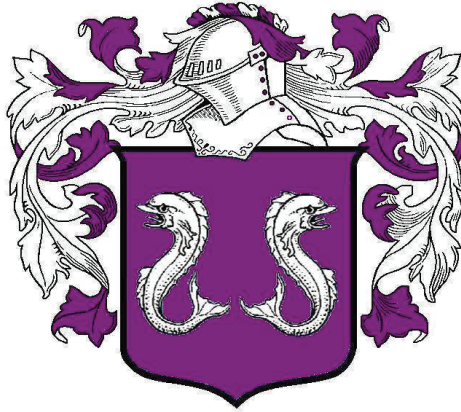


The Republic of Lyzanium

The birthplace of civilization and learning
We invented history



Immortality? It's a fine dream. To live forever? How tempting. But the immortality these creatures offer is a lie. True immortality is found in the legacy of ones deeds, in the lines of ones' children and grandchildren, in the grand slow play of events from the past to the future via the present. These creatures offer us only an eternity of slavery and stagnation. I thank them for their kind offer, but I will return to my estates and continue to build the future for myself and my family. I urge you, gentlemen, to be wary of clever dragons offering precious gifts.

— Senator Severus Selentius Lyzan, Final Address To The Renian Senate

Lyzanium! Epic island city, cradle of culture, seat of learning. Lyzanium! Most splendid isle, olive-groved, pastured with shoaat¹, wound with vines. Lyzanium! White-marbled crown at the centre of the world, echoed and exalted, land of the wise. Lyzanium! Heir of history, mother of civilization, father of the republic.

In the last days of the Renian empire, there were those who saw the shape of the future and refused to accept it. Severus Selentius Lyzar, a dedicated Imperial servant, spurned corruption and retreated to his island estates. When the Decline became the Fall, he declared himself First Senator of the New Republic, with the support of the loyal legions and the wisest of the Administration. He and his descendants took the best the old Empire had to offer, and reshaped a nation rooted in rationality and the highest arts of civilization.

The Lyzar in the street knows she is the product of a millennium of refinement. She comes from the single most civilized nation in the entire world. She knows that her people are educated and civilized and that people in other countries are unwashed and savage, barely scratching out a living in the ruins of the past. More to the point, she knows that the rational way of life practised in Lyzanium is the only one worth pursuing and that eventually everyone else will come round to that understanding.

Coming from a five-year period of political turmoil ending three decades of self-imposed isolation, Lyzanium again looks towards the world stage. It has heard of a new land across the Maelstrom, and where others are motivated by gross materialism the men

and women of Lyzanium see so many different possibilities. Bright-eyed, forward-looking, the heirs of empire stand ready with the weapons of civilization in their hands, and the pride of the truly enlightened ringing in their hearts.

AN OVERVIEW OF LYZANIUM

Lyzanium is the Grand Republic, ruled over by a Senate, whose number and membership is ultimately fluid. The Senate meets all year round in the great Senate building in Severus. The Senators have the support of the consular class – pure-blooded land owners of Lyzanium who trace a lineage back to the original founders of the Grand Republic and whose maneuverings dictate the policies of the Senators. The teeming multitudes of the citizenry support the Republic with their hard work, and in return they enjoy a standard of living rare in a world of poverty and corruption. Even a blacksmith in Lyzanium receives a level of publicly-sponsored education and enfranchisement that would make the sons and daughters of the Flembic nobility green with envy. The streets and highways are safe from random violence, and even those who are down on their luck will have enough to eat, clothes on their backs, and a place to sleep. The Republic is a stern but caring parent that looks after its' children.

Outside of the great city of Severus, there are many other urban settlements but none rivals the capital in size or splendour. The larger settlements tend to be on the coast, with smaller settlements generally having grown up naturally around some consul's estate, and rarely becoming larger than a small town. Roads and canals criss-cross the nation, allowing for the swift transportation of goods, people and – more importantly – ideas

¹*Shoaat*: A long haired creature similar to a cross between a goat and a huge sheep that provides fine wool and succulent meat. While a full grown shoaat is extremely valuable they are sadly not the brightest of creatures. Calling someone a shoaat is a common insult amongst Lyzar children

from one part of the Grand Republic to another. Great sweeping fields and orchards cover Lyzanium, surrounding the mountains that form the heart of the island-nation. Once these mountains thundered and smoked but those days are millennia gone. Once they were rich in silver, but that mineral wealth played out centuries ago and now their snow-topped peaks are left to their own devices, apart from a few quarries, and the occasional consul's holiday villa or dirt-poor farm.

In Lyzanium, the philosopher is king. Since the days of Severus Selentius Lyzan the people of the Grand Republic have striven to comprehend the universe in all its awesome complexity and quiet simplicity. The Great Lyceum teaches all the important arts – history, philosophy, logic, music, mathematics, rhetoric and the rest – but what it really instills in its students is the ability to think rationally, to question traditionally held beliefs about the world and man's place in it, and to translate those questions into new paths of thought. In Lyzanium, civilised citizens consider a good night's entertainment is to visit the forum and hear the respected minds of the day debate one another on meaningful matters with good manners and profound insight.

