

Kleos

To understand the mentality of the [Elysian](#) patriarch it is vital to understand the concept of Kleos. To the majority of patriarch's this is considered one of the most important motivations of their life, even if they do not consciously consider it. However it shapes much of their behavior and outlook on life.

The word Kleos literally means 'to hear' in an old dialect of [Seraphim](#). However it carries powerful connotations and its meaning to a non-Elysian could be roughly translated as 'Reputation' or 'The renown of your actions and name'. In addition to this it has very strong connotations of honor. However most importantly it is an 'eternal name' - one which shall never fade and so grant the Elysian a certain form of immortality.

How it's Earned

Kleos is earned through the actions of the individual - you gain more of it through great deeds such as valor in battle. In battle it is no great honor to vanquish a weaker opponent; you might even lose Kleos for doing so, but to destroy a powerful opponent is a great honor. Exactly how you earn it is not considered particularly important - a victory through guile and deceit can occasionally bring greater honor than simply matching your opponent in firepower. Battle is not the only place which Kleos can be accumulated or lost however - how you treat your guests is important for example (linked to the concept of Xenia which will be detailed at another time) or great actions in other fields. A master craftsman whose name was well-known and whose products were understood to be of superb quality would have a large amount of Kleos. It can be applied to almost all fields of work - although the Plebeians play by different rules.

Wealth is often considered to be a physical manifestation of a patriarch's Kleos - which is why they consider gathering wealth important, although not nearly as important as the giving and receiving of gifts (which show how much the other person thinks of you).

Effects and Significance

The reason why Kleos is of such significance is that it was long a tradition that only the greatest of people would get a pleasant afterlife, just as only the very worst would be assigned to hell - the vast majority of Elysians would be sent to a drab afterlife where neither great pleasure or pain could be experienced. Thus it was thought that you had to live on in that material world, and to gain a certain immortality there through all people knowing of your name and your great deeds. In addition it would help your chances of securing a more pleasant afterlife. The Elysian churches standing on the afterlife is currently under some fairly serious debate between the Exarches, and the advent of soul transfer technology conveys effective immortality to Patricians - both of which work to weaken this significance, but it is still an enormous motivating force, along with sheer pride.

Lastly Kleos is inherited - you inherit the Kleos of your forefathers (or foremothers) and build upon it to

bring both glory to yourself and your ancestors. This was the reasoning behind the Elysian custom, now going out of practice and considered a social anachronism, to state a patriarch's lineage behind his name upon introductions.

How this effects a Patrician's behavior should not be underestimated. It ensures that they are very individualist in nature, working to increase their own reputation. In the military they do not take this to such a degree as disobeying orders or insubordination, since this would lead to an enormous drop in Kleos, but it leads to a rather more individualized state of fears. However their view in a drab afterlife also means that Patricians in particular are less than enthusiastic about throwing their life's away – less it be in a particularly note worthy and effective manner. There is little worse than an ignominious death. Indirectly this concept has led to much of the arrogance of the Elysians.

In Non-Patricians

The Plebeians do not operate within the same ideological superstructure. This is partially because they do not have great names – if they did they would not be plebeians. And so they do not work for their own Kleos but for the joint Kleos of the entire race and nation. This is a powerful belief which has been enforced by the state and religion as an ideological superstructure. Plebeian's consider themselves working for the honor of the empire and hoping for a place in the afterlife through these efforts. This being said there are Plebeian's that try and accumulate Kleos in order that they might be raised to the rank of Patrician and be given a new body.

It is not thought that the Seraph have a particularly strong view of Kleos – they have certainly never been seen following a strong honor system of showing particular care about their own existence. Their own relationship with religion is rather haphazard since Elysians by and large do not consider Seraphs to have souls – and therefore deserving no eternal name and certainly not a place in the hallowed afterlife.

The Caelisolan's viewpoint is a strange hodgepodge of the views of the Patrician and Plebian viewpoints. While the existence of their body has eliminated the idea that non-Patricians's are unable to earn personal Kleos, many of them are still of the mind that they should be attempting to build the reputation of the Elysian nation as a whole through their actions. So their actions tend to be aimed towards both improving their own reputation and the reputation of Elysian's on the whole.

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[Zakalwe](#) created this article on 2006/11/14 16:35.

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Last update: **2023/12/21 04:22**



