

LIFE'S LONG

CONSEQUENCES

Mythic
CONSTANTINOPLE

Mythras

THE DESIGN
MECHANISM

Mark Shirley

LIFE'S LONG CONSEQUENCES

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INTRODUCTION

Kales Pegonites, the man that everyone wants. He's gone missing, and there are several people looking for him for different reasons. However, finding him is only part of the deal — Kales has found himself mixed up in a mystery as old as The City.

This scenario is intended to showcase some features of Mythic Constantinople, particularly the seedier side of life here. It is suitable for characters who have newly arrived in the city as well as those who have been here longer. It's been designed to have a little of everything: investigation, social interaction, skulking and sneaking, as well as combat, emphasising that surviving the City of Wonders requires more than just a strong arm and a sharp blade. The adventure can be adapted to any large city — such as Mythic Rome — without too much trouble; the only requirement being a foreign enclave of merchants to take the place of Pera, best placed on the other side of a river or on a nearby island.

Although designed for it, owning Mythic Constantinople is not essential to run this scenario, although it does provide context and background information that will bring this adventure alive. The scenario can easily be set, with a little adaptation, in Thennla, perhaps using the city states of either Borissa or Sarestra in the Korantine Empire as substitutes. And of course, the Greek nature of the city makes this scenario ideal for intrigue in Meeros.

For those who need it, below is a brief description of Constantinople as presented in the Mythic Constantinople supplement.

CONSTANTINOPLE, QUEEN OF CITIES

Constantinople is the capital city of the once-great Empire of the Romans, and in the current era — 1450 AD — is over two thousand years old. It is built on seven hills, founded on the First Hill in the far east and gradually expanding westwards as the city grew. Constantinople is entirely surrounded with walls at least 12 metres tall which broadly follow the line of the shore; the six kilometre stretch of the Land Walls across the neck of the peninsula consist of a moat, a low wall, a 20 metre kill zone and then the double thickness full height walls behind them. The city is split into nine districts and two

suburbs: the royal district of Blachernai and the mostly-independent city of Pera on the other side of the Golden Horn.

Constantinople is currently home to 70,000 people, although in its heyday it supported over a million inhabitants. The majority of these people live in the central districts of Kainopolis, Platea, and Vlanga. Most of the populace is Greek, although there is a healthy mix of Franks (that is, western Europeans), Turks, Arabs, and non-humans such as minotaurs, dog-headed men, and acephali. The Franks (who for the most part are Venetians and Genoans) are treated with suspicion and sometimes outright hatred thanks to the invasion and conquest of Constantinople by Frankish crusaders some 250 years ago.

Law and order in Constantinople is administered through two competing forces. Each district has its own Phylakes (city watch, singular Phylax), a civilian militia specifically charged with preventing and investigating crimes and keeping the citizens safe. The Vardariotai (singular Vardariotes or Vardariot) are an imperial guard unit who are charged with preserving public order and other policing duties. There are many jurisdictional battles between these two groups. The Praitor is the city's governor, assisted by a cadre of officials, bureaucrats, inspectors, magistrates, and gaolers.

The basic currency of the Byzantine Empire is the silver stavraton; lesser denominations include the silver half-stavraton and aspron (one eighth of a stavraton), and the copper tournesion (one twelfth of an aspron) and follario (one third of a tournesion). The Venetian ducat is used as a quarter-stavraton, and there is a nominal gold coin, the hyperpyon, worth two stavrata. One tournesion is equal to 1 CP, which makes an aspron approximately 1 SP and a stavraton approximately 10 SP.

OVERVIEW

Read through the adventure carefully from start to finish before attempting to play. This scenario is complex, and consists of linked events, locations, and non-characters, but has an open structure rather than a linear path. Characters can approach the locations in any order, and the scenario includes an amount of redundancy so if a clue is missed at one location there is an opportunity to discover it elsewhere. It is worth taking some time to review the Events section (see page 21), and being aware of their various triggers. Games

Masters might also want to devise some other events that can be dropped into the action if necessary.

The Games Master should be aware that this scenario is a “bait-and-switch”. The characters are hired to find Kales Pegonites but he is already fatally wounded when the scenario begins. The characters reconstruct the downwards spiral of his life over the last few years until they finally catch up with him and discover he has been the accidental victim of a trap meant for another, and he is dying slowly in agony.

Almost as soon as the characters find him, someone tries to kill him and likely succeeds. Despite how it seems, this is a mercy to Kales. He made a deal with an immortal creature who needs a fresh body to inhabit. This Zotikos cannot save Kales' life, but he can preserve his memory and his name. All Zotikos needs to do is to put an end to Kales' misery — and he is about to take this step when the characters arrive to save him.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

In Byzantine Greek, the title “Kyrios” denotes a lord or man of rank, and “Kyria” is used for a woman of similar standing. The wealthy middle class often use the epithet “Kyr”, which is a contraction of this title and cognate with the Frankish “Sir”.

Kales Dalassenos Pegonites, a young nobleman dying of demon venom. Everyone is looking for him but he doesn't make an appearance until the story's midpoint. His name is pronounced “KAH-lace pay-YON-nee-tace”.

Kyria Sophia Kantakouzene Pegonitissa, a noblewoman from the Morea. She has come to Constantinople in search of her son Kales.

Gjorgya “The Gorgon”, a lieutenant of the crime lord Dražan Romanoktonos. She is hunting Kales for the repayment of a debt.

Iannis Olybriou, a waster and social parasite who befriended Kales and showed him every sin the city had to offer. He is being pressured by The Gorgon, but secretly he is worried about his friend.

Kyr Tomas Dokeianos, bank-owner and dean of the Guild of Money-Lenders, partner to Figlio Levorato in a smuggling enterprise.

Figlio Levorato, smuggler and Kales' most recent employer.

Bartolomeo Giustiniani, a Genoan agent seeking the destabilisation of Constantinople's economy. The demon that attacked Kales was brought in by Giustiniani and intended to kill Thomas Dokeianos.

Zotikos, the immortal Orphanotrophos, currently masquerading as Michael Serron.

KEY POINTS/TIMELINE

1. (three years ago) Kales Pegonites arrives in Constantinople, meets Iannis
2. (six months ago) Kales withdraws the last of the Pegonites' money
3. (three months ago) Kales borrows money from The Gorgon
4. (six weeks ago) Iannis sees Kales for the last time, Kales begins work for Levorato
5. (five weeks ago) The last time that Kales visits the House on the Street of Bottlemakers
6. (three weeks ago) The Gorgon visits Kales' and Iannis' home
7. (five days ago) Kales has his last work shift and is given a private delivery to make for his boss
8. (four days ago) Kales accidentally releases an infernal spirit and is attacked by its demon
9. (two days ago) Zotikos makes an offer to Kales
10. (today) The characters are hired to find Kales and make some initial enquiries

AREAS TO BE COVERED

This story mostly occurs within the neighbourhoods of Constantinople adjacent to the Mese Odos, the road that is the lifeline of the city. The characters are likely to be using this road frequently as they move around. It is 25 metres wide for most of its length and is lined with mosaicked pavements covered by a marble portico on both sides. Shops open directly onto the porticoes.

The Pegonites family home is in Sphorakion in Kainopolis. Kainopolis is the main commercial district, although Sphorakion is a leafy neighbourhood where the rich have their villas.

Kales and Iannis lived in the neighbourhood of Olybriou in Vlanga. Vlanga is a crowded, industrial district, and Olybriou falls in the middle of the city. It is crowded with students who attend the nearby Imperial University.

The Gorgon operates out of Kaisarion in Vlanga. Kaisarion is to the south of Olybriou and is the most crowded and socially-deprived district in the City.

The Dokeianos Bank lies on the Mese Odos in Kainopolis, to the south and east of Sphorakion.

The Maona de Chio e di Focea is a merchant and shipping compound in Pera, a Genoese city on the other side of the Golden Horn.

The Docks and the Ptochotropheion (poor house) lie in Zeugma in Platea, an area outside of the city walls on the southern bank of the Golden Horn.

The Orphanage of Saint Paul is in Akropolis, the oldest part of the City on top of a hill. It is surrounded by parkland.

SKILLS & INFORMATION

Many of the following sections indicate a skill roll that reveals some information on a successful roll. These rolls can be made immediately — to determine what the character knows about the subject — but information listed under knowledge-related skills can also be uncovered with some research amongst the character's sources of information and affiliations. A difficulty grade for the skill roll is indicated for each piece of information; a character that succeeds with a more difficult success also knows or learns the easier information listed.

CLUES

A list of clues to assist the Games Master can be found on page 33.

BACKGROUND

Zotikos is one of the Seven Immortals of Constantinople. He is a spirit that migrates to a new body upon the death of the old one, and has lived countless lifetimes masquerading as other people. Unfortunately he is coming to the end of his current life; the body of Michael Serron is now nearly 80 years old and he can feel the vital spark of his body running low. It is time for him to find a new host for his undying spirit. Since committing himself to a righteous path, Zotikos has always sought permission for his body-snatching; seeking out a young man whose life will be cut tragically short by disease or debilitating injury. He prefers someone with no family ties or expectations, since he cannot plausibly pass amongst those who know his host body's personality well. Zotikos' offer is simple: the man gets surcease from this world's pain and Zotikos ensures that honour is ascribed to him by living a worthy life in his name. He has been searching for a suitable replacement for a while, and feels he has found it in a young man called Kales Pegonites.

Kales came to The City from Morea a few years ago. The son of an *autarkes* (a provincial landowner), his domineering father despised him, and his sadistic elder brother physically and mentally tormented him. After years of abuse he finally got the courage to leave home to make a name for himself. Things have not gone as well as he planned. After the money he stole on his family's account was frittered away on drink, prostitutes, and gambling, Kales was forced to borrow money just to keep alive. When he got a job with the Genoan merchant Figlio Levorato, he thought his money troubles were over, but it proved too good to be true. He was helping Levorato cheat their employer with the collusion of a Byzantine merchant, Tomas Dokeianos

Dokeianos and Levorato are illicitly importing alum through Levorato's job in Pera, and laundering it through Dokeianos' bank. Levorato borrowed the capital to set up this scheme from Dokeianos, and now pays it back in lieu of profits until the loan (and interest) is paid. Levorato's boss Giustiniani knows all about his employee's duplicity, and plans to use it to further his own schemes. Giustiniani has been tasked by the Genoan government to destabilise Constantinople's economy, and one way he plans to do this is by removing one of its most prominent, if crooked, bankers: Tomas Dokeianos.

Giustiniani acquired a piece of valuable mastic that was a fetish for an Infernal spirit. He allowed Levorato to 'discover' it, undeclared on the ship's manifest, worth more than the debt he owes to

Dokeianos. Predictably, Levorato sent it to his Byzantine conspirator, keen to pay off his loan and become an equal partner in their scam. As soon as the mastic was used, the Infernal spirit would be free, and assassinate Dokeianos in a gruesome manner.

The messenger carrying the mastic was none other than Levorato's new employee, Kales Pegonites. He decided to steal a tiny piece of the mastic, but in breaking it off he released the Infernal spirit from the fetish and became its target. The demon infected Kales with its agonising venom which causes madness and death. Wracked by physical pain and mental anguish, Kales has decided to surrender his body to Zotikos. Kales gets relief from his torment and Zotikos gets a new body. At least, that's the plan...

STARTING THE SCENARIO

There are a number of people looking for Kales Pegonites, and the characters could be employed by any of them depending upon their contacts. The Games Master should peruse the options presented below and decide which best suits the characters.

Once an entry point for the characters has been chosen, the Games Master should not forget about the others. The principals involved still want to find Kales, and may well go ahead and find people to help. These people might help or hinder the characters' own investigations. For example, if hired by Lady Pegonitissa, then they might encounter thugs hired by The Gorgon at one of the locations. If they help out Iannis instead, they could bump into agents hired by Kales' mother. These rival investigations have not been specifically accounted for in this story, but they can be used in a number of ways:

ASSISTANCE

If the characters' investigation has stalled, let a rival team track them down. They have a clue that the characters missed, but will not simply hand over what they know.

RIVALRY

The characters arrive at a location to discover it is already being searched by their rivals. This could result in a stand-off, a chase, or even combat.

ANTAGONISM

The rival team realise that the characters' goals are at odds with their own, so stage an ambush to try to force them to back off.

OPTION I: PLEASE, WON'T YOU FIND MY SON?

If the characters are new to Constantinople, then one or more of them might have spoken with a soldier called Andras (See "The Pegonites Villa", below) on the ship here. Andras has never been to The City before; he is the bodyguard of a lady from the Morea and is looking forward to seeing its wonders. He is friendly and

enthusiastic, and there is no reason why the characters shouldn't become his friend. A few weeks after they arrive, Andras reaches out to the characters on behalf of his lady Sophia Pegonitissa, and asks them to come to the Pegonites Villa in Sphorakion.

For characters established in Constantinople, have a contact let them know that Lady Pegonitissa is looking for trustworthy men and women for a sensitive and urgent matter. Their contact can arrange a meeting at the villa on their behalf.

Before or after they visit the villa, the characters may wish to do a bit of research about Sophia Pegonitissa, perhaps calling upon any connections they might have. As well as any information listed under her entry later, the following Skills might be useful:

Courtesy

(Success) The correct title for Lady Pegonitissa is autarkina (the wife of an autarkes), and she should be addressed using the epithet kyria (lady). Knowing this — and using it when speaking to her — makes one social roll of the player's choice one grade easier when dealing with the lady.

Streetwise

(Success) The Lady Pegonitissa arrived in the city a few weeks ago

(Success) She has had trouble keeping servants once they discover she cannot pay their wages.

OPTION 2: MAN, I'M SO DEAD!

The characters come across Iannis Olybriou in the Taberna Sykai. He is regaling all who will listen with his tale: his life has been threatened by one of The City's most notorious thugs — all for a debt that is not his but belongs to his flatmate Kales, who has now conveniently vanished. Iannis is drinking his last remaining aspra, begging anyone who looks capable to help him.

If the characters need added incentive to help Iannis, replace him with someone they already know such as a contact or ally. Alternatively, he hints that he thinks his friend Kales might be rich, so there could be a reward if he is in trouble.

OPTION 3: I DON'T CARE HOW MANY PIECES HE'S IN, AS LONG AS HE CAN PAY...

If the characters are known as mercenaries or criminals, and not known to be enemies of the crime boss Dražan Romanoktonos, then Gjorgya Gorgo might approach them. This option is not particularly suitable to characters who have only just arrived in Constantinople, unless their reputation precedes them, or they've made a name for themselves in the short time that they've been here.

An urchin hands the characters a coin and then runs off. The coin is blank on one side and has a gorgon's head on the other. If they ask amongst their contacts they learn there is only one person in the city who commissions work in this fashion: she is called The Gorgon, and has an office near to the Medousa Fountain.

Before or after speaking with The Gorgon, the characters may want to find out about her from their contacts.

Lore(Byzantine)

(Success): The Medousa Fountain has been the site of a grisly local murder. A man was found with his hands and feet removed, and his genitals stuffed into his mouth. The Phylakes (city watch) have not found the murderer yet; some say they are not even looking.

Streetwise

(Success): The Gorgon is the nickname of Gjorgya, a terrifying loan shark and criminal

(Success): Gjorgya works for Dražan Romanoktonos, one of the big crime bosses of the city

OPTION 4: YOU SEE A SHADOWY FIGURE PREYING ON THE HELPLESS MAN...

