

5E

GUIDE OF MELETIS

GUIDE FOR THEROS



D&D 5E HOMEBREW



WRITTEN BY DAVID LOPEZ

EDITED BY: DAVID LOPEZ

LAYOUT BY: DAVID LOPEZ

COVER DESIGN BY: DAVID LOPEZ

TEMPLATE: DAVID LOPPEZ

COVER ART BY: DAVID LOPEZ

INTERIOR ART BY: DAVID LOPEZ

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, WIZARDS OF THE COAST, FORGOTTEN REALMS, RAVENLOFT, EBERRON, THE DRAGON AMPERSAND, AND ALL OTHER WIZARDS OF THE COAST PRODUCT NAMES, AND THEIR RESPECTIVE LOGOS ARE TRADEMARKS OF WIZARDS OF THE COAST IN THE USA AND OTHER COUNTRIES. THIS WORK CONTAINS MATERIAL THAT IS COPYRIGHT WIZARDS OF THE COAST AND/OR OTHER AUTHORS. SUCH MATERIAL IS USED WITH PERMISSION UNDER THE COMMUNITY CONTENT AGREEMENT FOR DUNGEON MASTERS GUILD. ALL OTHER ORIGINAL MATERIAL IN THIS WORK IS COPYRIGHT 2020 DAVID LOPEZ AND PUBLISHED UNDER THE COMMUNITY CONTENT AGREEMENT FOR DUNGEON MASTERS GUILD.



THE CITY OF MELETIS

THE CENTER

7

THE PYRGNOS

THE AGORA

THE OBSERVATORY (2)

THE ESPLANADE OF THE BULE

THE THEATER OF AGORRUS (33)

THE PALACE OF THE PARMEXIADES (41)

TEMPLE OF PURPHOROS POLYMETON (40)

THE HALL OF TWELVE (9)

THE DEKATIA (3)

THE SACRED WAY OF THE TEMPLES

11

THE ALTAR OF MOGIS (20)

KERANOS LATROMANTIS (17)

PHARIKA APEMIA (19)

KRUPHIS BOULEOS (21)

PHENAX ERIKRIPTOS (22)

KARAMETRA GENETULIA (16)

IROAS (18)

EPHARA POLYMETA (15)

HELIOD EGLETES (14)

EAST OF THE CITY

13

THE MAGNO STADIUM (4)

TEMPLE OF IROAS HEGETON (35)

HALL OF HEROES (36)

TREASURE HALL (37)

TEMPLE OF NYLEA HECEBOLA (38)

PUBLIC GYMNASIUM (34)

PHENAXICUS THEATER (5)

PHENAXIC BATHS (45)

ECTYON'S PALACE (39)

THE BAY OF MELETIS

14

THE BAY OF THE KINGS (25)

BERETEA BEACH (11)

THE PORT QUARTER (46)

THE TEMPLE OF THASSA PELAGIA (24)

PALACE OF ICREON (43)

ARTISAN QUARTER (44)

CITY GATES (8)

17

TEMPLE OF KARAMETRA KARPOFORA (27)

THE NECROPOLIS (7)

TEMPLE OF EREBOS CHTHONIOS (26)

REVERENT ARMY BARRACKS (10)

TEMPLE OF ATHREOS (28)

KRIMNOS

20

THE MAIN SQUARE (1)

TEMPLE OF THASSA KRIMNEA (2)

TEMPLE OF KERANOS (3)

THE HOUSE OF MASTER ANAPSE (4)

LIBRARY (6)

TEMPLE OF KARAMETRA KRASI (7)

THE THEATER ON THE HILL (8)

THE FORGOTTEN ALTAR (9)

THE TEMPLE OF NYLEA (10)

LISTES

22

THE AKROON

TEMPLE OF IROAS AXIOTIMOS (1)

THOLOS OF EPHARA ALCIS (2)

THE PIRON (3)

STORES (4)

TEMPLE OF KARAMETRA MITERA (5)

NEOLANTIN

23

TEMPLE OF HELIOD LYKOFOS (1)

THEATER OF THE ARGOSTYLE (2)

FORTRESS OF THE

PHALANX OF HELIOD (3)

PALESTRA MAGNA (4)

TEMPLE OF IROAS CHRYSOPELEX (5)

HOUSE OF THE IXONES (6)

THE LIBRARY (7)

DIKAION (8)

AGORA (9)

TEMPLE OF EPHARA POLIATIS (10)

KARAMETRA GEORGICA (11)

HALLS OF THE TRIARCHS (12)

HEKVETION (13)

THASSEAN STOA (14)

TEMPLE OF THASSA ASPHALIA (15)

THE HARBOR

ALTAR OF PHARIKA ACESIA (16)

TEMPLE OF

PURPHOROS CLYTOMETIS (17)

BEACH OF TEARS (18)

PUBLIC BATHS (19)

TEMPLE OF ATHREOS

NECROPOLIS AND TEMPLE OF

EREBOS POLYDEGMON (21)

TEMPLE OF KERANOS ASTRAPEOS (22)

TEMPLE OF THE PANTHEON (1)
TEMPLE OF EPHARA ARXAIOS (2)
THE HOUSE OF ZARCORIAS (3)
TEMPLE OF THASSA THALASSINA (4)
THE FROUROS (5)
THE DOMATION (6)
TRAX BEACH (7)

TEMPLE OF KARAMETRA CHLOE (1)
THE ALSEID STOA (2)
TEMPLE OF NYLEA ANESIDORA (3)
HOUSE OF THE MAIDENS (4)
THOLOS OF
KARAMETRA KARPOPHORA (5)
ALTAR OF PHARIKA LOIMIA (6)
TEMPLE OF HELIOD PHOEBUS (7)
HOUSE OF ICREON (8)
PROSKYNITHON (9)

THE GREAT LIBRARY (1)
TEMPLE OF HELIOD BOEDROMIOS(2)
AGORA(3) AND TEMPLE OF EPHARA(4)
THE MUSEION (5)
TEMPLES OF TRUTH(7)
AND SCRIPTURE (6)
THE METAPHRASTION (8)
BIBLIOPOLEION (9)
THE THAUMATON (10)

THE MAUSOLEUM OF THE KINGS (1)
AGORA (2) AND EPHARA BASILEA (3)
THE SIX ALTARS (4)
TEMPLE OF THE HEROES (5)
BATHHOUSE (6)
TEMPLE OF HELIOD CRISAOR(7)
ODEON BASILEUS (8)
OXUS THEATER (9)
ROYAL PALACE OF THE DIARKS (10)
GOLDEN BEACHES(11)
THE PALACES OF OXUS

AGORA (1)
TEMPLE OF EPHARA POLIUKOS (2)
SQUARE OF THE PHILAKES (3)
THE LIBRARY AND TEMPLE OF EPHARA SOPHIA (4)
TEMPLE OF IROAS KIDEMONAS (5)
TEMPLE OF KARAMETRA MITERA (6)
THEATER (7) AND THOLOS OF PHERAX(8)
BAY AND HARBOR
TEMPLE OF THASSA PELAGEA (10)
THE KROTOR DISTRICT (11)
NEEDLE OF HELIOD (12)
LOYALIST QUARTER(13)
PALACE OF KIRENEIDAS (14)
PURPHOROS PHLOGESTES (15)
PUBLIC BATHS (16)
TEMPLES OF NYLEA(19) AND PHARIKA(18)
THE MEGASPAGHION ALTAR (20)
TEMPLE OF EPHARA ACRAEA (21)
WELL OF TARTARUS (22)
TEMPLE OF EREBOS NECRODEGMON(23)

AGORA (1)
THE CANALS (2)
THE BAY (3)
TEMPLE OF THASSA PELAGRA (4)
THE KINEA CHASM (5)
SANCTUARY OF KORINNA(6)
TEMPLE OF PURPHOROS
CLITOMETES (7)
TEMPLE OF KERANOS LOGAS (8)
COUNCIL HALL (9)
TEMPLE OF HELIOD HORKIOS (10)
THE HOUSE OF BOCREO (11)

THE SHIPYARDS
THE CHIMERA GATE (4)
TEMPLE OF EPHARA ERGANA (5)
TEMPLE OF THASSA ASPHALIA (6)
THE BACCIADE (7)



THE CITY OF MELETIS

THE CENTER

Possibly the very navel of civilization, the city center of Meletis is a monumental pride for all citizens of the polis. There is no place in all of Theros more sophisticated, cosmopolitan and full of man-made wonders. At the same time the center of Meletis is the place where most business of all kinds is conducted. Politics, magic, philosophy, science and every discipline of study takes place here and this concentrated point of the point acts as a spearhead for all of them from any of the buildings and institutions that the citizens of Meletis would defend even with their own lives.

THE PYRGOS OF MELETIS (1)

The majestic temple of Ephara rises like a tower in the center from which the whole city is organized, like an axis from which emanates not only the urbanism, but also the ideals of knowledge and civilization that it represents. The temple has its main entrance in the form of a wide marble staircase that goes into the sea, flanked by two fountains in the form of Ephara amphorae, which serve to drain the waters of the river X, channeled from the northeast under the city. The north entrance faces the Agora, the most magnificent of Theros and its ever-busy marketplace. A platform in the form of a marble walkway leads out from its gates and serves as an oratory for the rulers of the polis, the priests of Ephara and Medomai herself on their unflattering visits to the city.

At the south entrance its pediment holds sculptures representing Ephara blessing Tyre and Kinaios with magic to end the tyranny of the Archons. Other mythical heroes of the city figure on the pediment, while at the ends, Heliod and Thassa, lying relaxed, give their blessing to the heroes.

The north pediment represents the confrontation of the first kings with the tyrant Agnomakos, with the effigy of Ephara and two amphorae throwing knowledge of Nyx in the form of water at the top of the upper vertex, surrounding with Kinaios and Tiro a prostrate Agnomakos. On both sides allegories of the sciences and arts are emerging from the waters of Ephara. The outer frieze of the temple divided into metopes, represents the blessings of the goddess to different historical figures of Meletis in the form of disciplines such as history, magic, science, economics, architecture... Other gods also bring to the inhabitants of the polis their gifts, especially Heliod and Purphoros, in the form of order, laws or metallurgy and ceramics.

With columns 60 feet high, the temple stretches huge surrounded with the banners of Meletis on its walls behind the rows of columns. Its entrances remain guarded by various members of the Reverent Army, but in general anyone may enter the temple to honor the goddess or seek knowledge.

The south entrance of the temple is the most spectacular because of its direct access to the magnificent statue of Ephara, with its large amphora from which pure water emanates over a pool at the feet of the patron saint of the city. This water serves as a form of blessing for the faithful, and it is customary for priests to bless wine with a few drops from the fountain. The 18-meter high statue of the goddess stands majestic and serene on the north wall, built in a white marble of brilliant tones. The marble and gold crown of the goddess was made to float with magic by her own sculptor, the great master Pheridias, architect also of the temple and contemporary of the Kings, who built the temple with designs bestowed by the goddess herself, whose scrolls are still in the Temple, at the feet of the goddess, as her greatest relic. Every year on spring, the maidens of Ephara weave a mantle of white silk and sapphires and pearls to dress the goddess. It is an honor for the young women of Meletis to be chosen for this task and many take great pains to give their best embroidery to their patroness. The ancient cloaks are used to clothe the priests of the temple, as an heirloom, and its precious stones are extremely valued as foci by devout magicians and priests. The interior of the temple is of splendid beauty in white marble, of orderly forms decorated with blue silks. Two rows of columns frame the effigy of Ephara, and behind them, on the walls, high shelves for scrolls and papyri store the largest library in Theros. The upper floor, on either side, also overlooks the main nave and has more and more shelves, crammed with knowledge. Tables between the columns serve the avid seekers of knowledge, and there are always dozens of priests transcribing documents or studying some ancient scroll. The north entrance holds an altar for offerings and votive offerings, decorated with blue silks, and with a sculpture of the goddess in white gold, in front of a wall covered by a beautiful mosaic of blue colors. The accumulated treasure is considerable and the offerings are kept each month in the nearby Treasury building. It is this sculpture that accompanies the high priestess of Ephara in her boat procession each year as she enters the bay and harbor. Tradition also has the sculpture mounted on the captain ship of the polis fleet in times of war, considering that the goddess protects her sailors and increases the morale of the fleet, fighting alongside her goddess. The basement of

the sacred precinct holds more stone shelves in narrow rows. A round table in the center serves as a place of study and reference. The effigy of Ephara's face is repeated on each shelf, and helps and blesses scholars to find the inspiration to attain the knowledge sought.

The entire complex is illuminated with magic, said to be summoned by Ephara herself, in the form of balls of white light of varying intensity and adapted to the different needs of each worshipper. The sculpture and waters of the temple also emanate a white glow that makes them a source of soft, soothing light. High level discussions are allowed and well seen inside the temple, always based on respect and moderation of forms. The image of the goddess also serves as a witness to any dealings, peace or agreement of the polis and its rulers. The laws must also pass through the blessing in the temple, to the point of not being considered valid without the endorsement of the goddess. The Pyrgnos is considered the temple of reference of the goddess, and it is not unusual to find important offerings from other states such as the polis of Akros or Setessa.

THE AGORA OF MELETIS (6)

The reference for the rest of the cities and Polis of Theros, except perhaps Setessa, the Agora Magna, or simply Agora of Meletis, is a magnificent exponent of what civilization means. Surrounded by unique buildings and always crowded with merchants from the most distant points, this is the place where to deal with important, or more trivial matters, where to be seen and taught, where to complain about the government or run for office, where to buy and sell, and not only for Meletis, but for almost all mankind. The great esplanade is delimited somewhat artificially by several stoas, temples with an administrative character and to the south by the Pyrgnos, the Temple of the Knowledge of Ephara.

Stalls of all kinds of products are everywhere variegated with multicolored canopies, under the same stoas and surrounding the temples of Ephara Nomos and Ephara Agorea. These two temples of the patron saint of the city are also important centers of the administrative functioning of the city. The temple of Ephara Nomos serves as the city's court, and its priests are held as judges guided by the justice of the goddess herself. There are always disputes to be raised and the queues to be heard can put many off minor matters. Her priests, the dikastes, often travel to cities and villages throughout the peninsula resolving legal disputes throughout their lives. After a life as judges throughout the Polis, the wisest and oldest of them end up leading the temple with the acquiescence of the other priests, in a triad whose resolutions are taken into account even beyond the polis of Meletis itself. Currently the triad is formed by Aegon of Thesteia, Iphania "Three Coins" and the very old Siliates the Benevolent, with a career of more than 60 years behind him, and dozens of reputed law books written. The temple of Ephara Agorea also has a dual religious and administrative function, but mostly of a commercial nature. Its priests control accompanied by members of the Reverent Army that the deals of the Agora are not abusive, and that no deals are closed against the rights of any citizen. Their work often becomes tedious considering the amount of disagreements and trivialities for which they are required, and their reputation as arbitrators makes them rather unpopular despite their good disposition. The highest priest remains in the temple attending worship and is in charge of setting commodity prices along with some member of The Twelve when these seem to be manipulated by the abuse of some overly ambitious merchant. At least one sample of each wholesale commodity is brought before the altar of the goddess before it can be allowed to be sold in the Agora, and serves as a sample for the priest to check its suitability.

The center of the enclosure houses the Fountain of the divine

Banquet, the largest in all of Theros, and with always crystal clear waters. Five priestesses of the Pantheon, previously purified and immersed in the water of the fountain, are in charge of bringing to the table of the gods the food and drink offered by the citizens, and keep the altar clean.

Fresh, manufactured and imported products, from weapons to fruits, fabrics and even magical objects can be found in the agora. Among the most famous stalls are those of Karedon the younger, a member of a long line of merchants with a huge stall here and another in the artisan quarter, with a variety of manufactured goods brought from all over the peninsula, highlighting the fabrics of Neolantin, much in demand for their varied blue dyes. Ironeas the satyr has made a niche for himself with a variety of wines brought from different regions, especially from his land in Skola, and he has no problem in offering samples of the same, sometimes turning the tasting into a competition that Ironeas usually wins. Meselia is an old and experienced merchant of different and strange objects willing to offer credits to whoever needs them, which if not paid are usually claimed by her numerous and stout grandchildren. It is also not uncommon to see the odd gray Asphodel merchant (no fixed stall, and never the same one) on a street corner exchanging their trinkets. Some merchants believe that setting up their stall next to one of these unfortunates may be bad luck, and avoid them with some trepidation.

The limits of the enclosure are overflowing with stores among which can be seen in the shade of the stoas or in the buildings of the official markets philosopher teachers accompanied by their students strolling and discussing topics among the cries of sale of the merchants. The water carriers often give free water to these teachers as a sign of admiration and recognition of their fame, and their conversations are often interrupted by greetings to city authorities. At lunchtime, the many eating places fill their seats and members of the government can be seen eating and talking to a fisherman about the catch of the day or the ins and outs of some controversial law. The agora is the place where all citizens interact in every way possible, and treat each other as equals, making the bonds of citizenship deeper and stronger. You never know when you will need your neighbor to fight a tyrant, or simply to share a skin of wine.

THE OBSERVATORY (2)

On the slope of Mount Dindaro, at the end of a road considered almost sacred and away from the lights of the city, but in sight from every point of it, rises majestically the colossal Nyx Observatory. The building is divided into different floors open to the sky in large windows to the outside and colonnaded terraces to its gigantic inner courtyard, presided over by an armillary sphere of pure magic with representations of the constellations and with its center in Meletis itself. The lower halls hold an extensive collection of books centered on the observation of Nyx and the messages read by oracles and scholars, understood as prophecies and universal laws. Different observation lenses, magical and mechanical, decorate the openings to the outside. The interior remains in semi-darkness, softly illuminated by the lights emanating from the stars of the armillary sphere. The movement of scholars and priests is constant, but there are hardly any distant murmurs and the propitiatory silence of the study is respected. Faithful devotees of Keranos whisper their chants amidst incense accompanied by their oracles, while the clergy of Ephara carefully arrange the bundles of knowledge read in the heavens. The highest floor, with a golden pyramidal roof, holds an inner dome that, under the orders of oracles and priests, reflects Nyx itself as if at night. Several large lenses and stone tables allow the highest officials to study the cryptic laws hidden in Nyx, even with the sun overhead. Outside, a huge stoa surrounds the building to the north. Here travelers and petitioners in search



of answers refresh themselves and eat at long stone tables while waiting to be attended to by priests and experts. To the east, a building of considerable size serves as quarters for scholars, in dozens of sober cells with a central courtyard covered by a golden dome under which a sculpture of Ephara allows worship of the goddess.

THE ESPLANADE OF THE BULÉ

To the north of the Agora and as an extension of it, there is an esplanade presided over by the Tholos of the Pantheon, and delimited to the north by a semicircular stoa (29) with three portals, which served in its time to delimit a city that soon grew beyond it. This square is the traditional assembly for the citizens who are called upon to elect the Twelve wise men to govern them or to make important decisions for the city such as going to war or undertaking some great enterprise. The citizens spread out all over the esplanade to hear the rulers and discuss with them over the course of whole days in which they can approach at any hour and consult the scribes who sit in the stoa about what has been discussed. The assemblies can be convened by the Twelve, by the high priest of the Pyrgnos of Ephara or groups of 100 citizens. Also the appearance of Medomai in the Agora is usually sufficient claim to call the Assembly for its omens. Priests and magicians are in charge of facilitating voice to those who claim it and the words of the most illustrious philosophers are taken into account, as well as the most important oracular texts are read. The Pantheon leaves its doors open as a symbol of the participation of the gods themselves in the debate. It is traditional that the meeting begins after a ceremony of the priestesses of the Pantheon who go out from their enclosure to the temple opening the two great doors, after which the highest authorities and the citizens enter from the north door to pay honors to the gods, and then leave through the south door, thus beginning the Assembly.

The Tholos of the Pantheon(12) is the temple to all the gods and here are found representations of all of them, except Klothy, whose respect is usually shown without specific worship or representations of any kind. The sculptures of the gods are distributed inside within large chapels in a circle around a central sculpture of Kruphix, with his open arms facing the door. A representation of Athreos is engraved on each door as the god of transits. Facing each other to the east and west are Heliod and Erebos, while the other gods share the rest of the other 12 niches. The floor and the dome are decorated with braided hair as the only reminder of Klothy and the destiny that moves us all. The chapels keep offerings from the citizens, and the priestesses of the Pantheon are in charge of the care of the images and the order in the Temple.

THE THEATER OF AGORRUS (33)

One of the most important entertainment centers of the city and the scene of some of the greatest plays in all of Theros, this theater was founded by Agorras, former leader of the city and lover of the arts, who intervened in the city to beautify it with some of its most beautiful constructions. The theater has a long tradition and the actors of Theros prove their worth here, exposed to the exquisite taste of the greatest thinkers. The pinnacle of an author is to premiere his plays here, and only the most important ones are hosted on this illustrious stage. Admission is free until full capacity is reached, which causes a brawl at the door. To avoid further public unrest, the Phenáxicus Theater was built after the Agorras Theater. Today the Agorras mainly hosts tragedies and plays of deeper intellectuality, while the lighter plays and comedies are performed in the Phenaxicus. The Twelve, the masters of the Decatia and the High Priest of the Pyrgnos have a reserved place in this theater in the first row.

THE PALACE OF THE PARMEXIADES (41)

The Parmexiades family is one of the most illustrious families of Meletis. His lineage descends from Parmexias the Great, a citizen of great prestige who fostered the league of cities that later became the polis of Meletis. His fame reached such an extent that his effigy is represented on the south pediment of the Pyrgnos together with other heroes and personalities of the city. Since then the family has become a reference of loyalty and diplomacy. His palace was built near the old palace of the patriarch of the family, who gave it to the city as accommodation for ambassadors, official feast hall and enclosure of the priestesses of the Pantheon. The new, more modest palace still offers everything the wealthy and influential family can afford, with symposiums being discussed for months in its sumptuous halls. The palace also maintains a remarkable altar to Heliod, patron god of the family since time immemorial. It also maintains a loom room decorated with tapestries and fabrics of the finest thread, where the young maidens of the family weave some of the most magnificent and richest sacred cloaks of the image of Ephara. The vestments of the goddess have always counted at least one young woman of the family among their chosen weavers, adding to the honor of their lineage. The current head of the family is Phineas Parmexiades, a pleasant man in his late sixties, who has ties to many families throughout Theros thanks to the marriages of his many daughters and sons. His wife, Odirea, is a magnificent hostess and her network of contacts is as remarkable as that of her husband. The prestige of the family is such that a group of citizens has proposed on occasion to make the Parmexiades kings, without much success on the other hand. The family seems to be oblivious to these movements and have always been loyal to the Twelve and the institutions of the Polis, further enhancing their prestige and respect.

