

Specularum Locales

The **Merchants' Guildhall** is a broad, stout palace in the Stronghold district of Specularum. A statue of Zirchev, patron of the Guild, is located in the courtyard. Armed guards (mercenaries not associated with the Veiled Society) bar the access to the Guildhall.

Moneychangers' Guildhall is a square building in rusticated stone with large, arched windows, built to show the power and wealth of the guild.

Goldsmiths' Guildhall, a dwarven-designed palace, is found in the Hill Market district, right out of the walls of Duke Stefan's castle. It is rumoured that underground dungeons hold secret vaults where the gold reserves of the guild are stored.

City Jail

The jail is a massive, squat sandstone building of the Thyatian period, though built mostly by dwarven masons on a dwarven engineer's plan. The designer, one Bohrur Stonecleaver of Highforge, tried to mix a classical Thyatian architectural style with the typical dwarven construction, resulting in a low, rectangular building topped by an incongruous pediment. Hexagonal turrets flank the front of the building, providing a degree of defence to the entrance gate -- the only weak spot in the otherwise massive outer wall. A small courtyard opens beyond the entrance gate, and gives access to the guard rooms, the kitchens, and the offices. The cells are located on the first story.

The dwarves had been commissioned this work by Duke Stefan, when it became clear that the Hightower could not serve as the only prison in the town.

Since the Foreign Quarter was experiencing a significant increase in petty crimes -- brawls, pickpocketing, and muggings -- but wasn't as out of control as the Nest, the Karameikan government chose to locate it at there.

Nowadays, the Hightower is only used for temporary detention and for imprisoned nobles or political prisoners that should not come in contact with other inmates.

Escaping the City Jail is not impossible, but is very difficult, since the dwarven construction gave the wall extra thickness. It is rumoured that the dwarves built a secret exit passage, to prevent the humans from using it to imprison their own -- however, only Bohrur is likely to know the truth on the matter, and the old dwarf doesn't leave Highforge anymore.

Foreigners' Graveyard

This plot of open ground has been used as graveyard for more than a century. Its use dates back to the time before the Thyatian invasion, when a Minrothad merchantman was destroyed by a fire. The bodies of thirteen sailors were recovered, but could not be buried at sea, for the season was late and no more Minrothaddan ships were expected. Thus, the dead sailors were interred in a common grave just out of the city walls.

Since that time, foreigners who die in Specularum and are not cremated (in that case the urns can be sent back to their homeland) are laid to rest in this area, which is now dotted with small tombstones.

A few crypts were also built to hold the most notable residents of the Foreign Quarter, including the senior agents of House Hallonica and the Augrist priests (none of them has yet died on Karamaikan grounds, but the dwarves like to be prepared).

Rumours of undead haunting abound, but the most immediate threat in the area comes for much more mundane villains: Minrothaddan and Hin gangs both claim the graveyard as part of their territory, and brawls and small scale battles often take place during the night.

"The Breakwater", the Ierendian gang that controls the easternmost blocks of FQ. They are led by the ex-pirate Zila, who was landlocked after she broke her leg in a battle and was "voted out" from her captain's seat. Zila is no beauty, with a lot of scars, but she is quick as a cat and deadly. She has organised a protection racket in the area and wants to take over areas from other ethnic gangs. She has five experienced fighters from her pirating days and twelve lesser thugs.

HQ: an old warehouse with a good tactical location, inside fashioned ship-like

"The Swords of Kalim", the more aggressive one of the Ylari gangs, controls the southern and the eastern blocks of the Ylari area. These areas have a more prominent nomad population, with a lot of tents, tent pavilions and other such semi-temporary structures. The Swords are led by Ahmad Al-Azred, a fanatic follower of the Kin faction. He despises city-dwelling Ylari. (Ahmad figures also in the Specularum series adventure "Omens and Portents".) The gang extracts revenue from the locals, but due to the ascetic lifestyle of Ahmad's followers, they do not need much. Their main motivation is not economic but cultural: they want to keep the area free of infidels and hazar. Ahmad has 24 nomad warriors in his "court" and is a hard man to reach. He has dark, deep-set eyes and a cruel

voice. He likes to keep long uncomfortable silences to reveal the true nature of the people he is dealing with.

