

Your Homeland - The Empire

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The Empire

Largest and most powerful of all the countries of the Old World, The Empire is your homeland. Its history goes back some two-and-a-half thousand years, to the earliest days of Human development. Its founder was the legendary warrior Sigmar Heldenhammer, Hammer of the Gols, who united the warring Human tribes and drove the Gol hordes from the Old World back into the Dark Lands beyond the Worlds Edge Mountains. Later, the legends tell, he was accepted into the ranks of the saints, and now the Church of Saint Sigmar is the most powerful of The Empire's religions. Indeed, the Church's head, the "Grand Theogonist", is the Emperor's closest adviser.

The current Emperor, Karl-Franz I, was elected (by those fourteen provincial rulers known as Electors) ten years ago, and crowned in Altdorf by the Grand Theogonist. He is still a young man, and the people have great hopes that under his benevolent leadership, The Empire is poised on the brink of a new golden age.

In the last 50 years, technology in The Empire has advanced significantly. The most notable advances have been the printing press, and firearms (matchlock pistols, musket and blunderbusses, as well as cannon and bombards).

There are three religions found in The Empire. The Old Faith is a form of nature worship looked down on by the sophisticated town- and city-folk, but still practised in some of the more rural areas. The Church of Three Gods Become One, claims that God has three aspects: the All-Seeing Eye, the Merciful Hand and the Righteous War. Followers are expected to follow the tenets of the faith: "Do not take that to which you have no right, and do not give that which is not yours to give." This roughly equates to "No Murder,

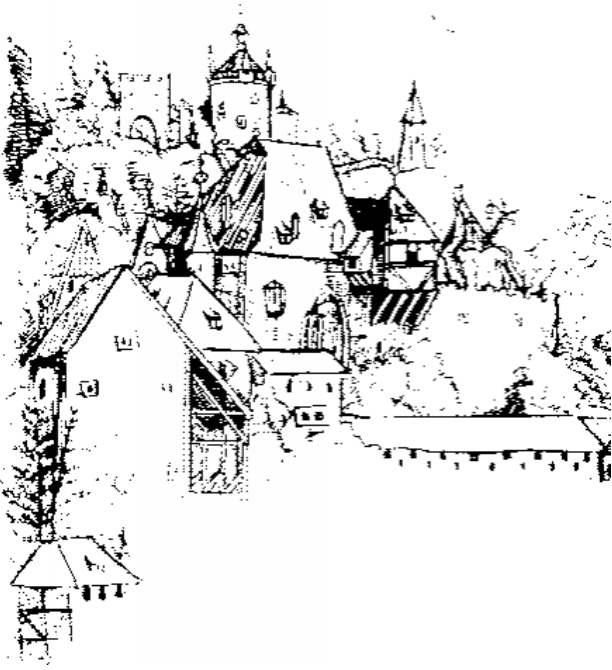
no stealing, no adultery and obedience to local laws". Finally there is the Church of Saint Sigmar, the official state religion of The Empire. This religion differs only in detail from the Church of the Three Gods become One from which it split. The major difference is that the Church of Saint Sigmar believe in the canonisation of Sigmar, the founder of The Empire. There is some political tension between the latter two churches, as the Church of Saint Sigmar has usurped much of the political power once held by the older church.

For one reason or another, your group has been thrown together outside a coaching inn called the Coach and Horses, not far from the country town of Delberz. Each of you has his or her own reasons for wanting to travel, some good, some not so good. Still, the glittering Imperial Capital is but two day's coach journey away, and where better to start your new life?

Travel in The Empire

The Empire is a huge country, filled with a multitude of people, places and creatures. Many of these people are simple peasants; others are artisans and traders who can sell you equipment, serve you in inns, and so on. A few are wealthy merchants or nobles, with little time for commoners such as yourselves. Nevertheless, you need to talk to people and win their friendship if your career is not to be a short one. But beware! The cosmopolitan cities of The Empire attract the dregs as well as the cream of society. There will be thieves who may pick your pockets and bandits who may waylay you on the road, On the other hand, if you always treat everyone as a potential enemy, you may miss useful contacts who could supply vital pieces of information.

As you can see from the map, perhaps the most significant feature of The Empire is its vast forests. These are well-known as dark, dangerous places and only the



foolish or suicidal would enter them without good reason. Travel is a risky business even for those who stick to the roads, and would be even more dangerous were it not for the well-defended coaching inns which secure the roads at regular intervals. Regular patrols of Roadwardens do their best to protect travellers from bandits and the like, but they are hard-pressed, busy folk who cannot be everywhere at once. They have enough on their hands without having to worry about formal trials for every wrong-doer. Consequently, justice is often dispensed summarily and on the spot.