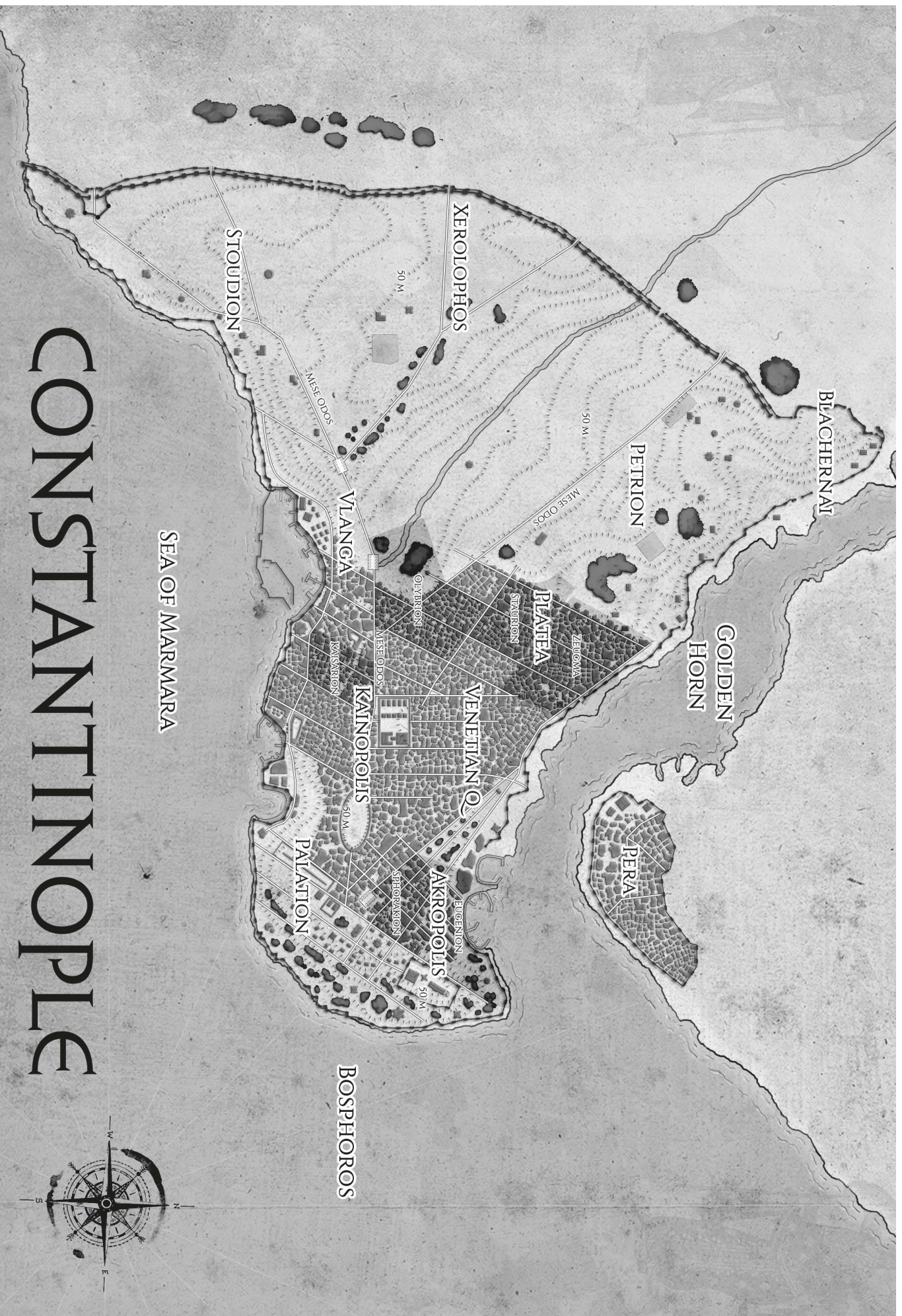
The characters are launched directly into the story by being witnesses to The Attack on the Zeugma shore. Games Masters need to come up with reasons why the characters are in Zeugma in the first place. One explanation is a visit to or from Pera, when they hear an agonising scream. Upon witnessing Zotikos with Kales, they could try to apprehend the attacker, help the victim, or both.

Only use this option if the characters are the sorts that would leap to the defence of a complete stranger — there are ways to bring them into the story as passive witnesses, but these are less dramatic. Starting here turns the adventure on its head. Now the focus is to discover who the victim is, and why he is in this state. After all, there might be a reward...

CONSTANTINOPLÉ

SEA OF MARMARA

BOSPHOROS



PEOPLE & PLACES

This chapter details the various NPCs and locations crucial to the scenario. It also acts as a primer to Constantinople's labyrinthine geography. Refer to the Non-Player Character and Areas to be Covered sections on page 3.

THE PEGONITES VILLA

Like many of the dynatoi, the Pegonites have a villa in Sphorakion, an upper-class district in northern Kainopolis. It occupies a whole city block, surrounded by a 2 metre wall. The whitewash on the wall is cracked and peeling, and the wrought iron gate has seen better days. There is no porter at the gate. Inside, the wall is a garden run riot; there may be elegant statues and fountains hidden amongst the weeds, but it is so overgrown it is impossible to tell. A path has been recently cut through the rampant vegetation to the front door.

Built in the classic Byzantine style of alternating red brick and white stone, the main building sits behind a paved courtyard surrounded by a covered walkway. A fountain dominates at the centre of the courtyard. The only occupants of the villa are Lady Sophia Pegonitissa, her maidservant Nonna, and a man-at-arms, Andras. Both retainers are loyal to the lady, having accompanied her here from Morea. They have done their best to make the villa habitable, but decades of neglect have taken their toll and the lady has no money to pay for the necessary repairs.

The first sign of habitation is a serving woman, Nonna, chasing a mongrel dog with a broom, shouting curses at it in a strong provincial Greek accent. Any native of the city knows that a native of Constantinople would never treat a dog in this manner; non-natives know this on a successful Customs roll. Nonna stops short when she sees the characters, and makes an attempt to smooth her clothing before politely asking who they are. If they have been invited, she shows them into the lady's day room; otherwise they are asked to wait in the courtyard. In the latter case, Andras comes out to watch them, something that also occurs if the characters look suspect or inappropriate for an interview with an aristocrat.

Lady Pegonitissa is seated in a light and airy room, doing her best to maintain her dignity amongst the faded glory. If the characters are appropriately attired she invites them to sit and offers them wine, brought from her homeland in Morea (if accepted, it is served

in small glasses). Somewhat apologetically, she explains that she has only recently arrived in Constantinople, and the villa has been empty for many years prior to that.

If the characters have been invited, the lady explains that she wants to hire them to find her son. If they were led here by other clues, then she assumes they know where he is as soon as they mention his name, and anxiously asks for news of him. Her husband and eldest son both died tragically quite recently, and this leaves her younger son Kales as heir to their estates in Morea. No-one has seen Kales for three years, although she has reliable information that he was heading for Constantinople. She is not so disloyal enough to the memory of her husband and son as to tell strangers why Kales left, but might admit to "difficulties". Further proof that Kales is here is what she was told by Tomas Dokeianos.

The Dokeianos Bank is the firm that manages the Pegonites account in Constantinople. When Lady Pegonitissa first came to the city she tried to draw upon these funds only to find them exhausted. She maintains that this must be an error, given the amount of money involved, but it suggests that Kales has been drawing on the family resources. Tomas promised to look into this on her behalf and she suggests that the characters follow this up with him. She also mentions that her son was wont to indulge himself in the typical vices of youth, and although it pains her to admit it, he might be found in places where he can partake in such activities.

Discussing the delicate issue of payment is a breach of etiquette (as anyone with the Courtesy Skill knows), but the characters have a right to be cautious when it is clear that the Pegonites are destitute. If the issue is broached, no matter how carefully, the Lady Pegonitissa declares that she still has one source of money available, and she touches the necklace of gold and pearls at her throat, a wedding gift from her husband. Note that she doesn't promise the necklace to the characters but merely indicates through it that she is not destitute. She also has a gold signet ring with the seal of a stalk of wheat. This is the Pegonites family seal, and is identical to that stolen by Kales (which is now in the possession of Iannis); and also identical to the third copy that resides at the Dokeianos Bank. She will not part with this ring.

The next time the characters visit the villa they find it has been spruced up. There are more servants, and years of neglect are being cleared away. She is without her necklace, and pays the characters what she thinks she owes them from the money she has remaining.

The characters might pick up on the following information while visiting Lady Pegonitissa:

Commerce or appropriate Craft

(Success): the lady's necklace is worth 60 hyperpyra (1200 SP).

Customs

(Success): if Kales cannot be found, then the despot will claim the Pegonites land. The lady herself will have nothing to maintain her other than the mercy of the despot.

Insight

(Success): Lady Pegonitissa is fragile at the moment, and is only just holding herself together. She's bereaved, unexpectedly destitute, and worried sick about her only remaining family.

SOPHIA KANTAKOUZENE PEGONITISSA

Born in the province of Morea, Sophia is a minor noblewoman related to the powerful Kantakouzenos family that used to rule the province. She is the (recent) widow of Stamates Dalassenos Pegonites, a cohort of the current ruler of Morea, Demetrios Palaiologos. Her husband and eldest son were killed in a pirate raid on their home that she is convinced was conducted by Ottoman Turks. She has come to Constantinople in search of her remaining son, to inform him that he is now the heir to their estates.

Sophia is proud and yet powerless. If she cannot find her son then the Pegonites estate will be absorbed into the holdings of the despot, and she will likely spend the rest of her days in a nunnery. She makes sure that those who speak with her formally are aware of her family connection to the Kantakouzenos family, members of which currently serve the empire as mesazon and grand domestic — the two highest-ranked positions — and that she is not to be trifled with. In secret she is conscious how tenuous this connection is, and only approaches her city relatives as a last resort.

Kyria Sophia dresses as befits her status, preferring cream cotton and grey silks for her kamison (chemise) and kolovion (gown) respectively. Her shawl is made of fine Persian wool. Her face still shows signs of the Morean sun, and is only delicately lined despite over six decades. Her jewellery is simple, except for the gold and pearl necklace at her throat, the one item she could not bear to pawn.

KEY SKILLS AND PASSIONS

Courtesy 66%, Endurance 38%, Influence 42%, Insight 39%, Willpower 57%

Hate (Turks) 72%, Respect (Church) 57%

Affiliations: Family (Kantakouzenos) 45%, Religious/Christian (monastic) 55%, Societal (dynatoi) 55%

Lore (Byzantine)

(Success) The Pegonites are a provincial family from the Morea.

Lore (Dynatoi)

(Success) The Lady Pegonitissa was born into the powerful Kantakouzenos family, who include both the Mesazon (prime minister) and Grand Domestic (commander-in-chief of the army).

(Critical Success) The Morean Kantakouzenoi are only distantly related to those of Constantinople; certainly not close enough for them to be able to demand any benefits of kinship.

ANDRAS

Andras is part of the Pegonites oiketas (household guard). He is of a similar age to Kales, having been adopted into the household after his parents were killed when their village was overrun by Turks. As such, he is devoted to Lady Sophia and knew Kales quite well, although they were hardly friends. As a servant, Andras could not save Kales from the beatings dished out by his brother, but he could commiserate with him and help him avoid his brother in the first place.

Andras is dark haired and lightly bearded, tall and broad shouldered as befits a man of the provincial Byzantine Heavy Infantry (or Skoutatoi). He rarely wears the full suit of plated mail armour these days; when abroad in The City with Lady Sophia he wears a short-sleeved coat of scale mail and an onion-shaped helmet, and carries a triangular kite shield and longsword. He is reluctant to leave his lady's side, but if the characters can convince Sophia that the only way to save Kales is with Andras' help, he will accompany them.

KEY SKILLS AND PASSIONS

Brawn 48%, Endurance 58%, Influence 25%, Insight 36%, Unarmed 64%, Willpower 41%; Combat Style: Skoutatos 75%

Loyal (Pegonites family) 76%

Affiliations: Family (Pegonites) 60%, Urban (Kainopolis) 40%

Influence

(Success): Something he is keen that his lady does not discover — he used to accompany Kales into town in search of women. The young master was particularly attracted to red-headed wenches.

IMPOSTERS?

The characters only have the word of Sophia (and Andras) that she is who she says she is; it is entirely possible that she is a con artist instead. If Games Masters want to use this option, Sophia's real identity is Iannis' mother Semne, who learned of her son's rich friend and came up with this scheme without Iannis' knowledge. Andras is a local thug who is Semne's current lover, and Nonna is a hired dupe.

In this scenario, Semne has two goals: get her hands on the signet ring that gives her access to the Pegonites fortune (not realising it has all been spent), and/or get her hands on Kales so she can ransom him to the real Pegonites family. She broke into the villa and is pretending to be Kyria Pegonitissa, hiring the characters to find her son. If this is the set-up, then naturally "Sophia" will not have the Pegonites signet ring, since it is still in the possession of Kale's father, and she doesn't realise that her own son currently possesses the signet she seeks (they aren't close).

By the time Sophia and Kales are reunited neither of them are who they say they are; and the characters may only discover they've been conned when they try to collect their payment and find only an abandoned villa. If they have made the acquaintance of Iannis, and discover the connection between him and Semne, then they may feel he betrayed them — but in truth Iannis is the only means by which they will be able to track down Semne and get justice (or revenge).

THE TABERNA SYKAI

Located in the seedier part of Vlanga district, the Taberna Sykai is a back-alley phouskarion — an establishment that specialises in a Byzantine spirit called *phouska*, hard liquor flavoured with mountain herbs. Characters could end up here for a number of reasons: meeting with a contact, looking for witnesses to a local crime, or simply slumming it in one of Constantinople's most notorious dives.

The phouskarion is a simple whitewashed wooden building with a roof of red barrel tiles. It is jammed into an alley between two tenement buildings. It is popular with local ne'er-do-wells due to the back door which exits at the head of the alleyway. The taberna has a few rickety tables with slightly sturdier stools, some inside and about twice as many outside. The most notable feature of the taberna is that the inside walls are covered with hundreds of syka — cheap ornaments in the shape of eyes made in blue glass — from whence it gets its name. These amulets traditionally ward against the Evil Eye and the phouskarion is believed a lucky place to drink, particularly for those in need of a great deal of it.

On the night that the characters visit, Iannis Olybriou is holding court in the phouskarion. This professional wastrel is practically begging anyone who will listen to his story of woe for some help. He has had a disturbing visitor in the shape of a local crime lord with a brutal reputation, who goes by the name of The Gorgon. She was asking questions about a friend of Iannis', called Kales. Her heavies went through his room, but found nothing. It turns out that Kales owes The Gorgon a lot of money, and if he doesn't pay up soon she is going to take it out of Iannis' hide. As a promise of future violence, she gave him a scratch on his cheek from her clawed finger. Iannis pretends that Kales was just a roommate and a hanger-on, but there is more to it than that.

If the characters agree to help Iannis, then their search probably begins at the House on the Street of Bottlemakers that Iannis shares with Kales. He might also suggest taking them out for A Night on the Town, visiting all their old haunts in an attempt to find Kales.

While speaking with Iannis there may be some opportunities to gather more information:

Influence

(Success): Iannis is too terrified of his visitor to give much information without this roll to calm him down. She is tall, and wore a helmet with a facemask the whole time: it had the image of Medousa on it, and from this he knew it was The Gorgon. She wore a pair of brass gauntlets with wicked curved claws.

Streetwise

(Success): The Gorgon is the nickname of Gjorgya, a terrifying loan shark and criminal.

(Critical Success): Gjorgya operates out of an office near the Medousa Fountain.

(Critical Success): Gjorgya works for Dražan Romanoktonos, one of the big crime bosses of the city.

IANNIS OLYBRIOU

Iannis of Olybrion has elevated wasting his life into an art form. He spends most of his time either drunk or hungover, sometimes

simultaneously. His favoured tactic is to become the best friend of someone with a lot of money, and live parasitically off them until their money dries up, at which point he abandons them. This is exactly what he did with Kales Pegonites. The young nobleman was flush with money when he first arrived a few years ago, and they spent it on food, drink, and women. Later, Iannis introduced his "friend" to both gambling and opium, all the while lifting coins from Kales' purse.

Iannis is not above getting involved in shady business now and then when he needs the money. He has never worked directly for any of the big criminal bosses of the city, but he knows his way around the criminal underground. He is an occasional opium user, but has not been able to afford enough to become addicted yet. He is tall and thin, with brown hair that bleaches in the sun. When not at the phouskarion he is usually fishing or swimming in the Sea of Marmara, using the small beach at the Psamathia Gate. It wouldn't be a stretch to characterise Iannis as a shiftless beach bum.

He wears a signet ring given him by Kales bearing the wheat-stalk symbol of House Pegonites. In his heart he knows it is not just brass, but has convinced himself it is exactly what Kales called it: worthless (it was worthless to Kales once the family account had run dry, given that he wants no reminders of his family). The fact that Iannis has hung onto the ring is a sign that he valued his friendship with Kales more than he can admit.

KEY SKILLS AND PASSIONS

Deceit 69%, Endurance 47%, Influence 47%, Insight 49%, Streetwise 57%, Willpower 27%

Desire (luxury) 63%, Guilt (for Kales) 40%

Affiliations: Deviant (opium users) 45%, Urban (criminals) 55%, Urban (prostitutes) 65%

Insight

(Success): Iannis is squirrely when the subject of Kales comes up.

(Critical Success): Iannis feels guilty about cheating Kales, and tries to hide the fact (even from himself) that he might actually care about him.