TEMPLE OF PURPHOROS POLYMETON (40)

Away from the rest of the temples and surrounded by the forges of the city is the vaulted entrance to the temple of Purphoros Polymeton, the one of the many techniques. Attached to a hill, the temple reveals only the outer tholos, as it goes deep into the earth, where multiple forges are set up, and only the priests of the god are allowed to work in the deep inner heat of the mountain. The outer dome and the columns supporting it are made of a reddish bronze, constantly heated, and with drawings worked into the metal depicting the creation of the weapons of the gods by Purphoros, with the figure of the god's torso above its entrance, holding XXX in his right hand. Areas of the structure still appear to be of molten metal and shine brightly over the entire blacksmiths' square surrounding the temple. Inside are displayed several magnificently carved bronze warrior figures, said to come to life to protect the temple. In the background and on the same rock of the mountain, a sculpture of Purphoros emerges from the stone forming around it a pool of molten metal. On the sides, two entrances in the same stone, from which constant clicks and hammer blows emerge, go deep into the mountain. Priests reside and work here. Their creations, from jewelry or weapons to machines, are exhibited in the temple protected by the sculptures for a year, after which they are melted in the pool in a rite that represents the constant creation and destruction of which Purphoros is the effigy. During the festivities of the god, the square around it hosts his rites, among which is to save from destruction one of the works exhibited by the priests. This work becomes the property of the city and is considered the work of the god himself. Also the priests give small jewels and weapons to people of worth or to those that the oracle of the flames of the god has fixed. Following this tradition, the craftsmen also give pieces of their creation and choose their

apprentices, establishing their bond of master and pupil in those days in front of the statue of the god.

THE HALL OF TWELVE (9)

Halfway uphill between the agora and Temple Hill, perched on a vegetation-covered cliff overlooking almost the entire city, stands the city's government building. This is where the Twelve meet daily for the administration of the city. The chosen sages have their space here to discuss important decisions to keep Meletis as the center of civilization. The building is organized around a hall covered by a dome where the plenum of the Twelve meets. On its east side a huge garden terrace, with statues, fresh water ditches and even a gazebo, offers views over the city and serves for more informal get-togethers between members of the government and other officials. Musicians of proven fame are sometimes hired to liven up outdoor gatherings. It is not uncommon to see Perisophia chatting with a guest under one of the bougainvillea-covered trellises if the heat permits. Each of the 12 wise men is constantly accompanied by a prosector, a special guard with the dual function of protecting and guarding the ruler against any attempt to attack his integrity, physical or moral. The position is of high prestige and they are usually chosen from among the members of the Reverent Army of proven loyalty. The remaining halls house archives and offices for the Twelve and other high officials. The government uses the building as a base for their constant work in the city, and although they always spend a few hours in it, they can usually be seen at any point in the city (or the polys) where they are needed.

THE DEKATIA (3)

The most transcendent and renowned Meletian institution on Theros is arguably the academy of magic and philosophy. Its students and teachers are among the most referenced figures for mortal thought and many of the great schools of thought were born here. Although there are many other teachers independent of the Dekatia the prestige of the institution makes it stand out in the preferences of aspirants to the famous institution. The name Dekatia refers to the ten years of study dedicated to both philosophy and magic, to which is added training in different disciplines of knowledge. The access requires a previous exam by way of test of several masters. The student chooses the training towards which to orient himself under the tutelage of a master. The training can be done at any age, but it is usual to start at 12 or 13 years of age. At the end of it, the student is given the honor of being called philosopher or magician, depending on the chosen branch. At 5 years in the Dekatia, the student may choose to join the Reverential Army, among its famed war mages, where he begins his military training.

The main building of the Dekatia stands to the east of the agora, in a circular three-story building with a central courtyard presided over by a tholos that acts as a great hall for the students and an enclosure for the image of Ephara Sophia, protector of magicians and philosophers. Each floor is open to the central courtyard as a three-story cloister. The outer area of each floor has halls of all kinds, with tiers where the teachers give their theoretical classes. It is not uncommon, however, to find outside the Dekatia or even anywhere in the city teachers giving their classes, declaiming about philosophy or magic surrounded by their students. To the west of the main building another large two-story porticoed building serves as a library and study. After the Pyrgnos and the Library of Ossus, this is possibly the most complete library in Theros, and certainly the one that has come to store more magic collected on paper. Its central courtyard has a large fountain-shaped pool, a perfect



area for meditation and study, for its tranquility. To the east of the complex a wing of two floors and two basements houses a huge symposium, cells for students and a chamber guarded with magic and several war mages that keeps objects and relics of varying power. To the southeast a pair of buildings serves as maintenance for the entire Dekatia.

THE SACRED WAY OF THE TEMPLES

To the west of the city, leaning against the southern slope of Mount Leros, stand the main temples of many of the gods. The path of steps and marble walkways that serves to access them is called the Sacred Way, and is the last stage of multiple pilgrims on a long journey from Phaela. The Sacred Way opens with the double Altar of Athreos (23) as a doorway and a huge altar covered on each side by magnificent white steps. The altar on the right side holds a bonfire into which pilgrims throw a sacrificial gift to honor the god of the steps before continuing on the path. The altar on the left has a large container of ashes that pilgrims use to stain their foreheads as proof of their pilgrimage. Four priests of Athreos, two on each side serve at the altars constantly securing the flame. Behind the Altar of Athreos a rectangular pool with ever-clear fountain spouts allows pilgrims to wash their feet and hands before continuing. Eight maidens of the Pantheon serve the newcomers in their needs.

THE ALTAR OF MOGIS (20)

After some new steps to the right opens the Altar of immolations of Mogis, a platform on which to offer sacrifices to the god, whose image observes from the center of a colonnaded temple behind the altar. During the Megasphagion the sacrifice of oxen is celebrated to appease the wrath of the god. Thus begins the festival in the city. The blood of the animals waters the altar and is collected to cover the statue of Mogis. The citizens stain the palms of their hands in the blood and do not wash them until after the festival. Much of the meat is distributed throughout the city and carried to the Fountain of the Banquet in procession.

KERANOS LATROMANTIS (17)

In front of the Altar of Mogis opens the temple of Keranos Latromantis, where pilgrims come seeking answers to their problems in the voice of the oracle of Keranos. The temple is completely open and only the columns, all different and created by different artists, protect its interior. Its south side opens abruptly to the cliff. In the center of the temple stands the image of the god, above which the roof opens in a circle. On stormy days, lightning strikes the bronze sculpture through this hole, protecting the rest of the temples from destruction. A stone staircase opens at the foot of Keranos where a circular room houses the oracle and the offerings of the faithful. There are always artists of all kinds in the temple, some working as acolytes to find inspiration. The dancers of the Astrapion rehearse their work daily, guided by the melodies created by the musicians attracted here in search of the genius that will enlighten them.

PHARIKA APEMIA (19)

Halfway up a new flight of marble stairs, the Temple of Pharika stands covered with ivy and surrounded by plants and herbs of all kinds. Only one row of columns surrounds the temple, and its entrance is covered by three silky curtains through which emanate vapors and incense of all kinds. The interior, always in semi-darkness, even completely dark, is always inhabited by the priests of the goddess, among threads and vapors of all kinds. No one knows how many plants underneath may exist, and many claim that a jellyfish dwells deep in the complex as high priestess revealing the secrets of the goddess to those who prove their loyalty. Here the faithful come to ask for cures for the most varied illnesses, in exchange for sacrifices and services of all kinds. Some also come to pray for death, sickness or plague for their enemies. These often require even harsher payments.

KRUPHIS BOULEOS (21)

To the left of a new flight of stairs and on a meadow at the edge of the cliff, is the Tholos of Kruphix, the most important temple of the god in civilized land, and not for being a particularly large or beautiful temple, in fact its decoration is null and its remarkable sobriety, even outdated. The sacred place owes its importance to be the residence of Kidele, the Oracle of Kruphix, god of mysteries. The priestess lives, eats, sleeps and prays always in the center of the Tholos, alone. No other priest is admitted to the temple, and the god is able to prevent the passage of anyone at his will and that of his oracle, even with its four doors always open. The pilgrims come with curiosity to contemplate the gifts granted by the god to his oracle and leave food for the priestess, never for the god, who could feel offended by pretending to buy his will.

PHENAX ERIKRIPTOS (22)

At the bottom of the stairs, a small shrine discovered between the temples of Pharika and Karametra, hosts a cryptic image dedicated to Phenax. In its very center, and monopolizing the attention, the image of Phenax appears here with eight masks united, sharing eyes and eight arms extended in different

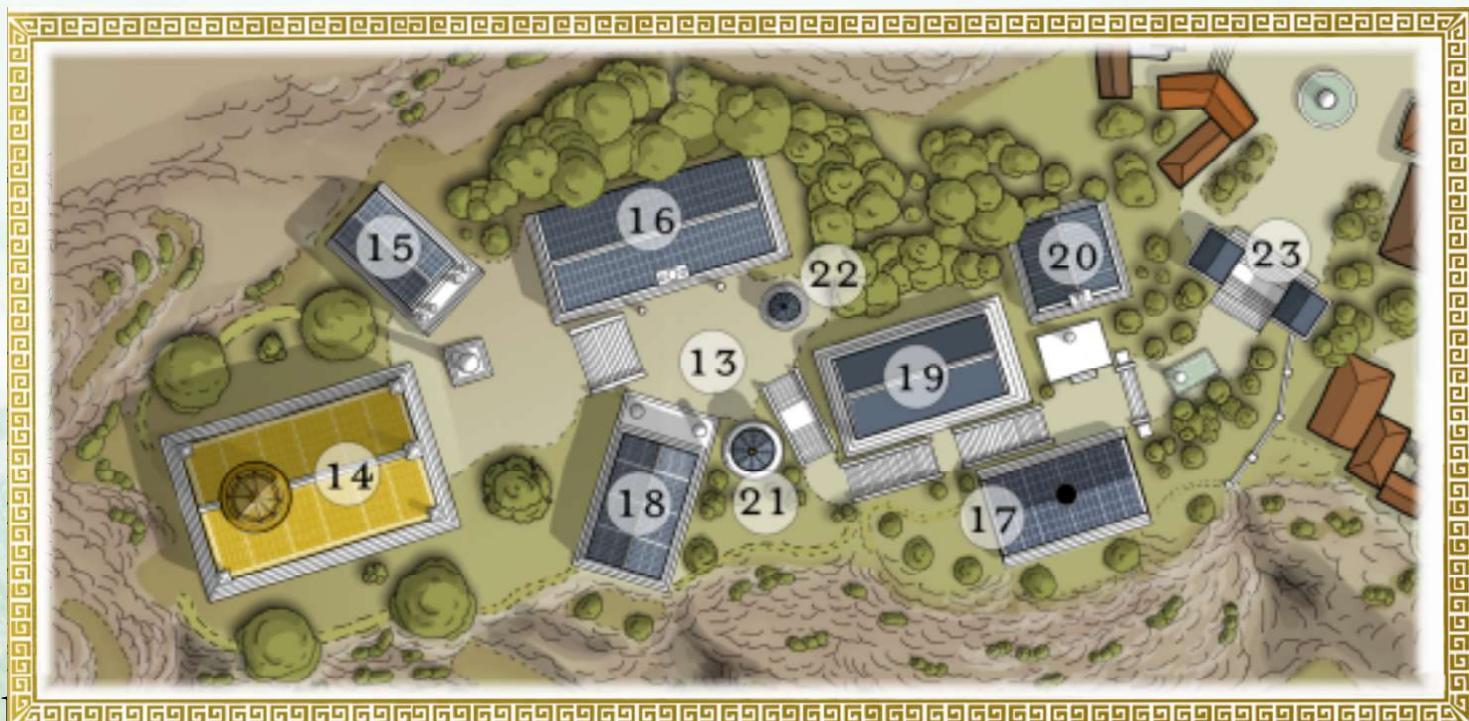
attitudes. The masks are golden, but legend has it that Phenax himself stole the authentic gold ones, replacing them with others of brass. The octagonal pedestal of the statue is always covered with critical graffiti, provocative phrases, anonymous accusations and invitations against the government. It is said that thieves and murderers who want to escape justice come to the temple for protection and that if they are cunning enough, a door somewhere in the temple offers them refuge and a way out of the city. The truth is that with Phenax you never know, and many criminals find themselves betrayed by the god himself when they are arrested on the spot by the city's justice, in an ironic twist.

KARAMETRA GENETULIA (16)

In that same square before continuing to climb, there are two more temples of considerable size. The one closer to the mountainside and surrounded by vegetation is the temple of Karametra Genetulia, whose priestesses offer their service as matrons to as many women as need it. The temple is arranged in three wings, the central one open and with a beautiful image of Karametra surrounded by children. Behind the image and the temple opens the forest of trees. The wings to the sides of the central one are closed and host communal areas to accommodate orphan children and priestesses. In front of the image of the goddess and under the roof of the central wing many women come to give birth helped by the priestesses, who have always prepared the area to protect the newborn and the newborn. A couple of women blessed by the goddess breastfeed the orphaned babies in the temple. Any woman who wants to give birth and is unable to raise her child is welcomed here by the goddess without question or judgment.

IROAS (18)

Opposite the temple of Karametra Genetulia to the southwest of the square, stands the temple of Iroas. Two large free-standing columns with allegorical sculptures of Glory and Honor preside over its entrance on a platform covered with weapons of all kinds placed neatly around the columns. The temple building maintains its own treasury and cells for the primate priest. In the center of the temple one can worship a sculpture of Iroas raised on his hind legs and raising the spear to the sky. The interior of the temple is sober and keeps only



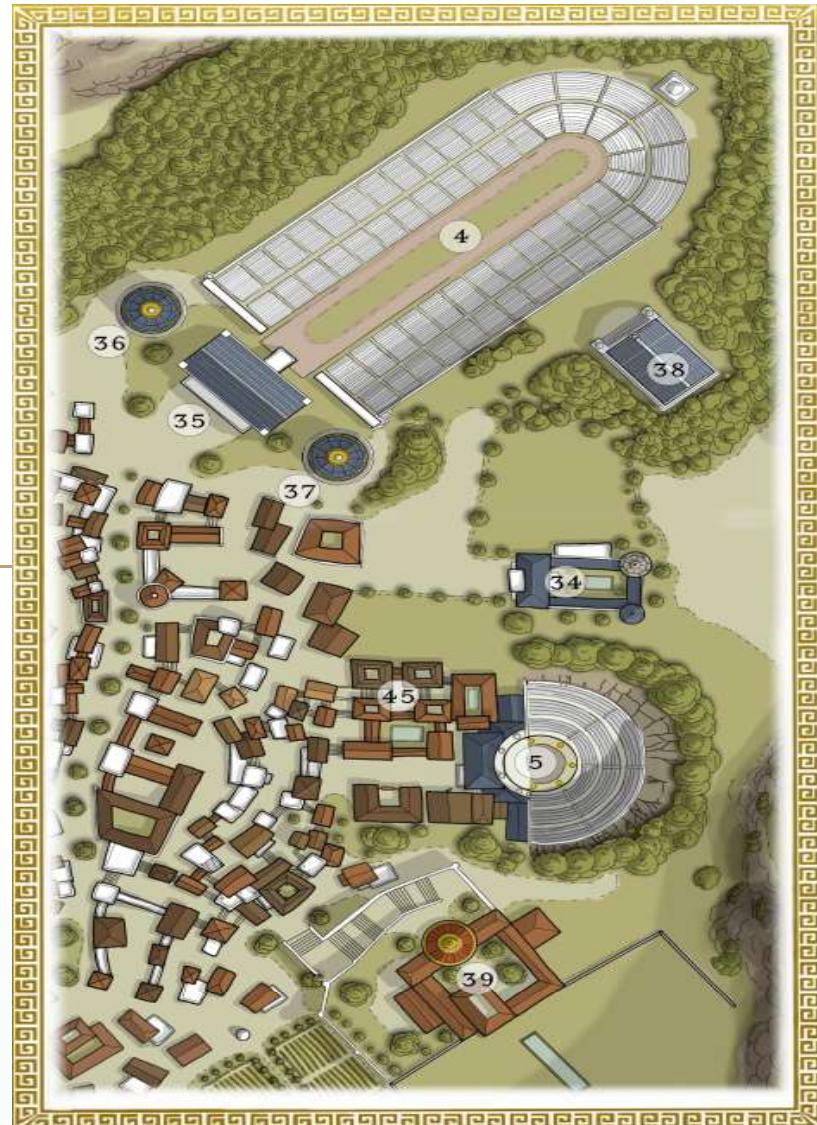
images of Iroas in different positions of war, used to train the young warriors. The doors of the temple are closed during the Megasphagion, as a sign of contempt for Mogis. Any young warrior can go to the temple and, after three nights of vigil before the altar, choose the weapon that the god has granted him. The temple treasury, at the south entrance, holds the most valuable of the weapons donated to the temple, and none are given to any warrior who has not proven himself worthy of the legend of carrying them. Six members of the Reverent Army stand permanent guard at the temple. The primate priest of the temple is a Sacred Warrior chosen by the god who serves in the temple as a teacher of young men with worthy aptitudes. Currently Pindaro the noble, a paladin of the god, holds this position, and is also in charge of officiating at any ceremony in which the Reverent Army participates.

EPHARA POLYMETA (15)

At the end of the last flight of stairs, the Sacred Way ends in a beautiful garden where two more temples stand. The smaller one is dedicated to Ephara as the goddess of knowledge. In front of the temple, a tall column like the nearby temple of Heliod stands crowned by a small image of the goddess made of pure silver. Sailors claim that her radiance can be seen from far out at sea, and that her glow brightens their arrivals, announcing the nearness of their homeland. The temple of Ephara rises behind. The temple is discreet and orderly forms, a beauty of pure lines that inspires architects and engineers who come to ask the blessing of the goddess to their projects. A figure of the goddess presides on the north wall of the building. Made of shiny marble that seems to glow with Nyx's radiance, its origin remains a mystery. The image bears scrolls spread out on which the Pyrgnos is engraved. Following the administrative function of the temples of the goddess, the temple also serves as a record of the plans for any buildings constructed in the city. The interior walls of the temple house tall shelves filled with plans of all kinds that can be consulted upon request by the authorities or the High Priest of Pyrgnos.

HELIOD EGLETES (14)

Culminating the Sacred Way, stands the majestic temple of Heliod decorated with marble and gold. The magnificence of the temple overwhelms the pilgrims. With a pediment decorated with images of the enthroned god and the radiant sun at his back, the image of Heliod as light covering the fields with his glory manages to instill the desired effect of humility on visitors. A golden domed tower rises above the temple. The very roof tiles of the temple are made of bright and shining gold. Soaring columns decorated with capitals of marble and gold rise up into the complex. A white floor that appears to be of one piece houses the main hall of the temple. With walls decorated with images of champions of the god in reliefs of the finest workmanship, the solid gold image of the god presides over the room under the colonnaded dome, illuminated by daylight. The sculpture rises up to 10 meters on a pedestal decorated with reliefs on the pilgrimage of Solsemon. In the hand of the god, a representation of Khrusor made of crystal channels and maintains the same light, illuminating the entire room. Dozens of offerings of all kinds are displayed at the foot of the sculpture. Twelve priests led by Clisthenes the pure, serve in the temple officiating the rites at sunrise, sunrise and sunset with lofty chants of glory. The pilgrimage to Mount Kure traditionally begins at this temple, after performing the purification rites required by the priests of Heliod.



EAST OF THE CITY

In the easternmost part of the city are located most of the recreational and leisure areas. Largely surrounded by a forest considered sacred and under the protection of Nylea, the area is organized around the Magno Stadium, the pride of the athletes of Meletis, and the site of agility and speed competitions, as well as equestrian races. It is common to see in this area young people training or hanging out, praying to Iroas or Nylea and even children going into the quiet forest for their first adventures.

THE MAGNO STADIUM (4)

The stage on which to celebrate great deeds in honor of Iroas, the Magno Stadium, stretches out across the valley to the northeast as the centerpiece of the group of buildings that serve the athletes of Meletis as places of training and worship. The stadium has its entrance to the west through the temple to Iroas. On the other side of the stadium stands a huge sculpture of the god, naked and in the act of throwing a javelin. Its rock-hewn stands are covered with white marble. The stadium is much less sophisticated than the Great Stadium of the Games in Akros, with only the track, and the competitions it hosts are usually less violent and less focused on fighting, being primarily speed and throwing events. Equestrian events are also frequent, but are usually special events on their own. The stadium serves as a picnic area for Meletians on game

days, who alternate and enjoy a day of games in the stands with their families and friends. Many agora stalls, especially food stalls, are set up in the square in front of the temple on those days. The Polis provides water carriers who distribute throughout the stadium. For the youth of Meletis the games are also the way to exhibit their skills and start their career to glory. In short, the stadium is as important a meeting point as the Agora on game days, and it is a suitable place to get information or to be seen.

TEMPLE OF IROAS HEGETON (35)

The Temple of Iroas presides over the North Stadium and serves as its entrance. The two-story temple serves primarily as an administrative building for judges and masters of the sporting events. Externally the building exhibits nothing more than a row of columns on its first floor as a porch in front of the entrance. The first floor has its main hall centered in the middle of two side wings. In the center of this great hall, halfway between the two doors, an image of Iroas with his spear binding with chains a prostrate furious minotaur (an unsubtle allegory of Mogis) focuses the vision of the visitors, representing the discipline that serves to bind the lower instincts. The wings on either side serve as access to the upper part and are guarded by priest-guards of Iroas. The judges and priests have rooms at the top, and are cloistered fifteen days before any sporting event to avoid fraud or blackmail during the tests. Two terraces on both sides allow to witness the entrance and the games to the Twelve after the offerings to the god. All participants in the games are blessed by the priests in front of the image of Iroas before whom they are shown dressed only in their clamid. The winners are also crowned here before their triumphal return to the stadium, the end of the games and the beginning of the celebrations.

