

Huzanter

"Yes, it always does that when you try and pick it up. Perhaps I should manufacture some kind of sign. Never mind, you will regain full feeling in only a matter of hours."

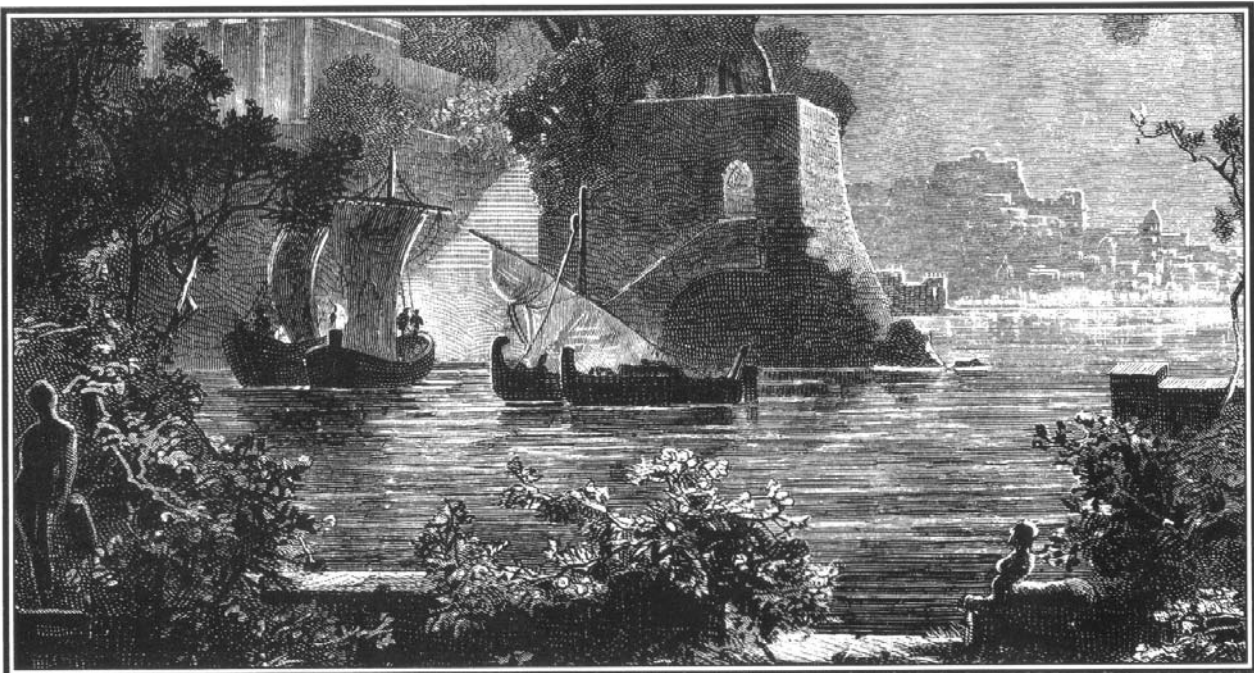
A curious old man who runs a Curio Shop in the Backs. He makes no claims to magical prowess, and in fact will refuse to engage in conversation with those who ask him questions about his personal life. Judging by the many dweomers lingering around his premises (see below), he clearly has magical mastery of some kind.

Ratings: Persuade (Glib) 12, Rebuff (Wary) 15, Attack (Caution) 9, Defense (Dodge) 13, Health 7, Magic (Studious) 16, Appraisal 12, Athletics 5, Concealment 6, Craftsmanship 3, Driving 3, Etiquette 7, Gambling 5, Pedantry 2~, Perception 9, Quick Fingers 5, Riding 4, Scuttlebutt 4, Stealth 8, Stewardship 3, Wherewithal 11.

Iucounu the Laughing Magician

"I can't help but wonder; did I just overhear you make an ill-considered disparaging comment?"

Detailed in the Dying Earth Rulebook (DERPG, p157), Iucounu is a proud and arrogant man, who delights in petty revenges and besting those who try to cross wits with him. He never enters the town without a bevy of spells packed into his sensorium, and has in the past eviscerated would-be footpads leaving nothing but their shoes. Iucounu dresses only in black and has a round head that seems perpetually split by a cruel smile.



