

Xanthian Society

The Psychology of Empire

Xanthian culture has some similarities with both classical China and the Victorian era. On one hand is its emphasis on progress, the technological betterment of all mankind and the need to civilize the world. On the other hand is its claim to eternal stability, the tendency to view people as part of a collective rather than individuals, the elaborate ceremonies of power and the often-subtle nets of obligation and respect.

Citizens are divided into “plant” (farmers), “metal” (military), “paper” (scholars), “wood” (bourgeoisie) and “feather” (nobility); these symbols are often used in art and designs.

Xanthians traditionally see themselves as parts of a great movement towards a bigger, better, stronger society that will grow to encompass first Mars and later reclaim the solar system. This sense of manifest destiny is imprinted in many aspects of culture. A popular symbol is the upward pointing hand or the slogan “Xanthe forward, outward, upward” (often written as a seven-pointed star). Today this sense has been turned more into a content feeling of Xanthe being special and watched over by providence. It is eternal, even if things do not always look good for the moment.

The relationship between Xanthians and provincials depends much on which province is involved. “True” Xanthians tend to regard themselves as the real imperial citizens, and Margaritiferians as slightly provincial (if dependable) bumpkins. They on the other hand regard themselves as just as Xanthian as the people of Xanthe, although they consider them to be somewhat haughty and conceited. Both groups look down on Arabians and Marinerians. Arabians are considered barbarians, with their simple culture and absurd gender roles. However, they are skilled and hardworking people that complement the empire and benefit from it. Marinerians aren’t even *clean* barbarians, and generally viewed as subhuman. The imperial conquest was the best thing that could have happened to them, since they now at least have civilized guidance.

The original Exnerian vision of using the Empire as a *tool* to bootstrap higher technology has gradually declined into a general technophilia in the administration, which in turn has become an obsession with weapons. Weapons are commonly seen as status symbols and a way for the owner to express himself. Many nobles compete in having the most elegant or exotic personal weapons and armour they can afford, and among commoners having a suitably chic (and workable) weapon is part of the wardrobe. At the same time Xanthian society seeks to limit the spread of arms among the people, including detailed prescriptions in the clothing laws about acceptable arms.

Xanthe is no evil empire. It is a coolly pragmatic government, doing what it needs to keep itself functioning according to plan. While Xanthe has its share of saints and sadists, they do not dictate the overall policy.

Organization

Xanthe is not a democratic society, but it is (was) relatively free. While Exnerism disdains “the populist spectacle of democracy” it recognizes the importance of allowing citizens to run their own lives if they are to be truly productive. To keep the citizens on the straight and narrow the institutions and ideology of society should channel their actions to the common good.

Xanthe is built on five pillars: the administration, the guilds, the military, the press and the Exnerists. These are intended to support and control each other; the administration relies on the guilds for the economy and the guilds get legal power from the administration. The military protects society and gets resources from all other branches, which means that if it misbehaves too badly it will be cut off. The Exnerists are the guardians of tradition and



progress, making them very culturally influential, so to keep them from abusing this influence they are not allowed any legal or political offices. If the press gets out of hand it will be censored, but normally it keeps the other institutions alert and free of corruption and incompetence, and so on. In practice the “tensegrity of government” only works through the myriad routines, understandings and compromises that have been made everywhere by the different institutions. Over the years these routines have hardened into inflexible traditions which now are being undermined by corruption.

The central administration of the Empire is organized along guild/department lines. The guilds are not merely interest organisations for different professions and fields of trade but hold political power. The different guilds are ruled by their respective central councils, usually dominated by the High Nobility with interests in the guild. The central guild organisation supervises and manages the provincial guild organisations, gathering their tariffs and taxes, resolving disputes and setting up the large-scale organisation of trade. The departments work in a similar way, forming a parallel structure tied with local governors and magistrates.

Originally the guilds were intended to act more like industrial associations and/or unions than cartels and guilds (and in time dissolve into a traditional capitalist economy). But during the expansion of the empire multi level marketing became a part of the strategy: Xanthian merchants contacted merchants outside the empire with offers of trade, with significant bonuses for joining the organisation. This way the economy of many regions belonged to Xanthe long before they joined the empire politically. It also stimulated the locals to recruit others, speeding up expansion tremendously. In Marineris it is said that the guilds were already at Tithonus when the armies were halfway through Coprates. Unfortunately the MLM approach was uncontrollable and promoted strong centralisation within the guilds; a single organisation was much better able to sell and distribute the products and rewards to local traders than multiple organisations. This and the other shared interests made the components of the associations meld together into single organisations with a hierarchical structure. The old Exner is on record as having said that the guilds were his greatest mistake and the largest threat to the empire, something that is very rarely mentioned today.

The guild councils and the imperial department committees have representatives (usually their most senior members) on the High Council. The High Council is the executive branch, mainly relying on the advice and proposals of the guilds and departments. It is managed by the three Imperial Coordinators, who are elected from the Council. The Coordinators have little more than a note keeping, administrative and symbolic role and are formally equivalent in power.

