



Lore Guidebook

Vassal LARP LLC
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Introduction

Vassal is a live action roleplaying game (LARP) set in a fictitious setting called “The Known World” which strongly resembles Europe and Asia during the late 14th, 15th, and early 16th centuries.

It is a game of people, be they monarchs, knights, merchants, or farmers, and their lives, hopes, and struggles.



This Lore Guidebook will cover the key historic events and backgrounds of each organized nation that exists in The Known World.

The Known World, 1225 IC

The Known World at a glance...

For more than seven centuries, the Empire de Lyonnais once ruled over much of the Known World. Its power and influence was beyond measure until the rule of its final emperor, Philip IV "the Incompetent" of the House de Lyonnais. After failed and costly military expeditions, internal strife throughout the empire, and a gross mismanagement of Imperial duties, Emperor Philip was betrayed by many of the Imperial vassals. The House de Lyonnais was extinguished and their glorious empire fell to ruin in the ensuing wars which erupted amidst the rebellious nobility. Seven centuries of mighty dominance had come to an end.

In the aftermath of the Empire's collapse, its foreign holdings declared independence one-by-one, unchallenged as Lyonnais burned in the flames of civil war. While future Imperial nobles would go on to claim the Imperial throne in Lyonne, its authority would never again be respected and Imperial influence would never succeed in passing beyond Lyonnais' borders.

It has been over 50 years since the fall of Philip IV and his empire. With the world up for grabs, a new era dawns...



Lyonnais, the Empire



Lyonnais, the Empire

Biography

01/08

Influences: 15th century France, Brittany, Burgundy, and Flanders

Lyonnais, the land which has played such a prominent role in the Known World's history, saw over a millennia of centralized power in Lyonne and nearly 700 years as a formidable empire. In some regard or another, no realm of the Known World has ever gone without mention of Lyonnais in their histories, and even with an empire in ashes, Lyonnais continues to cast a large shadow.

Founded at the start of the Imperial calendar by Roland the Uniter, the man who would be deified as a god in the Imperial Faith, the story of Lyonne is that of the most meteoric rise to power. Once a simple farming village, Lyonne became an ever-growing city which in 177 IC, became the capital of an established kingdom under Lothair de Lyonnais.

For the next three centuries, the House de Lyonnais would use statecraft, marriages, and force of arms to subjugate the other neighboring petty kingdoms and bring them under their banner. In 476 IC, Lyonnais at last controlled the entirety of the peninsula, and the Empire de Lyonnais was born under Emperor Philip I "the Glorious."

Lyonnais, the Empire

02/08

What follows is a long string of conquests across the Known World, forging the very links that would create the vast empire we know of today.

Ilbionne was the first to fall, having been invaded by Philip I himself in 482 IC, and would be a formidable Empire territory in centuries to come. Saragon would become part of the Empire next in 723 IC, though influence had begun long before that date, particularly with Saragon's prior adoption of the Imperial Faith.

Two centuries later, Kurzenstrad and Nordenmark had aimed to resist the Empire's advances together, but Nordenmark betrayed their would-be ally for bribes and privileges and abandoned Kurzenstrad in 927 IC, who then fell to conquest by 931 IC. Here ends the successful conquests of the Empire.

In those five centuries, there were numerous wars with Venoa, both offensive and defensive, and try as they might, the Empire could never outright subjugate the might of the island nation. Many have laid blame on the Empire's poor seafaring and maritime logistics, but some speculate that well-placed offerings of gold from wealthy Venoan bankers and nobles ensured that somewhere along the way, misfortune was always bound to occur for the Empire. Most notably in the Third Venoan War of 849 IC, Verleans was reclaimed by the wartime heroine Jeanne de Barre, and never again did Venoa control Imperial peninsular territories.





Lyonnais, the Empire

03/08

From 934 to 1126 IC, history entered the fñge of Imperial Peace, a time in which little military conflict occurred, there were no foreign conquests, and domestic infrastructure was improved tenfold. In this period, much technology throughout the Empire was able to spread to all its corners and a more homogenous way of life evolved in large.

This peace would end in 1127 IC when Emperor Hugh IX declared war on Iskara, the Empire's most ambitious dream of conquest yet. However, it was fated to end miserably, bankrupting the Empire and making it entirely dependent on loans from Venoan bankers.

Emperor Henri III would seek to rectify these losses and invaded Obrovoska in 1149 IC. His goal was to control the Obrovoskan black powder industry in the Chernogora Mountains. Many had witnessed the terrifying power of the Iskaran firearms two decades ago and believed if the Empire could control their own source of these weapons, a renewed conquest could find success.

Obrovoska surrendered in 1155 IC, entering a client-state status in which they paid tribute to the Empire and gave exclusive trading rights for their black powder and firearms in exchange for retaining much of their native governance.

Lyonnais, the Empire

04/08

In 1164 IC, Philip IV took the throne and began the second invasion of Iskara. Philip's war was an even greater failure than the last, plunging the Empire into further irreparable debt.

With the Lyonnais Peninsula in complete disarray from the destroyed economy, a coalition of nobles under the leadership of dukes Cardeaux and Tremont attempted to forcibly imprison Philip in 1173 IC. The coup failed, though both dukes survived and retreated to their holdings, where they gathered all of their military might to wage war against the Emperor.

Lyonne fell to the armies of Cardeaux and Tremont in late 1174 IC. Lyonne was looted and much of the remaining Venoan gold stolen, and Emperor Philip IV and his entire family were murdered, ending the House de Lyonnais. In the days after, Tremont betrayed and killed Cardeaux, and then crowned himself Rogier I, the new emperor.

Unsurprisingly, Rogier I found himself on an assassin's blade hardly two months later, and with Lyonne in leaderless ruins and the entire peninsula at war with itself for control, the Empire collapsed. Once news of what transpired had left the borders of Lyonnais, the conquered realms declared their independence one-by-one.





Lyonnais, the Empire

05/08

Kurzenstrad was first in early 1175 IC, followed by Obrovoska nullifying their client status. flbionne and Saragon both had violent, but swift struggles to remove their Imperial governors, and were next to join the secession. At the end, Nordenmark remained, wanting for its continued prosperity under Imperial authority. However, when it became obvious that no such future awaited, they too took their leave of the Empire.

Lyonnais thereafter ceased to be an empire, though many have crowned and named themselves emperor in the years since the fall of Lyonne. Such actions were naught but feeble attempts at grabbing some sense of legitimacy or power, a routine so commonplace that it does nothing but garner mocking ridicule throughout the Known World.

While the nobles of Lyonnais war amongst themselves for control of a ravaged realm, the former Imperial territories have focused on improving their own lands, so that none might ever fall under Lyonnais again.

For nearly 50 years, the lands of Lyonnais have remained in turmoil, but with time comes healing. Wars amongst the nobility still occur regularly, though no longer as cataclysmic as they once were. In time, they have become smaller, more private affairs, fought mostly by the knights and men-at-arms of the small ducal realms and the many foreign mercenaries these wars attract.

Lyonnais, the Empire

06/08

While the peasants certainly do not escape this unscathed, be it as levied soldiers or as helpless victims of pillage, they have become somewhat removed for the sake of repairing what remains of Lyonnais, a fact which every would-be emperor recognizes is vital for the continued existence of the land they hope to rule.

Presently, Lyonnais is now a country of various coalitions and temporary alliances. In the west, the duchies of Rhenault, Paryon, Drest, and Lontfort have banded together to safeguard their lands from would-be emperors. In the south, Cardeaux, Verleans, and Barre have joined in self-interest and their cooperation is minimal at best. Lastly in the east, Tremont still yearns for the Imperial crown, finding new partnership with Gaspard amidst failing attempts to sway Troyis.

All the while, Lyonne itself has fallen to a powerful baron turned brigand, a fact which shames the nobility daily. The glory of Lyonnais has crumbled in the shaping of a new world, but there are many who would see it restored.

For Lyonnais, this is a time of great uncertainty. The realm has burned, but in the ashes of the House de Lyonnais, there is also rebirth. One can only speculate as to what a new Lyonnais would look like. It will take great heroes to forge a unified realm, and make no mistake that if such an event should ever come to pass - the Known World stands ready.





Political Landscape: The Duchies of Lyonnais

- The Duchy of Lyonne - The Duchy of Paryon - The Duchy of Cardeaux
- The Duchy of Tremont - The Duchy of Troyis - The Duchy of Verleans
- The Duchy of Rhenault - The Duchy of Gaspard - The Duchy of Drest
- The Duchy of Lontfort - The Duchy of Barre

Geographic Landscape: Lyonnais

Mont-Noir

These formidable mountains are often clouded, creating a dark atmosphere which has long served as a point of artistic interpretation regarding the dark nature and ambition of Tremont's rulers.

Mont-du-Nord

The northern mountain range surrounding Troyis. While split by the Selbe River, it is the most westerly range of the Norden Mountains of Nordenmark.

Channel de Jeanne

It is the most traveled mercantile waterway as well as the site of countless naval military engagements. The channel is named for Jeanne de Barre, a Lyonnais war heroine who reclaimed Verleans from the Venoans during the Third Venoan War.

Lake Rouschard

The largest lake in Lyonnais. The city of Rhenault was founded beside it and the lake remains a popular tourist destination for merchants and travelers.

Lake Arvogne

A great lake surrounded entirely by forested land, it has long been a valued source of freshwater in Lyonnais, but this attraction has also made the wooded paths commonplace for banditry.



Culture Economy and Military

Ø8/Ø8

Perhaps one of the formulas for Lyonnais' success is that its lands held most everything the realm needed. There are expansive, fertile fields, mountain ranges which house valuable ores and gemstones, dense forests, and miles of coastline for fishing and easily accessible maritime trade with any direction in the Known World. All of this has only ever been amplified during the time of the Empire, when more resources were pooled together from the conquered territories. However, these boons have deteriorated over time through use and the ravages of war. While Lyonnais could still be a land of plenty, it must first heal.

