



Part Seven: Trade In the Archipelago

What Do I Need Money For?

For most characters in Grand Design a large quantity of money will allow you to purchase rare and wonderful things that you would not normally have access to. The Archipelago is populated with many people and if you really want something the chances are that there's someone in the Empire that can get it for you, if your pockets are deep enough. The best place to start looking for those individuals are the **Imperial Trade Cities**. All characters start with a healthy quantity of money; acquiring more can be done through Artisan skills, virtues that generate a regular income or of course from other characters.

Characters are not expected to spend any money in order to survive from one week to the next, or to clothe or feed themselves. Characters are assumed to have somewhere modest to live and do not need to pay for rent or housing (unless they wish to). All characters are assumed to be able to support themselves during downtime including raising any funds they require to travel from one place to another (there are a number of virtues and flaws which affect downtime income and expenditure though).

For players whose characters are landowners or Realm Lords money has other vital uses. A lack of money can be the ruin of a Realm Lord as when the coffers run dry the Realm's armies can no longer be expanded. The success of a realm in maintaining or even expanding its borders is often underwritten by a healthy supply of money. Such an income is generally generated by the rents paid by tenant families on the landowners estates or through taxation.

Currency

Though many Realms have in the past had their own internal barter or precious metal based currencies these have all been superseded by the **Throne** that is guaranteed by the Imperium as a stable unit of currency. Thrones are distributed by the Imperial treasury and are the unit of currency that all cross-realm trade is conducted in. The value of one Throne is set as equal to the work of one unskilled labourer for one day. An average farm in good land can be expected to generate three to four hundred thrones a year before expenses, a country estate with several dependent farms five thousand a year before expenses.

One Throne is made up of 50 **Anchors**.

Thrones and Anchors are printed on special paper at the Treasury. Thrones are issued in 1, 5, 10, 25, 50, 100 and 1000 Throne denominations. Larger quantities of Thrones are dealt with through **Promissory Notes**.

In game Thrones are represented by paper money printed by the organisers and given to players in their pre-event pack. Characters start with what ever money they have not spent on equipment from their starting allowance in cash. Money generated during downtime will be given to players in their next pre event pack.

Promissory Notes

These are issued by the Depository in a Trade City guaranteeing that the signatory has deposited a stated number of Thrones with that Depository; it may be redeemed from a Depository in another city with proof of identity of the owner. Many of the larger Mercantile concerns use Promissory Notes in preference to actual currency. Promissory Notes are backed by the full power of Isopolis and while occasional forgers can pass false Thrones into circulation, no one yet has managed to successfully fake a Promissory Note and live for more than a week afterwards.

Trading Cities

Several cities throughout the Archipelago have gained **Imperial Charters** as trading centres. These cities are licensed to hold great market fairs. Trading cities compete with each other most fiercely for the bonanza of trade that can occur. However, Imperial Charter can be withdrawn as well as issued, resulting in ruin for a city that has built its economy around the fairs, and potentially ruining merchants bringing vast cargoes to Chartered cities. The currently Chartered cities are:

Saran-Gasai (Imperial Capital - Imperial Hegemony)

Khidremar (Realm of Koth)

Bastopole (Realm of Bastopole)

Sadremar (Realm of Orinna)

Ichremar (Realm of Great Sardia)

Graisport (Realm of Lyrliheen)





Taxation

Most Realm Lords place a tax on those who live inside his or her lands. Generally each of the landowners (often regarded as Nobles) within the Realm's borders will be charged with the task of raising a set amount of money for the Realm Lord each year. The burden of raising that money is usually passed onto the peasants and common folk that reside on the landowners property in the form of tax. This is in addition to any rent that the residents pay their landowner for their farmsteads or the land on which their homes are built. Heavy taxation can make a Realm Lord very unpopular with both his landowners and the common folk of the Realm.

