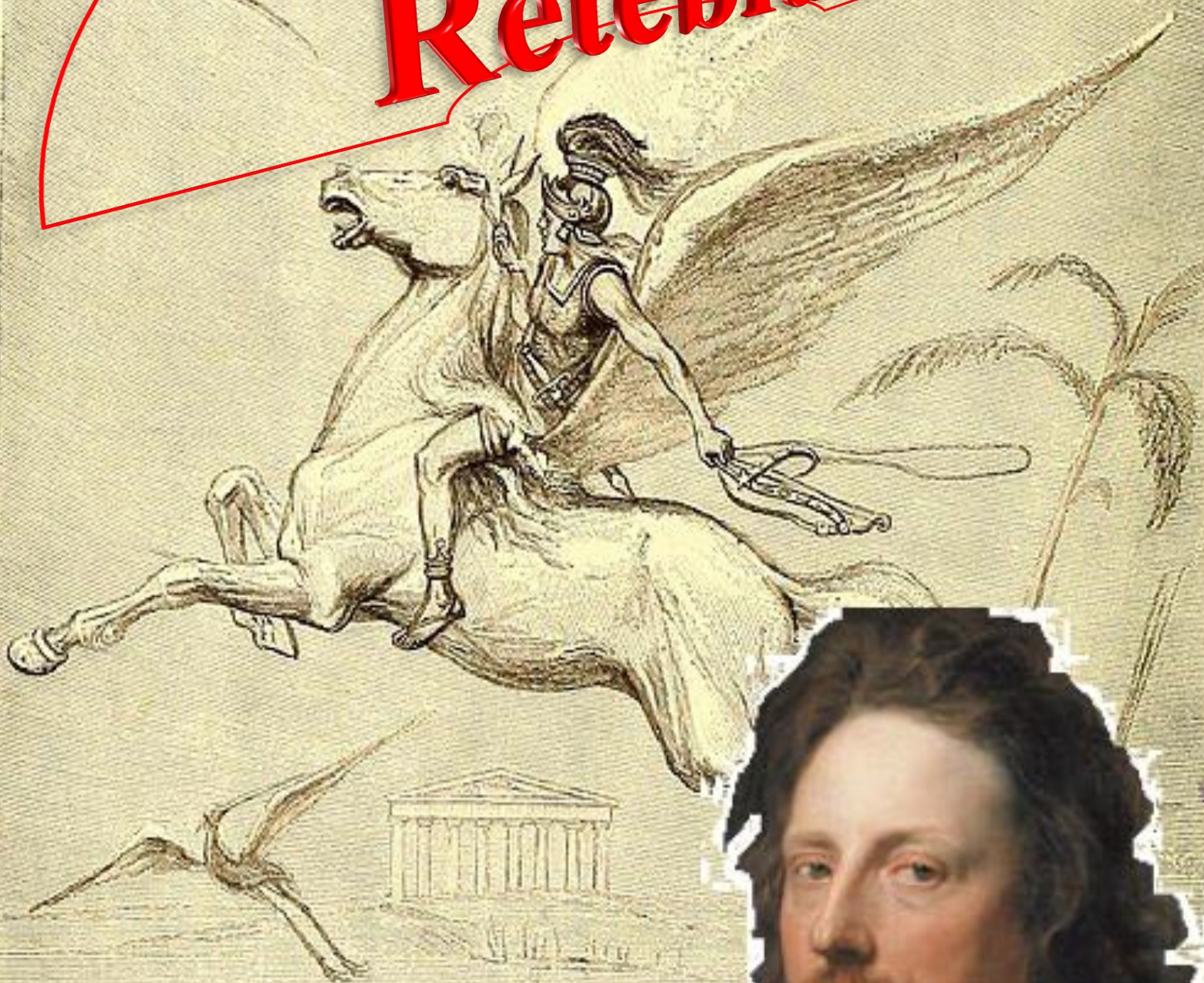


# The Duchy of Retebius



A THYATIS REGION FAN GAZETTEER  
BY SVEN JESKE



# Duchy of Retebius

## FOREWORD

There are tons of amazing fandom work about popular areas on Mystara, like Karameikos, Glantri or Darokin, and even on faraway places like Norwold and the regions north of it, the Isle of Dawn, and even Davania and Skothar. However, some regions in the heart of the Known World remained strangely featureless. Thyatis is one of those (Ylaruam is another example). So, instead of doing the 53rd version of Karameikos, I wanted to delve deeper into those “forgotten realms” in the middle of the KW.

Writing this Gazetteer, I stood on the shoulders of giants. I will mention the various sources in the footnotes (that’s the grey area at the bottom of the pages), but there are some people I would like to thank up front for their tremendous work that I used in this Gazetteer. In no particular order, **Thorfinn Tait** for his magnificent mapping; **Simone Neri** for the groundbreaking *Demografia Mystara*; **Giulio Caroletti** and **Giampaolo Agosta** for the series about the Thyatian Senate and the Hesperia 250 BC setting; **James Ruhland** for his Thyatian Timeline (and lots of other stuff); and all the guys at the Vaults of Pandius and editors of the Threshold magazine.

So, knowing that nobody likes to read forewords of epic proportions, let’s go in medias res, as the Thyatians say ...

## OVERVIEW <sup>[1]</sup>

**Time Setting of this Gazetteer: 1000 AC**

**Location:** Southeastern coast of the continent of Brun, south of the Altan Tepes Mountains, west of the Gulf of Kantrium. Outer World.

**Area:** 2.878,7 square miles

**Population:** 200.394 (154.704 freemen, 45.690 slaves) including the city of Retebius (15.000) <sup>[2]</sup>

**Latifunds:** 244 <sup>[3]</sup>

**Villae rusticae:** 3.069 <sup>[3]</sup>

**Languages:** Thyatian (Thyatian dialect), Elvish (Vyalia dialect).

**Coinage:** Thyatian Standard: emperor (pp), lucin (gp), asterius (sp), denarius (cp).

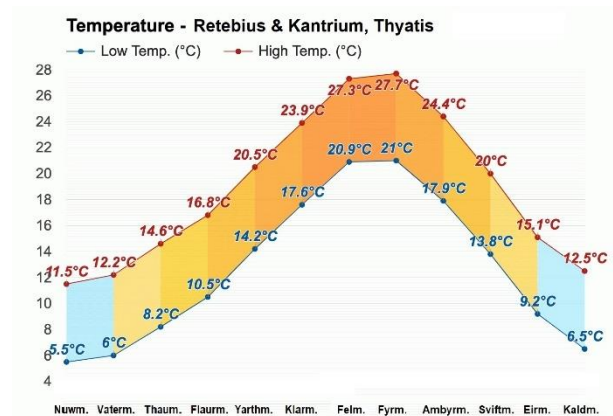
**Taxes:** *Imperial Thyatian taxing system. I refrain from details since IMHO the Thyatian tax system simply won’t work as published up to now. Working on a revision, but this is heavy stuff.*

**Industries:** Agriculture, crafts, fishing, oil, magic, rare mounts (flying), trade, wine.

**Flora and Fauna:** Grape vines, olive trees, cedar, peach, pear, orange, and cherry fruit trees in cultivated orchards; maple, birch, and oak trees. Herds of cattle, sheep, horses, goats, and mules. Bees kept for honey. In the northern and southern hills some few predators like bears, wolves or mountain lions can be found. Tamed Pegasi, griffons, rocs, ruby, gold, and white dragons as well as other aerial mounts are common near Retebius City. In the northern districts only, some monsters from the Altan Tepes may occasionally come into Retebius.

## Climate and Weather

Retebius has a Mediterranean climate. So, what does that mean? Glad you asked. Here are some charts that may be useful to determine what weather typically to expect in what month: <sup>[4]</sup>



[1] Template and some content from the Almanac here: [www.pandius.com/retebius.html](http://www.pandius.com/retebius.html)

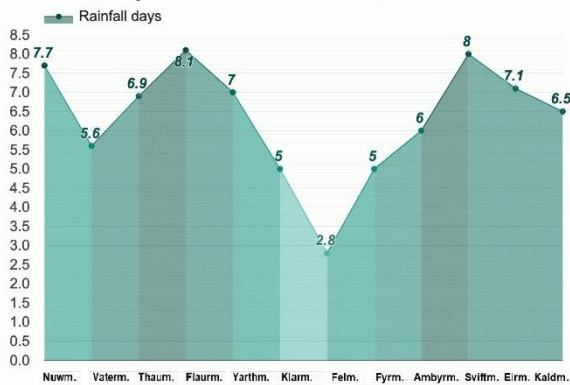
[2] Based on my own calculations; for comparison, the earlier Almanac gave Retebius a population of 140.000, while Simone Neri’s *Demografia* calculated 200.230 inhabitants.

[3] What’s this? Don’t worry we’ll get to those. For now, assume a villa rustica is a manor, a latifund a plantation.

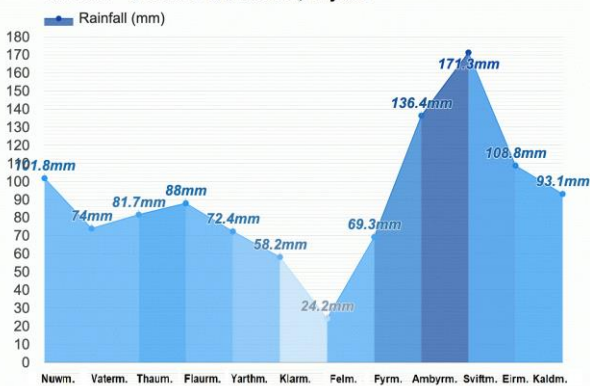
[4] My real-world reference region is Liguria, the area around the city of Genoa. Charts are actually Genoa proper.