Undoubtedly, it is Lyonnais' military which earns the most recognition. The evolution of the armored knight throughout the ages is due to Lyonnais' innovation and its tactical usage was often the key to battlefield success, for no cavalry could ever challenge the Imperial knights. In the centuries of its conquests, many of the defeated sought to replicate these advancements for themselves. Lyonnais is also known for its expert engineers, capable of turning the tide of any siege.

Notable Characters in Lyonnais Lore

Hugues de Garonne, the baron occupying Lyonne, known as the "Robber King."

Richart de Fortenay, Duke of Rhenault, head of the Western Coalition.

Marguerite de Bonteville, Duchess of Cardeaux, co-head of the Southern Coalition.

Jean de flengous, Duke of Verleans, co-head of the Southern Coalition.

Jacques de Tremont-Changres, Duke of Tremont, head of the Eastern Coalition.

Eleanor de Jonfleur, Duchess of Troyis.

Gregoire de Corvais, Duke of Paryon.

Landain le Rouge, the Duke of Gaspard



Kurzenstrad



Kurzenstrad

Biography

01/05

Influences: Mid 14th - late 15th century, Holy Roman Empire, Western Europe.

Once a land of divided petty kingdoms, Kurzenstrad stood united in the face of the Empire de Lyonnais. Centuries of strife with Nordenmark were put aside for an alliance in the name of turning back the western invaders, but in 927 IC, Kurzenstrad was left to defend itself after Nordenmark sought peace with the Imperials and turned against their southern neighbor.

The Kurzen people fought bravely, but against both Lyonnais and Nordenmark, there was no hope.

In 931 IC, the Kurzen laid down their arms and accepted Imperial lordship over their country. However, it was in their Imperial vassalage that Kurzenstrad knew peace - perhaps the only peace they had ever truly known.

After nearly two and a half centuries of Imperial rule, Kurzenstrad found independence again in 1174 IC after the destruction of the House de Lyonnais. As the acting Duke of Kurzenstrad under the Empire, Frederick Maritz von Flustrenburg was crowned the new King of Kurzenstrad, and all the counts of the land joined his court in the capital, Vienz.





Kurzenstrad

02/05

The king endeavored for a greater sense of equality amongst the nobility, refusing to create ducal titles where any of the counts would be elevated over others. The Count of Crant, Rudolf Kaisel, and the Count of Nurnich, Wilhelm Casser, each believed they were owed more and this discontent at court was disastrous, as both Kaisel and Casser were respectively the most powerful vassals in the realm.

Peace lasted only five years, broken at last by Casser. His uprising reached its pinnacle in 1182 IC, where at the Battle of the Leitzen, the royal army was defeated and King Frederick was slain while fording the river. Wilhelm Casser von Nurnich usurped the throne from Frederick's young son and ruled from his seat at Nurnstein.

At Casser's court, tensions continued as relations with Kaisel deteriorated over time, ultimately leading to another conflict. In 1186 IC, at the Battle of Margrause, the County of Crant prevailed under the leadership of Kaisel, now dubbed "the Lion of Luxenfurt," and similarly to the collapse of the Empire de Lyonnais, the Kingdom of Kurzenstrad fell apart into independent counties. The Kingdom of Kurzenstrad had only survived for twelve tumultuous years.

Kurzenstrad

03/05

The Warring Counties era thus began, where a seemingly never-ending sequence of wars took place. Alliances regularly shifted and advantages gained in battle were shortly lived before a defeat would undo any sense of progress. But throughout this period of time, Nurnich had solidified its hold over the County of Stravia, and Crant had successfully subdued the County of Flustrenburg.

Between these two great forces, the County of Burne suffered immeasurably, even after it was vassalized by Nurnich. All the while, the south's own flames of war raged as the Free City of Vinderburg chipped away at the lands of the County of Rhensbruck.

In 1210 IC, the returned heir of Flustrenburg, Dimitri Maritz, retook his castle and the city of Vienz from Crant, culminating in the Battle of Grunfeld in 1211 IC, where at last the County of Flustrenburg regained independence under the lordship of the House of Maritz.

In this new phase of the Warring Counties, Flustrenburg and Nurnich have tirelessly battled one another for small gains, and the lords of the realm have watched on and sought favor with whichever side they believe will prevail. Perhaps some eye the crown for themselves. But for many, their only wish is a lasting peace and an end to the chaos.





Political Landscape: The Kingdom of Kurzenstrad

- The County of Austrenburg, The City of Vienz - The County of Burne, The City of Bramzig - The County of Trant, The City of Luxenfurt - The County of Nurnich, The City of Nurnstein - The County of Stravia, The City of Grazburg - The County of Rhensbruck, The City of Metzenburg - The free City of Vinderburg

Geographic Landscape: Kurzenstrad

The Leitzen River

It is the largest river in Kurzenstrad and has served as the primary geographical feature of many key battles.

The Albine Mountains

The iconic scene of Kurzenstrad, giving birth to the many serene valleys which adorn the countryside. Austrenburg Castle is located within the Albine Mountains.

The Selbe River

This river flows from the Albine Mountains and forms the border between Lyonnais and Nordenmark.

Sangue River

The river connected to the Bay of Wine, the Sangue runs from the southern ranges of the Albine Mountains, through the city of Vinderburg.

Mount Grusinger

This mountain is at the center of industry for the economy of Nurnstein because of its rich deposits of coal.



Culture Economy and Military

05/05

Kurzenstrad, though one of the smaller regions of the Known World, is fortunate in its natural landscape. Rivers give way to fertile landscapes well-suited for farming, dense forests provide high quantities of lumber as well as a home for plenty of game, the mountains provide coal and riches, and the coasts of Kurzenstrad allow convenient access to seaborne trade.

However, Kurzenstrad's boons have proved to make it a land which garners the attention of foreign invaders. With the sudden collapse of the Empire de Lyonnais, hostile forces from Nordenmark venture southward more frequently than before, demanding a need for well-trained militias, particularly in those places along the Selbe and Leitzen rivers. When northerners are not of concern, the nobles of Kurzenstrad are often seeking the next advancement in military technology, with which they hope to outdo one another and claim Kurzenstrad's riches for themselves.

Notable Characters in Kurzenstrad Lore

Count Dimitri Maritz von fustrenburg, the leader of the County of fustrenburg.

Count Cristoff Kaisal von Trant, the Count of Trant

Count Wilhelm Casser von Nurnich, the Count of Nurnich

Count Hanz Langa von Burne, the Count of Burne

Conrad Volksgardt, leading noble of the Vinderburg High Council.



Nordenmark



Nordenmark

Biography

01/05

Influences: 15th and early 16th century Swiss Confederacy, Landsknecht Mercenaries

Nordenmark is found north of Kurzenstrad and east of Lyonnais. A vast country in its own right, Nordenmark is largely dominated by a mountainous landscape. Throughout the history of the Nordeners, their seemingly inhospitable countryside has instead been their greatest boon, often acting as a wall to stave off foreign invasion and simultaneously playing host to one of the Known World's greatest trade routes. Though a harsh land, the lives of Nordeners are often anything but.

In the years before the reign of the Empire de Lyonnais, Nordenmark was a land without a true crown. There were many independent cantons which made up an intricate political landscape of confederacies, though two dukedoms reigned supreme, those of Obenwalden and Konigstyre. Alliances would change as frequently as one changed their daily clothes, but the conflict between these two giants could never be settled.

War took its toll upon the land, often forcing the Nordeners to look southward as a means of replenishing their coffers and filling their storehouses. Rarely was war ever formally declared between Nordenmark and Kurzenstrad, but that never stopped either side from venturing across the border, either to raid or retaliate.





Nordenmark

Ø2/Ø5

In the year 927 IC, Nordenmark and Kurzenstrad set aside their differences to sign a treaty in which they would work together to repel the encroaching Empire de Lyonnais from their lands. But when the Emperor himself, Jean II, came to the dukes of Obenwalden and Konigstyre, he made an offer they could not refuse.

In exchange for their surrender, the Empire would grant Imperial immediacy, where each duke would serve as an independent vassal of the Emperor, and neither would owe fealty to the other. Even the cantons of Nordenmark and their confederacy would enjoy this condition. Moreso, Jean II revealed his plan to use Nordenmark as a highway of trade, an economic endeavor he swore would make Nordenmark wealthy beyond what it had ever known before.

Enticed by the Emperor's words, the two dukes and the councilmen of the cantons agreed without issue to the terms, and so Nordenmark peacefully joined with the Empire de Lyonnais and left Kurzenstrad to fend for itself, a betrayal which the Kurzenmenn would never forget.

Emperor Jean II made good on his promises. Imperial influence came to Nordenmark and aided in setting up various trade routes; building roads, maintaining them, and even giving rise to many towns and cities along the way. Through Nordenmark, trade came from all over the Known World. Svithland furs and ores traveled through Obenwalden and luxurious goods such as Obrovoskan Velenitsa lumber by means of Konigstyre.

Nordenmark

03/05

These treasured roads, now entrusted to be protected by the soldiers of Nordenmark, became so famed for their reliable and safe travel that any passing, trade or not, brought forth countless coins for that luxury. Within the Empire, Nordenmark flourished beyond expectations.

That is not to say that Nordenmark was without its conflicts. The cantons often rallied against the dukes when they sought to overreach their authority. Some engagements even required the mediation of Imperial overlordship, or in worst cases, the armies of Lyonnais themselves took to the field. Whatever the result though, Nordenmark endured, for the steady flow of Nordenmark gold to the Imperial treasury was crucial.

