

AGORA DISTRICT

Third Circle:

Agora:

This is the commercial centre of Stromphe – street stalls, hawkers, colonnaded shops, a temple to Hephaestos, and a large public baths, the gossip centre of the city.

Surrounding it are many guildhalls (*Gld* on map), and some not-so-friendly competition arises from time to time. Each of the massive guildhalls in this district is emblazoned with a

symbol representative of its craft. The most prestigious, fronting on to the Agora itself, are the ceramic and Ironmongers Guildhouses.

On the north-eastern side of the Agora, are large public baths, one of the more popular ones in the city. On the south-eastern side is a large Temple to Hephaestos, patron of craftsmen, especially smiths and engineers. Beside it is the Guildhouse of Engineers; on the other side is the imposing People's Assembly Chamber, where citizens can vote and debate on various current issues, and which then will be taken up by the higher authorities. And at the end of the south-eastern side is a long, three storey building, the Bouleterion, home of the Bouleos, business men gathering for relaxation, making deals, and making laws and regulations for the local economy of the city – the real city government.

The local constabulary stationed here have a keen lookout for trouble – the Assembly and Bouleos will tolerate no disturbance to business in this district.

To the west of the Agora itself, is the shame of Stromphe, the large Slavemarket, where captives from all over Artemisia, west Dorian and northern Kamurikandam are bought and sold to parties from all over the region. Here is the Slavers guild, but surprisingly, its practices are reasonably humane – they take good care of their stock. Slavery may be on its way out though, as the present Speaker and majority of the government find slavery rather distasteful.

Residential areas in this district are fairly middle class, with leafy courtyards.

The PanStromphaic Way, the route from the western Sanctuary of Persephone, to the Temple of Zeus at the summit of the Acropolis, passes through the Agora, turning 180 degrees on its way up the cliffs into the Second Circle.

Helena:

A lower middle class residential area, with so-so taverns and inns, restaurants and dance halls, and small local markets. Two sites are of more than passing interest – the Comic Theatre, staging bawdy plays and musicals, very popular with the hoi polloi; and Georgios Dance Hall, where dances, ribald parties and other less tasteful pursuits (surely not Drugs, Sex and Rock'n'Roll) entertain the same hoi polloi.

There are many small market places, taverns and inns, shops catering to the needs of its residents, and some surprisingly good eateries – the upper class are often seen here at night, and some even go to the Comic Theatre...or the Dance Hall on a dare.

Parklands:

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

A public Bath is also present, and Hera's Falls tinkle from the cliffs of the Second Circle to form a small lake and merry bubbling stream.

Second Circle:

The entrance to the Second Circle is here, a steep incline up the cliffs atop which the Second Circle sits, topped by a sturdy 15' granite wall and 30' towers.

Scholar Quarter:

In the southern part of this quarter is the great *Stromphe Infirmary*, where medical and risky surgical and dental procedures are carried out, for those able to afford it – or the very poor for whom it is free. The major controversy at present is whether washing hands before operating or delivering babies is better than washing after – most favour the latter. It also houses a new Nurses school and Dormitories, where young men and women (mainly women and gays) train in basic surgical training, and giving assistance to the lordly doctors, some of which have magical abilities to cure wounds, and eradicate poison – most useful after limb amputation, for wound closure and prevention of sepsis.

The Keep:

The Keep sits at the southern end of the second circle, like a prow to a ship. Here is the major garrison for the City-State, and a major training centre. The senior officers also live here with their families, in housing along the southern wall.

All male civilians are expected to train on a part time basis for five years, an excellent deterrent against aggression from neighbouring city-states (and the Imperium to the north) since virtually the whole populace is a trained soldier at times of war.

There is also a small magical division here devoted to military uses of the Art, including flying on reconnaissance missions, and perfecting lightning bolts and fire explosions. Gunpowder has not yet been invented, but the resourceful Stromphiens will no doubt catch on soon.

Bank Court:

Here are the major banks, especially Bank of Iraisia (OA), Stromphe Trading Bank (STB) and the City State Bank (CSB). The Stromphe Stock Exchange is also here, the biggest and most sophisticated in the whole of Artemisia, along with various trading company headquarters, and a few guildhouses. Here also, in a beautiful parkland setting, is Demokles House, the mansion of Georgios Demokles, the nouveau riche majority shareholder of the Comic Theatre and Georgios Dance Hall (and suspected of being a drug lord – oh no, surely not – he is such a nice man).

Here too, is the State Penitentiary, where those whose crimes are not so severe as to warrant them being sent to Prison Isle, or for those transferred from that Isle of dread, for their execution in front of a public audience – a great day for jollity and entertainment... and profits for the various hawkers of goods. The Criminal Court stands on the other side of Execution square. Residences here are of the wealthy upper middle class.