

Civilization IV Leader Traits: Self-Actualization, Axemen, and You

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Introduction

In Civilization IV, each leader has two “traits” which bestow some specific advantages to their civilization. For example, some traits make military units better, others improve an empire's economy, and several make certain buildings cheaper to build. While several leaders share the same trait, each combination of traits is unique within the game (and as of the Beyond the Sword expansion pack, there are three combinations do not exist at all).

Whether you purposely choose your leader for each game or let the computer randomly assign one to you, it's a good idea to incorporate your leaders' traits into your overall strategy. The purpose of this guide is to help you do that.

Thanks to the ALC series I've now played at least one game (usually several) with each trait. I'd like to think I'm in a position to share some insight into how to best leverage this feature of the game. In this article, I intend to first share some thoughts on each individual trait--its strengths, weaknesses, and how to best leverage it. After that, I'll share some thoughts on synergy--that is, how to work with the trait combinations.

This guide has been revised to include information relevant to the Beyond the Sword expansion pack. No new traits were introduced in BtS (unlike its predecessor, Warlords, which introduced three new traits), but several new leaders and other game elements were.

I want to first emphasize that what follows is largely my own opinion, though I am attempting to incorporate the opinions on the traits that I've seen here at CFC. In addition, based on responses to this article, I expect and hope to revise this article over time. I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has participated in the ALC threads. Much of the insight I have gained and am attempting to share here I owe to the ALC contributors.

Part One: The Traits

Not all traits are created equal. Some are clearly better than others. Thus, I've broken down the traits into three categories, kind of like Starbucks coffee: Strong, Medium, and Weak.

The Strongest Traits

These traits offer the biggest bang for your buck. When used properly, these traits make the biggest difference in dominating and winning the game.

Financial

+1 commerce on plots with 2 commerce.

Leaders with the trait (10)

- Hannibal (Carthage)
- Elizabeth (England)
- Victoria (England)
- Huayna Capac (Inca)
- Wang Kon (Korea)
- Mansa Musa (Mali)
- Ragnar (Viking)
- Willem van Oranje (Dutch)
- Pacal II (Maya)
- Darius I (Persia)

Overview

This is quite probably the strongest of the traits, at least at levels below Emperor, so much so that many players consider Financial to be a "crutch" and avoid leaders with this trait because they feel it offers an unfair advantage. The game developers apparently agreed, hence in one of the early patches they removed the double production speed of banks to lessen its power. Even so, Financial remains a truly awesome trait.

At first, it seems so subtle: +1 commerce on some tiles? So what?

The answer, of course, is this: It's the economy, stupid. Say what you want about military, research, religion, and other game elements; ultimately, your civilization requires a robust economy in order to support everything else you do. Military units incur maintenance costs, more so if they're outside of your territory. Cities likewise have maintenance costs, hampering your rate of expansion and requiring you to ensure each city can somehow pay for itself. And to keep up in technology you have to be able to set aside funds to support research. The Financial trait makes all of these tasks a little easier--if handled well, a lot easier.

High-Priority Technologies:

- Pottery
- Currency
- Guilds
- Banking
- Liberalism
- Printing Press
- Democracy
- Corporation

Useful Wonders:

- The Colossus
- Wall Street

Best Buildings:

- Markets
- Grocers
- Banks
- Libraries
- Universities
- Observatories
- Laboratories

Useful Civics:

- Free Speech
- Emancipation

How to use it

The main way to leverage the financial trait is very straightforward: cottage spam.

Yes, the tried-and-true Cottage Economy, or CE. Have your Workers lay down as many cottages as your population can work while still working other worthwhile tiles as well. I'm especially fond of placing cottages on riverside grassland tiles, as the Financial benefit kicks in as soon as the cottage is built, and the 2 food feeds the citizen working the tile (floodplains, with 3 food, are even better for cottages, supporting city growth along with the economy). Just remember you may have to irrigate some of those tiles instead, by placing farms on them, in order to feed and grow your population and/or to chain irrigate another tile. Make sure you have citizens working the cottages steadily, however, as it's the only way to make them grow and increase their revenue.

In addition, be on the lookout for resources that provide additional commerce. Gems, gold, and silver are obvious targets, but spices, silk, and wine are good as well; all will earn you the +1 commerce benefit in addition to the additional commerce of the resource. You want to claim these resources, ensure they're in a city's fat cross, and are improved and then worked by a citizen. Most of the commerce-rich resources also increase happiness, which means you can grow your other cities larger and, in turn, work more cottages and other commerce-rich tiles.

Since you'll have all that extra commerce rolling in, prioritize buildings that do something with it, and the technologies that enable them. Libraries, monasteries, universities, observatories, and laboratories all multiply the amount of research you convert from commerce via the science slider, while markets, grocers, and banks multiply whatever gold is left over. In addition, Printing Press will increase the yield from your cottage investment, as will the Free Speech civic. Emancipation will make any immature cottages grow faster.

The Downside

First off, Financial provides no direct benefit to a tile that isn't providing at least 2 commerce. This can make you reluctant to work tiles without the benefit, even though you will need to. This means a production city, which mostly works hammer-rich rather than commerce-rich tiles, gains no direct benefit from the trait. You will, however, need at least one production city, preferably more, so don't overlook them in favour of commerce cities. The same goes for tile improvements. Yes, you can place a cottage on a grassland hill. But should you? A mine would provide much-needed hammers, something commerce cities often chronically lack.