HALL OF HEROES (36)

The colonnaded tholos of the Hall of Heroes and its twin the Hall of Treasure flank the Temple of Iroas. Slightly lower and crowned with gold sculptures of allegories of Honor and Glory, the temples are dedicated to the athletes. With two floors, both are well guarded by volunteer guards. Each serves a different purpose.

The interior of the Hall of Heroes opens on two floors and a dome with a lantern that allows sunlight to enter. Vaulted niches on both floors house sculptures of glories of the different disciplines that won at the Iroas Games in Akros in the past and now serve as inspiration. All are crowned with olive branches and some element or emblem of their discipline.

TREASURE HALL (37)

The Treasure Hall houses the offerings of the different cities and athletes who pay homage to Iroas. Ivory sculptures, filigree crowns, ceremonial weapons and even objects loaded with magic are kept here behind the monumental bronze doors decorated with representations in ten cassettes with the exploits of the god. The most famous of the pieces present is possibly the silver and ruby armor with which the naked image of Iroas is dressed in times of war and which is able to adapt to any image of Iroas on which it is placed.

TEMPLE OF NYLEA HECEBOLA (38)

Beyond the southern stands of the stadium lies the main center of Nylea worship in the city. Built in her ancient shrine, formed in a forest clearing, its construction required multiple trips to consult different oracles until the goddess pronounced herself through a sacred white stag with golden antlers sent to the clearing by the goddess. The deer antlers were used upon the animal's death to create a bow to which wonders are attributed, and which is still kept in the temple as its greatest relic. The temple of Nylea over the years has been modified by the magic of the goddess and her priests. Externally it looks like a magnificent abandoned temple, but perfectly preserved, covered with plants and with the marble of its columns cracked by branches of trees that surround them. The interior is as wild as the exterior, and even hosts a naturak fountain and a small pond under the moss and flower-covered image of Nylea. The columns are covered with vegetation and smaller animals inhabit its beams and ceilings. Several trees have replaced the function of the columns at various points. The temple has a multitude of entrances, opened by high hollows between its walls from which natural light streams open to any animal seeking refuge here. The current priest in charge of the temple is Gilertias, an elderly satiro whose age the goddess seems to have decided to extend and who is possibly the oldest person in Meletis. The goddess allows her most faithful to use the wood of the temple trees to carve her bows after asking permission from Gilertias and doing the required work as an offering. These bows are highly prized even in the lands of Setessa, but very few deserve to carry one.

PUBLIC GYMNASIUM (34)

Much of the training and preparation of athletes in Meletis is done in this building. The complex includes the fields to the north of the building where athletes train outdoors on the grass and even going into the forest in impromptu competitions and betting. The entrance is guarded by an effigy of Heliod as the god of physical vigor, and another of Iroas himself. The building has a palestra, exercise tools, massage rooms and baths. Access is usually made at the age of 15 years after a symbolic payment and usually accompanied by a trainer, but no one is forbidden to enter after that age. Major athletes always enter free of charge and in fact their sponsors are usually the main maintainers of the facilities. The main courtyard surrounds a pool of considerable depth where young swimmers train.

The great rivalries between athletes usually begin here between peers or groups of youngsters competing as early as the gymnasium, encouraged by their coaches and condemned by the priests. Rumors and stories of all kinds are turned into poems sung by the aedos sometimes idealizing simple fights between kids as great epic deeds.

PHENAXICUS THEATER (5)

The second most important theater in Meletis after Agorras, it was built in honor of Phenax as the patron saint of actors. The theater is more popular for a large part of the people of the city because of its flashy productions and lighter themes. The comedies performed here are often a prelude to festive evenings and nights in the taverns of the area. Seating capacity is slightly less than at Agorras, but there are always fights at the doors to get in. The entrance hall is covered from floor to ceiling with masks carved into the stone, representing the thousand faces of the god. It is said that one of them is used to speak directly to Phenax and command oneself to him and

obtain his blessing for the deception. Many actors consider this their most emblematic temple and as such come to venerate the god, leaving coins in the mouths of the masks as an offering. While the theater of Agorrus has a reputation for being affected and intellectual, this one is quite the opposite, with laughter and commentary from the audience during performances. Drink and food are served tavern-style from the theater itself, which leads to a relaxation not permissible on the city's other big stage. Thieves and thieves are not uncommon among the audience and the authorities have on more than one occasion proposed to close the theater when rumors of even hired assassins during play breaks are on the rise. Authors of lighter comedies and dramas dream of seeing their plays performed here as a prelude to assured success, although not all of these plays are assured of the blessing of intellectuals and philosophers. The theater manager, Dilario the Good, a flamboyant man who likes to dye and decorate his beard as strikingly as possible, is a skilled negotiator and connoisseur of all kinds of rumors. He maintains a network of informants all over Theros and many suspect that he is hiding something else in his famous theater.

PHENAXIC BATHS (45)

Next to the Theater dedicated to Phenax, in a complex of seven united buildings, are the most important baths of the city. Although there are more in the city, these are the largest and most famous. With nothing to mention on the outside, beyond the fumes and damp smell rising from the buildings, the complex is attached to the Phenax Theater. Externally it has no large windows beyond narrow gaps, through which no more than a bird could enter, in its reddish brick walls. Behind a simple entrance of latticed wood, its vestibule opens majestically as a high hall that distributes to three areas. The stucco walls are decorated with frescoed images of naked young men bathing in natural fountains and lakes, amidst flowers and plants. The floor forms a huge mosaic of geometric figures in blue and red colors. The three white marble thresholds of this hall lead to the changing rooms, the patio of the large pool and the thermal baths. The thermal baths area is a labyrinth of vaulted corridors with indoor pools of hot water at different temperatures, in which to walk, relax and hang out. The gloom and steam in many, as well as the silence, can both relax and intimidate the less accustomed. Sprinkled throughout are stairs to sit on without getting out of the water.

It is not uncommon to find pleasant chats or even philosophical debates of citizens who have arranged to spend the day there. Many deals of all kinds are closed here, often the most obscure and illegal, conspiracies and defamations. Lovers who need to cover up their relationship also come here to see each other secretly, hidden from the eyes of the public.

The courtyards of the compound have large pools in which to swim, sunbathe and eat and around them small rooms are used to give massages to paying users. Nude statues of Heliod, Nylea, Purphoros, Iroas or Ephara in their adolescent, young or adult forms as well as famous heroes in relaxed poses surround the courtyards. Sculptures of Thassa and images of tritons and dolphins adorn the fountains.

The place is quiet and no scandals are allowed, facilitating the relaxation you are looking for. Fruits and watered wine and fruit juices are served in the patios, and there are even two rooms attached to them to offer symposiums to small groups of friends.

ECTYON'S PALACE (39)

Ectión "Tuxeros" is the most famous and eccentric merchant in Meletis. A self-made man, as he likes to call himself, his

wealth is enormous and undoubtedly deserved. His small fleet of ships is awaited by the citizens of the Polis for the exotic nature of his cargoes. He takes risks in business ventures of all kinds and usually wins. He is always willing to finance the most extravagant ventures and adventures, and collects curiosities in his magnificent mansion.

Built on a hillside to the south with access by a wide ramp decorated with balustrades and statues, the mansion includes huge vineyards of a type of grape that he had brought from a lost island in the Siren Sea and only he cultivates in all of Theros. The fame of this wine is no greater than that of the horses he breeds on his estate behind the mansion. Among them is a beautiful

The mansion itself is a bizarre mix of styles, fabrics, weapons and objects that make it any curious person's paradise. With a large inner courtyard, the mansion is the scene of parties and symposiums where the best wine flows. The young and beautiful wife of Ectión enjoys hosting her husband's guests covered with the most beautiful jewels. It is said that in fact Ectión's good fortune comes from a diamond blessed by Heliod himself and which the young woman wears on occasion. Whether or not it is true, it is not strange that the merchant enjoys the reputation of being blessed by the gods in view of the luck that usually accompanies him.

THE BAY OF MELETIS

The main entrance to Meletis is from the sea. As a city devoted to trade and open to the world, the transit of ships in the bay is constant. Soon the kings Tiro and Kinaios decided to protect the port with another artificial bay and to give importance to a fleet that would end up becoming the most important of Theros.

THE BAY OF THE KINGS (25)

Built in the time of the couple of hero kings of the city, under their same supervision in the times of the foundation, the artificial bay that serves as access and wall of the city is one of the



greatest and the oldest icon of Meletis. After the resignation of Tyre and Kinaios, the two colossi on either side of its mouth were built in their honor, at the request of the people. The circular shape and its colossi are the most characteristic of its qualities in this wall taken from the sea. On its surface and under the statues a contingent of the Reverent Army keeps watch day and night. The colonnaded temples under each colossus keep large bonfires always lit to guide the ships. Patrols of city triremes guard the sea with their base in a harbor to the west, near the natural gates to the harbor, within this bay. Two towers lean against the mountains that open abruptly into the harbor, always lit by bonfires. Newts who consider themselves citizens of Meletis enjoy the bay as their home, keeping the more dangerous animals away. A large fauna and flora has been created little by little in this space. Despite all the security measures it has not been possible to avoid attacks such as those of the kraken that attacked the Pyrgnos destroying a large part of it.

BERESEA BEACH (11)

Beresea beach lies southeast of the city and stretches for miles along the coast. The beach is a place of recreation for young people of all kinds but also a place of work for everyone who washes and dries their clothes here. Sometimes the two tasks are mixed in whole days of festive washing. Some fishermen have their homes here and go fishing from it before returning to the city port to sell their merchandise. The beach has been the site of unfruitful raids by triton raiders, repulsed by patrols and Meletian tritons, who consider it their duty and right to protect these shores. In the easternmost area there is a wall covering the lowest area between the mountains of the cliff facing the beach. The most famous legend of the silver is the one that speaks of Thassa often tries to entice the young men who enjoy the sea by adopting the form of a beautiful woman emerged from the sea. It is said that the stormy and agitated sea is the cause of the rejection of some proud young man to the goddess.

THE PORT QUARTER (46)

Although the port extends along the entire length of the inner bay, the real center for seafarers in Meletis is articulated in its easternmost part, perhaps because of its proximity to the temple of Thassa Pelagia and the customs houses. The warehouses are articulated all around the port, but the taverns and meeting centers for the people of the sea are concentrated here. Houses tumble down the northern slope of the mountain that serves as a wall to the sea, in a cluster of houses of all sizes. Legends of the sea here are a recurring topic of conversation and the most varied superstitions can be found. Dozens of people sitting in the shade in front of the harbor sew nets between songs, others unload and load ships with goods from all over, some negotiate and discuss prices under the statue of Thassa. The hustle and bustle goes on all day long until nightfall, when the area seems to quiet down. Many of the city's tritons live here among their fellow citizens, the most famous of all, Palaros the Grey, an affable triton who runs the Palaros tavern, a place of recreation and drunkenness for sailors and curious newcomers. Further inland, farther from the sea, there is an area of stores and market with a very bad reputation, where it is said that you can find stolen goods, forgeries, hire thugs or assassins and even hide among its streets and rooftops. Ixiades the bald has a store here and never refuses the purchase of any object, whatever its provenance. Also Elea of Krimnos cartography, has here his studio and bookstore, which keeps maps of the most varied, some of them manifest-

ly false, others of little credibility, and a few guardians of secrets and treasures worthy of being thrown into the sea.

THE TEMPLE OF THASSA PELAGIA (24)

Thassa is an important patron goddess for Meletis and her temple in the harbor proves it. Facing the harbor and preceded by a majestic statue of the goddess of the Sea, the temple opens with two buildings in the shape of an embrace over the harbor square. Its entire exterior frieze represents the Calafeia in all its stages and as a procession of images united by waves. From this entrance you enter the main hall where an image of Thassa opens between an artificial waterfall. The waterfall creates a huge rumor throughout the room. Wave and ripple motifs dominate here, with no humanoid figures, only fish, dolphins and corals. The feeling inside is that of a sea cave, a throne for the goddess. Its other entrance, to the northeast, opens onto the large square of Korinna, decorated with an image of the mythical queen, with sculptures of tritons and dolphins and a floor covered with mosaic with marine motifs. The square is a romantic place for couples in love at any time and also a frequent area for love dramas. It is a tradition for anyone wishing to venture to the Dakra Islands to approach the fountain to ask forgiveness from the queen for the affront that ended her life.

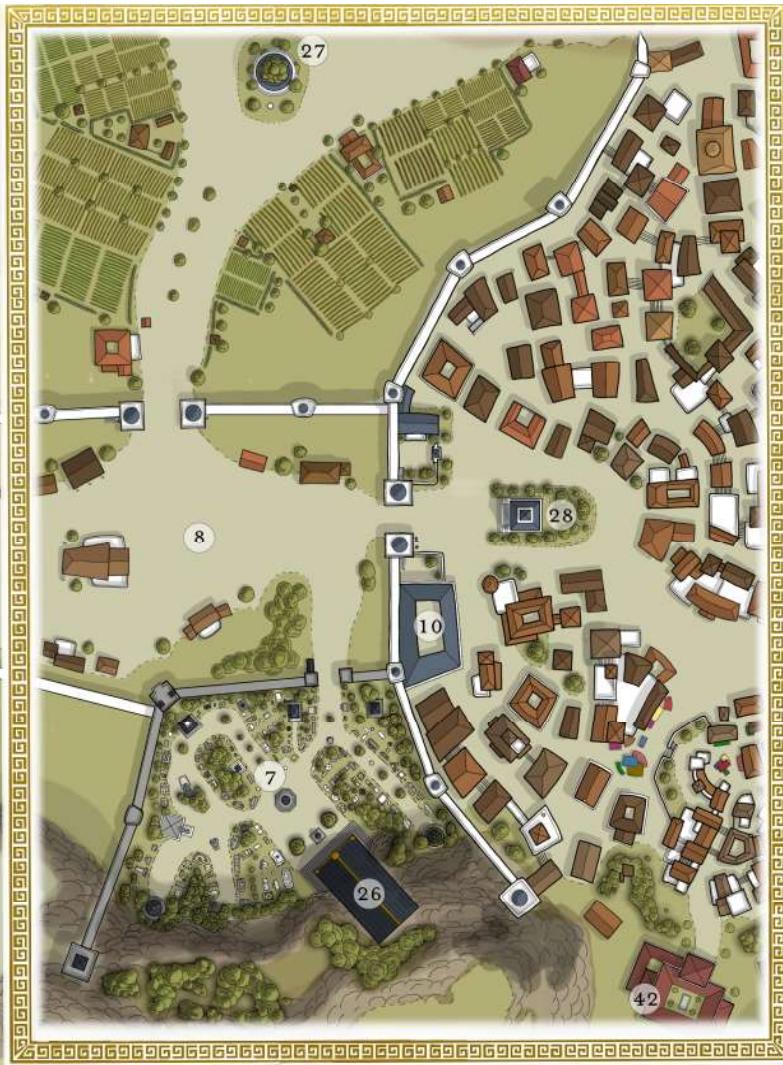
The buildings on either side of the temple serve on the upper floor as the residence of the priests and the lower floor as the market and customs buildings, where officials and priests mix their roles in permitting and price hearing.

PALACE OF ICREON (43)

The noble Icreon descends from a lineage that goes back to two of the first sages to rule in Meletis. Today he himself is a member of the Twelve and one of the most illustrious. His palace is the same house in which his ancestors have always lived and maintains a sober and romantic aspect, both for its antiquity and beauty. The garden of his courtyard and the surroundings of the house have centenary trees as old or even older than Meletis itself. The courtyard is also famous for the sculpture of the Kings, created using Tiro and Kynaios themselves as models. Many of the later effigies of monarchs throughout the polis have used these sculptures as a base. The symposium hall, decorated in shades of blue and decorated with frescoes of griffins and plants, is also considered a relic for all citizens, as it is believed that here the monarchs decided and discussed with their wise advisors how they thought the city Ephara should look like. Icreon is now well past fifty and supports an extended family of fourteen children, seven of whom still reside with him and his wife Ildria. Together they have raised an offspring famous for their beauty, and their daughters and sons are sought after by many, though Icreon and Ildria have always preferred their children to choose their mates without imposition. The twins Ephiné and Karón, the youngest, already have poems from aedos everywhere, elevating the beauty of both to semi-divine.

ARTISAN QUARTER (44)

One of the most popular quarters of Meletis, and certainly the one that maintains the most varied sample of the variety of products offered by civilization, the artisan quarter bustles among awnings, shouts and laughter, stalls of all kinds of works and hot food. Except for the forges of the city, concentrated around the temple of Purphoros, all kinds of workshops



are crowded here creating synergies between them to obtain more and more beautiful and complex creations. Jewelers, pottery artists, vintners from the fields north of the neighborhood, weavers, tanners, carpenters, and even sought-after glassblowers work from sunrise to sunset and share their lives and work with their families. The neighborhood is a labyrinth full of alleys covered by awnings, stairways, rooftops, open houses and workshops where children play while the elderly chat in the shade and merchants close their deals with the artisans to distribute throughout Theros the wealth created here. Among the most famed craftsmen residing here is Koliander the Younger, who has surpassed her own mother in the creation and decoration of pottery of all kinds, and whose workshop enjoys a superb reputation among the most noble families. Also Minon the One-eyed has made his magnificent jewelry and carved stones a reference everywhere. Perialtes of Phaela, a young weaver who recently emigrated from the south, has also become an outstanding artist with the most original designs of meanders and fretwork.

CITY GATES (8)

The northwest of the city is organized around the passage of its walls. The main agricultural lands provide food for the city and a good part of the trade with Akros and Setessa enters through here. The isthmus of the peninsula articulates the movements inside and outside the territory of the same polis, confined by the Long Walls, a double wall of kilometers long that serves as protection against any attack by land in a double wall system and also supplies the city by sea from both ends of the isthmus in case of blockade. The wall system was devised by the kings Tyre and Kynaios as one of their main works during their lifetime. Since then the walls have been refurbi-

shed and enlarged countless times. The interior of the walls maintains a small village inside organized around a couple of taverns and warehouses for merchants. Already near the Blue Gates, the access to Meletis itself, a group of buildings is organized around the esplanade in front of the gates. Near the Necropolis stands out the tavern of Milendroporos, an atypical and affable centaur who has never admitted his origin, nor his real name. He gives shelter in his huge house to those who do not want or cannot pass into the interior of the Polis, and takes care of the horses of his guests with care and reverence. Just in front of the gates a huge, elongated first floor building serves as administrative building, customs house, waiting for merchants and goods, and nexus between the two sides of the walls in trade as a crossroads between the peninsula, the polis to the north, the Siren Sea and the city of Meletis itself and its bay.

TEMPLE OF KARAMETRA KARPOFORA (27)

North of the Long Walls and covering even the Plateau of the Four Winds, fields of crops cover the land, from the vineyards and fruit trees closest to the sea, to the cereal fields going inland. On the way to the Akroana Propilea, the Gates of Akros on the north wall, and not far from the city, is the only major temple outside the walls. Dedicated to Karametra as goddess of the fertility of the fields, her devotees are generally the peasants and farmers of these lands, but the city itself honors with a procession in spring, where the image of the goddess in the temple is dressed with flowers.

The temple, like the rest of the sacred places in honor of this aspect of Karametra and in imitation of the temple to the lady of agriculture of the Sanctuary of Thesteia, is a tholos with columns open to the outside in which grow three large fruit trees that cover the image and the temple itself with their leafy leaves. Its columns covered with vines always keep in their bases baskets with offerings from the land of the peasants, fruits and cereals part of each harvest with which the goddess rewards her devotees. Priests of the goddess help with their blessings by blessing the land and the animals with the grace of the goddess. Several times a year the faithful go out in procession through the city giving seasonal fruits to the children, which makes the goddess very popular among the youngest.

THE NECROPOLIS (7)

Wedged between the city wall, the slope of Mount Xxx and its own wall, and dominated by the sober temple of Erebus Chthonios, the large cemetery of the city extends in an enclosure like a small and silent city. The entrance has a small stoa before the enclosure, dedicated to Athreos, and where the faithful leave copper coins for the dead who cannot afford them in their rites, arranged in different urns. Two priests of the god, covered from head to toe, spend the hours, day and night, praying for the passage of the dead by waving censers throughout the stoa. Pantheons and crypts decorated with carved images of their occupants dot the landscaped grounds. The rites to prepare the corpse are carried out in the Temple according to the decisions of their loved ones. Although cremation is customary, there are citizens who are buried in their family crypts, accompanying the ashes and other bodies of their ancestors. The wealthiest prepare their mausoleums years before, and sometimes their extravagance makes them stand out among the most humble and discreet. One of the most curious is the pyramidal pantheon of Anax "the fat", a remembered member of the Twelve adventurer and traveler in his youth who claimed to have traveled to lands beyond the

Drakka Islands and had himself buried here embalmed under the rites learned there and with the treasures obtained in his adventures.

Also prominent on the same hillside to the south, the circular family pantheon of the Parmexiades is famous for the legends of prophetic spirits that can be heard at night between its columns. Although few have seen it, the place is said to be tremendously beautiful and decadent on the inside, burrowing into the earth between niches of illustrious family members. It is not uncommon to see Retornados standing in front of a grave, aimlessly or desperately searching for something that no one, not even they themselves, know what it is. One tragic story told by the Aedos is that of Arxis and Taria, ill-fated lovers. When Arxis died prematurely murdered by the young woman's father, he decided to go the way of Phenax to return to his beloved. He was confident that his love would allow him to find Taria. It didn't. Taria committed suicide while his beloved returned. Now Arxis remains seated in front of the discreet altar of his beloved's grave without recognizing or knowing what he is doing there. It is said that Taria wanted to return as well, but in doing so only the eidolon of her soul, in the form of pure love, came to her own grave. Now one and the other remain together, but without ever recognizing each other.