Perception

(Success): Iannis is wearing a large signet ring with the symbol of a stalk of wheat. If asked about it, he'll say his friend Kales gave it to him, claiming it had no value. He seemed to want shot of the thing. Iannis assumes it is brass, but a jeweller can confirm it is gold and worth about 4 stavrata (40 SP). The seal is that of the Pegonites family.

THE MEDOUSA FOUNTAIN

A distinctive fountain in a small forum to the south of the much larger Forum of Theodosios. The fountain depicts the head of the famed Gorgon of legend: great staring eyes, flared nostrils, protruding tongue, teeth like a wild boar, and, of course, a halo of snakes. Water spews from the fountain's hideous mouth and over the spout-like tongue to splash into a bowl supported by winged snakes. The

bowl and fountain are carved in entirely different styles and were clearly once part of different larger pieces.

Local women pass the time of day while filling buckets and urns from the fountain's spout. Their children play Perseus and Medousa (a variant of Grandmother's Footsteps). The forum is surrounded by businesses, but the only one of note is a confectioner operated by a Turk. Upstairs from this business, Gjorgya Gorgo maintains an office, and she can be found here four days in every six. The business she operates from this address is moneylending, which is illegal not because of the extortionate rates of interest or exploitative tactics she uses to get her money back, but because moneylending is governed by an Imperial monopoly, and only the licenced guild is permitted to extort customers in this fashion.

Gjorgya carries her strongbox with her when away from the office. This locked iron box contains a supply of coin and records of all debts. She is usually accompanied by at least two of her men, although she has eight in total, all capable fighters. These men are responsible for the collection of the rents, bribes, protection payments and profits owed to Gjorgya as the operator of gambling dens, brothels, and various shady businesses. A hefty cut of all income goes to Dražan Romanoktonos, her boss.

Unless the characters were specifically summoned here by The Gorgon herself, then there is only a 20% chance on any given morning or afternoon that she will be present. Even when away from her offices, there are always two of her men waiting here to deal with any street trade.

If the characters are here because they were summoned by the coin (see page 5), then The Gorgon emerges from the confectioners, wearing a hood and the faceplate of her helmet. She invites the characters inside, and only once they are seated does she remove her mask. The characters might struggle to keep their reaction to her face to themselves (see her description on page 28), something that Gjorgya finds quite entertaining.

She gets right down to business. She's looking for a man called Kales who is long overdue paying a large debt, over 500 stavrata (5000 SP). Her usual agents are having trouble finding him, so she is reaching out to the characters — maybe a mercenary band with mixed resources might have better luck. If they like they can consider this an interview, since she is always looking for competent employees. She offers each character 1% of the money she recovers from Kales if the information they provide leads to his capture. If they dare they might bargain with her; she is prepared to go as high as a 15% total share to the characters, but to earn this they will have to bring Kales to her rather than just find him.

She can tell them that Kales used to live at a house on the Street of Bottlemakers, and they might want to start their search here. He was friends with a worm by the name of Iannis Olybriou at the same address. The pair were regular patrons at most of the tabernai and brothels in Vlanga, so they could try looking for him there (see *A Night on the Town*).

The perceptive might catch the careful wording of her deal — they only get a share of whatever she manages to “persuade” Kales to repay. However, if challenged on this, she might agree to have him sold as a debt slave and they can take their cut of the proceeds of that.

THE HOUSE ON THE STREET OF BOTTLEMAKERS

Kales and Iannis have shared this tenement in Olybrion for nearly three years. Other residents have come and gone in the meantime. It is a three storey building although the top storey has rotten floorboards and is unoccupied. The four residences surround a courtyard that has a working tap. The family in Residence Four maintain a small garden of vegetables, and the grandmother is fond of growing flowers amongst the edible plants. The courtyard is reached through an entrance which bisects the ground floor of Residence Four; this can be closed with an iron gate, although there is no lock or catch.

As the characters explore the house this would be a good time for them to meet up with one of the other groups looking for Kales, as mentioned earlier.

- ϕ Lady Sophia has begged her estranged family for help, and they have provided her with a distant cousin called Davos Kantakouzenos and a pair of oiketai (household guards, use the statistics for Phylakes). Davos is investigating out of duty rather than a true desire to help. Assuming he has the opportunity to speak with the characters, he'll be easily convinced to let them handle matters, suggesting that once they find Kales then Lady Sophia might offer a reward.
- ϕ Iannis sneaks back to his home on his own, having been unable to find anyone who will go up against the Gorgon. He's planning on grabbing his few meagre belongings and making a run for it; although it is possible that his unwanted but real friendship for Kales might bring him slinking back to The City in search for him.
- ϕ The Gorgon has posted a pair of spies on the house and when the characters arrive, one heads back to his boss, who establishes an ambush while the characters are inside. See *The Gorgon's Ambush*.

RESIDENCE ONE

Currently empty. The last residents were a Magyar couple, Sándor and Aranka. They left in a hurry one night about three weeks ago after catching a glimpse of The Gorgon at Kales' residence and wrongly concluding that she was looking for them.

The characters might hear of their midnight flit from Nipha (in Residence Four) and conclude that they are somehow involved in Kales' disappearance. This is not the case, but the characters might spend valuable time pursuing this red herring. The exact reason for the couple's fear of The Gorgon is not part of this scenario, but is mentioned under *Loose Ends* later if the characters decide to pursue this.

RESIDENCE TWO

This residence, opposite the entrance, is the home of Iannis and Kales. Iannis uses the lower floor, and Kales the upper, at least until six weeks ago. Iannis' room is a mess of garments, bedclothes, and empty wine jugs. Since the visit from The Gorgon, Iannis has spent very little time here. Amongst the tangle of clothing are a scattering of copper coins — perhaps enough for a jug of wine. Some of the clothes were once fine, but are now soiled or ragged from use.

Kales' room is not much tidier than Iannis', but there are a couple of things of significance here.

Perception

(Success): someone has already searched this room (this was The Gorgon, three weeks ago).

(Critical Success): The foot of the bed sits on a loose plank which has been put back the wrong way. In the cavity beneath is an empty pouch embossed with the imprint of the imperial seal and the Greek letter delta (Δ), and a tiny enamelled glass pot with two large yellow seeds inside.

The stairs to Kales' room continue up to the next floor, and unlike the others in this tenement look both useable and used. The other stairs have been dismantled, since the third storey is derelict. Characters exploring up here must be very careful, since the floor is rotten. Failing an Easy Athletics roll means that the characters put a foot through the ceiling, and fumbling means that the beams snap under their weight pitching them into the room below. Up here there are no walls remaining between the apartments, and characters should repeat the Athletics roll for each apartment they pass into. The only thing other than dust and spiders is above Paulos and Maria's room, where a plank has been laid across the bare rafters and has the imprint of a chest or trunk in dust, although the object itself is long-gone. Under the plank is a sack of waxed cotton. It bears a sigil on it in red ink, and the remnants of an astringent white powder inside.

Commerce

(Success): the letter delta signifies the pouch belongs to the Dokeianos Bank; the imperial seal indicates that they are a chartered guild.

(Critical Success): the Dokeianos Bank lends money mostly for trading in chemicals.

Lore (Alchemy) or Folk Magic

(Success): the sigil on the sack from the attic is the alchemical symbol for alum, and the stuff inside is indeed this chemical.

Streetwise

(Success): Alum is traded at the Portico of Achilles near the Great Palace of Constantinople.

(Critical Success): the seeds are called tatula, a rare drug in Constantinople. It has a dangerous reputation for causing bizarre hallucinations and is imported via Ottoman Anatolia.

If the characters follow up the lead on the pouch, they can be told by any traders (such as the spice merchants at the Portico of Achilles) that the pouch belongs to the Dokeianos Bank, which trades mostly in alum, saltpetre, sulphur, and other chemicals. The monopoly on alum is owned by the Maona di Chio e di Focea, a Genoese business based on the island of Chios but having an office in Pera. None of the spice merchants claim ownership of the cotton sack but they can all identify the sigil.

If they follow up the tatula connection with any of their contacts or affiliations, the characters are told by everyone to stay away from the drug: it is too dangerous. It might take a few days, but the right contact might eventually discover that Figlio Levorato at the Maona di Chio imports the drug via Chios.

TATULA

Tatula is a rare and expensive drug imported from Africa made under the auspices of the Dream Wizards of Marrakesh. It takes the form of the seeds of the thorn apple, and the hallucinations it causes can last for days, during which time the drug taker neither eats or drinks. One in ten tatula seeds traded in Constantinople is a fetish for an Intensity 2 madness spirit, bound by the insane wizards of the west. This spirit can initiate Spirit Combat with anyone who consumes (and therefore destroys) its fetish; if the spirit wins then it takes possession and imposes its Passion Ability.

Application: Ingestion

Potency: 35+1d6x10%

Resistance: Willpower

Onset Time: 1d6 minutes

Duration: 1d3 days (if mundane drug), else until possession ends (if a spirit drug)

Conditions: Hallucinations. If an Endurance roll is failed against the same Potency, then the victim also suffers Mania (avoiding light) and Exhaustion (due to overheating). If there is a spirit bound to the seed, then the victim also suffers from Sapping — the spirit gains (Potency/10) of the Magic Points lost during Spirit Combat by its victim.

Antidote/Cure: none. The symptoms naturally wear off or last until the possession ends.

MADNESS SPIRITS

Characteristics: INS 9, POW 16, CHA 5

Skills: Discorporate 75%, Spectral Combat 71%, Stealth: 64%, Willpower 82

Spirit Abilities: Covert, Passion (Deceit, Greed)

RESIDENCE THREE

Home to Sandeet, a master brewer. Sandeet is a skiapod, a non-human race from Ethiopia who have just one leg which terminates in a giant, one-metre long foot. He is otherwise human in appearance, with nut-brown skin and black curly hair. He is more agile on his one foot than many humans are on two.

He lives downstairs, and has a kitchen and brewery set up upstairs where he spends most of his time inventing recipes. If he sees the characters coming out of Residence Two he'll call down to them asking about Kales. It has been weeks since his old friend came in to sample Sandeet's latest brew and swap stories.

If the characters take the time to talk to the skiapod, they find him eager to gossip; he is somewhat lonely. The characters have to work hard to keep him on topic, although he is generous with the liquor he distils from various kinds of fruit wines, including one made of rose petals.

Influence

(Success): Kales would regale Sandeet with tales of his sex life — almost certainly exaggerated, although Sandeet doesn't realise this, since he is entirely inexperienced on the subject.

(Critical Success): Kales had one woman he was particularly sweet on. Sandeet does not remember her name, but she had red hair and lived in the House of Apricots. It sounds like an exotic place to Sandeet. He has a bottle of apricot liqueur somewhere...

Streetwise

(Success): The House of Apricots is a famous brothel in Platea District.

Lore (Sentient Races) or Culture (Skiapodes)

(Success): Skiapodes are incapable of either premarital or extramarital sex. Their equivalent of marriage awakens the ability within both sexes and bonds partners for life. Unmarried skiapodes like Sandeet still have urges, however. Sandeet was clearly living vicariously through Kales.

RESIDENCE FOUR

This residence has the entrance running through it, and the ground floor is divided into two rooms. A family lives here; grandmother Nipha uses one of the ground floor rooms and the other is the kitchen; on the upper storey is room for Paulos, his wife Maria and their four children. Paulos is a barrowman selling street food at the University, and is absent during the day. Maria claims not to judge other's lifestyles (which, from her disapproving looks, is patently not true), and it is difficult to draw her into gossip. Her children proudly show any visitors the litter of puppies that their dog has just had, and that is the sum total of their interest. Nipha is the best source of information; she sits on her porch and watches all comings and goings. She doesn't even need to be persuaded to talk, but volunteers the information as soon as the characters show an interest in Residence Two.

According to Nipha, the lads would be up all night making noise: singing, shouting, or the "bump bump bump" of the bed. They would have one or more different women every night. She cackles with delight when she describes the rows her son-in-law had with the two of them, complaining about the noise. He'd tried to get the Phylakes to evict them, and even tried to get the priest to accuse them of impropriety. The pretty one (i.e. Kales) was always polite to her, sometimes slipping her a jug of phouska or a Turkish confection. Nipha eventually gets around to telling them something they want to know: the last time she saw him was just over a month ago; he snuck back during the day and came out with a bag under his arm. He gave her a half-pot of honey and said goodbye.

If asked if anyone else has come looking for Kales, Nipha reveals that a few weeks ago, three men came; one stayed outside, the others went in. They stayed about 10 minutes, then left. Nipha did not get a good look at them (certainly not enough to spot one was a woman — this was The Gorgon). Nipha can also tell the characters that the couple in Residence One — Slavs or Magyars, she isn't sure — left suddenly about three weeks ago. Curiously, this was immediately after the visit of the three men for Iannis and Kales, although she didn't make the connection until just now.

THE DOKEIANOS BANK

Tomas Dokeianos runs a large bank on the Mese Odos in Kainopolis, not far from the Church of Saint Euphemia in the Hippodrome.

The portico outside the bank bears a mosaic, originally of King Midas but now partially replaced by a depiction of Saint Nikolaos, who is the patron of moneylenders. The ass' ears belonging to King Midas still protrude from the saint's mitre. The building proudly displays the imperial seal on its exterior, proclaiming it to be part of the Moneylenders' Guild. Outside the bank under the portico are booths set up for moneychangers; inside the bank, past a pair of guards, is a busy floor with further booths for the moneylenders. Clerks rush back and forth between desks.

The employees are likely to treat the characters according to their apparent social status. Requests to see Tomas Dokeianos are treated with derision or ignored. Kyr ("Sir") Tomas — clerks stress the honorific — is far too important to waste his time with walk-in trade, he is dean of the Imperial Guild of Moneylenders and likely to be its next guild master. If the characters are persistent troublemakers, then the bank has its own security which will remove them from the premises. Use the statistics of the Vardariotai (see page 32) if necessary.

Characters who look the part of a nobleman, or who liberally spread bribes around, can get to speak to Tomas Dokeianos without further trouble. More sneaky-minded characters might prefer to wait until he goes home and confront him away from the bank, although he always travels with at least one of his security men. Really sneaky characters, who want to break into the bank and rifle through his papers, are in for a load of trouble for little reward; the bank is patrolled at night, and the dean keeps no incriminating paperwork in his office concerning his private enterprises.

INVESTIGATING THE PEGONITES ACCOUNT

Persistent characters enquiring about the Pegonites account are handed to Mika, an under clerk who Tomas set to work investigating the Pegonites account after Lady Sophia brought it to his attention. Characters asking about deliveries made to the House on the Street of Bottlemakers will also be directed to Mika's desk.

Mika is a callow youth with a nasally voice and precise manner that tries the patience of saints. He explains that this is an old, dormant account. The bank trades mostly in imported goods, and ceased taking personal accounts decades ago; the Pegonites account must be one of the last. However, it has been revived; over the last two years there have been nine separate withdrawals, and the last one — which emptied the account entirely — took place six months ago. The withdrawals were made using a signet ring matching the one attached to the account. The first few withdrawals were collected in person, but the three largest withdrawals made last year, were delivered to the account holder (or rather, presumed account holder). The account had previously held 2,128 hyperpyra plus change (approximately 42,560 SP). A note on the file says that Tomas turned down Kales' request for a loan, but referred him to the Maona di Chio e di Focea in Pera. The only other activity on the account is Lady Pegonitissa's failed attempt to withdraw funds a couple of weeks ago.

Mika is reluctant to hand over the address to which the withdrawals were made, but can be persuaded with an Influence roll opposed by Mika's Willpower. If the characters include a bribe of at least 2 stavrata (20 SP, a week's wages), then the roll is unopposed.

Culture

(Success): spending over 40,000 SP in three years is extravagant but by no means unreasonable for a member of the aristocracy.

Influence (possibly opposed by Mika's Willpower of 47%)

(Success): The withdrawals were sent to a house on the Street of Bottlemakers in Olybrion.

TOMAS BARTZYTĖS DOKEIANOS

To get an audience with Dokeianos himself requires the right political connections, hefty bribery, or subterfuge. His staff are under strict instructions about who to admit and who to refuse, and to be on the former list one needs to be someone of importance. Through his office he administers the bank and guild business, as well as using the huge fund at his fingertips to back private investments.