Marcoster the Mage

"I see from the markings on your rapier hilt that it was originally produced in the Eighteenth Aeon. I wonder where it was you procured such a valuable curiosity?"

The highly knowledgeable, and slightly sinister, household wizard of the Duchess, Marcoster is a little-known fellow who seems to be able to travel around town without anyone seeing him. Many is the storekeeper who has leapt in fright when Marcoster appeared from seeming thin air to request the price of some small metal container or set of writing implements.

Ratings: Persuade (Eloquent) ~, Rebuff (Lawyerly) ~+4, Attack (Speed) ~, Defense (Sure-Footedness) ~, Health 8, Magic (Curious) 13, Appraisal 7, Athletics 5, Concealment 5, Etiquette 6, Pedantry 9, Perception 6, Physician 3, Quick Fingers 3, Riding 6, Scuttlebutt 4, Stealth 5, Wherewithal 10.

Phendway Hackram

"Your actions may be par for the course in Kaiin, but here we are civilized folk. I sentence you to sixteen lashes in the public stocks. Take him away."

Phendway is current chief constable of Azenomei, a red-faced and harassed individual who is the person on whom most of the town's practical responsibilities lie. He also acts in the position of town chief justice, and reserves the right to personally oversee trials involving major felonies.

Ratings: Persuade (Forthright) ~, Rebuff (Lawyerly) ~, Attack (Strength) ~, Defense (Parry) ~, Health 6, Magic (Studious) 3, Athletics 4, Driving 5, Etiquette 4, Gambling 3, Pedantry 3, Perception 7, Riding 6, Scuttlebutt 9, Stealth 6, Tracking 3, Wherewithal 8.

Varuna Albret

Varuna is the principle healer at the Ethodea Hospice, and in fact it was her great-great grandmother who established the hospice towards the end of her life (after a long and much-appreciated career as a local herbalist). Varuna herself is now in late middle-age, and leads a staff of seven other healers (five females and two males). Though kindly by nature, she is strong-willed and can be stern. Those who appear at the hospice sporting combat wounds are treated without question, but nonetheless a runner is sent as soon as practical to the Office of Constables.

Ratings: Persuade (Charming) 14, Rebuff (Pure-Hearted) 14, Attack (Caution) 7, Defense (Sure-footedness) 9, Health 6, Magic (Insightful) 5, Athletics 3, Craftsmanship 3, Driving 2, Etiquette 4, Pedantry 7, Perception 8, Physician 13, Quick Fingers 7, Riding 5, Scuttlebutt 6, Stewardship 4, Wherewithal 9

Resistances: All Ω (this woman is a devout follower of Ethodea)

Zelif Fote

“The reforms you suggest are not without merit, but you will find here in Azenomei that tradition is the watchword, and so I must regretfully decline to grant your license.”

Fote is current head of the town council, a merchant of great wealth who acts in all ways to protect his status and possessions, and those of his fellow merchants. He also controls the town constables, overseeing their appointments and activities. Nonetheless, justice here is neither lax nor overly-harsh.

Ratings: Persuade (Eloquent) 9, Rebuff (Wary) 12, Attack (Caution) 8, Defense (Misdirection) 9, Health 8, Appraisal 13, Athletics 4, Driving 5, Etiquette 7, Gambling 3, Pedantry 5, Perception 4, Riding 2, Scuttlebutt 6, Seduction 4, Stewardship 3, Wherewithal 7.

Typical Townsfolk

Probably around a tenth of the adults in the town know a cantrap or two to assist them with day-to-day chores, and about one percent knows three or more cantraps. An equal number know a few spells, but such folk tend to be established professionals who use these enchantments in their work (rather than serious magicians in training). Many are of average competency with a rapier, and some few (who are members of the local fencing society) show greater skills.

Events

The Monthly Market

Every month Azenomei holds a regional market at the site of its fairground between the Scaum and the Xzan. This attracts people from across the region, including many travelling traders and entertainers. As well as the opportunity to purchase, trade and be entertained, one may turn one's hand to games of chance, and contests of strength, expertise and horticultural prowess. The small local produce market takes place every other weekend, and this sometimes attracts a handful of smaller 'out of town' traders who are passing through.