When the Empire de Lyonnais collapsed in 1174 IC, Nordenmark was among the few vassal states who did not declare their independence. Under Imperial rule, Nordenmark saw immeasurable wealth and comfort and clung desperately to ensure its continuation. However, with Imperial infrastructure shattered and dissolved, ties to Lyonnais could not be formally maintained.

Nordenmark, in its need to transform in an era without the Imperial crown, chose to become an elective monarchy. The monarch would be elected from the nobility of the cantons, while the dukes of Obenwalden and Konigstyre would maintain permanent positions on the royal council. Once more, Nordenmark had collectively cooperated in its own self interest, intent on keeping their booming economy intact. In the years to come, Nordenmark remained a place of relative peace, safe as the world around them fought amongst one another. Though as new nations rise, one cannot help but think that Nordenmark and its vast coffers may become the target of foreign ambitions.





Geographic Landscape: Nordenmark

Mont-du-Nord

The northern mountain range surrounding Troyis. While split by the Selbe River, it is the most westerly range of the Norden Mountains of Nordenmark.

The Grand Highway

These treasured roads, now entrusted to be protected by the soldiers of Nordenmark, became so famed for their reliable and safe travel that any passing, trade or not, brought forth countless coins for that luxury.

Political Landscape: The Kingdom of Nordenmark

- The Duchy of Obenwalden - The Duchy of Königstyre -
- The Cantons of Nordenmark - The City of Küstenleben



Culture Economy and Military

05/05

Nordenmark is a bountiful land; the southern half of the country possesses fertile farmland while the north has plentiful mining operations in the mountains, dense forest, and miles of coastline to access the northern seas and their trade routes. These boons only add to the immense wealth still generated by the Grand Highway of Nordenmark, which continues to flourish even in a post-Imperial age.

The military of Nordenmark reflects the land's geography. In the north, heavily armored infantry are the preferred soldier, able to secure any mountain pass, whereas in the south, light and heavy cavalry alike are more prevalent for maneuverability in the open fields. Common in both regions however are Nordenmark's famed pikemen, who excel both in narrow fighting spaces and in open terrain to repel opposing cavalry charges. Nordener pike companies are often sought as mercenaries throughout the Known World, though come at premium fees that few can afford.

Notable Characters in Nordenmark Lore

Maximilian Habrich, the King of Nordenmark.

Leopold Weltner, the Duke of Obenwalden.

Hildegard Sturzenger, the Duchess of Konigstyre.

Marx Rausten, consort of Duchess Hildegard. famed knight and general of the Nordener armies.

Ynés Veracruz, Magnate of Küstenleben



Obrovoska



Obrovoska

Biography

01/05

Influences: Late 14th - mid 16th century Muscovy, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Cossacks.

The name Obrovoska simply means “the Vast”. As far as the eye can see, endless steppes mingle with low rolling hills. The wilderness teems with life but for the ancient tribes that dwelled here, it was an endless sea of nothingness. The vast lands were equally beautiful and terrifying, lush and desolate, peaceful and dangerous.

Emerging from the ancient era, the early tribes of Obrovoska had reached an unlikely unity. This “ancient era” pre-dated written records but the story of these times live on through tales that have been passed on for generations. The Obrovoskan Steppes, like today, housed a vast number of cultures and the aforementioned unlikelihood for their unification was based purely on their need to survive. Differences had been set aside and further conflict would not be sustainable, thus began the era of cooperation and prosperity.

In 1127 IC, Emperor Hugh IX of the Empire de Lyonnais launched his ill-fated invasion of Iskara. The Imperial forces were routinely bested by Iskaran gunpowder, a new battlefield innovation which brought dismay and confusion to the Imperial ranks. After numerous crushing defeats, Emperor Hugh was forced to abandon his campaign. Enraged by the defeat, Emperor Hugh sent forth Imperial spies to uncover the secrets of this scientific advancement, tracing the origins of the black powder to the Obrovoskan Chernogora Mountains.





Obrovoska

02/05

In his final years, the Emperor made frequent efforts to sway the eastern trade, but the bond between Obrovoska and Iskara would not break so easily. The Obrovoskan black powder needed to be secured for the Empire and denied to the Iskarans, who would one day be forced to kneel to Lyonnais.

In 1149 IC, Emperor Henri III, son of Hugh IX, launched an invasion of Obrovoska with the intent of claiming the Chernogora's black powder by whatever means necessary. With Imperial legions at his back, Emperor Henri marched unchallenged through the Zapadny Oblast, his sights set upon Roznigov, the center of Obrovoskan military power and the final bulwark before realizing his ambition. After a fierce resistance at Kauzemy Keep that lasted two years, with both Imperial and Obrovoskan cannons firing day and night, the fort was reduced to rubble and the defenders killed to the last.

The fall of Kauzemy opened the way into the Roznik Oblast, where fighting continued for another year to come. Despite the efforts of Roznigov's Pyotr the Bold, the Imperial army marched north and near the city of Borvalka, met the Obrovoskans once again in the field. After three days' exchange of cannon fire, a meeting was arranged before the battle could begin proper, and a treaty was signed between Emperor Henri and the Obrovoskan nobility.

Obrovoska

03/05

As a result of the treaty, the Chernogora and its black powder was opened to the Empire and Imperial merchants and nobles flocked to Roznigov. With Imperial influence spreading, the trade with Iskara fell to ruin and Imperial gold brought prosperity to the cities of Obrovoska.

With the fall of Emperor Philip IV in 1174 IC, the Empire de Lyonnais was no more, and their soldiers and nobles quickly disappeared. Despite their retreat, the shadow of Lyonnais was still felt amidst the Roznik people.

As industry in Chernograd continued and prospered, the nobles of Roznigov sought to claim all of the mountain's riches for themselves, violating the longstanding agreement with Svithland and bringing about a new conflict over the black powder.

After the Battle of the Chernogora Pass, in 1212 IC Obrovoska at last solidified its possession of their valuable resource. Obrovoska had always been a land of unity, but now in an age of conflict and uncertainty, must reconcile with their old ways or risk changing the very identity of Obrovoska forever.





Political Landscape: Obrovoska

- Roznik Oblast, The City of Roznigov, The City of Chernograd
- Rodnoi Oblast, The City of Skalensk, The City of Zenko
- Vozrod Oblast, The City of Svyatograd
- Zapadny Oblast, The City of Kirvod

Geographic Landscape: Obrovoska

The Chernogora

These “black mountains” not only serve as a natural line of defense in the north, but also have been a source of both conflict and prosperity for the region.

Ludvika Lake

This deep lake springs from the Chernogora and is responsible for the rivers that cut through the Obrovoskan landscape.

Sabla River

This river runs from Ludvika Lake and is a fresh water lifeline for agriculture in the Roznik Oblast.

Kosa River

The largest river in Obrovoska that forks and partially empties into the Eutipris Sea in the east.

Roso Lake

The largest inland body of water in Obrovoska, Roso Lake serves as the center point of all of the Obrovoskan oblasts.

Sovnia River

The rushing waters of the Sovnia cut southward down the steppes into Stryvania.

Velenitsa Forest

The Velenitsa Larch tree is renowned for being unique to the region and provides a bountiful supply of timber for the industry of Skalensk.



Culture Economy and Military

05/05

Obrovoska is well-known for its vast pasture lands, of which it is arguably the most plentiful of the Known World. Throughout Obrovoska, even the poorest of the populace often own livestock and farmable land. In both the east and west, mariculture is a profitable trade, easily accessible to most Obrovoskans by the large bodies of water surrounding the land, as well as the Roso Lake in the center of the country. In the north, the Chernogora Mountains have been a rich supply of coal, which has attracted much foreign attention and conflict, often being cited as the reason for the Imperial invasion in 1149 IC.

The Obrovoskan military is headed by the voivodes, of which there is traditionally one from each oblast. It is the duty of the voivode to defend their respective oblast and perform martial duties, such as mustering levies, overseeing the training of standing troops, and leading their armies into battle. In times of great conflict, the voivodes work together to create a larger, united Obrovoskan military.

Notable Characters in Obrovoska Lore

Olezka Zadrozniatsky, the Voivode of Kirvod.

Helena Drozdov, the Voivode of Skalsensk.

Roksana Pruski, the Voivode of Svyatograd.



Albionne



flbionne

Biography

01/06

Influences: 15th and early 16th century England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland

flbionne's history is one fraught with violence and failure, but in that loss one finds an unshakeable spirit for love of one's home and way of life. In its earliest days, flbionne was a wide network of independent tribal clans, and for as often as they warred and found peace, they rarely ever ventured beyond their island home.

When the Empire de Lyonnais arrived in 482 IC under their first emperor, Philip I, the people of flbionne were quick to band together and put forth resistance. But however fiercely they fought, their technology and tactics were primitive compared to that of the Imperials and defeat in the field of battle followed.

Once resistance faltered, many leaders of flbionne were willing to take bribes of nobility and titles from their conqueror, selling out neighbors and old friends for a chance at peace and to establish themselves in a new feudal system. Some saw it as cowardice. Others saw it as preserving the land they loved so dearly.





flbionne

02/06

flbionne's new social hierarchy gave birth to much unrest, as many former leaders were killed in the battles against Lyonnais, deposed by rivals, or had fallen into disfavor with their new overlords. But the lords of flbionne knew that one day they would find their opportunity to rid themselves of the House de Lyonne. They eagerly adopted the technology of the Empire so that when the day came, they would be prepared for war.

It was the dream of many flbionne nobles to be the hero who would reclaim independence, and many tried, but still they were met with failure for as the years dragged on into centuries, the strength of the Empire only grew to further heights that far outmatched the island nation.

Aside from failed rebellions, flbionne otherwise enjoyed much peace and stability, at times only mustering its armies to turn back the Svithland raiders of old. For many, life was spent on the coasts working their nets, tending to fields, or working within the textile industry of which flbionne was famed for.