Tomas is the dean of the Imperial Guild of Moneylenders, which puts him in second-in-command of one of the most profitable businesses in Constantinople. As much profit in money-changing is made as with money-lending: Constantinople stands at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, and has all manner of coinage passing through its purses. The common belief is that Tomas will be the next guild master — he is virtually doing that job already since the incumbent is in his dotage.

Dokeianos is in his late 40s, and running a little to fat. He has long dark hair which he keeps braided and tied back from his face, and a thick beard down to his chest. Vanity has him dye both, keeping himself looking young whilst leaving dark smudges on his clothing and furniture. Whether he is at the Dokeianos Bank or at court, Kyr Tomas dresses in the regulation silk of the Imperial rank he purchased for himself on the fortieth anniversary of his birth. He wears a brocaded kaftan of yellow silk embroidered with a tessellated pattern of white birds. His hat is tall and cylindrical with a domed top, also in yellow silk and beaded with pearls. The tips of his pointed shoes that protrude from under his robe are dark blue. The rank permits him to attend the Imperial Court, an important concession for an ambitious man like Dokeianos.

KEY SKILLS AND PASSIONS

Commerce 82%, Deceit 68%, Endurance 37%, Influence 57%, Insight 51%, Willpower 67%

Desire (high office) 69%, Loyal (to Levorato) 17%, Uphold (Pride) 62%

Affiliations: Cultural (Genoese) 55%, Political (Special Fisc) 65%, Professional (Moneylenders) 90%

The Byzantine banker is in partnership with Figlio Levorato, an employee of the Maona di Chio e di Focea, buying exotic goods such as alum from the Genoese merchant at a cut-price cost and reselling it through his bank's usual business transactions at a large premium. The lion's share of the profits come directly to Dokeianos, since Levorato is paying off a loan made to him with part of his share — a loan that was made with the guild's money, not Dokeianos' own.

The characters get short shrift if they try to quiz Dokeianos on his business dealings. He believes that he doesn't have to answer to anyone, and in the main he is right. The worst he has done is avoid paying the Imperial sales tax (or *kommerkion*) on his goods by purchasing them through a Genoese factor, and with his connections he can avoid any serious penalty. He laughs at any blackmail attempts,

although this will make an enemy of him, one who is determined to ruin the characters. At most, the characters might be able to get him to confirm his ownership of the Zeugma Warehouse — this is a matter of public record after all.

Courtesy or Lore (politics)

(Success): the colours of Dokeianos' costume indicates he has imperial rank in the Office of the Special Fisc; the government department that manages the Imperial treasury and monopolies, and oversees the guilds.

(Critical Success): his precise rank is *hyperlogariastes* (over-accountant). This puts him in a senior position; not quite one of the minister's deputies, but not far from it.

A NIGHT ON THE TOWN

Kales was known for the lavish spending of his family's money on women, wine, and gambling, and the characters might try to find him amongst the taverns, brothels, and gambling dens of the city. However, Constantinople has no short supply of such places, and finding one sinner in a city full of vice might prove to be an insurmountable task. If they talked with Andras, Lady Pegonitissa's man-at-arms, they may know that Kales was partial to red-headed women, and this might speed their search somewhat since this is a rare-enough quality amongst Greek women.

People enjoying their evening are not usually conducive to being questioned by adventurers. The response to blunt interrogation varies from ignoring the interrogator, through to outright violence, depending upon the type of establishment. In classier areas, patrons might report nuisance characters to the Vardariotai. All social rolls involved in this sort of approach are at least one grade more difficult, and perhaps more depending on circumstance. An effective technique is to work the crowd, carouse with them while buying drinks, and work up to the questions they want answered. This takes longer, and could turn the investigation into a glorified pub crawl through the flesh-pots of Constantinople, but it does negate any penalties applied to social skill rolls (including penalties for intoxication).

The Games Master should scatter gossip unrelated to this scenario throughout all social encounters: Chapter Seven of Mythic Constantinople has ample examples of suitable rumours, some of which could lead to other adventures. Particularly worth introducing are rumours regarding the activities of blood-drinking broukolakes (vampires) attacking people; a red herring, but one which might influence the characters' behaviour when they witness Zotikos leaning over the body of Kales later in this scenario.

KAINOPOLIS NIGHTLIFE

Most of the tabernai of Kainopolis are on or near the Mese Odos, and their clientele are typically men having a drink (and perhaps a meal) at the end of the working day. Nightlife in Kainopolis is a little more dignified than in other regions; patrons of the tabernai sit outside and gossip while playing backgammon or triodion. Things sometimes get boisterous after the taverns close at dusk, but the Vardariotai patrol the Mese Odos and keep order.

SPOT RULES FOR ALCOHOL

The effects of alcohol can be simulated using the poison rules. A character must make a Resistance roll after every CON/5 standard servings of an alcoholic drink, or whenever he switches from one type of alcohol to another. Failure inflicts the new condition of Intoxication. This condition causes the imbiber to gain an extra level of Intoxication, on top of any he is already suffering. Intoxication levels work in an identical fashion to Fatigue levels, except that they are not cumulative with Fatigue and the Recovery Period for Intoxication is not affected by Healing Rate. A person with Intoxication levels has lowered inhibitions and is more likely to act according to his Passions rather than his rational mind. A character intoxicated to the Debilitated level also suffers from Nausea and/or Hallucinations.

Alcohol

Application: Ingested

Potency: beer — 30%; wine — 50%; phouska — 70%

Resistance: Endurance

Onset Time: 1d6+12 minutes

Duration: determined by Recovery Period, which is taken from the point the character stops drinking

Conditions: Intoxication

Antidote/Cure: time. There may be folk remedies which allow the character's Healing Rate to influence Recovery Period in the same manner as fatigue recovery.

DRINK

The drink on offer is mostly wine, and there is usually more than one kind available. For those Franks missing home, a few tabernai sell beer, indicated by a pig's head on the sign. There are a few phouskaria (taverns specialising in phouska, an herb-flavoured spirit), but a Streetwise roll is needed to know where to find it.

WOMEN

Prostitution in Kainopolis is discrete. A few tabernai are licenced brothels and typically have just one or two women. There are very few streetwalkers, and never on the Mese Odos itself.

GAMBLING

Stakes for board games usually amount to buying the next round of drinks or perhaps a meal, but nothing to interest the serious gambler.

OTHER

Bored Vardariotai may decide to have fun with a group of characters, particularly if they are foreigners, or drunk, or both. Their talk of a "pavement tax" is a blatant attempt to extract a bribe, and if it is less than 1 stavraton (10 SP, about a week's wages) the characters could find themselves spending the night in gaol for "public disorder". They won't be charged with any crime, but it does give the characters a chance to ask the warden whether Kales was ever arrested. It turns out that he was — several times — and the warden remembers because he was always very apologetic the next day. He can direct the characters to the House on the Street of Bottlemakers.

PLATEA NIGHTLIFE

Platea after dark is less reserved than Kainopolis but more restrained than Vlanga.

DRINK

Both tabernai and phouskaria can be found in Platea, and they are well demarked. The former attract middle-class customers who want to eat, drink, and be entertained by musicians or mimes; and the phouskaria are for those who just want to get drunk at the end of a day of hard labour.

WOMEN

There are numerous brothels in Platea, including some of the finest in the city. The best are incorporated as private guilds, and the workers are shareholders receiving a cut of all profits. Brothels are also the main locations for the distribution of opium, with prostitutes earning a commission from dealers if they sell the product to their clients. Some brothels specialise in exotic women, and a successful Streetwise roll identifies the House of Apricots, which is known to have several red-heads.

GAMBLING

In a dark alley a door leads to an Arachnomachy ring. The Praitor has made owning exotic fighting spiders illegal due to their lethal bite, and yet here one can bet on the outcome of their battles. Each spider (actually a solifugid or camel spider, imported from Syria) has a body the size of a calf's heart and a leg span of over half a metre. Fighting spiders are usually pitched against each other, but might also be matched against a starving rat or a scorpion. If the characters want to gamble on a fight, then let them run their chosen opponent in a scaled-up fight, using the statistics of a Giant Spider, Giant Scorpion, or Bear (to represent the rat).

OTHER

An acrobat is performing on a street corner to the delight of the crowd. He has a trio of torches lighting his act, which consists of juggling, fire eating, and slack-line balancing. He has a trained monkey tottering around the crowd on its hind legs with an upturned hat, and everyone who contributes gets a polite "thank you" from the monkey in perfect Greek. The magically-inclined might recognise that the acrobat is using Folk Magic such as Coordination, Ironhand and Fanaticism (to cause excessive generosity). They might suspect that he used Ventriloquism on the monkey, except that this doesn't explain how it manages to pickpocket virtually everyone in the crowd. If the acrobat needs to make a hasty exit, he uses Incognito to blend into a crowd and lose pursuers. The monkey escapes over the rooftops.

VLANGA NIGHTLIFE

Vlanga is as riotous after dark as it is during the day, just with more drunk people. The favourite sport of working Greeks is pankration, a combination of boxing and wrestling with virtually no rules. Every Thursday night the Skamma of Eumachos famously puts on a pankration match; these are usually training bouts but are sometimes open calls, grudge fights, or ranking matches. If the characters happen to come on a Thursday they find the streets around the Skamma crowded, each person proudly displaying the colours of the pankriatist they favour as overall winner. For grudge matches or

ranking fights, hooliganism between partisan groups is common; the Vardariotai simply ensure that the violence does not spill over into adjacent neighbourhoods.

DRINK

There is little to differentiate the tabernai from the phouskaria other than the drink they serve: both types of establishment are low-down dives frequented by rowdy dock workers and sailors. There is a 20% chance that a brawl breaks out even if the characters don't provoke one themselves. If the characters have not yet met Iannis Olybriou, then they find themselves in the Taberna Sykai and hear his tale.

WOMEN

Most of the prostitutes in Vlanga are streetworkers, with a pimp who works for Dražan Romanoktonos lurking nearby in the shadows who may decide to rob the client before the prostitute does it first. The main attraction of a Vlanga prostitute is that they are cheap, but their price is a good indication of their quality. The characters only have to talk to 1d4 women (and avoid their pimps) before they find one who entertained Kales and Iannis at the House on the Street of Bottlemakers. Kales never took part himself, but still paid for a woman for Iannis. All this stopped about three months ago (when the money ran out); although the woman still occasionally sees Iannis around, he's no longer in Kales' company.

GAMBLING

Gambling and drink go hand in hand in Vlanga. There are games of knucklebones (which is based on pure chance) at all drinking establishments. There is often someone offering wagers over an arm-wrestle or other trials of strength. Many venues have a cock pit or dog ring for those who prefer blood sports; the same clientele attend the Skamma of Eumachos on match nights.

OTHER

Anyone wandering Vlanga's streets at night in a state of (real or apparent) intoxication is a target for mugging. There will be a number of street thugs equal to the number of characters, plus 1d3. The thugs try to split up large groups with their superior numbers, but are likely to flee once their leader (choose one at random), or half of their number has been disabled, tripped, or disarmed.

THE HOUSE OF APRICOTS

This brothel in the crowded Staurion neighbourhood of Platea is signified solely by the pale orange door facing the street. It is one of the busiest brothels in Constantinople. Visitors who make it past the bulky bouncer are shown to a comfortable sitting room and offered wine and apricots. The madam is Maria (this is a traditional pseudonym) who entertains clients, appraises their worth, and hears their preferences before fetching a selection of women for approval. The prices start at 5 aspra (5 SP) and go up to 15 aspra (15 SP) for two hours with Maria's best girls.

The House of Apricots is a legal establishment providing just the standard services, although Maria can arrange more exotic entertainment for wealthy clients, but never on the premises. Nearly all the sex workers sell opium and other drugs on behalf of a local

ASTRAGALISMOS OR KNUCKLEBONES

This game of chance is played using four dice made from the bones found in a sheep's foot (the astragaloi). The oblong dice are marked on four sides A' (alpha, worth 1), Γ' (gamma, worth 3), Δ' (delta, worth 4), and ΣΤ' (stigma, worth 6). Because of the crooked shape of the bones, these dice do not fall on all four sides equally: Γ' and Δ' each come up about 4 times in every 10, whereas A' and ΣΤ' come up once each. One can use d10s: a 1 is a A', a 0 is a ΣΤ', otherwise odd numbers are Γ' and even numbers are Δ'.

In the simplest version of betting on Astragalismos, each player adds a coin to a pot to start play. Everyone then takes turns rolling all four dice. For each A' rolled, the player adds a coin to the pot. A roll of Four Alphas is called the Styx, and is the worst possible roll, costing the player 4 coins. Play continues until someone rolls a Nike ("Victory") — the four dice each showing a different number. This wins the contents of the pot. After rolling Nike, good manners dictate that the winner must remain in the game, but at this point others can choose to leave or new players join.

An optional elaboration involves scoring each player's roll by summing the value on each die. There are a few extra special scoring combinations as well as Nike and Styx. An 'Exites ("Sixer") is a single Stigma and three other numbers (as long as it is not a Nike). An 'Exites trumps all other rolls except a Nike, including 'Exites with a lower overall total. A Gypes ("Vultures") is a roll of four Stigmas, four Deltas, or four Gammias, which beats all rolls other than Nike or 'Exites. A Gypes of Stigmas beats a Gypes of Deltas, which in turn beats four Gammias. For any other roll, add up the numbers on the faces. Four Alphas is still a Styx, the lowest roll of all. The player can put a side bet down (separate from the pot), that the next player cannot beat his score. If the next player does roll higher, he can choose to leave his winnings on the table for the next player to beat. A Nike clears the pot and all side bets, since no other roll can beat it.

criminal syndicate. Maria pretends not to notice, but she knows which girls are on the take, and charges them higher rent. There are 20 rooms in the upper storeys of the house, and a working staff of about 30; mostly women and nearly all of them slaves. There are no non-human prostitutes at the House of Apricots. Each of the rooms has a false wall concealing a passageway, allowing someone to check secretly on the girls (and, conveniently, their clients) through cleverly concealed spy holes. One of the rooms has a Protective Ward holding Neutralise Magic, cast by a sorcerer on retainer, to ensure privacy from scrying spells. This room is occasionally used for clandestine meetings that do not involve sex.

The House is frequented by important clients who want anonymity that they would not get from a more upmarket establishment. Maria wields the power of her client list with subtlety, never overtly blackmailing her patrons but instead using the information to exert minor influence. The working girls are sometimes less subtle, although those that antagonise clients tend to find their career in the House cut short.

Maria does not look kindly on characters who want to harass her girls with questions, and keep them from clients. She can be pacified with the usual social lubricant: hard cash. Kales was a regular visitor and is fondly remembered by the ladies (although not by name) for his kindness and pleasant disposition. None of them have seen him

in the last two months. Sveta was his favourite, and if the characters would like to pay for time with her, it is up to them what they use it for.

While the characters are at the House of Apricots — perhaps while one of them is interviewing Sveta — one or more of the following events takes place:

- φ A group of rowdy customers make trouble. A minor nobleman and his cohorts are drunk, and Maria is trying to eject them for the safety of her girls. Her two bouncers — one a minotaur — are manhandling the men out of the waiting room. The nobleman's bodyguards are waiting in the taberna across the street, and if they hear the ruckus, they rush in. This could quickly become a brawl with the characters caught in the middle.
- φ Andras (see the Pegonites Villa, page 7) bursts into the House looking for Sveta. He's been doing his own investigations which have brought him here. He evades the bouncers long enough to get to her, but leads them on a merry chase through the labyrinthine corridors of the brothel. The characters could become involved in helping him escape or getting him captured, depending on their motivations.
- φ The Gorgon enters alone, although some of her Snakes wait outside. She wants to talk to Sveta, and does not take “no” for an answer. Unless the characters intervene, this encounter could result in two dead bouncers and a severely beaten prostitute.

SVETA

A beautiful red-headed Russian slave who works as a prostitute at the House of Apricots. Although she has little choice in her occupation, she finds it tolerable. She has witnessed how hard it can be for a foreign slave in Constantinople, whereas she is warm, well-fed, and pampered by the house-slaves. If this life of luxury and ease can be bought by selling her body for a few hours a day, she can live with that.

Sveta has a friend, Janoz, who visits her every few weeks in the guise of a client. Sveta and Janoz met in Caffa at the slave block; she had been captured in Rus' lands and he hailed from Circassia on the far side of the Black Sea. They both ended up in Constantinople, although Janoz' master freed him two years ago. Janoz' tastes do not run to women; he visits his friend to check she is doing well and is not being mistreated. He also carries away extra money or gifts she has been given by her regular clients and caches it for her; one day she hopes to use it to buy her freedom. She is smart enough to allow Maria to discover and confiscate some of the gifts she is given, to keep suspicion from her. What Sveta does not realise is that Janoz was never freed; instead he murdered his master and is now managing his businesses and living off his accumulated riches.