The legions keep the people safe, the administration ensures their prosperity, and the emissaries make sure that the people of less happier lands do not trouble them. Guided by a Senate of men and women supported by the educated, rational consuls, and grounded on a foundation of rational thought, Lyzanium is surely the most wonderful place in all the world to live.

The Senate

In theory, all matters of state are discussed and voted upon by the Senate, their decisions implemented by the Administration – the civil service. In practice, many of the more tedious day-to-day tasks of running the Republic are left in the capable hands of the Administration unless one senator or another wishes to make a political point by drawing attention to them.

All senate business is conducted publicly – there are no secret ballots in Lyzanium, and the public galleries are always crammed with citizens and consuls. Each senator is supported by the votes of ten consuls; any more votes than that are effectively "wasted" so a great deal of manoeuvring goes toward ensuring that any given political affiliation has as many senators as possible without leaving any one senator in a position where a change of heart might rob him of his seat. The Administration records which consuls support which senator and this is publicly available information to any citizen.

This arrangement has led to the formation of dozens of political affiliations with senators and citizens united by a shared philosophy.

These coteries wax and wane in power and influence, and are at best very loose associations. Supporters of a certain coterie tend to adopt a certain mode of dress, and to support a certain mode of thought, but these coteries should not be confused with political parties; ultimately, like everything else in Lyzanium, politics comes down to philosophy and to modes of thought rather than to simple expediency. This does not stop their various supporters competing with one another whether openly or in secret; brawls in the street when groups of citizens with opposing views meet are by no means a rare occurrence, especially when the wine has been flowing.

At any given time there tends to be around a dozen primary

coteries active in the senate, and perhaps twice that number of minor affiliations and interest groups. At the moment, the main affiliations include the White Arrow (a coalition of consuls with an interest in maintaining the strength of the military), the Accommodation for Progress (a loose affiliation who promote policies designed to reinvigorate Lyzanium as a world power but who seem just as interested in lining the pockets of the consuls involved), the Seventh Wave (an ethical association who promote policies designed to reinvigorate Lyzanium as a world power, with a definite focus on the duty of the Lyzar people to help less civilised nations to overcome their ignorance), the Noonlight Column (a strong coalition of traditional consuls whose senators are mostly concerned about defending Lyzanium from external threats, but are united by a deep-seated suspicion of the militaristic White Arrow) and the Scions of the Blood (a somewhat reactionary group that urges senators to vote in favour of making the citizenship examinations more difficult). Lesser parties include the Fraternity of the Cup (a thorn in the side of the more traditional senators and consuls, made up mostly of younger and more rebellious consuls whose absurdist antics include a deeper and more threatening anarchist undertone) and the Green Wheel Harmonium (a fringe group growing in influence whose supporters advocate the "natural harmony" philosophies of Agonates of the Jug). This is of course not to mention the half-dozen looser associations who lack a name, or whose name is secret.

A Brief Note About Lyzar Names

You can tell a lot about a Lyzar by his name. Consuls and pure-blooded citizens have three names; a personal name, a family name, and a consular name that tells you which Renian founder they are descended from. Common citizens have two names; a personal name and a family name. Everyone else has one name. Some Lyzars from powerful, traditional families may have several personal names, often chosen to honour ancestors or personal heroes; so Gailus-Valencius Hepartes Jevan might formally be referred to as "Gailus Valencius of the family Hepartes, consul of the line of Jevan." This is by no means common practice, however.

Matters of blood and citizenship

Blood is of great concern to the people of Lyzanium. "The blood" and "being of pure blood" determines one's eligibility to own land and claim the title of consul. To be of "pure blood" means to be able to trace an unbroken line of descent back to the recognized founders of Lyzanium – the families of the men and women who created the Republic from the rubble of the Renian Empire. One is only "of pure blood" if both one's parents are of pure blood. Even a single ancestor who is not of the pure blood would theoretically invalidate one's claim to the pure blood.

Each pure-blood family maintains extensive genealogical records, but these are nothing beside the Great Record of the Scions of Lyzanium, a library maintained by the civil service that traces every torturous branch and root of the pure blood and can definitively state if someone is indeed pure blooded.

Challenges are extremely uncommon, and it is a matter of law that a challenge to the status of one's pure blood can only be lodged against someone who is alive, and can only involve the parents and grandparents of the individual. The bureaucracy is bound to carefully investigate all evidence that someone is not

of the pure blood, and possesses the authority to strip someone of land if they are found to be falsely claiming pure blood. It is very rare that anyone is actually accused, much less stripped of their land. Attempts have been made in the past to disenfranchise entire families due to some spurious claim of the doings of a great-grandfather, but the response of the bureaucracy is always the same "To go back further than the doings of the grandfather is to delve into history, and what is history is fact and may not be challenged." This restriction on how far back evidence of a challenge to a person's pure blood status goes is as much a safety net as anything else; the political turmoil that might ensue if an ancestor eight generations back were proved to not be of the pure blood, the sheer number of consuls whose position might be threatened, is simply too much to consider.