TEMPLE OF EREBOS CHTHONIOS (26)

Erebos has one of the most important cult centers of Theros here. The largest known population also has its largest number of dead, and the sinister and respected priests of the temple always seem busy. The temple of black marble, slate tiles and covered with small golden images of the god, rests clinging to a hillside with part of its structure embedded in the stone. The entire temple is dotted with precious stones and metals giving shape to friezes depicting the different punishments that mortals suffer in the god's domain. Its interior sinks deeper and deeper into the earth, in a labyrinth of catacombs after the first level. The main hall shows Erebos seated as a judge on a golden throne completely covered with jewels, dressed soberly in cloth and holding his whip in his right hand and dropping assorted riches from the left in a cascade created with magic. The room is always in semi-darkness, slightly illuminated by the fire of smoking braziers of assorted incense. Columns of black marble are lost to the sides in the darkness. On each side of the throne opens a door with a brilliant carved marker imitating punished souls. These enter the Halls of Erebos, where the corpses of the faithful are prepared in the proper rites to pass to the other side. Many of the most prestigious leaders of the city have been buried in these catacombs that can only be entered accompanied by a priest of the temple after an offering to the god and with the permission of the Archon, the highest authority of the temple. Miclaudes the Blind has held the position for some years by specific decision of Erebos himself, who appointed him as such by taking away his sight as a sign of his blessing. The catacombs hold the most varied secrets and riches. The priests act in pairs of master and apprentice and investigate techniques of preservation of corpses, incineration rites and forms of burial that most please their inflexible lord.

REVERENT ARMY BARRACKS (10)

Although there are several locations that serve to house and train the Reverent Army, its main center and headquarters where its generals make decisions is located in separate buildings on either side of the gates. Members of the army also serve at the gates as customs and guard patrols throughout the city. The buildings both have a sober air where the boasts have room only in the offerings to the chapels to Heliod, Ephara and Iroas that are kept inside. The building to the north of

the gates houses the warrior mages of the army and here the Theurgus, General of the war mages, is also based. Currently the Theurgus is Erion Alertiedes, eldest son of Alertius the Elder, famous for his nobility and honor in battle and for single-handedly facing a Kraken with magic and saving the village of Krimnos from destruction. The library kept in the building is small and concentrates its knowledge in battle magic, but the studies also lead the mages to know spells that allow them to act in other situations that may threaten the safety of the city. The members of the army are devoted to the gods and keep their own rites to show their devotion. The citizens admire and respect them and their most prominent members achieve fame and glory among their fellow citizens. Among their most famous glories are Cloria, Hephador and Milene. The trio is famous for their indiscipline, bravery and adventurous character, which has led them to face situations together to help anyone who has needed it. They enjoy the complicity of Erion who has covered for them on multiple occasions knowing the goodness that always guides them.

TEMPLE OF ATHREOS (28)

A must for foreigners arriving in the city and citizens about to start a trip, the temple of Athreos stands as an altar where the bodies of the most illustrious citizens and heroes of Meletis are laid to rest before the cremation or burial rites are performed. In the cases of the greatest, the enormous altar is even used as a funeral pyre. The temple is raised on a platform with access from a staircase where pilgrims usually kneel in search of the favor of Athreos for a passage without suffering to the other side. The base is covered with images of different golden masks representing all kinds of people, from beggars to kings. On the platform a huge altar covered by a small temple of four thick columns serves as the center of the rituals, of exclusive access to the priests and the deceased who are brought here. It is customary to leave as offerings copper coins on the stairs of the temple so that the priests of Athreos can facilitate the poorest deceased to pay the god in the transit of death. The priests go from here to fetch the recently deceased to their homes. In silent procession with their relatives to the temple, they perform the relevant rites and finally carry the corpse to the gates of the necropolis where the priests of Erebos receive them before burying them.

KRIMNOS

The small village of KRIMNOS would be irrelevant if Master Anapse had not decided to set up his house here. The simplicity and beauty of the village fascinated the philosopher, and he decided to put his vital ideology into practice here, attracting his most faithful admirers and followers. The locals at first did not understand anything, wary of foreigners, but the admiration for their way of life and the wealth and life they have attracted have made everyone live together affably in a symbiosis that seems to improve everyone's life.

The village has no leader or governing body and, due to its small size, the citizens make decisions in impromptu assemblies where everyone is heard. The exquisite fish and seafood and the magnificent fruit, coupled with the tranquility of the village, make the place an idyllic spot for Anapse and his disciples.

THE MAIN SQUARE (1)

The area that acts as the tiny agora of the village is divided by the Gorgos River and connected by two ancient and rough stone bridges over it. In its center and facing the river, a sculpture of an androgynous being of great beauty, holding a cup of wine above his head in one hand, and a cornucopia with fruits of all kinds in the other. The sculpture is covered by a pavilion and represents the eidolon of simple pleasure. A wealthy merchant patron of Anapse paid for the work and had it installed there. It is said that the sculpture is based on the writings of the old philosopher about the visits of the eidolon that inspired his thought. On the same side of the river a wooden building formed by a roof on columns and open, acts as a daily fish

market and allows passage to the temple of Thassa at the end of the arm of land. Next to it, a large building (for the scale of the population) serves as accommodation for foreigners. The good Jiton and his family run the inn and act as guides for many foreigners. On the other side of the river, a one-story white marble building (5) serves as a temple for the patron saint of the polis.

A sculpture of the goddess presides over the interior, decorated with frescoes depicting scenes of symposia, philosophers chatting and phrases of illustrious sages. The fountain that flows from the amphora of the goddess to the central pool, serves the citizens to refresh themselves, and it is not strange to find farmers and philosophers chatting in the coolness of the water. Among the population Anapse is regarded as the chief priest of the worship of the goddess, though it is done very informally and with the philosopher giving speeches in praise of the goddess with the intervention of the others. The festivities are properly honored, but all citizens are open to novelties and improvisations.

TEMPLE OF THASSA KRIMNEA (2)

The goddess of the sea has her temple at the end of the arm of land that protects the small fishing pier of Krimnos. The temple image is small in size, half the size of a human, and is sometimes taken out of the temple in procession, even in boats that go into the sea to offer the goddess there the appropriate offerings. The image stands on a column in the center of a saltwater fountain. The column has dolphins and tritons in high relief, honoring the goddess above. The fountain pool is inhabited by small marine plants and animals such as crabs, minnows, and other creatures. It is also home to Kelyfos, a crab the size of a large dog and very bad-tempe-



red, who has been in the temple longer than the oldest locals can remember. Kelyfos is respected and well regarded on Krimnos, and can be seen on the beach to the west or even in the square north of the temple. The inhabitants educate the children to respect and not to bother the old crab, which does not bother anyone if it is not bothered. To everyone it is a strange pet sent by Thassa, and as such foreigners are warned against disturbing the venerable Kelyfos.

TEMPLE OF KERANOS (3)

Beginning the slope up to the vineyards, just opposite the bridge to Anapse's house, a small, open, circular temple stands in honor of Keranos. The image inside is of an adolescent god, impetuous and surrounded by stone rays. The eyes of the god are two precious stones that change color from red to blue. The temple is famous for the long conversations the philosopher has alone in front of the god. At first it was attributed to the high age of the master, but after being questioned, the inhabitants of Krimnos do not doubt that his conversations are with Keranos himself.

THE HOUSE OF MASTER ANAPSE (4)

One of the most illustrious living philosophers, the elder An built his home here after becoming convinced that Krimnos allowed him to illustrate his thoughts of a simple life in which to enjoy the small details of life, such as good food, conversation or the beauty of nature. In his youth he traveled all over Theros with an open mind to everyone, and can be said to be true friends with the most disparate people.

His house is simple, one-story, with just enough to live in peace and quiet. His library, accumulated over decades, was donated to Krimnos, and he only keeps those books and files that were gifts or for which he has a sentimental interest. The kitchen of the house is run half and half between his mistress, Gerotia, and Anapse himself. Gerotia has served in the house for over 40 years and shows more energy than the master himself, despite being only slightly younger. Grumpy and not very patient, she gladly puts up with Anapse's jokes and certainly watching them together is both tender and comical. There will never be a shortage of good conversation in front of delicious cheeses, figs and good wine in the courtyard covered with vines and lilacs and open to the sea view. The whole house serves as an office and everywhere you can find papers with improvised writings of the master, drawings and poems.

LIBRARY (6)

The small library building was built with money from the polis following Anapse's donation of his collection. The building is simple and is permanently open during the day, administered by Besilana, an illustrious disciple of Anapse with a genuine devotion to reading. Order is not exactly a virtue of the library, but Besilana knows each book and its location perfectly, even remembering the loans that have been made. The walls overflow with material from donated collections, and while the library is not impressive, it holds a bohemian charm that makes it memorable. Besilana can be found here even with the doors closed, avidly rereading some book.

TEMPLE OF KARAMETRA KRASI (7)

High up on the vine-covered hillside that frames Krimnos the temple of Karametra honors the goddess to enable the creation of ever more delicious wine. The wine of the small town is in demand everywhere, and its varieties become fashionable among the elites of the entire peninsula. The citizens send amphorae of the delicious broth to Perisofia and other mem-

bers of the Twelve every season. The temple of the goddess is covered with vines, which grow from the very throne of the effigy. Grapes can always be seen on the branches, whatever the time of year. Tradition leads the peasants to bring before the goddess proof of the wine created for her blessing, and it is to this that they themselves attribute the taste of the wine. Next to the temple a fig tree with large and tasty fruits is said to have been made to sprout by Nylea herself to give shade and food to the farmers.

THE THEATER ON THE HILL (8)

The small grandstand that serves as the theater of the village, is rarely full, except in special situations such as solstice festivals in which Krimnos becomes the center of its region. On those occasions people even from Listes come to the town and the theater is not enough for everyone.

Erected by all the citizens under the plans of an illustrious architect friend of Anapse, the theater hosts plays performed by the citizens themselves. On the grandstand, a column holds the image of Heliod with his spear, as the guardian of order for the citizens. Anapse even enjoys playing comic characters in which he even laughs at himself. Sometimes the plays are performed by children, sometimes by disciples of the master, but they always have a friendly and open character. They eat and drink affably, sharing and laughing together. When it is necessary to convene an assembly of citizens, the place is used to host it.

THE FORGOTTEN ALTAR (9)

At the top of the steep hill that rises like a cliff facing the sea overlooking the town, stands an ancient temple that had been abandoned since before the Trax Era. The remains of the ancient temple are limited to the base of the temple and the remains of its columns. Also a pedestal of some size rises in the background. When Anapse found Krimnos, on one of his walks, the inhabitants guided him to the ruins. He convinced the inhabitants to clean and restore what was left of the temple as much as possible. Thus, the remains became an enclosure open to the sky, with the pedestal of the now lost divinity becoming the altar. A swan with open wings engraved on the altar is the only mention of the mysterious function of the temple, besides the roses that are distributed everywhere, climbing up the remains of different sizes of the columns. Their aroma makes the altar the perfect place for young lovers and many weddings are officiated in front of this altar. Also ceremonies in honor of all the gods are performed here, with the usual improvisation and simplicity that is customary here.

THE TEMPLE OF NYLEA (10)

This temple to the goddess of nature is rarely visited by anyone other than those called by the three priestesses of the goddess who inhabit it. So wishes Nylea. The temple would seem abandoned, taken over by the wildest nature. Open to the sky and with trees growing over its roof, the temple is also the nest of several large falcons. The priestesses and falcons of the temple are dedicated to protecting the mortals of the population, acting as lookouts from on high. They are the closest thing to an organized defense that Krimnos has. And the townspeople thank them with special feasts and by making the temple falcons sacred, like animals of Nylea. There are no stone statues inside, but the roots, trunks and branches of the trees have formed a beautiful image of the goddess that surprises visitors when she seems to come alive with animal contact, wind breeze or rain.

LISTES

Marking the northern boundary of the territories dominated by Meletis, this fortress is a source of pride for the Reverent Army because of the respect its troops command among the population of the region.

The symbiosis between the troops and the population is enormous, and their traditions, references and even character make them a very cohesive group. The cult to Iroas is very important and the honor that the god represents is inculcated from an early age together with the cult to Ephara. Traditionally (and somewhat apocryphally) here both gods are considered a marriage and their legends about how the two have influenced the region dominated from Listes.

THE AKROON

The solitary hill on which the citadel of Listes stands dominates the region on either side of the Zerion River. Before the citadel was erected on top of it, the hill was used for signing peace agreements and commercial treaties between the Polis of Setessa and Meletis. The sculpture of Ephara that today is under cover in the temple of the goddess in the fortress presided over these agreements already in those times.

Gradually and after facing the dangers of the forest beyond the river and the incursions of some Pheres tribes, the hill was fortified to serve as protection for the area. Today farms and fields are organized around it seeking its shelter, and it also serves as a place of worship for many of the traditions of the locals.

TEMPLE OF IROAS AXIOTIMOS (1)

Nestled as part of the wall itself, proud and lofty, the Temple of Honor of Iroas is a center of daily worship for the soldiers of the Reverent Army and a large part of the civilians. Every morning and as soon as the sun rises, the faithful gather in front of the temple in formation in the square that serves as an agora. After some rites of offerings in the temple in charge of the priest and maximum rank of the troop, the champion of Iroas Ignax the Brave, the troop and the civilians who think it is necessary train in combat in the square while the activity begins. The temple presides over the fortress on a stepped platform that continues up a staircase the width of the doorway and into the temple to the image of the god, standing firm, holding his spear and shield in a martial stance as he looks down the steps at the bottom of the staircase to his worshippers. The outside of the temple that merges with the wall maintains a huge bas-relief of the helmet of Iroas flanked by two columns attached to the wall. The image seems to watch over the entire region from the walls. The temple is considered the last bastion of all Listes, the place to take shelter when all else falls. The citizens have even been trained to carry the image of Ephara next to Iroas in case their integrity is in danger. This has never been the case.



THOLOS OF EPHARA ALCIS (2)

The other great temple of the citadel is in honor of the patron saint of the polis, and keeps inside the most precious relic of the region. The effigy of the goddess, in white marble, has accompanied the inhabitants since before the walls were built. The sculpture is small in size, with a height that makes it transportable. To give it more packaging, has been raised to a column decorated with warlike exploits of Meletis and placed in the center of the temple. It is said that only if the statue is damaged beyond repair will the city fall, and that is why the civilians have an orderly protocol for its care in case of attack. The care of the temple and the effigy is in the hands of three priests (Milene, Estrion and Hendora) who are also in charge of educating the children of the citadel by giving classes in the temple around the image.

THE PIRON (3)

From the top of this tower starts the system of fire signals that alerts other watchtowers one after another until Meletis. The Piron is turned on in case of alarm about something that the commanders of the citadel do not think they can cope with and could be dangerous to the Polis. So far it has been used on rare occasions, in case of war or by some creature out of the forest. Given the height of the watchtower, above the rest of the buildings, its lit fire also serves to warn peasants and shepherds to seek refuge, if possible in the citadel. All the inhabitants of the region are perfectly aware of the procedure in such cases, and respond as disciplined as the most veteran soldier.

STORES (4)

The few stores and stores of the citadel are organized around the temple of Ephara. The weekly fruit and grain market is organized in the central space, used as an agora, but manufactured goods are sold in these other stores. There is not a great quantity of products, certainly, but you can find some rarities brought by Lagoona or traders from Setessa. One of these stores is especially curious. Run by a satirist named Querestes, strangely organized and cerebral, it sells all sorts of products needed to undertake adventures, arranged in specific kits. Querestes was a very adventurous traveler in his youth, and is also willing to offer advice to those who want to venture into the forests to the east.

TEMPLE OF KARAMETRA MITERA (5)

At the foot of the Akroon hill, watched over by the image of Iroas from the wall, the temple of Karametra was built here near the road with a twofold intention. Firstly it gives the farmers of the area a place to worship the goddess close to the fields they work. On the other hand, visitors and travelers from Setessa find a temple to their patroness in the first settlement outside their polis. The three trees that host the image of the goddess were brought as seeds from the Nexus of Spring itself in Setessa. The temple itself is simple, but the evergreen blossoms of the trees naturally embellish it. Many spring processions in the region end here.

NEOLANTIN

The city of Neolantin, heir of the mythical polis of Olantin, belongs to the coalition created by Meletis, but of all the populations that compose it, it is the one that has the least feeling of belonging to the polis, either by distance to the city of Meletis, or by its own history and culture, or by the simple power of the city itself. The city has inherited all the myths and traditions of its predecessor, proud of its past, but promising not to make the mistakes of the powerful polis. The city maintains the cult of Heliod as fundamental and many rites dedicated to the god are unique to Neolantin. This does not indicate neglect towards the other gods, evidently, and the religiosity of the inhabitants is palpable in every house of the city, and disrespect to any deity is condemned with expulsion from the city. As in its day Olantin, today the city is governed by the Triarchy, the three priests of Heliod in charge of the most important rites to the Sun god and of keeping the tradition brought by the survivors of Olantin. In addition, unlike the rest of the populations in the peninsula, the old nobility has real power in the city, and the civil positions are not democratically elected, but appointed by the Triarchy from among the noble families, being this a headache for Meletis, and cause of the major frictions with the Triarchs.

TEMPLE OF HELIOD LYKOFOS (1)

The sacred Temple of Twilight, dedicated to Heliod, vigilantly dominates the entire city from Cape Argostos, the westernmost point of the Meletis peninsula.

The temple is the main place of worship in the city and daily, at sunset, it becomes the landmark of all citizens. Next to the main building rises a marble obelisk twice the height of the temple. The pyramid that crowns the obelisk is made of shining crystal and every evening the bright light of Heliod illuminates the crystal with a final glow, which can be seen from anywhere in Neolantin. The obelisk is both a tribute to the sun's rays and a reminder of the power of Khrusor, the Spear of Heliod, destroyer of Olantin. The Triarchy presides over the so-called Songs of Tears from the temple, and the rest of the temple priests, dressed in white and gold veils, ritualize weeping for the end of the day, praying to Heliod to return to illuminate the world with his glory at dawn.

The temple, without walls, stands on two rows of columns with capitals and bases decorated in gold. An image made of white marble of the god, serious and distant, hieratic, in position to throw Khrusor, recalls the wrath of the god. The exterior light bathes the white marble of the floors of the temple, and its roof of golden tiles. The temple is always attended by priests of the god, who also walk among the city watching for any act of pride that could offend Heliod, to punish him.

THEATER OF THE ARGOSTYLE (2)

The theater of Neolantin is installed on the slope of the Argostyle, at the foot of the Temple of Heliod Lykofos. The exterior building is sober, decorated only with columns and a pediment with a theater mask in its center. Plays to be performed must first pass through a council headed by one of the Triarchs, who decide whether they are suitable for performance or might offend the gods. The groups of itinerant actors who seek to represent comedies in Neolantin, always have difficulties to do so, and some are banned from entering the city, for their frivolous representation of the gods.



FORTRESS OF THE PHALANX OF HELIOD (3)

The legendary troops of Olantin have their direct continuation in the current protectors of Neolantin. Arising in the mythical times of the Akronian Wars, the Phalanx of Helioid stands today as heir to the pride of the ancient Polis. Armed with spears and javelins, and with golden shields, the Phalanx thus clearly differentiates itself from the Army of Meletis, again making it clear that they are an allied city, not a subjugated

city. The highest ranking member is the Polemarch, Archiolas of Neolantin, a proud warrior, also a priest of Heliod, famous for his victories in his youth at the games of Iroas, and for his humility and honor.

The fortress is still no marvel, more like a cluttered cluster of buildings clinging to the rocks below the temple. It is far from worthy of the troops protecting it, but there is already a project to double its size and create a fortress worthy of Neolantin and his mythical army.

PALESTRA MAGNA (4)

One of the most popular competitions in Neolantin are the wrestling competitions. In the Palestra Magna, the most important fights from all over the peninsula, including Meletis, take place. The tradition is so great that wrestlers from Akros have come to test their skills in this hall. The palestra is a square building with a square central courtyard whose center is the palestra itself, surrounded by bleachers for a limited number of spectators. Not just anyone is allowed to enter, although members of the surviving noble houses of Olantin always have a place. The young men who fight in this space, do so knowing that glory will accompany them in Neolantin all their lives, and that as long as they are considered valid fighters, they will lack for nothing. The wrestlers' families and sponsors put them up in their homes and pay for their every need and whim. In return they are seen with them in public as a sign of prestige. The winners of the most important fights, presided over by the Triarchs, are called Touched by the Sun, and are given a golden olive crown which they wear in public and which they must give up if they lose to an opponent, inside or outside the Palestra Magna.

TEMPLE OF IROAS CHRYSOPELEX (5)

Iroas, he of the Golden Helmet, is worshipped here as the protector of honor and justice brought by Heliod. On the way to the temple of the Solar Crown, before starting the ascent, a large sculpture of Iroas looking to the sky, armed and wearing his helmet, stands in front of the temple of Iroas. Called "of the golden helmet" because of the effigy of the god on its pediment, represented only by his helmet, here made of gold, the temple acts as a corridor for the fighters of the palestra who perform here the rites prior to the combats, covering their bodies with the sacred oils of the temple and honoring Iroas to guide them towards honorable behavior. The city's soldiers also come here to bless their weaponry when they receive it, and often hold a night vigil in front of the image of Iroas outside. The temple has no images of the god, but the friezes depict images of the Akronian Wars and the heroes who fought in them, exalting the noblest of them.

HOUSE OF THE IXONES (6)

Ixon Falcitas was the first nobleman of ancient Olantin to reach land after the catastrophe of the polis. It is said that being saved was a sign of Heliod's blessing, and today his descendants are still considered the noblest among the families of the city.

The house that serves as the base for the family is a mansion of clear good taste, with decoration typical of the old Olantin and always with exquisite maintenance. The family has in the mansion a small altar to Heliod, and another to Thassa. The devotion of the members of the household is unquestionable and they are among the most devout and conservative in the city. The most important collection of Olantin artifacts is housed in the mansion. Its matriarch, Fedora Ixona, is a tremendously religious old woman who finances expeditions all over to find remains of the ancient polis, mainly tablets with writings that can help bring back the glory of her ancestors.

THE LIBRARY (7)

The Neolantin Library building, a tall single-story building near the Agora, is mainly devoted to collecting ancient knowledge from Traxian times, which does not make it particularly extensive. Other important parts are also its collection of maps from Olantin times, and ancient incantations. The

amount of material would make it a mediocre library, but the rarity of the works makes it a place of reference. One of the Triarchs acts as librarian and is the one who grants or withdraws permission to access the collection, and he is not very keen on doing so.