The provincial administration answers to the Colonial Department. The empire is divided into provinces, each run by a governor and his administration. The provinces are in turn divided into smaller regions run by magistrates and other officials, and the Unions, which are guild administrative divisions. Many cities are managed by citymans, a common position for new nobility.

The military is placed under the command of the War Department Council, which contains both representatives of the War Department and the commanders of the different branches of the military. The Strategic Commission (sometimes called the Gamemasters) organizes foreign policy, military matters and aspects of imperial finance. It still wields tremendous influence, but its importance has waned since the era of expansion. Today it consists of analysts, game theorists and economists applying their skill to maintain the status quo.

The legal branch is run by the Imperial Adjudicator, who leads the Legal Council. The Legal Council administration (sometimes slightly inaccurately called the Law Guild) appoints adjudicators and monitors to the cities and regions. Adjudicators handle civil law cases, while monitors act as prosecutors of criminal law cases, which are given to the magistrates. Lawyers, notaries and rhetors need accreditation from the Legal Council administration to be able to work in the courts.

Beside the overt police forces there also exists secret police acting for the High Council. This police, known as Apoptosis, does the regrettable but necessary work to keep the empire running smoothly and to bring the High Council the information it needs. It is a small elite organisation hidden behind biological code names that reports directly to the Coordinators. Some of the High Council members have begun to worry that it could be acting more in the interests of some of the Coordinators than in the interests of Council, but so far there is little evidence for that and no accusations have been voiced.

While the imperial administration is a bureaucracy/technocracy the feudal families are tightly interwoven with the system. The imperial nobility is divided into the High Nobility, the Low Nobility and the New Nobility. The High Nobility (or “The Ten Families”) is descended from the original Xanthe houses that began the Empire.

They have extensive land holdings and often monopolies on key technologies (which are described in the Constitution). The leading members of the families are titled by their number – the Icaros leading member is number Nine since the Icaros are the “Ninth family”. Within the families there are usually plenty of other titles circulating.

The Pretka decimal notation is sometimes used to denote exactly who is who in the Ten Families. It assigns a decimal number to every noble depending on their rank within the family. This way truly status-conscious people can compare their ranks along several dimensions.

Below the Ten Families is the Low Nobility, nobility that came from regions that voluntarily joined the empire, family members made rulers of regions and other noble but less noble families. Unlike the New Nobility Low Nobility is inherited. New Nobility is a term for the non-inheritable titles given to excellent administrators, militaries and citizens. New Nobility is more a matter of courtesy and status than real power, although as always there are exceptions.

The noble titles are Dimans (from Martian English “District manager”), Remans (“Resource managers”), Promans (“Project managers”), Executive, Supervisor and Controller. Dimans rule a domain, either an old family domain or act as inherited governors of a province or a smaller region. Remans and Promans are technobility, linked with a certain resource or industrial process. Reman is a slightly higher position than Proman, as new Promans can be named as the Empire expands. Executives, supervisors and controllers form the bulk of the Low and New Nobility.

The typical honorific used for anybody noble, respected or above one’s station is “ser”.

Lineage is from both biological parents, making it possible to perform complex legalistic feats. As a rule the eldest daughter inherits the highest title of both her father and mother, the next eldest daughter inherits the next available title, and so on. Sons merely inherit Low Nobility titles, and only if there are no sisters that can take them. However, testaments and special regulations abound, making it possible to bias the system cleverly.

One ancient rule harks back to the days of technobility line marriage. If a noble mother dies her eldest daughter can marry her mother’s husbands with the exception of her biological father, retaining all her titles. This is usually done only when the daughter is too young to be expected to handle her noble position on her own. Her husbands become her advisors and tutors until she reaches maturity, usually defined as 34 years old. Such “Shield Marriages” are uncommon but sometimes used to keep family holdings safe.

The provinces are divided into smaller subdivisions run by the magistrates, who oversee the smooth running of local administration, relay information to the governor, handle everyday policy and the local branches of the guilds. The magistrates are supported by the pretorians, the Xanthian equivalent of sheriffs. While larger cities have special police forces, the countryside is patrolled by the pretorians.

The traditional way of making a career has been to join the bureaucracy or military. The military has however always been kept subservient to the administration (plenty of historical precedents have firmly convinced the technocrats that the gun must serve the Empire, not the Empire the gun), making the ultimate power only reachable by technocrats (of good breeding). But today the administration is faltering, and more and more of the dammed ambition of the military is showing. Maybe some arm of the military will seek to bring order to the empire in the near future, triggering a civil war.

Economy

The economy of Xanthe can be said to have rested on three pillars. Firstly, there were the guilds. These, by the aid of landed nobility, handled nearly all production within the empire. The guild system also furnished financial services, with a meta-guild (i.e., the guild of economy, of which all other guilds were members) as national bank and chief guarantor of the value of liquid means.

