

VAOZUM

The Age of the Empire

In remote antiquity, the world was overrun with the foul spawn of the incomprehensible Outer Gods. This was the **Age of Abominations**.

10,000 years ago dragons drove the abominations underground and reigned over the cities of the Serpent Men. This was the **Age of Serpents**.

4000 years ago the dragons fell mute, the Serpent Men were overthrown, and Giants assumed mastery of Vaozum. Thus began the **Age of Giants**.

3000 years ago the Giants' empire fell and the human, demi-human, and humanoid races overran Vaozum. Thus began the **Age of Invasions**.

1000 years ago humanity broke the power of every other race. Thus began the **Age of Heroes**.

308 years ago the nations of Vaozum were brought together under one Emperor. Thus started the **Age of the Empire**

Now the dream of unity is dying. The Empire is beset with rebellion, and the nations are re-asserting their ancient independence. The tyrannical Emperor puts down insurrections with increasing bloodshed. The Wizards fight secret wars against each other. Witches and warlocks defy the Inquisition to work illegal sorcery outside the bonds of the Arcane Covenant. The Imperial Faith that once unified human religions is now wracked by schism and heresy. The humanoid tribes, long ago subdued, are waxing bold and defiant. Long forgotten abominations lurk in the dark corners of the world, and there are rumors that the dead themselves grow restless.

The 13 Realms of The Human Empire

Each *Realm* possesses its own form of government, but is also overseen by an Imperial Governor.

Acabria - The fog-shrouded kingdom of Acabria is home to large populations of demi-humans, and its human inhabitants are famed for their rugged, self-reliant natures. The megalith-studded homeland of the Druidic faith, it is now under the patronage of the divine **Calebur, The Father of Light**. Acabrians and Maresites are known to get along very well.

Arigea - Dedicated to the perfection of body and mind through work, the Arigeans are master builders and stonemasons. Their patron is **Baraman, Our Lord of Labor**, whose will is made known through the Grand Abbot of the Monastery of Sublime Perfection. Arigeans are known to dislike Qoshites, and the Nagatese.

Chosa - The theocracy of Chosa consists of dry plains giving way to trackless deserts where many secrets lay buried. Its famously loyal inhabitants are renowned for their elaborate funeral rites, and are said to love their dead family members better than their living ones. Fittingly, their patron is **Kepton, King of the Dead**.

Cruosia - The crusading warriors of Cruosia are famous for their piety and skill at arms. The special patron of this constitutional monarchy is **Havilt, Prince of the Wind**. They tend to dislike Xaruthians on principle.

Diros - It was in the Dirosian city of Mnexos that human Wizardry was first created, and Diros remains the home of magic. The Realm is named after Diros the Divine, First Emperor of Humanity, and its scheming inhabitants are ruled by the High Council of Mages. **Aos, the Eye of Infinity** and creator of the Universe, is their special patron. Dirosians tend to look down upon Qoshites.

Engasea - The crafty Engaseans are the master sailors, merchants (and thieves) of Vaozum, ranging far and wide in pursuit of profit. They hold **Amara, Princess of the Moon**, as patroness of their plutocratic republic. The common Imperial tongue is based upon the Engasean language, with generous borrowings from other languages (especially Dirosian).

Latyrea - The intellectual Latyreans choose their leaders at regular Symposiums, where philosophers publicly debate their opinions. Their patroness is **Vettysha, the Mouth of Wisdom**, and her temples in Latyrea are the greatest schools of Vaozum. Latyreans tend to publicly disparage Xaruthians (but patronize the Xaruthian pleasure cities all the same).

Lavolea - The clannish, olive-complexioned Lavoleans inhabit the subtropical lands of the southwest. Worshipers of **Our Lady of Life, Qualea**, their theocratic society prizes the defense of family and fertility above all. Lavoleans generally hate and despise Qoshites.

Nagato - The proud, dark-skinned Nagatese are renowned for their skill at music and dance, as well as their refined tastes. This monarchy holds **Olassu, the Son of Beauty** as its patron. The Nagatese do not get along well with Arigeans.