Those who sought to put swords to use in the name of the Empire de Lyonnais found service in its armies and many were successful in ventures abroad, even going so far as to form great mercenary companies or become members of the royal guard.

filbionne

03/06

When the House de Lyonne fell in 1174 IC, Henry Gauntbrook, Duke of Brancaster rallied the people of filbionne under his banner. He offered an ultimatum to those loyal to the Empire; join with the peoples of all filbionne in peace, or be put to the sword and driven from the land.

Few stood against him and those loyal to the Empire gathered at the city of Lionswick under the command of Lord Geoffrey Windermere and the Imperial governor, Sir Pierre de Fauconville. They fought on the first day of spring in 1175 IC at the River Dain, east of Lionswick. There, after nearly 700 years of vassalage to the Empire, filbionne was at last free.

Henry Gauntbrook was named king thereafter. However, his rule was short, dying of illness two years later and with no direct heirs of his own. While some suspected foul play from Lyonnais agents, Henry was known throughout his life for being ill-bodied, and though he was a fierce and heroic warrior, his time away from the battlefield was often spent in bed or in the care of his doctors.

The crown was passed to his cousin, James Dunchanan, a noble of a northern filbionne family. James would rule for nearly twenty years, and upon his death, his son David ascended the throne. David had no sons nor brothers, only his daughter, Catherine, who had fallen in love with a young southern noble, Richard Strathmoor.





filbionne

04/06

While many in filbionne are fond of the tale that King David let his daughter marry solely for her heart's sake, there was no denying that Strathmoor was of a kingly disposition. He was just and courageous, educated and well-spoken, temperate and sober, and perhaps most notably, a descendent of Henry Gauntbrook, through the late king's sister's daughters.

It was a stretch for pure royal lineage, but the marriage of Catherine of Dunchester and Richard Strathmoor was one joyously welcomed by the kingdom, for their union was a living embodiment of filbionne's own unity amongst its people. And when David found eternal rest in 1219 IC, lying in his bed and surrounded by his loving family, Richard and Catherine ushered in their new reign, accompanied by the applause of filbionne's citizens.





Geographic Landscape: flbionne

The River Dain

The central river which flows throughout flbionne.

The Caldenwood

flbionne's greatest forest lies in the north. Known as the Caldenwood, it separates lower Calland from the great fields of its northern lands, known as fiana's Reilig.

fiana's Reilig

The very northeast of flbionne is a wide plainsland named for the storied figure known simply as fiana.

The Strait of flbionne

The body of water that separates flbionne from Lyonnais.

Political Landscape: The Kingdom of flbionne

- The Duchy of fódlainn, The City of Ullsmoor - The Duchy of Morraig, The City of Glenwarren - The Duchy of Calland, The City of Dunchester, The City of St. Bonnie
- The County of Aislington, The City of Lionswick - The County of Wester, The City of Windermere - The County of Essford, The City of Kennilswick - The County of Derryshire, The City of Sunderbury - The County of Montset

Culture Economy and Military

06/06

flbionne is known primarily for its three main industries: lumber, textiles, and fishing. The great forests of flbionne have long provided vast quantities of serviceable lumber, which while not as sought-after as Obrovoskan Velenitsa, is far more attainable. flbionne is also one of, if not the largest, exporter of wool in the Known World and there are many textile dynasties which flourish through international trade. Lastly, flbionne's people have long sustained themselves on the gifts of the seas and are respected as expert fishermen.

Having imitated the Empire's own military, flbionne makes frequent use of heavily armored knights and men-at-arms. However, due to flbionne's forested and mountainous terrain, many of these combatants are more potent on foot, rather than mounted, for they spent centuries training to fight in conditions where their horses would provide little use. To supplement the armies, if not act as the pivotal instrument itself, flbionne fields elite archers who make use of uniquely powerful warbows which take years, if not decades to master.

Notable Characters in flbionne Lore

Catherine of Dunchester, the Queen Regnant of flbionne.

Richard Strathmoor, the King Consort of flbionne.

Clíodhna O'Briain - Duchess of Fódlaínn





Saragon



Saragon

Biography

01/05

Influences: 15th and early 16th century Iberian Peninsula (Castille, Aragon, Navarre, Portugal, Granada and Al-Andalus)

Southward across the Lorentine Sea from the Empire de Lyonnais lies Saragon. An expansive land known for its dominating dry plains, Saragon has long been a melting pot for peoples across the Known World, bringing together many different cultures and ways of life; and for the more profit-minded, a blossoming center of rich trade. Saragon's diversity is its greatest strength, a quality they have used time and time again to their benefit.

In Saragon's earliest known days, it was home to countless rulers and their small holdings. From northern barons and counts, to southerly and easterly Iskaran-influenced emirates, Saragon was a land of many cultures, yet these numerous landholders and warlords made life in Saragon one of great strife for the people who lived there.

When the Empire de Lyonnais arrived near the year 700 IC, resistance in Saragon was poorly mounted, for even in the face of invaders, the local lords could not unify to combine their strength. By the year 723 IC, all Saragon had fallen under Imperial dominion.





Saragon

02/07

Saragon's future as an Imperial entity was to be an ebb and flow of comfort and suffering. fit times, the Saragonese lords and their peoples enjoyed immeasurable wealth and flowing trade, and in other instances, those who thought they could rebel against the crown of Lyonnais would be promptly reminded why they served the Empire - and it was the common folk who always endured the worst pain.

Saragon's most frequent act of servitude was the supply of its ships to Lyonnais' naval efforts, soldiers for launching attacks against Venoa, and the contribution of many northern farmers' harvests to feed Imperial armies in their efforts about the Lorentine Sea.

Under Imperial rule, Valenzia became the favored city of Imperial nobility, in part for its closeness to Lyonnais, but also for the highly advantageous geography of its proximity to the sea and the fact the citadel of the city sat upon a very high cliff, making it a significantly defensible position. In 740 IC, Emperor Hugh III created the title Prince of Saragon, a position of overlordship which would come to be granted to Imperial heir apparents. Centuries later, this title would eventually be given to other members of the Imperial royal family.

Saragon

03/07

In 889 IC, Saragon enjoyed brief independence under Garcia Ramirez, known posthumously as El Rey, a once-exiled knight who would become King of Saragon. El Rey came from Granmeria, a city of prominence prior to the Empire's rule which had fallen out of favor with Valenzia's rise. With Granmerian soldiers, El Rey defeated Prince Robert at the Battle of Valenzia in 888 IC; a victory which had depleted the prince's forces so entirely, he could not properly defend the citadel within the city, losing it within the next week. Prince Robert's ransom was used to secure Saragonese independence.

In 895 IC, upon news of El Rey's natural death, Emperor Charles IV arrived at Valenzia with his Imperial host and swiftly defeated El Rey's only son, Ramon, and promptly executed him after the battle. Imperial overlordship and the principality was restored.

In the final century of the Empire's influence, Saragon played a key role in fending off Iskaran advances while the disastrous northern campaigns brought ruin. The border between Iskara and Saragon gave birth to many castles and forts on both sides, becoming an endless war front that attracted many would-be heroes seeking glory.





Saragon

04/07

While Saragon suffered many casualties, it never failed in its objective to defend the border. Any Iskaran assaults that broke the line were temporary and quickly repelled. In the final days of the Empire, it was said many of their best soldiers were indeed Saragonese, and the accolades and honors bestowed were lasting proof.

When the Empire de Lyonnais fell in 1175 IC, so too did the face of Saragon change. Ramiro Fistovera, the leading nobleman of Valenzia, had spent many years visiting the Imperial Court, where he had ample opportunity to witness the Empire's decline. Ramiro began preparations to seize control of Saragon as early as three years in advance and waited for his moment to strike.

When news came of the eradication of the House de Lyonne and the civil war in Lyonnais, Ramiro and his soldiers ousted every vestige of Imperial occupation. The decisive engagement was the Battle of the Basko Plains, where Lord Bertrand de Lusigny made a last, futile effort to retain Imperial control.

Within a year, all Saragon had rid themselves of affiliation to the Empire de Lyonnais and recognized Ramiro Fistovera as their new ruler, the Grand Duke of Saragon.

Saragon

05/07

Ramiro was not wholly accepted by all, most importantly the Saragonese clergy, who were skeptical of Ramiro's new reign and what it would mean for the common people and the Saragonese church. There were small rebellions led by religious leaders, though none ever gained enough traction to have a meaningful impact, at most causing a single city or two to raise banners in defiance.

Ramiro's battle-hardened soldiers outclassed any opponents who stood against them. After what came to be known as the Three Stands of Faith, Ramiro proposed a treaty in which he appointed three clergy people to his court in honor of the three defeated rebellions.

These clergy would advise Ramiro not only in matters of the faith, but also have an influential role in tutoring the Saragonese heirs to come. In 1216 IC, Ramiro suffered a bout of sickness which left him permanently bed-ridden.

Having outlived his son and heir, Sancho, the effective leadership of Saragon fell to his child grandson, Eldonzo. As Ramiro slips further into an incapable state, the realm looks to the beloved but talentless Prince Eldonzo to lead them.





Political Landscape: The Grand Duchy of Saragon

- The Duchy of Granmeria - The County of Listo - The County of Telero (the Bishopric of Telero) - The Emirate of Selvaga - The Emirate of Ildoba

Geographic Landscape: Saragon

The Centroda Mountains

Mount Giganza lies within, the tallest mountain top in all Saragon. Numerous trade paths are kept within the range allowing for quicker travel between Telero and Listo for those who can bring the necessary provisions.

The Ildenees Mountains

The western mountain range of Saragon. Due to the fertile land surrounding it, many villages have taken birth in its great shadow.

The Galeean Mountains

During Saragon's early history, the people of Ildoba formed a lucrative mining business. The renowned steelwork of Ildoba, of which is often attributed to the iron found in these mountains, is known as Galeean steel.