DIKAION (8)

The priests of Heliod roam the city covered with their veils acting as judges of the most common disagreements among the citizens. Even so, the most serious matters are dealt with here. The building consists of a large hall in front of a sculpture of Ephara with her eyes covered and holding an unrolled scroll before her, with the most important laws of the city engraved on it. In front of the sculpture three equal thrones allow the Triarchs to preside over judgments of importance in the city. Only the aforementioned and the Triarchs, accompanied by protectors of the Phalanx of Heliod, are allowed access during deliberations. In the square between the Temple of Ephara and the Dikaion, hundreds of citizens usually congregate waiting for the judgment of the priests. When the decision is made, the priests leave the temple and make it known to all. A scribe takes note and after making the appropriate checks and rites, the writing is kept on the shelves of the Dikaion. If the priests of Heliod have doubts about how to impart justice in the streets, they can go to look for exemplary sentences kept here taken by the Triarchy since ancient times.

AGORA (9)

The inhabitants of Neolantin are very proud of the beauty and order of their agora. Arranged around the temple of Ephara Poliatis, it may not seem as crowded as the huge space that Meletis has, but this is largely because some of the trade is also carried to the auction building near the port, extending the daily hustle and bustle there. The agora consists of one-story stoas, surrounding the central square, in the center of which stands the shrine to Karametra. The stoas protect the citizens from the heat and rain and allow them to hold conversations of all kinds, including philosophy and magic. At lunchtime, the agora is overflowing, and citizens seek shadows in which to eat with their friends and fellow citizens.

TEMPLE OF EPHARA POLIATIS (10)

The temple of Ephara presides over the agora, neat and majestic in front of the temple of Karametra. Of straight lines and pure white marble, its decoration is formed by fretwork in the form of waves and bas-reliefs in a frieze that tells the story of the founding of the city since the arrival of the ancient citizens of Olantin. The size of the temple is considerable and it holds one of the symbols of the revival of the people of Olantin inside. In the center of the great hall a sculpture of the goddess, somewhat cracked and aged, stands covered with fabrics of the finest workmanship. The sculpture of double human size, is said to be the same one that was kept in the ancient temple of Ephara in the now submerged polis. Only a few months later, and as a symbol of the goddess' approval, the same sculpture was found on the Beach of Tears, southwest of the city, weathered by waves and rocks, but complete and beautiful as before. For the citizens of the new city, this was the symbol of the new opportunity the gods were giving them.

KARAMETRA GEORGICA (11)

On a circular altar covered by a marble dome, the image of Karametra seated on her throne blesses the farmers and the products they sell around her. Producers from around the city organize themselves around the temple of the goddess every new day, supplying the food needed by the city. The stalls have been perfectly distributed for decades, and it is difficult for any of them to change. Every day, all the farmers leave a piece of their products on the altar around the goddess. The Triarchs then give orders to distribute these offerings among the orphans of the city in honor of the motherly goddess. The priestesses of Karametra, housed in the Halls of the Triarchs, take care of this every evening, which makes them very dear to the poorest and neediest.

HALLS OF THE TRIARCHS (12)

The palace where the three priests of the Triarchy reside is also the center of the city's government. Civil officials, nobles and priests of all rites and gods can be seen here. The priestesses of Karametra and the priests of Heliod also reside in this palace, assisting the Triarchs. The exterior of the building is simple, with two floors. A large hall in one wing of the building serves as an audience hall and large dining room, presided over by the three thrones of the Triarchs, in front of a large image of Heliod, haughty and menacing. On one side of the building, a large courtyard with a huge altar keeps a huge cauldron on a column always lit. The rites of remembrance of Olantin are performed here, and here also Heliod is asked for forgiveness for the pride of the men of the past. The city officials swear here not to be guided by pride and never pretend to usurp the glory of the gods, and to serve them with will and firmness. Immolating incense, wood and objects of great value, the offering and the promise are taken to heaven. The Triarchs always act jointly in making decisions, so that it is difficult to know whether or not any of the three are in disagreement with their companions. The guide for any decision is always the correct morals and the application of the doctrine, although they do not hesitate to send pilgrims even to Mount Kure if they doubt and need the answer of the god through his oracles.

HEKVETION (13)

Neolantin's answer to the Dekatia of Meletis, the Hekvetion serves as an academy of philosophy for the young people of the city, without having to go to Meletis. In reality, neither the means at disposal, nor the quality of teaching is comparable to the Dekatia, and the teachers of Meletis tend to be less closed-minded. Still, mages coming out of the Hekvetion achieve outstanding success in elemental magic.

Ephara has a worship space within the same building, which has classrooms dedicated to all the gods, with frescoes and reliefs on the walls and ceilings. One of the members of the Triad officially presides over the Hekvetion, although he is only bothered for important matters, and a council of seven masters makes the day-to-day decisions.

THASSEAN STOA (14)

Between the temples of Thassa and Ephara, near the agora and facing the harbor, is an enclosed stoa in a square that serves as a marketplace and price auction for merchants. Much of the work as judges of the priests of the temple of Heliod ends up taking place here, resolving disputes that invocations to dialogue in front of the images of Ephara have failed to resolve. Prices are thus decided in this building. Swindlers or

those seeking to abuse their position can be banned from any trade in the city, so "special" business is usually done on the sly. The frieze of the whole stoa repeats the face of Ephara on each hollow between columns, and it is under these effigies where the deals are closed, with the blessing of the goddess.

TEMPLE OF THASSA ASPHALIA (15)

Thassa is worshipped here as the protector of sea travel. A walkway over the sea connects a sculpture of the goddess on the water with the temple in the harbor. The interior of the temple consists of a single huge nave with thick columns with recesses in them from floor to ceiling. In these recesses are displayed models of real ships whose owners thus ask for the protection of the goddess. The walls inside the temple depict the sea, with sea creatures. The ceiling of the temple is made of wood of different types, coming from the ships that were saved from the sinking of Olantin. The prows of those ships are now used as decorative capitals or in the pediments of the exterior, where Thassa is depicted protecting the survivors to their new lands.

THE HARBOR

The bay that forms the port is relatively small but well protected. The ships are sometimes crowded to the point that sometimes the unloading of goods must be done in boats without reaching the port. The entrance to the harbor is marked by a lighthouse of considerable height, which also helps to bridge the cliffs to the southeast. The lighthouse is a source of pride for the citizens of the town who do not hesitate to boast of its height to visitors. A relief effigy of Thassa decorates each of the four outer walls of the building. The lighthouse fire is always kept burning, considered sacred and a symbol of consecration to the gods. Small-sized warehouses dot the docks and carriages can be seen constantly between the harbor and the Thasian Stoa, where much of the merchandise is stored directly. Group of Neolantin's citizen tritons serve in the harbor as guards and protectors of the ships. Even in one of the taverns on the south side of the docks, the Tavern of Iolas, a group of tritons led by Direa the white, offer themselves as mercenaries to go into the ruins of the sunken Olantin. To the south of the docks stands a small open circular temple protecting a stele that reads, "Respect the gods, traveler, and may your pride not pretend you are equal to them."

ALTAR OF PHARIKA ACESIA (16)

The altar of the goddess Pharika is divided into a public upper part and an inner cave unknown to anyone other than her priests. Two stone chalices of gigantic size flank the main building with the image of the goddess covered by the stoa surrounding the altar. In front of the sculpture the floor opens to a staircase that leads into the inner cavern beneath the temple. Here lives the only priestess of the goddess in the city, Pesela, a triton who has disowned her own race and is fervently devoted to Pharika. No one knows how far the caves extend from here, but there are rumors of submerged caves with algae and aquatic plants, molds and waters of special properties blessed by the goddess, which Pesela busily collects for her ointments and cures of all kinds.

TEMPLE OF PURPHOROS CLYTOMETIS (17)

As in other cities, Purphoros surrounds its temple with workshops and artisan stores. Here it becomes the most popular of Neolantin's neighborhoods, and its temple an agora of exhibition and competition among workers vying for the god's favor. The temple is an elevated platform on steps with a circular stoa around an eternally burning pure. Three staircases covered by the stoa lead to a basement with rooms for the four priests, a forge with a large furnace, and an altar with the image of the god, to which only the priests have access. To prove their worth, the artisans offer pieces of exceptional workmanship to the temple. If the priests consider the piece worthy, they leave it there for ten days, it is considered a masterpiece, and its creator a master. If any of the priests do not consider the piece suitable, they throw it on the pyre, destroying it in the flames of Purphoros.

Among the most important masters of the city are Hirios the skilled, a centaur blacksmith raised in Neolantin, adopted by Kliron, a human who taught Hirios the mastery of metal. Pilea is a ceramic artist whose paintings have made her a favorite of the Triad, and her works supply temples throughout the city. Finally, Neolantin's most prominent craftsman, Tericles, is known throughout Theros for the quality of his jewelry to the point of being nicknamed "touched by Purphoros." His temper of genius, on the other hand, makes him intractable and many of his patrons suffer his fits of anger with resignation.

BEACH OF TEARS (18)

It is said that the survivors of Olantin reached this beach after its fall. From here the resignation turned to tears and the weeping is still remembered today in a feast guided by the Triarchy and that begins here, with a procession of mourners desse the beach, silence in the streets and submission before the temple of Heliod. The images of the temples are covered with black veils during that day.

The beach serves also for amusement of the young people and of port for some boats of fishermen.

PUBLIC BATHS (19)

In addition to beautifully decorated baths with swimming pools and relaxation areas, this building also has dedicated gymnasium areas where many young people train their bodies. The baths are always open, day and night, and access is free. Ephara and Iroas preside over many of the rooms in fountains and sculptures. The baths hall is renowned for its beauty, with brilliant blue tiles that look like real sapphires in the glare of the fine rays of sunlight streaming overhead. The view of the thermal pool, covered with these tiles, is memorable, even more so for the beauty of the image of the Ephara fountain at its bottom, made of beautiful blue-veined marble. It is said that in the evenings, philosophers of every school meet here to discuss theories that in public might be considered heretical.

TEMPLE OF ATHREOS

It is said that the first of the temples created in the city was this one to Athreos. Upon their arrival in the area, the major concern of the survivors was to offer suitable rites to the inhabitants of Olantin and to pay for their passage to the other side. Thus, rites were offered and oracles of the god

were consulted and this temple was built with the names of the deceased engraved on walls, columns and ceilings. The great exterior pyre replaces any image to the god and serves to throw offerings to even save those who perished under the waters. The temple holds a percentage of the city's taxes as an offering, and remains closed unless the Triarchy requests that it be opened.

NECROPOLIS AND TEMPLE OF EREBOS POLYDEGMON (21)

Outside the walls stands the temple to Erebus, the one that welcomes the dead, and around it, two stoas with niches and several mausoleums keep the remains of those who can afford it. Almost all of Olantin's survivors found rest for their bodies here, and the most noble lineages claim these tombs as a way of legitimizing their own.

The building most reminiscent of the art and style of the polis of Olantin is the temple to Erebus. Erected under the direction of one of the most famous surviving architects, the great Tholos of gray stone and black roofs, covers much of its walls with black marble. The large inner hall holds in its center a smaller temple enclosed by a door of pure gold with the image of Erebus engraved on it, ruling the dead. The interior of the shrine holds a huge treasury of offerings and a complex of rooms representing the different parts of the domains of the god of the dead. Beyond it lie unknown caverns and halls. The care of the temple is performed by Nerenikles the upright, chief priest of the god. Four returnees serve in the temple as assistants to Nerenikles. No one knows how the four returnees came to the temple or why they serve the god, but they have proven their devotion and usefulness.

TEMPLE OF KERANOS ASTRAPEOS (22)

Stormy nights are especially beautiful spectacles from the eastern shores of Neolantin. The temple of Keranos, which covers almost the entire surface of a nearby lonely island, attracts lightning from storms in the area, and seems to intensify the force of its thunderbolts. This greatly reassures the citizens and surprises foreigners, who are often fascinated by the spectacle of lightning striking the temple of the god, amidst great waves, without damaging it in any way. Only the priests of the temple, always isolated on the island, know what exactly happens on these occasions, but there is talk of extraordinary ordeals in which the god offers prophetic illumination. The temple is a tholos with an open roof, supported by columns, and with its interior excavated in the rock, like a huge well with entrances and small rooms. Some artists and craftsmen have held weeks-long vigils at the temple to obtain guidance from Kerakos, but not all have returned with anything more than the experience of a lightning strike over their heads.



PHAEALA

The southernmost town in the entire territory of the confederation formed by Meletis, Phaela is a frequent meeting place for heroes and adventurers. As a fishing village, the port does not have sufficient capacity for large trade, but the landing here is usually for reasons more related to the search for glory than for money. To the southeast of the town rise hills and craggy mid-height mountains that hold ruins from the Age of Trax, where it is rumoured there are still remnants of the palaces of giant kings and the rule of the Archons. Phaela itself seems to still keep traces of that past and it is not strange to find in its architecture references to the dreaded Archons and even more terrible creatures.

TEMPLE OF THE PANTHEON (1)

Overlooking the village from the top of Mount Thikon, the main temple for the inhabitants of Phaela honors all the gods equally. In fact it honors effigies of gods even unknown today. Its structure is similar to that of any other temple in Meletis, but its decoration is archaic and strange to any foreigner. Internally the temple is organized as a wide corri-

dor between its north and south doors. On both sides of this colonnaded corridor are open recesses where there are representations of twenty gods, all surrounded by candles, incense and offerings. Many of them can be clearly recognized as those of Heliod or Erebos, but others cannot be more than slightly associated with any of the gods. Karametra has here a different appearance and her sculpture is always covered with blood. Neither Iroas nor Mogis can be associated with either, and Ephara hardly with any of the goddess images. A golden bull adorned with garlands of flowers can be worshipped and honored as well. The walls inside the great hall are covered with badly deteriorated paintings and engravings with as yet undeciphered writings from ancient times. The temple priestess, Narkissa, seems to be as old as the temple. Elderly and enigmatic, she celebrates the rites pertinent to the gods in unclear languages. In spite of everything, and the doubts that the temple causes in the visitors, the inhabitants of Phaela do not hesitate to honor here all the gods with offerings and rites with subtle variations of what is usual in the rest of the peninsula.

TEMPLE OF EPHARA ARXAIOS (2)

Near the road to the north and in front of the pier is a small square that serves as an agora for the citizens of Phaela and in the center of which stands the temple dedicated to Ephara. Circular in shape and proportionately high, the temple is of white stone with multiple masks of Ephara covering its walls. Its columns are plain and without bases, with simple capitals. The interior is also tremendously simple with an image of Ephara in the center on a circular pedestal. The image is crude and seems to be carved on an earlier sculpture. Even the amphora of the goddess looks like an addition. The few trials and contracts that are closed in Phaela are made in front of this image. The priest of the temple, Antides Pyrinos, a skilled magician also serves as the guardian of the population, and wise man to turn to.

THE HOUSE OF ZARCORIAS (3)

A two-story building near the agora and facing the harbor, with an outside stairway access to the second floor, it serves as lodging and tavern for visitors and locals. It is owned by Zarcorias, a gruff man in his fifties famous for his lack of patience with braggarts. Fishermen often spend time in front of Zarcorias' house sewing their nets, chatting and making up stories to tell. The accommodations offered are hay beds in four-person rooms without any luxury. The price varies according to how smug you seem to the owner, who will not hesitate to throw out those he doesn't like, with a beating if necessary.

TEMPLE OF THASSA THALASSINÁ (4)

In fishing villages like Phaela the cult to Thassa is primordial. Here her temple stands near the cliff to the south, arranged near a tall column with the effigy of a newt blowing a horn at its highest point. The column has been placed to mark the dangerous rocks of the cliff, which in the past claimed the lives of so many fishermen. On the esplanade that follows, the temple stands alone. Low in height, with twisted columns, unusual, its walls glow in blue and green colors, with brightness reminiscent of the interior of the sea. With three identical arched entrances, the temple has a single room with the image of Thassa in the center of a pool that overflows into a moat. On the outside, the moat supports along its entire wall a staircase that

descends deep into caves that connect to the sea. The image does not wear his characteristic bident and raises his hands above his head, making the water that fills the pool gush out of them and falls in an overflowing waterfall at the bottom. Chipped murals with huge damp stains cover the interior walls. The smell of humidity and salt is intense. In the temple serves a triton priestess, Alas, assisted by two young women from the temple. Alas is said to know access to unknown caves and halls from the sea caves at the bottom of the temple, and is also said to have sealed some because of the danger they might bring to Phaela.

THE FROUROS (5)

The southernmost fortress in the entire polis of Meletis is not much more than a watchtower on the cliff. In fact protection is limited to the small building with its three-story tower and a detachment of fifteen men commanded by Peliades the Red, a veteran of the fleets of Meletis skilled in dealing with pirates and tritons. The fortress has little of note beyond the tower and the cramped barracks. The hoplites actually go down to the harbor to eat. The flirtations between the troop, sent from Meletis, and the young locals is the main cause of gossip. Lately the fashionable couple is the young hoplite Phedira and Dilio, the most desirable and attractive of the young fishermen of Phaela. They have already sworn eternal love to each other in front of the temple of Thassa, making more than one of them sigh.

The fortress regularly faces raids on the village by tritons in search of plunder, and in times when their aggressiveness is at its highest, they even go out with the fishermen in their boats to protect them.

THE DOMATION (6)

The party hall where to celebrate events, great fishing or a victory without casualties after an attack of pirates or tritons, the single-storey building has room for all those who want to join. As a large arcaded courtyard, when not being used as a party venue, it serves as a storehouse for grain and fish in the rooms around the courtyard. In the center of the courtyard there are usually large bonfires where they cook fish while feasting, singing and creating their own legends about what they have experienced.

TRAX BEACH (7)

To the south of Phaela and of difficult access on foot, perhaps impossible, this beach has a reputation of dangerous. The inhabitants rarely come here. The colossal head of a statue of unknown effigy rests on the beach. The locals have dubbed it the “Trax head” without much rigor. No one knows who it belonged to or how much it was sculpted. The young people bet among themselves to reach the beach, a rather dangerous feat. Some of them say that by investigating the beach they can also

find an armed arm of the sculpture buried in the sand.

The beach is also famous for its numerous caves, of different sizes, no one has yet explored them beyond some group of heroes who either have not returned or have done so telling stories of ruined palaces in its depths.

THESTEIA

The village of Thesteia is actually a sanctuary around which are scattered farms and buildings closely related to the sacred temple of Karametra Chloe, she who makes the fields bloom. The village has a large influx of pilgrims from all over the peninsula, who come to ask the goddess for her gifts of fertility in fields and wombs. Many couples make a trip to the shrine after getting married and perform the famous Karametra rites here to bless them with healthy and strong children.

The shrine is also the seat of the mystic cult of the goddess in Meletis. Faithful initiates are trained here in the goddess' secret ways related to fertility and then serve as priests of Karametra everywhere blessing crops and families.





TEMPLE OF KARAMETRA CHLOE (1)

The magnificent center of the shrine is similar to many of the temples of the goddess on the peninsula. An open circular stoa with an image of the goddess in one of its inner thirds from whose throne emerges a gigantic tree that splits into three and covers the image and much of the temple. The tree bears fruits not found anywhere else called Karpos, sacred and of use only in the mystical rites. The image of the goddess, made of white marble and her golden scythe stand out on her throne of bark and moss. The hair of the goddess is made of natural leaves of an eternally shining greenness. The temple is always brimming with offerings in the form of produce from each season's harvest, distributed at the feet of the image or resting on the columns. In spring the temple is a real spectacle when the branches of the tree blossom into beautiful pink flowers that fall caressed by the wind and bathe the ground. The flowering lasts more than a month accompanied by an explosion of flowers throughout the sanctuary that make it one of the most beautiful spectacles to behold.

THE ALSEID STOA (2)

This stoa in front of the main temple is used for the pilgrims' banquet. Flanked by two silos of wheat and barley in the form of towers, the open building houses an elongated table where there is always fresh fruit of all kinds brought by local farmers to feed any pilgrim in need. Good wine is served in jugs with images of the goddess and her priestesses. Any abuse of Karametra's gift is punished, and gluttons and drunkards are usually expelled after a suitable beating. Only children are allowed to eat as much as they wish. Adults are required moderation and awareness of the gift.

TEMPLE OF NYLEA ANESIDORA (3)

Nylea is considered here the "mother" of Karametra along with Heliod. The role of the goddess as facilitator of natural gifts, fruits of the earth, strength or vigor is honored in this temple. The image at its center is devoid of her bow and instead her hands brush with her marble fingers plants that cover the image up to the waist. The plants vary

their color and condition according to the season in a beautifully exaggerated image of the passing of the year. The colonnaded tholos is open and the white image of the goddess is seen from any part of the sanctuary presiding over much of the rituals in honor of Karametra.

HOUSE OF THE MAIDENS (4)

The sacred Maidens of Karametra live in this magnificent building in front of the temple. It is divided into simple rooms and a preparation room for purification before the rites with a covered pool in its center where the young women wash for the daily rites. Nothing else. Entry into the house by anyone but the Maidens is punishable by death. The building is sacred as the priestesses themselves, and offending Karametra can mean years of bad harvests that no one is willing to face, so the priestesses of the goddess are never disturbed in their tasks and the faithful are responsible for offering food for them as an offering in the temple. They are in charge of cleaning the image of the goddess and keeping the temple perfect for the visit of the many faithful. Every day at dawn they get up between songs, purify and make the procession from their home to the main temple of Karametra in the sanctuary and perform the tasks and rites appropriate to each day of the week and season. It is a pleasure for pilgrims to wake up to the voices blessed by the goddess of Maidens. The girls cover their hair with white veils always, held by diadems of leaves, small fruits and even ears of corn. Their dresses are always immaculate white. They are in charge of guiding the initiates through the mystic rites. There is no hierarchy among them, and only Karametra herself guides them. It is said that a blessing from one of these priestesses can cure even the most serious illnesses.

THOLOS OF KARAMETRA KARPOPHORA (5)

Although the main temple of the Sanctuary is that of Karametra Cloe, the aspect of the goddess as the giver of fruits is undoubtedly the one that has more followers among the peasants of the region. The circular temple of small size and open, does not even have an image of the goddess, who is represented by her throne of multiple amphorae from which branches of trees are always loaded with fruits of different types. At the foot of the throne grow berries, strawberries and other fruits of leafy bushes. The goddess has appeared on this throne on many

occasions, many to bless children. The most famous legend is that of Chaeron of Thesteia, a young orphan boy who is said to have been nursed by the goddess in the temple where he took refuge at the age of three. The child grew up blessed by the goddess and became a hero of remarkable strength and beauty, who served as a champion of the goddess protecting the peasants and shepherds of Thesteia from beasts and dangers.