The biggest problem with Financial, however, is the vulnerability of your economy, especially as time goes on. It takes a lot of turns to make a cottage grow into a town, but that investment can be quickly undone by a couple of pillaging enemy units. And the not-inconsiderable amount of gold to be gained from pillaging cottages is very tempting to the AI. You will need to garrison your best, oldest commerce cities with anti-pillaging units if you go to war. Also try to have your best commerce cities inland at the heart of your empire, rather than on the more vulnerable borders or coastline.

Philosophical

Great People birth rate increased 100 percent. Double production speed of University.

Leaders with the trait (9)

- Elizabeth (England)
- Frederick (Germany)
- Alexander (Greece)
- Gandhi (India)
- Peter (Russia)
- Sitting Bull (Native American)
- Lincoln (American)
- Pericles (Greek)
- Suleiman (Ottoman)

Overview

Just as the Financial trait lends itself to the Commerce Economy, the Philosophical trait lends itself to the Specialist Economy (SE). The SE, of course, has many adherents, and the debate over which economy is best rages on.

Suffice it to say that the SE is strongest in the hands of a Philosophical leader, since running all those specialists will result in many more Great People. You don't have to run a SE with a Philosophical leader, just as you can run a CE without the Financial trait, but the SE and the Philosophical trait are both at their strongest when combined.

Great People have many uses, of course. In the Specialist Economy, they are principally used for "lightbulbing", that is, using the Great Person to discover a technology, usually research-free. You can then trade this "free technology" for techs you need from other civilizations. This allows you to run the research slider at 0% for most of the game while you rely on a combination of scientists and tech trades to keep up in research. (My version of the SE in a nutshell.)

High-Priority Technologies:

- Writing
- Polytheism
- Code of Laws
- Philosophy
- Education
- Biology

Useful Wonders:

- The Pyramids
- The Parthenon
- The Great Library
- The Statue of Liberty
- National Park (Beyond the Sword)

Best Buildings:

- Libraries
- Universities

Useful Civics:

- Pacifism
- Representation
- Caste System
- Mercantilism

How to use it

I won't go into the details on how to run a SE, because that's beyond the scope of this article. Let's just say my recommendation with the Philosophical trait is to run a SE or at least a "hybrid economy" where some cities focus on food and specialists and others focus on cottages and commerce. (A hybrid economy is especially suitable for Elizabeth of England, who has the Financial trait that, as mentioned above, requires a certain amount of cottage spam to take full advantage of it.)

Within the SE community, opinions differ as to the importance of building the Pyramids. The appeal of the Pyramids to a SE is to run the Representation civic extremely early in the game. This civic raises the happiness cap of your five largest cities on a standard-sized map (which are probably your only cities early on). This allows you to grow those cities even larger so you can work more farms and run more specialists. In addition, *every* specialist contributes an additional three research points under representation beyond whatever research points they normally contribute—even those that normally don't contribute any research, such as engineers, priests, merchants, and ordinary citizen specialists. The science contribution of artists and spies goes up from 1 to 4 under representation, while the contribution of scientists doubles from 3 to 6. Obviously the Pyramids and early Representation hyper-charge the SE, but many maintain the SE can get along without either the wonder or the civic.

The Parthenon can also be a useful wonder to a Philosophical leader. You're already relying on Great People for technologies, so why not build a wonder that increases the number of GP you'll get?

Writing will be an early priority technology so you can build libraries and run your first scientists. Wonders can be very useful since they all contribute GP points; go after the wonders that contribute GPP towards the types of Great People you most want and need. Since Great Scientists are usually the most useful GPs, that makes the Great Library a very attractive wonder for leaders with the Philosophical trait. Mercantilism contributes a free specialist for each city, as does the Statue of Liberty (and without the “no foreign trade routes” price of Mercantilism). The Caste System civic is a huge boon to the SE and the Philosophical trait, allowing you to run as many merchants, scientists, and/or artists as a city can support. Therefore Code of Laws is a priority technology. Education enables the Philosophical trait’s cheap building, the University, so that’s a priority as well. Philosophy makes the Pacifism civic available, which provides a further +100% boost to GP production in cities that have your state religion. Biology will allow you to grow larger cities and support more specialists, so prioritize that tech later in the game.

In the Beyond the Sword expansion pack, the National Park national wonder benefits the SE as it allows 1 free specialist for every forest preserve. It means, though, that you have to be careful to preserve some forests or even jungles in the fat cross of the city where you build it.

The Downside

Running a specialist economy requires a great deal more micro-management than running the more-straightforward cottage economy. The game will take longer to play and you’ll need to manage everything much more closely. That style of play doesn’t suit everyone.

The benefits of the Philosophical trait and of the SE begin to peter out in the late game. Great People get more expensive to produce and appear less frequently, while technologies become too expensive for your specialists and fewer Great People to research efficiently. You had better be in a position to win by this point or you may quickly find yourself falling behind. Either that, or you will need to transition to a cottage economy; a switch to the Emancipation civic will be essential to pulling this off.

Unlike the Financial trait, the Philosophical trait does not provide any direct economic benefits. You’ll need to look for other ways to keep your economy afloat.

Medium-Strength Traits

Don't get me wrong, these traits are still powerful—just less so than my top two. These also tend to require a little more effort to leverage. I mean, to take advantage of Financial, you just need to lay down and work cottages; Philosophical, run specialists. These ones, however...

Spiritual

No anarchy from civics or religion changes. Double production speed of temples.