The Cantazia River

Many claim it to be the most scenic of Saragon's rivers, upon which many businesses and lavish homes have risen nearby.

The Dominoco River

Its namesake was a famed lord prior to Lyonnais occupation, who once owned a trade empire so grand, it was said his many ships could fill the entire river.

The Mellizana Rivers

Known elsewhere as the Twins, it is seen as a symbol of fertility.

The Basko Plains

At times this area is a quaint expanse of farms and at other times, home to blood-soaked battlefields.



Culture Economy and Military

07/07

Saragon has maintained much of its economy in the wake of Lyonnais' downfall. Galeean steel continues to be highly sought by the wealthiest of patrons, both domestic and foreign, while meanwhile in the west, farming and herding of animals, primarily sheep, continue a long-held balance. This herding of sheep is dominated by a powerful guild, who migrate them regularly between summer and winter pastures. Saragon is also known for producing many medicinal herbs, mostly believed to have originally been brought from Iskara.

Saragon's military consists largely of two elements: the heavily armored component, adopted in large by Lyonnais' tradition, and the light skirmishers native to Saragon's own war practices. These knights and men-at-arms benefit considerably from Galeean steel, meanwhile the light troops and skirmishers, both mounted and on foot, are units capable of swift movement across Saragon's terrain, excelling in hit-and-run assaults.

Notable Characters in Saragon Lore

Ramiro fistovera, the Grand Duke of Saragon.

Falcona fistovera, the Grand Duchess of Saragon.

Isabella Gardaña, the Countess of Listo.

Rodrigo Crastacrista, the Duke of Granmeria.

Yusuf Nasrim, the Emir of fildoba.

Sayyida filqanta, the Emira of Selvaga



Stryvania



Stryvania

Biography

01/05

Influences: 15th and early 16th century Hungary, Croatia, Romania, Wallachia, Serbia

South of the western reaches of Obrovoska's Zapadny Oblast lies the lands of Stryvania, a realm caught in the midst of its neighboring cultures. Stryvania's history is a bloody tale, often fighting for its independent survival or serving beneath the rule of a foreign crown. Stryvania is a land which has birthed many heroes - as well as villains.

Stryvania was rarely involved in the affairs of the Empire de Lyonnais and its expansion, guarded to its west by the Corvos Inlet, one of the two bodies of water stemming from the Lorentine Sea known commonly as "the firms." To reach Stryvania would require either immense naval efforts or passage by land through Obrovoska, an inconvenience which served as a shield in its own regard.

However, this did not stop the Empire de Lyonnais from setting its sights upon Stryvania's fertile plains. In 932 IC, one year after Kurzenstrad's subjugation, Emperor Jean II continued his conquest and sailed his armies from the port of Vinderburg to the shores of Stryvania. War lasted for two years, but the Imperial armies of the west could make no considerable and lasting headway into Stryvanian lands, eventually causing Jean II to abandon his endeavor.





Stryvania

02/05

Though the west entered into its Paix de Lyonnais, the fige of Imperial Peace, Stryvania would instead enter into its most bloody conflict in 1087 IC, when its southern neighbor, the Kingdom of Konstantia, was invaded by Iskara.

With allied relations spanning centuries, Stryvania and Konstantia made their stand together against the might of the east, and though they fought valiantly, Konstantia fell in 1099 IC. With the Iskarans closing in, Stryvania prepared for the worst.

The defense was led by Count Emeric fiparesti, who owned a small hereditary county in the southeast. Emeric defeated the Iskarans in seven pitched battles, after which he was known for mounting the heads of his fallen foes on their own spears and leaving them behind as a sign for the next wave of Iskarans, earning him the name, “the Demon of fiparesti.”

However, Emeric would die in battle after Gaspar Taksony, a former compatriot and nobleman, turned traitor to Iskara. With Emeric’s death in 1108 IC, Stryvania would fall under its last independent king, Bela V.

Stryvania

03/05

Under Iskaran overlordship, Stryvania was relegated to an archduchy within Iskara, though rulership of the land has always been allowed to continue amongst the native Stryvans, so long as they honored their vassalage.

The armies of Stryvania served faithfully in the Iskaran military, even serving as the first line of defense against the Empire de Lyonnais when they returned in 1127 IC under Hugh IX and again in 1164 IC, the campaign which ended so disastrously for Philip IV that his empire collapsed soon after.

Ever since its subjugation, Stryvanian youth have been forcefully recruited into the Iskaran Janissaries, an elite force of the Sultan, and there they have served with great honor and success. To this day, Stryvania still bows before Iskara. One can only wonder if Stryvania will continue living as a vassal of the Sultan or seek to rid itself of the eastern crown.





Geographic Landscape: Stryvania

The Danoma River

Stemming from Lake Velnia, it collides with the Sovnia River empties into the Corvos Inlet. It is upon the Danoma River that the capital city, Posnovar, resides.

The Bulkar Mountains

These mountains house a dark forest at its base, known to many as a haunted and cursed land within Stryvania – a rumor that brigands and criminals are happy to use as they take shelter in the forest and mountainous slopes.

The Kartok Mountains

Large enough to have served as a form of protection from Iskaran armies of ages past, these mountains are named for Kartok flmus, a legendary hero of Stryvania. He repelled the Iskarans many centuries ago and allowed for tribes to settle the land.

Lake Velnia

Its name roughly translates as “Devil’s Lake,” for it was here that Emeric fparesti was said to have drowned one thousand Iskarans.

Lake Balso

Its name means “voice,” for which it is named either for its peaceful waters or the many young maidens who have sung beside it for fishermen and travelers.

The Alföld Plains

Known as one of the most fertile stretches of land in the eastern reaches of the Known World.

Political Landscape: The Kingdom of Stryvania

- firchduchy of Stryvania (under Iskaran rule) - Duchy of Walgaria - Duchy of Crosnia



Culture Economy and Military

Ø5/Ø5

Stryvania has long maintained a healthy economy, both by the fruits of its own lands and by the strong trade relationships that have kept gold flowing over its borders. The lakes which garnish the plains have produced bountiful fisheries, well-fed by their tributaries.

In the flfold plains, farmers are repeatedly blessed in their harvests, for the land itself is well-nourished by the abundance of minerals in its soil. The Bulkar Mountains have long been a source of silver and the component known as saltpeter, a crucial ingredient in the making of black powder for firearms.

The Stryvanian military is maintained and orderly, though at times spread thin. fls part of the terms of its vassalage to Iskara, many Stryvanian youth are trained in the Janisary corps. Whether as a career for those returned from Janisary service, or for the nobility and wealthier men-at-arms, the most elite make their way to the infamous Black Guard, the standing army of Stryvania. While the Black Guard is intended to serve as a permanent defense, they have been known to take mercenary contracts and engage in foreign conflicts, with a share of their profit being sent as dues to the Sultan.

Notable Characters in Stryvania Lore

Matthias Jakovic, flrchduke of Stryvania. His rule began in 12Ø2 IC, after he formerly served as the head of the Black Guard.

Klara Jakovic, flrchduchess of Stryvania, wife of Matthias



Svithland



Svithland

Biography

01/06

Influences: 15th century Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland

In the north of the Known World lies Svithland. A harsh country, Svithland is dominated by tall mountains, dense forest, at its northernmost reaches, a climate so frigid that few call it home. It comes as no surprise that the history of Svithland is fraught with hardships and violence, but after centuries of struggle, Svithland has forged itself anew.

During the age of the Empire de Lyonnais, Svithland was a free land. Ever since the crowning of the first king in Lyonnais, Svithland raiders made regular forays into the north of the Empire, striking hard and then disappearing on their ships. The Empire was not alone in its troubles at the hands of Svithlanders, for Albionne and Nordenmark were also common targets of raids. Some of the most daring even went so far as to sail into the Lorentine Sea, to plunder riches from Venoa, Saragon, and Konstantia.

For centuries, this was the way of the Svithlanders; to steal what their land could not provide and kill whoever got in the way. Names such as Haraldr the Bloody, Sigurd the Serpent, and Halfdan the Harrowed still live on in stories told about the hearth. But while bloodshed makes for great stories, this is not the whole truth of Svithland. While they carried a fearsome reputation, many also knew them as sincere and honest traders.





Svithland

02/06

In the city of Birkholm, goods from all over the Known World came and went, placing gold in the pockets of many who sought a more peaceful way of life.

Nonetheless, life in the Svithland countryside was a hard one, where many worked themselves nearly to death only to eke out mere survival. Clans and petty kingdoms once made up the political landscape of Svithland, and they warred amongst themselves more than with any realms abroad. All of that changed when a man named Harold Erlingson rose from obscurity.

The son of a petty king in central Svithland, Harold dreamed of a united land that could set aside internal strife and look outward. When his father died in 1068 IC, young Harold took the crown and his family's castle of Utilborg and attacked his neighbors. His ruthlessness in battle and honor displayed to surrendered enemies made short work of conquest, and by his twentieth year in 1073 IC, he controlled nearly all the land between Birkholm and the Sorven Mountains.

The following years were a greater test for Harold, who fought tirelessly to further his demesne southward and claim Birkholm, but victory eluded him. However, in 1084 IC, a rumor filled the land with fear. Many had come to believe that Nordenmark, and by extension, the Empire de Lyonnais, had set its sights on Birkholm.

Svithland

03/06

In the face of such a threat, Harold was the architect of the Treaty of Kolhus, an agreement which ceded southern Svithland to him and named Harold king and protector of the land. In 1085 IC, Harold was crowned King of Svithland and founder of the Utilborg dynasty. The feared attack by the Empire never did happen and scholars years later have argued the rumor's authenticity.