ALTAR OF PHARIKA LOIMIA (6)

The place of worship of Pharika in Thesteia, the altar is a completely enclosed and dark circular temple with only one entrance. The columns attached to the wall mimic snakes with their heads instead of capitals, and the entire wall of the building appears to be covered with reptilian scales carved in stone. Inside is the altar of the goddess, in front of a moss-covered stone image of the Pharika. On the altar there are always two chalices with different liquids. Only one priest of the goddess serves here, and its importance for the rites is fundamental. In Thesteia Pharika is the dark sister of Karametra. In the mysteries of Karametra, within the rituals to the initiates, the passage through the temple is a critical step on the path, and it is said that Pharika herself uncovers important secrets to the initiate after performing different libations from the chalices. For the rest of the faithful, the place is also the place to ask the divinity to rid the fields of pests and it is tradition to pray outside the temple and plant strange plants around it, which turns its base into a garden of resources for the priest of the goddess.

TEMPLE OF HELIOD PHOEBUS (7)

Considered to be the father of Karametra in the sanctuary, Heliod is worshipped here as the source of light for the flowering of plants. The temple, also circular, has its entrance facing east, from where the golden image of the god inside makes the entire temple glow with the rays of sunlight that enter the temple every dawn. The statue of the god appears radiant in the center of the Tholos, standing leaning on a column, relaxed and unarmed. In his right hand he holds a bunch of grapes. The temple is decorated with golden vine leaves covering the columns. Outside, vines are mixed with the golden and white decoration of the temple. The grapes that grow on the vines covering the temple walls are golden in color and magnificent in size and the five priests who serve here use them to make a white

wine of extraordinary flavor only for singularly important occasions. The vineyards in front of the temple are also loaded with golden grapes of great size, although without the extraordinary characteristics attributed to those of the temple of Heliod Phoebus.

HOUSE OF ICREON (8)

The largest and most luxurious house in Thesteia is that of the good Icreon, his wife Therea and their three children, and he makes it available to the most illustrious families on pilgrimage, acting as their host. The house is a country villa of considerable size surrounded by a large estate. The furnishings and decoration of the house are old-fashioned, out of date. But where Icreon's house excels is in the food it offers its guests. Icreon has an incredible amount of fresh produce, cold cuts, honeys and cereals that make the food made in their kitchens a true marvel of fame throughout the peninsula. Icreon also acts as the responsible representative of the citizens of Thesteia, and takes his position very seriously, paying out of his own pocket for the expenses his people need. Icreon also welcomes renowned heroes honoring Karametra, Ephara, Pharika or Heliod, of whom he considers himself a pious servant.

PROSKYNITHON (9)

The poorest pilgrims can rest in this humble building. Divided into two straw-bedded barracks, it also has a small dining room that acts as a tavern where all kinds of stories are told. The dining room serves a wide variety of drinks made from fermented fruits and honey, such as wine, barley ciceon with herbs, retsina, must, juices, and all flavored with cinnamon, honey and spices of all kinds. As a result, this dining room becomes the most relaxed place in the entire sanctuary, and the rigor of the most pious faithful passes into an affable closeness with strangers to whom to tell stories brought from all over Theros.



GLOSSION

Glossion owes its entire existence and economy to its magnificent Library, founded according to legend after Ephara appeared to the philosopher Parion after his ship was shipwrecked off the coast of the small village that was then Glossion. The construction of the library has brought enormous prestige to the small town and new workshops have been created to meet the needs of visitors and librarians. The number of thaumaturges is considerably high and philosophical discussions in the town's agora tend to a depth on the level of Meletis itself.

THE GREAT LIBRARY (1)

The huge center building of Glossion rises in a perfectly square plan with an adjoining transverse gallery, on a stepped base of a man's height leading to the door through a double staircase of white marble. A fountain with the image of Ephara precedes the Library, and it is mandatory to wash one's hands and face in this fountain as a sign of respect for the goddess and as a sign of the Library's character as a temple of knowledge. The building is crowned by an enormous lantern in the form of a tholos that serves to illuminate the interior. Inside, the building is divided into two main areas. The oldest and main one, the square building, is articulated around a circular open space just below the lantern that opens like a dome at the top.

Around this courtyard, like rays of sunlight, the bookstore galleries are arranged thematically in a two-story height with access by narrow staircases at the back. The tranquility and silence of the room contrasts with the number of people consulting volumes at the tables scattered throughout the building.

The second area, the Magic Gallery, is an elongated building accessed by a door from the main building. The two wings into which the door divides it, cover its walls with rhomboidal shelves covered with loose volumes and scrolls, with treatises and incantations. A thaumaturge acts as librarian and is in charge, with the help of ten assistant magicians, of the maintenance and security of the building. He answers only to the Grand Librarian, director of the entire complex. The current director is the illustrious Beliosanter of Glossion, who leads an aggressive policy to obtain magical tomes and scrolls from all over Theros, and especially from ancient times such as the Age of Thrax. The Grand Librarian also acts as the city's leader.

Beliosanter is a thaumaturge of famed skill, and possibly one of those who has been able to collect more spells in his book.

TEMPLE OF HELIOD BOEDROMIOS(2)

To the north, between the Library and the agora, a large tholos serves as a temple to the sun god. The temple has been built around a primordial image of the god. As the village grew because of the Library, a first temple was created which was later covered by a new line of columns, a total of five concentric circles each of a more modern style from the original interior to the recent temple now seen from the outside. Access to the image is restricted and guarded by two priests. Heliod receives multiple requests for help through his image here, and the faithful take their turn praying around the circles formed by the temples for days on end.

AGORA(3) AND TEMPLE OF EPHARA(4)

The agora of Glossion exceeds the needs of the city. The construction of its stoas surrounds the square presided over by the Temple of Ephara Agorea. The fountain of the Banquet serves as the center of the square and as a place of worship to the Pantheon. Stalls selling food, fruit, meat and more are clustered in the square, while stores selling paper, scrolls, strange inks of all kinds, feathers and even clay tablets are clustered in the shelter of the stoas. Thus, the locals tend to concentrate in the center of the square with their daily purchases, while thaumaturgists, philosophers and curious stroll under cover by the stoas in search of materials or even a strange book.

The temple of Ephara is of a relatively small size, with a beautiful statue of the goddess in its background and a fountain at its feet. There is no remarkable decoration in the temple, but it is usually tradition, as in other cities, to use the temple to settle business disagreements or even close deals with an oath before the goddess.

THE MUSEION (5)

Behind the Library itself, a landscaped square leads to a building decorated with a number of reliefs arranged in friezes depicting images of gods and nyxborn creating works of art of all kinds. The building was erected under the patronage of a group of craftsmen of the city and with the encou-

agement of Feron de Meletis, a philosopher who loved poetry and music. The building keeps the largest record of works of poetry, and music in all of Theros. Artists and aedos from all over come here seeking inspiration in the words of ancient geniuses. The building's walls are lined with shelves of mostly small books, mixed with images in marble, bone and metal of all kinds, recovered from ancient times or created by some famous living artist. The rooms have beautiful ceilings with frescoes of special beauty, enlivened by magic, which are a pleasure for visitors.

The aedo Pericolos "the humble" runs the Museion under the supervision of the director of the Library, but with total freedom in reality. Pericolos likes to hold events and contests in the building related to poetry readings, epics and even the presentation of a work of great beauty discovered among the ruins of some lost palace.

TEMPLES OF TRUTH (7) AND SCRIPTURE (6)

Two small temples on either side of the Museion close the square behind the Library. Inside there are no images, but both house in their center a narrow altar on which two scrolls have been placed. It is said that both are infinite and that in each one a long story can be read, the beginning of which is no longer remembered. Two elderly priests are in charge of watching over each of them. Sometimes the priests believe they can read prophecies in the eternal scrolls. The one housed in the temple of Truth is visited regularly by an eidolon of great beauty, in the form of a winged youth. The boy writes on the scroll regularly in a language now lost, and the priests are accustomed to record his words, understood as some prophetic hieroglyph, or replica of the past. Thinkers of all kinds hold vigils at both temples for enlightenment.

THE METAPHRASTION (8)

To the south of the Library, a building of the same style serves as a center for the translation of ancient languages and losses. The copyists who work here know all kinds of languages, some of them already lost languages, even if only in bits and pieces. The

building outwardly resembles a rectangular temple with the effigy of Ephara on its pediment and reliefs of copyists arguing on either side of the goddess. A row of columns surrounds the building which is accessed by four large doors, one on each side of the Metaphrastion. The two-story interior has a first floor filled with tables where translators are always copying books and tablets. The second floor opens to the ground floor on a balustraded terrace. A sculpture of Ephara with her right arm raising her scrolls watches over the work from the back of this floor, which is accessed by stairs on either side and is constantly guarded by guards. Here are the original texts to be translated, many of them from distant lands, and even from the time of the Age of Thrax. When a text or volume is finished, it is returned to the Library along with its translation. Among the copyists working here, Eplites the Elder is noted for his knowledge of languages and signs. He is said to know every accent and language of Theros and has on occasion been called upon as a translator for the Twelve of Meletis on visits by foreign retinues from far away lands.

BIBLIOPOLEION (9)

The artisans in Glossion focus their activity on supplying the library and its visiting scholars with inks, papyrus and parchment. In fact, their specialization has reached such a point that the Pyrgnos and the Dekatia only rely on the work of the craftsmen of Glossion to obtain the best support for their writings. Hunters of all kinds of beasts also sell the skins of magical creatures here. The workshops are bustling with activity and are perfectly adapted to the needs of thaumaturgist customers, who order the materials for their spell records here. The trade war between papyrus and parchment sellers rages when one of the two becomes scarce and the other increases in price. It seems that sometimes this war is artificially generated by some merchant of the city with speculative interests. It is said that they delay ships, burn cargoes and even extort craftsmen to profit from this situation. Many blame Demetrios "the Fat", a quirky merchant with a bad reputation and proven dealings with the underworld of several cities. He claims luck and a good eye for the business he undertakes, but the Great Librarian is beginning to tire of such "luck".

THE THAUMATON (10)

All of Glossion maintains a high population of wizards, but in the Thaumaton neighborhood the percentage rises considerably. Many thaumaturges of varying skill make their home here.

Thus magic becomes commonplace in this area of the city and mages and their apprentices rehearse their most practical spells in buildings of singular beauty marked by Ephara's gift. The Thaumaton is remarkably beautiful at night, as globes of light illuminate the streets and all manner of subtle ma-

gics adorn the stones with inscriptions and invocations to the gods. The tavern of Melcides, a satyr of great size and strength, who lets his employees work with unusual freedom while he welcomes the poorest and youngest thaumaturgists to his feasts of all kinds. He likes to seduce the inexperienced of either sex with considerable lip service and spiced wine. Many of the apprentices here seek references from a master, expose strange theories in front of their colleagues and many others exchange knowledge sitting around a jug of wine.



OXUS

When the kings Tiro and Kinaios retired from power, they chose the village of Oxus to stay away to exert their influence on the politics of the polis and end their days together. Their decision made the small town a popular place for many citizens to retire, and today the sumptuous mansions of many wealthy merchants become some of the most famed buildings in the village. Legends of the last days of kings are part of the daily life of the citizens, and many of the merchants boast of being the chosen ones of the founders, without much more proof than an unclear legend. The city climbs up Daerea Hill from the quiet harbor to the Basileo Theater in a line of monumental buildings among which the Mausoleum of the Kings stands out.

THE MAUSOLEUM OF THE KINGS (1)

Presiding over the large square in front of the harbor, a circular building rises preceding the agora, open to the agora and the sea by a double colonnade. Of extraordinary beauty and elegance, the tomb of Tyre and Kynaios, built entirely in marble, consists of a circular temple from which two rectangular wings emerge. The bodies of the kings are in a lower level never opened since the construction of the mausoleum. Above that room, where the same panoply of the monarchs and other magnificent treasures are supposed to be found, the center of the temple is occupied by a magnificent sculpture of great size of both warriors in regal position and carrying their weapons, with the helmet at their feet. An image of Ephara appears to bless her champions from behind them. The sculpture is true to the youthful image of the kings and inspires respect and pride in the citizens of the entire polis. The entire image glows with magic and from Ephara's amphora Nyx herself seems to gush forth as a light cloud of stars that diffuses as it falls. At the base of the sculpture, engraved around it, the epic of how they faced the tyrant Agnomakhos to victory is told. The dome of the Tholos is covered with bas-reliefs illustrating the life of both kings and how Ephara guided their steps to the very foundation of Meletis.

The two wings leading off the main tholos are open to the outside in a colonnade of tall, slender columns. These areas are frequented by loving couples. According to tradition, declaring your love before the tomb of the kings guarantees Ephara's blessing,

and many young people pray here to be granted a love like that of Tyre and Kinaios.

AGORA (2) AND EPHARA BASILEA (3)

The agora of Oxus is famous for the exoticness of its products. Fruits from distant islands, strange fish, fabrics from distant polis, wines from beyond Skola....

The tastes of the richest inhabitants of the village are generally extravagant and many seek to surprise and show off their sophisticated tastes. Emerfero "the receipt" brings spices (and they say poisons) from even beyond Lindus. Fithara "the long one", brings daily plants cultivated by returnees from the Asphodel peninsula. The satyr Peroclates, uniquely adapted to city life, boasts unique fruits, grown on trees blessed by Karametra herself. Competition for the exquisite sometimes borders on the ridiculous, and when rumor has it that some merchant wants to offer a big feast, or a particularly flashy symposium, the exaggerations can manage to surprise foreigners.

Presiding over this daily spectacle, the temple of Ephara Basilea has here its invocation mainly dedicated as protector of Tyre and Kynaios. The temple keeps the same elegant aesthetics of the Mausoleum of the kings. The temple is in fact called Basileon by the inhabitants of Oxus and honors the goddess as protector of her champions. Images of the goddess bestowing magic on the kings are shown on both pediments. The interior is a huge reliquary of scrolls protected by magic, displayed on the walls in exquisite displays made of marble high reliefs. All these writings are supposed to be the original handwritings of the goddess herself in which she showed the fundamentals of magic to the kings. The truth is that many of the texts kept in the Pyrgnos of Meletis are attributed the same authorship. The pilgrims who come to the temple are usually thaumaturges who come to the temple to study the texts on display, so their authenticity seems proven. A contingent of about twenty members of the Reverent Army protects the temple, the agora and the mausoleum.



THE SIX ALTARS (4)

On both sides of the Mausoleum of the Kings, guarding it from both sides, six temples of small size have been erected by different cities as a treasury to honor the Tiro and Kynaios. The same polis of Akros and Setessa have an altar here as a symbol of peace with Meletis. The same Meletis, Altrissos, Neolantin and Glossion also have their altar in honor of the Diarcas. The temples are very similar, differing in their interior decoration and pediment, each of which has representations of each city and its symbols. The gates are always open and are only closed in case the owning city considers it has been offended by the polis of Meletis. An ambassador from Akros and another from Setessa reside permanently in the city, and act as priests of their altars. They are in charge of depositing the offerings of their polis in their corresponding altar and of closing the doors of the altar if necessary. Currently Tira of Akros, cousin of the King of Akros, and Te mostenes of Setessa act as the heralds of each altar. They travel frequently to their polis, but both enjoy the Glossion lifestyle more than they would like to admit among their respective countrymen. The altars all hold treasures worthy of admiration,

each one more surprising and luxurious, protected by city guards and the magic of their cities. Especially rich is the treasure of Neolantin (ancient treasure of Olantin), with precious pearls and sea emeralds and some of the oldest and most elaborate magical objects of all Theros. The weapons of the treasury of Akros stand out for their extraordinary workmanship.

TEMPLE OF THE HEROES (5)

To the southwest of the agora a small temple surrounded by a square stoa allows to venerate the ancient heroes and champions of the gods. The sculptures decorating the temple are arranged between the columns with effigies of heroes of the Akroan Wars, Callaphe, Elspeth, Anax or Daxos. Many others honor heroes of the games or especially relevant generals.

The pavilion in the center of the enclosure keeps under its roof a sculpture of Tyre and Kynaios back to back in hieratic position. Many young men of the city use the place as a palestra and gymnasium, seeking inspiration from the vigilant heroes. Legend has it that on occasion many have received advice from a couple of hooded men at the site,

only to disappear mysteriously afterwards. It is believed that the Diarcas themselves thus appear before promising youngsters to bless them and train in them as champions by some kind of miracle.

BATHHOUSE (6)

The bathhouse of the city has facilities covered with marble of the finest quality, sculptures of the finest and most elegant, and most extravagant amenities for the discerning citizens. Marble figures of beautiful naked young men walk the halls. Annually during the summer solstice festivities, the most beautiful among the girls and boys of the city is chosen in a contest which has as its prize a sculpture here.

The great dome has fresco depictions of Ephara, Nylea, Thassa and Helios enjoying the baths. Heroes of the past, including the Diarchs, converse relaxedly with them. A figure covered with a mask, seemingly reminiscent of Phenax disguised as a dancer, servant or waiter, seems to incite with alcohol and other substances to relax their morals to all of them, with a mischievous and frivolous attitude. There is a main public part in the baths, open at very low prices to all citizens, but also a number of rooms and services are only allowed upon payment of high prices. These rooms are hired by wealthy characters of the city for symposiums of even days. Virgonio "el bello", a merchant famed in his younger days for his wit and beauty, is one of the most regular customers. His parties here, as in his mansion, are remembered at least until the next one.

TEMPLE OF HELIOD CRISAOR(7)

A four-story temple serves as a place of worship for the god Heliod. The temple has large spans, some up to two stories and thus displays the beautiful all-gold effigy of the god to the outside. With a height of four men the sculpture shows Heliod leaning on a stone column relaxedly, smiling and benevolent. In his right hand he holds Khrusor, made of pure gold and crystal. The whole sculpture glows with warm light, the effect of some miracle bestowed by the god, and which makes the sculpture visible from the sea. The temple always seems to live by day. The sculpture is considered a marvel throughout Therros, and many visitors come to see it with offerings to the god. The temple has interior terraces on its walls around the sculpture, with large banqueting tables and open rooms for the priests.

The priests of the temple of Heliod Crisaor have been blessed and do not need to sleep while serving in the temple. They are recognized by their heavy solid gold staffs and white robes.

ODEON BASILEUS (8)

Three equal tiers surrounded by trees give shape to the Odeon of Oxus. At the end of a wide and monumental staircase and in the shade of the nearby mountains, fits what is said to have been the place where King Tiro used to recite and sing before the citizens of the village and his beloved Kynaios. A contest during the festivities to Keranos, rewards performers and aedos coming from all over. The gold-leaf crown with which the winner is crowned is made from gold-leaf sheets carved in the Temple of Heliod Chrysaor and worn before a master goldsmith blessed by Purphoros who crafts the crown with great skill. A silk ribbon is inlaid in the wreath with praises to Keranos. The same God has sometimes manifested himself before the genius of some artist with storms of great force, lightning striking the sand of the Odeon or even the performer himself, leaving him miraculously alive, although sometimes with some sequel such as madness or blindness, always with some visionary gift associated.

OXUS THEATER (9)

The city's theater is enormous for its population. Fitted in the highest part of the city, a large terrace serves as a lobby of its facade, and on the days of representation this is filled with stalls, street dancers and street food. A multitude of musicians are located those days around the theater. The richest merchants settled in Oxus sponsor companies of actors and musicians and their performances in the theater. The building has on its façade large marble plaques engraved with the sponsors of the theater, its maintenance and the plays. The actors' rooms are extraordinarily luxurious, not seen anywhere else in Therros, with rooms for the actors and servants' quarters. For any company or playwright to be called to perform at Oxus is big business, although not always the sponsor chooses companies and plays of too much quality.

ROYAL PALACE OF THE DIARKS (10)

The residence where Tiro and Kinaios resided in Oxus is located on Bocia Island, a small islet that is the center of many legends related to the kings. The palace is monumental and elegant, full of small-sized rooms, with a luxurious, yet casual charm. All the walls are covered with drawings of animals and plants, linen curtains sway everywhere, and small fountains share their waters through marble ditches. A large terrace overlooking the sea hangs from the northern cliff. Multiple sculptures dot the gardens.

Nothing has been touched since the time of the kings except for maintenance. The palace is used today to house members of the Twelve who visit the city. It is said that the basements of the palace hold a room where the kings kept the weapons of Agnomakhos after defeating him, including his mythical helmet. Some legends say that it was not only his weapons, but also the tyrant's head itself.

GOLDEN BEACHES (11)

The especially golden sands of Oxud's beaches have given them their name. Popular with young athletes who use the beach to swim in the waters of the sea competing against each other, launching themselves from the cliffs to the south, or off Bocia Island, to which they organize swimming races. The cliffs between the island and the city itself hold reefs full of natural beauty that lead young people to enjoy diving in these areas, despite the danger involved. Occasionally night parties are organized on the beach, as well as the Lyokokymion festival in honor of Thassa. On the southern beach during this month, during the festival, crabs of all shapes and sizes come out of the sea covering the sand with shiny shells like precious stones, honoring Thassa with what the citizens have come to call "Thassa's tiara".

THE PALACES OF OXUS

The wealth accumulated in Oxus has led to a more than interesting competition among the retired merchants to give the city more and more sumptuous buildings. The houses of Oxus all stand out for their luxurious beauty, but the highlight is undoubtedly the palaces.

Among the most beautiful and oldest is the Palace of the Gerontes(12), a merchant family with a con-

siderable fleet that is considered the high nobility of Oxus. When the head of the family retires he leaves his children in charge and settles in the palace. Myron Gerontes and his wife Merinea have been retired in Oxus for 15 years, sponsoring events and buildings such as the Theater or the Temple of He-liod Crisaor. Although their Palace parties are few, luxury and good taste plague every stay on these refined occasions.

Another great palace(13) to consider is that of Omerto of Meletis, on the cliff to the south. Omerto is the complete opposite of the Gerontes, outlandish and ostentatious, he dresses his house like himself, with colorful and shiny silks, gold everywhere and unnecessary exaggerations. The parties in his palace are always the talk of the town because of some embarrassing event or sign of bad taste. The palace has in its courtyards exotic, even dangerous animals, trees of strange provenance mingle in its gardens. Omerto even boasts of a tree that he claims to have managed to grow from the Blood Cypress, which has scandalized and frightened some of the inhabitants of Oxus.