The Great Fair

Once every year, at the start of summer, Azenomei holds its annual 'Great Fair', and this event attracts not only traders of great renown, but also royalty and other notables from as far as Kaiin. This is the only time that the entire fairground is filled, and the town council makes considerable funds through renting out the prime positions and levying a small tax on all goods bought and sold beyond a certain price limit. Naturally, this vast market attracts professional thieves and confidence tricksters in equal proportion to the genuine merchants.

Ethodea Day

Established only a few decades ago by the Hospice, this celebration is a way for the healers to acquire extra funds. The day starts in the early morning with a procession winding around the town, with an effigy of Ethodea carried at the head. It ends around noon with a pagan flower festival on the riverbank just to the east of town. Everyone throws petals into the waters, and many make elaborate model rafts to support their

flowery offerings. The children then chase this colorful mass all the way to the western edge of town. Throughout the day small donations are accepted by the known healers, and citizens may give or pledge larger sums in order to ensure that they receive priority treatment for the following year should they become sick.

The Scaum Regatta

Smaller in size (and in pomp and ceremony) than the Kaiin Regatta, nonetheless the Azenomei Regatta has its own character and spectacle. The barges that participate here are less glamorous, though still decorated and painted to great effect. This event too begins with a parade (in this case along the concourse), but here in Azenomei the lesser folk of the town continue to participate (rather than languishing jealously along the riverside as the common folk of Kaiin must do). Several of the larger barges are communal property, and for a minimal fee take parties of revelers up and down the Scaum from one side of town to the other, mingling with the privately owned vessels. It is common place for acquaintances to jump from one vessel to another as they pass, but fatalities are fortunately rare.

The Running of the Baulk

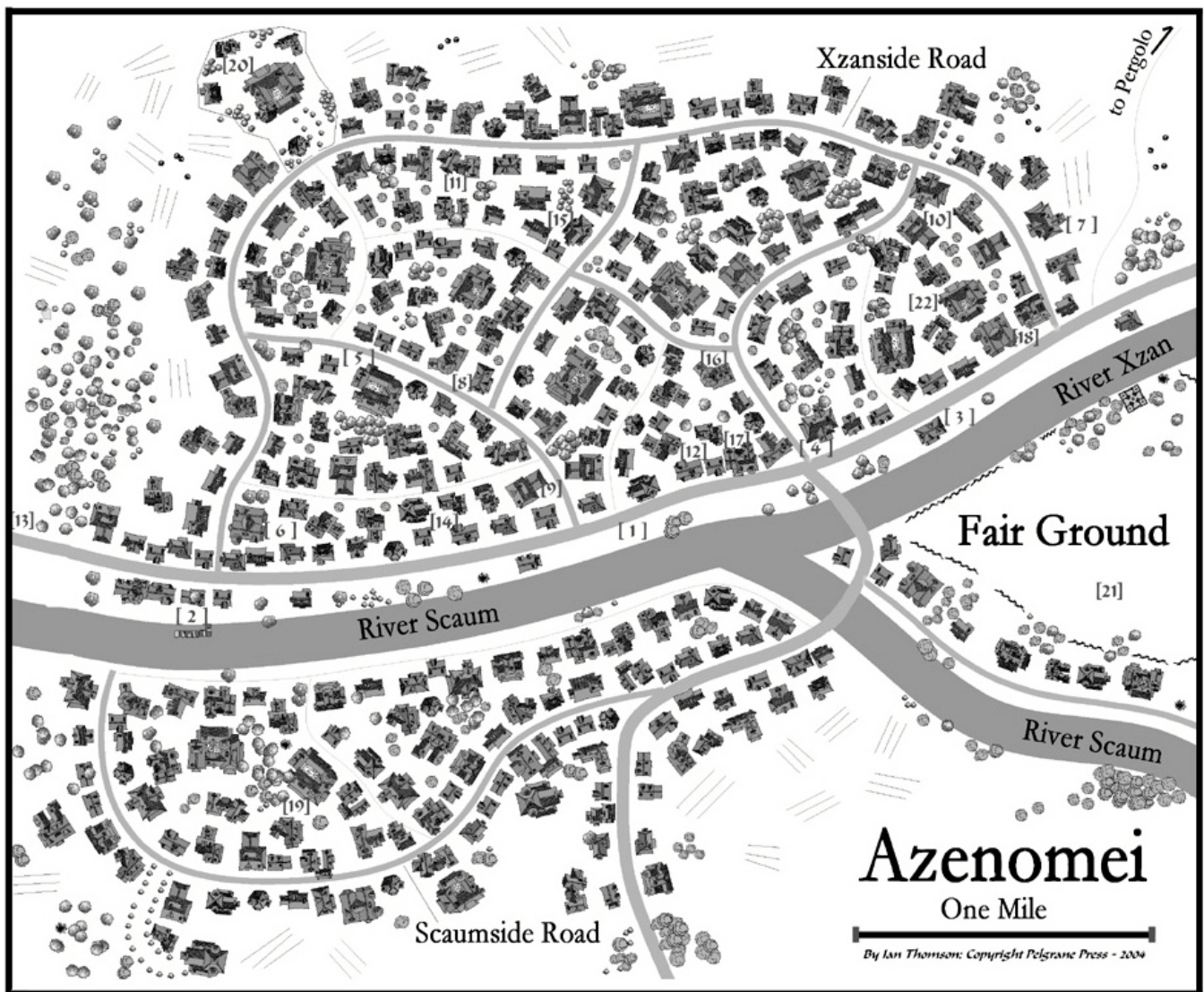
Several days before the annual Great Fair several major streets are lined with thorny barricades and up to three-dozen juvenile baulk are released. These animals run frantically up and down, seeking egress. Not so very entertaining you might think; however, whilst most people view the scene from their balconies, it is a sign of bravery to run the streets with the baulk, and every year two hundred or so locals or brave foreigners join in the 'fun'. During this event about a quarter of the participants are significantly injured, and each year usually accounts for around half a dozen deaths. (More deaths would surely occur were it not for the healers of Ethodea who remain on hand.) The streets that are blocked off are: the Xzanside from Duchess Street (the main turning south of the Duchess' Manse) to Bridge Street; Duchess Street as far as Center Road; all of Center Road; Bridge Street down to Fairview Lane; and all of Fairview Lane. This provides a winding track of about five miles, which is lined with screaming spectators on balconies and behind their barricades.

