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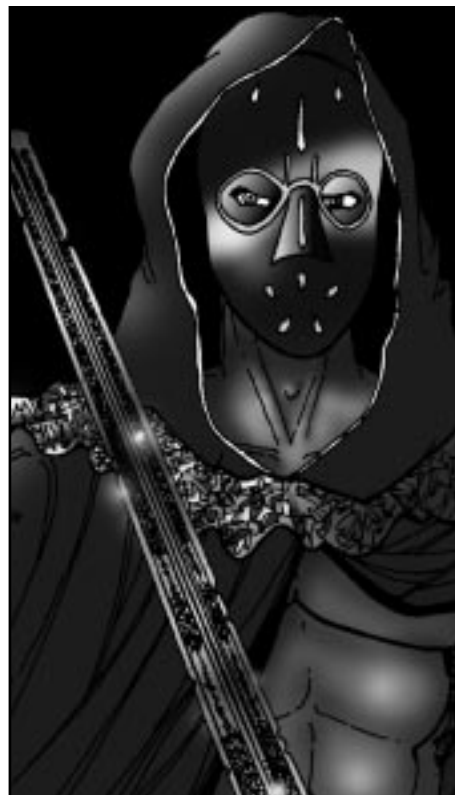
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## About GURPS

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*Pyramid* ([www.sjgames.com/pyramid](http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid)). Our online magazine includes new rules and articles for *GURPS*. It also covers the hobby's top games – *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Shadowrun*, and many more – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *INWO*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures*, and more. And *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online, to see (and comment on) new books before they're released.

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*GURPSnet.* Much of the online discussion of *GURPS* happens on this e-mail list. To join, send mail to [majordomo@io.com](mailto:majordomo@io.com) with "subscribe GURPSnet-L" in the body, or point your World Wide Web browser to <http://gurpsnet.sjgames.com/>.

The *GURPS New Sun* web page is at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/newsun](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/newsun).

## Page References

See *GURPS Compendium I*, p. 181, for a full list of abbreviations for *GURPS* titles. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition Revised* – e.g., p. B144 refers to page 144 of *Basic Set*.

CI refers to *GURPS Compendium I*, CII refers to *Compendium II*, BE to *Bestiary*, G to *Grimoire*, M to *Magic*, MI to *Magic Items*, P to *Psionics*, RO to *Robots*, TT to *Time Travel*, UT to *Ultra-Tech*, VE to *Vehicles*, and VI to *Vikings*.

# INTRODUCTION

Sorcerers and adventurers battle over "magical" artifacts, remnants of former super-science. Weird cults and secret societies perform unspeakable rites in exchange for power from ancient "gods" who are actually tyrannical extraterrestrials. Men of eldritch lore create wondrous machines and horrible monsters in their relentless drive to rediscover the lost sciences that once took humanity to the stars. And over the landscape the blood-red sun gutters like a candle in the wind, threatening to go out and bring eternal night to a tired world . . .

This is the last chance of a dying planet. Any battle between "good" and "evil" has become obscured by the scientific law of Entropy and the religious prospect of Rebirth. Is the answer "Science" or "Magic" – or is it something that transcends both? Is it the old pattern of Empire and Domination, or is it something revolutionarily new that breaks the mold? Is the key to the future that of "dehumanization" or "rehumanization"?

All of this and more awaits those who would dare enter the baroque and decadent world of Urth in search of adventure. Welcome to *GURPS New Sun*.

## About the Author

Michael Andre-Driussi's fiction has appeared in *Interzone*, *Tomorrow SF*, and *The Silver Web*. His essays have found publication in *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, *Extrapolation*, and *Foundation*. Before working on *GURPS New Sun*, he wrote a book-length dictionary for the Urth Cycle called *Lexicon Urthus*, published by Sirius Fiction (P.O. Box 6248, Albany, CA 94706) in 1994. He dedicates this worldbook to Ken St. Andre: roleplayer, role model, and friend.

## About Gene Wolfe

Winner of several major awards, Gene Rodman Wolfe was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1931. He contracted polio in 1933 without permanent effects, and visited the New York World's Fair of 1939, where the theme was "the future."

Wolfe's family moved every few years until 1941, when they settled in at what would become his home town – Houston, Texas. He graduated from Lamar High School in 1949 and entered Texas A&M, where he wrote for a college humor magazine (1951-1952).

Wolfe dropped out in 1952 and was drafted for the Korean War. Among the horrors of war, he saw high-tech armor and weaponry (armored vests, machine guns) being used side-by-side with ancient weapons (swords, knives) – this was not the bright and tidy future promised by Buck Rogers and the World's Fair.