Non-humans

The Empire is a human land. While non-human races exist, they do so on the fringes of The Empire, or deep within its forests. The general belief for most citizens of The Empire is that non-humans are found “somewhere else”.

Other creatures that you know of from rumour, travellers tales, history and legend include the Fey (the Elves of legend), Rock Dwarves, Goblins and other sidhe. You have also heard of Golen (or Gols), large, ugly aggressive humanoids from a militaristic society. They are only rarely found within the borders of The

Empire, usually as small raiding parties.

There are also mutants, humans who suffer from the taint of Chaos. Mutants are usually killed or abandoned at birth, but some survive. Others do not manifest their mutations until later in life, and flee to the forests to escape the wrath of the people of The Empire.

Other, more dangerous, creatures are rumoured to exist - Chaos warriors, warped humans who fight for the Lord of Chaos; Beast-men with human bodies and the heads of animals; and the feared Skaven, giant rats twisted into the shape of men. You know little of these but rumour, and are grateful for it.

Hints on Tactics

Remember that while it is possible to play a Fey or Rock Dwarf (or other Sidhe) character, it will mean that the character will either have to hide their nature, or suffer significant penalties when interacting with strangers (which is what much of “The Enemy Within” campaign is about). Also remember that sorcery is proscribed in The Empire, so that sorcerer characters will have many problems.

There are only a few of you, and there are many hazards in The Empire. You will need to work together to maximise your chances of survival. Remember that some stories will focus more on one character, and some on another, so be prepared to take a supporting role occasionally. It is everyone’s responsibility to communicate with each other - discussing, planning, and sharing information - without letting things degenerate into a chaotic babble. You must also listen carefully to your GM. He or she is, after all, the prime source of information about the adventure and its setting. If you miss a key piece of information because you weren’t listening, you can’t blame the GM when your character dies!

The main thing to remember is that combat in *The Riddle of Steel* is fast and deadly. Pick your fights carefully, and try to avoid unnecessary combat. If you do find you need to fight, try to alter the odds in your favour; whether by ambush, trickery or other means. Remember that every time you get into a fight you may die. Ask yourself first, “Is this worth dying

for?” Often, the answer may be “No”, and you might find that negotiating or avoiding the fight are better options.

Follow your character’s Spiritual Attributes. Remember that your character is much more effective whenever they are involved in what you are doing. Also remember that your character advances largely by taking risks in pursuit of the goals given by your SAs. Also remember that your Spiritual Attributes define the stories you would like to be involved in.

Notes on the Calendar

The Old World takes 400 days to travel round its sun, a much larger and hotter star than our own, and is orbited by two moons. The larger of these - known in The Empire as Mannslieb - has a cycle of 25 days from full to full, and looks not unlike the moon of our own world. The other - named Morrslieb - is erratic, appearing now closer, now further away than its partner.

There are two main legends concerning the origins and nature of Morrslieb. According to the first, it was once a gateway in the sky, through which demons came to prey upon the people of the Known World. Mrr inflicted a great and terrible death upon them, and fashioned the second moon out of the wreckage, so that mortals would never forget how the god had saved them. The second legend maintains that when Chaos first broke through into the Old World, a great block of Warpstone was hurled high into the sky, where it circles endlessly, spreading Chaos on the lands over which it passes. This legend is believed mainly by the followers of The Lord of Chaos, who hold festivals when Morrslieb is full.

Months and Festivals

There are almost as many calendars in use in the Old World as there are countries, but the one shown below is standard throughout The Empire. The Imperial calendar divides the year into 12 months of 32 or 33 days, and six days which fall between months and are not numbered. Four of these are festivals connected to the Summer and Winter solstices, and the

Spring and Autumn equinoxes; while the other two mark the occasions when both moons are full. These nights are greatly feared, and even the most hardened cynics stay out of the eerie light cast by the moons on Hexensnacht and Geheimnisnacht (“Witching Night” and “Night of Mystery”).

The months may be translated as After-witching, Year-turn, Ploughtide, Sigmartide, Summertide, Fore-mystery, After-mystery, Harvestide, Brewmonth, Chillmonth, Thomastide and Fore-witching.

The eight days of the week have names that probably date back to before The Empire. They could be roughly translated as Workday, Levyday, Marketday, Bakeday, Taxday, Kingday, Startweek and Holiday. However, the reasons for the names are now largely forgotten - a market day might fall on any day of the week, depending where you go in The Empire. Holidays do generally fall on Festag however, since it is the Holy day of both the Church of The Three Gods Become One, and the Church of Saint Sigmar.