Rumors . . .

- ♣ Iucounu the Laughing Magician is away on business. A certain Fianosther (SVG: p54) who regularly runs a stall of magical curios at the fair has seen the mage depart in a magical carriage. On previous occasions Iucounu has been away for up to a week, and certainly never returns in less than ten hours. Surely some swift and dexterous folk could enter Pergolo (his manse) and make away with a few choice valuables. After all, why would someone as well-known and as arrogant as Iucounu bother with any protective magics.
- ♣ A cavalier young trader of unkempt and untrustworthy appearance has started irregularly attending the weekly and monthly markets at the fairground, selling talismans that are 'not obviously ineffective'. Despite his obviously roguish ways this man (a certain Kungle or some-such similar epithet), has a certain charm. He recognizes in the PCs a similarity of demeanor, and over beer one day approaches you with not one but three apparently credible plans for a joint operation towards mutual improvement.
- ♣ Respected local (and wealthy owner of several properties), Gnasein Koyle, has been discovered dead in his own outhouse, drowned in effluent. His family is distraught, especially that a man of such sober habits should meet his end in such an offensive way. However, was he such a sober fellow? A few days before this event you were returning home along the concourse late one night when you overheard voices. You thought to recognize Koyle and a suspected footpad by the name of Ertrind arguing about 'the next delivery', and Ertrind confirming that the previous shipment still awaited collection 'beside the black stump'. Taking the sensible course, you diverted up an alley and continued on your way without being seen. However, you also recall one of the town's hunters describing a peculiar black stump he saw on the edge of the Ferghaz Forest last season.
- ♣ One of Azenomei's squatters was a young woman naming herself as Jadel. She was only a passing acquaintance, but you exchanged pleasantries with her from time to time and found her intelligent and lively company. However, something seemed to be bothering her, and you presumed she was in this town because of previous problems at some other location. Chancing upon a mutual acquaintance, you have just heard that he went to visit her yesterday and found her room in disarray and Jadel missing. This is suspicious in itself, but also this acquaintance says that her room looks like she was packing in a

hurry – and yet her belongings are still there. Could this have anything to do with the strange party of taciturn monks that arrived from Val Ombrio with their little cart last week?