HQ: Bivouac erected in a ruined area.

"Myrrh of the Night" is a rich but relatively small prostitution racket led by Narim Muskalin, an Ylari aesthete and bohemian. He is a true hazard: a city-dweller who has been cut from his Alasiyan roots, at least as far as the nomads are concerned. Narim employs a motley crew of prostitutes of various races, sexes and persuasions, who are protected by a dozen Ylari goons. Forays by the Swords of Kalim to purge the hazard areas of the Ylari district tax his strength and wallet, and he has thus forged an alliance with the dwarves, long-time cultural friends. He has also developed a nasty addiction for the dwarven mushroom moonshine, resulting in the occasional fit of berserk rage.

HQ: Brothel "Myrrh of the Night"

The **dwarven gang** has no name, as they do not need one. They are led by the seasoned veteran Kartak, one of the most ill-tempered men in the whole Specularum. His voice has been scarred by decades of a nasty habit he picked in Ylaruam: he drinks dwarven moonshine by mixing it with some hot cooking oil simmered in hot chili peppers. Kartak and his friends thrive by selling hallucinatory mushroom moonshine and protect the local dwarves at no cost. Currently they are also protecting Narim's gang, as Kartak likes city-dwelling Ylari. He hates Ahmad Al-Azred, as he considers him a hypocritical, utterly boring religious fanatic who would not know a good party even if he was tied to a chair and forced to have a good time. But there is no harm in trying...

Specularum NPCs and Places by Ville Lähde

I am using a system of narrative points that each player can use to create NPCs and places into the city. Each player has one point per one adventure, so locales and people are cropping up. I'll send updates when I can, take up whatever you want. I won't be able to give details to many of them, as they are supposed to gain flesh through the creativity of the players.

But already we grew fond of the pawnbroker Jerzy, a refugee from Halag, who has a semi-legal pawnshop in the Foreign Quarter. One can buy weapons and armour from him, no questions asked, although the selection is limited. Jerzy has sympathies for other refugees and the Traladaran resistance, and might give them discount, but he will never give anything free. Every transaction has to get him something.

One of the PCs is a prostitute, and her player created a sort of a safehouse for all working girls and boys in the Nest and Old Quarter area. They call it "the Salon", but many other people call it "the Fishbarrel". Another locale that was created impromptu in the Nest was a freehouse, a sanctuary for people who want to stay hidden and answer no questions. The management of the house has loose deals with the local gangs, Veiled Society and Kingdom of thieves, as everyone needs such a place. But they are not incorruptible, so if someone pays enough, they can turn a blind eye, especially if the person in hiding has no good contacts.

In South End we have created a local Veiled Society ringleader (or starosta, as in Giampaolo's article) Stavros, a Traladaran man who works from a local Traladaran restaurant "Borsch". Even though he is an elder member, he often takes part in street action. Starosta is a stern man who will kill anyone who offends the Society, but sometimes he may change the sentence into a service, if there are mitigating circumstances. In some cases he has even been known to give some rewards for people who perform well in such missions where the wage was supposed to be sparing their life. Stavros has an uneasy truce with the district guard captain Porius. Porius is a political animal who cares most of all for appearances and the facade of order. If need be, he will arrest an innocent man if he cannot find the real culprit, but he would do this to safeguard his own position, rarely for a price. Porius is also well known by the local prostitutes as a good customer who does not care about some scars, and never causes them himself.

The Inns and Taverns of Specularum

by Sean Meaney

The Rattlebone Inn sits on Rattlebone Lane in a poorer part of Specularum. It has a small selection of Ales and Meals and Many honest and not so honest people frequent it on a regular basis although it is not as notorious as the Blue Water Mead Hall down toward the Harbour. It has a small kitchen and caters to perhaps forty people at most each evening. Of some note is the Waste pit that dumps straight down into a network of Tunnels that are being secretly dug by criminals of all persuasions beneath this part of the City (see B9: In search of Adventure).