# Duchy of Retebius

Rainfall days - Retebius & Kantrium, Thyatis

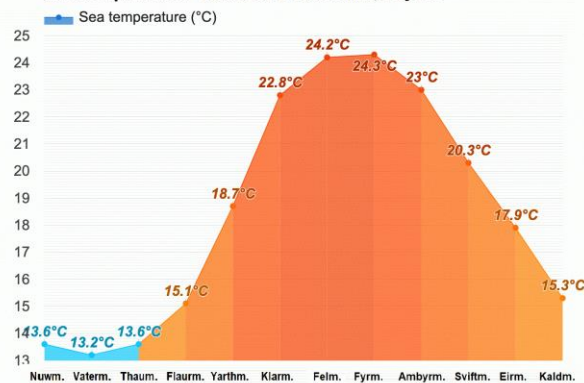


Rainfall - Retebius & Kantrium, Thyatis



And, as a bonus for those who like to swim, here is the water temperature in the Gulf of Kantrium:

Sea temperature - Retebius & Kantrium, Thyatis



## Population Details

Here is a breakdown of the inhabitants of the duchy according to racial/ethnic background [5]:

### Freemen:

Thyatian	79,90%	123.609
Alasiyan	3,70%	5.724
Hattian	5,70%	8.818
Isle of Dawn	2,40%	3.713
Nuari	2,00%	3.094
Ochalean	1,85%	2.862
Lupin	1,40%	2.166
Dwarf	0,40%	619
Elf	0,50%	774
Halfling	0,30%	464
Gnome	0,35%	541
Other Human	0,90%	1.392
Other Nonhuman	0,60%	928
	100,00%	154.704

### Slaves:

Davania	14,00%	6.397
Pearl Islands	10,00%	4.569
Ochalea	9,00%	4.112
Alphatia, Bellisaria	12,00%	5.483
Isle of Dawn	15,00%	6.853
Thyatis	9,00%	4.112
Norwold	6,00%	2.741
Ylaruam	4,00%	1.828
Minrothad	4,00%	1.828
Heldann	3,00%	1.371
Northern Realms	3,00%	1.371
Karameikos	3,00%	1.371
Atruaghin	2,50%	1.142
Sind	2,50%	1.142
Yavdlom	1,30%	594
Sea of Dread	0,80%	366
Other Human	0,30%	137
Other Nonhuman	0,60%	274
	100,00%	45.690

## Local History [6]

The area of Retebius was settled by neolithic Neathar tribes, related to the *Albai* a bit further west, since before the Blackmoor era. With the Great Rain of Fire, those tribes were nearly obliterated, the few survivors fleeing to their core area in what is today Kerendas, where they spent several centuries in primitive conditions. When the Taymoran civilization rose from the ashes of the Great Rain of Fire, they had contact with those

[5] Original figures from Simone Neri's *Demografia*, with the freemen population percentages adjusted by me.

[6] Based on [www.pandius.com/hesperia.html](http://www.pandius.com/hesperia.html), [www.pandius.com/hesperiadm.html](http://www.pandius.com/hesperiadm.html), [www.pandius.com/thy\\_time.html](http://www.pandius.com/thy_time.html), [www.pandius.com/tralhist.html](http://www.pandius.com/tralhist.html)

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tribes, bringing them to a copper age. When Taymora fell during yet another cataclysm, some Taymoran refugees fled to these tribes. The groups slowly intermingled, forming the base of the Etrusnan ethnicity between 1500 and 1200 BC. The Retebius area in that age was mostly wilderness with a lot of monsters and humanoid tribes, while the Etrusnans made fast progress, developing a refined architecture and bronze technology. It may be possible, though, that in the remoteness of the Retebius wild, some fleeing Taymorans erected settlements (which are totally forgotten by now).

Sometime around 1200 BC, two Etrusnan subtribes, the Retii and the Halathii, migrated eastward. The Retii settled along the Mesonian and Polithius rivers, while the Halathii moved even further to the east. The city of Verona, which became the capital of this new Retia area, was founded in 953 BC, Felzna already around 1000 BC (the exact date is lost).

At the same time a bit to the west, 1002 BC saw the invasion of a huge gnoll army into Traldar territories. While the brunt of this invasion eastward was stopped by Vyalia and Haven elves, it can be assumed that a substantial number of gnoll raiders and Traldar/Milenian refugees made it eastward into Etrusnan territories, which would add to an eastward migration of Etrusnans themselves.

The arrival of the three tribes of Thyatis, Kerendas and Hattias in 600 BC caused another new wave of Etrusnan migration eastward into Retia, resulting in the founding of the city of Spna (540 BC). The Thyatians and the Retii started mixing, developing into the group known as the Retians. Verona and the Thyatian League closed an alliance (as two independent partners as equal partners) in 390 BC, and Verona became thyatized fast. Felzna and Spna meanwhile chose to remain independent.

During the Alphatian campaigns between 192 and 190 BC, Spna and Felzna were completely destroyed. Verona saw heavy fighting against Alphatian-summoned monsters inside as well as outside the city but escaped total destruction; it was later captured and became the central Alphatian colonial settlement of the Retia region, being very close to the coveted gold mines of the eastern Altan Tepes. The locals were subjugated and mostly

enslaved, to work under horrible conditions in the mines, and as well sending crops and animals as tribute to Alphatia. At the same time, Alphatia introduced their art, music and alphabet to the region, replacing old scroll writings with books, and teaching some gifted selected people their art of magic.

Meanwhile, the Thyatian resistance (Etrusnans were by now completely assimilated into Thyatian culture) in the area formed mainly in the marshes around the estuaries of Polithius and Kantridae rivers. The local rebel leader, Sextus Sennius, managed to free Verona early on during the rebellion, and when the empire formed, he gained the honorary name of Retebius, and dominion over the region. His former headquarters in the marshes, a few miles north of Spna, was developed into the new regional capital of Retebius.

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## THE LANDS OF THE DUCHY

The Duchy of Retebius is divided into 11 administrative districts, each governed by a magistrate on behalf of the duke. Magistrates are appointed by the duke for a period of 2 years. The usual procedure is that the chosen candidate pays the duke the expected sum of tax income for "his" district for two years in advance, and then can keep whatever he or she can really extract in taxes and similar income from his "dominion". This method makes for a quite slim administration for the duke. The duke is, however, absolutely free to ignore this and simply appoint whomever he wants.

So, if by now you haven't got the 2-mile-hex map of Retebius, you should do this now.

Here is the link to the high-resolution map:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rnfPcvnYPDM5YtFT43plu9K9wpxUT0B0/view?usp=sharing>

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# Duchy of Retebius

## Upper Mesonian River Valley District

Area: 185,5 square miles  
Population: 6.242 (5.437 freemen, 805 slaves)  
Latifunds: 0  
Villae rusticae: 111  
Magistrate: Lucius Agros Cornallus (Gens Zendrolion)



*Upper Mesonian River with RAF watchtower* <sup>[7]</sup>

The Upper Mesonian is the northernmost district of the duchy, bordering the Imperial Territories as well as the County of Halathius. Occasionally, some monsters from there spill over into the area – some ogres here, a manticore there. Due to this, all manors (*villae rusticae*, see the excursion below on Thyatian agriculture) are fortified and can field at least a dozen guys with light armor, shields and weapons – which would be very unusual in the southern regions. Since a lot of valuable goods are transported from the County of Halathius downriver to Thyatis City, and the other side of the river is the less controlled Imperial Territory of Altienas, the riverbanks are intensely patrolled; watchtowers with accommodations for RAF flying patrols line the river in regular intervals of about 10-12 miles, all the way down to Lithoron.

Weather in this district is already considerably colder than at the coast, due to the elevation. Snow in winter is irregular, but not unusual. In those days, the locals prefer to drink their wine heated and heavily spiced. A very strange tradition for lowlanders.

The village of **Aquincum** (pop. 380) is only one day's walk away from the Halathius village Ternia

Minor, and there are strong connections and regular visits between those settlements.

The southern village, **Tuder** (pop. 550), is the seat of the district's magistrate. Lucius Cornallus (born 941) from the aristocratic but rather small Cornallus family holds this position since more than 10 years; he is a seasoned no-nonsense military veteran who takes his position seriously and is only moderately corrupt. He has assembled a company of some 30 Guardsmen, called the "Wyvern Guard" to deal with trouble, and is also known to hire adventurers for "Special Operations".



*Wyvern Ridge with Altan Tepes in the background* <sup>[8]</sup>

The district also contains the **Wyvern Ridge**, a small extension of the Alten Tepes to the north. Aside of the occasional Wyverns making their lair there (normally promptly raided by the RAF), there are rumours about extensive cave systems that link to similar caves below Halathius and may contain unusual underground monsters.

The southernmost tip of the Wyvern Ridge sees an abbey built right atop a cliff, **Saint Athoros**. Short of flying (which is of course rather easy in Retebius), the only way up is by a shockingly unstable looking winch going 300 feet straight up. The clerics there like to keep to themselves, a lot of the three dozen (all male) following vows of silence. Rumour has it that they are keepers of some dark and dangerous secret knowledge.