- ♣ Whilst attending the weekly market earlier today you were answering the call of nature behind a tree when you heard two men sneaking into the woods. In the interests of probity you maintained absolute silence, hoping they would depart. However, they engaged in a brief and heated conversation, during which you were able to pick out the name ‘Huzanter’, and the fact that a ‘sure-fire plan’ would be enacted this evening to enable them to gain access to his premises and magical curios. Do you wish to warn Huzanter and perhaps gain some sort of reward, or wait for the thieves in the hopes that you can follow their lead and plunder his premises after they have departed?
- ♣ In the River Inn early one evening you are sitting near a group of travelers just arrived from Val Ombrio. These folk are discussing having only an hour or two ago observed odd lights on a hilltop in the thick woods several miles to the south. Local rumor has always maintained that many years ago the ruined manse of Casant Purliander emitted odd lights and sounds in that region, due to some kind of magical machine that suddenly produced magical household devices. Apparently, some enterprising locals journeyed to the manse, filled their sacks with such objects and sold them in Kaiin for great wealth. Can it be that this machine has somehow reactivated?
- ♣ The healers of Ethodea are sending off another expedition to collect rare herbs from several locations across the Scaum Valley. These reliable employers offer payment in salves and potions of known efficacy, though only once the job is complete. As usual they are looking for a small band of persons used to the perils of the wild and the odd ways of the other local settlements. These employees will be required to escort and assist one of the healers, who will be identifying the herbs required and co-ordinating the harvesting methods.



Places of Interest

Note that this Azenomei map is also available as a separate download at the 'Violet Cusps' page.

- 1) Concourse
- 2) Wharf
- 3) River Inn
- 4) Doughty One Inn
- 5) Prince's Crown Inn
- 6) Boatman's Inn
- 7) Lorn Meropidan Tavern
- 8) Rampant Erb Tavern
- 9) Crusty Loaf Tavern
- 10) Tarnished Terce Tavern
- 11) Hooded Mage Tavern
- 12) Zombal the Tailor
- 13) The New Gibbet
- 14) Gilsan Char's Bakery
- 15) Huzanter's Curio Shop
- 16) Mathep's Wayfarers' Supplies
- 17) Central Stores
- 18) Gentle Scaum Tea-Rooms
- 19) Ethodea Hospice
- 20) Duchess' Manse
- 21) The Market Fields
- 22) Manse of Volune Stinobric

1) **The Concourse**

Along the north bank of the river, the majority of Azenomei's more upmarket shops stand in a long line. In most cases their owners (who are often but not always their proprietors) live in the large homes attached to the retail premises below. Only a few of the more notable shops are mentioned in the index; however Azenomei has a plethora of fine establishments selling every day and luxury goods. (More examples exist of the former than the latter.)

2) **The Wharf**

On the north bank of the Scaum, this ancient structure provides a berth sufficient for several medium-sized river craft all at the same time. However, in these languid times it is rare to see more than two or three there at once, except perhaps during the time of the fair. Next to the wharf is a huge dilapidated old hut, which some say used to be the customs office. However, it is now barely sufficient so shelter travelers from the elements, and a very uncomfortable place to stay. (In any case, the town's constables check the building at irregular intervals, and 'discourage' transients from staying more than a night or two.)

3) **The River Inn** (SVC - pp50-53)

Commanding a fine view of the Xzan, the River Inn, is the finest in Azenomei. As such it is always booked solid during the monthly fair. It is well-known for its fine food, serving such delightful local dishes as spiced sausages with green wine. It also of course has bath chambers and a resident barber.

4) **The Doughty One Inn**

Popular with merchants, proprietress Desmuria keeps a clean establishment, and serves specialty fish dishes. This inn is likewise normally full to capacity when the monthly fair takes place, and the bribe required to arrange for a current guest to be removed is far beyond the purses of most wayward travelers.

5) **The Prince's Crown Inn**

Another fine establishment, whose proprietor Fiswingle is blessed with annual patronage (at the time of the Great fair) by Prince Kandive and his retinue. It too will be filled to capacity during this time and during the monthly fair. Anyone who kicks up a fuss and disturbs any of the Royal party may well be arrested and/or disciplined.