The importance of pure blood is paramount. At any given time, only a limited number of pure-blooded Lyzars have consular rank. The vast majority of the pure-blooded have only citizen rank. However, they are dedicated to the maintenance of the purity of their lineage because they know that only through vigilance can they hope for their descendants to achieve the important goal of acquiring land and gaining enfranchisement.

If one of the blood has children with someone who is not of the blood, those children cannot be pure blooded, regardless of whether the other parent is a citizen or a foreigner. The unblooded children must still pass the citizenship examination if they wish to become citizens, but they can never hold land in Lyzanium: once sacrificed, the blood cannot be regained. Of course, a pure-blood who has unblooded children may still take a blooded husband or wife and produce blooded children as well at a later date. Children that are born out of wedlock can never be pure blooded. There are perhaps ten thousand recognized pure-blooded families on Lyzanium at this time, of which only a fraction actually own land and claim the vote of a consul.

To be a citizen of Lyzanium is a privilege, not a right. Any human, mokosh, wemic or avian can approach the civil service and ask to take the citizenship examination. The citizenship examination is based partly on questions relating to Lyzar history and current practices, but there is also an element of philosophical discussion, understanding of mathematics, and an appreciation for popular Lyzar literature and essay writing involved. Most of those who have been raised on Lyzanium have little difficulty passing the examination; foreigners, however, often have to engage in extensive study to receive a passing mark. One may petition to sit the examination at any time, but it is most commonly attempted when one is fifteen years old. If the examination is completed successfully, their names are passed to the senate and (presuming there is no contest from within the senate) passed on a general "aye" at the start of business each day. It is rare but not unknown for the Senate to challenge ones' right to be a citizen, and it is almost always as a result of "politics" that this happens.

A citizen has full protection under the law, and retains his citizen status as long as he continues to pay his taxes. The senate can strip a citizen of his status, but this is a power the senate never actually exercises. A citizen cannot be sold into slavery, although he can "voluntarily" renounce his citizenship and become a slave – this generally happens where the alternative is the death penalty for some crime.

Children, those who cannot pass the citizenship examination (such as the mentally infirm), foreigners and criminals are not

citizens. They belong to the class of the dependant and have a nebulous position somewhere between citizens and slaves. While the infirm, the under-age and the recidivist are viewed in very different ways, they all have one thing in common – their survival relies on the support of others, whether it be a child's parents, an administration or legion-run orphanage, a charitable hospital, or a prison. They have very few rights under Lyzar law; there must be a person or organization that specifically takes responsibility for them; and they can be sold into slavery, forced to work, or exiled from Lyzanium on the whim of their sponsor.

The Consular class

Foremost among the citizens of Lyzanium are the consuls. Each consul possesses a single vote which can be used to support a senator of their choosing. Possession of the rank of consul and the benefits that go with it seems to outsiders to be a simple matter of owning land but the situation is actually much more complex. All Lyzanium is divided into estates – parcels of land fixed on an area of one-hundred-square-miles capable of supporting agriculture, on which is constructed a certain minimum number of buildings – generally a single sprawling villa and some farm buildings, although some estates include villages, towns or even small cities.

There are two-thousand estates on mainland Lyzanium, their boundaries set down by the civil service centuries ago. These estates cannot be subdivided or broken up, nor may they be combined together – their boundaries are inviolate. Because Lyzanium has never been an especially warlike nation, the Senate recognizes no estates outside of the nation itself, so the number of consuls had been set at two thousand since the early years of the Grand Republic.

Each of these parcels of land bears with it the possibility of a single vote, but it would not be correct to say that each estate automatically provides one vote. A single consul may possess only a single vote, no matter how many estates she may come into possession of. She maintains ownership of that land until she chooses to legally pass it to another. It is common practice to pass ones estate – and ones' vote – to ones descendants but this is by no means the only model by which land may change hands. A consul in possession of more than one estate might bestow the land on any pure-blooded citizen of Lyzanium in a practice referred to as "enfranchisement". "Enfranchisement" requires certain documents to change hands, and a contract to be written and witnessed by the civil service in which the consul renounces all claim to the estate and transfers it to the recipient. At the point where the land is transferred, all claim that the consul has to the estate is immediately nullified – it becomes the sole legal property of the recipient. As Iseleus Heptamius says in his Satires, "A thing is not given if the giver can simply take it away; responsibility and authority must remain the sole provenance of the possessor."

A consul may disseminate ownership of her estate to any pure-blooded citizen she chooses and may do so directly (through enfranchisement) or through her post-mortem will. All consuls, as a matter of course, maintain wills which are registered with the civil service and regularly amended. Possession of land brings with it the right to vote and the rank of consul. In cases where for one reason or another an estate cannot be passed to an heir, the Senate determines which pure-blooded citizen will take possession of the land and thus gain the consular vote.