KEY SKILLS AND PASSIONS

Endurance 37%, Influence 57%, Insight 49%, Language (Greek) 40%, Seduction 62%, Willpower 47%

Desire (comfort) 52%, Loyal (to Janoz) 55%

Affiliations: Political (Chancellery) 55%, Professional (guild inspector) 55%, Urban (prostitutes) 70%

Anyone wanting to question Sveta finds her limited command of Greek an impediment. If the characters can find a Russian translator they have a much easier time questioning her — although this might use the time they have paid for. She'll happily talk about Kales unless the characters are particularly brusque or clumsy (i.e. fail their Influence roll). If the characters make the Insight roll listed below, then they can augment their subsequent Influence with their Insight to push Sveta to reveal what she is hiding.

Insight

(Success): When Sveta talks about Kales, there is a strong emotion colouring her voice and making her tremble slightly.

(Critical Success): the emotion Sveta is feeling is not love (which is what might be expected), but grief, and fear that she will be somehow implemented in his death.

Influence, capped by Sveta's Greek or a translator's Russian

(Success): She knows Kales well, as a regular client. She calls him “pretty boy”, and she liked him; he was considerate and kind. He even learned some Russian and she'll confess that he might have been a little bit in love with her.

(Critical Success): Kales mentioned some time ago that he had got a new job, across the Golden Horn in Pera. She doesn't know what the job was, but it made him happy because it meant he could visit Sveta more often. Last week (actually four days ago) one of the other girls passed her a message from “pretty boy”. He wanted to meet her outside the walls, near the Droungares Gate. She slipped out of the brothel to let him down gently, but found him lying on the shore covered in blood and sobbing in pain. Not wanting to be accused of murder — there was a lot of blood — she alerted the staff of the “house for poor men” (the Ptochotropheion) and fled. She believes that he must be dead by now.

- φ If Sveta does not confess her discovery of Kales on her first meeting with the characters, her conscience will be pricking at her. She may still advance the plot depending on her or the characters' actions:
- φ If the characters left any contact information at the brothel and they seemed sympathetic to Kales, then she might track them down on the following day and confess what she knows.
- φ Sveta could appear at the characters' residence bloodied and bruised after a visit from The Gorgon. The Games Master should decide whether she gave up Kales' location or not.
- φ If the characters follow her, they see her head down to the Ptochotropheion to ask about Kales' condition

THE MAONA DE CHIO E DI FOCEA

Kales has worked at the Maona de Chio e di Focea for the last six weeks; so visiting the business premises in Pera is an obvious step for the characters. However, they have to first survive the Crossing to Pera.

The characters may already know something about the maona and/or its trade, or be able to call upon contacts to provide some of this information:

Lore (Byzantine)

(Success): The former Byzantine Island of Chios has been ruled by this Genoese company for over a hundred years. The island is the sole source of mastic. Chios has always controlled the settlement of Phocaea on the Anatolian mainland, which is the site of one of the only sources of alum east of the Black Sea.

Healing

(Success): Mastic is a rubbery or resinous gum extracted from trees; it has strong medicinal properties and is included in many cures, not least for the Black Death.

(Critical Success): Mastic can lessen the symptoms of toothache as it plugs the holes left in the teeth from a diet too rich in sugar.

Commerce or Lore (alchemy)

(Success): Alum is an astringent white powder with a wide range of applications such as making colour-fast dyes and forging metal for firearms.

(Critical Success): The only Mediterranean source of alum is the mines of Genoese-controlled Phocaea. Otherwise it must be imported from the Black Sea.

Customs (Genoa) or Culture (Genoa) or Commerce (at a difficulty grade penalty)

(Success): A maona is a chartered company that is typical of Genoese business practice. Several Genoese families buy into the business and this grants them a seat on the governing council as well as a proportional share of the profits. Risk to any individual shareholder is therefore divided amongst the board of members.

(Critical Success): The Maona de Chio has become rich from their monopoly of mastic and their dominance in the trade of alum and exotic goods from the Mamluk Sultanate, the Ottoman Empire, and the Holy Land: spices (saffron, pepper, cinnamon, and cloves), incenses (such as olibanum, plant cinnabar, and myrrh) and alchemical reagents (such as sulphur, orpiment, and realgar).

The maona is not far from the Galatas harbour. If this is the characters' first visit to Pera, they find the Genoese city very different from Constantinople. Built on the steep southern slopes of the Galata hill, the city is dominated by the Tower of Christ built at the city's highest point. The first exposure the characters have to the city is the slave market, upon whose revenues the city thrives. Virtually nothing remains of the Greek settlement here, and the architecture is uniformly Italian. The maona is a well-known landmark and no-one should have trouble telling the characters where it is — except that most Genoese pretend not to understand Greek, particularly when spoken in their own city, and the characters have to overcome this xenophobia with charm or threats before they can find their destination.

The maona has a compound of its own; consisting of a separate business office and several large warehouses. The compound is always busy, with labourers manoeuvring heavy loads of imported goods using portable cranes and barrows. There is an acrid smell to the air, a blending of the raw substances that pass through the

warehouses: sulphur, alum, and saltpetre being the most significant. One small warehouse is kept locked at all times and a guard is posted outside. The mastic is stored here, and it is worth more than its weight in gold.

THE MANAGEMENT

Bartolomeo Giustiniani is in charge of the day-to-day running of the maona. He is a busy man, but he answers questions while directing his workforce, placing his seal on purchase orders, and various other tasks. If they ask about Kales Pegonites he is confused, having never heard the name. If the characters know that Kales was referred to Giustiniani by Tomas Dokeianos, he gives a short, barking laugh. The referral was not for a loan, it was for a job. Dokeianos knows that Giustiniani is always in need of labourers, and given the nature of the work, he pays well. The characters want to speak with Giustiniani's day manager, Figlio Levorato.

The characters probably have no more than this brief conversation with Giustiniani, and not realise that he is a very dangerous man. Not only is he very wealthy and a member of Pera's ruling council, he is also involved in a plot to bring down Constantinople. He is employing diabolic forces and manipulating his own employees to achieve his aim of destroying Dokeianos; who is influential at court as well as the de facto controller of the Imperial Guild of Money-Lenders. This is just part of his plot to destabilise Constantinople on behalf of the Genoese government; more information on his other schemes can be found in Chapter 8 of *Mythic Constantinople*.

FIGLIO LEVORATO

Figlio Levorato is the day manager of the Maona de Chio e di Focea. He is in charge of the day-to-day running of the business, checking the cargo manifest and organising the storage and subsequent carriage of the trade goods. The ships from Chios rarely sail with a full load in their holds due to issues with supply. Usually the vacant hold space would be sold to other merchants, but since the maona owns all the trade rights from Chios there are no other merchants. Some years ago Levorato saw the opportunity to use that spare space to bring privately-purchased trade goods into Pera. He is not actually stealing from his employers, but he is using hold space that in normal circumstances he would have to pay for, and thereby greatly reducing his costs. Since he is also responsible for determining the shipping manifest, on occasion he has prioritised his own illicit goods over those of the maona.

However, Levorato needed finances to set up and run this scheme, paying bribes to the factors in Chios to look the other way, paying wages of the labourers loading the goods, and of course capitol to buy the contracts for his trade goods in the first place. While looking for financial backing in Constantinople he came across Tomas Dokeianos, who had certain attractions as a business partner because of his interests in the sale of alum (sourced from the Black Sea) as well as similar goods. Dokeianos soon realised the true nature of his proposed business, but rather than reporting the commercial skulduggery to Levorato's boss, Dokeianos used it as leverage to buy into the scheme. He provided Levorato with the funds he needed in return for a cut of the profits as well as a favourable deal on the wholesale cost of the smuggled alum.

While the deal seemed ideal at the beginning, Levorato has become increasingly dissatisfied with the arrangement, since he sees Dokeianos making money while his own profits go into paying back

the initial loan and interest. If he could just get his hands on sufficient funds to pay Dokeianos back, then they could split the profits equally. When he discovered the undeclared mastic on the ship's manifest, all his dreams were answered. This valuable commodity would settle his debt with Dokeianos, and he asked his most enthusiastic new hires to carry it to the banker in Constantinople.

Figlio Levorato is a short Genoese man who is constantly sweating, regardless of the weather. He wears a handkerchief attached to a ring on his finger and uses it regularly to swab down his face. He talks very fast and repeats himself a lot.

KEY SKILLS AND PASSIONS

Commerce 74%, Deceit 65%, Endurance 27%, Influence 52%, Insight 49%, Willpower 57%

Affiliations: Cultural (Genoese) 40%, Professional (merchant) 70%, Criminal (smugglers) 65%

Covert (Wealth) 78%, Resent (the rich) 65%, Loyal (to Dokeianos) 27%

Levorato hired Kales ostensibly to watch that no cargo went missing at the Zeugma customs before sailing to Pera. In reality he hired Kales to unload and move his illicit cargo to the Zeugma Warehouse after it had been assessed by Constantinople's customs agents but before it reached the maona's own storage yard. By treaty, the Genoese do not pay an import tax on goods destined for Pera.

Levorato cannot deny knowing Kales when the characters speak with him. "He was a good man, a good man. Not the best first thing in the morning, but then who is? Some say that Greeks are shiftless and poor workers, but not Kales. A good man."

Insight (Opposed by Levorato's Deceit of 65%)

(Success): Levorato is not telling the whole truth about Kales. Knowing this is not sufficient to make the Genoese confess anything, however; he'll simply deny knowing any more.

Levorato has no knowledge of Kales' fate, but the characters' visit throws him into a panic. He last saw Kales five days ago when he was dispatched on a special mission to deliver an expensive item to Dokeianos, which would have cleared his debt with the banker. Kales asked for a couple of days to sort out a personal matter, and Levorato, feeling benevolent, had agreed. Now he is wondering if the youth has absconded with his gift. As soon as he can get away from the conversation with the characters Levorato makes the crossing to Constantinople (on a private charter ship if the ferry is out of action) and visits first the Zeugma Warehouse then to the Dokeianos Bank, to see whether Kales visited Tomas Dokeianos.

Dokeianos confronts Levorato on the main floor of the bank, but they conduct their conversation in whispers. Although the opportunity to eavesdrop on this conversation is minimal, even by observing the two they might glean something of interest:

Insight

(Success): The two clearly know one another; Dokeianos is angry.

(Critical Success): Levorato is obsequious towards Dokeianos, and clearly trying to placate him.

THE ZEUGMA WAREHOUSE

The Zeugma Wharf is one of the busiest in Constantinople. As well as providing an embarking point for the Pera ferry, it takes commercial shipments as well. Prominently placed between the Zeugma Wharf and the Great Wharf is a warehouse bearing the 'delta' sigil of the Dokeianos Bank. The warehouse is a legitimate business for the bank, but also has an area set aside for the personal use of Tomas Dokeianos himself, which is where the smuggled alum is normally kept. There is usually a staff of two guarding the warehouse, who both know Levorato; however there is just one at the moment, as the other is the missing Kales.

If the characters follow Levorato, he heads for the warehouse, rather than entering the city. He has a brief conversation with the warehouse manager to confirm that Kales did leave here with the package to deliver five days ago, and that he hasn't returned since. The manager complains to Levorato about having to work double shifts, asking when a replacement for Kales is going to be found.

If the characters talk to the manager, Petrides, they find him reluctant to speak without a substantial bribe (at least 60 SP, three times his weekly salary). As an employee of the Dokeianos Bank he has no particular loyalty to Figlio Levorato, and happily relays the conversation the two have just had. Petrides is starved for company and more than a little avaricious; the characters may well get some local gossip from him if they seem to be good payers. He'll recount the terrible screaming he heard in the fog four days ago, coming from further down the shore, "but there is nothing down that way other than the Ptochotropheion".

Perception

(Success): There is rot here that is reminiscent of the prelude to the sinking of the Golden Horn ferry. Perhaps the character spots rotted holes in Petrides' clothing, or the sorry state of his lunch.

(Critical Success): There are an unusual number of rats in the warehouse; the character doesn't see them as much as hear them skittering behind the crates. Further investigation uncovers a swarm of cockroaches circling a piece of waxy resin the size of a chickpea. The insects seem attracted to it but do not touch it. This is the piece of mastic that Kales broke off the fetish, releasing the Infernal spirit.

This warehouse is a likely location for the Demon Attack event. This is where Kales released the Infernal spirit and is still its favourite haunt.

THE PTOCHOTROPHEION

This institution is funded by the Office of the Imperial Orphanage, and acts as a hostel for those unable to care for themselves. Rather than a homeless shelter, the ptochotropheion is home to the family-less and indigent elderly or infirm. There is a permanent staff to provide medical care, and students at the various hospitals are strong-armed into practicing their trade for free. The house is run by Brother Rafaelos, a junior monk from Saint Stephanos, a small

monastery just inside the city walls. Every day he comes here with two volunteers, typically devout middle class women wanting to show their piety, and sinners working off their penance.

There are currently 17 patients at the Ptochotropheion, with ailments ranging from psoriasis to consumption. There are also another dozen elderly individuals who need daily care. One of the most serious patients is Kales Pegonites (although no-one knows his name). He is tied to his bed by cloth strips, and he has been gagged for the benefit of the other patients. He writhes in pain, his body adopting a contorted rictus of torment.

The characters probably want to speak to the staff at the Ptochotropheion, either before or after the following event. Brother Rafaelos is happy to answer any questions they might have. He can relate that the young man was found virtually on the doorstep; a red-headed woman (probably a prostitute) alerted him that a man was dying by the shoreline. Rafaelos implies that this could have been a robbery, using the woman as bait — unfortunately not the first such case that he has seen. The man had very little on him when he arrived, and he indicates a pile of clothes on the ground. The kamison (shirt) bears the delta sigil of the Dokeianos Bank. Underneath the clothes is a small cloth satchel that was slung around the patient's shoulder. Kales' few worldly belongings are here: a handful of tournesia, a wild flower he had intended for Sveta the prostitute, and a small jar of blue enamel bearing a chunk of mastic the size of a small egg. There is a powerful dusky aroma released when the jar is open; the resin is impregnated with frankincense. The observant notices that a small piece has been recently broken off the waxy lump.

Commerce

(Success): This much mastic is normally worth about 120 stavrata (1200 SP); however, this piece is worth twice that because it is impregnated with frankincense.

Perception

(Success): Several of Kales' belongings are rotted and degraded, not least the flower he'd intended for Sveta, which is green with mould. This is decidedly odd given that it was picked just a few days ago, and is identical to the rot that the characters witnessed immediately before the ferry disaster (see page 22).

KALES DALASSENOS PEGONITES

The man everyone wants to find. His mother describes him as a cheerful young man with short curly hair of a dark-blond colour unusual amongst Greeks; he has a short beard and blue eyes. By the time the characters catch up with him he is drawn and pale, his body showing signs of the demonic venom that is eating away at his flesh.

Kales had a job guarding the Zeugma Warehouse. Despite being employed by Figlio Levorato, he knows that the warehouse actually belongs to the Dokeianos Bank. His boss Levorato asked him to deliver a jar of mastic to Tomas Dokeianos at the bank, but Kales couldn't resist stealing a grain or two of the valuable substance as a gift for Sveta, a prostitute from the House of Apricots, with whom he had fallen in love. However, in breaking off a piece of the mastic he released a demon that dealt him the wound that is now killing him.

KEY SKILLS AND PASSIONS

Endurance 30%, Influence 37%, Insight 34%, Willpower 47%

Seek (a better life) 63%, Desire (Sveta) 58%

Affiliations: none

Anyone examining the patient beneath his sweat-soaked rags finds the cause of his pain; a gaping wound of black putrefying flesh on his abdomen, with a web of spidery lines radiating from it across his torso and spreading onto his limbs.

First Aid

(Success): the wound was made by a thrusting weapon, circular in profile and perhaps a half-inch in diameter. The patient is also covered in self-inflicted scratches. The staff here tied him up when he started to harm both himself and those who came too near.

Healing

(Success): the patient is afflicted by a venom introduced through the wound in his side; it is a 'hot' poison that causes agonising pain. Without knowing the agent, there is no hope of manufacturing a cure. Relief could be provided by a 'cold' poison of equal strength, which dulls the senses as well as consciousness. A decoction of opium, mandrake, and hemlock would be needed, but given the level of pain Kales is in, the dose required would probably kill him.