Miscellaneous Facts

Mares - The feudal kingdom of Mares is a temperate realm of rich farmland and prosperous towns. Its inhabitants are renowned as diplomats with a love of the simple pleasures of life. Their patroness is **Lameyre, The Mother of Mercy**. They view the Acabrians as particular friends.

Qosh - This desert kingdom is the home of fierce, turbaned warriors who sequester their women to avoid the wrath of the jealous war goddess **Shekeveroth, the Queen of Horses**. The current Emperor, Aqim III, is Qoshite. Qoshites are traditional enemies of the Lavoleans, Dirosians, and Arigeans.

Xaruth - The inhabitants of the theocracy of Xaruth are noted for their attractiveness and are regarded as immoral hedonists by the other nations. Their patroness is **Ilunna, the Daughter of Desire**. The cities of Xaruth are the pleasure dens of the Empire, and their famous blond and green-eyed courtesans are said to owe their beauty to a touch of Elven in the race. Xarutians and Latyreans bear a noted antipathy towards each other.

Imperial Province - The lands around the Imperial capital Augalis are administered separately from all other realms. Even the farmers that supply food to Augalis seem to hold themselves as above the inhabitants of other lands, and the citizens of Augalis itself are infamously arrogant and proud of living in the central city of Voazum. The greatest schools outside Latyrea, the most powerful Wizards outside Diros, the most disciplined martial monasteries outside Arigea, the most beautiful courtesans outside Xaruth, and the finest artists outside Nagato are all to be found here.

Demihumans occupy small freeholds scattered throughout the human realms. Imperial officials allow their leaders the title and status of Lord or Lady, although many claim higher offices that go unrecognized among humans. Demihumans are subject to, and protected by, human law when in human lands. By treaty, Imperial law does not apply on Demihuman freeholds.

Humanoids (Goblins, Orcs, etc.) have no legal protections at all (except as slaves), and live wherever they can. Hunting and killing wild humanoids is considered a righteous act by humans of the Imperial Faith.

The months of the **Imperial Calendar** are named for the 12 recognized deities of the Imperial Faith. The 1st of each month is a festival dedicated to its particular God. The months are (in order from the Vernal Equinox): Aos, Ilunna, Olassu, Calebur, Shekeveroth, Qualea, Baraman, Kepton, Lameyre, Havilt, Vettysha, and Amara.

Priests and Priestesses of the Imperial Faith must be of the same gender of their especial divine patron (except for Shekeveroth, who only accepts male priests). Cloistered **Monks and Nuns**, on the other hand, are usually of the opposite gender of the deity they dedicate themselves to (The big exception are the martial monks and nuns dedicated to Baraman which are of both genders equally).

Each recognized Deity of the Imperial Faith also has **Legacies**. A *Legacy* is a local deity who is considered a form of one of the other Imperial Gods. *Legacies* can be of a different gender than the Imperial God they are identified with. Some *Legacies* (such as the vampire goddess Azanna, a *Legacy* of Ilunna) are illegal.

Arcane Magic can be legally practiced only by members of the Magical Orders that constitute the *Arcane Covenant*. The *Covenant* runs an Inquisition to destroy **Witches** and **Warlocks** who practice magic illegally. The rules of the Covenant prevent Wizards from being involved in mundane politics (except in Diros). Wizards are neither protected by or subject to ordinary laws, but are instead governed and protected by the Covenant. A typical town will probably be inhabited by only 1 or 2 wizards.

Few **Clerics** are able to perform miracles. Those that openly display the ability are sometimes investigated by the Inquisition to ascertain that the cleric is not performing arcane magic outside the Covenant.

Druids can usually safely practice their religion in Acabria, Engasea, and Mares, but elsewhere they are often subject to persecution by the Arcane Inquisition.

It is **illegal to enslave** humans, elves, dwarves, halflings, or gnomes anywhere in the Empire. **Humanoid slaves**, particularly goblins, are common however, especially in Qosh.