[7] Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carl\\_Hasch\\_-\\_Italienische\\_Abendlandschaft\\_\(Herbstabend\\_an\\_der\\_Riviera\\_bei\\_Bordighera\)\\_-4293\\_-\\_%C3%96sterreichische\\_Galerie\\_Belvedere.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carl_Hasch_-_Italienische_Abendlandschaft_(Herbstabend_an_der_Riviera_bei_Bordighera)_-4293_-_%C3%96sterreichische_Galerie_Belvedere.jpg).

[8] Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caspar\\_David\\_Friedrich\\_012.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caspar_David_Friedrich_012.jpg)

# Duchy of Retebius

## Albe District

Area: 306,9 square miles  
Population: 13.776 (11.186 freemen, 2.590 slaves)  
Latifunds: 5  
Villae rusticae: 251  
Magistrate: Wilhelm von Tothenburg (Free Thinkers)



*Adventurers crossing the Mesonian at the Albe ford* <sup>[9]</sup>

At Albe (pop. 730), the Mesonian River becomes wider and shallower, and there is a good ford right at the village. Therefore, pioneering settlers, hunters and adventurers from the Imperial Territories longing for some civilization usually come to Albe first. And vice versa, people on their way to Altienas usually come through Albe as well. Due to this, the village is (for its size) very well stocked with equipment and supplies for pioneers and adventurers. It even boasts a magic shop that sells healing potions and similar stuff (for double the usual prices).

Besides a narrow very fertile strip of land along the river, the district consists of large areas of foothills, so among the most productive economic activities are sheep- and goat-herding. The area is famous for a strongly spiced goat cheese. Also, the locals make the excellent Hill Cider, fermented with a secret mix of fruits and apples with a dark orange colour, that is as alcoholic as a strong wine.

Magistrate von Tothenburg (born 959 BC) is of Hattian descent, but with his family living in Retebius for more than four centuries. He is a man utterly devoid of any moral convictions, and of any

kind of spine. Dubbed alternatively as “Willy the Weasel” or “Toady Tothenburg” by his many enemies, he has nevertheless shown an almost supernatural talent for getting out of troubles and avoiding consequences from selling out to the highest and the second highest bidder at the same time.

## Litohoron District

Area: 287,8 square miles  
Population: 19.208 (14.137 freemen, 5.071 slaves)  
Latifunds: 36  
Villae rusticae: 309  
Magistrate: Caesia Decma (Gens Zendrolion)



*Felzna in flames 192 BC* <sup>[10]</sup>

The village of Litohoron (pop. 950) is an important transshipment point for trade between Thyatis City and the County of Halathius. There is some serious lobbying going on about upgrading the village to township status (which would bring more prestige for the magistrate and some tax advantages).

The most defining feature of the district are the ruins of the old Etruscan city of **Felzna**, which was allied to the Thyatian League when the Alphatians attacked in 192 BC. Alphatian wizards burnt the city to the ground – literally. As one of the (very few) survivors stated, “the very stones melted like butter in the sun”. All that was – and still is – left of Felzna is an area of black, glassy-like smolten

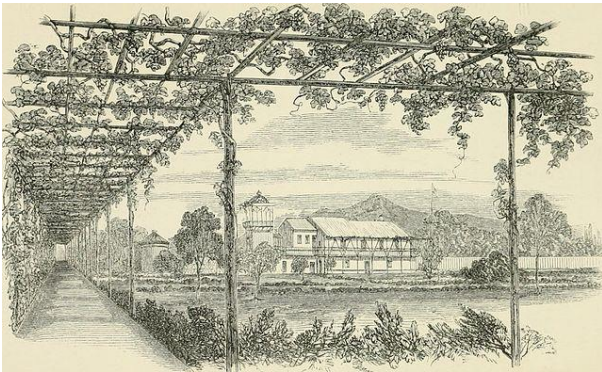
[9] Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rubicon,-to-ford-the-river-.jpg>.

[10] Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A\\_Riverside\\_Town\\_on\\_Fire.PNG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A_Riverside_Town_on_Fire.PNG)

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fundaments, with no vegetation even after more than a millennium. It took until the second century AC until a new settlement, Litohoron, was founded two miles away from that place.

Magistrate Caesia Decma, sometimes called the “Iron Lady of Litohoron”, is one of the few women in a powerful position. Born 931 BC, the matriarch of the Decma family now holds the position of Litohoron magistrate for an unprecedented fifteenth term in a row. She is a staunch conservative, exceedingly intelligent and strong-willed and equipped with a sharp tongue, not suffering fools gladly. Caesia governs the district with the same iron fist and discipline she applies to her family clan and to herself.

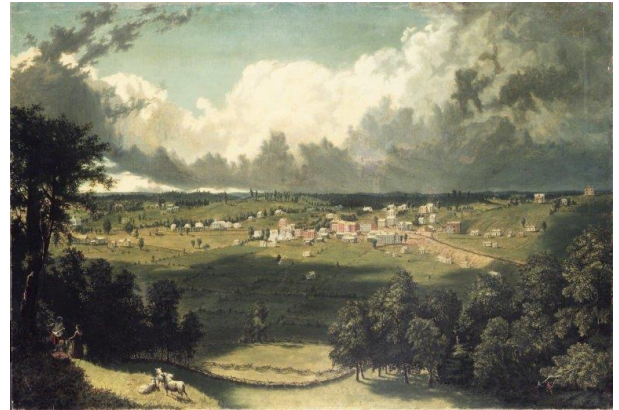


*The Decma Vineyards near Litohoron* <sup>[11]</sup>

The Decma clan owns substantial real estate in and around Litohoron, most famously the vast vineyards that produce a variant of *Abbey Red*, featuring ripe blackberry aromas and hints of tobacco leaf and licorice that are nicely balanced with a flavourful finish. The competition between the Decma vineyard and the other three top tier wineries (see Vairona and Hillfork districts) is downright brutal. It is said that Gaius Decma, the third son of the matriarch and current overseer of the winery, will have his head delivered on a silver plate if the Decma Red doesn't win next year's competition.

## Hillfork District

Area: 318,3 square miles  
Population: 19.545 (14.365 freemen, 5.179 slaves)  
Latifunds: 28  
Villae rusticae: 270  
Magistrate: Julianus Pictor (Populares)



*View at Hillfork* <sup>[12]</sup>

Only some 40 miles away from the megalopolis Thyatis City, Hillfork is a small town of about 2.300 inhabitants at the densely populated bank of the Mesonian River.

The “suburb village” of **Apricena** (350 inhabitants) is known for its vineyard, producing the *Apricena Topaz*, a yellow to amber coloured wine, slightly dry and balanced with a nutty flavour and a unique apricot aftertaste. It is one of four top-tier wineries in the duchy (the others being in Litohoron and Vairona) caught in a nasty rivalry.

**Scafali** (400 inhabitants) is another suburb village, and boasts a huge mill, an experimental design created by the gnomish engineer Theophrastus that combines water- and wind-powered technologies to run more than 300 millstones at the same time – a beacon of modern Thyatian technology and efficiency.

Magistrate Julianus Pictor, now in his third term, is the successor of the immensely popular former magistrate Sixtus Viribono <sup>[13]</sup>, who made it from

[11] source:

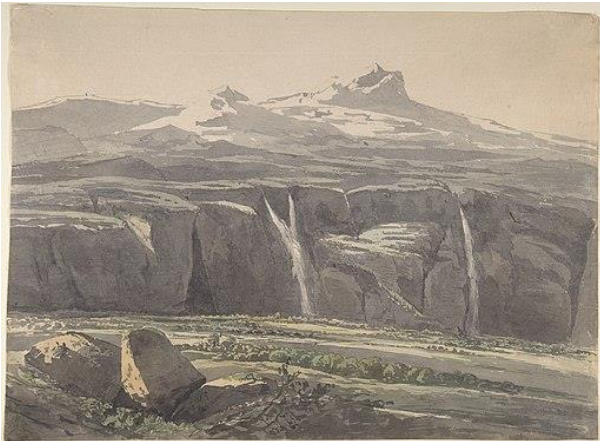
[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e6/Cilicia%2C\\_its\\_former\\_history\\_and\\_present\\_state%3B\\_with\\_an\\_account\\_of\\_the\\_idolatrous\\_worship\\_prevaling\\_there\\_previous\\_to\\_the\\_introduction\\_of\\_Christianity\\_%281862%29\\_%2814756725426%29.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e6/Cilicia%2C_its_former_history_and_present_state%3B_with_an_account_of_the_idolatrous_worship_prevaling_there_previous_to_the_introduction_of_Christianity_%281862%29_%2814756725426%29.jpg)

[12] source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brooklyn\\_Museum\\_-\\_Panoramic\\_Landscape\\_with\\_a\\_View\\_of\\_a\\_Small\\_Town\\_-\\_overall.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brooklyn_Museum_-_Panoramic_Landscape_with_a_View_of_a_Small_Town_-_overall.jpg)

[13] see <http://www.pandius.com/thysntr2.html>

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here to the Senate in Thyatis and even to the Tribune position. It is part of a local tradition for the duke to appoint a magistrate here not from the aristocracy, but a commoner usually close to the Populares faction. Julianus, a former jeweller, knows that these are very big footsteps he is following and tries his best. He is a very competent administrator, but he lacks the charisma and passion that Sixtus exhibits in abundance.



