

THE GLORY ROAD

Issue 2

Neighborhoods of Estarion, Pt. 1

ESTARION: THE CITY

Estarion is crowded, with few paved streets. Buildings mix trade space with residential, with residences above shops. Structures are typically two to four stories, made of mud and brick with flat roofs, often with gardens atop the buildings. Wealthy homes may be made of brick and stone, and wooden construction is rare. Overall, Estarion has a Mediterranean feel, with hot, dusty, crowded streets. Tunnels riddle the earth under the city, mostly the remnants of older cities that were built over, but there were also sewers, basements and caves – some secret, built by criminals and cultists to hide their work – and others just forgotten.

Social stratification is normal. Not only do people of wealth and standing have greater rights and protections under the law, but sumptuary laws prevent people from even seeming like they are of higher social classes by penalizing the use of titles or even clothing of a higher social class. Armor and weapon are theoretically controlled, but the law is loosely enforced, particularly in poor neighborhoods. However, the city watch and Imperial centurions are glad to harass anyone equipped for violence leading many thugs, criminals, and commoners to equip themselves with 'tools' which serve as weapons in a pinch: hammers, chisels, and so forth... at least in areas where the guard still maintains a strong presence. As a consequence, weapon smuggling is big business for the various gangs and criminal syndicates.

To choose a random neighborhood, roll 1d8:

1. Selindra
2. The Old City
3. The Second City
4. The New City
5. The Riverfront
6. The Waterfront
7. Red Lanterns
8. Downwind.

The River Selintan runs north of the main city, with a bridge crossing the river between the Old City and Selindra. Estarion sprawls from the river over the tip of a small peninsula, with ocean to the east and south, seeing river barge traffic to the north, along the Selintan, and ocean ships along the waterfront to the south. A wall protects the edges of the city except for the riverfront, the waterfront, Red Lanterns, and Downwind, with a moat outside the western wall as well, red by the Selintan and flowing down to the ocean. West and southwest of Downwind there is a

swamp, the Salt Marsh, home to smugglers, alligators, huge rats, giant spiders, and all manner of human scum.

THE OLD CITY

The site of the original trade city of Estarion, the Old City is built of stone, with flat-roofed houses and shops, typically of two or three stories. The streets in the old city tend to be winding, narrow, cobblestone, and without easy drainage.

d6 Location

1. **The Palace.** The imperial governor, Prince Lucius Martellus' palace. He sees petitioners once a week, as chosen by his councilor, Marius Escandar. This is well guarded by a garrison of Imperial Centurions.
2. **Temple of The Olympian Twelve.** The most powerful religious faction in the city, but lacking in the traditional value of the temple of Hecate. Hecate was the patroness of Estarius, and thus is the patroness of the city that bears his name. Her priestesses have since had the ear of the city's princes.
3. **The Gem Market:** Jewelers meet here to trade gems and precious metals under heavy guard every morning.
4. **The Court of Justice.** The courts meet six days a week. Court proceedings are by tribunal, with Aquilan judges accountable only to the Prince. The hangman's noose, whipping post and stocks are outside, but crucifixion happens outside of the city, in view of Downwind.
5. **The White Dragon Inn.** A wealthy and well-heeled establishment with rooms for traders of status and food for the well bred. They do their best to keep out the riff-raff.

I wanted the feeling of romance and the sense of wonder I had known as a kid. I wanted the world to be what they had promised me it was going to be—instead of the tawdry, lousy, fouled-up mess it is. — Robert A Heinlein, *The Glory Road*

6. **The City Jail.** Heavily guarded with tiny, miserable cells and a continuous problem with vermin.

THE SECOND WARD

The second phase of the city's development, this area has wider, more organized streets. The second ward was built by and for merchants, and serves as the heart of the city's economy.

d6 Location

1. **The Grand Guildhall.** The trade guilds maintain a monopoly on training, certifying, pricing, and distributing many kinds of craft goods and skilled trades in the city. They are part corporate monopoly, part trade union, and part mafia family. Among the most influential guilds are the guilds of stevedores, porters, and blacksmiths
2. **The Three Lions Tavern.** A respectable tavern for merchants, tradesmen, and guild members, the Three Lions is a clean place filled where informal business is done regularly.
3. **The Temple of Hecate.** The Temple of Hecate is politically powerful, holding a historical significance because Hecate is considered the patron goddess of the city. Her temple is devoted to her role as goddess of the moon, crossroads, and learning. She is also considered a protective goddess over homes, who brought prosperity and blessings to homes. Her priestesses consult with the prince, give blessings to different factions, and guide policies that affect daily life.
4. **The Great Bazaar.** This large open-air market is an essential shopping area, where small merchants maintain booths selling goods of all sorts. Market stalls open every day, and remain busy throughout the year.
5. **The Scola Magica.** The Scola Magica is a educational institution for the wealthy and powerful. Part University, part school of wizardry, the Scola Magica plays a key role for magical investigations.
6. **The City Watch Armory.** The armory is a center of the city's defenses. It is both a garrison for soldiers and a storehouse for arms and armor, a visible sign of the city's commitment to protecting the Second Ward.

THE NEW CITY

The westernmost of the city's main wards, the New City was expanded on in the last five decades, built as the Empire sought to expand its interests eastward. The plans never came to fruition, so the New City is home to more foreigners, poor, and outcasts than other portions of the city.

d6 Location

1. **The Sanitarium.** Run by doctor Marcellus Nonus, the city sanitarium treats the mentally ill, with a focus on helping the poor and needy. The Sanitarium seems to be preternaturally still, and the people there very calm, though Nonus is very enthusiastic about helping. In truth, it is a cover for Nonus' necromantic experiments on patients he thinks will not be missed.
2. **The Shrine to All Gods.** A simple shrine with an altar to the Unknown God. The building is maintained by the priesthood of the Olympians, but serves as a placeholder for worship of any god unknown or unrecognized by the Olympian priesthood, and is used for worship by all manner of people, particularly foreigners.
3. **The City Baths.** The public baths are widely used by working folk, in particular the local Tarquai, for not only hygiene, but as a place for sharing news and rumors. The place is divided into the women's baths and the men's, and sections of the baths are maintained for the wealthy and the common.
4. **The Great Arena.** The Aquilans are fond of combat, and the Great Arena is where games are held, sometimes between convicted criminals, sometimes between professional gladiators, and sometimes with wild animals or monsters. Some fights are prizefights where no one dies, others are full-on blood sports with fights to the death. A great deal of gambling goes on behind the scenes, and is key part of the games.
5. **The Farm Market.** The stalls here sell produce, meat, dairy and simple farm goods such as soaps. The place is usually busy every day. This is less a place of merchants than of farmers earning extra cash.
6. **The Horse Market.** The market sells horses and beasts of burden as well as other livestock at a daily auction.