The Blue Water Mead Hall caters to the many folk working in the Harbour as dock hands, rope makers, sailwrights, and boat builders. Although it caters to a rough working-class crowd, it is a front for the underground complexes of the Veiled Society, A major Criminal Network active in the City (see B6 Veiled society or B9 In Search of Adventure).

The Bawd and Minister

Besides being a famous inn this building is also a 'house of ill repute'. Well, the ill part depends on your point of view. It is located in the part of the Old Quarter that borders the Merchant District in Specularum. It takes its name from a scandal from many years ago when one of Duke Stefan's first ministers was revealed as a regular client of the harlots working there. The local barkeep, Ising Perpalp, is the husband of the madam of the brothel, a woman named Estella.

The Rogues' Den

At the docks in Specularum lies a large old vessel called "The Wind Chaser". She used to be a proud ship that roamed the seas between Sind and the Isle of Dawn with the most vicious crew ever to sail the Sea of Dread. Their captain was the Pirate Lord Balthros Bloodeyes and the mere mentioning of his name would scare children to crawl up to their mothers and cry!

For years the Wind Chaser eluded naval patrols of all nations around the Sea of Dread - not because she was fast, but because of her captain's devilish luck! It was whispered in taverns and the living quarters of junior naval officers that Captain Balthros was in league with a horrible monster - a creature as large as a sea dragon and capable of putting out banks of fog and mists to cloak old Bloodeyes and let him escape. Few were the captains that dared follow The Wind Chaser into such a mysterious mist.

Eventually, Bloodeyes got old and sick. Pirate tales claim that he grew paranoid and secretly buried all of his treasure on a small remote island. When he died, supposedly of poison in his food by the hand of his own ambitious lieutenant, the crew fell into bickering and arguing about how to get the treasure back. They turned on one another and many men were killed before a new captain was elected. He wasn't any good however, and a few months later the Wind Chaser was finally ambushed by several ships from the Irendi navy in a small cove. The crew was captured and hung in the nearest port and after a thorough search of the ship's hull, the Wind Chaser was auctioned off to a wealthy merchant in Specularum. This was in the year AC 989.

The merchant wanted to start trading with foreign lands without having to pay Minrothad merchants as go-betweens but he soon fell into economic difficulties and had to abandon his ideas. The Wind Chaser fell into disrepair, her hull started to rot and leak, and nobody wanted to buy her at the price the greedy merchant demanded.

Eventually, in AC 996, he did sell her - to a young elven lady named Silvariel Stormstrider from Minrothad Guilds. She put a crew of able-bodied men to restore the hull to water-tight conditions and pump the hulls so she would stay afloat. Then Silvariel arranged for a long-

term lease at the docks and a permission to run a food-and-drink-serving establishment and opened the Rogues' Den Inn aboard the proud, old ship.

The main room for dining, drinking and gambling is below deck where the crew and cargo used to be. At the front of the ship where sails, rope and supplies used to be stored there now is a food store for the kitchen right next to it. Silvariel and a few of her employees have their living quarters above deck in the old cabins that used to belong to Balthros Bloodeyes and his lieutenants.

The inn itself serves decent food and drink at reasonable prices but nothing exceptional. A lot of customers come here for the special atmosphere and because it is somewhat of a tourist attraction. Retired naval personnel come aboard to take in with their own eyes the ship that so often eluded them in the past. Children climb the lower parts of the rigging, pretending to be pirates or naval heroes and sailors from all over the world enjoy the slightly rolling feeling of a ship's deck beneath their feet - even while they are in port.

On the surface there is nothing suspicious about the conversion of the Wind Chaser into the Rogues' Den Inn. But secretly, a lot of things are going on. First of all, an unknown number of pirates frequent the inn, hoping to learn something about Bloodeyes' treasure. Old die-hard tales insist that Balthros hid his treasure map somewhere onboard the ship in a secret compartment and these men are trying their best to search the vessel without acting suspiciously.

