CREDITS

Line Developer: Walt Ciechanowski
Creative Director: Dominic McDowall
Art Director: Scott Purdy
Writing: Chad Bowser, Walt Ciechanowski, Lynne Hardy, Andi Newton and Alasdair Stuart.
Cover Art: Jon Hodgson
Interior Art: Scott Purdy
Layout and Graphic Design: Paul Bourne
Editing: Andrew Kenrick
Publisher: Dominic McDowall

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Continent!

You have in your hands Victoriana’s official guide to Europe. This supplement is the result of work over two editions and has greatly evolved over time. What started as a shilling shocker spread through a few European cities has become a full-blown Continental gazetteer with an epic penny dreadful that could reshape the map of Europe.

From the Rock of Gibraltar to the steppes of Russia, from a Kingdom of Giants to the Boot of Italy, this book is packed with information about the nooks and crannies of a fantastic Victorian Europe. We’ve tried to make each region come alive to enable Gamesmasters to set entire shilling shockers in a given region (I have a soft spot for the Danubian Principalities might) without tossing in a whole host of new rules. That said we do offer a smattering of new sapients in the Appendix, ready to be used as adventurers or supporting characters.

The Concert in Flames is a penny dreadful that is a bit of a departure from our previous adventures. While some investigation is involved, this penny dreadful is plotted as an action-adventure with a race against time. The adventurers follow clues and thwart a Continental conspiracy in the streets of Paris, Vienna, Pestbuda, Prague, and finally Geneva, where an ancient horror threatens to burn Europe. Throughout all of this the adventurers get to attend the re-coronation of Napoleon, rub elbows with Emperor Franz Karl, join forces with the Tsarina, and possibly end the Crimean War. It’s an adventure they soon won’t forget!

Before diving into this book I’d like to thank all of my co-authors. This was a challenging project to pull together with multiple authors and they had only the vaguest of outlines to work with. In spite of that they did an admirable job in helping Europe come alive for Victoriana. Their hard work is most appreciated!

Using this Book
The Concert in Flames is divided into two parts. The first is a gazetteer of Europe, beginning with more articles from Countess Lyonesse’s scrapbook and concluding with entries on each of the major regions of Europe. Adventurers that hail from these regions should use the appropriate social class table when determining their breeding.

With the incidental exception of Paris’ Département aéthérique, there are no new associations offered, as there is really no need. Each association given in the Victoriana Core Rulebook has its equivalent in any of the regions; a simple name-change is all that is necessary. One point that any European adventurer will want to pay attention to is languages; adventurers that hop around the Continent can quickly find themselves in cities where communication is difficult.

A Different Europe, but Much the Same

While The Concert in Flames is a supplement on Continental Europe, we aren’t providing canned histories of the continent and its various countries. The reason for this is simple: it isn’t necessary. In broad strokes, the history of Victoriana’s Europe is the same as our own. The Roman Empire, the Crusades, the Renaissance, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars all took place essentially as they did in the real world. It only takes a few minutes with a good search engine to find more detailed information on a particular historical event than we could possibly provide here.

Where Victoriana differs from our world is in some of the details. Obviously a world of Dwarfs, Orcs and magic is going to have differences to our own, although we’ve taken the conceit that these differences tend to resolve themselves over time. For this supplement we’ve chosen to focus on the things that are noticeably different in order to illustrate how a Gamesmaster can ‘tweak’ other parts of history to give them a Victoriana spin. In short, recorded history is a source to plunder for adventures, not a straitjacket to prevent them!
We have peppered the gazetteer with interesting new equipment and other items of value and there are a few new spells here and there (some of which are reprinted from the *Liber Magica*). Of particular interest are the new firearms of the German Confederation, the blue diamonds of Greece and the crystal blades of Andorra.

After the gazetteer is a penny dreadful that takes the adventurers from Paris to Geneva by way of Austria. More than just an exciting city-hopping adventure, it is an opportunity for Gamesmasters to shake things up and, perhaps, bring some wayward elements of *Victoriana* back into line with our own history or, alternatively, spinning things off into even more far-flung directions. The adventurers should feel like their action, or inaction, can change the world – and they won’t be wrong.

One word of caution: we’ve tried to make each city come alive with its own character. It would be a crime if Paris or Prague felt just like London. When your adventurers are hopping across the Continent they should feel like they are immersed in different cultures.

A little research can go a long way when an adventurer orders breakfast or thinks that her fluency in German is going to be enough when trotting around the Austrian Empire.