The second pillar was indenture. The forced labor of a person to pay off a debt was commonplace in Pre-Xanthian societal doctrine. The custom most likely dates back to the Fimbulwinter, when the knowledge economy of the Stargazers collapsed into anarchy and feudalism. The feudal lords wholly relied upon the work of the people under their protection. If an outsider tried anything untoward, a stint of digging in the deepest tunnels would be less costly than

incarcerating him. Many societies applied the death penalty of course, but those that were to liberal with it did not last long (see *The Deep Kingdom of Broken Bridge* by the same author. Argyre University monotype, 892 After Landing, Terran reckoning)

The third pillar was the traditional imperialist methodology of extracting more resources from conquered areas in its periphery than it invested (in non-military terms). As the expansionist phase slowed, the empire would have done well to review its economical infrastructure. The system of indenture, closely tied to the guilds (who were legal entities that could be the beneficiaries of a specific indenture. The there was the expansion, through which losing forces were often conscripted into the guild or army systems on terms similar to indenture. This created expectations of a never-ending supply of low-skilled labour at little or no cost save basic subsistence.

Curiously, a secondary market for indentured people emerged. Some would say that this made the process tantamount to slavery, and I will not take issue with them. It is to be noted though, that Xanthe had stern laws against slavery. This could perhaps be seen as a way of safe-guarding the state's effective monopoly in parceling out a work force to guild and others, via a thoroughly politicized judiciary. On the other hand, it could also be seen as a mental construction made by Xanthians in general. By distinguishing between slavery and indenture (which was generally temporary), the people of the empire saw indenture as a reasonable legal measure, unaware of how it effected the economy as a whole.

-- The economy of the Xanthiam empire ,
George Argot. Hab, Msc, PhD

The key to the imperial economy is the concentration of highly skilled craftsmen and engineers to Xanthe, making it possible to create advanced goods that can be sold at a great profit in the outer regions. These in turn supply many of the raw materials and luxuries needed.

Xanthe has no real central currency: every guild produces their own scrip. The guild currencies (called Guilder) are in general paper currencies where the paper has been treated or fibres included giving them a characteristic odour – sandalwood for the Mining Guild, musk-jasmine for the Fur Guild, orange for the Aviation Guild and plastic for the Plastic Guild. Most are interchangeable to platinum or gold at guild offices, although some like the Fur Guild scrip are instead based on goods. Typical Guilder bills come in 1, 5, 10, 50, 100, 500, 1000 and 5000 notes; for higher payments special cheques are written.

The imperial administration has its own currency, the Imperial, seldom used outside military and inter-guild matters. It is directly tied to platinum, and low denominations consist of platinum rods of differing length and thickness. Higher denominations are usually paper money for ease of transport, but there exist rare Imperial ingots.

Major Guilds

Guild of Mining	Mining, metal production, certain chemicals
Plastic Guild	Plastic production, chemistry, lacquerwork
Aviation Guild	The construction and flying of planes and zeps.
Guild of Woodworkers	Carpentry, timber production and transport.
Guild of Shipbuilders	Shipbuilding and maintenance.
Guild of Mechanism	Mechanics, clockworks, motors and engineering
Guild of Distillation	Beverages, tar, certain chemicals.
Textile Guild	Textile production and dyeing.
Builder's Guild	Masonry, architecture, harbours, roads.
Guild of Cartographers	Mapmaking, archival of deeds
Guild of Medicine and Genetics	Medicine, genetic counselling
Guild of Numbers	Accounting, computers, cryptography
Fur Guild	Furs, scouting and prospecting
Infomerchant Guild	Electronics, radio, long-range communications
Economy Guild	Trading, banking, currency exchange, insurance.

The Economy Guild is somewhat different from the other guilds, in that it does not hold a true monopoly. For practical economical matters, people use banks and insurance run by the other guilds or even the few independent banks. These banks are at the same time part of the Economy Guild, which is run by representatives from the other guilds and the Imperial Economical Commission.

Many other professions organize themselves into guilds, but lack the legal clout of the major guilds and representation in the higher councils. There are for example many shoemaker guilds. Locally they can reach significant power, like the Wine Guild of Midgaard or the Waterists of Arram. Many of the major guilds have internal guilds, such as the Guild of Wings within the Aviation Guild. There exist special Arabian guilds subordinate to the major guilds.

Professions

Pillars

It has become common to equip young nobles or other important persons with two assistants/bodyguards; a Left Pillar protecting their body and soul, and a Right Pillar protecting their heart and mind. In the East where the practice originated the Left Pillar was often a member of a Bioist militant order; in Xanthe it is commonly an experienced military giving moral advice. The Right Pillar is a combined chaperone, psychologist and tutor. Often the pillars are introduced at an early age and remain at least until the late teens. A well-liked pillar can become a longtime companion or even lover. In fact, among some noble families a non-interfertile Pillar is sometimes deliberately selected to become a lover of a daughter in order to prevent accidental and troublesome pregnancies.

Surrogate Mother

Nobles and sufficiently rich people who use IVF often employ surrogate mothers to bear their children rather than doing it themselves. Most surrogate mothers are unmarried women from the lower classes; they are recruited by the Unbroken Houses, who give them a home and pamper them while they are “working”. Many later become nannies, servants or caretakers for the noble families, or begin to work for the Houses.