It is common for a consul who owns a number of estates to have land scattered all across Lyzanium, and it is equally common for a consul never to set foot on the land that grants him voting status. Some consuls live on their estates, or maintain them as active concerns – this is especially true of those estates that contain urban areas. Many other consuls, however, lease their estates to others to maintain on their behalf – especially to the Greenfield Shores Trading House. Greenfield Shores has an extensive presence in Lyzanium, producing luxury Lyzar produce for sale in foreign markets. Often the Trade House will lease several adjoining estates and transform them into a single vast agricultural area dedicated to grapes, olives or grazing shoats. That is not to say that all consuls are rich. Especially in the cases of the mountain estates and their empty silver mines, a consul might well find themselves in possession of land that far from producing funds is actually a money sink. These poor-quality estates are the ones most likely to change hands in return for money, or be gifted to allies to create new consuls for political purposes.

Large families are the norm among the consular class (and to a lesser degree among the pure blooded in general) because each consul wants the largest pool of “candidates” to choose from when it comes time to pass their land and votes on; they also want to ensure there are plenty of good candidates with which to make politically expedient matches. It is not uncommon for a powerful consul to enfranchise one of her children as part of the marriage agreement to “purchase” a good match. It is also not unknown for a consul to enfranchise a pure-blooded citizen as he marries her – after all, no matter how much land a consul owns he has only a single vote. A like minded spouse (or heir, or ally) who also possesses a vote is much to be preferred.

Not all consular families have equal power or estate – far from it. Mater Valenia Hepatres Jevan owns a vast estate with several villas, acres of vineyards and pastures, several orchards, two moderately-sized villages, and a word from her can shake the foundations of the Republic much more effectively than a dozen angry denunciations from less well-connected families. When the White Arrow need to choose a senator who will support its military concerns, it is to her and her family that they look for suggestions first.

A consul is generally addressed by the honourific matriarch or patriarch as appropriate to their gender.

CITIZENS

Everyone else who matters in Lyzanium is a citizen. They enjoy many rights and legal protections, but they also bear terrible obligations – they are the people of the Grand Republic, the heirs of civilization. The average Lyzar enjoys a level of sophistication and education that is the envy of the sons and daughters of Flambard, along with a level of combined freedom and responsibility that would stupefy a Freiboden Free Merchant. A citizen has an effective “status” within Lyzar society based initially on the reputation of his family, but which rapidly becomes dependent entirely on how well and in what capacity he serves the Republic. The citizenry includes the general populace, as well as all members of the Administration (the civil service), the military, and the priesthood. Every citizen serves a term of “service to the republic” which is usually in the military – although those with a clear suitability to other areas of national service may be assigned to Administration offices instead. A citizen tends to be affiliated with a consular family

either directly (by blood or marriage) or indirectly (through patronage).

Taxes (for citizens) are high in Lyzanium. The wealthy are very wealthy, true enough, and even the poor are not really poor when one considers the various civic services that are at their disposal – no citizen goes hungry, or goes without medical attention, or wears rags.

There are so many benefits to being a citizen in the Grand Republic that the freedoms one surrenders are nothing more than a fair trade.

Slaves

The lowest stratum of Lyzar society is populated by the slaves, but even here there are distinctions. A house-slave tasked with looking after a consul's heir is in an entirely different position to the slave who toils in the vineyards or slaughter-house. There are families of slaves who have served the same consular family for generations who enjoy a position of trust and even authority that would be inconceivable even to the trusted slaves of Amun-sa and would inspire jealousy in many household servants the world over. Some of the more progressive families may even arrange for their most favoured slaves to join the citizenry as a reward for some service to the republic, although this is by no means common and is considered unusual.

Gender Roles and Family Life

Both genders are legally and socially absolutely equal in the Grand Republic. That is not to say that differences are not suggested and the subject of heated discussion. The philosopher Gracilla Uleria Tacantes, suggested that men and women had different “qualities of reason” and that the best way to solve any problem is to give it to an educated man and an educated woman. This pairing is a common one in all walks of Lyzar life, but the idea that one sex might be in some way superior to the other is laughable.

Among those of pure-blood, all marriages are arranged to some degree, mostly to preserve the bloodlines but also because of the intricacies of inheriting the consular title. It has been remarked that the arrangement of marriages among the pure blooded is a sport not entirely dissimilar to horse-trading in less civilised lands. Every family wants to make the most advantageous match, after all, preserving their bloodline and ensuring that their consular votes (if any) pass on to suitable candidates.

Those of the pure blood do not typically marry foreigners or unblooded citizens because to do so is to produce children who are not pure blooded. Most pure-blooded Lyzars consider the idea of giving up your birthright and your place in history for some passing infatuation with an unblooded citizen to be a charmingly naive foible.

Marital infidelity by a pure blood woman with a man is a capital offence for both of those involved, if it can be proved. It is essential that the pure-blooded know who the parents of all their children are. Petty jealousy has nothing to do with the issue, anything that brings the genealogy of a pure blood child into question undermines the basis of Lyzar society and is punished accordingly.

Men tend to arrange the marriages of their sons, women the marriages of their daughters although this is only custom.

Outside the ranks of the pure-blooded, marriage arrangements are much less formal.