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**Using the Second Edition**

The Victorian world of 1867 in *Victoriana*’s earlier editions isn’t so much a set historical period as it is an amalgamation of the ‘best bits’ of the Victorian era, and much of it is based more on the 1850s than the 1860s. Thus, most of the information given in the gazetteer can be used whole cloth, with the Gamesmaster easily smoothing over the occasional inconsistency.

The penny dreadful provides a bit more of a challenge, as Napoleon Bonaparte is presumed dead (as he was in our world by 1867 – or 1856 for that matter) and Louis Napoleon is now in charge of France. As France is still ‘the French Republic’ in the core rulebook then it’s a simple matter to make the coronation about Louis Napoleon’s ascension to emperor as Napoleon III; it just happened a few years later than in our world.

Similarly, the Austrian Empire became the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary in May of 1867. By massaging the date, a Gamesmaster can comfortably make the Unity Concert a symbol of this compromise and allow events to play out as they are written.
CHAPTER I
The Encyclopaedia Victoriana
In spite of more enlightened scholarship regarding the state of the Continent after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, there is still a tendency amongst some of my esteemed colleagues to refer to the era between the Age of Rome and the Renaissance as ‘the Dark Ages,’ a time when much of our learning was lost while our ancestors simply struggled to survive against barbarians and each other.

Such a notion is ludicrous and terribly regional. The Eastern Roman Empire (‘Byzantine’ is anachronistic) and the Nithami states not only preserved the knowledge of the ancients but improved upon it, to say nothing of the cultures of the Orient. Indeed, it’s worth noting that gunpowder, that technological innovation that challenged the hermeticist for supremacy on the battlefield and changed the face of war forever, was discovered during this period. When taken as a whole, there never truly was a ‘Dark Age’ in Europe.

Unless, that is, we go further back. Before the Roman Empire, before the Greek Empire, and even before the Egyptian and Mesopotamian Empires, there was an age where much knowledge was truly and universally lost, so much so that we can’t even piece together the world as it was before. We call this age the Great Cataclysm or Great Flood, when the antediluvian world was wiped away forever.
And how truly was it wiped away! Antiquarians have found curiosities and relics that posit the antediluvian world as one in reverse, when continents were oceans and oceans were continents. The Guild refers to this world as the Golden Age or High Age of Magic, when vast empires were ruled by sorcerer-kings and everyone was connected to the aether. If such notions have the scent of myth about them then they should, as most of our collective knowledge about the world before was preserved only as mythology in various Paynim cultures.

What was the world truly like before the Great Cataclysm? Mythology and scant records hint at a few names. Chief amongst them is Atlantis and Antilla in the Atlantic Ocean and Thulia in the North Sea. Other such lands include Lemuria and Kumarinadu in the Indian Ocean and Fusang and Mu in the Pacific. A few antiquarians even assert that desolate Antarctica once held a thriving civilisation and similar claims have been made about the Arctic.

I do believe, and there is considerable, if circumstantial, evidence to support, that the Antediluvian Age was one of great magic, when the Celestial Engine was set a cog or two towards Entropy. By even fragmentary accounts it was an age when the aether flowed through the skies like air, with cities of towering spires and majestic flying ships, quite unlike our crude aerostats, that carried hundreds of people across continents. Chirurgeons could cure diseases and regrow lost limbs and sorcerers could achieve true immortality as archons. It was indeed a glorious age to be alive!

And then, seemingly overnight, it all came to an end. We aren’t sure what happened but again we can point to legend and mythology, this time preserved in the texts of the Levantine religions. The Aluminat Codex casts the Golden Age as diabolical, with Devils ruling the world as princes until the Celestial Army of Order cast them out. Some say that it was the Great Archon Nergal who commanded that army. Others believe that Nergal and his followers, the Nergaleen, sought to destroy the world and remake it in their own image, necessitating the Army of Order to deal with him as well.

Whatever the truth, the world was dealt a devastating blow from which it never truly recovered. As Sir Arthur Dee has so eloquently put it on several occasions, we live in the ‘dying embers’ of the magical age; hermeticists grasp at the scraps that remain after most of the magic was somehow ripped away from the planet. In that sense, the Dark Age is not a moment in time; instead we continue to wallow in it.