Leaders with the trait (10)

- Saladin (Arab)
- Montezuma (Aztec)
- Brennus (Celt)
- Hatshepsut (Egypt)
- Ramesses (Egypt)
- Asoka (India)
- Gandhi (India)
- Mansa Musa (Mali)
- Isabella (Spain)
- Justinian (Byzantine)

Overview

As with Financial, Spiritual's great strength comes from its positive impact on your economy. Anarchy means that for one turn or more, your cities do not grow or build anything, your culture does not increase, GPP are not accumulated, cottages do not grow, and so on. Spiritual means you avoid those periods of economic stasis; this should result in your being able to research at least one or two additional technologies, build several more units and buildings, produce more Great People, and so on, compared to a non-Spiritual civ.

Unlike several other traits, Spiritual's effects do not decrease later in the game. On the contrary, as more civics and religions become available, you may want and need to change civics more often, and Spiritual lets you do so.

However, this trait has slipped, in my opinion, from being one of the strongest to being a medium-strength trait. This is mainly because of the **Beyond the Sword** expansion pack. Frankly, many disputed my inclusion of it in the "Strong" category to begin with. But Beyond the Sword has reduced its strength by making its effects easier to obtain. You now only need to use one Great Person, not two, in order to bring about your first Golden Age; and you can now change civics anarchy-free during a Golden Age. This is just one of many ways that Golden Ages have been improved and made more attractive in Beyond the Sword.

Furthermore, in the late game, when you have access to all the civics and Spiritual is normally at its strongest, you can now achieve the same effects by building the new **Cristo Redentor**

wonder, which not only gives you Spiritual's ability to change civics anarchy-free; you can also change civics *without having to wait for a single turn change*, let alone the usual five! (Note: in the BtS 3.13 patch, this has been changed to a 1 turn waiting period between civics changes.)

So Spiritual, to my mind, has fallen from strong to medium not through any fault of its own, but through easier access to its benefits to non-Spiritual leaders.

High-Priority Technologies:

- Those that enable civics
- Those that found religions
- Divine Right (Even if you don't get to DR first and found a religion, it's still highly useful to a spiritual leader. Read on.)
- Paper

Useful Wonders:

- The Pyramids
- The University of Sankore
- The Spiral Minaret
- The Apostolic Palace
- Shwedagon Paya (BtS)
- The Sistine Chapel

Best Buildings:

- Temples
- Monasteries

Useful Civics:

- Nearly all of them—if it offers a worthwhile benefit and fits your strategy, switch to it.

How to use it

No anarchy means you can adopt a civic right now, as soon as it's available, and gain its advantages immediately, rather than waiting to change several civics at once as a prudent non-Spiritual leader would do. So if a civic would benefit you, don't hesitate to switch to it. The only restraint you have is waiting five turns until you can change civics again.

There are also diplomatic benefits. You can easily convert to a religion or change to a favoured civic to court another civilization. Once you gain what you need from them—say, a tech trade—you can convert religions or civics back just as easily. However, do keep in mind that diplomatic bonuses for shared religions or favoured civics can take several turns to accumulate to a significant level.

The Pyramids are an attractive wonder for a Spiritual leader, since they enable all the government civics early on, letting you leverage the trait early in the game. Obviously, any tech that enables a civic is valuable and should be prioritized—provided the civic is worthwhile. In Beyond the Sword, the Shwedagon Paya is also attractive, since it's the religious equivalent of the Pyramids, enabling all religious civics.

Temples are modest buildings, producing +1 culture and keeping one citizen happy. However, Spiritual's cheap temples can truly shine if you build the Spiral Minaret (enabled by Divine Right), the University of Sankore (Paper), and the Apostolic Palace (Theology). These wonders make the temples of your state religion produce +1 gold, +2 research, and +2 hammers, respectively. (Please note that if you don't build the AP, you can still get its +2 hammer boost for all religious buildings by adopting the AP religion as your state religion.) Just be aware that building one or more of these wonders makes the Free Religion civic unappealing, and lowers the priority of Computers and Mass Media, which obsolete the wonders.

The Downside

Spiritual is the inverse of a trait like Creative: it is very weak early in the game when there are few civics available. Its benefits come later as more civics come on line. Realistically, most of your civics changes will occur in the mid-game, though obviously this can vary, but in most games I find myself taking less advantage of the Spiritual trait in the late game.

In addition, while Spiritual may allow you to “save money”, unlike Financial, the trait it doesn't directly produce any. You'll need to have a sound economy, as usual.

You may be tempted, when playing as a Spiritual leader, to switch to any civic as soon as it's available. Remember that some civics have high maintenance costs compared to others; ensure the civic is worthwhile in some respect before changing. Also remember that just because a civic is made available, that doesn't mean it's necessarily optimal for you at that point in the game. Consider your choices carefully and make sure your civics fit into your overall strategy and the circumstances within the game.

To gain the benefits of the cheap temples, you need a state religion. You'll therefore need to either found a religion or have one spread to you. In addition, you may need or want to adopt a state religion very early on, and that may have diplomatic repercussions for you.

Aggressive

Free Combat I promotion of melee and gunpowder units. Double production speed of Barracks and Drydock.

Leaders with the trait (10)

- Montezuma (Aztec)
- Alexander (Greece)
- Tokugawa (Japan)
- Genghis Khan (Mongolia)
- Kublai Khan (Mongolia)
- Stalin (Russia)
- Ragnar (Viking)
- Shaka (Zulu)
- Hammurabi (Babylon)
- Boudica (Celt)

Overview

This is a warmonger's trait. You get a free promotion for most of your units (the best units in the game, really—melee and gunpowder) and cheap barracks and drydocks to provide additional promotions. If you don't go to war when you're Aggressive, you're wasting the trait.