Without a doubt the most lucrative form of taxation comes from the tariffs imposed on trade at the Imperial Trade Cities by those Realm Lords lucky enough to have such a thing within their borders. The tax money raised can provide an enormous source of income. Typically Realm Lords impose a 5% tax (payable by the vendor) on every trade carried out within a trade city. Consequently those realms containing trade cities are generally the richest and most powerful Realms in the Empire.

Merchant Houses

The availability and demand of goods can vary greatly throughout the Empire. Consequently the price of commodities can be vastly different from one Trade City to the next. Merchants specialise in moving large quantities of goods around the Empire from the cities where they are plentiful to those where they are in the greatest demand making a healthy profit for themselves as they do so. A successful merchant can amass vast sums of money and suddenly find themselves becoming very influential with Realm Lords desiring their backing.

In some parts of the Empire merchants have banded together to form highly influential merchant leagues or merchant houses. These organisations come about when groups of individual merchants with interests in the same trade cities come together to speak with one voice to their Realm Lord. With a co-ordinated approach Merchant Houses have found they are able to negotiate far more effectively with the nobility over such matters as taxation and funding for the realm's armies.

In more recent times the actions of some of the merchant houses has thrown a shadow over the reputations of such organisations. Many of the Realm Lords of the Imperial Trade Cities have become tired of being held to ransom by their merchants. There are also growing rumours that some members of the merchant leagues are being intimidated into joining and paying astronomical membership fees. Those who refuse to pay have found their goods mysteriously destroyed in their warehouses or never arriving at their intended destinations.

Buying and Selling Goods and Equipment

Buying Goods

In most cases a character will buy goods during downtime. In order to purchase something the character must travel to an Imperial Trade City. Once there, assuming the desired commodity is available and that character has sufficient funds, he or she will be able to purchase what was intended.

Prices for commodities vary from place to place and time to time. However the prices listed in the **Typical Costs and Prices List** are a good guide to what a character will need to pay. If you're buying something listed under **Artisan's Materials & Trade Goods** then these goods are assumed to be stored in locked warehouses in the city in which you purchased them. Storage doesn't cost you anything and goods can be left there in relative security for as long as you need. Other items are assumed to be taken with your character wherever you travel.

Items purchased in downtime must of course be paid for. Players are free to purchase items in cash (by sending the organisers the appropriate cash with the downtime submission) or by having it deducted from income generated during that downtime.

If you want to purchase something in downtime please state clearly in your submission:

- . What you want to purchase.
- . Where you want to purchase it.
- . The maximum price you are prepared to pay in Thrones for the item.
- . How you want to pay for it (cash or subtract from income).





Selling Goods

The sale of goods again must be carried out at an imperial trade city. The quantity of Thrones you'll receive depends on the prices those items are currently fetching in the city in question but the typical prices shown in this section are a good guide. You'll also have to pay tax on the sale to the local Realm Lord.

If you want to sell something in downtime please state clearly in your submission:

- . What you want to sell.
- . Where you want to sell it.
- . The minimum price you are prepared to sell the item(s) for.

Transporting Goods

All goods moving between Trade Cities are carried by boat, simply because it is not possible to move goods from any one trade city to another exclusively on land. Ship's Captains charge transportation fees for moving cargoes from one place to another. Fees are usually based on the relative worth of the cargo rather than its size (as more expensive cargoes can make a ship prone to pirate attack if word of what's being carried gets out). Most Captains will charge 5% of the cargo's worth for transporting goods from any one Trade City to any other.

Units of Measure

The Imperium recognises several units of weight and measure as standard across all realms, these are described below.

Robes Used as a measure for cloth and hides. One robe is deemed to be a quantity of material required to fully clothe the great Emperor Choudhury III, a man of average height and build.

Palms Used as a measure for small loose goods sold in small quantities such as gems, precious materials, sugar and salt. One palm is deemed to be a quantity sufficient to cover the surface of the great Emperor Choudhury III's right palm.

Doses Used by alchemists in measuring ingredients required for alchemical preparation. One dose is said to be the minimum amount of a substance required to have any effect upon an alchemical brew. The actual quantity of material covered by 1 dose will of course vary from substance to substance but is usually small (within the range of a few palms).