Psychologist

The relatively non-religious Xanthian society needs people to listen, give personal counsel and help disturbed individuals to cope. Psychologists fill the role priests do in many other societies, especially for many rich people who also have courtly psychologists as status symbols. Bound by strict deals of confidentiality they often become privy to deep secrets of their patrons and act as their advisors on emotional matters.

Since males are good listeners and emotional, they are regarded as especially suited for the job. It is not entirely uncommon for psychologists to marry some of their clients, even if it is regarded as slightly gauche. They have to leave the Guild of Medicine and Genetics and end their careers as freelancers when this happens.

A specialisation is tropoclastics, the science of breaking habits and cathects, charging up or activating people suffering from apathy, laziness or other kinds of acedia.

Computer

Running the empire requires sizeable numerical resources. While old computers and mechanical calculators do exist it is often more cost-effective to have a human do the job. Computers are people doing computations, either alone or in teams. Various guilds have developed cleverly organized “computer rooms” where computers perform parts of large calculations side by side as a kind of production line, sending their results to other computers according to a pre-arranged plan that allows both error correction parallel calculation. These rooms are used in the economical calculus of the guild planners, cryptographic encoding/decoding (the parallelism ensures that individual computers only know at most a letter each of the decoded message) and engineering calculations.

Computers are traditionally male since males have a better sense of mathematics and geometry. Most computers are hoping to become accountants or specialists for certain rare or complex calculations like trigonometrists or rootfinders. They are organized in the Guild of Numbers.

Cryptographer

An expert in hidden and encoded messages. Despite the loss of much of digital computation encrypted messages are often used in the affairs of nobility, the guilds and the military. Cryptographers design new encryptions, oversee the encoding/decoding and analyse the messages of enemies. They are usually highly trained mathematicians or informaticians from the Guild of Numbers.

The Infomerchants are known to contain some great cryptographers, but these are viewed as slightly untrustworthy. They might put their own society before their client's aims.

Aerial

Aerials are the aerial equivalent of a marine, paratroopers intended to be landed at key points behind enemy lines using zepps or ultralights (or even the infamous drop-boats). Regarded as the finest of the airforce and generally admired for their bravery.

Messenger Flyer

While infomerchant wireless is the fastest way of transmitting information, certain messages and packages cannot be trusted to them. Hence the messenger fliers, who use pedal-driven ultralights to fly from city to city, transporting essential messages.

Exnerian

The followers of Exner or Vicuna form a kind of political/economic/humanistic priesthood, whose goal is to ensure the flourishing of the Xanthian Empire and through it all its citizens. While most people filled with the Exnerian vision have ordinary jobs (often within the government), some become full-time evangelists of Exnerism, Exnerians. Exnerians visit people to extol the fundamental visions holding society together, hoping to kindle the same spark of enthusiasm and nationalism as they themselves feel for the empire. Their reception may be mixed; while some view them as tiresome busybodies other view them with a mild reverence or at least acknowledge the need for someone to uphold the standards of civilized society. Exnerians have in the past been used as diplomats, teachers, announcers of new official policies and lobbyists. In some of the remote provinces they are even deputized to aid the Magistrates or Praetorians.

Exnerians commonly are supported by the House Vicuna, a foundation based in Exner's old hometown. The House funds the Exnerian evangelism (with government support and plenty of donations), new editions of Exner's writings and the education of orphans into good citizens.

Guild Inspector

Inspectors are sent out by the guild boards to inspect the accounting and activities of local guilds, controlling that they do not withhold tariffs, break the guild rules or compete unduly. The arrival of an inspector can be a sign that the board is unhappy with a district, or just that it was unlucky to receive a random visit. The exact enforcement powers of an inspector are described in their Letter of Mission; it can range from merely reporting back results to the right to arrest guild members, disband guild houses and change local ordinances. Often inspectors are accompanied by assistants, accountants and guild soldiers.

Furrier

Furriers treat the fur of people. Not to be confused with hairdressers, who deal with the "public" hair of the body. While body fur usually does not need much tending, beauty-conscious or sensualist people like to have it washed, oiled, possibly tinted and scented by furriers. Furriers are partly masseurs and partly beauticians, often working in special body parlours or in bathhouses. They prefer to refer to themselves as trichologists.

Infomerchant/Sciolist

The term Infomerchant is used for everybody who makes a living by selling information, especially by teaching. The clan of the Infomerchant Guild is sometimes called the Teleks to distinguish them from ordinary infomERCHANTS who also have little or nothing to do with the old Infomerchant culture, although many do their best to use the same trappings. Sometimes the slightly negative term sciolist is used. InfomERCHANTS act as teachers, advisors, analysts and scholars at the many academic institutions of the empire. Sometimes the term is used to denote a spy or informer.

Parroteer

Parroteers raise and train parrots. While hunting-parrots are the most profitable and exclusive, messenger parrots make up the bulk of parrotting. Most parroteers work for the guilds and noble houses tending their aviaries, although there are many independent parroteers that catch wild birds, sell trained birds or re-train birds who have acquired nasty traits. Trainee parroteers are often set to catch the wild budgerigars that plague major cities, hence their nickname 'budgies'.

