

THIEVES are everywhere, and most of the the lower city is divided territory between rival gangs and thieves guilds. Thus, Aquila is also known as the CITY OF THIEVES. The upper city is ripe and rich for the plucking, but much more protected, so the thieves must be clever and patient, and ideally work with (or for) a rival of the noble who is to be fleeced.

SUN, WIND AND RAIN are frequent companions here, and the swarthy Southmarens are quick to duck under an overhang to get out of an unexpected downpour or windstorm. Wet and dry monsoons alternatively soak and bake the city, and many neighborhoods of the LOWER CITY are vulnerable to flooding, although rats swim well. Protected by the tall-peaked roofs of the HIGH ROADS, the wealthy of the UPPER CITY quite enjoy the rains that wash their streets clean, as well as the balmy evenings. The **CLOCKTOWER of ARSENALE** is visible across the city, telling precise time. Bells and steam whistles sound off the hours of the day, start and ends of shifts, important days such as pay days and holidays, and are the city alarm for fire or invasion. The whole city is listening.

CITY GUARDS are common on the HIGH ROADS but seldom found in the LOWER CITY. Each of the FIVE GREAT TOWERS has its own guard force, who patrol within and around their territory. A squad of “gold cloaks” of COMMERCIO is quite different from a turb of “black cloaks” of SORCERIE, with their own panoply, approaches, and standing orders.

GUILD MASTERS are recognized by silver **Master Pins**. A navigator wears his compass and a musician her pipes. Master Pins are awarded by a Guild after demonstrating mastery of a craft, art, or trade. This is an accomplishment, celebrated by the Guild and recorded in their ledger, and affords many privileges of rank, acknowledgement, respect, and the license to sell goods at top-notch prices. “Always seek a master if thee desires the best item or service of quality.”

HARRIERS are elite agents of the Emperor. Depending on the needs of the Empire they are emissaries, diplomats, advisors, scouts, spies, magic-users, and assassins. The TOWER GRIFONE is between PALACIO and SORCERIE, and off-limits to the normal populace. Harriers are famous as griffin riders, although it’s not the most important thing they do.

MAGIC is uncommon, and even the simplest working will provoke awe and fear in onlookers. By Imperial law, magic is restricted to the Imperial Black Wizards of the Tower of Sorcerie; any other workings are unlawful, although “anything that happens on the Street of the Gods stays on the Street of the Gods”. In addition, curious adventurers who plunge into the city will find that there is in fact a great deal of the supernatural below the surface.

POLITICS and FACTIONS are a fact in any city. The Five Great Towers play with and against one another in a game of thrones. The guilds, merchant and thieves alike, vie for power. The way you play with or against each of them defines your experience in the city.

NAVALLE is the navy harbor between ARSENALE and PALACIO.

BLACK WIZARDS are adepts of the magic arts who serve the Emperor, for the good of the Empire. They are recognizable by their shaved heads, black robes, and magical symbols. They reside in the TOWER SORCERIE but all-too often raverse with gliding steps the city streets.

THE STREET OF THE GODS is at the end of the city, a cul-de-sac surrounding TOWER DESTINO and ending in the DEEP STEPS. “The truth is at the end of the street” so they say, and this closed-loop street is a funnel and fishtrap for anyone seeking truth, listening to divine voices, speaking in tongues, or otherwise acting crazy, etc. Thousands of gods find worshipers here, but the most prevalent are **Pyrose** the Sun King, **Xohm** the Earth Mother, **Mrmym** the Winged Messenger, **Lunara** the Veiled Maiden, **Kurg** the Winter King, and **Hruul** the Voice in the Void. They are known by other names across cultures and the aeons, but the archetypes are the same, for example the Baal known the Veiled Maiden as Suul.

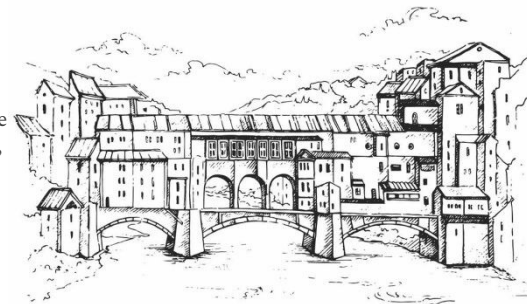
THE DEEP STEPS are old stone stairs leading from the STREET OF THE GODS down crumbling cliffs into the cold waters of the lagoon. Nobody talks about what is down there, but the steps have always been, just as DESTINO has always been.