Cups Used to measure volumes of liquid. Ale in the Imperium is generally served in two-cup portions. A standard barrel for holding wine or other liquids has a capacity of 100 cups.

Lifts A measure of weight used for trade in heavy and bulk items. One lift is said to be the weight that an average man can lift from floor to shoulder without assistance. The lift is thought to have first been used on the docks of Khidremar in the year of the Empires founding.

Unusual Commodities

Shellac: This is the partly organic material used by the Sea Princes to build their vessel hulls; it is grown from the shell of a giant aquatic snail, and with the correct treatments can be used to make a material approximately as hard as cast iron but much lighter and more durable. It is highly prized, and very rare, with only two concerns in Khidremar currently in possession of the water snails. The Sea Princes will occasionally trade finished and worked articles of Shellac but they expect a high price for such goods.

Gnositite: This mineral, found in small quantities in Orinna and in minute deposits elsewhere, is arguably one of the most sought-after in the Archipelago; this is the rare ore which Children of the Maelstrom (Storm and Stone Born) need to reproduce, but additionally is the ore from which, after much refining and processing, Red Quicksilver is drawn.

Red Quicksilver: A liquid metal refined from the ore Gnositite. Red Quicksilver is a remarkable material capable of storing the energy of living creatures inside its matrix. Tiny amounts of it are used in the production of Phylacteries critical to the casting of Natural Philosophy. It can fetch an astounding price.

Black Lotus: The plant from which the drug *Liao* is derived, illegal yet almost ever present throughout the Archipelago. The Giants of Heroun especially prize this substance. Liao addiction is regarded by many as one of the greatest social evils citizens of the Empire have ever been faced with.

Loaman Iron: An exceptionally strong, dense and rare metal that is incredibly hard and can be sharpened to an extreme degree. Loaman iron is extremely difficult to work and the secret of its forging is a closely guarded secret known only to a handful of armourers.



Serpentis: The scales of the great sea worms known to occasionally terrify shipping in the Southern sea-lanes are known as Serpentis. They are much sought after due to their flexibility and remarkable toughness. Serpentis is also thought to have an innate resistance to magic that can protect its wearer from hostile spells.



Slaves: Several of the Realms support a slave trade, and have varying laws regarding the conduct of and rights of slaves from the liberal (Orinna, Oscuromar, Gevou) to the merciless (Lyrliheen, Bastopole). Other Realms, such as Heroun, Moon-Mirror, the three main Plains and Koth, regard slavery as abhorrent and actively suppress it within their territories. Nevertheless, wherever a market exists, merchants unscrupulous enough to service it spring up. In Gevou, slaves are indentured for a fixed term and then released to freedom; it is more a judicial punishment than a form of forced labour, but in Lyrliheen they are both workforce and occasional sacrifices to the dark forest gods, and many slavers sell their goods in Graisport, which holds the largest slave market in the Archipelago. Enterprising slavers either raid Insurrectionist territory for captives, track down bands of wandering Esbeeti, or purchase cargoes of prisoners of war from skirmishes and territorial expansion. The Karakush (when they can be captured) are highly valued amongst slavers for their strength and endurance.

Weapons Trade

Weapons are not traded in the Empire. In fact it is seldom that armourers forge weapons these days. The history of the Empire is long and bloody. In days gone by it supported huge armies and insisted on all of its citizens being armed to protect themselves from an external threat. The Empire has declined in size since those days and the Sea Prince blockade protects from external threats; but the old weapons remain keen today.

Almost every Imperial household has a functional weapon or two most of which are in good condition and seldom needed. The nature of iron and base metals within the archipelago makes it impractical to re-forged them into something more useful. Once forged metals become extremely brittle and almost useless if put through the process again.

Due to this enormous excess of weaponry there is no weapons trade within the Empire. While armour is traded and is expensive by most people's standards weapons are regarded as practically worthless unless they are master crafted or magical in some way.

Players need not purchase weapons for their characters and may assume they have access to any phys repped weapons they care to bring to an event.