6) **The Boatman's Inn**

This is normally the best inn for travelers, combining good prices with good (if not excellent) meals, accommodation and atmosphere. Again, during the time of the monthly fair this place is packed beyond capacity.

7) The Lorn Meropidan Tavern (8VC, p53)

This single-storied building on the edge of town offers cheap beer, and has nothing else to recommend it. Meals consist entirely of a stew that is best not examined too closely, and accommodations consist of sleeping on the tables or the floor for 1t a night. For an extra terce, the proprietor, one low-browed Teedmain, will force one of his disheveled and grimy daughters - or even his son - to share their lice-infested palliase with a guest. There is no security here, and one is likely to be woken at night (or not) when one's valuables are being pilfered. (As likely by the landlord as by anyone else.) This place is never full; however, PCs will have to resist Arrogance **and** Gourmandism in order to stay here. (If they fail either of these, the place is simply too disgusting.) The one benefit of this place is that local hunters and scavengers from the surrounding countryside congregate here, and may have a fine tale to tell in return for ale.

8) Rampant Erb Tavern

Despite its apparently aggressive name, and overtly suggestive inn-sign, the rampant erb is the popular gathering place for Azenomei's youth and the squatter population. Travelers prepared to put aside their nefarious ways for the evening can enjoy stories, poems, song and friendly flirtations around the common room. (Or, allegedly, imbibe of narcotic substances in one of the rear upper chambers.) Prices are a little higher than normal, but the place is clean, and food is good (and occasionally exceptional). The proprietress is the raven-haired and down-to-earth Eryssa. Again this place has no rooms during the monthly fair, but if approached in an open and honest manner, Eryssa might be 'Persuaded' to contact one of her friends, and arrange for friendly travelers to rent a small attic studio in a nearby house. (After first assisting the owner with the arduous task of transferring assorted bric-a-brac to the outside shed.)

9) Crusty Loaf Tavern

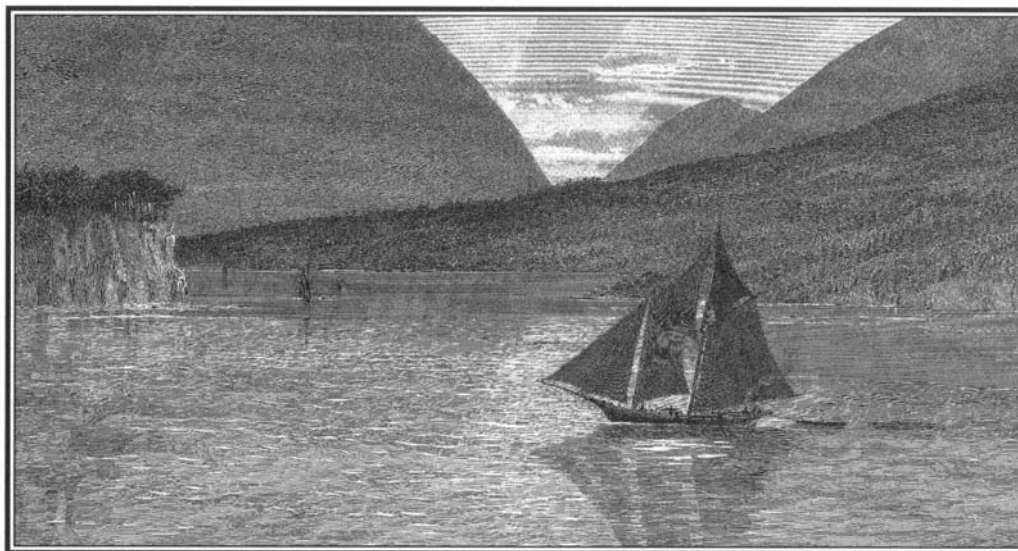
As ill-mannered as the Rampant Erb is refined, the Crusty Loaf sounds as if it should be quaint and relaxed. It owes its name to having once been owned by Gilsan Char. However, that was some years ago, and it has changed hands several times since. It is now owned by the muscular Thrimp, and its clientele favor hard-drinking and fist-fights as their premier entertainments. No overnight accommodation is available here, and Thrimp throws everyone out as soon after midnight as he feels like it.