Logotect

Logotects are word processing experts. The term encompasses traditional secretaries and assistants, and more specialized word- or writing-related skills. Many logotects call themselves by their speciality names.

Tachygraphers are people able to read and write very quickly. They use a stenographic notation to note down discussions or lectures, later converting it into readable text. They are also employed to make quick summaries of information. Calligraphers specialize in beautiful handwriting, a must for formal invitations, contracts and memorial documents. Sphragists deal with seals and stamps. Stigmeologists handle punctuation, rhythm and rhetorical cadences of very formal texts, as well as writing speeches. Euonymics invent new names for things or people; they are often hired to suggest a propitious name for newly born.

Sympist

Sympist is short for symposiarch, a master of ceremonies. Sympists arrange festivities, dinners and especially the highly formalized aspects such as placement, spices, the order of entrance, the structure of the entertainment and sending out invitations of the right kind. The upper classes often have hired sympists that give all their events consistency, often called spicebearers since they formally begin the festivities by bringing in the spice rack(s). There are also many sympists ("epularies") working freelance as organizers and entertainment managers in the rest of society. Some run their own professional clubs or regular parties, making a tidy profit from entrance or invitation fees.

Zymurgist

Zymurgists deal with zymurgy, the branch of applied chemistry dealing with fermentation processes. In Xanthe zymurgists are part of the Guild of Distillation and the Plastics Guild, overseeing the fermentation of plastics and other chemicals. The training is done entirely within the guilds and together with chemical remans; the secrets of zymurgy are viewed as state secrets. It is an important and highly paid job, especially for those zymurgists able to smell exactly what is going on and add the right bacteria, yeasts and chemicals to control the process. They are sometimes called "noses".

Running books

Messengers among the New Chryse criminal groups. Books run errands, deliver messages and packages as well as act as a distributed information network. Many books work not just for the criminal side but also for many other groups. Their "code of honour" (enforced by the typical reactions of their "clients" if they find that they have been betrayed) is to keep silent of everything they know no matter what. While in popular myth "silent as a running book" is true, in practice many make money on the side by a bit of judicious spying or squealing.

Recycling Professions

During the Second Dark era much of the production capacity for advanced materials and devices was lost. But huge amounts of material remained from the past, and people set to make use of it. Scavenging and recycling became important professions, not unlike farming.

Scavengers look for valuable material or new locations to scavenge. Some specialize in finding particular things like Red Era caches, other handle certain regions where they know where to find things while a few travel widely trying to find a great find. They often lead scavenging teams composed of strippers. Strippers are the basic labour of removing metal, dismantling building parts or sorting piles of ancient tubing. This is a job usually given to the youngest and strongest members of a scavenging team. Recyclers are on the top or work for the guilds, taking the material and making use of it - melting light metal, restoring old equipment, cleaning up ancient art or finding uses for small pieces of advanced materials.

Xanthian Education

Xanthian schooling is highly variable. In general education is approved regardless of class, and most parents do their best to ensure that their children get good schooling. Most elementary schools are paid for by the parents, usually as co-ops where they hire teachers to do the teaching. The teachers are often infomERCHANTS or EXNERIANS, with EXNERIANS especially common in rural or poor areas since they see their teaching as a service to society rather than a career, and hence do not demand much pay. Sponsoring is also common; noble families often sponsor good schools in their domains, and the guilds commonly contribute. In the cities more elaborate elementary schools exist, with the Legal College of New Chryse as the most famous.

Elementary school usually lasts from around 6 years of age to 16, but there is great variability both in when children start attending and when they leave. The aim is to give them the necessary knowledge to pass the Majority Test – reading, writing, history, science, EXNERISM and a general understanding of society. Elementary schools are usually rather practical and have no set curriculum, although inspectors from the department of Education sometimes check that they are not defrauding the parents by not teaching essentials.

Beyond elementary school there are many different forms of education. Many go to guild schools, schools organized by the guilds to teach a trade. Guild schools range from direct apprenticing in the Woodworker's Guild to university-like organisations such as the Academy of Numerism of the Guild of Number and the Cartographers. Even lesser professions have apprentice programs (sometimes called guild schools), some of which rival the “real” guild schools.

EXNERIAN Colleges are somewhere between colleges and a religious education. Here students are taught the complexities of social science, Xanthian ideology and the works of EXNER, as well as many practical fields such as rhetorics, logotecture, administration and policy. While some students become wholesale EXNERIANS, most use them as a jumping-off point to a career in politics or administration.

The Universities are somewhat similar to the bazaars of infomERCHANTS, places for the study and development of knowledge. While some bright people go directly from elementary school to the university, most pass through a guild school or an EXNERIAN college. Often a few courses at an university, sufficient to bring a degree, is the finish of a young Xanthian's education. Some people, especially well-off unageing, gather a new degree every 25 years. The most common degrees are Giradu (one martian year of study followed by an exam), Magist (two martian years), Overat (three years), Doctor (four years) and Pentas (five years).