After the war, Wolfe graduated from the University of Houston with a degree in mechanical engineering. Hired at Procter & Gamble Co., he was one of the engineers on the team that created the Pringles potato chip.

Wolfe began writing in earnest in 1957; his first story was sold in 1965. He left P&G in 1972 to become editor of *Plant Engineering*, near Chicago. He stayed at this job for 12 years, writing seven novels and 70 short stories in his spare time, before retiring in 1984 to become a full-time author.





## The Autarch's Guilds

(Continued)

Guilds require a Duty. This will be trivial for most non-state guilds (on a 6 or less for -2 points), but substantial for guilds serving the Autarch (anywhere from on a 9 or less to Extremely Hazardous). They also require a Vow, basically to obey the trade or mercantile guild, or the Autarch for state guilds. This really amounts to only -5 points, since such obedience is usually in the best interest of a guild member (just as any employee seeking to stay employed should consider obeying the boss) and overlaps with the Duty.

Guilds may also give members traditional Enemies, Unusual Backgrounds, or other advantages or disadvantages.

Guild lore is jealously guarded, and some guilds hoard what fragments of high- and ultra-tech they have in the form of skill monopolies.

Each guild has a patron saint whose day determines the feast day of the guild, and whose life figures in the guild's mysteries and lore.

Player-characters may start out in a guild or may roleplay the process of getting into a guild. Generally speaking, the higher up the social ladder the guild is, the more difficult it will be to gain entrance. A person of bad character (i.e., bearing the marks of punishment for a crime) will be turned away by even the butchers and candlemakers. Should all else fail, one can almost always join the soldiers or sailors, who don't care much about one's past, or sell oneself into slavery.

### Guild Tincts

Each guild has a tinct, a specific color that is associated with their profession. The tinct for the torturers is fuligin (a variety of sooty black considered "blacker than black"), that for the librarians is gray, but the others are not given. To create new tincts for guilds, one may refer to the long out-of-print *GURPS Tredroy*, p. 15, or start with the basic tinctures from European heraldry and use a thesaurus to give a New Sun flavor: Silver becomes argent, red gules, blue azure, black sable, green vert or sinople, purple purpure, blood red becomes sanguine or murrey, orange tenne, flesh tone becomes carnation, sky blue becomes bleu or celeste, ashen gray becomes greis, and brown brun.

*Continued on next page . . .*

## Law

The Control Rating for the Commonwealth is 5/1, generally repressive but very open with regard to weapon legality: Melee weapons are unrestricted to free citizens, pyrotechnic polearms and arrows are not too difficult to obtain (expense being the main barrier), and even something as magical and concealable as a laser pistol (a badge of rank, worn by military officers) is not illegal for an ordinary person to own. Most pyrotechnic weapons are issued to soldiers just before battle and collected afterward, so people seen with military hardware like repeating arbalests will be suspected of being deserters and questioned for that reason.

Otherwise, the laws are harsh. Traveling from town to town by the Autarch's roads (the highway system of the Commonwealth that is for the most part in ill repair) is forbidden to all but military personnel and punishable by immediate death (a law dating to Autarch Maruthas, some 70 years before the Book of the New Sun). The *uhlans* are a mounted highway patrol with permission to kill and loot the bodies of those who break this law. Corporal and capital punishment are common, but most sentences are carried out by relative amateurs and outside of the Citadel the torturers guild is thought to be only a legend.

### Crime and Punishment

In the course of his narrative, Severian tells of the punishments for various crimes. Thecla is tortured on the revolutionary (an electric machine) for treason; her maid has the full boot (skin stripped from her lower leg) for the same reason; Agilus is beheaded for multiple murder and mayhem; Barnoch, convicted of spying for Vodalus, is sealed within his house for several months, sentenced to be branded, broken on the wheel, and beheaded; Morwenna of Saltus is branded on the face, has her legs broken, and is finally beheaded for murdering her husband and son; a cattle thief is beheaded; the armigette Cyriaca of Thrax is sentenced to death by strangulation or drowning for her multiple adulteries; thieves are commonly whipped or lose their right hands; Winnoc (slave of the Pelerines) was publicly whipped in his youth for stealing; merchants are whipped for overcharging and cheating customers (especially the Autarch's army); Eata is whipped and bound into indentured service on a far-trading ship for his conviction on charges of smuggling. Permanent exile is the punishment for deodands and remontados. See the sidebar on p. 25 for medieval punishments.