*The Baxman Heights* <sup>[14]</sup>

The **Baxman Heights** east of the district get their name from old legend dating back to the times of the early empire <sup>[15]</sup>. Cornelius Bax, known as “Old Man Bax”, was a very rich merchant, town piper and host of an inn in Hillfork. He had a great fortune and was said to have obtained it through fraud and robbery. Due to his old age, which was more than atypical for this time, the citizens believed that he had made a covenant with an unknown evil Immortal. According to legend, Cornelius Bax died at the age of 91. A large number of citizens took part in the funeral procession to his final resting place. When they came back to town, they were amazed when Old Man Bax, who had just been buried, stood at the window of his house and laughed at the citizens.

So it was decided to bury him a second time. But this time he went back to town with the mourners from the cemetery. Thereupon the Hillforkers decided to banish him with the help of two clerics of Tarastia. He was brought to the spring of the

small creek on the top of the nearby hills in a horse-drawn cart with four strong black horses. By the time the team reached the spot, the black horses had turned moldy from the exertion. When the coachman turned around to look after Cornelius Bax, the spell was broken and he happily went back to Hillfork. He was banned one more time. This time the clerics even took him personally to the spring in the hills, which he was supposed to empty with the help of a sieve. Should he complete the task, he would be released from the spell. One year an icy winter hit the country and froze the spring. Old Man Bax then broke the ice into pieces and spread it over the surrounding meadows. With that his spell was broken yet again.

When Old Man Bax was back in Hillfork, the citizens were frightened and again called the Tarastia clerics for help. They repeated the procedure, placing a new ban on him. So now it was his job to empty the spring with a thimble. Since that day he has not been seen in Hillfork, and it can be assumed that he has not yet been able to fulfill this task.

Today, the Baxman Heights is one of the few places that still see an occasional predator like wolves or a mountain lion. Also, it is said that in a cave in the hills lives a prophetess known as the “Hag of Hillfork”, who is well-versed in brewing unusual potions <sup>[16]</sup>.

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## Montebulo District

Area: 198,6 square miles

Population: 6.968 (6.174 freemen, 794 slaves)

Latifunds: 0

Villae rusticae: 137

Magistrate: Mathaios Sarantellis (politically unaligned)

[14] source:[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ab/Foggy\\_Landscape\\_in\\_the\\_Apennine%3B\\_verso-Sketch\\_of\\_Landscape\\_MET\\_DP804184.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ab/Foggy_Landscape_in_the_Apennine%3B_verso-Sketch_of_Landscape_MET_DP804184.jpg)

[15] this is actually a German legend from the Hessen area, see [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die\\_Sage\\_vom\\_Baxmann](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_Sage_vom_Baxmann)

[16] The Hag of Hillfork is mentioned in context with the Retebian Senators, <http://www.pandius.com/thysntr2.html>



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*The Montebulo Hills* <sup>[17]</sup>

The Montebulo district lies in the foothills of the Altan Tepes and between the river valleys. It is the poorest and least populated area in the duchy. Most prevalent economy is sheepherding. And then more sheepherding. The locals usually keep to themselves and are considered an uncouth lot. Rumour has it that some of them resort to banditry to make a living, but if so then they keep a low profile, probably because doing spectacular stuff will only get the RAF involved. Occasionally there are encounters with wolves or mountain lions in the hills, or humanoids on a raid from the Altan Tepes to the north. The manors in the hills are fortified, similar to the ones in the Upper Mesonian District.

There are also some stretches of Poppy fields in the hills – beautiful red flowers that can be cut to extract a latex material; this latex or milk is either distilled in a liquid or refined into a powder that can be smoked. In both forms, it is quite addictive, and an illegal drug in Retebius. Therefore, there is no one claiming ownership of these fields.

The current new magistrate on his first term, Mathaios Sarantellis, is a well-known powerful magic-user from a commoner background who in the past has shown no inclination whatsoever to dabble in politics. Nobody knows why he wanted to become a magistrate, much less why the duke actually granted him the title. His guideline as administrator seems to be a laissez-faire policy ... in other words, he doesn't care much for what is happening. There are however plans to erect a wizard's tower some six miles to the north of Montebulo village.

## Palazzone District

Area: 256,0 square miles  
Population: 16.539 (13.463 freemen, 3.076 slaves)  
Latifunds: 5  
Villae rusticae: 321  
Magistrate: Quintus Gallus Ephore (Gens Aurelia)



*A Hin in Palazzone* <sup>[18]</sup>

The *Palazzone Gap* is a lowland area between the foothills of the Altan Tepes to the north and the Baxman Heights to the south. Not quite as densely populated as the coastal and the river areas of the Mesonian and Polithius, this region is very rural, calm and considered backwater. Most of the roughly 500 Halflings in the duchy settle in or around the village of Palazzone. The village is likewise famous for producing very delicious sausages, and the Hin also introduced some tobacco to the fields around Palazzone, though in a rather small amount.

The huge *Happy Pimple Caravanserai*, owned by the Hin Gulliver Buddenbrooks, is taking up half the space of the village, since many caravans make a stop here on their way between the two rivers. The inn serves excellent food and beverages; most famously, for really VIP guests there are some few bottles of *Gladfeet Woods* available, a sparkling champagne that Gulliver exclusively buys through his contacts in the Five Shires. Never, ever, ask about the name of the inn, though.

[17] source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Claude\\_F%C3%A9lix\\_Th%C3%A9odore\\_Caruelle\\_d%27\\_Aligny\\_-\\_Italian\\_Hills\\_-\\_49.1730\\_-\\_Museum\\_of\\_Fine\\_Arts.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Claude_F%C3%A9lix_Th%C3%A9odore_Caruelle_d%27_Aligny_-_Italian_Hills_-_49.1730_-_Museum_of_Fine_Arts.jpg)

[18] source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Karel\\_du\\_Jardin\\_\(Amsterdam\\_c.1626-Venice\\_1678\)\\_-\\_A\\_Bov>Loading\\_an\\_Ass\\_in\\_an\\_Italian\\_Village\\_Street\\_-\\_RCIN\\_404616\\_-\\_Royal\\_Collection.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Karel_du_Jardin_(Amsterdam_c.1626-Venice_1678)_-_A_Bov>Loading_an_Ass_in_an_Italian_Village_Street_-_RCIN_404616_-_Royal_Collection.jpg)

# Duchy of Retebius

Magistrate Quintus Ephore is the elder brother of a very powerful ecclesiastical senator in Thyatis City - Gaia Ephore. Flaminia Tarastiana, Quaestor of the City of Thyatis <sup>[19]</sup>. While Palazzone is not one of the richest districts, it is one of the most quiet ones – and that is just the way Quintus likes it. He is the nearly polar opposite of the tireless, adventurous and lively senator Gaia; the siblings love each other dearly nonetheless. Quintus' sedentary manners (some call it laziness) hide a very sharp mind, however. He also has developed a passionate taste for tobacco since he acquired the magistrate's position.

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## Arelapo District



*Cattle in Arelapo* <sup>[20]</sup>

Area: 307,9 square miles  
Population: 19.739 (14.133 freemen, 5.606 slaves)  
Latifunds: 23  
Villae rusticae: 365  
Magistrate: Placidio Messala (Gens Zendrolion)

This district at the centre of the duchy has the highest number of premium cattle farms in the duchy. There are also several farms that specialize in breeding exotic creatures, from giant beetles to giant lizards and way beyond, to produce exotic foodstuff for the Retebius Air Fleet ... and for the more decadent elitist circles of the empire.

***Clupea Waystation*** is a large inn and stop at the junction of various trails, right in the middle between Retebius, Arelapo, Varonia and Palazzone. A huge complex of inns and stables, it is continually busy. For unknown reasons, the place is owned by the Church of Thyatis.

Placibio Messala (born 940), district magistrate on his third term, belongs to the Messala clan, one of the most loyal and close political allies of the ducal family since more than two centuries. He is an oldschool gentleman, always impeccably dressed, courteous, well-read in philosophy and history and with an exquisitely polished way of speaking. He is also quite chauvinistic, and the Messala have a reputation for exploiting their slaves very ruthlessly. Placibio is currently trying to broker a marriage between his grandnephew Aristide and Desdemona Retebius, the heiress to the ducal title (both are 4 years old as of now).

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## Norba District

Area: 202,4 square miles  
Population: 9.351 (7.845 freemen, 1.505 slaves)  
Latifunds: 8  
Villae rusticae: 163  
Magistrate: Eirene Retebius (Gens Zendrolion – secretly leaning Republican though)

The hills near the mountains of Halathius along the Polithius river make up this small district. In contrast to neighbouring Montebulo however, and due to the river, these hills here are lush and green, and are home to a large number of exceptionally beautiful wildflowers, as well as to a wide range of herbs. The colourful flower fields from spring to autumn, this is what this district is famous for.

[19] see <http://pandius.com/thysntr4.html> about Senator Gaia Ephore

[20] source: [https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nicolaes\\_Pietersz\\_Berchem\\_\(1620-1683\)\\_-\\_Cattle\\_and\\_Sheep\\_in\\_a\\_Landscape\\_-\\_1535103\\_-\\_National\\_Trust.jpg](https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nicolaes_Pietersz_Berchem_(1620-1683)_-_Cattle_and_Sheep_in_a_Landscape_-_1535103_-_National_Trust.jpg)

# Duchy of Retebius



*Lush hills at Norba* <sup>[21]</sup>

In a somewhat surprising contrast to the flowery environment, Norba is also home to about 170 dwarves – the highest number of the stout folk outside of Retebius City. Metals from Halathius coming through here are often refined by the skilled dwarves into strong alloys before being sent as ingots to other places or worked into tools and weapons just here in the village.