High-Priority Technologies:

- Bronze Working
- Iron Working
- Civil Service
- Machinery
- Gunpowder
- Chemistry
- Rifling
- Steel
- Assembly Line

Useful Wonders:

- Heroic Epic
- West Point
- Red Cross
- The Pentagon
- Statue of Zeus (Beyond the Sword)

Best Buildings:

- Barracks
- Drydocks
- Stables

Useful Civics:

- Vassalage
- Theocracy
- Nationhood
- Police State
- State Property

How to use it

How to use this trait? War. Duh. Am I not making myself clear, here? Put together a horde and go kill somebody already.

You'll want your forces to mostly be composed of units that benefit from the trait: Melee units (Warriors, Axemen, Swordsmen, Spearmen, Macemen, Pikemen), Gunpowder units (Musketmen, Riflemen, Grenadiers, Infantry, SAM Infantry, Marines, Mechanized Infantry) and their UU variants. Drydocks make Steel a priority technology; likewise with technologies that enable one of the aforementioned units. Note that some of the Aggressive leaders have a UU that benefit from the trait (Montezuma, Alexander, Tokugawa, Ragnar, Shaka) and some do not (Genghis, Kublai, Stalin). The latter do benefit from the cheap barracks, however. Also, remember that you'll need more units than just melee and gunpowder—siege weapons and mounted may not receive Aggressive's free Combat I, but they're still essential.

In the Beyond the Sword expansion pack, the new Statue of Zeus world wonder is very good to have--mainly so that someone you're attacking *doesn't* have it. War weariness is bad enough as it is; having it doubled will definitely put a crimp in your world domination plans.

The Downside

Aggressive in and of itself has no economic advantages and may, in fact, over-encourage you to accrue too many economic liabilities. Every unit has a maintenance cost, remember, and that cost goes up when the unit leaves home turf. In addition, every conquered city has maintenance costs. Over-conquering, especially early in the game, can be just as bad as over-expanding.

On the plus side, since Aggressive should mean you have better units, hopefully you'll need fewer of them.

Creative

+2 culture per city. Double production speed of Library, Theatre, Coliseum.

Leaders with the trait (9)

- Hatshepsut (Egypt)
- Louis XIV (France)
- Kublai Khan (Mongolia)
- Catherine (Russia)
- Willem van Oranje (Dutch)
- Zara Yaqob (Ethiopia)
- Suryavarman (Khmer)
- Giglamesh (Sumer)
- Pericles (Greek)

Overview

Creative is powerful early in the game, allowing you to quickly expand your borders and thereby claim territory and resources. The Warlords 2.08 patch added cheap Libraries, one of the best buildings in the game, making this trait even better.

High-Priority Technologies:

- Writing
- Drama
- Construction

Useful Wonders:

- n/a

Best Buildings:

- Libraries
- Theatres
- Coliseums

Useful Civics:

- Free Speech

How to use it

The big benefit Creative provides is allowing you more freedom in your city placement and in your early city builds. You don't have to worry about placing a city so a crucial resource is in its first ring of workable tiles so you can access it right away; it will be workable within a few short turns of founding the city. You can also skip monuments, Stonehenge, and spreading a religion (well, you can be a little more relaxed about the latter, at least).

In addition, Creative may allow you to win some early game tug-o-war battles with a nearby civ over a key resource tile. By the same token, if the map lends itself to it, you can use the trait to seal off territory at a choke point. Creative is also something of a defensive trait, a cousin to Protective. By expanding your borders earlier and infusing the tiles with your culture, you have more territory that the enemy has to trudge through to attack you. It's also harder for another civilization to take tiles from you by city placement or by conquering cities. Creative also raises the cultural defense of a city faster, making it tougher to conquer.

Writing enables the trait's cheap libraries, so it's obviously an even more important tech than before. The cheap theatres and coliseums may or may not be useful, depending on your strategy and circumstances in the game. You may want to warmonger in the mid or late game to get your most out of these buildings, using them to decrease war weariness.

The Downside

Creative is a trait that is extremely useful in the early game and gets weaker as the game goes on. The +2 culture becomes less and less of a factor as the game progresses and more methods of producing culture accrue in each city. Also, the cheap buildings are available early and are all relatively cheap to begin with, so their faster production times will be less noticeable later in the game. By the middle of most games, the Creative trait is mostly a non-factor.

Expansive

+2 health per city. Double production speed of granary and harbor; +25% production of Worker (from hammers only).

Leaders with the trait (10)

- Washington (America)
- Mao Zedong (China)
- Bismarck (Germany)
- Mehmed (Ottoman)
- Peter (Russia)
- Isabella (Spain)
- Shaka (Zulu)
- Suryavarman (Khmer)
- Pacal II (Maya)
- Joao II (Portugal)

Overview

Expansive doesn't look that great at first glance. In fact, it first appears to belong in the category of "weak" traits, like Protective. After all, health is not a big problem; it's happiness that cramps your growth early in the game. And once you get used to those sickly green tendrils floating around your city, you realize that its effects aren't usually that bad. Health problems just slow growth a little.

But hang on. Granaries—cheap for Expansive leaders--are one of the most useful buildings in the game. With grains, they provide additional health. But more importantly, they allow you to leverage slavery by growing your sacrificed population back faster.

And with the Warlords 2.08 patch, Expansive got a needed boost thanks to slightly cheaper workers. You can always use more workers, especially early in the game.

High-Priority Technologies:

- Pottery
- Compass
- Bronze Working
- Mathematics

Useful Wonders:

- The Hanging Gardens
- Notre Dame

Best Buildings:

- Granaries
- Harbours

Useful Civics:

- Slavery

How to use it

Bee-line to Pottery. Build (or whip) your cheap granaries. Whip some more and keep whipping.