Harold made extraordinary progress in Svithland, which no doubt won him loyalty even amidst such pretense. In many of his conquered lands, Harold gave estates to the peasantry, declaring them free of feudal taxation, as much of Svithland's yields were small enough that taxation crippled and ruined communities.

However, for the more profitable lands of the south, Harold continued taxation and traditional feudal service. Perhaps most importantly, the exportation of iron to Iskara brought a new influx of revenue. As Galeean steel in Saragon rose to prominence, so too rose its price, and Harold was quick to offer a more affordable alternative to eastern trade.

The long reign of the Utilborgs ended in 1203 IC, giving way to the new House of Stennog. King Gustav I made his first order of business as king to further mining operations in the Chernogora Mountains, with the intent to build upon the black-powder industry and sell to foreign markets. However, in 1209 IC, Gustav died of a fever, and his eldest son Eric took the throne.





Svithland

04/06

With the new king's character relatively unknown, the news of war became all the more shocking. Conflict erupted in the Chernogora with the Obrovoskans in 1210 IC. Eric denied any wrongdoing on his part, yet the Obrovoskans claimed the Svithland operation had overstepped the mountain borders, slew Obrovoskan miners, and stolen their yields.

With no proof to exonerate himself or reputation to aid him, Eric was left with no choice but to fight. As the campaign in the Chernogora Mountains turned against the Svithlanders, nobles and magnates alike begged their king to sail across the Vithnal Sea and lay siege to Roznigov. But with much of Svithland's forces stationed in the mountains, there were few soldiers left to call upon for a second campaign and military action never materialized. Eventually, Eric agreed to a truce and signed peace with the Obrovoskans in 1212 IC. Svithland mining enterprise left the Chernogora entirely.

Defeated, shamed, and unpopular, Eric Stennog struggles to maintain his throne. Some say that he is weak, a fool unfit for kingship, while others speak to his credit that he is a good ruler, peaceful in nature, who fell victim to a malicious plot. Wherever the truth lies, many Svithlanders anxiously wonder what future awaits them and if their age of prosperity will soon come to an end.



Geographic Landscape: Svithland

The Sorven Mountains

The central mountain range which runs through over half of Svithland. It is sometimes referred to as, "the Spine of the Known World."

Lake Frida

Svithland's largest lake, located where the Sorven Mountains shift direction. It is named for Frida, a semi-historical figure of legend. Frida was said to have been a witch living near the lake, but when a great battle occurred nearby, she arrived and was able to put an end to it with words of peace. Ever since, she was welcomed by nearby communities as a person of great respect and mediated many conflicts. Some believe that Frida's tale may have been inspired by Lucianna in Obrovoska.

Lake Vostern

The southernmost lake in Svithland, it separates the towns of Utilborg and Bystad.

Lake Osmo

The northernmost lake in Svithland, it often freezes over throughout the winter, making it a frequent location for ice fishing.

Political Landscape: The Kingdom of Svithland

- The County of Birkholm - The County of Utilborg - The County of Marsund - The County of Arvola - The County of Kalborg - The County of Bystad - The County of Talheim

Culture Economy and Military

06/06

Svithland's arable land largely resides south of the Sorven Mountains, while in the north mining remains one of the most profitable trades. Svithland's iron is exported as an inexpensive commodity in international trade, but has succeeded in bringing considerable amounts of wealth to the country. Throughout Svithland, fishing remains one of the primary methods of providing food. Those who reside in the far north often rely on hunting to acquire sought-after furs which they exchange in southerly markets, which has earned Birkholm the title of the "fur capital" of the Known World.

Svithland's military is known to be somewhat unreliable. While many of the knights and feudal servants of the nobility are ready for service and equipped with contemporary arms and armor, the majority of Svithland's peasantry are scattered over long distances as one ventures further north and many lack proper equipment. Those peasants who live on free land have also been known to refuse the call to arms, stating they bear no responsibility to join unless of their own choosing. This challenge to mobilize has commonly been a weakness in Svithland's military capabilities.

Notable Characters in Svithland Lore

Eric Stennog, King of Svithland.

Cecilia Stennog, Queen of Svithland.

Margaret Sverikson, Countess of Utilborg.

Rikitsa Kajaven, Countess of Arvola.

Albert Gustavson, Count of Marsund.





Vennoa



Venoa

Biography

01/06

Influences: 15th century Italian City-States

Ven

oa has been a significant force in the Known World for well over half a millennia, thanks to its bottomless coffers. Residing at the very center of the Lorentine Sea, nearly all maritime trade passes through Ven

oa one way or another, providing endless coin to its cities like it were the blood in Ven

oa's veins. While the islands themselves give an outward appearance of unification, the truth couldn't be further from that visage.

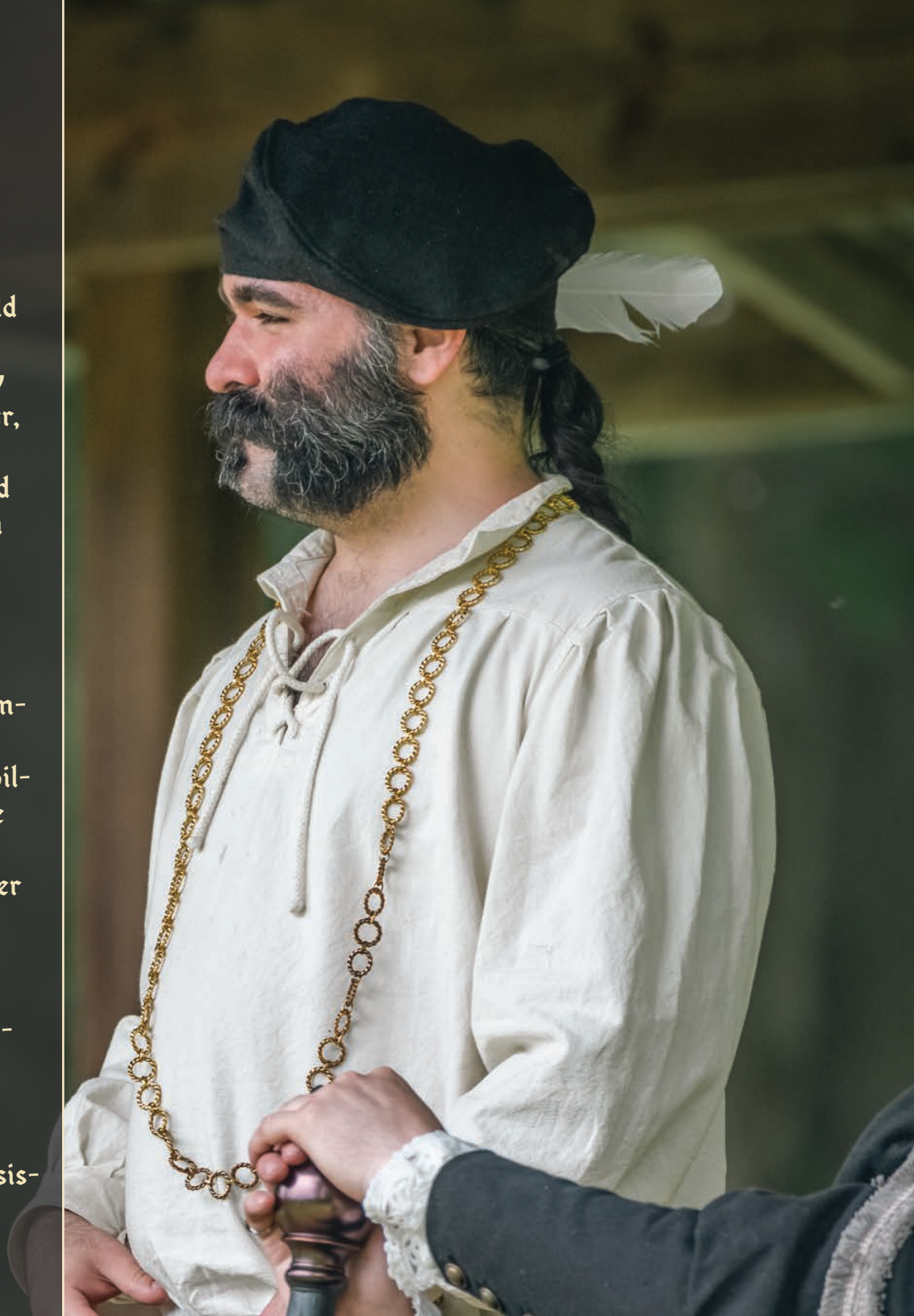
fit various times throughout the first few centuries of the Imperial Calendar, successful attempts had been made to unify the Ven

oese cities into a single kingdom. But these monarchies would prove short-lived, for the regularly changing power imbalances were always far too great to provide stability for a single realm. fit one city would push its dominance and seat its most wealthy family on the throne, it was only ever a matter of time until the winds of fortune blew another way and one dynasty fell in favor of another, more wealthy house.

In the year 594 IC, the last monarchy to rule all of Ven

oa collapsed. From that point on, various states emerged within Ven

oa. Some took form as republics, others as small feudal realms of their own. These states have fluctuated throughout the years until the modern day, but the one consistent element is the central control of a powerful city.





Venóa

02/06

In 668 IC, the Republic of Floranno began what would be known as the first Venœse War, an offensive conflict against the Empire de Lyonnais. As the Empire grew, so too did their maritime trading, yet Venœse fleets often blockaded all routes of passage within the Lorentine Sea and restricted travel to Kurzenstrad, Stryvania, Konstantia, and Iskara. These Venœse entities (some legitimately sanctioned by state, others merely pirates claiming such; the distinction was often indistinguishable) demanded hefty taxes, a cost which hindered trading efforts and bled profits dry. In retaliation, the Empire conducted similar behavior in the west, denying Venœse ships access to the west and into the north.