While Xanthe boasts many universities like the New Chryse School of Technology, the Museum of Mars, Deokten Tower, many nobles send their brightest or most troublesome children to study at the University of Argyre. It has a great reputation academically, but is also regarded as a somewhat subversive place.

Xanthian Law

The purpose of society is to sustain man.
The purpose of law is to sustain society.
-- Exner ov Vicuna, Eternal Progress

What is justice? The Xanthian legal system is built around societal benefit. Justness is a quality that enforces accepted norms and values within society as a whole. This results in a somewhat organic world-view usually associated with conservatism. One might argue that the Xanthian project of technological advancement is inherently conservative, in that it seeks to return to a past age of material and informational wealth. Likewise, a case could be made for ideological fundamentalism, with the backward-looking aspect and the respect for the "prophet" Exner forming vital ingredients.

Bearing this in mind, what are the central precepts of Xanthian legal doctrine? In order to answer this question, a historical recapitulation will be useful. During the early years of the empire, several different legal systems co-existed, with technobility courts and merchant guilds handling significant parts of the civil and criminal caseload. The Exnerist system insinuated itself gradually into these existing frameworks through appellate courts, subsidy systems and constitutionalism. One important point was the societal advocate reform. Representing the side of the societal benefit, this person essentially created a tri-partite system consisting of wronged, accused and societal advocate.

-- Apocryphals of Xanthian legal doctrine, Anonymous

The Xanthian legal system is based on Exnerism. Laws should be created in order to ensure that society progresses in a way that benefits its members; smooth running and pragmatism is more important than eternal principles.

The court consists of the prosecutor, the defender, a state representative and the judge/magistrate(s). The role of the state representative is to represent the interests of society and the Empire in the court. Often the representative merely acts by quoting the law or relevant Exnerisms. In small Magistrate Courts the role is sometimes handled by the Judge or local Exnerian.

There are multiple levels in the system. The lowest level is the Magistrate Court, run by the local Magistrate. Above it lies the Union Court, handling more serious cases and local appeals. Unions, the regions handled by a single Union Court, are determined based on a complex system of guild treaties, and the guilds also have great influence on the location and operations of the Union Courts. Union courts have three judges presiding. The next level is the Provincial Court, handling cases from the entire province (or, in the case of the Metropolitan Courts in New Chryse and Allemi, cases from a single major city). Provincial courts have five judges presiding. Finally there are the Executive Courts (Social, Economic, Military, Technical and Cultural) handling the largest and most involved cases in a very formal way. They are the final level of appeal, manned with large boards of judges drawn from relevant parts of the administration, guilds and military. Beyond the Executive Courts the Imperial Council can decide to take a case of outmost policy importance by acting as the Imperial Court.

In civil cases the judge decides on the amount of guilt of *each* part; it is entirely possible that the litigator is found to be partially or equally guilty, and forced to pay the other part too.

Xanthian law is notably harsher when a crime is done in an organised way by several people rather than just by an individual. The creation of a "contraproject", a subversive or alternative order to the social order, is viewed as serious in itself.

Beside the legal punishment, most criminals find themselves at the receiving end of an exnerian sermon from a local representative. In some regions it is expected that condemned people attend a series of exnerian lectures to show their contrition and willingness to better be a part of society.

Xanthians reach majority at 15-20 years of age when they pass the Majority Test at a local magistrate (or sometimes exnerian). The test checks whether they understand their society well enough to be regarded as a real citizen responsible for their own life, and usually consists of an oral exam where the magistrate asks questions about exnerism, the world and the youngster. People with average intelligence, maturity or education can pass the exam fairly easily and are given a Majority Stamp for their Gema Scroll. Someone who fails the test can retake it a year later, up to five times.

People above 20 who have not passed the test are given reduced majority. They are not eligible for certain posts, nor can they fully exercise certain trades and property rights. People with reduced majority are generally assigned a guardian or trustee. The guardian acts as a parent, trustee oversees economic affair. In rural or remote areas it is not uncommon for people to reach reduced majority by default simply because they never take the test. In this case they formally have the local Magistrate as guardian and trustee until they decide to seek full majority.