Read up on how to best leverage the slavery civic in order to maximize hammer overflow from whipping, making both the build you whip and the following build cheaper. Thanks to the granary, the population will grow back faster, allowing you to whip them again.

Obviously, build more Workers since they're cheaper for you, and put them to work. Get your tiles improved and your resources connected faster. Just remember that the +25% for Worker builds is accelerated by hammers, not by food, so you'll need to improve some tiles with good production and work them while the Worker is being built to take advantage of this. Since harbours are cheap, try to claim several coastal cities so you can leverage the advantages of that cheap building.

Also look for opportunities to leverage that +2 health. Early on, you can place a city smack-dab in the jungle, for example, or surrounded by flood plains. In addition, you can construct health-reducing buildings like forges and factories with less concern for their impact on health. You can chop more forests because you don't need their health benefits (hence the attractiveness of the Bronze Working and Mathematics techs). Just keep in mind that the trait does not make your cities invincible, and you will have to concern yourself with their health—just later rather than sooner.

The Hanging Gardens is an attractive wonder for Expansive. It might not seem so at first—I already have a health boost, why do I need more? Because you're pursuing a strategy that pushes the envelope of your cities' health, that's why. I'm fond of wonders and buildings that further enhance a trait's benefits (which is why I like to try to build the Parthenon when I'm playing as a Philosophical leader, for example). The Hanging Gardens also provides more citizens to whip away. And hey—GPP towards a Great Engineer! You gotta like that.

Notre Dame can also be handy. If you're whipping 'til your hands bleed, the big cathedral's happy boost may be very welcome indeed.

The Downside

Like many other traits such as Creative, the effects of Expansive diminish as the game goes on. Other means of increasing health appear, the cheap buildings are early ones, and by the end of the game, once your railroad network is complete, your plentiful, cheap workers start to become idle. You may also switch away from the Slavery civic, losing one of the principal benefits of the cheap granaries.

And as with most other traits, Expansive does not provide any direct economic benefits.

Industrious

Wonder production increased 50 percent. Double production speed of Forge.

Leaders with the trait (9)

- Franklin D. Roosevelt (America)
- Qin Shi Huang (China)
- Ramesses (Egypt)
- Bismarck (Germany)
- Huayna Capac (Inca)
- Stalin (Russia)
- Augustus (Rome)
- De Gaulle (France)
- Louis XIV (France)

Overview

If Aggressive is the warmonger's trait, Industrious is the builder's trait. Wonders are cheaper, enhancing their “ooo—shiny” appeal and giving you a leg up in the competitions to get them built. In addition, forges, a building that makes other buildings faster to build, is, well, faster to build.

As of the Beyond the Sword expansion pack, this is now Civilization IV's most exclusive club, though not by much. All the other traits have 9 or 10 leaders who possess them, while Industrious is shared by only 8 leaders. And no, there's still no Industrious/Philosophical trait combination; it's obviously regarded by the game designers as overpowered.

High-Priority Technologies:

- Masonry
- Monotheism
- Metal Casting
- Assembly Line

Useful Wonders:

- Er... pretty much all of them. Well, maybe except for Chichen Itza. 😊

Best Buildings:

- Forge
- Factory

Useful Civics:

- Organized Religion
- State Property
- Caste System
- Environmentalism

How to use it

Build wonders, of course. Build them and leverage them and keep them out of the AI's grubby little hands. Also look for and claim the wonder-hurrying resources such as copper, iron, marble, and stone. Remember that the accelerated wonder production applies to the national wonders as well.

Also, prioritize the Metal Casting tech in order to access your cheap building. A tactic with a great deal of synergy for Industrious leaders is to build the Oracle (a wonder, so it's cheaper) and select Metal Casting as your free technology. Then go build forges. Remember forges are also required for additional wonders like the Ironworks, the Colossus, the Eiffel Tower, and the Statue of Liberty. Since Metal Casting enables it, the Colossus is usually built right after its future city's forge is finished.

The Downside

When you're playing as an Industrious leader, the siren-like allure of being a "buildaholic" is even greater. Even though wonders are cheaper, they're still not dirt cheap. They require a considerable investment of hammers that could be put to better uses. As always, make sure the wonders you choose to build fit into your strategy and the circumstances of the game.

Organized

Civic upkeep reduced 50 percent. Double production speed of lighthouse, courthouse, and factory.

Leaders with the trait (9)

- Franklin D. Roosevelt (America)
- Napoleon (France)
- Frederick (Germany)
- Asoka (India)
- Mehmed (Ottoman)
- Julius Caesar (Rome)
- Hammurabi (Babylon)
- Zara Yaqob (Ethiopia)
- Darius I (Persia)

Overview

Although Organized has a direct economic benefit—reducing the overhead of civics—it isn't nearly as big a boost in that regard as Financial. Nevertheless, saved GPT is saved GPT and is nothing to sneeze at.

High-Priority Technologies:

- Monotheism
- Code of Laws
- Sailing
- Assembly Line

Useful Wonders:

- The Great Lighthouse
- The Forbidden Palace
- Cristo Redentor

Best Buildings:

- Courthouses
- Lighthouses
- Factories

Useful Civics:

- Slavery
- Organized Religion
- Civil Service
- Police State
- State Property

How to use it

Similar to Spiritual, technologies that enable civics—especially higher cost civics—are priorities. Unlike Spiritual, however, switching civics is not something to do constantly (unless you're Asoka, who has the best of both worlds in this regard). Also remember to choose a civic because you'll benefit from it, not just because it's available or because Organized will make it cheaper.