Hirelings

There are always people looking for work in the Imperial Trade cities with a broad spectrum of skills that could be of use to a potential employer.

Hirelings allow players to add to their characters downtime by paying individuals to perform (potentially dangerous) tasks for them. Hirelings are ideal for undertaking simple tasks that a character needs performed but hasn't got the time or skills to do themselves. A sample of potential hirelings is given below. The monthly rates of pay required by hirelings are shown on the **Typical Costs and Prices list**.

Labourer: An unskilled and uneducated individual suitable for carrying out simple and menial tasks.

Scribe: Scribes typically have Literacy, Mercantile Knowledge and at least one additional language. A scribe could be useful for carrying out trade transactions on the behalf of a character or for transcribing or translation work.

Scout: A combat trained individual who will know the territory of one particular Realm of the Empire very well. Useful as a guide or to carry messages into dangerous terrain.

Mercenary: A professional soldier who will typically be well armed and equipped. Ideal as a bodyguard when travelling in possibly hostile places.

Typical Prices

Presented over the page is a typical price list for goods, commodities and services within the Empire. Characters should purchase their starting goods and equipment using the prices shown below. Players should use this table as a guide to the prices at which their characters are likely to buy or sell goods during downtime.

The availability column gives an indication of how likely it is that you will be able to find an item at any given time at any given trade city. Plentiful items are those with the greatest availability, then Common, Uncommon with Rare items being very seldom available for sale. Characters may start with any item on the list regardless of its availability but during downtime supply of the more difficult to acquire items cannot be guaranteed.

The price of some rare items is marked as N/A. These items are so sought after that prices are always negotiated on an individual basis, even finding a supply of such commodities can be extremely difficult. Players may not start with items marked N/A.



**Typical Price List**

Item Description	Price (Thrones)	Availability
Armour		
Light Armour (per location)	8	Plentiful
Medium Armour (per location)	15	Common
Moderate Armour (per location)	35	Uncommon
Heavy Armour (per location)	70	Uncommon
Buckler	5	Common
Round Shield	10	Common
Kite Shield	20	Common
Tower / Door Shield	50	Uncommon
Alchemical Preparations		
Medicinal Bandage	50	Plentiful
Heal Limb Balm	100	Common
Heal Body Balm	200	Common
Potion of Lesser Healing	400	Common
Potion of Healing	800	Uncommon
Potion of Greater Healing	2000	Rare
Minor Poison Antidote	50	Plentiful
Non Lethal Ingested Poison	500	Common
Non Lethal Blade Venom	2000	Uncommon
Wizard's Tonic (Will Restorative)	2000	Rare
Priest's Tonic (Faith Restorative)	2000	Rare
Endurance Potion	2500	Rare
Dose of Liao	25	Common (illegal in some Realms)
Incense (500 sticks)	5	Plentiful
Fine Incense (500 sticks)	100	Uncommon
Alchemical Ingredients (all per dose)		
Yew Berries	2	Common
Wild Garlic	2	Common
Trellis Mushroom	20	Uncommon
Tombdust	N/A	Rare
Toad Skin	30	Uncommon
Slippery-Elm Bark	2	Common
Silver Shavings	2	Common
Salamander	N/A	Rare
Rose Oil	1	Plentiful
Red Cavern Mould	N/A	Rare
Quartz	50	Uncommon
Poppy Seed	2	Common
Nightshade	4	Common
Moonflowers	90	Uncommon
Mandrake Root	80	Uncommon
Healwort Leaves	2	Common
Mabden Gold	N/A	Rare
Comfrey	1	Common
Amber	40	Uncommon
Adder Venom	N/A	Rare
Black Lotus	5	Common
Whitethorns	25	Uncommon