Crimes

Crime	Definition	Punishment
Arson	Deliberate creation of a fire, water or ground hazard to induce property destruction and danger to human life.	Expilation, banishment and indenture 5-10 years.
Assault	Severe violence causing injury to another human	Damages and indenture 2-5 years.
Assaulting Guild official	Physically attacking a guild official	Damages and indenture 5-8 years.
Assaulting Imperial official	Physically attacking an imperial official	Fines and indenture 5-10 years.
Breach of Agreement	Failing to comply with a binding agreement or unilaterally adding, subtracting or altering obligations therein.	Damages and fines, if society has experienced detriment.
Brigandry	Organized theft, includes piracy and organized fraud	Indenture 5-10 years.
Burglary	Entering a private or public area in order to commit theft. Covers trespassing and illegal entrance	Indenture 2-5 years.
Claiming False Ancestry	Intentionally claiming wrongful genetic or familial status.	Family name legally changed to Noman. Fines and damages.
Conspiracy	Planning or contributing to another crime.	Generally a year shorter sentence or 2/3 damages/fines of the main crime.
Counterfeiting	Deliberately falsifying documented information	Exoculation or fines, depending on severity.
Crimes Against Nature	Wanton disruption of the ecological system	Indenture to the Ecology Department 5-10 years.
Deconstructive Behaviour	Serious acts of non-sobornicity creating a detrimental effect upon society	Expilation or hanging.
Defalcation	Misappropriation of funds by the person or group entrusted with them	Banishment or hanging.
Disturbance of the peace	A directly unprovoked outburst or unseemly display in a public place.	Fine or public humbling.
Drawing a weapon in a public place	Brandishing a lethal weapon	Fines.
Espionage	Acquisition of classified information with the purpose of dissemination to unfriendly regimes.	Exoculation and internment.
Extortion	The extraction of material or spiritual gain from another through unlawful threats	Fines and indenture.
Failing to Complete Necessary Work Orders	Failing to complete guild orders for indentured labour or people	Fines and partial indenture.

Failure to Comply with Clothing Regulations	working within a guild's purview Wearing clothing not in accordance to social standards or insignia regulations	Fines.
Faithless Behaviour against Employer or Dependent	Failure to fulfil the obligations of one's post. Also, actively counteracting the interests of an employer/dependent.	Fines and damages, expilation, indenture.
Fraud	Purposefully deceiving another person or organization for gain, be it material or spiritual	Fines, damages and indenture 2-4 years.
Freelance Subversion	Spreading malicious memes, working individually in thought or deed to subvert the rightful authority of the empire	Fines and indenture 2-4 years.
Guild desertion	Leaving a guild without following the proper administrative regulations for exiting the guild	Indenture to offended guild 2 years, after which membership automatically lapses.
Inducing mental disorder	The intentional inducement of mental ailment to another person or group	Indenture, 2-5 years
Insurrection	Participating in a organized mob that is practicing assault, vandalism, theft and/or disruption of collective services	Indenture 5-10 years.
Intentionally Wrongful Calculation	Deliberate distortion of numerical or geometric information	Fines and damages. Partial indenture.
Irresponsible Giving of Advice	Careless professional advice, appraisal or similar service.	Damages.
Manslaughter	Accidental killing of another due to wanton carelessness	Damages and/or indenture.
Mass murder	Systematic killing of a human group	Execution.
Military desertion	Leaving the military without following the proper administrative regulations for exiting it	Indenture 2-5 years. In time of war punishment is left to the military.
Murder	The intentional killing of another sapient. Only humans are considered sapient	Execution or permanent indenture.
Oathbreaking	Failing to comply with a witnessed oral agreement.	Expilation and symbolic fine.
Practicing Guild Profession without a License	Any practice of a profession organized by a constitutionally protected guild	Indenture, to the offended guild.
Predation Upon a Human	Kidnapping, cannibalism and similar forms of coercion	Indenture or imprisonment 10-15 years.
Rape	Uninvited sexual coercion, forced intercourse and acts of perversion upon a non-consenting partner	Castration and indenture.
Reckless Creation of Suspicion Among the Greater Public	Disseminating seditious information towards the common woman which may cause detrimental effects to society	Fines or indenture.
Reckless Endangerment	Incautious handling of	Fines or partial indenture.

Remaining While Disinvited	dangerous objects, organisms or creation of hazardous situations)	
Rioting	Not leaving a domain after being formally asked to leave	Damages (which are not subject to transferral tax).
Robbery	Participating in a disorganized mob that is practicing assault, vandalism, theft and/or disruption of collective services	Fines, partial or full indenture, depending on severity of participation.
Sedition	Theft while using violent coercion	Indenture 5-10 years.
Slave trading	Organized acts of subversion	Indenture or imprisonment.
Smuggling	The transferral and/or trading of indentured labour without the proper government clearances	Lifetime indenture.
Tax evasion	Transporting prohibited goods to, from and within the empire. Also, transporting goods that have not been properly declared to guild or customs officials and travel without permits.	Banishment for foreigners, otherwise fines and confiscation.
Treason	Failure or attempt to withhold taxes, guild tariffs and levies	Fine or partial indenture.
Unlawful weapons possession	A counterproject aimed at overthrowing or weakening the empire	Execution or imprisonment.
Unsanctioned Conspiracy	Owning a weapon not properly licensed or permissible to pertinent social class	Fines.
Usage of counterfeit information	Counterproductive cooperation carried out in secret	Indenture 2-5 years.
Wasting Ministry/Guild Time and Paper	Deliberately using counterfeited documents	Fines.
Worktheft	Intentionally provoking distraction within an administrative process	Fines.
Zabernism	The intentional and malicious appropriation of another person's post	Fines and damages each equalling lost pay.
	Misuse of military power, reputation or authority	Permanent degradation to private, with no possibility of discharge. In time of war punishment is left to the military.

Punishments

Fines are fairly common punishments for lesser crimes, especially victimless crimes like the clothing laws.