The first Venœse War saw the capture of the city of Verleans, which in itself was a great blow to the Empire as their wealthiest city and the one through which most foreign imports arrived. Despite brief seasons of recapture, for nearly two centuries, Verleans would remain a Venœse city under the governance of the Republic of Floranno. In 755 IC, the Second Venœse War began, a series of attempts by the Empire to return the favor and conquer land within Venóa.

If Venóa itself could be occupied, many believed the disturbance would allow Verleans to be retaken. However, these attempts rarely made landfall, with most battles taking place at sea. The Venœse often hired Konstantian mercenaries, who made destructive work of the Empire's navy with their incendiary weapons. This war lasted roughly nearly eighty years.

Vennoa

03/06

In 849 IC, the last and third Vennoese War was sparked by a young Imperial woman, Jeanne de Barre. After Vennoese soldiers had performed routine raids of the eastern countryside, Jeanne rallied her countrymen and launched a campaign to retake Verleans. Her war was a success, and with much of the southern peninsula poor from centuries of conflict and pillaging, the Vennoese were ready to count their final military expenditures and return home. Many merchants remained however as valuable members of the Verleans communities, and even financed the great university that resides there as a show of good faith to their neighbors.

Tired from centuries of warfare at sea and abroad, the Vennoese were happy to pursue other avenues of accruing power. It was in 898 IC that the “first” bank was founded by a nobleman of Floranno, Giuliano de fildici, and is arguably the most important event in Vennoese history. While the fildici Bank was certainly not the first bank to ever exist, it set a new precedent for the long term possibilities of using banks to accrue profits and secure power, and every Vennoese bank modeled themselves upon the fildici, or attempted to.

An important element of the fildici that many others lacked was their ability to ensure that every investment paid off. They surrounded themselves with would-be artists, scientists, and philosophers and made every possible effort, honorable or not, to place them as the head of their respective fields. More importantly, many fildici married into noble and royal families all throughout the Known World, and that meant the fildici Bank and their services came with them.





Vennoa

04/06

As early as the invasion of Kurzenstrad, the Empire made use of the Vennoese banks to fund their military endeavors. This was the beginning of a toxic partnership, which some have deemed Vennoa's true revenge for the loss of the Vennoese Wars. This came to fruition in the 12th century IC, when the Empire dared to wage war against the Iskaran Sultanate. Vennoa was happy to finance the Imperial campaigns. While irrefutable proof was never brought to light, there was much credible skepticism that the Vennoese were making investments elsewhere against the interests of their client.

With the Empire's collapse, the city states of Vennoa, their banks, and their merchant guilds, have been free to profit without resistance once more.



Geographic Landscape: Venoa

Lake Gardi

Lake Gardi lies beside the city of Ilisa and has long been a source of freshwater for citizens of western Venoa.

The Teno River

The Teno River runs north from Lake Gardi into the Lorentine Sea.

The Marno River

The Marno River passes through the great city of Floranno.

The Volno River

South of Enza is the Volno River.

Political Landscape: The City-States Venoa

- The Republic of Floranno - The Republic of Ilisa - The Republic of Sonacelli - The Republic of Enza - The Duchy of Beniviso - The Duchy of Paluco

Culture
Economy and Military

Ø6/Ø6

Venøse farmers primarily deal in fruits and vegetables, but wheat farming is often found lacking, however it is an issue easily remedied in trade from nearby Rhensbruck in Kurzenstrad and the fílfold Plains of Stryvania. The greatest domestic export of Venoa is their textiles, which have always served as a regular trade good upon Venøse barges abroad. In regards to Venoa's immeasurable financial successes, much of it is owed to Iskaran goods. While the roads to Konstantia, Stryvania, and Obrovoska are well-traveled by Iskaran merchants, few travel further than that by land. For the most direct trade to the west, all goods pass through Venoa, and these maritime endeavors have been the backbone of Venøse profits for centuries.

Venøse armies are often used to posture, threaten, and otherwise engage in rather bloodless conflicts until one involved party makes terms with the other. The life of a Venøse soldier and of the mercenary companies which largely partake in these conflicts is one of minimized risk, and continued survival has resulted in lucrative business for career soldiers, who often boast some of the finest arms and armor throughout the Known World; though some might challenge the worth of the warrior themselves.

Notable Characters in Venoa Lore

Cosimo de fíldici, current Lord of Floranno.

Bianca de Fortrazzi, magnate of Enza.

Piero de Gardi, magnate of Sonacelli.

Clarice de Pieti, magnate of Ilisa.

Galeazzo de Salviaro, Duke of Bariviso.

Contessina de fírenci, Duchess of Paluca.





Konstantia



Konstantia

Biography

01/07

Influences: 14th and 15th century Byzantine Empire

Konstantia, “the empire that could have been,” as dubbed by some, is a land of plenty humbled by its great overlord. For over a century it has been a vassal of Iskara, subject to service and the demands of higher authority. But this was not always so, and once, if fate had looked upon Konstantia more favorably, it could have been the mightiest of all.

Konstantia as it is known today dates back as far as the Kingdom of Lyonne in the west. While the armies of Konstantia were among the most powerful in the Known World, it was their great navy which brought them immeasurable wealth and glory. They dominated the Lorentine Sea east of Venoa and traded ceaselessly over its waters, with fleets so powerful that no pirates dared to interfere, and those who did were met with a grave soon after.

The invention of “Konstantian fire,” an incendiary weapon used to wondrous effect at sea, was no doubt the reason for this dominance and as a closely guarded secret, attempts to replicate it by foreign powers failed. Konstantia’s long history involves many conflicts with neighboring Stryvania and Iskara, and at other times, involvement as an ally to these would-be enemies in wars against other powers.





Konstantia

02/07

Konstantians are known to have participated in wars in Saragon, Venoa, and even Kurzenstrad predating its subjugation by the Empire de Lyonnais. By the tenth century IC, these forays into faraway lands ceased due to the increasing aggression of Iskara, and it is at that time Konstantia's power began to wane.

While certainly not the first war with Iskara, the War of 951 IC was the turning point of Konstantia's long age of prosperity and the start of the Xanalonika Wars. After increased development of Konstantia's furthest eastern cities, it became a concern of Iskara that such efforts were an attempt to undermine the authority of Mara Mazra in the region. To preemptively halt this advance, the Iskarans launched multiple attacks on the border, provoking a response by the Konstantian king, Andronikos IX, a young king crowned only a year past, known best for his reputation of being foolhardy. Even more importantly to the Iskarans, Andronikos was the last of the long-reigning House of Laskenos.

In the spring of 951, Andronikos led his troops from Xanalonika over the border to lay siege to filepoli. Unsurprisingly, this was a maneuver foreseen by the Iskaran sultan, Bayezid VI, who closed in on the Konstantian forces. When news reached Andronikos of his enemy's movements, he withdrew the siege. It was only three days later on the march when he was attacked, surrounded from all sides.

Konstantia

03/07

At the Battle of Manzis, it was said Andronikos fought on with his bodyguard until the baggage was all that remained, and there he was killed among the last remaining Konstantians. The death of Andronikos IX was no doubt the intention of Sultan Bayezid, for the young king's demise at the hands of his enemy threw the realm into turmoil. With the destruction of the Laskenos dynasty, Konstantia's vision of expansionism to Iskaran territory ground to a halt.

Nobles and courtiers alike fought for control of the government, giving rise and fall to rulers with every year's passing. Some of these monarchs did well in resisting Iskaran advances, though Xanalonika itself came under siege a total of six times between 952 and 1065 IC. All of the sieges were repelled, but the countryside suffered to varying degrees every time, causing long term destruction and decay of Konstantia's infrastructure.

In 1084 IC, Isaac Komnephoros succeeded in gaining the throne after his victory over the Iskarans at the Battle of Burseri. He was a strong-willed and popular king, but his greatest test was yet to come. In 1087, Iskara again invaded Konstantia under the new rule of Murad II. Like Andronikos, Murad himself was a young, fiery leader, but where Andronikos was willingly ignorant of many of life's teachings, Murad was an enthusiastic patron of academia and science and heeded the advice of his counselors.





Konstantia

04/07

In response to the Iskaran invasion, an alliance was struck with Stryvania, and together, the allies resisted successfully for over a decade. But in 1098, defeat at fidrionika gave Iskara control of the Evra River.

At fidrionika, Sultan Murad had debuted his new cannon, which with enough time was capable of reducing stone walls and fortifications. In 1099 IC, the Iskaran army laid siege to Xanalonika, the seventh and final siege of the later dubbed Xanalonika Wars. This time Murad had brought with him additional cannons to reduce the dual layered Spardian Walls, the city's famous, impregnable defensive structure. While Murad's cannons were effective, they were not so effective as to cause immediate destruction, and the siege lasted months as defenders were able to conduct repairs between rounds of cannonfire.

After half a year of siege, and with both waterways surrounding Xanalonika controlled by the Iskarans, Sultan Murad launched his final assault with the intention of overwhelming the diminished defenders with sheer numbers.

Konstantia

05/07

The fighting lasted from sunrise and through the dead of night, but by the time the sun rose again, Xanalonika had fallen to the Iskaran army. At some point during the fighting in the night, King Isaac Komnephoros was slain alongside his soldiers in the streets in what had been a final charge to buy time for civilians to flee. The war ended in 1108 IC with the eventual defeat of Stryvania.

Ever since Xanalonika's fall, Konstantia has served as a vassal state to the Iskaran Sultanate. While Konstantian monarchs have been allowed to continue governance of the lands from Corrinopolis as the Archduchy of Konstantia, they pay regular tribute to Iskara in both wealth and soldiers, greatly hampering their ability to wage rebellion.

At all times, a healthy Iskaran garrison resides within Xanalonika with watchful eyes, serving the Iskaran nobles who rule over the once proud city.