The big benefits from Organized, however, are the cheap buildings—three of the best in the game. To leverage the lighthouses, try to build several coastal cities. Cheap courthouses make new cities cheaper, so you can employ this into a REX strategy or into warmongering or both.

In fact, I tend to consider Organized to be a warmonger's trait (especially for Hammurabi, Julius Caesar, and Napoleon, whose companion traits are also warmonger-friendly). This is because my first build in a conquered city is a courthouse to reduce its maintenance cost, and Organized makes those courthouses cheaper to build—or whip.

Finally, factories are one of the best late-game buildings, and the 2.08 patch has made them cheap for Organized.

Technology priorities are obviously Sailing, Code of Laws, and Assembly Line for the cheap buildings. Other tech targets are those that enable some of the more useful but expensive civics, especially Civil Service for the powerful Bureaucracy civic. Its high upkeep cost will be cut in half for an Organized leader, increasing its utility. The same goes for Organized Religion (enabled by Monotheism) and Police State (enabled by Fascism).

The Downside

Like many traits, as the game progresses, Organized gets weaker. Your economy grows and high-upkeep civics gradually become more affordable. As a result, the addition of a late cheap building (factories) in the 2.08 patch was a welcome late-game boost to Organized. Nevertheless, the best period for Organized is definitely the mid-game when you're probably running Bureaucracy and Organized Religion and are still building your economy.

Charismatic

+1 happiness per city; -25% XP needed for unit promotions; +1 happiness from Monument, Broadcast Tower

Leaders with the trait (9)

- Washington (America)
- Hannibal (Carthage)
- Brennus (Celt)
- Churchill (England)
- Napoleon (France)
- Cyrus (Persia)
- Lincoln (America)
- Boudica (Celt)
- De Gaulle (French)

Overview

Charismatic was introduced with the Warlords expansion pack (along with Imperialistic and Protective) and is definitely the best of the three new traits. It is clearly a warmonger's trait, mainly because of the reduced XP requirement for each promotion. By warring early, you can amass a force of highly-promoted veteran units which you can keep upgrading as the game progresses.

The extra happiness from the trait and two buildings also helps with warmongering, since it reduces war weariness. It should also help you financially; whether you run a CE or SE or a hybrid, more population because of an elevated happiness cap always means a stronger economy.

High-Priority Technologies:

- Mysticism
- Agriculture
- Animal Husbandry
- Radio
- Mass Media

Useful Wonders:

- Stonehenge
- Heroic Epic
- West Point
- The Eiffel Tower
- The Pentagon

Best Buildings:

- Monuments
- Barracks
- Stables
- Drydocks
- Broadcast Towers

Useful Civics:

- Vassalage
- Theocracy

How to use it

When you're Charismatic, go to war early to collect those promotions and build your army of veterans. Playing with barbs, even raging barbs, turned on allows you to amass more promotions faster, so you will likely have a powerful army by the time you've dealt with the barbarians and are ready to turn on your neighbours.

Also be sure to take advantage of the elevated happiness cap. Prioritize growth in the early game: ensure each city has good food resources, bee-line to Pottery so you can build Granaries, and build Workers so you can ensure all your extra citizens have improved tiles to work. Chop Workers and Settlers as much as possible to hurry their builds and get your cities back to growing their populations.

Mysticism and Mass Media are obvious tech targets in order to enable the happiness-increasing buildings (which are, unfortunately, not made cheaper by the trait; Charismatic is one of the few traits without a cheap building). Alternatively, you may bee-line to Radio and build the Eiffel Tower, which gives you a free broadcast tower in every one of your cities.

Stonehenge is also an attractive wonder, since it gives you a free monument in each city. However, remember that those monuments magically disappear once you discover Calendar (Astronomy in BtS). Broadcast Towers and the Eiffel Tower, in contrast, never become obsolete. Also, any monument you build directly stays put to produce culture, and the culture doubles after 1000 years.

The Downside

As mentioned above, while Charismatic enhances the effects of two buildings, it has no cheap building, a limitation it shares only with the Financial and Imperialistic traits.

Balancing early growth with the need to have a large number of Workers to ensure those extra citizens have improved tiles to work can be tricky. In addition to ensuring each city has at least one food resource, also try to ensure it has forests for chop-rushing Workers.

Imperialistic

+100% Great General emergence; 50% faster production of settlers (from hammers only).

Leaders with the trait (9)

- Victoria (England)
- Genghis Khan (Mongolia)
- Cyrus (Persia)
- Julius Caesar (Rome)
- Catherine the Great (Russia)
- Justinian (Byzantine Empire)
- Charlemagne (Holy Roman Empire)
- Joao II (Portugal)
- Suleiman (Ottoman Empire)

Overview

After several off-line games as Julius Caesar, my opinion of this trait has improved. I originally included it in the “Weak” category, but now feel it belongs in “Medium”—if it’s used properly.

Imperialistic supports aggressive expansion in two ways. First of all, Settlers are cheaper to build, allowing you to perform a faster land-grab early in the game. Second, to take advantage of the increased Great General emergence, you’re encouraged to expand through aggression.

High-Priority Technologies:

- Bronze Working
- Masonry
- Mathematics
- Code of Laws
- Fascism
- All military technologies

Useful Wonders:

- The Great Wall

Best Buildings:

- Barracks

Useful Civics:

- Vassalage
- Theocracy

How to use it

Obviously, pursue a REX (Rapid EXpansion) strategy in the early game, and follow this up with an aggressive, warmonger's expansion policy once your core cities are established. This especially suits Catherine the Great of Russia, since her Creative trait has definite synergy with an early game land-grabbing strategy.