Just like in Upper Mesonian or Montebulo, there is a certain risk of monsters from the Altan Tepes coming to the Norba district for raiding or plundering. Therefore, the villae rusticae here are all fortified and the people are armed. With weapons of rather high quality, of course.

The village of Norba proper (540 inhabitants) also has a large brewery – the Dwarves brought their beer culture with them. Beer isn't that exotic, but somewhat unusual in a wine-culture like Thyatis. While most Thyatian breweries produce *North Brew* (a standard dark amber lager), Norba puts out barrels of *Bleak Stout* – a dark brown stout that has almost double normal alcohol level, very bitter but with a slight chocolate aftertaste.

Magistrate Eirene Retebius (born 975), on her first term, is a distant cousin of Duke Callastian, hailing from the extensive family holdings on the Isle of Dawn (near Newkirk) <sup>[22]</sup>. She is a protégé of Polibia Retebius, the former (now retired) duchess and mother of Duke Callastian. The *grande dame* of the family sees immense political talent in the Newkirk girl and decided to push this talent a bit. Eirene is

no beauty – tall, lanky, with small breasts but a huge nose – but she is sharp-witted, keen, confident, a shrewd negotiator and a very fast learner. Well-read in philosophy and history, she is secretly becoming more and more convinced that the empire would do better as a republic, ruled by the Senate. Which may become a problem for her.

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## Varonia District

Area: 307,9 square miles

Population: 25.067 (19.252 freemen, 5.816 slaves)

Latifunds: 55

Villae rusticae: 361

Magistrate: Cantius Nectaridis (Gens Sergii)



*View at Varonia from the west* <sup>[23]</sup>

A quaint small town (1150 inhabitants) dating back to Etrusnan times, then as the city of Verona, allegedly founded 953 BC by the Etrusnan tribe of the Retii, and during Hesperian times being a powerful independent city state. While other cities of that time were completely razed (like Felzna at the Mesonian, or Spna that sank beneath the sea), this place was continually inhabited. A fact the locals take tremendous pride in, often boasting that their town is “older than Thyatis City”. The town of Varonia even has the same colors – a golden cross on blue ground.

Today's Varonia is of course only a fraction of the size it has been, not even close to the 14000

[21] source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lionel\\_Constable\\_-\\_Landscape\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lionel_Constable_-_Landscape_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

[22] The Isle of Dawn line of the Retebius family is mentioned in context with Senator Aemilius Fabius, see <http://pandius.com/thysntr4.html>

[23] source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hendrik\\_Frans\\_van\\_Lint\\_-\\_A\\_Landscape\\_with\\_an\\_Italian\\_Hill\\_Town.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hendrik_Frans_van_Lint_-_A_Landscape_with_an_Italian_Hill_Town.jpg)

# Duchy of Retebius

inhabitants of Etrusnan times. What is the town today, was originally the palace grounds, erected on a small outcropping of rock.

Varonia is also famous for its many orchards bearing excellent fruits – cherries, pear, peaches, oranges and lemons. There are two famous vineyards in the area – the Porphyra vineyard producing an excellent red *Bloodwine* (fortified with raisins, allegedly made from grapes growing on ancient battlefields), fruity with a slight aftertaste of strawberry. And the Sylla winery which boasts a strong *Glowfire*, a pale chartreuse wine with very faint luminescence in darkness and a strong pear taste. Both compete regularly among each other and with the Apricena vineyard near Hillfork and the Decma vineyards of Litohoron for the title of best vineyard in the duchy. A very serious rivalry that is, that may sometimes lead to actions bordering on the illegal.

Cantius Nectaridis, magistrate on his third term, is a fat, jovial fellow always out for a quick joke ... between meals at least, which are the most important thing for him. A gourmet of high renown, he is always looking for the latest new exotic food or beverage and also enjoys the arts and being around artists. His regular monthly parties are eagerly awaited. Politically, he always follows the path of least resistance, trying not to annoy anybody – or at least the fewest people.

## **Sanctum Artumes – a Shrine of Diulanna**

Dating back to Etrusnan times as well, the shrine was a holy Etrusnan site dedicated to the Immortal Artume (Diulanna) and is still at this time. It is said that the High Priestess Artelana sacrificed herself to Artumes and thus through some kind of Immortal intervention spared the town of Verona the total destruction during the Alphatian attack of 192 BC. Her mortal remains are interred in a crypt deep below the shrine. Touching her coffin allegedly offers protection from evil.

## **Bridgewater**

A lot of merchandise from Halathius coming down the Kantridae river but destined for Thyatis is unloaded at Bridgewater and transported via Varonia, Palazzone and Litohoron to the Mesonian River. Thus, although the village isn't big, it is

always bustling with workers loading goods from ships to caravan wagons.

## **Borgomasino District**

Area: 314,9 square miles

Population: 22.715 (17.490 freemen, 5.224 slaves)

Latifunds: 30

Villae rusticae: 367

Magistrate: Oppius Peregrinus (Gens Aemilia)



*Borgomasino pasturage* <sup>[24]</sup>

This rich district west of the capital and north of the border to the Duchy of Thyatis is densely settled and thrives on agriculture of all kinds. The area is also known to harbour the majority of the duchy's **Lupin** population – ca. 1500 *Canis sapiens colossus* (King Mastiff and Torreóner Pit-Bull) live in villae rusticae in the less settled western half of the district. The village of Borgomasino itself (550 inh.) produces a great bacon known as *Jamon Borgomo*.

The magistrate Oppius Peregrinus (born 970 BC) got his prestigious position the old-fashioned way – by paying the highest amount of gold up front. The Peregrinus family is one of the richest in the duchy and Oppius is very ambitious and utterly convinced of his own superiority over everybody else. Unfortunately, his intellectual abilities and his character suitability don't keep up with his ambitions.

## **Duke's Wood and the Hunting Lodge**

At the western edge of the district, nestled into the Baxman Heights hills, there is a small forest known as the **Duke's Wood**. There, the duke, his family, friends, guests and a select small group of VIPs can go hunting foxes, deer, boars and occasionally

[24] source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=21996910>

# Duchy of Retebius

mountain lions. Since the wood is far too small to allow for a decent population of these, agents of the duke are always looking to buy such creatures from enterprising merchants to set free in the wood.



*Hunting deer in the Duke's Wood* <sup>[25]</sup>

The duke's **hunting lodge** at the edge of the forest is built in a rustic design, but actually offers all the amenities and luxuries suitable for persons of very high status; even emperor Thincol has been a guest here. For security reasons, the lodge and the wood are restricted area and are permanently guarded by a number of elite fighters, plus mages and clerics and a routine permanent air patrol, all under the command of Brutus Tercolianus, an experienced retired Forester from Vyalia.

## District of the City of Retebius (Retebius D.C.)

Area: 197,2 square miles  
Population: 41.244 (31.222 freemen, 10.022 slaves)  
Latifunds: 55  
Villae rusticae: 415  
Magistrate: Duke Callastian Retebius (Gens Zendrolion)

The area right around the capital city of Retebius is the most densely populated part of the duchy, and the duke traditionally is also the magistrate of the region. The city itself will be covered below, here some short notes on the surrounding rural area.



*Working in the fields around Retebius* <sup>[26]</sup>

**Bridea**, **Davinus** and **Isara** are villages that could be considered "suburbs" of Retebius City, all no more than 2 hours walk away; while the former two specialize in cattle and beef, the people of Isara do a lot of fishing, as do other villae rusticae along the short strip of Retebian coastline.

**Kerkezi** is a similar "suburb" but is already on the Kantrium side of the Kantridae river, so technically not part of Retebius. For all purposes of everyday life, with the exception of whom they pay their taxes to, they are part of the city, however. A large bridge, the Kantridae Bridge, crosses the river right at the village.

**Misilano** is a resort for the rich, boasting a beautiful stretch of beach nearby. It has a small yacht harbour with private ships for the affluent, some can be rented out. It is restricted area, however, walled and patrolled by a couple of very competent guardians, including mages and clerics. You need an invitation from one of the noble residents when you want to get in.

## Ruins of Spna

Spna was an independent Etruscan city state (founded 540 BC) allied with the Thyatian League when the Alphatians attacked in 192 BC. Alphatian magic-users caused an earthquake that sent the city completely under the sea. Where it still is and may even still hold ancient treasures. If so, then you can count on meeting some underwater undead and/or magical guardians.