(Critical Success): this is almost certainly demon venom, delivered by the sting of the material form of an Infernal spirit. There is a curative prayer, but only the Order of Pi-Kappa-Alpha (a group of exorcists), know it, and there may not be enough time to apply it.

THE PALACE OF THE ORPHANOTROPHOS

The Palace of the Orphanotrophos is the official residence of one of the 12 ministers of the emperor's government. This small residence is located in the Eugenion neighbourhood of Akropolis, on the north-western slopes of the First Hill overlooking the Golden Horn. The villa is incorporated into the remains of the Byzantium Walls, the oldest of The City's defensive walls dating from before it was called Constantinople. There are only a few remaining sections of this wall left, and the Palace of the Orphanotrophos is built into one of the watch towers that studded the Wall. It has been added to over the centuries with repairs and extensions, and is now a mish-mash of conflicting styles and building materials. The compound is contained within an irregular hexagonal wall which is continuous with the Byzantium Walls and the back wall of the palace.

The palace has seven members of staff, all former beneficiaries of the Imperial Orphanage and loyal to Michael Serron. There is one guard at the gate and another in the palace, plus a cook, a maid, a secretary from the ministry, a gardener, and a handyman.

The characters will likely have arrived at the palace because they have chased or followed Kales' (actual or attempted) murderer from the Ptochotropheion. This 'murderer' is Michael Serron, the Orphanotrophos himself — or rather, the creature Zotikos that inhabits his body. He will not have come here if he thinks he was being followed; he does not want any link between himself and Kales. If Zotikos has succeeded in putting Kales out of his agony — or thinks he has succeeded — then his one remaining task is to have someone

find Michael Serron dead. He has arranged for his cook to leave a cold meal in his study; he will eat some of it then drink some wine from his personal supply. He'll place his favourite fez on his head and wait. The wine has been poisoned with a swift and lethal toxin, acquired at great expense from one of Zotikos' many contacts. For all the world it appears as if this 80-year old man has had a heart attack and died. Zotikos decided not to poison Kales with the same toxin because he didn't know how it would interact with the venom already in his system.

MICHAEL SERRON

Michael Serron is the chief minister of the smallest and least important government office, that of the Orphanotropheion or Imperial Orphanage, which administers the charity of the empire and the emperor, mostly through the Orphanage of Saint Paul. However, Serron has a secret — he's not really Serron, Years ago the real Michael Serron and his wife were brutally attacked on their wedding day. As he lay dying, Serron made a deal with Zotikos, one of The City's seven immortals. In return for the use of Michael's body after his death, Zotikos vowed to exact revenge on their killers. He made good on this deal, and "Michael Serron" has had a long and fulfilling life doing many good deeds.

Lore (Byzantine)

(Success): Michael Serron is the Orphanotrophos, one of the emperor's 12 ministers. He is one of the few ministers liked by the people since his role is to administer charity rather than collect taxes.

(Success): 60 years ago, Michael Serron and his new wife were confronted on their wedding day by thieves trying to steal the wedding gifts. Serron survived without a scratch, having been knocked unconscious immediately, but his bride was killed defending him. Serron single-handedly brought the thieves to The City's justice, and soon after became the new Orphanotrophos. The story caught the imagination of the people; there was even a play written about the tragedy.

Lore (Dynatoi)

(Success): Serron is not an aristocratic name. It simply indicates an origin in the city of Serres, which was lost to the Ottomans. It is unusual for a commoner to become a minister.

Streetwise

(Success): The City's orphans are under Serron's protection, and not just those that live at an orphanage. The Orphanotrophos may have the largest network of informers in Constantinople.

governmental ministry, its business has long been considered by the court as a home and school for the care of orphaned nobility. However, its chief minister (the Orphanotrophos), has always subordinated this expectation by caring for every child brought to its gates, whether they come with an inheritance or not.

The day-to-day running of the orphanage is overseen by the master of the house (chartoularios tou oikou), whose name is Stamates. A treasurer looks after the charitable donations to the house as well as the endowments of the orphans themselves, and an army of curators look after the orphans themselves: feeding and bathing the youngest; providing tuition in academic subjects, manners, and religion; and finding work placements for those who are not due to inherit money. The master of the orphanage also has the older children care for the sick and elderly outside the orphanage at least once per day, tending to their wounds and serving them food.

Every master of the house is given a sealed message to be read on the death of the Orphanotrophos. This letter reveals instructions on how to recognise the next Orphanotrophos through a simple pass phrase, half of which is included in the letter and the other half given verbally by the previous incumbent. The master then informs the emperor of identity of his new Orphanotrophos.

A day or so after Kales' Resurrection, he will come here and confirm his identity as the new Orphanotrophos. Of course, Kales — and the former incumbent Michael Serron — are actually the same person, Zotikos, and so he has no trouble being elected to the position. Most masters of the house realise that something unusual is going on, and more than a few work out precisely what, or else are told by Zotikos. However, the masters are always chosen for their utter loyalty and dedication to the position and the role, and Zotikos rarely has any trouble completing the transfer of role to his new identity.

THE ORPHANAGE OF SAINT PAUL

The Orphanage of Saint Paul is situated at the very top of the First Hill, overlooking the confluence of the Golden Horn and the Bosphoros. It is one of the oldest foundations still standing in the city, having been first founded in the late sixth century. Around the central three storey square building, amidst a cultured woodland, is a township of makeshift accommodation for the blind, crippled, diseased, lamed, war veterans, and elderly incapable of caring for themselves. Astate-sponsored charitable organisation as well as a

EVENTS

All the events mentioned in this section have a trigger condition: they occur when the characters take a particular action.

THE GORGON'S AMBUSH

TRIGGER

When characters who are not working for The Gorgon enter the House on the Street of Bottlemakers. This event could also occur at just about any time the characters are in one of the lower-class districts of Constantinople such as Vlanga or Platea.

The Gorgon is as keen to find Kales Pegonites as the characters, since he owes her a substantial sum of money. If the characters have visited his house then she assumes that they know him, and try to use a show of strength to intimidate them into getting what she wants. Statistics for The Gorgon and her thugs can be found on pages 28-29.

Most of her men are hiding disguised as a pile of rubbish, their stone-like makeup helping their concealment. Civilians will have spotted the ambush being set up and make themselves scarce. Each of the hiding thugs is armed with a loaded light crossbow, and there are several other ready-loaded crossbows waiting in various places around the ambush spot. Keeping crossbows loaded like this is dangerous and puts undue strain on the lathes of the bow: as Games Master you might want to say that any fumble causes catastrophic failure of the bow as well as the usual effects. There are one or two arquebusiers on overlooking rooftops, each armed with a loaded hook gun. They have no compunction against firing into melee.

Characters should have an opportunity to spot the ambush, perhaps noticing that there are piles of detritus that were not there before, or seeing the silhouette of an arquebusier on the roof top. Each character may make a Perception roll at Hard difficulty grade due to the camouflage granted by the men's cloaks; this roll is opposed against the group's Stealth. If the attackers have had an hour or more to set up this ambush then they have an Easy adjustment to their Stealth: roll once for the whole group.

When the ambush is detected or sprung, roll Initiative for all opponents. If an attacker goes first, he Delays his action, demanding that the characters surrender. If the first character to act does not surrender on his turn, then the attacker Interrupts and Attacks. The ambush becomes a brawl, with the attackers trying to incapacitate rather than kill. On the third round of combat, The Gorgon joins the fight from a nearby alleyway. The characters are given a second chance to surrender if half their number have Serious Wounds. If the fight goes poorly, The Gorgon flees, as described below.

If the characters surrender, The Gorgon enters the fight if she is not already here. She explains to the characters that she wants Kales or she wants her money, and they should bring either tomorrow at noon to the Amastrionon — a public square in Vlanga with a sinister reputation as a haunt of thieves and cutthroats. The thugs then slink off into The City. Failing to come through on this instruction causes all-out war between the characters and The Gorgon: she cannot afford for her contemporaries to see her fail.

The Gorgon does not have to survive this fight if the characters are sufficiently skilled to stop her, but she would make a great recurring villain for a campaign set in Mythic Constantinople. Games Master might want to give her Luck Points which she reserves to help her get away, if needed. She has prepared a rope, slung through a pulley attached to the side of a building and fastened to the ground. The other end of the rope is tied around a barrel of bricks that weighs more than she does and is hoisted high off the ground at the top of the pulley. By gripping onto the rope and slashing it at ground level, she is lifted into the air at lightning speed, and she leaps off onto the roof of a lower tenement and away. Her arquebusier provides cover if necessary, and anyone trying to stop her from below also has the plummeting barrel of bricks to deal with.

THE CROSSING TO PERA

TRIGGER

Whenever the characters make the crossing over the Golden Horn to visit Pera, such as when they travel to the Maona de Chio e di Focea.

The ferry terminal is in the neighbourhood of Zeugma in Platea, and there are six public ferry crossings every day. It costs a quarter stavraton (1 SP) to make the crossing. The Golden Horn is only 400 metres wide here and the ferry takes just 10 minutes to make the crossing, plus about 10 minutes on either end for manoeuvring and mooring time. The ferry is usually busy, mostly with foreigners who have accommodation in Pera. The ferry disembarks to the side of the Galatas Harbour near the slave market.

The ferry that the characters catch over to Pera has one extra passenger of which no-one is aware. The infernal spirit Zakchuros has been lurking on the Zeugma shoreline ever since Kales released it from its fetish. For some reason — perhaps it senses a connection between the characters and its most recent victim with some alien perception, or maybe it is just bad luck — it decides to board the same ferry as the characters. The spirit of rot and ruin turns its Rotting Aura power loose on the ferry when it is about a third of the way across the Golden Horn. A character might notice the fruit carried by one of her fellow passengers suddenly blacken and collapse into grey mould; or hear the curse of a man as his packages all become undone when the string snaps. All hell breaks loose a few moments later: a scream as a plank buckles and snaps; a sudden lurch as the ferry ships water from beneath the waterline; curses from the crewmen as they struggle to control the vessel.

It takes an average of 8 rounds — under a minute — for the spirit's Rotting Aura to completely destroy the ferry's Hit Points, at which point it starts to sink. For added dramatic tension you may wish to roll the damage (1d10) each round so this timing is less certain. The ferry takes the same number of minutes to sink as it took rounds to lose all its Hit Points (see below for the stats of the ship). The characters might get involved in a number of activities while the ship is sinking:

- ϕ All but the thickest ropes aboard ship have unaccountably rotted and cargo is spilling out amongst the passengers. As the ferry rolls back and forth, barrels and crates break loose and slide precariously around the deck, possibly threatening the lives of other passengers. A piece of cargo has a SIZ of 3d6+18, which should be compared to the Damage Modifier table (Mythras page 9). Sliding cargo makes a Sweep attack (Mythras page 105) with the Trample Creature Ability. The damage is 1d6+Damage Modifier, and is Size Enormous.
- ϕ Characters can help the crew plug the most significant holes, holding down planks (using Brawn rolls) while the crewmen hammer in nails; or stuffing the smaller holes with pitch-soaked cloth.
- ϕ Some of the passengers may have dived or been thrown overboard by the juddering movements of the ferry. If they are too close to the ferry then they are in danger of serious injury or getting caught in the undertow (see later), and their family or companions might be yelling for help.
- ϕ With double hands on the oars, the ferry can be moved closer to shore. It can move approximately 4 metres in a round at full speed, although damage reduces this (see below).
- ϕ If a character can sense the Infernal spirit then they can try to distract it. How they do this depends very much on their magical capacity, but the spirit is drawn to pain and cruelty. Every round they delay is a round that the ship is not losing

Hit Points. If they provoke it unduly then it might manifest its demonic form using a rat or chicken aboard ship.

- ϕ The characters might jump overboard. If they do not get far enough away from the edge of the ferry then they risk getting caught in the undertow caused by the erratic movements of the foundering ship. An Athletics roll is needed to jump clear, which determines the distance achieved from the ship. The strength of the current is 50%, and the character must make a Swim roll opposed by this strength to swim clear of the undertow. The Swim roll is standard difficulty at 3 metres (or further) from the ferry, and increases by 1 difficulty grade for every metre closer to the ferry that the swimmer is. If the character fails the roll he gains a level of Fatigue and gets no further from the ferry. Once he is too tired to fight the undertow then he may drown; once he is more than 3 metres from the ferry then he can swim back to shore.

If you are using the rules in Ships and Shieldwalls, then the Golden Horn Ferry has the following statistics:

GOLDEN HORN FERRY	
Movement	2.5 km/hour
Crew	10 plus up to 30 passengers
Dimensions	Length 20m, Beam 4.5m, Freeboard 2m
Capacity	60 tons
Size	L
Hull Type	Utility
Armour Points	4
Hit Points	40
Seaworthiness	30%
Range	3
Armaments	none

Each passenger takes up the room of approximately 1 ton of cargo, and it typically sails with 30 passengers and 30 tons. Its low Seaworthiness makes it slow and clumsy in the water but it is not usually required to do more than cross the 400m between Constantinople and Pera six times a day. The captain has a Seamanship of 50% and the crew have an average Boating of 60%.

The ferry begins at the Seaworthy Condition. When it has taken a third of its Total Hit Points in damage its Condition is reduced to Battered, imposing a Hard Penalty to all Seaworthiness rolls and reducing its speed by a quarter. Once it has taken two thirds of its Hit Points in damage the Condition is Swamped: all rolls are Formidable and speed is halved. Once all Hit Points have been lost the ferry is Sinking: it cannot move, and all Seaworthiness rolls are Herculean.

Once the Infernal spirit has had its fun with the ferry it loses interest and return to its haunts in the Zeugma timber yards. The Platea Phylax (watch) arrives to help in the rescue efforts and cargo is soon washed up on the shore. The ferry is only out of action for a day or so — The City can't afford for it to be any longer; a ship will be drafted into service until another ferry can be built.

The characters might be understandably reluctant to use the ferry again; in which case they face an 8 kilometre hike north out of the city to find a point where the rivers that feed into the Golden Horn may be forded, and then another 8 kilometre walk along the

north shore to reach Pera. This trek takes them through the region known as Pegai Krenidai, which is the home to a tribe of Arimapsoi — one-eyed barbarians who hunt griffins for sport.

THE DEMON ATTACK

TRIGGER

The characters visit the Zeugma Warehouse and disturb the rats there, or else visit the shoreline near the Ptochotropheion where Kales was attacked.

The first signs that something is amiss is the congregation of rats: rather than fleeing from the characters they begin to group together to form a squeaking and skittering swarm of fur, claws, and teeth. As the swarm begins to form, the Infernal spirit Zakchuros (who is causing this effect with its Dominate Rats Ability) unleashes its Rotting Aura Ability. This might affect the characters' clothing, but the spirit might direct it at the wooden hafts of weapons, or at shields.

Once the tension caused by the unusual rat behaviour and the sudden stench of rot has built sufficiently, one of the rats undergoes a remarkable transformation, becoming Zakchuros' demon: a man-sized amalgam of mangy lion and louse-ridden eagle with too many legs and a scorpion's sting. While the demon attacks, so does the rat swarm, surging towards one or more of the characters.

This is a potentially deadly encounter; and the characters should be given the opportunity to flee if they wish. The Infernal spirit wants as much mayhem and terror as possible; and living targets spread fear more readily than dead ones.

RAT SWARM

Under the influence of Zakchuros' Dominate Rats power, the rats of Zeugma form into a swarm with a SIZ no greater than the spirit's POW. The spirit must spend an action to command or change the orders of the rat swarm.

Hundreds of rats flow past a character's defences, nibbling and scratching through any chinks in armour or clothing. Melee weapons are useless against a rat swarm since each blow can only kill a tiny proportion of the entire swarm. Each individual rat is so minor they possess no Characteristics, but the collective has a number of Hit Points equal to its SIZ, assuming that the characters have some sort of area attack capable of damaging a volume encompassing at least 75% of the swarm rather than a single target.

On its first successful attack the swarm engulfs an opponent if its SIZ exceeds the character's SIZ. Any remaining SIZ can be used to engulf other characters; and it can use part of its SIZ to partially engulf an individual. A SIZ 22 swarm could therefore totally engulf two characters of SIZ 11, or totally engulf one of SIZ 14 and then half engulf a SIZ 16 individual (attacking just the legs and abdomen). If a character is totally engulfed then the swarm's attacks automatically hit, and cannot be avoided. Otherwise, the swarm affects every engulfed Hit Location of a target that fails to Evade its attack. If the rolled number of injuries exceeds the victim's Armour Points then each successful injury inflicts one Hit Point of Damage. In addition, anyone taking damage from the swarm is exposed to a disease which is resolved when the encounter is concluded. Swarms

do not generate Special Effects, and neither do they use Combat Actions to parry or evade unless attacked with area effect attacks.