Lyzar marriage, especially among those of consular rank, is meticulously planned affair. Marriage is a secular ceremony, rather than a religious one – a marriage document is signed in front of civil servant witnesses and copies are kept for later reference. The marriage contract is generally exactly that – a complex legal document detailing the rights and expectations of both partners, often detailing how and when the marriage may be dissolved. It is not uncommon for children or even babies to be married to each other. It is considered odd for a consul to experience romantic affection for his or her spouse.

Inheritance is governed by the will that all citizens are expected to formalize and leave with an appropriate representative, updating as need be. Both partners keep their own property when they enter a marriage, with any joint property being clearly under the ownership of one or the other. Prenuptial arrangements are par for the course and can run to many pages.

Laws governing prostitution are restrictive on Lyzanium. Only specially trained priests or priestesses may provide spiritual or physical indulgence for money in Lyzanium. A few bushels will only buy you someone with enough training to know how to apply kohl, but for a handful of florins you can enjoy the companionship of a priest whose learning matches that of the great scholars. Marital infidelity involving a pure blood woman is a capital offence however, and such women are meticulous to only enjoy the company of the finest professionals with liaisons always carefully chosen to avoid potential issues. Most men and women are encouraged to seek out the company of a member of their own gender, but a member of a different race is acceptable. These companions are entirely unlike traditional whores; a consul's courtesan is a respected public figure who is likely to spend time publicly and privately with the consul. They are expected to provide companionship, spiritual and even political advice as well as attending to the lesser physical needs.

The Threefold Foundation - Administration, Legion, Emissary

Administrator Leontes Indentes said "Consul and senator come and go, but the nod of the viziers makes the river flow" and it is as true today as it was three hundred years ago. Three rocks form the foundation of Lyzar culture: the administration, the legion and the emissaries.

The administration – the civic servants – record and implement the decisions of the Senate. Easily half the administration is made up of wemic citizens, although all races are represented. The many departments of the administration saturate every level of Lyzar society; they keep records, administer the citizenship examinations, arrange prices for necessities, oversee the construction of new buildings, judge legal cases, plan roads and many other vital services needed by the Grand Republic to exist healthily. A bureaucrat cannot legally become a senator or consul, but any serving bureaucrat can resign his commission with a months notice and become a regular citizen again. All civil servants are paid a set salary by the state, and it is one of the jobs of the senate to agree on that salary.

It is not uncommon to find an ex-Lyzar civil servant serving abroad as an assistant, secretary, advisor or lawyer. It is likewise

not uncommon for them to discreetly keep their fellow citizens apprised of interesting developments in their new country. The Lyzar military, the legion, is not large, but it is well armed, well maintained and well paid. The army looks after its soldiers, providing pensions, ensuring medical care and support for soldiers' families, and maintains very high morale. Their responsibilities generally involve protection Lyzanium's borders, and acting as a police force under the guidance of the administration. They have good quality weapons, although their battlefield tactics tend to be a little archaic in the modern world. There are no organized darkpowder troops in Lyzanium at this time, but this is not due to any cultural bias against darkpowder so much as a lack of training and the current nebulous position of darkpowder – there are some schools of thought who consider the pistol and the musket to be little more than amusing toys not suited for the Lyzar people, while others welcome them as a marvellous new advancement in the field of weaponry.

As with the administration, the men and women who serve in the legions cannot be consuls unless they resign their commission – the senate occasionally becomes very paranoid about the idea of a military coup overthrowing the republic and refashioning it as an empire, and it would not be truthful to say that such a thing has never been contemplated or attempted.

Every citizen must serve a term in the military or they forfeit the right to be citizens. While most citizens serve in one of the citizen militia, many become career soldiers and join the legion full-time. A clear majority of the Lyzar soldiery are mokosh, and there are several respected mokosh-only units within the legion with a history of devoted service to the Republic. All generals are humans, and as one advances in rank the likelihood of finding human officers increases dramatically. The mid ranks are split roughly fifty-fifty between humans and other races.

For an island nation, Lyzanium has a surprisingly small navy. They would much rather pay other people to patrol their coastal waters. On occasions where Mayan sponsored forces or Gnollish fleets have attempted to invade, the emissaries have secured the assistance of other nations – generally Alkonian, Freiboden or Merisusi vessels - to repulse the attackers. They rely as much on their diplomatic connections as their physical defences to protect their beautiful island, but the Lyzar are masters of harbour defence. They rely not only on walls but on manufactured "reefs" of stone and metal designed to tear the bottoms out of ships that do not know the correct channels to approach the coast. The Labyrinth of Lyzanium is a vast wall of coastal defences that rings the island, both on the shores and in the sea, modified and adjusted every year, and nobody outside the highest levels of the military and their Administration aides knows the extent of these defences.