Keep in mind that the increased Settler production comes from hammers, not food. This means you'll want to focus as much on mines as farms and pastures when improving tiles in the early game. Chopping and whipping contribute hammers, so those get multiplied by the trait as well—hence the attraction of Bronze Working and Mathematics.

You can enhance the increased GG emergence further by building the Great Wall. In addition to keeping barbs away, that wonder also provides +100% Great General emergence from battles that take place within your cultural borders, resulting in a +200% GG boost with the trait when defending within your own territory. Masonry, therefore, and a source of stone are likely to be priorities when playing as a leader with this trait.

The chief way to take advantage of the Imperialistic trait once the original period of REX is over is simple: war. War early and war often. It's the only way to generate Great Generals (and remember that battling barbs earns you XPs, but *not* points towards a Great General.) Great Generals are actually one of the most useful Great People in the game, even if they lack some of the uses of other GPs (such as lightbulbing technologies or starting a Golden Age). You can attach them to units to uber-promote them, put them in cities to provide additional XPs or boost unit production with a military academy. Just remember to prioritize Code of Laws and courthouses to keep your ever-expanding empire economically viable.

Many players favour combining the first Great General with a unit and giving it the Medic I, II, and III promotions. This medic unit will heal your stacks faster, allowing them to return to the fray much sooner. You can also use a GG to give a unit the Leadership promotion, which creates synergy with the Imperialistic trait because the promotion results in double XPs for that unit from every battle it survives, and those double XPs are doubled again in their count towards your next Great General. You can also combine the GG with a Caravel to give it Flanking I, Navigation I, and Navigation II in order to practically guarantee winning the circumnavigation bonus.

Since you're going after several Great Generals (and likely basing much of your strategy on their benefits), you'll want to snag the free one that you get from researching Fascism first. With all the warmongering you'll be doing, you're going to want to build Mount Rushmore and run Police State to alleviate some of the War Weariness anyway.

The Downside

Well, for starters, there's no cheap building and no economic advantage. It seems logical that Imperialistic should have cheap courthouses, but Organized has those, and shifting them away would seriously weaken that trait. Perhaps jails would have been a good cheap building for Imperialistic. If Civ IV had useful forts, faster build times of those would have been logical for this trait as well.

Instead of a cheap building, however, there's a cheap unit. But Imperialistic's boost to Settler builds comes from hammers, not food. This means you need to work at cross-purposes in the

early game, building mines to ensure your Settler builds take advantage of the trait. If food also boosted the Settler's build time, this would be a much stronger trait.

The biggest weakness of the trait, however, is that it locks you into a specific strategy. You don't have to play as a warmonger with the Aggressive trait; you could leverage it to build a strong army and military infrastructure (the cheap barracks and drydocks count towards your power rating, after all) so you're left alone to build. With Imperialistic, however, you *have* to warmonger. There's no other way to earn those Great Generals except by fighting other civs. Don't play with this trait unless you're in the mood to knock heads, or you're wasting it.

The Weakest Trait

Well, there had to be at least one that just doesn't shine as brightly as the others. Luckily, I've found that only one trait out of the eleven available is, in my opinion, lacking in overall strength.

Protective

Archery and Gunpowder units receive Drill I and City Garrison I automatically; Double production speed of Walls and Castle.

Leaders with the trait (9)

- Saladin (Arabs)
- Mao Zedong (China)
- Qin Shi Huang (China)
- Churchill (England)
- Tokugawa (Japan)
- Wang Kon (Korea)
- Charlemagne (Holy Roman Empire)
- Sitting Bull (Native America)
- Gilgamesh (Sumer)

Overview

This is another new trait introduced by the Warlords expansion pack, and doesn't seem to be very well-thought out. The fact that I consider this one of the weakest traits should not come as a surprise, since that's an opinion shared by most players—though I grant that Protective does have its fans.

High-Priority Technologies:

- Archery
- Masonry
- Polytheism
- Sailing
- Feudalism
- Machinery
- Engineering
- Gunpowder
- Chemistry
- Rifling
- Assembly Line

Useful Wonders:

- The Temple of Artemis
- The Great Lighthouse
- Chichen Itza

Best Buildings:

- Barracks
- Walls
- Castles

Useful Civics:

- Vassalage
- Theocracy

How to use it

While Protective is weak, it isn't without its uses. When you capture a city, your freely-promoted units are better equipped to defend your new possession, which is highly likely to come under a counter-attack. In fact, your gunpowder units can potentially perform double-duty as both attackers and defenders. (Most archery units, however, are weak attackers and are best used on defense only.)

If you have a source of stone, the walls and castles are even cheaper, making them less of a burden to build. Combined with wonders like the Temple of Artemis and the Great Lighthouse, you could make Protective's cheap castles part of a trade route economy, which can be very helpful in the mid-game period. You can also use the cheap castles to supplement espionage in BtS. In fact, some players have begun playing an EP, or "Espionage Economy", where the science slider is turned down to 0% after Alphabet and most remaining technologies are acquired through tech-stealing.

The civilization that probably benefits the most from the trait is China, because its UU is one of the best Archery units in the game—the Cho-Ko-Nu, which can and should be used as an attacking unit. Drill I just enhances its power, giving it an additional first strike chance beyond its 2 free first strikes.