The rat swarm moves at 4 metres per round, but can augment this rate using its Athletics Skill. The best option is to escape the area as quickly as possible. If the mass can move more quickly than the characters then the results can be deadly.

SIZ: 1d6+18 (22)

Combat Actions: 3

Hit Points: 22

Movement: 4 metres

Skills: Athletics 60%, Willpower 30%

Combat Style: Swarm Attack (bite, claws) 60%

Swarm Damage: 1d6 injuries to all Hit Locations

Rat Bite Fever

Application: injected via rat bites

Potency: 60%

Resistance: Endurance

Onset Time: 1d6+3 days

Duration: 1d2+1 Weeks

Conditions: Fever and Nausea.

Antidote: Total rest under the care of a competent physician. Each week of bed rest allows a new Healing roll

KALES' MURDER

TRIGGER

Out of dramatic necessity this event is triggered when the characters are present. Zotikos won't know when he arrives at the Ptochotropheion that the characters are here because of Kales, so he'll go through with his plan without realising the opposition he might face.

Just as the characters find Kales Pegonites, he is fated to be snatched away from them again. As per his agreement with Zotikos, Kales has agreed to surrender his body to the spirit, and Zotikos — still occupying his current decrepit body — has come to collect. Zotikos' plan is to join the volunteers at the Ptochotropheion which gives him a legitimate reason to get close to Kales. He intends to kill him as painlessly as possible, and then return home before vacating the body of Michael Serron. The old man is found dead in his own home, not unusual for a man of his age.

The most dramatic way of implementing this scene is for the characters to witness the hooded figure of Zotikos bent over the body of Kales bound to his bed in the Ptochotropheion, knife in hand ready to plunge it into his heart. This scene most likely occurs after the characters have found and identified Kales, in the midst of returning to visit him, perhaps with his mother in tow. If the characters put Kales under guard then Zotikos resorts to creeping in at night, perhaps after causing a disturbance.

As mentioned earlier, it is possible to start this scenario with this scene. The Games Master will have to provide some other reason why the characters are in the Ptochotropheion, but they witness the (attempted or actual) murder of an anonymous patient and then are motivated to find out why.

Whatever the circumstances, when they first see the hooded man with the knife, the characters have several options open to them.

The sections below discuss the consequences of taking one of these actions. Players are full of surprises however; be prepared for them to take a different course altogether! Zotikos' most important task is to kill Kales; once he has done this he doesn't care what happens to his decrepit old body. He would prefer to get home undetected and be found dead in his sleep, but if he has to use the characters to commit 'suicide' he will — but would prefer it if he could not be identified as Michael Serron. To this end he might jump off a tall building or wall, or dive headfirst into a cistern.

SAVIOURS

If the characters rush in to save Kales, Zotikos' actions depend upon how far away they are when they make their presence known. If they have a round's worth or more of ground to cover, then Zotikos has time to kill Kales. If they are closer than this then he does not — he doesn't want to risk botching the job and causing even more pain to Kales.

If Zotikos has time to kill Kales then he will do so, slitting his throat with his dagger. Depending on how much remaining time he has, he will either turn to face the characters or make a run for it. His remaining task in this body is to die; he would rather do this under the circumstances he has planned (see *Chasing the Murderer*), but if he has to commit suicide by means of the characters, that works for him as well.

If the characters fight Zotikos, they will find him no match for them: he has the body of an 80-year old man. As long as Kales is dead he will fight with as much fury as possible, wanting them to kill him. If they are trying to subdue rather than kill him, then he'll use his Discorporate power. His body collapses, apparently dead, but freeing his soul to enter and resurrect Kales' body.

If Zotikos is unable to kill Kales before the characters intervene he will hide the knife and wait for the characters to close. He'll then ask them for aid, claiming to work at the Ptochotropheion. If asked about the knife, he'll claim to just have been cautious — only a fool approaches a maniac unarmed, no matter how well tied up he is. Suspicious characters may ask to use Insight to confirm the truth of this, which is opposed by Zotikos' Deceit Skill (see his stats on page 31).

Zotikos tries to get away from the characters as quickly as possible whilst avoiding raising their suspicions any further. He'll refuse any help to see him home. He retires to the Palace of the Orphanotrophos, but does not go through with the plan to kill himself until he can make another attempt on Kales' life.

WITNESSES

If the characters do not intervene but watch what is going on, they will see Zotikos kill Kales, make the sign of the cross over his body, and then leave at the fastest walking pace he can manage. He is heading for his home, the Palace of the Orphanotrophos. He then enacts his plan to arrange the death of Michael Serron. Moments after this occurs, Kales' Resurrection takes place across town.

FOILING ZOTIKOS

Due to the characters' intervention, it may be that Kales is still alive. He is too sick for his disappointment to be obvious, although he may cry out "why aren't I dead?!"; a reasonable thing for him to say in his state, but nevertheless perhaps still a bit suspicious. He still believes

Zotikos' plan to be his best option, and will say nothing about their agreement. Barring a miracle, Kales will die in unbearable agony after 1d3 days, during which time Zotikos will keep a close eye on him using the orphans that he cares for as spies. When Kales finally passes, Zotikos will resume his plan; Michael Serron will pass away from a plausible cause for an old man, and Kales will have a remarkable recovery after apparently dying (see Kales' Resurrection). If for some reason Michael Serron is dead and Kales is alive, then Zotikos will use his Spirit Abilities to animate a corpse to act as murderer for him.

There are pharmaceuticals and potentially spells that could grant Kales relief from pain, but these are temporary measures only. Kales needs the Cure Malady miracle to negate the demon venom in his system and repair all damage it has caused. He will also need Heal Mind to undo the homicidal Mania that the venom has caused. Finding a theist capable of these miracles may well be a story in its own right, by which time Zotikos may have succeeded in his task.

CHASING THE MURDERER

TRIGGER

Zotikos' attempt to kill Kales — whether successful or not — is interrupted by the characters and he is forced to flee.

If Zotikos is forced to run from the characters he is at a severe disadvantage due to his decrepit body. He only resorts to this option if his plan to kill Kales failed; or if he succeeds but has reason to suspect the characters will try to take him alive. In the former case he is running for home (the Palace of the Orphanotrophos), but will not lead the characters there if he can avoid it. If he cannot shake them, or if he is running to avoid capture, he heads for the Byzantion Walls, intending to hurl himself from the top. If he succeeds, the characters will probably witness his dive onto the pavement below.

To conduct the chase, use the following spot rules. Bear in mind this is not a simple race across even terrain; it is a mad dash through the jinks and turns of a crowded city — a city that Zotikos knows very well.

- ϕ First determine the head start (in terms of number of rounds) that Zotikos has over the characters. He'll do his best to make this as high as possible, upturning furniture in the Ptochotropheion, or barring the door from the outside if he can.
- ϕ Make a series of opposed Athletics rolls. For every roll that Zotikos wins, his lead increases by one. For every roll that a character wins, the lead decreases by one. A Critical success or a Fumble changes the lead by 2 in the appropriate direction.
- ϕ If the lead is reduced to zero, then the characters have caught up with Zotikos. If the lead exceeds the DEX of all the pursuers, then Zotikos has escaped.
- ϕ Characters can decide their own pace: walk, run, or sprint (*Mythras* page 69). If a character's movement in any turn of the chase is 5 or more metres faster than his opponent, then he doubles whatever gains in the lead he makes. However, a character must make an Endurance roll for any roll for which he sprints to avoid gaining a level of Fatigue.

From the Ptochotropheion, Zotikos takes the route indicated in the table below. Zotikos will run in his first turn (35 metres) and then run in subsequent turns (21 metres). There are hazards for each leg of this route that he will employ to shake pursuers. These add to Zotikos' lead if the characters fail to negotiate the hazard. If Zotikos wants to increase his lead he can repeat the hazards of the Harbour Road or the Eugenion alleys as many times as necessary. Consult the map for the route: the Harbour Road separates Eugenion from Sphorakion.

ROUTE	HAZARD	PENALTY
Leave the Ptochotropheion	—	—
Along the shore of the Golden Horn	—	—
Into The City through the Gate of the Neorion	The gate guard is a former orphan. He'll admit Serron, but delay anyone else.	3d4 rounds of lead, or 1d4 rounds if the characters use Brawn to muscle past the guard
Along the Harbour Road into the heart of Akropolis District	A crowded street filled with market-day traffic (can be repeated)	1d4 rounds of lead if the characters fail a Streetwise roll
Either to the end of the Harbour Road to where it meets the Byzantion Walls and up the ruins to the top	Climbing up and balancing along the precarious wall.	2d4 rounds of lead if the characters fail a Hard Athletics or Standard Acrobatics roll
Or taking a left turn into the alleys of Eugenion.	Feinting and dodging through the confusing mess of alleyways, shops, and forums in Eugenion (can be repeated)	1d4 rounds of lead if the characters lose an opposed roll of Perception versus Zotikos' Evade (augmented by his Deceit)
Through the sally port of the Palace of the Orphanotrophos.	—	—

KALES' RESURRECTION

TRIGGER

Once both Kales and Zotikos (as the host Michael Serron) are dead. It might be a few rounds if Zotikos died near to the Ptochotropheion, or a few minutes if further away.

A faint shimmer passes over Kales' corpse, beginning at his heart and radiating out all over his body. All injury and abuse to his body is wiped away; although there will still be a lot of blood on his body there are no wounds beneath (this is Zotikos using his Healing Spirit Ability which he can only do once incarnate in a body). "Kales" will start breathing again, and then sit up. Zotikos needs a few minutes to get used to his new body, and he will use this time to get his story right, acting dazed and confused.

Zotikos is keen that Kales' attacker is not identified as Michael Serron. He would rather that his previous identity was not affected by scandal that might embarrass the emperor. He'll try to pass off the whole affair as an attack by a crazy old man, who was clearly too weak to get the job done properly. He'll claim to want to put the whole affair behind him and discourage any further investigation on the characters' behalf.

It is entirely plausible that the characters are distrustful of this resurrected Kales. One of the reasons that Zotikos chose Kales is that he didn't appear to have anyone that cared about him who could catch him out in a lie. However, the characters possibly know a great deal about Kales' life, and may have met Iannis, who knows even more. This could make it difficult for Zotikos to maintain his cover, and he'll do his best to discover the reason for the involvement of the characters and take steps accordingly to plug up the holes in his story.

If the characters were contracted by Iannis or Gjorgya, then Zotikos' fix for is simple. Both their issues are about money, and Zotikos has plenty of that. Kales will announce that he has just secured a new job in the government complete with a proclaimed title, and that he can immediately cover any debts he owes. All he needs to do is make a visit to the Orphanage of Saint Paul in Akropolis, where the master of the house is expecting him. He will speak with the man in private for a few minutes, and then emerge with a pouchful of cash that will clear all outstanding debts. Kales will be deliberately unclear as to what his new job is, particularly if the characters seem like the nosey sort who might wonder how a provincial lordling might rise from no-good waster to one of the emperor's chief ministers in such a short space of time. He'll do his best to rid himself of the annoying busybodies as soon as possible.

If the characters were hired instead by Lady Sophia, making them go away is a bit more problematic. Kales had no idea of his family's tragedy, and the presence of Sophia in the city is a problem for Zotikos as he is unlikely to be able to fool Kales' own mother that he really is her son. The characters might consider their job done when they take Kales to the Pegonites Villa, and Sophia is certainly gushing with happiness, and they will receive their fee along with a generous bonus from Kales himself.

If the characters were drawn into the story by witnessing the attack on Kales, then the Games Master should make sure that his actions after his resurrection raise suspicions amongst the characters. How did such a failure at life secure a position as minister without any relevant education or experience? Why doesn't he remember key parts of his life, like his brother's name or the face of family retainers? This should induce the characters to start digging further, and perhaps uncover the truth.

A STATE FUNERAL

TRIGGER

A few days after the discovery of Michael Serron's body.

The emperor orders a feast day in honour of the death of a favoured minister, Michael Serron, who served as the Orphanotrophos for over 50 years. All residents in the city who are released from work should attend mass held for the minister's soul, and then attend the procession of the body as it passes down the Mese Odos from

Blachernai to the Hagia Sophia for the burial. If the characters attend, they will see the new Orphanotrophos, Kales Pegonites, walking behind the coffin in the entourage of the emperor in full court regalia: a white silk kaftan with a black trim, and a red silk fez. Following the service, the emperor has halved the state cost of wine until the tabernai close at dusk so that the city can toast the memory of Serron.

Even if the characters do not attend the funeral procession themselves, the subject will be all that people talk about for a few days. The circumstances of Michael Serron's death are common knowledge, although the details may have been 'tidied up' a bit for public consumption: he will have been murdered in a back-alley robbery rather than slain after he tried to kill someone, for example. No mention will be made of the fact that he was in the company of his successor Kales moments before his death, either. People will also gossip about his successor Kales as well, mentioning how he is a Kantakouzenos through his mother, that he grew up in the Morea, and so on.

CONCLUSIONS

The scenario is basically concluded with the death and resurrection of Kales Pegonites. The characters have achieved the task for which they were hired — finding Kales — and they can return to their principals and receive payment.

However, most characters are going to have questions which have not yet been answered. They may continue to follow up clues, so that they have the complete story for their employers. If they did not encounter Zakchuros — and thus discover what happened to Kales — then this should certainly take place as a finale. The characters might decide that they want to investigate further immediately, or a future encounter with Zotikos could prompt more questions. The Games Master can use the following events to keep the characters interested.

AROUND WE GO AGAIN

A month or so after the state funeral, the characters are contacted again by their former employer. If it was Lady Sophia, then Andras is the one who seeks out the characters. He is concerned that Kales — with whom he was formerly very close — no longer has any time to see him, and will barely give him the time of day. He wants the characters to tell him anything they found out that might explain this behaviour, or investigate further to find out what happened to him to cause him to change so much. Iannis will come to the characters with a very similar complaint, although in his case he was trying to borrow some money from his friend, who just handed over a stack of money and told him not to return. Iannis hasn't spent any of the money — he's too hurt by the brush-off he received. Either encounter might take the characters to the Orphanage of Saint Paul, and Zotikos might decide that it is time for the characters to Learn the Truth.

Gjorgya's interest in Kales Pegonites is far more mercenary. During the investigation the characters uncovered some choice information about the last three years of Kales' life, information that she is sure the new Orphanotrophos would not want to become public. Since the characters had the most to do with him, she wants to pay them to make the approach. She'll give them a 10% share of whatever they can extort out of him (raising as high as 45% if the

characters bargain). For details on how Zotikos might respond to blackmail, see Learning the Truth, below.

LEARNING THE TRUTH

If the characters are persistent in harassing Kales after he has adopted his new life, he might just risk telling them the truth. He won't do this if they have displayed any criminal tendencies, since he doesn't want to lay himself open to blackmail; but in truth he is more than capable of handling the characters — this won't be the first time that confidants have tried to extort him, and it won't be the last.

Zotikos will reveal a pared down version of the truth. He won't mention the existence of the other Immortals or confirm the existence of the Ateleutoi to any who ask (see Mythic Constantinople, Chapter Eight for more details). He will admit to his true name and answer any questions the characters might have. He will assure them of his good intentions, and that Kales was a willing participant in the scheme. He only wishes that he could heal others with his powers, but alas that is not the case. If the characters treat him honourably, then they will have made a powerful and trustworthy ally in the cutthroat world of Mythic Constantinople. If they end up with a friendly relationship with Zotikos, he may send business their way. Of immediate interest to the Immortal is why a powerful demon was imprisoned inside a piece of mastic originating in Chios? He might pay the characters handsomely to find out for him.

If the characters appear that they are going to cause trouble once they know the truth, Zotikos has a few tricks up his sleeve. Firstly, it is unlikely that anyone significant will believe them if the characters come with tales of an immortal body-switching minister in the imperial court. The Orphanotrophos is traditionally the least influential of the 12 ministers, but he still has sufficient friends at court that he can keep the characters from spilling his secret.