The third "pillar of the Republic" is made up of those citizens in the diplomatic corps – the emissaries. At one time, the diplomatic corps was part of the Administration but the Senate declared it a separate branch of government four hundred years ago. Where the Administration deals with all internal affairs and sees to the smooth running of the Republic, the emissaries look outwards. Their power and influence wax and wane as Lyzanium passes through periodic introspection. The corps is sometimes called the "Little Satrapy" referring to the old Renian practice of installing Imperial "advisors" to existing political entities in the days of the Empire. The diplomats specialize in learning as much as possible about a culture they will visit, and adopting the manners and mannerisms of that nation to better put their

hosts at ease and avoid social faux pas. Many are skilled actors, although they are generally scrupulous about not engaging in too much espionage because if they are caught doing so they will ruin the reputation of the corps. There is a large majority of avians among the emissaries, although for obvious reasons members of all races are equally valued.

The emissaries are responsible for arranging Lyzar trade. This evolved as a natural outgrowth of their work to negotiate treaties for the Grand Republic. Although not wealthy on the scale of Schaffhausen, Lyzanium is still rich – although much of its wealth is invested in its infrastructure and its citizens rather than lying uselessly in vaults. Fine Lyzar goods are appreciated throughout the civilised world, especially their fabrics, pottery and most especially their wines and fine cuisine.

At one time, the mountains of Lyzanium were riddled with rich silver mines, but they have long since been played out. Today, Lyzanium has a strong agricultural base, with much of what might be wilderness in other countries being covered in farms built in an earlier age. While 60% of the food produced on these farms is for internal consumption, a lot of it is sold to Greenfield Shores who also maintain many of the agricultural estates on behalf of the consuls. This has led increasingly to the most profitable crops being “luxury crops” rather than basic foodstuffs. Many of the luxury crops grown on Lyzanium are popular products simply because they come from Lyzanium. While many nations produce wine, the true connoisseur favours Lyzar wine simply because of its cultural origin.

What Lyzanium really exports, however, is neutrality and civilization. Even the more paranoid nations understand that a Lyzar mediator can actually be trusted to remain neutral when he tries to solve a dispute over national borders. To attend one of the Lyceum Colleges of Lyzanium is to ensure that a noble's son or daughter receives the best education the world can imagine in the fine arts and the philosophies. To have a Lyzar critic praise a piece of art or an architectural triumph is to know that the work is truly worthy of that approval. Something in the hearts of many foreigners recognizes the sheer length of time that Lyzanium has been a nation, and responds to it.

The citizenry pay high taxes, but the emissaries have ensured that foreign wealth that is brought to Lyzanium is subject to only nominal rates of tax through careful political manoeuvring. This unusual approach has made Lyzanium especially appealing to the Trade Houses, all of whom maintain extensive offices and vaults in Severus and interests throughout the nation.

Race, Gender and Family Life

Throughout Lyzar history, senators have been almost exclusively human. All military generals and administrators of the Administration are human. The entire consular class is made up of humans. Yet nearly half the citizen population is not human. There are avian, mokosh and wemic citizens, with wemic citizens being somewhat in the majority. As in Renian times, many mokosh serve in the military, while the mercantile classes have plenty of avians in them, and there is a tendency for wemics to join the Administration, but these are only generalities.

Traditionally, the Lyzar population considers itself Lyzar first and foremost and defines itself by race only as an afterthought. Whether human or not, Lyzar citizens do not see a cultural

connection with “their race” in other nations. This does not stop the Administration from pretending a stronger connection than actually exists - they send wemic diplomats to Amun-Sa and Tritoni, and when they are in those countries the wemic will do their best to adopt Amun-Sa and Tritoni customs. This is another element that makes Lyzar diplomats so successful. While some citizens – humans included – see the ingrained inequality of a society where only humans can aspire to the consular class as offensive the average mokosh or avian in the street simply does not see a problem.

In the end, everyone serves the Republic. But some serve in different ways.

There is ingrained racial prejudice in Lyzanium. Dragons and dracoscons are not welcome; the blooded are summarily executed if they are found to have touched island soil, and Lyzanium has no diplomatic relations with Maya. Mayan vessels that stray into Lyzar waters are boarded and their cargoes and crews confiscated.

To have a family member take the blood of a dragon is a cause for great shame and has brought down at least one powerful consular family. The Lyzar people do not forget and they do not forgive.

There is also some prejudice against idolons; their position as alleged messengers of the gods is subject to great debate. That they can perform useful functions is not questioned, but how much of what they do is in the service of the divine is a matter that priests and philosophers argue about interminably. Those that can prove themselves to be effective interlocutors or advocates of philosophy are accepted and respected, though more for their intellectual merits than their status. Those that demand to be respected purely because they claim a divine mandate are scorned. It is easy to claim to be on the business of the divine, but to prove it is another matter entirely. Those idolons who demand status because they are immortal rarely recover from such a mistake.

Same-sex romantic relationships are not only accepted fact of life but are actively encouraged in Lyzanium. Not only are such relationships unable to produce offspring and potentially dilute the pure-blood or confuse the genealogies of a family, as the philosopher Jamantes Isochlear is reported to have said “If we accept that men and women have different ‘qualities of reason’, it makes it much easier to explain why I do not understand men, and nor does any other woman with whom I have shared discourse.”