THE SMUGGLERS CLIFFS are the eastern seaside of the city, picturesque yet sheer and crumbling cliffs fit only for mansions wishing a sunrise view and sea thieves smuggling untaxed goods and contraband into the city. There are many sea caves, some with secret passages up into the city.

THE MAINLAND is vast, stretching like an arm from the five-towered “hand” of Aquila and onto the shores of a vast lagoon and surrounding countryside. Roughly a million people live here, with most farming food for the city and a few serve the locals or have cottage industries.

AQUILA

Aquila is the famed capital city of the Southmarens, who with their vast fleets have explored much of the world, and established many secret trade routes and colonies around the Dragon Sea. Aquila is known as the Golden City, the Eternal City, seat of the Southmaren Empire of Harnendor, and City of Thieves. People come to Aquila from all corners of the world, but what Aquila is to you depends on who your friends and enemies are. Play to find out what Aquila is for you.



AQUILA is a peninsula, stretching like an arm from the southern coastline. A million people dwell on the mainland and peninsula, a hundred thousand in the **LOWER CITY**, and only a handful wealthy thousand make their homes in the resplendent **UPPER CITY**.

FIVE GREAT TOWERS rise like fingers of a hand above the lower city, stretching above the streets, guild shops, and noble houses all. Each “tower” is in effect an independent city-state with its own leaders, laws, walls, soldiers, and trades. The towers are visible everywhere in the city, so you can always know where you are.

- I. **COMMERCIO** - The hub of trade, mercantilism, and banking. Everything important that enters or exits Aquila is managed and taxed here. The Southmarens of Aquila have vast fleets and have explored much of the world, and established many secret trade routes and colonies around the Dragon Sea.
- II. **ARSENALE** - A large complex of shipyards, armories, factories, and stockpiles clustered together in northern shore of the city. Almost anything can be mass-produced here. The Arsenale is responsible for producing all large ships, both naval and merchant, launching as many as two ships per day. COMMERCIO delivers raw materials and imported components, and exports manufactured goods. The Arsenale employs many skilled laborers, and provides lodging in camps for those willing to sweat their way out of the slums.
- III. **PALACIO** - The imperial palace of the Emperor of Harnendor, seat of the Southmaren Empire of Harnendor.
- IV. **SORCERIE** - The Tower of Sorcery is home to the Black Wizards of Aquila. These sages and practitioners of the dark arts are licensed by the Emperor and do his bidding.
- V. **DESTINO** - A mist-shrouded crumbling tower forbidden by Imperial decree. The tower has always been in the city, and grows noticeably larger each year, but none know who built the tower or who might be working on it now. Claims of unusual and supernatural activity at night are quite common. Surrounding the tower is the Street of the Gods.

HIGH ROADS connect the five towers. These are embankments and bridges built up over the lower city. Much of the wealth of Aquila is here, in the hands of nobles, wealthy merchants, and master guildsmen. These roads are clean, well lit, and well guarded. Most are also roofed to cover passerby from the incessant rain, which is cunningly collected in pipes to wash the streets and fill the reservoirs of the lower city.

GREAT PLAZAS are found at intersections of the HIGH ROADS.

- I. **OUTER MARKET** - The *Market di Largo* at the outer gates, selling large and travel goods.
- II. **INNER MARKET** - The *Market di Stretta* in the inner city, selling small and fine city goods.
- III. **GRAND PLAZA** - The *Piazza Grande* is the city center where all HIGH ROADS cross, in front of the PALACIO. The large square has several statues and fountains, and is both a favored meeting place as well as a venue for Imperial decrees and executions.
- IV. **PLAZA D. ARTES** - The *Piazza della Artes* is a market gallery outside the TOWER SORCERIE where works of art and wonders of invention can be found. Is this some magic?
- V. **FOREST OF DARK DELIGHTS** - The misty, mysterious, ancient black forest between the TOWER SORCERIE and TOWER DESTINO. A very popular destination for lovers trysts but also infamous for missing people and werewolves.

LOWER CITY neighborhoods form the vast majority of the city space and population (90% / 100K). Most are slums built on shifting mud and some are actually nice places to live, but all are under the sway of the thieves guilds and monsoon floods. City guards do not venture here while on duty, so there is no law besides your blade and arrangement with the friendly local neighborhood thieves guild. Almost everyone in the LOWER CITY dreams of “making it” out and into the UPPER CITY.

Aquila