## Religion

The people of the Commonwealth are monotheists, but many visitors have come away believing them to be polytheistic since their one enigmatic god (the Increate) has a number of other titles (the poor call him "God") or aspects (Aperion, Caitanya, Demiurge, Pancreator, Panjudicator, and Paraclete), and there are a bewildering number of intermediary beings between the Increate and mankind. The Increate is fundamentally a solar god, but not Apollonian. The



people of the Commonwealth do believe in reincarnation, a detail that, when combined with the illusion of polytheism, gives a Hinduistic feel to the religion.

The church itself has a large number of orders, but there is no uniting authority – that is, no pope or high lama. In this respect it is more like the Eastern Orthodox Church. Another similarity is the vast variety of monks that it supports (see pp. 67-68).

Religious sentiment has declined greatly by the time of Severian's youth. There aren't so many pilgrims any longer; in fact, they've become a rare sight. The chapel where the torturers hold their feast day every year has been in ruins for some time.

See Chapter 5 for more information.

## Technology

The technology level of the Commonwealth is generally around TL4 in Nessus and lower elsewhere. This isn't hard and fast; parts of Nessus enjoy TL6 electrical service and a specialized guild maintains the TL6 knowledge to service it. The Autarch maintains household guards with TL10 (presumably off-world) hardware; the knowledge to repair their weapons likely is imported, too. Exultants have access to TL12 contragravity fliers, but the knowledge to service them has certainly disappeared.

The most advanced weaponry on Urth is TL8+ laser pistols and energy weapons, most of the latter being ancient spaceship artillery.

Slug-throwers such as rifles are unknown; the armies use medieval-style polearms that also discharge a napalm-like substance, spouting gouts of flame up to 50 yards. Repeater crossbows shoot bolts tipped with the stuff, and slings send "shooting stars" whizzing. While the concept of these weapons can be as low as TL2, and the ammunition might be manufactured with resources as low as TL4, their actual performance suggests very ultra-tech materials and design.

Armor is medieval in design, but made of a Kevlar-like material, presumably because high-tech manufacturing is cheaper than using what little smeltable metal remains on Urth.

While technology has been in decline for chiliads, bioengineered creations have staked their niches in Urth's ecosystem, as witnessed by the "destrier," the common war mount with clawed feet, tusks, and an omnivorous diet.

Although the people of Nessus live with the relics of such magical technology, even the fairly learned among them who know that the roads were built for "road engines of the ancients" would be absolutely amazed to see "oxenless wains" or a powered "boat-without-sails," and they simply would not comprehend a radio at all, assuming that disembodied voices belong to ghosts, or that a talking box must have some intelligence inside of it. (And they could very well be *right*, given the hazy line between magic and technology.)

## Language

The language of the Commonwealth, called the Common Tongue, is of average difficulty. It is remarkably stable across the Age of the Autarch – people from Severian's time will have no difficulty speaking and understanding the language in Typhon's era. They might encounter a few odd words now and then, but not enough to really hint at the passage of a millennium.

### Names

See Appendix 3: Onomastics (p. 124).

## The Autarch's Guilds

(Continued)

Common patterns substituting for a single color are ermine (white with black spots), ermines (black with silver spots), erminetes (black with white spots), erminois (black with gold spots), and pean (gold with black spots).

### Creating New Guilds

The character templates beginning on p. 58 include a handful of guilds serving the state. GMs may want to create other state guilds or trade guilds of their own.

When doing so, GMs should determine the Social Status, Reputation, level of Duty, special advantages or disadvantages, skill requirements, and patron saint of the new guild. For trade guilds, guild dues must be determined as well.

The average member should be assumed to be a journeyman, meaning he'll also need Administrative Rank 1 and the Vow. For the differences in apprentices and masters, see *Torturers* on pp. 76-77.

The GM may also want to determine the initiation requirements of his guild; many require an entrance fee or otherwise restrict potential apprentices. For instance, the torturers only take their members from the very young male children of those who die in their "care." The witches only take the torturers' girls.

The result would be essentially a succinct, specialized character template. An example:

**Charioteers of the Commonality:** the hackneys guild. *Social Status:* -1. *Reputation:* -2 all the time; borderline criminal and often in cahoots with prostitutes. *Duty:* On 6 or less. (This reflects duty to internal guild business; hackneys likely spend most every waking moment chasing fares.) *Special:* Fit advantage. *Skill Requirements:* Professional Skill (Hackney)-12+, Area Knowledge (Nessus)-12+, and Streetwise 12+. *Patron Saint:* St. Fiacre. *Guild Dues:* 25% of income plus \$8 monthly for every \$100 still owed guild on \$500 fiacre (basically a two-mule wagon). *Cost to Join:* \$30 deposit toward buying fiacre.