[25] source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jan\\_Brueghel\\_\(I\)\\_-Forest\\_landscape\\_with\\_deer\\_hunt.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jan_Brueghel_(I)_-Forest_landscape_with_deer_hunt.jpg)

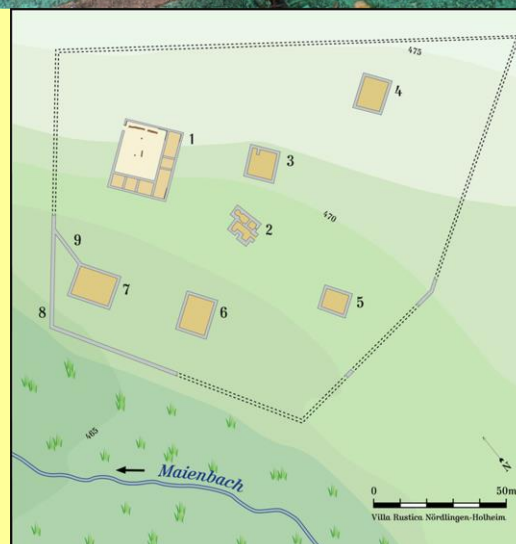
[26] source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Coleman\\_-\\_Women\\_in\\_the\\_Wheat\\_Fields,\\_Anacapri\\_\(1887\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Coleman_-_Women_in_the_Wheat_Fields,_Anacapri_(1887).jpg)

# Duchy of Retebius

## Excursion: A Short Introduction To Thyatian Agriculture

Starting with what is *not* there – you won't find the archetypical small self-sufficient farm/homestead that is the base of most other more feudal nations. This is different in the colonies and on Hattias, where stubborn Hattian peasants still cling to their small homesteads on around 1/3 of arable land, but not on the Thyatian mainland. None. Nada. The whole agriculture instead runs on two basic economic units – the Thyatian manor (aka *villa rustica*) and the Thyatian plantation (aka *latifund*).

A *villa rustica* is home to roughly 50 people – peasants, herders, workers - and covers about 150 to 200 acres of land. Of the 50 inhabitants, roughly 20% are slaves. On the 2-mile hex map, on a typical "cultivated" hex you will find about eight to ten of these manors (but then, subtract two from this number for latifunds, see below). In the hills, three to four manors per hex in the more fertile areas, and one or two in the not so fertile lands. On the simple plain grassland, usually five or six manors per hex. Mountains, forests and wooded hills don't have these manors, though. A typical *villa rustica* looks like this:



1 = main house, 2 = bath house, 3-7 = farm buildings, 8 = protective wall, 9 = connection wall (sources:

Von Mediatus - Eigenes Werk, CC BY-SA 3.0,

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=16310145>

Von Presse03 - picture is own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2665694> )

See as well here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villa\\_rustica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villa_rustica)

# Duchy of Retebius

As for ownership, about 15% of *villae rusticae* are owned by the duke and rented out to farmers, 55% are owned by minor nobility (without a feudal title, but aristocratic entitlement due to landownership) and rented out as well, and only 20% are owned by the typical middle class one-farm peasant. This number was much higher at the beginning of the Thyatian settlement and the early empire, but even through the many upheavals, a millennium of economic concentration has taken its toll: the rustic middleclass landowner that used to be the backbone of the early empire is slowly dying out. The remaining 10% are owned by enterprising farmers that managed to get hold of two, three or four manors, but are not considered aristocracy.

The manors are largely standardized, optimized and nearly identical – if you know one, you know them all. They are organized with the ruthless efficiency needed to feed the megalopolis of Thyatis City.

The **latifunds** (plantations) are even more strictly organized; typical size is about 400 acres, with 100 people living and working on it. Of these, roughly 30% up to 40% are slave laborers. Latifunds are only found in “cultivated” hexes – as a rule of thumb, assume that every hex has one, at the expense of two *villae rusticae*. However, while the manors produce food for the masses, only ¼ of the latifunds do so; the vast majority produce “cash crops” instead, and just enough food to sustain themselves. In Retebius, these “cash crops” are olives (mainly for oil), grapes for wine, livestock (yes, I know this is technically not a crop) and fruits.

See: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latifundium>

20% of the latifunds are owned by the duke, 65% owned by the minor nobility, and 15% are owned by the Church of Thyatis. In Retebius, that makes for 244 latifunds (49 ducal, 36 church-owned, and 159 nobility-owned). By their very definition, latifunds are never owned by “normal” farmers.

One final note – as consequence from this agricultural system, there are no villages in Thyatis. Well, yes, there are ... but they are not what you expect when you think of a typical medieval village. *There are no peasants in Thyatian villages.* The villagers may own a herbal garden and a dozen chicken, but that’s it. These villages are only about crafts, industry, services and trade. Exclusively. Again – no peasants there. Everything concerning agriculture is only done in the plantations and manors.

In this “imperial system” with its magistrates, plantations and extensive use of slave labour, the usual BECMI rules of dominion income don’t make sense. There is no possibility for an upcoming ruler to establish his own lesser dominion. There isn’t even the typical “family unit” that is the basis for all BECMI dominion tax calculations. However, this system with its magistrates, *villae rusticae* and latifunds can be adapted to a similar rule system. I will talk about this in a later part in one of the upcoming other Thyatis Mini-Gazetteers.

# Duchy of Retebius

## THE CITY OF RETEBIUS



*The Harbour of Retebius* <sup>[27]</sup>

The city of Retebius was originally founded by Thyatian colonists in 539 BC, by the name of *Corthius Mire* – as a balance to the founding of the Etruscan city of Spna a few miles to the south just one year earlier. However, at that time, the estuaries of the Polithius and Kantridae rivers were a large swamp area, and the Thyatians were new while the Etruscans were native to the land. So, Corthius Mire for centuries consisted only of some simple mud huts, while Spna thrived and became a powerful city state. After the Alphatians attacked in 192 BC and sunk Spna into the sea, the marsh area around Corthius Mire became a local centre for the Thyatian resistance, and the guerrillas from there played a vital part in the rebellion that ended in Thyatian independence. The leader of that local guerrilla army, Sextus Sennius, received the honour name of Retebius after the victory, symbolic of the Retia area. In 26 BC, Empress Valentia initiated a huge project to dry out the swamps and considerably expand the tiny settlement, renaming it to Retebius and granting the rights of ownership to the family of Sextus Sennius Retebius. Which, remarkably, the family has retained continuously since then (though there have been some rather tenuous adoptions in between).

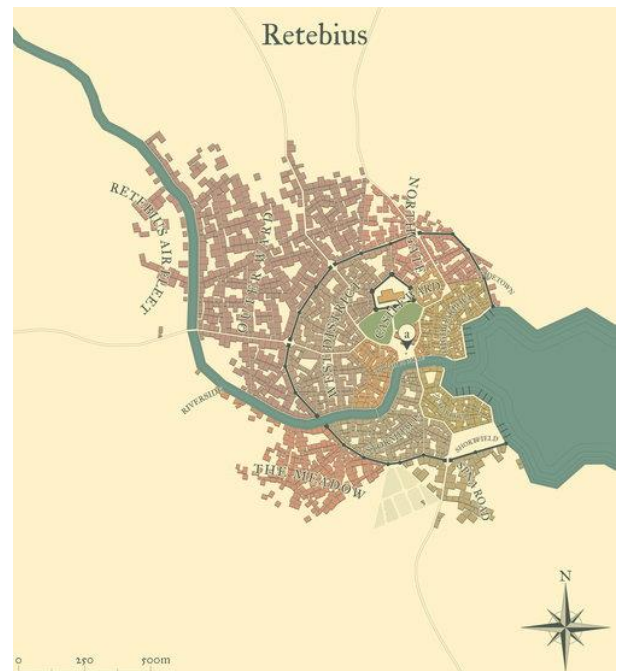
With a population of 15.000, Retebius seems to be a well-sized city, and it certainly has a grand name. On second sight, though, the city seems bigger than it actually is. If you subtract the substantial Retebius Air Fleet personnel in the city proper (about 3.500), and the 3.600 slaves, there are no more than 7.900 freemen left. On another angle,

the huge number of soldiers in the city – and the fact that it is a trading port with a large harbour on top - creates the need for a very substantial “entertainment service” sector. The *per capita* ratio of taverns and similar institutions, but also of prostitutes, is among the top three of all Thyatian cities (together with Lucinius and of course Thyatis City).

There is a huge city map <sup>[28]</sup> (with all the 2290 buildings) available for those who want to flesh out the city more. You can download it from here:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G\\_b2WZ26xBh-GKsXNDw5zdRn\\_ukB64Zd/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G_b2WZ26xBh-GKsXNDw5zdRn_ukB64Zd/view?usp=sharing)

Small thumbnail:



You can also watch this city map as an **animated 3D-Model!**

Instructions:

- 1) Download the retebius.json file from here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JcCXyxE2yG7f8WhKRvOYe9dwi4GbNTqj/view?usp=sharing>
- 2) open this website: <https://watabou.itch.io/city-viewer>
- 3) Drag & Drop the just downloaded retebius.json file into the cityview-window. Voilà!

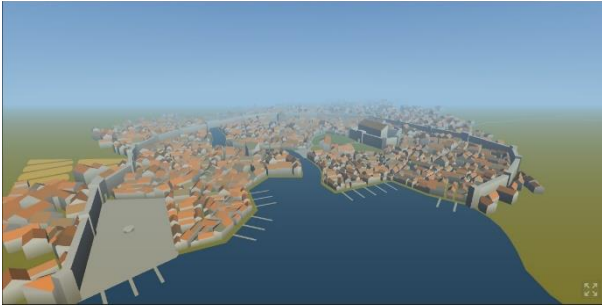
[27] source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adriaen\\_van\\_der\\_Kabel\\_-\\_Port\\_of\\_Genua\\_1660.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adriaen_van_der_Kabel_-_Port_of_Genua_1660.jpg)

[28] created with this great tool: <https://watabou.itch.io/medieval-fantasy-city-generator>



# Duchy of Retebius

Here is a screenshot of the 3D-Model:



And here is a breakdown of the quarters of the city, as shown on the map:

## Castle Ward

Unsurprisingly, this area holds the castle of the duke, a heavy fortification in itself, seat of the duke's family, his central government and his personal retinue. Right in front of the castle, there is a large green park area, the **Duke's Greens**, divided into two halves by the broad **Duke's Alley**. This park is open to the public and is a very popular destination for the citizens to chill and relax. Other administrative buildings are to the east of the castle. South of the park area is the grand **Retebius Plaza**, bordering the final yards of the Polithius river before it enters the sea. The plaza features a huge statue in honour of Sextus Sennius Retebius.