Imprisonment is relatively uncommon. Instead indentured labour is commonly used; if there is a victim most of the salary goes to her or her family for the duration of the labour. While it happens that criminals are made servants of their victims, the most common form of labour is farming, maintaining the kelp forests or mining. Most of the guilds operate work camps that are in practice prisons, which are used for the most serious criminals.

One common punishment is epilation, the removal of the fur. This can be done through shaving, or more painfully through wax or burning. Epilation is mainly used as a shaming punishment for marital transgressions, disrespect to superiors or incompetence. An alternative is being locked into a hanging cage placed outside the court building, similar to the stocks on medieval Earth.

Banishment to a certain province or region is mainly used for criminal administrators or troublemakers. It can be time limited or indefinite.

Castration is used to “treat” rapists.

Spying and certain serious crimes are punished by exoculation, the removal of the eyes. In some serious cases exodontias, the removal of teeth, and removal of limbs are added to the punishment.

Hanging: in the low Mars gravity, hanging is less fatal. Instead of a quick death, it is a slow death of gradual blood blockage and thirst. In many regions hanging is a time-determined punishment (“Hanged for three sols”), a painful but not necessarily deadly punishment.

Execution is always public and handled by a ktenologist. The ktenologists are a small, guild-like organisation under the Department of Defence, and usually recruited from former military personnel.

Overall the Xanthian approach to executions is to make them clearly public and a warning, but keep them relatively rare in order not to devalue human life. The Xanthian interest in technology and efficiency has led to some unusual implements intended to both showcase the power of machinery and make sure the criminal is very obviously killed. The most common forms of execution are beheading and the garrotte, but major cities often boast unique execution implements like the famous debraining machine of Aurum or the New Chryse hydraulics. Nobles of high enough rank are executed by saffron poisoning – hardly a pleasant way to go, but stylishly expensive and gives them time to take farewell of their family and friends.

Indenture economics

Originally indenture was relatively rare, but during the Marinerian conquest the practice spread and became standardized. The empire had plenty of prisoners of war and the need to build a new infrastructure in the region. Since then indentured workers have become an increasingly important part of Xanthian economy

Indentured workers are not slaves. Quite a few live nearly ordinary lives and have families, but their wages go almost exclusively to some beneficiary. It is not uncommon for people in light indenture to make deals for longer indenture in exchange for being allowed to keep a larger amount of their wages, so-called percentage constancy indenture. Although rarer than labourers, there exist indentured administrators.

Killing or wounding an indentured worker so that she cannot work can cause transfer of indenture: the culprit is forced to take the victim's place and replace the loss of labour, or at least pay a corresponding fine.

If indentured workers commit crimes with indenture punishments they are usually transferred to heavier indenture, commonly one of the guild compounds. This can also cause issues of who is to be beneficiary of their work; the general rule is that the victim of the most serious crime has the main claim, and either can claim indenture before the second claim (the worker will first have to work off their indenture to the primary claim, then to the second claim), or a larger share of the wages of an extended indenture. The latter is often the preferred decision, since heavy indenture has a high likelihood of leading to illness and early death.

When the crime is serious, leading to imprisonment or execution, past indenture is either postponed or annulled. Hence it is in the best interest of the beneficiaries of indentured workers to keep them on the straight and narrow path, although in some cases people or guilds benefiting from an indentured worker have kept their crimes secret in order to not forfeit the income. In progressive courts government restitution to indenture beneficiaries sometimes is done if the original reason for the indenture was a serious crime like violence.

The amount of indentured workers has been steadily rising, creating an unhealthy economic bias since their wages are kept artificially low. While not a real slave force, to compete workers in similar fields have to keep their costs down to a similar level. This had had notable effects especially on agricultural and mining rates.

Indenture can be transferred, but trade in indenture is formally forbidden and the regulations of indenture transfer are complex and strict. However, it is possible for indenture beneficiaries to decide where an indentured worker works, and this has produced the lucrative field of indenture reassignment. Typically the beneficiary of an indentured worker signs a contract with another party, usually a guild or company specialised in handling indentured workers, that gives them the work of the worker and in return they pay a certain sum or dividend.

This is a common choice for people who cannot handle an indentured worker on their own or cannot take advantage of her specialisations.

Indenture managers and reassigners have a legal background, and either work for the guild indenture departments or private indenture reassignment companies. The companies compete for “good catches” and can often market themselves quite aggressively at the courts.

While many guilds employ indentured workers in different conditions, they work best in simple labour such as farming and mining – it is harder to motivate creative or skilled indentured personnel, although in some specialised jobs this is doable. Even guilds such as the Guild of Numbers have found it profitable to get reassigned workers and employ them in farming daughter companies.

Marinerian voluntary indenture: many Marinerians voluntary agree to indenture as agricultural workers and other positions in Xanthe in order to get a steady income to send back to their families. Often they stay after the end of indenture, making a living in Xanthe. Technically, this procedure is illegal. However, it is made formally legal by Marinerians signing prewritten confessions of freelance subversion and then charged by magistrates bought by the reassigners.