10) Tarnished Terce Tavern

A tavern typical of the kind that the PCs will have discovered the length and breadth of the world over. The owner (Parvel Sigson) is a retired adventurer from distant parts who made his fortune in 'ruin excavations'. Now approaching middle-age he can still regale visitors with exciting tales of his exploits. Though only of average build, he knows several spells (or possibly has magic items that cast them for him) and thus keeps order mostly through reputation alone. No accommodation is available here, although trusted patrons have been permitted to sleep it off overnight in the booths of the back bar.

11) Hooded Mage Tavern

This is named (some years after his disappearance) in description of a strange magician that used to dwell in these parts prior to the arrival of Iucounu the Laughing Magician. This tavern is frequented by the more skilled of the local dabblers in magic, who like to spend their evenings comparing cantraps and discussing spells and magical lore. (Though few amongst them know much more than rumor.) Generally these folk take offence to anyone asking to learn one of their cantraps, but if approached discretely and politely will not normally turn down an offer of 200 terces or more. This establishment closes on the dot of midnight and has no accommodation of any kind.



12) Zombal the Tailor

The only tailor in Azenomei that is as respected and sought after as the finest in Kaiin. He is capable of designing all manner of garments (save cloaks, footwear and hats), and for the right price his staff can create magnificent pieces in a single day.

13) The New Gibbet

Situated on the Kaiin road, just outside the borders of town, the new gibbet is rarely used, but the moldering remains of its most recent occupant are preserved there by a horrid cantrap, as a deterrent to wrong-doers arriving in Azenomei from the direction of the big city. The gibbet is visible from both the trail and the river.

14) Gilsan Char's Bakery

The home and premises of a master pastry chef; however, during the fair he has a (very popular) booth there instead.

15) Huzanter's Curio Shop

In the backstreets away from the main concourse, Huzanter's establishment is situated within the ground floor of his crumbling manse. It suitably consists of several rooms, each more tightly packed with laden shelves of 'curiosities' than the last. Due to the magical dweomers at play here it is entirely possible to become lost within these rooms for hours (or possibly even days). However, if approached politely, Huzanter (an elderly gentleman with a long gray beard and brown cloak) will lead rescue parties into the depths. Otherwise he sits behind the huge oak table that serves as his desk, perusing a number of folios and librams in extant languages. Near the door is a small and comely demonette suspended in a large cage hanging from the ceiling. She uses cantraps to detect if any stolen goods are secreted upon the persons of those leaving the premises. If so, she casts the Spell of the Macroid Toe upon them. Repentant thieves may be invited to spend a day or so assisting Huzanter cataloguing his vast collection, cleaning the enormous rambling house, chopping and collecting firewood ... that sort of thing. (Rather than being cast upon the tender mercies of the town's constables.)

16) Mathep's Wayfarers' Supplies

Another rambling store in the ground floor of its owners premises – although the house itself is not so large and grand as Huzanter's. All manner of useful (and useless) oddities are available for sale here; however shoppers must explore rack upon rack of disordered shelving in this enormous room to find what they want. (If approached furtively, Mathep may purchase 'previously-owned' goods.)

17) The Central Stores

Three ordered and pristine rooms contain household goods and furnishings, basic clothing, and dried foodstuffs in plenty. However, this place is a little pricey.

18) The Gentle Scaum Tea Rooms

Typical of several such places along the riverside concourse, the establishment of the Gentle Scaum is a place where gentlefolk take their afternoon refreshments. It is a sign of prestige to have the time and money to recline beneath capacious parasols regarding the passing riff-raff from behind a small copper rail above a miniature hedge.

19) Ethodea Hospice

The town healers work in this building, which is also dedicated as a shrine to this nearly forgotten goddess of mercy. Outside the building is a statue of the gentle goddess. The healers know cantraps to assuage injuries, combat poison, and fortify against disease. They also train in herbology and general first aid, and are very much appreciated by locals and travelers alike. Those in need must pay a nominal fee according to their financial ability. Anyone without funds who requires major treatment is usually required to perform some service for the hospice in lieu of hard terces.

20) Manse of the Duchess

Surrounded by a ten foot wall, the Duchess' manse, outbuildings and servants' quarters are off-limits to most residents and visitors alike.