Magical Supplies		
Teaching Scroll of Circle 1 Spell	100	Rare
Hirelings	(cost per month)	
Labourer	30	Plentiful
Scribe	90	Common
Scout	90	Common
Mercenary	100	Uncommon
Mercenary (Elite)	200	Rare
Artisans Materials & Trade Goods		
<i>Prices Given per Lift</i>		
Wood	5	Plentiful
Base metals (ore)	80	Common
Stone	15	Common
Shellac	N/A	Rare
Gnositite	N/A	Rare
Loaman Iron	N/A	Rare
Clay	5	Plentiful
Building materials	110	Common
House-hold goods	140	Plentiful
Ironwork	180	Common
Wheat	20	Plentiful
Fruit	50	Common
Glass ware	2000	Rare
<i>Prices Given per Palm</i>		
Precious metals	50	Uncommon
Gems	75	Rare
Jewellery	170	Uncommon
Dyes	10	Uncommon
Salt	5	Common
Sugar	10	Uncommon
<i>Prices Given per Robe</i>		
Cloth	20	Common
Silks	30	Uncommon
Hides	15	Plentiful
Serpentis	N/A	Rare
Clothes	30	Plentiful
<i>Prices Given Per Barrel (100 Cups)</i>		
Wine	20	Common
Ale	10	Plentiful
Rum	50	Common
Red Quicksilver	N/A	Rare
<i>Items Sold Individually</i>		
Slaves	700	Common
Paper (per sheet)	2	Uncommon
Transport And Housing		
Yearly rent on peasant family's acreage paid to Landowner	200	
Yearly rent on city hovel	100	
City House	5000	Common
Small Castle	100,000	Rare
Ocean Going Vessel (Carvel)	10,000	Uncommon
Galleon (Battle ready)	15,000	Uncommon



Glossary of Terms

AL	Armour Level. The number of blows a piece of armour can take before it stops protecting its wearer.
Alchemical Preparation	A substance manufactured by an alchemist.
Alchemical Ingredient	An ingredient used in manufacturing Alchemical Preparations.
Astral Magic	One of the schools of magic. Manipulating the powers of the planets and stars.
Celebrant	A member of a religion who is able to cast Greater Mysteries.
Circle	A term used to grade progress of a Mage in the understanding of a school of magic.
Down Time	The period of time between events.
Emperor	The ruler of the Empire in which the game is set. Kept in seclusion.
Ephemeris	Magical item in which Astral Mages store their spells.
FP	Faith Point. Spent by Celebrants or Reverents when casting Mysteries
Game World	The World of the Empire and its surrounds where the game happens.
HL	Health Level. The number of blows a part of an individuals body can withstand and still function.
IC	In Character. Term used to describe actions or items in the game world rather than the real world.
Imperial Law	The core laws of the Empire in which the game is set.
Laminate	A laminated card that describes the in game effects of a item or object. Usually has a corresponding ribbon.
Mage	A caster of spells, a student of one the schools of magic.
Mystery	A religious power that may be called upon by Celebrants and Reverents.
Natural Philosophy	One of the schools of magic. Tipping the balance between life and death.
NPC	Non Player Character. A character briefed by the organisers to behave in a given way.
OOO	Out of Character. Term used to describe actions or items in the real world rather than the game world.
Other World	Strange alternate world existing side by side with the normal world.
PC	Player Character. The character portrayed by a player in the game world.
Phylactery	A magical item in which a Natural Philosopher may store health levels.
Phys - rep	Physical Representation. An object that is used to represent an in game item.
Realm	Part of the Empire in which the game is set. A geographical area ruled by a Realm Lord.
Realm Lord	The ruler of a Realm. Sits on the synod that elects the Emperor.
Reverent	A member of a religion who is able to cast only Lesser Mysteries.
Rhodomancy	One of the schools of magic, the summoning of spirits and bargaining with them for power.
Ribbon	A piece of ribbon attached to a phys -rep to show that it is unusual. Usually has a corresponding laminate.
School of Magic	One of the three types of magic that may be used by a Mage.
Spell	A magical effect created by a Mage.
Spirit Family	A group of supernatural creatures that rule part of the Other World.
Throne	The unit of Imperial Currency.
WP	Will Point. Spent by Mages when casting Spells.