ALTRISSOS

The city of Altrissos is the best example of prosperity in all of Theros. As the most prosperous of the Meletis settlements, the city is considered blessed by Ephara. The most famous of the stories demonstrating this deference of the goddess is the well-known repulse of a huge kraken with the appearance in effigy of the goddess herself on the city walls, who also raised the height of the walls to protect its inhabitants. Before and after that, Altrissos has always been fervently loyal to Ephara and her face is carved on every street and building in gratitude for the prosperity achieved under her protection.

The city elects a politarch democratically from among its inhabitants, who acts as governor and is advised by a philosopher sent from Dekatia and elected by the Twelve of Meletis, a representative of the city's artisans and merchants, and a polemarch, or general in command of the Reverent Army that protects the city and its environs. The current polemarch of the city is the young Hedron, a clear example of the possibilities that Altrissos gives to the humblest people who strive and excel. Born into a family of humble artisans, his initiative as a child turned his family into prosperous merchants, and Hedron himself into a reference. His exploits,

despite his youth, have made him famous among his fellow citizens who tell more or less exaggerated stories of how Ephara protects the young man in his exploits.

The population is mainly made up of humble artisans, merchants and fishermen. There are no particularly wealthy people, but all citizens enjoy a more than decent standard of living compared to even other polis and cities. The number of theurgists in Altrissos is also remarkable, and some offer themselves as teachers to those who cannot access the Dekatia in Meletis.

In recent years the secret worship of Phenax among some citizens seems to have increased and Hedron is facing increasingly difficult situations of smuggling, theft, blasphemy in the temples and even vandalism of Ephara effigies in the city.

AGORA (1)

On the edge of the harbor and surrounded by stoas, the center of Altrissos opens from the sea in a square of stepped terraces made of white limestone. In front of this square, the agora itself has as its center the temple of Ephara Poliukos, protector of the city, embraced by the stoas. Every morning the agora is filled with citizens and street stores selling all kinds of products from inside and outside the city. The port is close by, and the hustle and bustle between the two areas produces buying and selling even before reaching the agora itself. At the southern entrance, a group of roofed sculptures in a small pavilion serve as a place to dispense justice. The sculptures depict the Kings of Meletis in a relaxed pose, dressed in their full panoply. Legends say that one of the swords of the Kings was buried under the pedestal. The sanctuary to the Kings serves as a place to dispense justice and settle matters that occur in the agora, from disagreements in prices to accusations of theft.

TEMPLE OF EPHARA POLIUKOS (2)

The main temple of the Agora, and center of the public activities of the government, such as the assemblies, or the hearings of the Council, the temple of Ephara Poliukos is a beautiful temple of white marble with beautiful blue veins, extracted from the famous quarries of Neromarmaro to the south. Its blue ceramic roof and beautiful polychrome frieze make it a source of pride for the citizens of Altrissos.

The interior of the temple is covered with colorful frescoes depicting cities and towns of the peninsula, some recognizable as Altrissos itself or Neolantin. In the center of the enclosure, entering from the harbor square, between the two doors leading to the room that overlooks the agora, the blue and silver marble statue of Ephara on a high pedestal. At his feet, a semicircular tiered seating for about 10 people and presided over by a simple low throne, serves as the center of government activities. The ceremonies to Ephara are performed here by the polyarch, assisted by the other members of the government. For maintenance activities, a group of priests dedicated to the goddess serve in the temple.

SQUARE OF THE PHILAKES (3)

As an extension of the agora, behind the temple of Ephara and from its rear access, the square of the protector gods is organized as the center of much of the worship in the city. Here are the temples of Ephara Poliukos, Iroas Kidemonas and Karametra Mitéra. In its center, the fountain of the Banquet of Gods serves to honor the pantheon with offerings. Among the fountain (always frequented by people chatting or carrying amphorae of water), a huge column raises to the heights a sculpture of Ephara, in which the divinity is represented with a shield with his effigy instead of the scrolls he usually carries.

THE LIBRARY AND TEMPLE OF EPHARA SOPHIA (4)

To the southwest of the square of the Filakes, the temple of Ephara Sophia stands as the main temple of magicians and philosophers in honor of the goddess, knowledge and magic. The sober temple surrounded by garden, keeps in its front four sculptures of allegories of magic, philosophy, civilization and humility, treated as servant of Ephara. The pediment of the temple has an enormous face of the goddess surrounded by theurgists and warriors, placing the same Kings of Meletis the closest to the divine effigy.

The interior is divided into two buildings, temple and library, of similar style. The temple itself, like the Pyrgnos of Meletis, hosts discussion groups on philosophy, politics, magic and other more mundane topics around the marble sculpture of the goddess, from whose amphora, thanks to some kind of magical effect, Nyx herself seems to fall like

a waterfall, melting into the air. Behind two marble arches, the temple opens onto the rooms of the library, built on two floors that house a continuous shelf where dozens of books, scrolls and tubes are accumulated in orderly order. The librarians act as priests of the temple and assist with questions or references to any teacher who can help the querent. Each section is decorated with the face of the goddess in marble reliefs. The librarians claim that Ephara speaks through the effigies if the person is considered of sufficient importance to the divinity.

TEMPLE OF IROAS KIDEMONAS (5)

The temple of Iroas is important in the city for its famous oracle, perhaps one of the few with which the god makes known to men his designs. The temple of Iroas stands surrounded by a row of columns, all with shields hanging from them, each of which was part of the panoply of some Polemarch of the city. Many of them are magical, and some are considered true relics. There are always guards keeping watch at the temple, day and night.

Through relatively small doors, you enter the temple, illuminated by small upper windows. In its center, a golden helmet on a circular altar welcomes the visitor and in each of the four corners the image of Iroas on two legs, intimidates the less courageous. Around the room, small arches covered by red curtains give access to the cells of the oracle and the servants of the temple. A bronze chair is placed in front of the altar and the helmet, the chamber of the oracle in his visions. The oracle comes into contact with the god by putting on the helmet after a purification ritual. The prophecies and visions are always related to threats, attacks or wars that threaten the whole polis. The servants of the temple are all trained runners ready to act as couriers of the oracle when it is necessary to warn any region of Meletis of a threat.

TEMPLE OF KARAMETRA MITÉRA (6)

In this temple, mothers and fathers come to pray for their children, for the protection of the goddess and to make them grow strong and healthy. A circular temple surrounded by trees, with its traditional image of Karametra inside and covered with vines and flowers, it is traditional to ask the goddess here for a child by promising to plant a tree somewhere, being linked to the newborn. The temple is usually surrounded by children playing,

even inside the temple. There are no specific priests to officiate the cult, and the main acts are carried out by the politarch.

THEATER (7) AND THOLOS OF PHERAX(8)

A covered image of Phenax, as a triple image, each with a different mask, welcomes the theater carved into the rock in front of the temple. The images are united in the three hands they share, each in a different gesture, cryptic as usual in the images of the god.

The front of the theater has images of the same masks presiding over the entrance. Attached columns and false wooden windows decorate the facade. The vestibule serves as a distributor to the theater. On the floor a mosaic of the mask of Phenax in a circle dominates the room.

The theater has a good size and a very detailed polychrome decoration that is sometimes used as a stage for the scenes represented. Several returnees work on the premises. It is assumed that they are former actors who now repeatedly perform plays on the stage when the theater is empty. On several occasions the theater has been opened at night to see the sad tragedy enacted.

BAY AND HARBOR

Altrissos has a wide bay surrounded by piers that makes Neolantin envious. Although never usually crowded, this harbor makes itself easy to use for merchants and travelers. In the center of the bay a colossal sculpture of Ephara (9) welcomes ships. The northern part of the harbor is mainly devoted to trade, and the southern part to fishing, although in reality the activities overlap on a regular basis and without much rigidity.

The large agora square, with its stepped stone quay, is used for ceremonial receptions, such as when the Twelve visit Altrissos, when a foreign delegation is received or during the traditional Ephara festivities.

TEMPLE OF THASSA PELAGEA (10)

The temple of Thassa in Altrissos is a real sanctuary. Enormous in size and height, the marble and ceramic with which it was built was chosen among the bluest of the marbles of the peninsula. Its exterior is decorated with marine motifs, seaweed and dolphins. On the roof there is a stone lantern crowned by a dome of small turquoise cera-

ALTRISOS



mic pieces creating a mosaic of waves. The interior is surprisingly spectacular. Surrounding the entire enclosure, narrow terraces lead to a natural cave that goes deep into the ground. On a rock in the center a gigantic image of Thassa focuses attention. Streams of salt water penetrate from the sea

cascading around the rock walls creating a deafening noise in the echo of the temple. Light pours through the upper lantern illuminating the algae and mollusk covered image of the goddess. No one knows where the rock cavern leads, but many priests of the goddess claim it is one of the en-

trances to the caverns where Thassa imprisons sea creatures that disobey her. Almost all of the twelve priests of the temple are tritons totally adapted to the city, and with forms and customs that are a perfect blend of their two cultures. A couple of families of tritons live in the walls of the cavern of the temple, among the waterfalls climbing up and down the dangerous cliffs with a surprising naturalness.

THE KROTOR DISTRICT (11)

The Krotor River provides fresh water to the city, but also fishing and fun for the city's inhabitants. The neighborhood north of the river, around the temple of Thassa, is one of the most picturesque in the city. The piers and trees and the fresh fish from the sea and the river condition its citizens, who have created a street market of fish of the most varied in an improvised way. Cooked fish of all kinds is served on improvised tables, and individuals open their homes to those who want to taste the best fish of Theros, according to the opinion of the inhabitants of the neighborhood. Lately, the clashes and robberies in the neighborhood have complicated this idyllic view, with violent fights included. Hedron sees the hand of the radical cult of Phenax and has increased the presence of troops in the neighborhood, which, for the moment, has not ended the problems.

NEEDLE OF HELIOD (12)

Towering high above the rest of the structures of Altrissos, the temple of Heliод rises over seven stories topped by a terrace covered by a beautifully decorated golden tiled dome. The tower acts as a temple and "monastery" for the priests of the god. Each floor has different functions including the worship of the faithful outside, the library of the heroes (where compendiums of heroic deeds of heroes from all over Theros are kept), a small hospital run by the priests, the cells of the priests, a scribe's office, kitchen rooms, a purification room and a terrace open to the sun, for banquets in honor of the god, decorated with sculptures of heroes and champions of Heliод. Both externally and internally the temple maintains a sober and elegant decoration of white marble, gold, and the finest sculptural works in reliefs and free-standing sculptures. The most glorious of them, the image of Heliод Corona Solar on the second floor. The light of the sun itself

emanates from the effigy stone, with the warmth and glory of Heliод himself, from the very center of the room. The sculpture represents a proud and haughty Heliод, but close and cheerful. The temple is very popular in the city and the priests offer their labors and services to everyone they can with the only payment of the service to Heliод, which is not always a small thing.

LOYALIST QUARTER (13)

The Loyalists is what the oldest and wealthiest inhabitants of Altrissos call themselves. They arrange their houses between the east wall and Heliод's Spire. The houses are usually larger than those of the rest of the city, built on the ancient lands of the first founders. The relationships between them begin to be somewhat inbred, and they make themselves look like a kind of aristocratic nobility with closed marriages between their families and events to which only the "loyal" are invited. Some of the most influential members among the loyalists are in the Phytolides family. Headed by Direna Fitolides, the sober matriarch, their political and commercial influence reaches even to Meletis or Akros. They respect the city government, but consider themselves above the majority of citizens and many of the younger members of the family, such as Pitea, Direna's granddaughter, show a remarkable arrogance.

PALACE OF KIRENEIDAS (14)

Kireneidas was an ancient and infamous politarch whose ambition originated a conflict with the polis when he decided to crown himself king of the city. In his megalomania and before the war with Meletis, Kireneidas had his palace built here. Today the building serves as accommodation for foreign ambassadors and special civil events. Most of the frescoes representing the tyrant, today have been replaced by others in which it is seen how the citizens (most of them ancestors of the now called loyalists) ended up killing Kireneidas and convincing the rest of the city and the troops to remain on the side of Meletis.

The palace also had a multitude of sculptures of the self-proclaimed king, with his effigy in marble medallions everywhere. Today each of them has been replaced by the face of Ephara. Only in the center of the central courtyard a sculpture with the head torn off and placed at his feet, recalls the traitor Kireneidas.

PURPHOROS PHLOGESTES (15)

The groups of artisans have around the forge of Purphoros the great majority of their warehouses and workshops. Like other temples of the god of fire and forging, that of Altrissos has the tradition of deciding the mastery or not of a craftsman. Its interior is usually decorated with pieces exhibited by the aspirants. The center has a large pyre of fire constantly burning. The temple is constructed of clay, bright red tiles and bronze inlays and metopes. The many artists who work the blue marble in Altrissos and who exhibit their works here, make the interior of the temple become a contrast of shapes and colors bathed in the red of the flames of the pyre.

The various trades have organizations that compete with each other in a contest of skill during the Chalcanapsion, after the ceremonies to relight all the fires.

PUBLIC BATHS (16)

The city's huge public baths are famous throughout the peninsula for their size. They encompass not only the buildings attached to the hill, but also a complex of natural caverns and pools fitted out for their use. The waters of the caverns have a reputation for healing. The caverns go deep into the mountain and deep into the earth, with streams of sea water, natural hot water lakes of small size, and all decorated with architecture that seems to be born from the rock itself, decorated with reliefs of the idyll between Thassa and Purphoros. The rooms of the building itself also include a gymnasium of considerable size and rooms with pools decorated with mosaics of great beauty.

THE WALL OF EPHARA (17)

The citizens take great pride in their city walls. Ephara is considered to be committed to the defense of the city since the attack of the kraken averted by the goddess. To be sure, each tower of the wall displays a large relief of the face of the goddess, and the entire wall is decorated at its highest part with a frieze repeating the divine effigy. Three fortresses of considerable size (although exaggerated for the limited contingent of troops of Altrissos) serve the city as ravines for the Revetente Army and as a center of surveillance and arsenal. For the city, the most important is the fortress of the port, with a

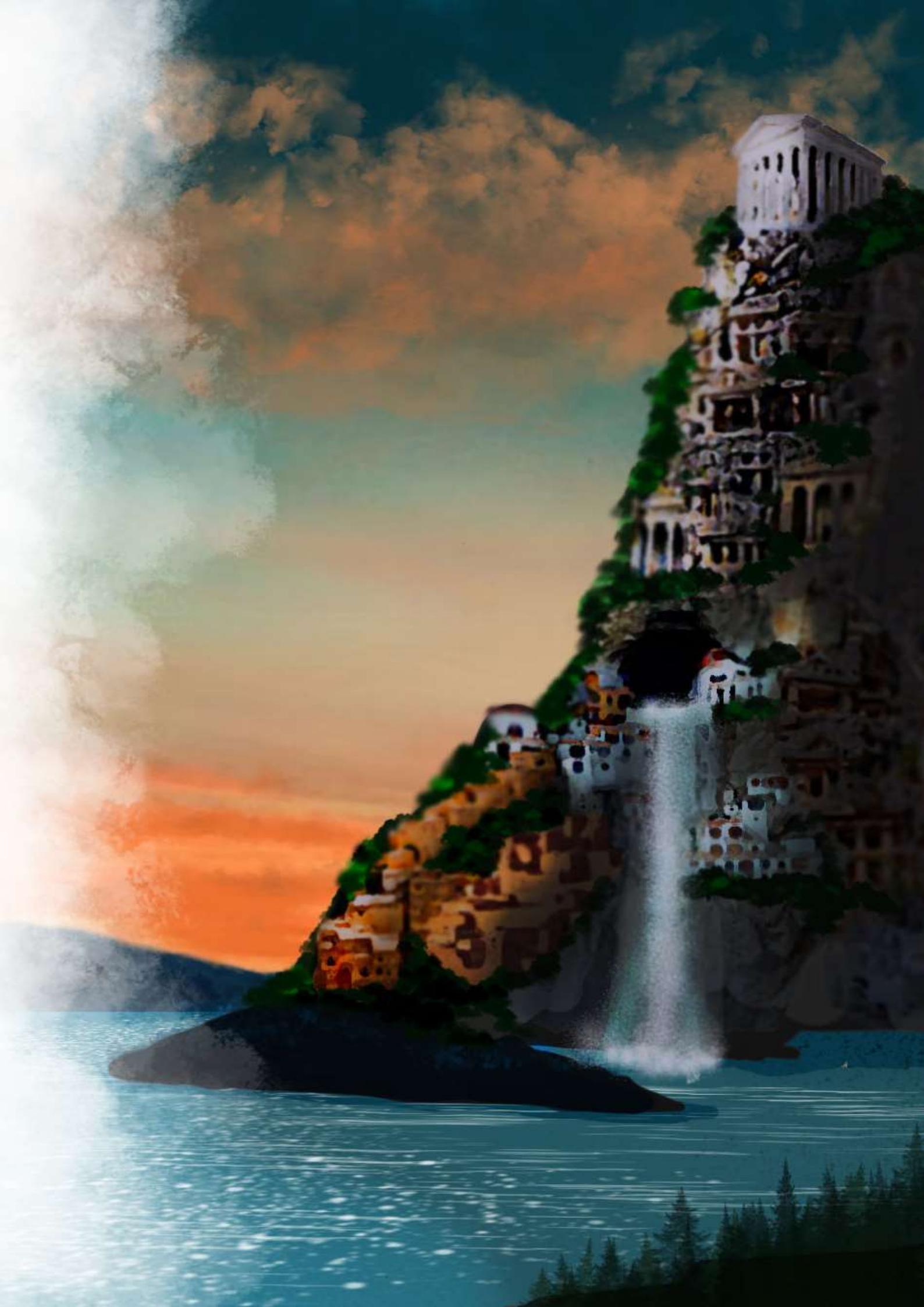
huge stone pier that serves as a courtyard to train the troops and as a platform for defense and transport by sea. The fortress also has in its interior an altar to Ephara, armed here with a shield and a spear, and covered with a breastplate in a singular and strange invocation of the goddess, but of great devotion on the part of the soldiers of the city.

TEMPLES OF NYLEA(19) AND PHARIKA(18)

The mountains to the south of the city are practically a high and steep cliff that turns them into a natural wall. Between the less rugged ledges of the hillside overlooking the city lie the temples of Nylea and Pharika, side by side. The temple of Nylea sits on a ledge, overlooking the city from the heights. The temple is an enclosure of limited access to which the priests of Nylea do not let just anyone enter. A centaur by the name of Criton serves as the head of the temple. Criton is also the oracle of the goddess and pilgrims come from afar to consult his opinion and that of Nylea herself through the mouth of the centaur. To access the temple, among other things, a purification in the pool of the Altar of Pharika is required. The altar of the goddess has a pair of priestesses who pour different herbs into the pool and cover the pilgrims with ointments. The effects of the ritual on the pilgrims after immersing themselves in the pool determine whether they are fit to continue or, if not, the disease spreads across their skin. This makes the temple a relatively quiet place where only those very sure of their good deed with Nylea in the eyes of the goddess Pharika come.

THE MEGASPHAGION ALTAR (20)

Outside the city and surrounded by vegetation, the Altar in honor of Mogis is used for sacrifices during the festivities in his honor. The eastern gates of the city become a feast of excess in honor of Mogis, intended to appease his wrath. A disorganized feast forms in front of the city gates and meat and wine flow around the area. It is not allowed to bring the feast inside, but outside there seem to be no laws. In recent years there have even been murders, which has led the polemarch to consider celebrating Megasphagion in a different way.



TEMPLE OF EPHARA ACRAEA (21)

In the highest part of the city lies a meadow reached by wide stairs, the last flight of which leads directly inside the temple of Ephara. The temple is said to be the oldest building in Altrissos and the reason for the creation of the city. It seems to have been an ancient shrine to some deity or titan. The temple can be seen from anywhere in the city overlooking the mountain that serves as its dwelling. The meadow surrounding the temple is covered with vegetation in the form of low shrubs and flowering plants of various colors. Olive trees, cypresses, pines and oaks are part of the groves formed around the temple, and make the white stone of the temple stand out even more. Externally, the temple looks archaic, with columns without bases and simple capitals. The sculptures of its friezes also appear to be of an ancient and unrefined style, with geometric shapes and humanoid figures in profile positions. The gods of the Pantheon are represented at some point in the frieze, which extends into the interior of the colonnade. Some of the figures seem to represent titans, but many others are not recognizable. The interior also exudes sobriety, but its walls have been covered with marble slabs magically joined together, renewing its space and giving the sensation of a single piece. The image of Ephara, in the background, is shown in the center of a fountain with a background of blue and turquoise tesserae. The image is particularly delicate and the face of the goddess seems to soften her traditional hieratism, leaning on her amphora, from which the water of the fountain flows, on a column. The young people of Altrissos offer during the Polidryision a new linen dress for the image of the goddess, as in Meletis, and it is in this temple that the processions in honor of the founding goddess end that day.

WELL OF TARTARUS (22)

On one side of the temple of Ephara Acraea, like a simple circular colonnade, a bottomless well sinks deep into the earth. The place is considered the place of worship of Athreos in the city. The well leads directly to hell and only Athreos prevents the dead from passing into the world of the living. Offerings are made here to ask the god to maintain the universal order between the worlds, but also many pilgrims come to ask the god to deliver messages, memories or gifts to their deceased loved ones to the dead. The faithful throw these offerings into the

well with prayers to Athreos, leaving copper coins in the temple for the god. Two priests of Athreos, covered from head to toe, and carrying chains, throw daily into the well in rituals to the deity the coins offered.