Also onboard, working as bouncer and kitchen-help, is a man named Stavros. He is a secret agent working for the government of the Minrothad Guilds. His job is to spy on Silvariel because they suspect that she (being a long-lived elf) might have been part of Bloodeyes' crew in the past and therefore has some knowledge of where to look for it or for the map.

Furthermore, some of the people living along the waterfront claim to have seen the ghost of Balthros walking around on the deck or sitting in the rigging on dark, moonless nights. They say that the ghost of the pirate lord has come back to get his revenge on the crew that poisoned him and is more than likely to take out his anger on anyone he finds aboard the ship!

Whether any of this is true is for the DM to know - and your PC's to find out!!

The Grand Market – This is the largest open marketplace in Specularum. It's thickly infested with stands and rolling carts selling goods during the day; all such stands must be disassembled and removed by full dark and may be set up again at dawn.
[GAZ1/K:KoA]

Ambassadors' Quarter – Duke Stefan eventually acquired about 3 blocks of this area and set its estates over to the dwellings of official ambassadors to Karamaikos. Guard

Patrols are common, and the ambassadors have their own retainers for additional protection. [GAZ1/K:KoA]

Hill Market – This small marketplace serves The Hil; in addition to ordinary foods and services, you can find many businesses selling delicacies, expensive imports, and the like. Not surprisingly it is the most upscale of the markets in Specularum. [GAZ1/K:KoA]

North Market – This is an open marketplace serving the north end of town; it has characteristics similar to that of the *Lesser Merchant District* (exotic foods and crafts; wide range of goods). [GAZ1/K:KoA].

The Scriveners' Guildhall neighbourhood

The Scriveners' Guildhall

Located at the end of Bricktop road, near the Great Market, the Guildhall is a four-story building, with a protruding turret on its corner. The ground floor is occupied by two halls -- the entrance, and the meeting hall. The meeting hall opens on a small courtyard, while the entrance hall opens on Bricktop road, and gives access to both the meeting hall, and the upper floors.

The first floor is divided in many small rooms, used by the Consuls and the Guildmaster as offices and council rooms. The second and third floor are occupied by the the famed library of the Scriveners' Guild. The library collects tomes on law (mostly on the second floor), with smaller sections on economics and political topics (third floor).

Notable tomes include *The Administration of Empire*, written by Thyatian Emperor Alexandros II Dalessenos, the *Oratory* by Paphocuzitum, and the *Rhetoric* by Strozner. A copy of the classical text on Traladara by Governor-General Elena Hassenberg (the third Thyatian governor of Traladara after Flavian Osteropulos) can also be found in the library. Texts on the history of Thyatis, Traladara and Darokin (including the Lynnell edition of the *Lay of Almarand*) are collected on the third floor as well.

A "secret" section is located in the third level of the turret (accessed through stairs from the upper level of the library). It is a single bookcase covering half of the curved wall of the turret, and it is protected by a trapped lock. Only the Guildmaster and Consul Igor Wolf (who is in charge of the maintenance of the library) have access to this area.

The secret library contains a number of secret documents related to Guild politics, as well as a few restricted access books (access to the library is otherwise allowed even to non-members), such as the works of Fabritius Luscinia, and a couple of tomes on alchemy and magic, collected by previous Guildmasters, including the magnum opus of one of Karameikos' wizardly luminaries, Krollan's *Artifecta Arcanum*.

The Golden Book

Right next to the Scriveners' Guildhall is a small inn and restaurant, The Golden Book.

The restaurant's walls are lined with dark woods and leathers, making it appear even smaller. It features a dozen small tables on ground floor, plus two smaller dining rooms at first floor, while the second floor has four single rooms, often rented by visiting scholars, and the last floor houses the innkeeper's family.