The **city watch** is headquartered in Castle Ward as well, though they have a dozen smaller stations scattered all over the city. The 140 guardsmen are led by **Captain Victor Magnidis** (born 949), a career veteran guard who spent his whole life in the watch and knows each and every trick there is to know. Captain Magnidis and his men sometimes find themselves at odds with the private guardsmen of Corthius Mire (see below), who consider that aristocratic quarter to be their own domain. For Thyatian conditions, the Retebius watch is only moderately corrupt, but there are enough cases of trouble – maybe a reason why Senator Mars Gabronica (see "People" below) was successful in the city with his anti-corruption election campaign.

## Corthius Mire

This is the area where the original first settlement was. Over the centuries, it has gone from palacial grounds, to barracks, to merchant quarter, to red light district, to ramshackle slum area. Then, about a century ago, the great-grandfather of the current

duke, razed the area and rebuilt it totally new. Since then, this quarter along the Polothius and south of Castle Ward and the park, is the prime piece of real estate in the city. Here you can find all the magnificent city villas of the nobility. The streets are heavily patrolled by private "security service" guardsmen, and anyone looking like he doesn't belong here risks a thorough questioning.

## West District

The western third of the area inside the city walls makes up the middleclass quarter. Here you can find the commoner craftsmen, skilled laborers, the smalltime merchants. The craftsmen and merchants usually have their open working/sales area on the ground floor and live on the upper floor of the same building. Plus, there are six large public bathing houses, and some taverns and brothels for those who don't want to degrade themselves in the Stormhall or Low Harbour quarters. From time to time, there is some trouble with protection rackets from Low Harbour, but all in all this quarter is considered a somewhat boring neighbourhood.

## Bathing Houses

*When you want to do some socializing with the locals, the tavern is NOT the place to go in Thyatis. Except for a special case of socializing – most taverns double up as brothels.*

*Instead, if you just want to meet people, get the latest gossip and spend some free time, you go to the bathing houses. Every village has one, every town has several, and Retebius City has about two dozen. The bathing houses are owned and financed by the state. Entrance is free for each and everybody, at no cost. Sometimes, musicians are playing. You can order a jug of wine or some biscuits or fruits (those have to be paid for of course) here as well. Naturally, all armour and weapons have to stay outside, or more precisely, in lockers at the entrance. Also, the areas for males and females are strictly separated.*

## Northgate

This quarter extends over the inner city inside the walls as well as the outer city. It is dominated by the **Grand Cathedral of Retebius**, one of most

# Duchy of Retebius

magnificent and beautiful temples of the Church of Thyatis, and of course seat of the Prelate of the Church in the duchy, a position currently held by **Prelate Marina Telessenta** (born 948, C18 of Asterius).

Several smaller temples are scattered all over the city as well. The church grounds in the city are famous for being a centre of learning for the more scholastic members of the clergy. While there is no large central library in Retebius, one or the other of the temples probably has every important book you could ask for.

Another side of Northgate, however, are the **Academies of Art**. Traditionally, the Retebius family has been a great supporter and sponsor of all kinds of artists – sculptors, painters, playwrights, actors, musicians. Many famous artists studied here in small independent schools. The new current duke, Callastian, having travelled as an artist himself, will even expand on that and is expected to greatly enhance the duchy's sponsoring program even further. You can find several small ("avantgarde") theatres here, as well as two larger open stages, and lots of ateliers. Often, different schools of artists get into heated discussions about the superiority of this or that school, which might even lead to some fisticuffs.

Finally, as for the sciences, Retebius is among the most advanced places to study architecture. Schools for these can as well be found in Northgate, though by nature a lot of practical work is done all over the city and the county at large.



*Retebius' architects at work* <sup>[29]</sup>

[29] source: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7e/Luca\\_Cambiaso-Strada\\_Nuova-palazzo\\_Lercari\\_Parodi.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7e/Luca_Cambiaso-Strada_Nuova-palazzo_Lercari_Parodi.jpg)

## Widetown

A tiny quarter outside the city walls, it contains some businesses that are not wanted in the middle of the city due to environmental concerns – most notably tanners, but also a brewery.

## High Harbour

This is the merchant district of Retebius. Besides warehouses and residences of numerous merchants, it has several high-quality inns; the "**Admiral Quintus**" counts as one of the best, proper even for visiting aristocrats.

Similarly, there are some great taverns and a number of high-quality courtesans for visiting ship captains and officers, two bathing houses and a small temple especially dedicated to Protius. Last but not least, there are several shops dealing in magic. The famous auction house "**Sothebius**" from Thyatis City has a dependency here that auctions magic items off once per month.

## Low Harbour

The shantytown of the city. Here you can find all the lowlife that invariably is drawn to the big city. See beggars posing as powerful wizards and powerful wizards posing as beggars, get wasted on the cheapest booze, buy illegal slaves on the black market, find a wererat prostitute, taste the latest drugs from Jaibul, contact the assassin of your choice, socialize with pirates from Terentias, get shanghaied by the very same pirates ... all the things adventurers enjoy doing in their free time.

A half dozen street gangs are vying for control over the underworld, marking their turfs by painting colourful symbols at the walls. These guys are quick at hand with their knives and consider trespassing on their territory a serious affair. Their activities run the usual gamut of racketeering, pimping, selling drugs, robbery and burglary. There are rumours of a powerful mysterious figure trying to unite the gangs ... then again, these rumours have been around for centuries, and it seems none have succeeded.

# Duchy of Retebius

## **The Sewers (not shown on map)**

There is an extensive, labyrinthine net of sewers running below the city. About 300 slaves and four dozen overseers are at work here, keeping the city at least halfway clean. Of course, there is always a lot of trouble with rats, and sometimes with bigger and more dangerous scavengers. The gangs from Low Harbour regularly use the sewer system for getting around, and you can see their turf symbols from above ground also down here below.

According to one legend, there once was a wizard who tried to make a tunnel from the sewer system to the undersea ruins of Spna. Nobody knows if this is true and if he succeeded, but this gives room for a lot of rumours about really big and dangerous monsters crawling through the sewers. Of course, this may just be some clever propaganda, as it is somewhat useful in reducing unauthorized traffic through the sewers.

## **Shortfield**

A large open area along the southernmost part of the harbour, this is where markets are held for people from the surrounding lands, and from trading ships arriving at the harbour, to sell their wares. Market is every three days, and temporary booths are erected on the area. It is also a staging ground for soldiers, especially when the “wet fleet” (as the Navy is somewhat derogatively called by the RAF) visits the city.

## **Stormhall**

Another poor people quarter, but in contrast to Low Harbour, where the inhabitants accept that they are scum – some even revel in it – in Stormhall are the guys who are still struggling, who try to lead an honest life, but are drawn bit by bit to the dark side of society. Which overall makes for a pretty depressive place. Clerics from charity missions are seen here often, offering free healing spells and running free soup kitchens.

## **Spna Road**

This quarter in the south of the outer city, and bordering the sea, holds many of the woodcrafters and smiths of the city. Most notably, the small but

productive shipyard of Retebius is located here, along with the necessary side businesses like sailmakers, carpenters, ropemakers and so on.

## **The Meadow**

This quarter outside the city walls contains a lot of the city’s food-related industry – butchers, bakers, etc. There is also a daily food market where fresh fruits, vegetables, meat and fish can be bought or sold wholesale or in single portions.

## **Riverside**

This small quarter outside the city walls right at the riverside holds villas from those lesser nobles who can’t quite afford living in Corthius Mire. Like their famous example inside the walls, the guys in Riverside employ their own private security guards, though these are slightly less arrogant and competent.

## **Outer Ward**

The Outer Ward is a low-to-middle-class quarter outside the walls. Along with some craftsmen, cheap taverns and multi-storied worker tenements, there are many small pensions here, renting out rooms on a monthly base. These are often rented by lower officer ranks from the RAF or by Knights of the Air who are on a budget but don’t want to sleep in the barracks. Very popular with adventurers as well.

## **Retebius Air Fleet Fields**

Most of this area is off the city map; there are dozens and dozens of stables and corrals, barracks, warehouses with food and equipment, guardhouses, three air control towers and the huge training fields of the RAF. Visitors and new-bees, as fresh recruits are called, regularly get lost in the vast array of buildings and areas. Every week, there are flight shows that always draw hundreds of spectators, from the city, the duchy, and of course from visiting tourists. It’s a great time for everyone, including the salesmen selling snacks for triple the normal price and the numerous pickpockets.