The Downside

The problem with the Protective trait is that it's largely defensive in nature. The free City Garrison promotion is only useful when units are under attack while in a city. Walls and castles—which are pretty cheap to begin with, making their double production speed less appealing—are likewise only useful when you're under attack. Only the free Drill I promotion is an attacking promotion, but how often do you attack with archery units? Unless they're Cho-Ko-Nus, of course. (Though it can be beneficial to your more aggressive gunpowder units.)

The problem with playing defensively in Civilization IV is that the AI is so fond of pillaging. If your units cower behind city walls, the AI will gleefully send your economy spiraling down into ruin by pillaging every tile improvement in sight. Your units have to venture out of your cities to defend your territory, which makes walls and castles next to useless—ditto with the City Garrison promotion.

In many ways, the Protective trait seems to have been added more to benefit the AI than the human player. The AI prefers to play defensively for the most part, so Protective suits its programming. Any human player will tell you that going up against Protective Longbowmen, fortified in a city on a hill with a castle and walls, can be intimidating—though certainly not insurmountable. Just bring more Trebuchets to the party.

Part Two: Trait Synergy

It's relatively easy to enumerate the advantages and disadvantages of a leader trait in isolation. It can be trickier to work with them in their various combinations.

I won't discuss every possible combination available because, frankly, I think the ALC pre-game threads do a better job of that. Discerning the synergy (or lack thereof) within a particular trait combination can be an art as well as a science. I propose, in this section, to look at some examples.

As mentioned above, certain traits push you towards specific strategies: cottage economy or specialist economy, builder or warmonger, expansionist or isolationist. The trait combinations will tend to exaggerate these tendencies further—or may drag you in contradictory directions.

The Obvious

Some trait combinations just scream out their most beneficial strategies from the rooftops. Genghis Khan is a perfect example: if you play as Khan, you're obliged to go to war, otherwise you're wasting both of his traits. Aggressive, as mentioned above, is the ultimate warmonger's trait, while Imperialistic increases the rate at which Great Generals are produced. But you have to be fighting to get those GGs. Boudica, introduced in *Beyond the Sword*, is another natural warmonger. Granted, Charismatic has some other benefits, but its big one is the faster rate at which her units gain promotions, and there's only one way to make that happen: kick some AI butt.

At the other end of the spectrum, Huyana Capac is probably the most obvious builder in the game, especially since he traded in his Aggressive trait for Industrious as of the Warlords expansion pack. Oh, he's not a perfectly peaceful builder—but with those Quechuas, it makes sense to rush an opponent early, take their land, and then settle back to build cottages and wonders to a peaceful win.

Ghandi and Alexander are the best candidates for a Specialist Economy. Both are Philosophical, of course, but each brings additional advantages. Ghandi is Spiritual and can switch civics on a dime, allowing you to build peacefully until you need to produce a large number of promoted units for a war. In fact, the SE benefits greatly from war (it's a great source of gold), so Alexander has an obvious advantage there, being Aggressive.

Elizabeth, meanwhile, can have her cake and eat it too. She can benefit the most from a hybrid economy, where several cities are cottaged to reap the rewards of the Financial trait, while others have farms to run specialists and produce Great People. As she owns the two strongest traits in the game as well as one of the best mid-game UUs and a UB that has synergy with her Financial trait, she's a favourite leader of many Civ IV veterans (including the one writing this).

The Less Obvious

Other leaders have trait combinations with synergies that are more hidden, harder to determine. Or perhaps let's think of the glass as half-full rather than half-empty and say that they offer more flexibility in your strategic choices.

Stalin may pose the biggest conundrum of all: war or build? He has a trait to capitalize (excuse the ironic pun) on each! The answer is, as one of the esteemed posters at the CFC forums put it in one ALC thread, "I war in order to build". Use the Aggressive trait to claim the territory and resources you need, then fall back on the Industrious trait to produce those nice, bright, shiny, sparkly wonders. Oooooo...

Now, what about someone like Asoka, Spiritual and Organized? In my opinion, his traits make Asoka a warmonger. Spiritual allows you to switch to the war civics to produce promoted units without incurring periods of anarchy, while Organized gives you cheap courthouses to reduce the maintenance costs in the cities you conquer. The real-life Asoka was a pretty bloodthirsty fellow before he found Buddhism. Just do the opposite with him in the game: found Buddhism (or Hinduism, whatever) then go out and kill people.

Other Factors: UU, UB, Starting Techs

Remember that each leader has additional unique characteristics that they bring to the game beyond their trait combination. They also have unique units, unique buildings, and starting technologies.

The two English queens, Elizabeth and Victoria, share both the Financial trait and a Unique Building that combines exquisitely with it: the stock exchange, which ups the ante on banks' +50% gold boost by an additional 15%.

Julius Caesar is a good example of a leader with a trait—Organized—that has a terrific synergy with his UU and one of his starting technologies. Consider: Julius Caesar starts with Mining, giving him a head start on not only Bronze Working, but also Iron Working, which enables (with a source of iron, of course) Rome's awesome unique unit. So you want to research Iron Working early and go conquering. This is where the key benefit of Organized kicks in: prioritize researching Code of Laws (you may want to chop the Oracle to get it) for the cheap courthouses you can now whip/build in every new city you conquer with your Praetorians.

Notice that this synergy is not as obvious as knowing to spam cottages when you're Financial! This is where some careful planning, experience, and using the CFC forums to your advantage all come into play. By all means, scour the forums for others' takes on how to best leverage a given leaders' characteristics; this is often the best way to come across hidden synergies which may take you a long time to discover on your own.

Beyond that, play the game and learn from your own experience. But by all means remember that it is a game—so have fun!