

## Stromphe City

Stromphe is the leading city in the Irisian City States Confederation, housing some 60,000 souls, admittedly in rather cramped conditions for most. It is divided into 5 main sections; the central high Acropolis, surrounded by its own wall; the Second Circle, also surrounded by its own wall; and the Third Circle, with the city wall surrounding it. On the west bank of the Zatrakos River is a burgeoning unwalled town, and outside the city walls to the north and east is the cemetery and other less salubrious areas.

From the central heights of the Acropolis springs the Stromphe Stream, supplying clean water to part of the city, but most is supplied by an aqueduct bringing water from the hills to the north-east and stored in the Escarpment district.

Stromphe is led by the Speaker, Ionnes Demosthino, the leading member of the Assembly comprised of 2 members from each district of the City, and the heads of each merchant Guild and 5 representatives of the old nobility which this 'republic' overthrew 36 years ago in a bloodless coup.

Its culture is of ancient Athens, with more liberal views towards women (but not citizens – you must have both your parents being citizens), and with a rather Renaissance mercantile attitude – think Medici Florence.

The Districts are as follows:

### **The Acropolis**

This district occupies the First Circle, and enjoys magnificent (and strategic) views of Kostas Bay and the plains to the east, west and north. The day-to-day business of governing Stromphe is carried out from the Acropolis, and it is also the destination of the annual Stromphaic procession from the sacred Caves of Persephone just west of the city, via the Pandocles Bridge and around to the south and into the Acropolis itself. Quite a few public bureaucrats actually live here with their families, especially the Chancellor of the Exchequer; the Mint and Treasury is also housed here. Here also is the High Court, and the Assembly building to house the representatives of all the Irisian City States for their annual convocation, and the Assembly of the City itself each month.

### **Second Circle**

#### ***The Heights:***

Here are found the Embassies of various nations – Leondar Imperium, Maluk Almayta cities in Kamurikandum, Helmonte and Western Dungoth in Dorient. Smaller delegations from other nations of course are present, but some situated elsewhere in the city.

#### ***Bank Court:***

Here are the major banks, trading company headquarters, a few guildhouses and the Criminal Court. Residences here are of the wealthy upper middle class.

### ***The Playground:***

This is the ‘high-brow’ entertainment area, mainly for the well-off and famous. Here is a large Bath complex, a gaming establishment, a more intimate theatre for risqué plays and musical shows, ‘gentleman’ clubs, and a gymnasium. In addition, there are some four and five star restaurants and dance halls here. This is the place for a classy night out – if one can afford it!

### ***Scholar Quarter:***

There are actually two distinct scholarly communities here, not always on good terms with each other. The bigger is the Academia, a university of some renown in north-east Nibirum for the high standard of learning and the impressive Library – the best in Artemisia. The other is the magical community, but again it is of high standard, though not the best in Artemisia. It also has impressive library and stocks for potions and spells, and does research on various magical artefacts. Occasionally, a magical blast emanates from one of the building’s laboratories, even to the extent of requiring medical attention of innocent bystanders. Not behaviour that endears the magical community to its neighbour!

And this is THE place to find that good book!

In the southern part of the quarter is the great Strophe Infirmary, where those able to afford it – or the very poor for whom it is free – medical and risky surgical and dental procedures are carried out. The major controversy at present is whether washing hands before operating or delivering babies is better than washing after – most favour the latter.

### ***The Keep:***

Here is the major garrison for the City-State, and a major training centre. All male civilians are expected to train on a part time basis for five years, an excellent deterrent against aggression from neighbouring city-states (and the Imperium to the north) since virtually the whole populace is a trained soldier at times of war. There is also a small magical division here devoted to military uses of the Art, including flying on reconnaissance missions.

## **Third Circle**

### ***Northgate:***

Here are the craftsman and lesser merchants, with a banks and few guildhouses and Temple to Apollo. Much trading is done here in the square, filled with stalls and street hawkers.

### ***Herapol:***

Mainly the home of the middle classes, with a few parks, restaurants and taverns, gaming places and generally a nice place to live.

### ***The Escarpment:***

The Hippodrome dominates here, along with a newly dedicated Temple to Ares. The district is filled with stables, horse-trainers and sellers, wagoneers and chariot makers.