21) The Market Fields

Not just the site of the monthly fair (and annual 'Great Fair'), but also of the regular weekly market. This broad field has been the site for traders and entertainers to converge for countless centuries. Apparently the monthly fair and the great fair are extremely similar, except for the contests held at the annual event. At all fairs numerous traders gather to try to make a profit, and entertainers and thieves also arrive en masse, with exactly the same objective in mind. The monthly fair is only two days long, but the Great Fair lasts for a full five days. A few decades ago the town gibbet stood at the edge of this field, but as the fair started expanding it was moved to the other end of town.

22) Manse of Volune Stinobric

Volune Stinobric is more of a previous resident of Azenomei. He lived in this town before embarking upon his career as a fortune-hunter, and after his successes returned to purchase this fine property. He continues to maintain its upkeep and small staff of servants, but these days is rarely seen in town as he is now a lecturer in Erotic Studies at Kaiin's famous Scholasticarium.

Other Establishments

In town is a blacksmith capable of heavy fabrication, plus other regular businesses such as a wheelwright, tailors, potters, carpenters, cobblers, hat-makers, bakers, butchers, and lantern-makers. Along the concourse are goldsmiths, silversmiths, coiners, curio shops, purveyors of condiments, and even a soothsayer's establishment. Note that none of these finer manufacturers engage in furious industry, but rather are specialists maintaining a slow but profitable stream of customers. Purchasers travel all the way from Kaiin or Val Ombrio to purchase the local crafts produced at Azenomei (such is their reputation).

Other Nearby Locations

Because this region is considered so safe, **various farms and hamlets** are scattered about the countryside nearby. Some workers also choose to set up their establishments within a mile or so of the town's outskirts, usually taking advantage of some substantial ruin they can use either as a foundation or as a source of building materials. Both a blacksmith and a glass-blower have **workshops** in such a place on the south bank of the Scaum only a mile east of the town.

On the north bank of the Xzan, just east of the market place is a small adjunct to Azenomei, though by and large considered to be part of the town. Here stands a **small village** of around a dozen stone huts, where a community of farmers and bargefolk dwell. They cultivate garden plots on the terraces above the river (which here outside town have few dwellings to obscure them). These people live a curiously old-fashioned life, keeping themselves to themselves (except during the time of the fair, when they operate numerous entertainments in order to generate income from visitors). They claim that their ancestors have lived at this site since the previous aeon or earlier.

The most prominent local building is **Pergolo**, the magnificently-gabled manse of Iucounu the Laughing Magician (SVG, p56). This is situated to the north east of Azenomei and is reached by following a trail out of town or another up from the river near the village of riverfolk. Despite his name, Iucounu's jokes are often moribund, and few other than he gain much amusement from them. He is a magician of middling power in a world he considers to be populated by inferiors. And he is both quick to anger and slow to forget a sleight. Because of this reputation, few other than legitimate trades-persons visit Pergolo. Iucounu is treated with respect when he is in town purchasing supplies, but has no friends in Azenomei, only some who might name themselves as acquaintances.

Another local item of note (though not something widely known of) is the **Twk Colossus** (SVG, p56). This twelve-foot high statue is built of silk and dragon-fly skins, but is nonetheless sturdy, having been ensorcelled many centuries ago. In an emergency one of the leaders of the Twk Folk can activate it to defend their people. However, normally it stands motionless in a glade a few miles north of Azenomei.

Walking a day and a half west along the Scaum from Azenomei brings you to **Jeçantay** (SVG, pp57-60), the closest neighboring settlement. (Riders on reliable steeds can cover the distance in a single day.) The colorful residents of this large brightly-decorated town hope that their historically anomalous actions will convince the sun that it is far younger than it really is.

Twenty-five miles south along the Val Ombrio road, but nonetheless worth mentioning, **several ruined villas** (SVG, pp48/49) are perched on a hillside overlooking the small Murant River (which feeds eastwards into the swamps north of Val Ombrio). Various rumors claim that both Phandaal and Amberlin II had their summer homes at this place.

Val Ombrio itself (some 75 miles to the south) is a geographic neighbor only. Whilst plenty of travelers pass between the two settlements, and some significant trade also, the overland goods between Val Ombrio and Kaiin do not. They are portaged instead along the Taun Sfere Road. Nonetheless, Azenomei is the first large settlement that anyone travelling downstream on the Twish, Xzan or Lesser Scaum come upon. Thus its importance as a trading center is significant.