TEMPLE OF EREBOS NECRODEGMON (23)

The necropolis and the temple of the god of the dead are located on the sand and stone ledges that rise from the Altrisa beach. The tombs and mausoleums are spread out on the hill in an open enclosure, landscaped, but covered with vegetation in a somewhat neglected manner. The circular temple built in very nearly black granite, is covered by reliefs covering the walls from top to bottom in large metopes. The images represent twelve champions and heroes of other gods who now reside under the dominion of Erebos. They all wear golden laurel wreaths. The interior of the temple is notable for its beautiful inner dome of precious stones and gold and black tesserae. In the center, elevated on a pedestal of two meters, the image of the god of the dead rises distant and would be. Mastix, his whip, encircles the figure in a spiral. Magic causes the whip to swing wildly amidst sparse gleams of light. The inner room remains always in semi-darkness. Double black metal doors prevent sunlight from entering. Faint magical lights are placed around the room to allow the faithful to see. A staircase behind the image leads down into the cellars to the treasury rooms and the permanently darkened cells of the priests. Occasionally, the city government requests that the priests take charge of certain prisoners to be tortured if their crimes are particularly serious. The tortures to which the unfortunates are subjected are unknown, but the work of the priests seems exceptionally efficient.

NATUMBRIA

The village of Nartumbria has a reputation for being quaint and unruly. In itself it is not a settlement of Meletis as much of the peninsula, and its origin, although rumored to be a colony of Olantin, is lost in the Age of Thrax. In fact, on several occasions they have stood up to the polis by rising up against it. The last occasion was a long time ago (and is remembered in a feast of the calendar) and today relations with Meletis are more than settled. One of the most fascinating features of the city is its relationship with the sea and its fauna. Dolphins, small

sharks, crabs and even whole schools of fish help the inhabitants in fishing, as companions and even in warfare. The large population of newts in the village is another example of this relationship with the sea. Many human inhabitants eat food prepared by newts that allows them to breathe underwater longer than usual. For the citizens, with such a close relationship with the sea, the cult of Thassa is fundamental and they have festivals almost all year round dedicated to the goddess.

AGORA (1)

Little more than a square open to the canals to the north, the humble agora does not particularly stand out for its variety or quality of products. What does stand out is the quality of its seafood and the strangeness of many of them. From nearby farms and villages people come to buy seaweed with strange properties, fish and seafood of extraordinary flavor and curiosities taken from the sea.

The center of the square is occupied by the Temple of Ephara Thalassea, an invocation of the goddess as daughter of the ocean itself and guide of civilization. The temple is covered with small blue and turquoise tesserae, which give it an exotic appearance. A frieze with geometric waves carved in marble runs along the upper part of the temple. The interior, simple, keeps a simple image of the goddess making water flow from her amphora. The interior walls are covered with turquoise and blue frescoes of the Sea of the Mermaid, in which islands are represented, some recognizable, and others completely strange.

THE CANALS (2)

A circuit of canals surrounds part of the city closest to the sea. Carefully dug, these canals connect parts of the town and allow the citizens to maintain their close relationship with their animal companions. Dolphin-pulled boats or even large crabs can be seen pushing up from the bottom of the canal. Children and youngsters swim through the canals riding on dolphins with which it is customary to create a deep bond.

THE BAY (3)

A small, well-protected bay surrounds the village and protects it from waves and storms with a natural wall of rocks secured by walls created by the inhabitants. These islets are inhabited mainly by tritons who act as sea lookouts for the village. The triton houses dot the islets with a quaint and pleasant air, with their small blue domes.

The bottom of the bay is a true paradise of marine beauty, cared for and protected by all the citizens. Corals of varied tones cover the rocks and an immensely varied flora turns the bay into a wonder blessed by Thassa. Fish of the most varied have their refuge here.

TEMPLE OF THASSA PELAGRA (4)

The center of the bay is occupied by a temple formed by a colonnade in a circle and a roof. Above the waves the temple barely reveals a stone circle, but underwater, the temple rises with the beautiful image of Thassa in its center, surrounded by columns and illuminated by the sun shining through the water of the bay. Corals and algae of various colors cover the stone floors of the temple sunk under the waters. The sacredness of the temple does not prevent the boys from using the upper part of the temple as a playground for swimming and training with their animal companions. The goddess has always blessed this attitude and seems to consider it part of her worship. The priestess Febala "eye of Thassa", seems to confirm the favor of the goddess. The newt leads the worship of the goddess from the depths of the bay, and is said to never set foot on land as a pledge of fidelity to the goddess. Thassa is said to grant the inhabitants of Natumbria who join their animal companions here, gifts of various kinds, such as being able to communicate with them, to be able to breathe underwater, or even to increase the lifespan of the animal companions.

THE KINEA CHASM (5)

On Kinea Island, a pit sinks into the interior, communicating with the bay. Like the entire bay, the walls of this chasm flourish with vegetation and aquatic animals roam it. The island's newts use the chasm as a place to train with their animals and teach all kinds of tricks to their companions. Many times the trainings become a spectacle for the citizens who come here as in other cities they would do it to the theater.

SANCTUARY OF KORINNA(6)

On the rocks and in front of the temple of Thassa, a small open shrine with a sculpture of the triton queen Korinna allows the tritons to pay homage to their former mistress. Human citizens also come to the shrine with offerings to ask forgiveness for the murder of the queen, so beloved by Thassa.

The temple depicts the beautiful triton on a coral throne decorated with pearls. The temple seems protected from the strong waves, leading to legends about Thassa's protection of the site.

TEMPLE OF PURPHOROS CLITOMETES (7)

The god of fire has here if temple buried in the rock as in Meletis itself. It is said that the bluish dome that covers its exterior is in honor of the love for Thassa that the god professes in so many myths and that make him even father with the goddess of Keranos. The interior of the temple is a huge central forge with an eternal sacred fire. The temple is ruled by the human priest Coreneus, whose skin is said to be touched by the god, with a dark bronze color that makes him look like a work of Purphoros himself. The works of Coreneus and his apprentices are decorated with pearls as a tribute to Thassa, and the seawater with which they are cooled is blessed by the goddess, making them especially beautiful with a bluish sheen and polish that sets them apart. Citizens who go to war and protect the city carry weapons from this temple with special pride.

TEMPLE OF KERANOS LOGAS (8)

A temple in three heights, almost a tower, the temple of the god Keranos seems to engage in conversation with that of Thassa. So it is said in fact, that in its three halls you can hear murmurs of the gods in conversation, and that these can illuminate those who approach with a unique epiphany. The exterior of the temple is decorated with some very strange columns in the form of dragons coiled along the three floors. The image of the god seated on a throne-like chair facing the sea is exposed by the open colonnade, so that it can be seen from many parts of the city. Four staircases spiral up the walls of the other two floors. The visions obtained by walking through the temple allow aedos, philosophers and artists to access the inspiration they seek. Many prestigious orators also come to be blessed by the god.

COUNCIL HALL (9)

Formed by a diverse group of citizens both tritons and humans, a seven-member council makes political decisions in the city, when it is not possible to gather the bulé, or assembly.

Erito "the young" priest of Heliod, is at its head, but both Coreneo and Febala are part of it. The hall that hosts the meetings is a circular building at the foot of the slope leading to the temple of Heliod. The Hall partly juts out into the canals overlooking the bay and its steps host the meetings outside allowing Febala to keep his promise to Thassa. The Hall also acts as a court and feasting hall, and houses images of the gods who do not yet have a temple in the city, except for Erebos, whose temple is located outside Natumbria.

TEMPLE OF HELIOD HORKIOS (10)

Above the rest of the buildings and on top of the hill surrounded by cliffs, the temple of Heliod as guardian of the oaths watches over all Natumbria. The exterior of the temple is imposing, with white columns of a luminous glow, with frieze and pediments decorated with allegories of different oaths such as friendship, marriage or loyalty to a polis.

The frame of the entrance door is gilded with inscriptions commanding to firmly fulfill the oaths made in the temple. Inside, an image of Heliod on his throne, hieratic and severe, fixes his gaze on the visitor. The walls are covered with gold plaques with engraved oaths of a multitude of faithful. Many marriages are officiated here, with the blessing of the god. It is said that Heliod will strike with Khrusor anyone who breaks an oath made here.

THE HOUSE OF BOCREO (11)

Bocreo is undoubtedly the wealthiest citizen of the city, but his notoriety does not come from his wealth. Bocreo is famous for having received Thassa's blessing to marry the beautiful naiad Artemidora. The man adores his loving wife and she adores him. His palace is decorated with ponds and fountains, with sheets of water everywhere, and decorations that convey the freshness of water. Small fish fill the ditches of the palace in a perfect blend of marble and water. The beauty of the couple's love seems to please the goddess who protects her daughter with



fervor and their two children, Leticles and Evirea. The children are famous for their exotic beauty even far from their Natumbria, which fills Bocreo with pride.

SITRIUM

Sitrium is perched on a quiet cliff facing the sea. The town uses the cliff itself as a wall to protect itself from the hinterland. The houses that do not hang on the vertical carved walls, or that do not sit on the beach at the foot, sit on the sea in stilt houses. Sitrium centers its existence on the shipyards for which it is famous. There are not many other notable buildings in the village, and the citizens work directly or indirectly for them.

THE SHIPYARDS

Deep-draft merchant ships and longships or warships are built in Sitrium. Many of the buildings on the water in Sitrium are dedicated to shipbuilding as well as housing and even stores. In addition, the beach is suitable for the construction of large ships(1), both warships and commercial vessels. Merchants who come to the village do so to secure a supply of timber. Every craftsman in the city dedicated to shipbuilding improves his techniques and is instructed as an engineer to give the best advances to the ships they produce.

The city has a tremendously industrious character and is always bustling with activity in its workshops. The most famous shipyards of Sitrium are undoubtedly those of the master Posilion (2), descendant of the family of the mythical Callaphe. According to legend and Callapheia herself, the Monsoon was built here. Many great lords seek the prestige of the shipyard to give their ships a touch of Callaphe's glory. Another shipyard, (3) famous for the speed and maneuverability of its small sailing ships, is that of Thiro "the skilful", an elderly man reputed to know stories of distant islands that he himself claims to have reached with his ships.

THE CHIMERA GATE (4)

The only land entrance to Sitrium is through a narrow tunnel that winds its way up the cliff from the plateau of the peninsula. The tunnel is constantly patrolled, as the tunnel forks several times and creature encounters are frequent. One of the most talked about creatures is the Pitarxa, a giant snake that seems to move with extraordinary stealth. The path to the door of the Chimera is marked by sculptures of Ephara's face. In the tunnel just before reaching the gate itself, a guard post carved into the rock acts as a small fortress connected to the city. It is assumed that the tunnel is covered with spells that would allow it to be closed by the guard station.

ned here. There is also a small temple and a subway necropolis carved into the walls and dedicated to Erebos in a relatively quiet area near the tunnel.

TEMPLE OF EPHARA ERGANA (5)

Only two temples have room in Sitrium in its small space. The first is dedicated to the patron saint of the polis, here as the patron saint of workers and industry. The temple stands atop a promontory on the southern cliffs, overlooking the activity of the city. Although small in size, it serves as a reference for the workers of the city who make a brief prayer in the direction of the temple before starting their day. The interior has a simple wooden decoration and a roof built like the keel of several ships. All



SITRIUM

shipyards register the ships built at the temple before the priests of the city. The leaders of each shipyard form a governing council for the city, based here, before the marble statue of the goddess, who here carries a trireme in her right hand, rather than her traditional scrolls.

TEMPLE OF THASSA ASPHALIA (6)

The temple to Thassa as guardian on journeys is the other temple built in the city. The council has taken the decision to build one to Heliod on the cliffs, but it is still only a project.

On a sand-covered stretch of a small islet, the temple of Thassa is covered by the waters with the frequency of the tides. Its rocky exterior is eroded by air and water, and bathed in salt. Its interior always has a thin layer of sand on the floor, from which come out crabs and other animals brought by the water at each tide. The image in the center of the circular temple is occupied by an image of Thassa covered up to half a body with a thin layer of sea salt. It is customary to keep on each new ship a bag of salt obtained here to bring luck to the ships on their voyages. Elipheltes, the triton priest of the temple, is in charge of sanctifying this salt and anoints with it many sailors and fishermen who come to the temple to be blessed by the goddess.

THE BACCIADE (7)

The neighborhood where Sitrium's workers rest from their day's work is a nightly hotbed of revelry and wine. The rougher ones compete to drink the strongest wine or liquor, while the older ones tell stories of legends of all kinds, and the younger ones flirt, flushed with alcohol. Parties after finishing the construction of a significant ship can last all night long. Rivalries between shipyards often end in drunken fights that are forgotten the next day. The people of Sitrium are proud of their rough and tumble way of being and of being linked to the work of the sea. It is said that it was precisely in the Bacciade that Callaphe got part of his crew, and this is something that is made known in this tavern district, where every citizen makes his lineage known to one of the sailors of the Callapheia, considered great heroes here.

MAPS

1. PYRONOS. TEMPLE EPHARA ARKEGETA.
2. THE OBSERVATORY.
3. DEKATA.
4. ESTADIUM MAGNO.
5. THALAIK PHENAXICUS.
6. AGORA OMILLITIS
7. NECROPOLIS.
8. LONG WALLS.
9. HALLS OF THE TWELVE.
10. REVERENT ARMY.
11. BERETEAN BEACH.
12. TEMPLE OF THE PANTHÓN.
13. SACRED ROAD OF THE TEMPLES.
14. TEMPLE OF HELIOD COLETES.
15. TEMPLE OF EPHARA POLYMETA.
16. TEMPLE OF KARAMETRA GENITULIA.
17. TEMPLE OF KERANOS LATROMANTIS.
18. TEMPLE OF IRGOS.
19. TEMPLE OF PHARICA APEMIA.
20. INNOMINATION ALTAR OF MOGIS.
21. DOME TEMPLE OF KRUTHIS BOULEOS.
22. DOME TEMPLE OF PHENAS ERIKRIPTOS.
23. ALTARS OF ATHREOS.

24. TEMPLE OF THASSA PELAGEA.
25. COLOSSUS OF TIRO AND KYNAIOS.
26. TEMPLE OF ERBOS CHTHONIOS.
27. TEMPLE OF KARAMETRA KARPOFONA.
28. TEMPLE OF ATHREOS.
29. ESTIOA OF THE BULL.
30. TRIBUNAL, TEMPLE OF EPHARA NOMOS.
31. AUCTION HOUSE OF EPHARA AGOREA.
32. TREASURY OF EPHARA.
33. AGORRUS THATFER.
34. PUBLIC GIMNASIUM.
35. TEMPLE OF IKRAN HEGETON.
36. HALL OF HEROES.
37. HALL OF THE TREASURE.
38. TEMPLE OF NYLLA HECEROLA.
39. PALACE AND VINEYARDS OF ECTIÖN.
40. TEMPLE OF PURPHOROS POIMETON.
41. PALACE OF THE FAMILY PARMEXIADIES.
42. PALACE OF IGEÓN OF MELETIS.
43. PALACE OF ALEKTO "THE ELDER".
44. ARTISANS QUARTER.
45. PHENAXIC BATH HOUSES.
46. HARBOR QUARTER.



MELETIS



NEOLANTIN



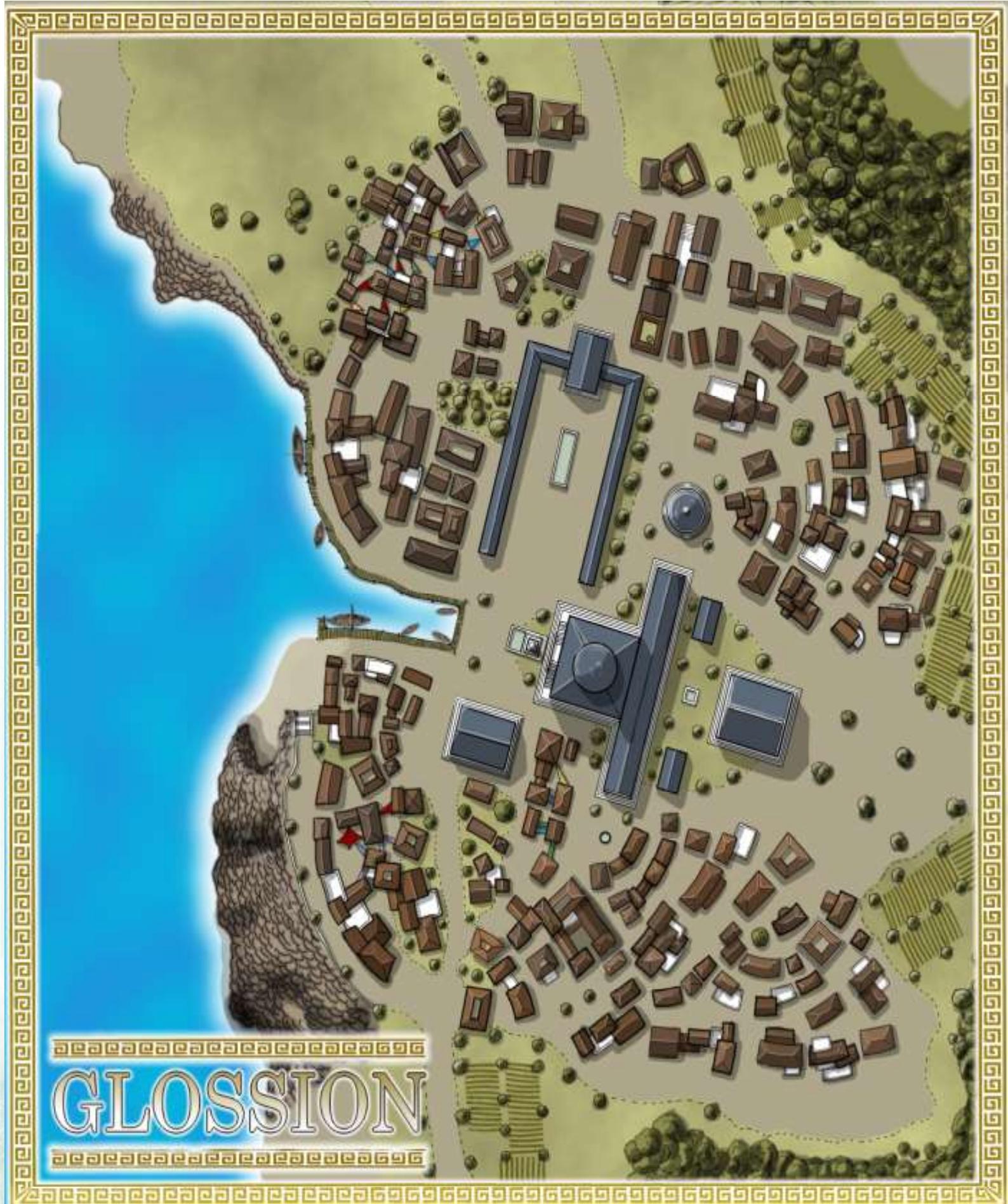
ALTRISOS







SITRIUM

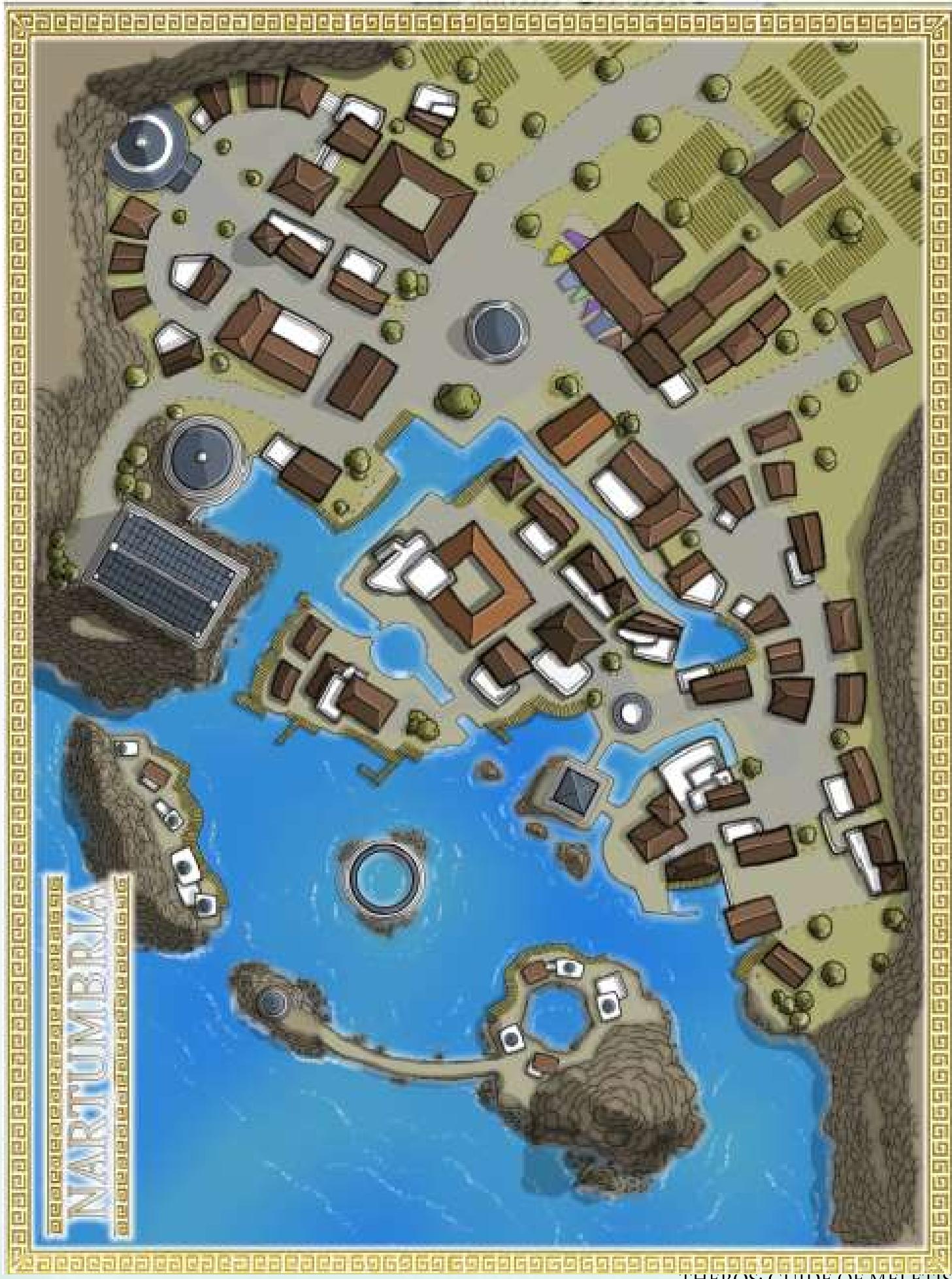




OXUS

PHAEOSTOS





NARTUMBRIA

KRIMNOS