Education

What is it that makes Lyzanium so different to other, less happier lands? Ask the average Lyzar (should such a thing exist) and he would promptly answer that it is education. Since the time of Severus Selentius Lyzar, education, reason and philosophy have been the cornerstones of the Lyzar Republic. All citizens are educated in philosophy, history, poetry rhetoric, logic, literature, music, mathematics and a dozen other disciplines. The children of wealthy households are educated at home by private tutors, while lower-class citizens send their children to schools operated by priests of the Emperor and organized by the Administration. The brightest students go on to study at the Lyceum; the Administration maintains a scholarship fund that ensures that the best students do not suffer from lack of family

funds. Every citizen has the right to a free education at one of the Lyceum Colleges, but entrance exams are fiendishly difficult if one lacks the right financial or political connections.

The greatest discipline taught at the Lyceum is that of philosophy – to the Grand Republic there is no discipline more valuable than the ability to think rationally. There are many branches of philosophy, aesthetics, ethics, logic and metaphysics and a skilled sophist is expected to have a grasp of them all. To examine an idea and determine if it is valuable, and to discard those that are not. To think of the greater good and the individual good, to consider the consequences and understand the causes ... to free the mind and aspire to the greatest understanding of the universe. Everything else comes from this; politics, religion, everything must be subordinate to the understanding of the enlightened mind.

Everything comes back to philosophy in Lyzanium, and the study of thought is not a passive thing. It is alive; lecturers have been known to brawl in the streets over differing opinions of the nature of the soul; duels to the death have been fought over the meaning of an off-hand statement from a man long dead. While it is the consuls and the senators that guide the Republic, it is to the philosophers and the thinkers of the Lyceum that they look for guidance themselves.

If there is a weakness in Lyzar education it is that they have long since relegated the more physical sciences to a lesser position. They have produced no great advances in metalworking, architecture or natural sciences in several hundred years. Their smiths make metal goods the same way they have done for centuries, their architects concentrate on restoring existing buildings rather than constructing new ones. Their mines might well have failed simply because of their reliance on traditional methods that simply failed to be economically successful in a changing world. It is ironic, perhaps, that a nation founded so passionately on ideas, and that dedicates itself so much to thinking about thought should be so actively, almost wilfully, trapped in the past.

The Orthodox heterodoxy

When the Renian Empire fell, there were those who claimed the gods had abandoned them; the societal backlash led to many unfortunate incidents. As the Republic forged itself in its new form, a new relationship formed between the citizens and the Divine. In the early years of the Republic, the great philosopher Pilocrates expounded a philosophy that it was not the gods that were to blame for the fall of the Empire, but rather man's incomplete understanding of the Divine, a situation exacerbated by the meddling of eidolons. The error was in treating the vast universal forces represented by the gods as if they were men, when they clearly were not; to give them human faces was to walk a path into folly. Pilocrates spread the idea that the "gods" of the Renians represented philosophies of the universe, and that a true understanding of them required an understanding of what their "ways of living" represented. The gods themselves were really "patrons" made-up by men to help guide them to an understanding of the divine, rather than being actual entities. He was eventually stoned to death by angry priests, but his ideas reshaped a nation.

Lyzanium has priests and devotees like any other nation. Rather than identifying the gods as individuals, they refer to the "Path" or the "Way" represented by each of the old gods. A philosopher-

advocate would say that he "Walks the Imperial Path" and that his patron is the "Emperor." Indeed, it has sometimes been said that in their striving to understand the quintessential core of the Divine, they "collect" the names and faces of the gods from other lands, studying each for whatever insight it may give into their own relationship with the heavens. This approach has placed them at odds with almost all other established religions, but this is generally considered to be a small price to pay for being right.

The priests themselves take a stance of service to the Republic, as well as the individual philosophy they espouse. In a nation where faith is seen as being much less trustworthy than reason they perform many of the jobs that their fellow citizens would consider unpleasant, but that are too important to entrust to slaves. A common comment about the Lyzar priesthood is that unlike priests in other lands, the spiritual leaders of the Grand Republic work for a living. There are priests and devout devotees in all walks of life, even among the slaves, and while their spiritual calling is respected, they are no less expected to work than anyone else.

Butchery is a craft traditionally performed by priests, for example. All practical areas of medicine - midwifery in particular – are dominated by the priesthood. While the Lyzanium people are all in favour of the theory of medicine, anything that has to do with actually touching corrupted bodies, being covered in bodily fluids or hacking off limbs is seen as distasteful. Priests prepare and wash the dead, and oversee their funerals. Chaplain-priests fight alongside the soldiers of the military, offering them courage and placing whatever blessings they have received in the service of the unit. Only the priesthood may legally serve as courtesans offering spiritual advice, pleasant company and more physical distractions. Most professional actors are priests - lying in public is seen as too serious a matter to be entrusted to less spiritually advanced individuals.

As with members of the Administration members of the priesthood are barred from holding positions in the senate.