Political Landscape: The Kingdom of Konstantia

Geographic Landscape: Konstantia

The Danoma River

Coursing from the north out of Stryvania, the Danoma River passes into Konstantian lands, where it divides into the rivers Morios and Evra.

The Morios River

The westerly branch of the Danoma River.

Lake Vostern

The southernmost lake in Svithland, it separates the towns of Utilborg and Bystad.

The Evra River

The easterly branch of the Danoma River. The city of Adrionika is found alongside it.

The Arkanea Mountains

These mountains have proven in the last one hundred years to be vital to Iskara's continued gunpowder endeavors, leading Xanalonika itself to be one of the Sultanate's westernmost centers of production.



Culture Economy and Military

Ø7/Ø7

Prior to its subjugation by the Iskaran Sultanate, Konstantia once boasted one of the Known World's strongest economies. Konstantia saw immeasurable trade through its ports, which to many, acted as a gateway between east and west. However, the trade tariffs enforced by Iskara have sapped much of the profit, greatly diminishing the wealth of Konstantia. Agriculture remains the strongest element of Konstantia's economy, in thanks not only to the large amount of arable land, but Konstantia's opportune climate. Even the most humble farms are considered robust in the eyes of many foreigners.

On land, Konstantia's military has often been a blend of heavy and light cavalry, with light militia-based infantry. Prior to the Xanalonika Wars, Konstantia bore a stronger heavy infantry element which was supported by a land-for-service structure, but as the available land diminished and the system was discarded outright by the Iskaran Sultanate, this tier of soldier has become scarce as most peasantry no longer possess the means to outfit for the role. Instead, armies are formed from ill-equipped local peasant levies, supplemented by the mounted retinues of nobility and what mercenaries can be afforded.

Notable Characters in Konstantia Lore

Alexios Corrinikos, Archduke of Konstantia.

Theodora Corrinikos, Archduchess of Konstantia.



Iskara



Iskara

Western Iskara

Biography

01/04

Influences: 15th and early to mid 16th century Ottoman Turk, Egypt, Persia, Balkan Peninsula

Iskara, the greatest empire of the Known World, has long outlasted its more infamous, westerly counterpart, the Empire de Lyonnais. While the millennia-old empire has fluctuated throughout the ages, growing, shrinking, and growing again like the beating of a heart, it has remained constant. The arid plains and deserts of the eastern reaches of the Known World have belonged to Iskara longer than most written histories and its western borders extend as far as Obrovoska in the north and Saragon in the south. Wherever the armies of Iskara venture, victory is theirs and glory is to the great city of Mara Mazra.

While Iskara is known for its military might, it has also been home to countless technological, cultural, and societal innovations. Democracy has its birth in Iskara, as does the Known World's first writings, mathematics, and alchemical studies. Most anything the Known World boasts, one can likely make a reputable claim that its origin lies in Iskara. Though beyond all doubt, Iskara's most widely known and feared innovation has been that of the black powder which fuels their fiery weapons of war.





Iskara

02/04

In 1087 IC, Iskara invaded its western neighbors, the Kingdoms of Konstantia and Stryvania. By this time, the Iskarans had already produced their first cannons and hand-gonnes, with which they used to negate the heavy cavalry charges their opponents relied so heavily upon. In 1099, Konstantia fell, and Stryvania followed suit in 1108. Now vassals of Iskara, many held their breath to see if the Iskarans would push further west.

It was Iskara who would be on the defensive, when in 1127 IC, Emperor Hugh IX of Lyonnais came forth with his imperial armies. All along the Iskaran coastline of the Lorentine Sea, war raged on for nearly a decade. In the end, Hugh IX surrendered and peace was made. The Iskaran blackpowder weapons had made an impression once again, this time, in a way that would change the face of battlefields forever.

Philip IV would bring war again in 1164 IC, facing an even greater defeat than before. There was no doubt that in the aftermath, as the Empire de Lyonnais crumbled apart, that Iskara had dealt the killing blow. After nearly 700 years of dominance, the greatest empire of the west was no more, and Iskara was undoubtedly the mightiest force of the Known World.

Iskara, for all its proficiency at war, does not hunger for it as other nations do. Free of the Lyonnais threat, Iskara has been relatively peaceful since, only mustering its armies to quell internal strife. But many in the Known World watch with careful eyes, fearful that Iskara might rise from its slumber and gaze upon them.



Political Landscape: The Sultanate of Iskara

Geographic Landscape: West Iskara

Eutipris Sea

The largest inland sea of the Known World. Many Iskaran villages and towns have made their homes upon its shores.

Zeyton Bay

Centuries past, this body of water once saw endless conflict between Iskara and Konstantia, but now it serves as a flourishing trade route for ships to sail peacefully.

The fthkimaz Desert

This waste separates Iskara from Saragon and is the primary reason why southward expeditions have often failed. Few know how far it truly extends, yet none have survived who can map it entirely.

The fth'Ban Tributary

A vast wealth of fresh water runs like a vein through the north western Iskaran landscape providing life and commerce for the cities that sit at the end of its outstretched fingertips.



Culture Economy and Military

Ø4/Ø4

Iskara boasts a strong agrarian economy, but the quantity of land even still far exceeds the number of workers needed to utilize it. It is at the forefront of every Iskaran governor's mind how best to use their land, grow their local population, and expand these efforts. Domestic trade has also been an important element of this lifestyle amongst the peasantry, for the many wandering nomads bring goods from across the realm to those who need them. Perhaps its most lucrative trade good however is the fine silk that Iskara brings to the Known World from its unknown contacts in the far east.

Ever since the conquests of Konstantia and Stryvania, the Iskaran military's greatest strength is their elite Janissary corps, which levies these vassal soldiers into a professional, standing force that acts with unshakable confidence and well-calculated tactical maneuvers. Furthermore, these Janissaries are renowned as being the finest gunners in the Known World, able to perform the many duties of using firearms flawlessly while under pressure. It has been due to the bravery of the Janissaries that many battles have been won for the Sultanate.

Notable Characters in Iskara Lore

Sultan Murad Iska-Seljun III, ruler of Iskara.

Osman Candahri, commander of the Sultan's Janissary corps.



The Steppes



The Steppes

Biography

01/04

Influences: 9th - 16th century Cumans, Kipchaks, Khazars, Mongols, Catars

The eastern steppe lands, referred to as the Wild Steppes in the records of Lyonnais, are the home of many semi-nomadic tribes. Since approximately the year 552 IC, the Onogur Khaganate has lorded over these diverse peoples, bound in faith to the eagle-god, Ezir. The name Onogur has been translated to "Ten firrows" and aptly represents the ten cadet branches of its noble family, of which there are four major tribes: the Red Onogurs of the south, the Yellow Onogurs of the west, the Black Onogurs of the north, and the Blue Onogurs of the east.

With a notable lack of written record, much of the Onogur history remains elusive in the Known World as it is primarily passed by oral tradition and with rare opportunity for scholars of the west to write accounts of it. What is known is that in the last fifty years, the Onogurs have fostered friendly relations with the eastern oblasts of Obrovoska and many horsemen have served as auxiliary cavalry for the voivodes. With such relations, this friendship has resulted in increased trade opportunities.

However, the Steppes is not a land as united as it may seem, for there are other tribes outside of the powerful Onogurs. In the west lie the Qarluk, in the south, near the Eutipris Sea, are the Sawir, and the northeastern most reaches are home to the Qimeq. All three of these powerful tribes chafe against the Onogur hegemony and seek opportunity to rise against the Khagan's rule.





The Steppes

02/04

In 1223 IC, a brief civil war erupted within the Blue Onogurs concerning the succession of the Tarkhan. The Tumen and their Qimeq allies were defeated by the Chenegs and their Ulgen kin, and as a result, Catbeg of the Cheneg ascended as Tarkhan.

During this event, the Khagan Ilterish fell ill and was bedridden, forcing the council of lords, known as the Kurultai, to determine a successor in the likelihood that the Khagan would not survive his illness.

The Khagan's only son, Tulan Shad, had been heir apparent, but was widely unpopular for his tempestuous and erratic nature. Following Catbeg's victory, many of the Kurultai voted in her favor, and Catbeg accepted the nomination. There were some, however, who opposed this decision.

In the autumn of 1223 IC, Tulan accompanied the lords of the Black and Blue Onogurs in a stag hunt, during which he met his untimely demise in an alleged accident. Many believed the circumstances to be as suspicious as they appeared, but no more than a month later, Ilterish passed from his illness and Catbeg succeeded him as Khagan of the Onogur Khaganate.



Geographic Landscape: The Steppes

Cöl

The given name of the land according to those who dwell there.

Eutipris Sea

The largest inland sea of the Known World.

Political Landscape: The Steppes

- The Onogur Khaganate - The Qarluks - The Sawirks - The Qimeqs



Culture Economy and Military

Ø4/Ø4

The people of the Steppes have traded primarily with Obrovoska and Iskara, exporting silks, horses, cattle, fermented milk, and wheat and rye harvested near the Eutipris Sea. They have commonly imported wine, spices, and luxurious cloth from Iskara and the further east. While many in the west consider Iskara the dominant force of the silk trade, the Steppes have proven to be a viable contender. In recent years, partly due to friendly relations with Obrovoska, the Onogurs have been able to oversee trade deals extending as far west as Kustenleben.

Throughout the Known World, the horsemen of the Steppes are rightfully feared. Over a millennia of life in the Steppes and nomadic tradition has instilled a great talent for horsemanship and cavalry dominate the open terrain. Be they armed lightly or heavily, every Steppes warrior is skilled in the use of a bow from horseback, making them highly mobile and versatile soldiers who adapt to the flow of battle.

Notable Characters in Steppes Lore

Catbeg Khan, the ruler of the Onogur Khaganate.

Culan Shad, the recently deceased son of the previous Khagan, Ilterish, whose suspicious death continues to inspire dissent.

Credits

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