Many average taverns and guesthouses and inns dot the district.

***Eastgate:***

Here are poorer merchants casing in on the trade from the Eastern road, and it is fairly easy to pick up women and drugs – for a fee. Here the great aqueduct ends, storing its waters in three huge tanks which act as the city’s immediate reservoir.

***Parklands:***

For those who love the outdoors, this river bank parkland, the gift of a former Speaker to the city, provides a respite from the hustle and bustle of the city. Clusters of trees, landscaped flowerbeds, and lawns of trimmed grass dominate the landscape. The air smells fresher here than it does elsewhere in the city. A public Bath is also present.

***Riverside:***

Here the smiths and weaponmakers congregate, keeping their furnaces together. Potters and glaziers also are found here, the taverns are sleazy and streetwalkers abound. A lovely name for a working man’s district.

***Drydocks:***

The great ships of the Irisian Navy are made here, as well as in other places in the city States. Merchant vessels are also constructed here as well, and the whole shipbuilding enterprise is very profitable. Because a number of shipbuilders like to live near their work, there is a jumble of very well appointed houses mixed with working class quarters.

***The Pit:***

Apartment Homes This is the slum area, and several thieves’ organizations and minor drug dealer lords make their home here. Protection rackets are rife, housing is substandard, though most apartment blocks rise 4-5 stories high. Homelessness is common. The Greenfields block of apartment buildings, each identical 4 story brick buildings, are the best in the area, albeit offering rather cramped living space. They were erected at public expense by a former Speaker in order to ‘do something’ to help the poor – needless to say, he lost his Speakership at the next election, but the work on those begun was completed, with the aid of a few wealthy philanthropic individuals. Otherwise, this unremarkable district is an excellent hiding place for those who are skilled at blending in.

***Captain’s Docks:***

This is the naval base for the City-State of Stromphe, and also has one drydock to allow for repairs. It has a very military flavour, and the taverns are of low to average quality only. Many sailors as well as workers have lodgings here.

***Helena:***

A lower middle class residential area, with so-so taverns and inns, restaurants and dance halls, and small local markets.

***Agora:***

This is the commercial centre of Stromphe – street stalls, hawkers, colonnaded shops, a temple to Hephaestos, and a large public baths, the gossip centre of the city. Surrounding it are many guildhalls, and some not-so-friendly competition arises from time to time. Each of the massive guildhalls in this district is emblazoned with a symbol representative of its craft. The local constabulary have a keen lookout for trouble – the Assembly will tolerate no disturbance to business in this district.

To the west of the Agora itself, is the shame of Stromphe, the large Slavemarket, where captives from all over Stromphe, west Doriant and northern Kamurikandam are bought and sold to parties from all over the region.

### ***Dockside:***

The main trading area, where wares from all over the world are landed, stored in the giant warehouses, and loaded onto and off the myriad ships that embark here. Here is the temple of Poseidon, the Customs House and Harbour Master's offices (and residence), a few banks and loan sharks, seaman's lodging, rowdy taverns, busy but substandard inns, gaming halls and brothels for the sailors and stevedores. The population is dense, but itinerant.

### ***Golden Mews:***

The financial hub of Stromphe – banks, loan sharks, lawyers, accounting houses, merchant cartels and fairly opulent residences

### ***Lookout Hill:***

Another military installation, with experimentation in aerial combat, courtesy of the Magic Colleges of the Irisian City States. It has far-reaching vies of the whole harbour, and up the Zatrakos River

### ***Upper Tables:***

Another district for the well-off middle class, and the sector where most of the jewellers and goldsmiths operate. It also houses the great Stromphe Amphitheatre, site of theatrical extravaganzas, exciting ball games and athletic contests, and grisly fights to the death for condemned prisoners – crime does pay – the government, not the criminals.

### ***Waterside:*** (strictly speaking outside the city walls, but counted as second circle)

Here the old nobility live in slowly decaying mansions set on the waterfront on an island district, with gondoliers plying their trade. The most southerly island houses the magnificent multi-storey villa of the Speaker, Ionnes Demosthino, with a private staircase up the cliffs of Lookout Hill.

### **Western Bank**

This area has grown like topsy, with no planning and fewer rules. Housing, except in Concordia, is of dubious integrity, and fires are common.