# Duchy of Retebius

## SOME IMPORTANT PEOPLE

### Duke Callastian Retebius <sup>[30]</sup>

Duke Callastian Retebius (born 969, T12, LG) is an experienced adventurer who just recently came to the ducal throne on the abdication of his mother Polibia. He posed as a common-born acrobat and made his living as an entertainer for many years of traveling and adventuring, meeting his future wife Mitasula on his journeys. He is a humorous man fond of storytellers and actors; in defiance of his ancient family tradition he is not in the Retebius Air Fleet, but in the Knights of the Air as a pegasus-rider. And he is one of the people that provide a good reputation to the followers of Thincol - something that the Emperor is well aware of, and makes very good use of. Callastian is a typical Thyatian with brown hair and beard, brown eyes, who likes to dress in theatrical black trousers and cloak and a flowing black silk tunic.



*The Duke* <sup>[31]</sup>

### Mitasula Nuar-Retebius <sup>[30]</sup>

His wife Mitasula Nuar-Retebius (born, 973, M11, LG), the daughter of a Nuari seaman-warrior of the Thyatian Navy, studied magic with a naval wizard and became an expert adventurer. She too is a pegasus-riding Knight of the Air. She likes to dress in knee-length, long-sleeved white silk tunics and white belt and boots.

### Desdemona Retebius

The lively four-year-old is the first (and so far only) child of Callastian and Mitasula, and therefore heir to the title.

### Polibia Retebius, The “Duke Mom”

The former Duchess Polibia (born 940, NW, NG) abdicated in 999 to make room for her son (and enjoy a bit of private life, including pampering the little Desdemona, after serving as ruler of the duchy for 30 years). But she still has a lot of useful contacts, favours to claim, and all the vast experience of her long term. In a way, she is still the “power behind the throne”, though she keeps it back most of the time. She is very popular with the common population.



*Polibia, the “Duke Mom”* <sup>[32]</sup>

[30] these descriptions are copied from: <http://www.pandius.com/thysntr2.html> - Credits to Giulio Caroletti!

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[32] source: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7f/Wiederkehr\\_noble\\_woman.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7f/Wiederkehr_noble_woman.jpg)

# Duchy of Retebius

## Patrizio Retebius (†) <sup>[33]</sup>

Younger brother of Polibia (born 943, died 991?), uncle of the current duke, was married to Senator Aemilia Scaurus, but the couple divorced in 985. Patrizio continued his adventuring career thereafter, and left Thyatis for an expedition to the Denagoth plateau in the far north in 990 – where he never arrived. Unbeknown to everybody, he ended his days as prisoner of some minor khan in Ethengar but had a similarly unbeknown daughter with a maidservant of the khan's wife.

**Leana Scaurus** (born 979), the daughter of Patrizio and Aemilia, and therefore cousin to Callastian, is an aide to her mother in the Senate.

## Senator Alexandros Retebius <sup>[33]</sup>

**Alexandros Retebius** (born 973, F7, TN, Gens Aemilia) is the younger brother of Callastian, and will keep the hereditary Senatorial seat of the Retebius family as long as Callastian does not have a son or daughter that turns 21. Alexandros is jealous of Callastian's fame, and feels he was not liked enough by his mother, who spent most of her time concentrating on his older brother. He pretends to be a loyal brother but is just desperate to do something on a grand scale to prove the better of the two. He wouldn't actually really harm his brother, but if he can't do something big himself to show off, he would gladly put his brother through some mild public embarrassment to teach him some humility.

## The Senators Of The Duchy <sup>[30]</sup>

**Libonia Aeris** (born 971, F10, LG) was part of the adventuring group of Mitasula and Callastian - after they had married, but before they got back to Retebius. She has the complete trust of the ducal couple. A fierce woman, tall and muscular, she's considered a bit of an aberration in the Senate and among many Thyatians. She has become friends with several of the other elected women of the Senate suffering the same snickering remarks from men - among them, Tanja Bendaoud, Flavia Metonenzes, Delphina Koteas, Samuela Kuir and Yara Mensah. She supports Gens Zendrolian mostly

because of Callastian, but has no special liking for the Emperor, whom she thinks belongs to the same chauvinistic bunch as most of the ethnically Thyatian Senators. Libonia has fallen hopelessly in love with the courteous elf Linfarillien Greenheight, ruler representative of the Count of Vyalia. She has bought a love potion from the Hag of Hillfork, a famous prophetess who hides in a cave near that city and is wondering how to make the elven Senator drink it.

The presence of the Air Fleet and the Knights of the Air has made Retebius a progressive conservative steadfast, with Gens Zendrolian reaping most of the electoral harvest for the last century.

**Scipio Caeculo** (born 960, F16, LG) is one of the two current Consules - it is his first term as such, and it is considered a great honor for the city and the Duchy of Retebius, who has voted him as Senator for four terms in a row - terms in which he held the posts of Quaestor, Praetor (twice) and lastly Consul. After becoming Consul he resigned from the command of the instructors in the Retebius Air Fleet - while his previous posts enabled him to keep both positions, being Consul required from him to spend too much time in the capital. Caeculo and Thyarius Palykratidius are rivals for a number of reasons, chief among them the eternal debate on what attitude a good teacher should have with his students - even more than the rivalry between Cavalry and Air Fleet.

The jovial **Sixtus Viribono** (born 948, NM, LG) managed to be re-elected after his stunning performance as Tribunus during his first term in the Senate. A merchant with a solid food transport business, former mayor of Hillfork and sometimes judge, he was elected only after the third Senator died during the election night, poisoned by a plate of bad mushrooms, and somehow found himself Tribunus and spent his time traveling in central Thyatis. Although he was not elected Tribunus again, much to his dismay, he intends to spend his time traveling through Retebius and listening to his countrymen, and not gathering dust in the Senate.

Surprisingly, **Mars Gabronica** (born 965, F9, TN), a Knight of the Air, got the third Senatorial position

[30] these descriptions are copied from: <http://www.pandius.com/thysntr2.html> - Credits to Giulio Caroletti!

[33] these descriptions are taken from: <http://www.pandius.com/thysntr3.html> - Credits to Giulio Caroletti!

# Duchy of Retebius

in Retebius. Mars is, like Alkybiades Nemeicus, one of the few Pure Ones who is not of Hattian origin. Mars doesn't share their racial prejudices but is concerned about the Thyatian way slowly losing ground as the main philosophy of the Empire. He blames Thincol for not having been able to root out the Empire's chronic corruption - and he implies that one of the reasons is that Thincol himself is corrupt in the first place. The election of Sixtus is considered a shame by Duke Callastian, and although few Retebians admit to having voted for him, many a citizen of the Duchy has been heard muttering "well, he's a bit excessive, but, he has nailed it, hasn't he?"

## Magist Liberius Centagonnidis

The venerable **Liberius Centagonnidis** (born 825, M36 <sup>[34]</sup>) has been Magist of the duchy for more than 20 years and is in the service of the ducal family since the time of Duke Callastian's great-grandfather. In recent years, however, he often talked about retiring (possibly to Sclaras). In this case, most probably his protégé Phillipia Caesaria will become the new Magist (even though, as Liberius likes to say, "that young gal hasn't even seen 100 winters!"). He is the archetypical magic-user, with a white long flowing beard, colourful robes, a pair of small glasses, an always slipped pointy hat and a perpetual absent-minded look on his face. Also, he could level half of the city with a wave of his hand (if he had prepared the right spells beforehand). Normally though, when he is not busy researching spells or waving his hands for the duke, he is completely satisfied with collecting rare butterflies, enjoying a glass of wine and reading an elvish novel from the third century.

## Faustus Ignatius Mertinax

An average looking man of average height with an average face that you forget one heartbeat after you have seen it. That's the duchy's Primus

Inquisitor, usually only known as "M", the boss of the secret service (T19, born 942). A brilliant organizer with an eidetic memory, he has more than 200 informants and agents scattered all over the empire. It is said that when Mertinax doesn't know about something, then it doesn't exist. He is known to sometimes hire adventurers for delicate missions (usually without them knowing for whom they work).

## The Lesser Nobility

As mentioned above, there is a group of minor nobles in Thyatis. You could call these "patricians", and they are usually addressed as "Sir" or "Dame", or "Milord"/"Milady" (in Hattias, the head of such a noble family clan is traditionally called "Freiherr"). Most positions in government and administration, as well as higher commissioned officers in the army, are held by such nobles. The most prestigious one of course is that of a Senator. One major difference between these patricians and feudal nobility is, that they are not compelled in any way to protect their land and their people. The clans' approach to this differs vastly from family to family - some organize and pay their own little "standing army" of guardsmen, others sponsor and employ mercenaries and adventurers on an on-demand basis, and others do nothing and simply shift all responsibility to their duke/the army/the emperor.

Such a minor noble family clan has usually 20-30 family members, and they own on average 5 latifunds (roll 2d4 if you like) and countless small manors. One latifund is usually designated as the clan's family seat. A lot of these families are mentioned as magistrates in the district descriptions. All in all, there are 31 of these aristocratic lesser families calling Retebius their home. Keep in mind though - some of the latifunds are owned by families from other parts of the empire, and vice-versa some of the local families have holdings outside of the duchy as well.

[34] after a recent discussion on the Piazza forum about the number of high-level mages in Sclaras and Alphantia, I thought I would place one of those M36ers here.

### THE FINAL FOOTNOTE

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This Fandom-Gazetteer was written by Sven Jeske aka Philosopher\_X. Berlin, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021

**Thank you for reading.**