ENTERTAINMENT

All Lyzars enjoy a good debate, but rhetoric is not the only form of entertainment that exists. Not far from the centre of Severus is the Cnidus, a massive crumbling arena and temple complex dedicated to the Athlete. It was built in Renian times and still stands today, if barely. Despite its aging nature, the Cnidus is home to hundreds of athletes who are divided into competing stables by the priests who manage the arenas. On any given day, you can travel to the Cnidus to see fine displays of physical prowess as the athletes train and compete. And while the Cnidus is the largest arena in Lyzanium, it is by no means the only one.

Lyzars do not forget the barbarous cruelty that consumed the Renian Empire after it was poisoned by the dragons. The pitiful site of a mokosh fighting a pack of dogs, so common in Merisusi or Gnoll lands would not be tolerated for an instant here. Only animals should fight other animals and only animals like to watch. Lyzars have no time for blood sports. Slaves and most animals are forbidden by law within an arena and the only exceptions are the scared beasts used by the athletes for displays of bull leaping.

In a Lyzar arena men and women strive to show what can be

accomplished without bloodshed. Athletes show off their skills by jumping over a charging bull, either directly or by grasping the creature's horns. The bull's horns are capped and a long rope tied to them so that it runs directly at the athletes and is restrained from trampling or goring them should they miss a jump. Even so bull leaping remains the most dangerous sport allowed in the arena.

Regular contests are held in every arena to establish the strongest and the fastest athletes, but the only competition that now fills the Cnidus is the annual Games. The finest male and female athlete from each stable competes to be declared champion of the Games. To win he or she must complete in five contests, the long jump, discus, javelin, sprint, and a wrestling match. Victory in any one contest brings applause but the Games are awarded to the male and female athletes able to place most highly overall.

Lyzars consider their athletes to be in search of physical truth, just as their scholars seek out spiritual and philosophical truths. The most successful athletes are regarded with the sort of respect that would normally be accorded to a prominent consul, priest or philosopher.

Gambling in the arena is not strictly against the law but it is regarded with great disdain. Athletes train for years to display their skills, to be seen scrabbling in the dirt trying to make a few guilders; betting on outcomes is considered disrespectful and vulgar in the extreme. There is a time and a place for gambling and the Games are not that place.

Fashion

Like everything else in Lyzanium, fashion is a matter first of philosophy and second of politics. An observer can tell much through simply noting how a citizen or a senator chooses to dress themselves and their household. The basic form of dress has not changed for several hundred years; the long, loose tunic is still favoured by citizen, senator and slave alike, with the flowing toga reserved for formal occasions, or for those whose work does not require manual exercise. Here all constancy comes to an end.

On the streets of Severus, a senator favouring the philosophies of Coercius and the Accommodation for Progress will wear a red toga, supplemented by fine gold and silver jewellery, whereas an old master who lectures at the Lyceum wears a black tunic that has seen better days and wraps his feet in wool and leather, trusting to his reason to be all the ornamentation he needs. A mater of the Escellius family will wear her hair on her head in recognition of her ties to her honoured ancestress, while a citizen of the Green Wheel Harmonium will wear her hair long and loose to reflect her acceptance of her "natural" state. A consul of the White Arrow shaves his head and wears a dagger openly on his hip as he glowers at passers-by, while his son the warrior-poet dresses in fine Kamakuran silk, and while he wears a sword on one hip announces his affiliation with the Fraternity of the Cup in the finely-decorated wineskin slung across his shoulder.

Regardless of station, a citizen of the Grand Republic views the choices he makes about his public appearance as an opportunity to declare his allegiances and his understanding of the universe. In the face of this individuality of expression, those who represent a greater order - the Administration, the Military and

the diplomatic corps - maintain a certain uniform appearance. Bureaucrats wear the black toga, and soldiers on duty always wear their armour and a simple unhooded cloak. The colouration of the cloak reflects rank and station within the military; red for an officer, black for his adjutant, green for a sergeant, white for a legionary. The diplomatic corps by contrast embraces the fashions and styles prevalent in the nation to which they are "assigned" - the most skilled and subtle diplomats, however, manage to wear the fashions of their "host nation" while still maintaining the ability to express their individual philosophies.

One wit, Acanthus Milantes, commented that the slaves wear a uniform as well - generally a dirty smock, a pair of sandals, and some mud - but the Milantes are known for producing scions with more wit than good sense.

Recent Developments

The most important development in Lyzar life in recent years has been the opening of the Maelstrom. A handful of young and over-enthusiastic Lyzars have argued that the republic should expand forcefully and build a great colony there. More cautious heads have counselled waiting for the other nations to make their move first so that the dangers of the New World can befall someone else. The arguments have raged around the Senate quite literally for years and likely will for some years to come.

In the end a handful of ambitious Lyzars have sailed out to the New World. They have secured the backing of the Senate albeit grudgingly. Their goal is to discover new truths about the world, to build a powerful colony that can send back riches to the homeland, to expand the extent of the Lyzar mainland, to create a glorious new republic, to show the other nations how nation building should be done, or to bring about the certain fall of the Lyzar Republic, depending on which Senator you talk to. Success of any kind is likely to please some in the Republic but no success will silence all the critics. But such is the nature of politics in the Republic.