#)
- [Simplicity pattern 4528](#) - currently out of print but available online

Closed robes can be worn instead of, or on top of, a tunic, and should be loose and flowing to the ankle. These could have long flowing sleeves, or be sleeveless to show off the tunic underneath. This garment is based on either the traditional kaftan, or the thobe, but should be brightly coloured and highly decorated as in Moorish Spain and North Africa and not the plain white robe worn in the Middle East. Low necklines, slits to knee or hip and short sleeves could all be used in the closed robe to reveal layers underneath.



A more dress-like version of the tunic is the Anarkali suit, which is a high waisted dress with a full skirt to knee or calf, worn over trousers. A similar garment from Morocco is called the El-keswa. In the film Alexander, the Persian dancers wear a version of this dress, left open below the bust line, and worn with a circle skirt, over trousers.

- [Tutorial for anarkali](#)
- [Online pattern](#)





A Melia is a traditional Tunisian dress/robe, which is simply fabric pinned at the shoulders and either left hanging, or be belted to the body, much like a Roman Stola. This is probably one of the easiest pieces of costume to make, but should be worn over a tunic style top and trousers for Freeborn characters.

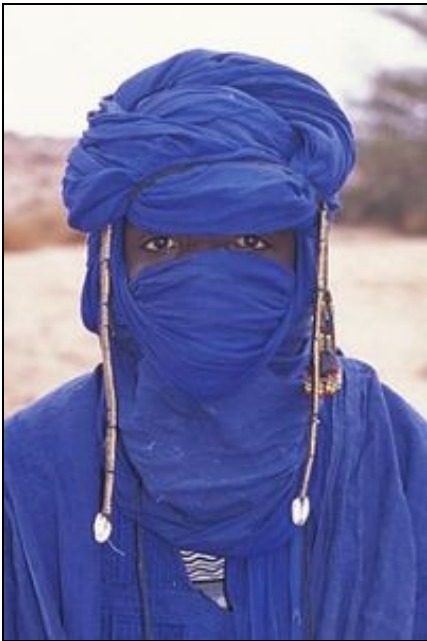
- How to make a Stola.



Waistcoats and open robes are another possibility to layer over a tunic, or even another robe and a chance to add another colour and more decoration to your outfit. These can be long or short and have long or short sleeves. Several can be worn at once to increase the layered look. Adding scarves to open robes, and one or more fabric sash belts will finish off the Freeborn look.



The preferred Brass Coast headdress is the [tagelmust](#) (preferably in bright red, orange or yellow rather than blue) or other veils, scarves, and head-wraps. [How to tie a tagelmust video](#)



Veils are worn by both men and women to make them appear more mysterious and alluring, and to frame the eyes or face attractively. Jewellery is very common with the best pieces, like necklaces, crowns or tiaras, also designed to frame the wearers face or the hands.

Shoes in the Brass Coast are often sandals, lacing up over the foot or higher up the leg. Greek, Roman or 'Gladiator' sandals are recommended for this. Arabian or Indian style slippers are also perfect and easy to find for men and women. Leather boots to mid calf or the knee can also be worn, particularly on the battle field.



15.6.1 Children



Children are an opportunity for parents to show off their wealth, dressing their offspring in traditional Freeborn styles. Children in the Brass Coast can be dressed in scaled down versions of their parents clothes. For toddlers and babies simple t-tunics and drawstring trousers are simple and easy to pull-on garments, that can be made in linen or cotton for easy washing! These types of clothes also have plenty of flexibility in terms of size, meaning you'll get more than one year's use out of them. For active children, you may want to consider keeping the costume shorter - robes coming to the knee etc. and simplifying the head dress to a basic scarf.

Top layers that have flexibility in terms of size are the Melia/Stola as described above, and sleeveless robes. With some planning, several years of wear should be possible and so fancy trims and embellishments are ideal for this top layer.

When making costumes for smaller children, remember to avoid anything tight around the neck - strings, cloaks, hats on cords etc and in addition, all tabards should secure under the arms. Make sleeves and armholes wider than needed; they're the bits that get tight as they grow. Neck holes also need to be bigger than for adults or should fasten at the back.

- [Information on clothes and swaddling for babies](#)
- [Patterns for Medieval children's clothes](#)
- [Revival Clothing's Premade items for children](#)
- [Gambeson's Premade items for children](#)

15.6.2 Sutannir



A cross between a professional priest and a party organizer, Sutannir conduct important ceremonies such as the coming of age or a wedding, and see to the spiritual needs of the Freeborn as a whole. Before the ceremony many paint their face and limbs with stylised flames in bright colours and dress in flamboyant costumes.

Sutannir characters offer a chance to really go to town on a costume - they dress like other Freeborn, but more so, in everything they wear. Every layer is decorated, every colour is vibrant, they wear layers over layers and top the whole thing off with as many bells and rattling coins as they can find. Sutannir robes should look like living flame, so jagged edges and strips of organza or chiffon should be layered to dramatic effect. The rule with Sutannir costume is 'more is more'. This isn't a look that can be achieved effectively on a very small budget, though for DIY costumers it's a chance to use your skills to good effect.

15.6.3 Corsairs

These daring privateers risk everything ensuring that the Empire's enemies are unable to threaten her shores and earning a fortune in gold in the process. It is a dangerous life but one that perfectly suits the Freeborn passion for high adventure.

Corsair costumes are slightly more restrained than the rest of the Brass Coast, as too many long layers can get in the way when onboard ship or mid battle. They'll mostly be seen in voluminous trousers gathered to the ankle, worn with a large shirt or tunic, and possibly a hip or knee length waistcoat or robe over the top. They will wear their spoils, though, so clothes should still be highly decorated with beads and coins, and they should wear plenty of gold on their wrists and necks.

15.6.4 Armour



Armour, whether metal or leather, should have embellished edges and rich decoration, with calligraphy and ornate designs.

Scale is the ideal armour, ideally in a bright golden colour, worn like mail or else secured with leather.

Chain in the ?jannissary? style, particularly the chain helmets, is also great.

Small pieces of plate or breastplates are also good especially if ornate and inlaid.

Leather armour is common, and is usually magnificently tooled and decorated.

15.6.5 Weapons

The perfect Freeborn shield is a domed, round shield that is intricately decorated in gold.

Scimitars are less common than straight swords and axes. The Bhuj, a large heavy single-bladed spear, is the ideal pole-arm. The best quality weapons are intricately etched and engraved.

15.7 Bibliography and Resources

- [Berber Costumes of Morocco, Marie-Rose Rabate](#)
- [The Moors: The Islamic West 7th-15th Centuries AD David Nicolle](#)

15.7.1 Armour

- [Totally Leathered](#) [Totally Leathered](#) provides custom tooled leatherwork & bespoke armour.
- [Idiom Productions](#) Costume and Props Workshop creates custom hand-tooled leather armour, clothing and LRP weapons

15.7.2 Costumes

- [Midgard Seamstress](#) Custom made UK LARP and Re-enactment costumes