### ***Wharf:***

A smaller rough-and-tumble version of Dockside, with more opportunity for

larcenous skulduggery. It mainly services river trade passing under the high arches of the magnificent multi-storied Pandocles Bridge. Bars, flophouses, and small shops—many of which don't bother to advertise the nature of their business—line the street.

***Westside:***

The notorious red-light district, it caters to all types of jaded tastes, with garish brothels, strip shows, drug dens, gambling clubs, dog and bear fights, ferocious boxing and wrestling matches, as well as a thriving black market for almost anything. Pawnshops are the commonest financial business here.

***Concordia:***

These residences belong to successful merchants and high-level bureaucrats in political or religious organizations. Servants or guards are posted at many of the front doors.

***Cockles Maze:***

A typical shantytown, owing much to its fishing community environs. Many of the structures in this district seem to be in imminent danger of collapsing on their residents. The poorest of the poor live here in decrepit buildings, refugee colonies, and squatter camps. Lean-tos, smoky fires, and makeshift hovels crowd in among the debris and rubble of the dirty, destitute streets.

**Outside Walls**

***Wallsend:***

This is one of two caravan districts, where major livestock in particular is bought and sold, and other trades of a mediocre quality takes place. It serves mainly trade from the north, even the leondar Imperium. Pickpockets abound. Animal pens, stables, and circles of trade wagons squat on many vacant lots. The air on occasion is thick with campfire smoke, and a dozen different languages can be heard. Even Grim can be found, and tolerated, here trading for their communities elsewhere.

***Newtown:***

Another new housing district, with reasonably constructed dwellings and major brick-making and lumber businesses. It is still mainly lower class in population

***Eastend:***

The second caravan district, much like Wallsend, but serving traffic from the east.

Districts such as this one are common in cities that rely on overland caravans rather than sea transport for their imports and exports. Merchants and other foreigners are welcomed here but usually discouraged from spending time in the rest of the city.

***Earth Turns:***

Most malodorous business are sited here and in Downwind; leatherworks, perfumeries, charcoal burners, and similar industries. Definitely a lower class, cheap (and nasty) housing district.

***Downwind:***

The main tannery area. The acrid smell of tanning hides would reveal the nature of this district even to a blindfolded person. A cluster of small, dingy shops caters to the unfortunate denizens of this nauseating district.

#### Slum

This district is clearly for the down-and-out. A slum falls somewhere between poor apartments and a shantytown on the scale of poverty and misery.

**Buildings:** Temple (Olidammara or Pelor), poor lodging (1), poor food (3), poor trades (10), poor services (5), poor residences (70).

#### **First Impression:**

**Social Class:** Lower class.

#### *The Flats:*

Another Strophe triumph in poor services to the destitute. Home to the destitute, this neighbourhood features a mix of shanties, hovels, and tenements in disrepair. Trash fills the streets and alleys, and the stench of offal mixed with rotting flesh and even less wholesome substances hangs heavy in the air.

In Kostas Bay are islands of interest, though with no voting rights in the Assembly. These are:

**The Prison:** The only permanent prison for condemned criminals – and the conditions are fairly appalling, the warders corrupt, and where the strong viciously lords it over the weak.

**The Asylum:** As the name implies, this is where the incurably insane are incarcerated. Sexual and physical abuse of inmates by the staff is rife.

**Quarantine:** Where all ships and people suspected of harbouring contagious diseases (plague, yellow fever) are kept isolated from the city for at least three months. Treatment here is quite satisfactory; after all many of these are high-born and potential trading partners. This is one policy that the city strictly enforces, and corruption, surprisingly, is almost absent, and when discovered, results in severe punishments.

**The Leprosarium:** Here the unfortunate lepers are housed, and have to look after themselves. Priests of Asclepios and Hestia care for them as part of their duties, but this is unexpectedly a strong coherent community of otherwise shunned souls.

**Mauseleum:** The site of the old mauseleums of the nobility and past Speakers. A small community of Hades acolytes live here, caring for the tombs.

**Naval Keep:** A small garrison mans this harbour outpost, serving as a naval defence against naval invasion. Trebuchets, ballista and mages with Fireballs at the ready are housed here.

Each District will have its own map, and from there individual structures will be detailed.