The Golden Book is an upscale establishment, where somber waiters in dark uniforms serve mostly Thyatian and New Karameikan cuisine with imported wines (the innkeeper, Lucius Falernianus, is a connoisseur reputed to have one of the best collections in Specularum) and some local light beers and ciders.

Lord Bartram Cordelius, the Minister of Trade, and doctor Antonius Marcianus, a prominent judge and a Consul of the Scriveners' Guild, can be often found here at lunchtime or in the evening.

The Priest and Jug

Just opposite of The Golden Book lies this much rougher establishment. ``Decorated'' mostly by humorous (and often vulgar) graffiti, the Priest and Jug is the haven of the New Karameikan students. The walls are periodically tinted white by the owner, Pyotr Caesarion, but are immediately covered with new writings.

Caesarion, a drop-out student of Law who managed to put his hand on a good amount of gold in his first (and last, as he swears) attempt at adventuring and invested it in the establishment, serves simple but nutritious dishes of meat and vegetables, together with good beer. He is helped by a single serving girl, Marina, and the cook, Vika, an aged Traladaran woman.

The generally friendly atmosphere sometimes (especially late at night, when everyone has had too many drinks) degenerates when students of ``pure'' Traladaran or Thyatian descent come in to stir trouble.

During the day, besides the students, Caesarion's maternal grandfather hangs out at the Priest and Jug with a small clique of retired Traladaran scriveners. The aged gentlemen spend every afternoon playing cards and critiquing every item of news they can get.

Specularum by Rendclaw

(Capital City of the Grand Duchy of Karameikos)

Notable Churches: There are shrines to every deity in the Temple District, just south of Mirror Bay. Several churches have made petitions to construct churches on their grounds, but only several exist as of now. These are:

The Trading House, temple to Asterius; Master Trader Jennack Arrith (NE hm P13); 12 priests, 28 followers.

House of the Tossed Coin, temple to Beliaar; Most Fortunate High Priest Camille Ilsarne (N hf P14); 9 priests, 28 followers.

House of the Flowing Notes, musical/bardic college and temple to Cyrillia; Virtuoso Arnam "Quickfingers" Veline (NG hm P14); 15 priests, 33 followers.

Home of the Azure Sky, temple to Frigga; High Priestess Yanaith Thranior (LN hf P14); 6 priests, 15 followers.

The Hall of Eternal Vigilance, temple to Heimdall; Most Watchful High Priest Gallar Hincas (LN hm p16); 6 priests, 15 followers.

House of the Arrow, temple to Petra; High Marksman Windon Unlarin (LG hm P14); 7 priests, 36 followers.

Protius' Domain, temple to Poseidon; High Priest Vasily Tenov (LE hm P15); 9 priests, 18 followers. Note: Traladarans refer to Poseidon as Protius, while those of Thyatian descent use the original nomenclature (just another of the differences between the two cultures).

The Open Spellbook, temple to Talimyra; High Magistress Carinne Saedryil (NG hf P17); 12 priests, 33 followers.

Notable Rogues' and Thieves Guilds: The Kingdom of the Thieves and The Veiled Society are headquartered here, along with numerous cells from the Iron Ring. Various freelance rogues operate within city limits, as well as gangs of toughs that roam most of the poorer sections of the city.

Adventurers' Quarters:

The Black-Heart Lily; This is the most famous tavern and inn in the city. Luthier Sforza (NG hm F5, Str 17, Con 18) welcomes adventurers and clients from every walk of life to eat, drink and sleep here, and is an invaluable source of gossip and rumour. He keeps his prices of fair, and the sleeping rooms can suit the needs of a wide variety of clientele. (excellent/moderate)

The Gorgeous Giant; This small inn and tavern is run by Morrus Vasiyev (N hm F6), a retired adventurer who named his inn after an encounter with a beautiful cloud giantess and her jealous husband. His inn is fairly new, but is doing well. (good/moderate).