The Hope of Rome
By Placido Puccinelli – Lecture at the Università degli Studi di Torino, 3 September 1855

Almost two millennia ago the Roman Empire was marching around the Mediterranean and through Europe, bringing order to the lands through the strength of its legions. It blended nations, cultures and even religions together in a homogenous whole. For a long time, Rome seemed invincible and, after it fell, the dream of a strong Roman empire never really died. The Greeks carried the torch through the Byzantine Empire for a millennium more, and Holy Roman Emperors have carried the torch up through the turn of this century.

Why has the dream of Rome endured? We need only look to the Aluminat for the answer.

The Heavenly Host inspired the Eight Voices to give its message to the world, that we can be happy in this world and secure our place in the next by accepting Order into our lives. The Aluminat Codex casts the Golden Age as diabolical, with Devils ruling the world as princes until the Celestial Army of Order cast them out. Some say that it was the Great Archon Nergal who commanded that army. Others believe that Nergal and his followers, the Nergaleen, sought to destroy the world and remake it in their own image, necessitating the Army of Order to deal with him as well.

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Since then, of course, we’ve seen the folly of our ancestor’s ways. Factional interests have kept the Continent in an almost perpetual state of war, and even when there is no war we remain divided. Even the Conclave acknowledges the seemingly permanent divisions by supporting the various sects of the Aluminat with no concrete plan for reuniting them. The Concert of Europe simply maintains the fractured status quo with the promise of stamping out disruptions to it. Rather than settle our differences we look for new enemies to fight together so that we can ignore those differences. The forces of Entropy laugh as we do so.

Can there ever be a new Roman Empire? That is the hope of the Book of Perfection, the ultimate book of the Aluminat Codex. Like a machine, it only works when all of the parts work together. We were tested once and found lacking, thus the Great Flood purged the most entropic elements. The Book of Perfection warns us that we shall once again be tested, this time by fire, and only through unity can we hope to succeed.

The Book of Justas

CHAPTER 5: THE SIX IMPERATIVES
Blessed are those who submit to Order, their place in Heaven is prepared.
Blessed are those who repent, they have time to right themselves.
Blessed are the righteous, they will be victorious.
Blessed are the just, they shall be justly judged.
Blessed are those who accept their condition, they are martyrs for Order.
Blessed are those who battle Entropy, they shall be exalted.

Entropic Scientist: Leonardo da Vinci
By Lord Blackthorne – London Guild Quarterly, Summer 1855

What does it mean to be a Liberator of Entropy or a Templar of Order? Can one simply substitute ‘magic’ for ‘entropy’ and ‘science’ for ‘order’? Is it possible for a hermeticist to be truly devoted to the Heavenly Host if she continues her magical studies? If so, then why Maleficium?

I confess it pains me when I overhear snippets of conversations amongst my colleagues in Guild parlours oversimplifying the Celestial Engine as if it were two teams on the field. The simple fact is that it is a war of philosophy made manifest, and anyone can support either side no matter what tools they use.

One need only look at the pathetic state of our own thaumaturgy to see the philosophy of Order in action. Creativity and spontaneity, once the hallmarks of a truly great magician, have been replaced with rote memorisation and recital of a few common spells handed down from instructor to student. Where are the innovators? Entropy isn’t the willing of aetheric force through one’s fingers; it is the ability to create new effects on a whim!

No, I’ve long argued that the true Templars of Order are not the engineers and scientists, whose sparks of entropic creativity develop new technologies, but instead the staid academics who are content with learning and teaching that which is already known. There are far too many hermeticists comfortable with that description.

As for an unorthodox Liberator of Entropy, I offer the great Leonardo da Vinci. Considered amongst the greatest artists in history and perhaps the greatest of the Renaissance polymaths, da Vinci no doubt vexes many an Eldren who felt he should belong to their noble subspecies rather than be a common Huldu. Still, da Vinci’s talents weren’t restricted to the arts; he was a great inventor as well!

How he could have reshaped the world with his creative inventions had sorcerers not been so quick to categorise him as an overzealous artificer and deem his inventions for the most part impractical.

Even in the 15th century, when it was painfully obvious that magic no longer held the potency it once had, the hubris of the sorcerers of the time refused to see the potential of technology. Instead, they saw only the gunpowder of the battlefields destroying the world they knew and believed da Vinci’s inventions would only hasten that destruction. Towards that end the great magicians of the time were true Templars of Order, stifling the new to preserve the old.

As the example of Leonardo da Vinci shows, magic and technology belong to neither entropy nor order; they are simply the tools most commonly deployed by those professing such philosophies. I yearn for the day when the Consortium can reshape the world once more, rather than simply try its best to preserve the water in a leaking cup!