Of course, the calendar also serves to mark the turning of the seasons. Spring begins on the 17th Nachexen, Summer on the 18 Sigmarzeit, Autumn begins on the 17 Nachgeheim, and Winter on the 18 Kaldezeit.

Using the Calendar

Below, you will find a copy of the Imperial Calendar for the year 2512. It is important that you keep a record of the passage of time, so that you can keep track of mundane things like how much food you have, and to help you note how long a given journey will take. Your GM will tell you when to start marking off the days. If you remember to mark off a day after each night’s rest, you will have no difficulty in keeping track of time. The campaign starts on the evening of Festag, 24th Jahrdrung 2512.



The Imperial Calendar, 2512

Hexenstag	New Years Day	Sommerzeit	Mittherbst	Autumn Equinox	
Nachexen		Wellentag	- 6 14 22 30	Brauzeit	
Wellentag	1 9 17 25	Aubentag	- 7 15 23 31	Wellentag	- 3 11 19 27
Aubentag	2 10 18 26	Marktag	- 8 16 24 32	Aubentag	- 4 12 20 28
Marktag	3 11 19 27	Backertag	1 9 17 25 33	Marktag	- 5 13 21 29
Backertag	4 12 20 28	Bezahltag	2 10 18 26	Backertag	- 6 14 22 30
Bezahltag	5 13 21 29	Konistag	3 11 19 27	Bezahltag	- 7 15 23 31
Konistag	6 14 22 30	Angestag	4 12 20 28	Konistag	- 8 16 24 32
Angestag	7 15 23 31	Festag	5 13 21 29	Angestag	1 9 17 25 33
Festag	8 16 24 32	Sonnstill	Summer Solstice	Festag	2 10 18 26
Jahrdrung		Vorgeheim		Kaldezeit	
Wellentag	1 9 17 25 33	Wellentag	- 5 13 21 29	Wellentag	- 2 10 18 26
Aubentag	2 10 18 26	Aubentag	- 6 14 22 30	Aubentag	- 3 11 19 27
Marktag	3 11 19 27	Marktag	- 7 15 23 31	Marktag	- 4 12 20 28
Backertag	4 12 20 28	Backertag	- 8 16 24 32	Backertag	- 5 13 21 29
Bezahltag	5 13 21 29	Bezahltag	1 9 17 25 33	Bezahltag	- 6 14 22 30
Konistag	6 14 22 30	Konistag	2 10 18 26	Konistag	- 7 15 23 31
Angestag	7 15 23 31	Angestag	3 11 19 27	Angestag	- 8 16 24 32
Festag	8 16 24 32	Festag	4 12 20 28	Festag	1 9 17 25 33
Mitterfruhl	Spring Equinox	Geheimnistag	Day of Mystery	Thomaszeit	
Pflugzeit		Nachgeheim		Wellentag	1 9 17 25 33
Wellentag	- 8 16 24 32	Wellentag	- 4 12 20 28	Aubentag	2 10 18 26
Aubentag	1 9 17 25 33	Aubentag	- 5 13 21 29	Marktag	3 11 19 27
Marktag	2 10 18 26	Marktag	- 6 14 22 30	Backertag	4 12 20 28
Backertag	3 11 19 27	Backertag	- 7 15 23 31	Bezahltag	5 13 21 29
Bezahltag	4 12 20 28	Bezahltag	- 8 16 24 32	Konistag	6 14 22 30
Konistag	5 13 21 29	Konistag	1 9 17 25	Angestag	7 15 23 31
Angestag	6 14 22 30	Angestag	2 10 18 26	Festag	8 16 24 32
Festag	7 15 23 31	Festag	3 11 19 27	Mondstille	Winter Solstice
Sigmarzeit		Erntezeit		Vorhexen	
Wellentag	- 7 15 23 31	Wellentag	- 4 12 20 28	Wellentag	- 8 16 24 32
Aubentag	- 8 16 24 32	Aubentag	- 5 13 21 29	Aubentag	1 9 17 25 33
Marktag	1 9 17 25 33	Marktag	- 6 14 22 30	Marktag	2 10 18 26
Backertag	2 10 18 26	Backertag	- 7 15 23 31	Backertag	3 11 19 27
Bezahltag	3 11 19 27	Bezahltag	- 8 16 24 32	Bezahltag	4 12 20 28
Konistag	4 12 20 28	Konistag	1 9 17 25 33	Konistag	5 13 21 29
Angestag	5 13 21 29	Angestag	2 10 18 26	Angestag	6 14 22 30
Festag	6 14 22 30	Festag	3 11 19 27	Festag	7 15 23 31