The Besieged Dungeon; This tavern looks exactly like its name suggests; torches on sconces give a low, flickering light, long corridors and passages, and several drinking rooms set up like lairs of orcs, goblins, and hobgoblins complete with masked servers playing the role. Needless to say this place is extremely popular with adventurers and those who want a taste of the adventuring life (good/moderate).

Sharton Ses-Tril (CG hm F6/T7) Swordsman, adventurer and freelance thief, Sharton is fairly popular in Specularum. He is currently searching for his wife Daniella (CG hef R7), though he suspects that she has been captured by the Iron Ring.

Important Features in Town: Specularum is the capital city of the Grand Duchy of Karameikos, named by Duke Stefan Karameikos III when he traded away his ancestral lands in Thyatis for lands in the Traladaran region, and a guarantee of autonomy. So, in AC 970, he arrived and renamed the city of Marilenev to Specularum.

Specularum is like almost any other large city; crowded, smelly and dirty, with mostly earthen streets, quite narrow, twisting, unlit and often unsafe. Sanitation is usually a small trench cut in the middle of street. Buildings are usually made of brick or wood, with few being made of fired brick or stone.

The people here, of Traladaran and Thyatian descent alike, are proud of the community that has been made here. The two peoples still view each other with some distrust and suspicion; most likely due to the constant jockeying for political position by both the Thyatian and Traladaran nobility, but they are slowly learning to get along.

Renn's School of the Blade: Located in the Bricktop section, this establishment has gained a reputation from the Northern Reaches to the Five Shires as the premier place for weapons and combat training. The fees are quite high, but those warriors that have trained there swear by the techniques that they have learned, stating many a time that what they learned has saved their lives.

Grand Master Renn (N hm F20), his wife High Mistress Alicia (NG hf F13) and their retinue of teachers (5 7th level fighters) and masters (3 10th level warriors) charge a very high price for their training, but it is worth it. Characters that train there complete their training in half the time it usually takes. Add to this a small yet complete hospital next to the complex (temple to Mirrah; High Priestess Lady Tia (NG hf P12), 3 7th level priests and 30 doctors and nurses) and weapons smithy (Mastersmith Ral (N dm F10); Mastersmith Sharran (NG em F8/M9); Mastersmith William (LG hm P9 of Halav); 12 lesser smiths and 24 apprentices). Renn's School of the Blade is a complete training facility for the warrior who wants (and can afford) the best training his money can buy.

The Grand Market: This is a very large, open marketplace. It is packed with stands and carts selling all kinds of goods throughout the day. At dusk, all vendors must be packed up and removed, but they can be set up at dawn tomorrow. If one needs to purchase something after the businesses here are closed up, they are referred to the all-day, all-night bustle of the Merchant District.

The Temple District: Located across from the Nest and the Old Quarter, the temples and shrines to all respective faiths in Specularum are in this walled community. All faiths have taken a pact not to directly interfere with the other faiths, though a few do seem to find ways of making things difficult for their rival faiths.

Local Lore:

The ruins of the ancient city of Krakatos, several miles northeast of Specularum, are almost always infested with evil humanoids of all types. The ruins themselves hide a darker evil, as the Black Eagle himself is responsible for the constant "restocking" of the ruins. Adventurers do a lot to keep the population of the ruins from becoming a problem (and many an adventurer has gotten his or her start there), but Lord Alexius Korrigan is starting to wonder just where all these monsters and humanoids are coming from. Master Terari has recently suggested remaking the ruins into a College of Wizardry, once they have been cleaned out permanently, of course.

Admiral Hyraksos is looking for stalwart warriors to command a ship to sail into the Gulf of Halag and prey upon Black Eagle pirates, which have been raiding Karameikan merchant vessels.

Lord Alexius Korrigan is looking for adventurers to map unexplored wilderness for the ducal cartographer.

Sharton has found proof that his wife has been kidnapped by the Iron Ring, and needs a bit of help in rescuing her. He will be encountered by the party beset upon by Iron Ring agents, and any help the party gives will lead him to request their help in getting her back (Module A1-4, Scourge of the Slavelords).