Secondly, Zotikos has significant supernatural powers. He is a pacifist who values human life, no matter how low, but the characters need not know that. He can disincorporate himself and battle a character in Spectral Combat in his dreams — and if he wins he can rifle through the character's own secrets or plague him with unpleasant dreams. Zotikos can observe the characters in spiritual form or while in possession of a street urchin, and learn all their secrets that way instead. Zotikos can also animate the dead: imagine what it would be like, especially for a soldier, if every corpse moaned your name, or if a dead relative or loved one showed up to dinner every night; or if an enemy you thought you had killed kept coming back.

Thirdly, as Orphanotrophos Zotikos has been building a network of orphans for years. Many of his former wards are now influential in a wide diversity of roles: the Guilds, the Military, and the Church in particular. With a few well-placed words he can close doors on the characters' own ambitions or cause trouble for them in a myriad of other ways. Any such blockages put in their way will make a point of mentioning that they were once orphans, so that the characters know just who is responsible for their woes. It is not only the orphans of influential families that fall into the hands of the Imperial Orphanage, and the characters will find out what it is like to be under constant surveillance from street urchins; to be bombarded with rotten fruit wherever they go; and be unable to do anything about it without being publically outed as abusers of children.

LOOSE ENDS

BARTHOLOMEO GIUSTINIANI

The Genoese magnate only had a small part in this scenario, and probably not enough to pique the interest of the characters. The reverse is not true. Giustiniani invested a lot of time and money in procuring that mastic fetish, and Kales Pegonites managed to undo all his planning. Since the characters have been investigating Kales, there is a risk that they have learned the origin of the mastic, and Giustiniani cannot risk them tracing it back to him. He will call upon his private assassins to kill anyone in Constantinople, Pera, and Chios that was even vaguely related to the whole business; this includes Figlio Levorato. The biggest problem to him is the diabolist who created the fetish in the first place, who, perhaps unsurprisingly, manages to avoid the hired killers.

The characters might encounter this string of suspicious deaths if they follow up any leads on behalf of Zotikos or their original employer, or try to contact Levorato or Dokeianos. They have every reason to suspect that they are also on the hit list; but this is actually only true if they drew any conclusions about a conspiracy after talking to one of the murdered men, who were all thoroughly interrogated before being killed. If they are lucky and/or skilled they may manage to put all the pieces together to implement Giustiniani, and must decide what to do with that information.

TOMAS DOKEIANOS

The characters may see an opportunity to use their leverage over Dokeianos. After all, they know that he was involved in smuggling; a dangerous profession for someone aspiring to be guildmaster of a powerful imperial guild. It is actually surprisingly easy to gain control of Dokeianos if the characters are prepared to push hard enough — they may need to prove that they are not just making empty threats. However, none of the dynatoi expect to reach a position of power without having to pay off a few blackmailers along the way.

SÁNDOR AND ARANKA

This Magyar couple are secretly agents for John Hunyadi, who is regent of the Kingdom of Hungary. They have been working in secret with the Imperial intelligence service (the Office of the Drome) to broker a deal between Hungary and the Byzantine Empire based on mutual support and defence: support for Hunyadi when he makes a move on the throne of Hungary, and defence of Constantinople against the inevitable attack by the Ottoman Turks. Aranka is the senior agent, Sándor is posing as her husband but is actually her bodyguard. When Sándor saw Gjorgya Gorgo at the House on the Street of Bottlemakers, he recognised her by her reputation as a hired killer who has definitely worked for Hunyadi's political opponents in the Hungarian court. He had not realised that The Gorgon was living here in Constantinople, and now suspects that she is a deep-cover enemy agent. He moved Aranka out of their base that very night, and has not dared to return, despite leaving behind potentially incriminating evidence behind.

If the characters investigate their apartment in the House on the Street of the Bottlemakers they may uncover hidden documents. Sándor has been watching the house, and if he sees the characters enter his former home he'll later risk checking to see whether they have found them. If they have, this puts him in a quandary. If his

investigations have uncovered that the characters are working for The Gorgon, he cannot risk them passing on the documents to her. Even if she is not an enemy agent, she knows who to go to in order to turn these documents into a handsome payday. On the other hand, if Sándor sees the characters clashing with The Gorgon's thugs, he'll conclude that they may be possible allies; but at the very least might accept payment for the return of the diplomatic dispatches. Either way he will shadow the characters to gather more information about them, and should they get into trouble he might hinder or help them, depending upon how his investigations have gone.

If the Games Master wants to spin out this false lead into a game of espionage and counter-espionage, there is plenty of material with which to work. While Sándor is negotiating with the characters, Aranka gets herself into trouble. In addition to the Hungarians and their enemies, the Office of the Drome has its agents in the city, as do the Ottomans, in the form of a cadre of female Mystics loyal to the Sultan's mother (who acts as the Ottoman spymaster).

STATISTICS

Rather than providing full statistics for all the NPCs in this scenario, key Skills and Passions have been listed along with Affiliations (which are described in more detail in the *Communities* chapter of *Mythic Constantinople*).

GJORGYA ƆORƆO

Gjorgya (pronounced approximately CHYOR-gyah) is a lieutenant of Dražan Romanoktonos. Her main role is as a collection agent and enforcer for the Bulgarian crime lord, although she is usually only called in for the most pernicious of offenders. Gjorgya is well known for her ugly features and terrifying demeanour. On one of her first jobs she caught her quarry because he was paralysed with fright upon seeing her. Upon finding out that others were calling her “The Gorgon” behind her back, she revelled in the nickname rather than getting annoyed, and she is now more commonly known by this name than her real one, which Greeks find difficult to pronounce anyway.

Gjorgya is a Magyar from distant Hungary. She is tall and strong, wearing her black hair formed into snake-locks by the application of grease. She has a cruel mockery of a face; her staring eyes, placed too far apart, peer from either side of a mass of wrinkled scar tissue that runs vertically down the middle of her face. Both her upper and lower lip are split and her nose and tongue are similarly cleft in twain. She has no front teeth, and her eye teeth are twisted and grow at odd angles. She does not speak of the terrible injury that caused this horrific disfigurement and no-one has dared ask her.

Greeks tend to underestimate her as a warrior because of her sex, a mistake they are usually only able to make once. Gjorgya’s command of the Greek language is good but she has a thick accent which is further mangled by her missing teeth and split tongue. To enhance the Gorgon image she has commissioned a custom faceplate for her helmet that depicts Medousa’s terrible mien and snake locks. She often wears this separately to the helmet as a mask. She also wears a pair of gauntlets made of brass scales, each finger bearing a wicked claw. She is a ruthless and efficient killer. She has her offices above a confectioner’s shop in the forum of Medousa’s Fountain.

Despite her high CHA, Gjorgya is intimidating rather than charming. Any social rolls based on good looks or charm are automatically two difficulty grades harder due to her disfigurement.

Gorgo	Attributes
STR: 15	Action Points: 3
CON: 14	Damage Modifier: +1d4
SIZ: 17	Magic Points: 9
DEX: 16	Movement: 6 metres
INT: 11	Strike Rank Bonus: +14 (−6 for armour) +8
POW: 9	Armour: Equivalent to Greek medium armour if expecting a fight
CHA: 16	Abilities: None
	Magic: None

Skills: Acrobatics 54%, Athletics 66%, Brawn 65%, Endurance 66%, Evade 55%, Insight 51%, Perception 48%, Unarmed 57%, Willpower 50%

Loyal (Dražan) 66%, Hate (debtors) 54%

Affiliations: Criminal (Dražan’s Gang) 75%, Cultural (Hungarians) 55%, Societal (street gangs) 55%, Urban (Vlanga) 65%

1d20	Location	AP/HP
1—3	Right Leg	6/7
4—6	Left Leg	6/7
7—9	Abdomen	6/8
10—12	Chest	6/9
13—15	Right Arm	6/6
16—18	Left Arm	6/6
19—20	Head	7/7

Combat Style: Skoutatos (longspear, glaive, longsword, sabre, kite shield) 72%

Weapon	Size/Force	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Sabre	M	M	1d6+1+1d4	6/8
Clawed Gauntlet	S	T	1d4+1d4	6/4

THE GORGON'S SNAKES

The Gorgon has a band of men who are more-or-less loyal to her, although that loyalty was hard-won. There are eight in all in her band, two specialists in the use of the hook gun and six street thugs. Most are refugees from the Ottoman conquests in Europe; Bulgars, Bosnians, and Serbs, although she refuses to employ other Magyars.

In keeping with her gorgon persona, she refers to her band as her "Snakes". They smear chalky grey paste over their faces that makes them look like they have been turned to stone, and wear grey clothing and cloaks smeared with the same rock-textured paste. This pantomime enhances both their reputation and Gjorgya's.

Arquebusier (x2)

Action Points: 3

Damage Modifier: None

Magic Points: 11

Movement: 6 metres

Initiative Bonus: +14 (−2 for armour) = +12

Armour: Laminated-padded, with half-plate helmet (ENC 14/2)

Abilities: None

Magic: None

Skills: Athletics 47%, Brawn 52%, Conceal 32%, Deceit 49%, Endurance 43%, Evade 68%, Gambling 36%, Influence 47%, Insight 49%, Language (Greek) 45%, Locale 37%, Native Tongue (Serbian or Bulgarian) 62%, Perception 37%, Stealth 47%, Streetwise 56%, Unarmed 52%, Willpower 31%

Passions to Fear Church 34%, Loyal to The Gorgon 54%, Oppose Law and Order 54%

1d20	Location	AP/HP
1—3	Right Leg	2/5
4—6	Left Leg	2/5
7—9	Abdomen	3/6
10—12	Chest	3/7
13—15	Right Arm	3/4
16—18	Left Arm	3/4
19—20	Head	5/5

Combat Style: Self Defence (quarterstaff, club, knife, sling; Cautious Fighter) 52%.

Arquebusier (hook gun, shortsword, grenado, buckler shield; Daredevil) 62%

Weapon	Size/Force	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
<i>Hook Gun</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>2d6</i>	<i>4/8</i>
<i>(Impale, Range 15/50/100, Load 4 Rounds)</i>				
<i>Shortsword</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>1d6</i>	<i>6/8</i>
<i>Knife</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>1d4</i>	<i>5/4</i>
<i>Club</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>1d6</i>	<i>4/4</i>

Street Thug (x2)

Action Points: 2

Damage Modifier: +1d2

Magic Points: 11

Movement: 6 metres

Initiative Bonus: +12 (−3 for armour) = +9

Armour: Light Frankish Armour (ENC 17/2)

Abilities: None

Magic: None

Skills: Athletics 47%, Brawn 54%, Conceal 32%, Deceit 49%, Endurance 43%, Evade 62%, Gambling 36%, Influence 47%, Insight 49%, Language (Greek) 45%, Locale 37%, Native Tongue (Serbian or Bulgarian) 62%, Perception 37%, Stealth 47%, Streetwise 56%, Unarmed 52%, Willpower 31%

Passions to Fear Church 34%, Loyal to The Gorgon 54%, Oppose Law and Order 54%

1d20	Location	AP/HP
1—3	Right Leg	2/6
4—6	Left Leg	2/6
7—9	Abdomen	4/7
10—12	Chest	4/8
13—15	Right Arm	2/5
16—18	Left Arm	2/5
19—20	Head	7/6

Combat Style: Self Defence (quarterstaff, club, knife, sling; Cautious Fighter) 55%.

Footman (mace, military pick, falchion; Formation Fighting) 57%

Crossbowman (light crossbow; Ranged Marksman) 55%

Weapon	Size/Force	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
<i>Light Crossbow</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>1d8</i>	<i>4/5</i>
<i>(Impale, Range 20/100/200, Load 3 Rounds)</i>				
<i>Mace</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>1d8+1d2</i>	<i>6/6</i>
<i>Knife</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>1d4+1d2</i>	<i>5/4</i>

ZAKCHUROS

Zakchuros is an infernal spirit that delights in pain and rot. It is the very essence of the old adage that rats leave a sinking ship, specialising in maritime disasters and in rats. Zakchuros is currently haunting the crossing at Zeugma, causing plants to wither and die and grain to rot. If its attention is drawn by the characters it will make its initial approach in the shape of a possessed rat, but will manifest its demonic form at an appropriate moment. If it plans to attack it will use its Dominant Rats power, creating a rat swarm of SIZ 1d6+18; if this is greater than the spirit's POW (22), then it cannot control this swarm and it must release them before trying again.

The demon that Zakchuros manifests has the head of an eagle, with a lion's body and three pairs of legs: a lion's powerful hind legs

and two pairs of eagle claws. The demon's rat origin can still be seen in the prominent incisors, mangy grey fur, and naked pink tail, although tipped with the huge stinger of a scorpion.

The statistics for Zakchuros' demon assumes that the Infernal spirit is Intensity 3, although you may wish to adjust this based on the martial abilities of the characters.

Zakchuros	
INT: 16	
POW: 22	
CHA: 9	
Spirit Abilities: Covert, Dominate Rats, Manifestation, Rotting Aura*	
Skills: Spectral Combat 82%, Stealth 75%, Willpower 94%	
Spectral Combat damage: 1d10	

**Rotting aura: the spirit has an aura with a radius of its POW in metres that kills plants and rots wood. Any plant material with fewer Armour Points than the spirit's Intensity is automatically affected by the mere presence of the spirit. Any other object of plant origin takes an action and costs a Magic Point per object to initiate the rot. Affected targets suffer the spirit's Spectral Combat damage each round it remains in the spirit's aura, ignoring any Armour Points of the object. If a targeted object is carried or held then the spirit must win a Spectral Combat roll opposed by the bearer's Willpower.*

INFERNAL SPIRITS & DEMONS

Infernal spirits possess a small creature (in this case a rat) and then manifests its material form through it; this manifested form is called a demon. A demon is somewhat like an elemental; it has no Hit Locations, just a single pool of Hit Points, which equals the spirit's Magic Points when it manifested the demon. A demon inflicts spiritual damage at the same time as physical damage; this acts like the Wither Spirit Ability. This demon can inject venom with its tail.

Once all its Hit Points have been exhausted the demon is dispelled and cannot be reformed for three months. If the spirit ends the Manifestation Ability before it is dispelled (requiring an Action) it loses 1 Magic Point for every Hit Point damage it took, but can reform the demon at any time — although it usually waits for its Magic Points to regenerate before it does.

*Demon Scorpion Venom
Potency: 64%
Resistance: Endurance
Onset Time: 1d3 rounds
Duration: 1d3 +6 days*

Conditions: Agony is instant in the affected limb, lasting the entire duration. After a day, the unrelenting pain leads to Mania, causing the victim to lash out wildly at anyone in sight. At the end of the Duration if the victim remains untreated he becomes a mindless ravening beast, killing and eating anything he can find.

Antidote/Cure: The pain cannot be ameliorated through mundane means except by amputating the affected location. Exorcists know a healing prayer, and every day must match the exorcist's Willpower against the venom's Potency. After four successes the symptoms cease. This prayer is ineffective once the victim has become a ravening beast. Once that has happened, a Heal Mind miracle is needed with a Magnitude greater than the spirit's Intensity.

The Demon	Attributes
STR: —	Action Points: 5
CON: —	Damage Modifier: +1d10 (spirit damage)
SIZ: 14	Magic Points: 22
DEX: —	Movement: 6 metres
INT: 16	Strike Rank Bonus: +13
POW: 22	Armour: None
CHA: 9	Abilities: Terrifying, Multi-Limbed
	Magic: none
<i>Skills: Stealth 75%, Willpower 94%</i>	

1d20	Location	AP/HP
1—20	Body	0/22

Combat Style/Spectral Combat: Rending and Tearing 82%

Weapon	Size/Force	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Claw	M	M	1d4+1d10*	-
Bite	M	T	1d6+1d10*	-
Tail	M	L	1d6+1d10*	-

**All damage is Spirit Damage and automatically bypasses worn armour*

ZOTIKOS

Zotikos has no idea how he became an immortal; his long life appears to be a cosmic accident. He was a minister during the reign of Justin II. He established the Orphanage of Saint Paul, and the Office of the Orphanotropheion was established to continue his good work. The last thing he expected was to find himself present as a spirit at his own funeral. Instinctually his soul re-entered his own corpse and he staggered into unlife, struggling to control the dead flesh of his corpse and driven mad with panic. He was soon hacked apart by horrified soldiers. Once again his soul fled his body but refused to pass on; out of blind panic and dumb luck it lodged itself in the body of a dying soldier he had attacked in his mad rampage. Fortunately no one noticed that the soldier's wound was mortal, and Zotikos' presence in the body somehow rapidly repaired his injuries. Zotikos masqueraded as the soldier for five years until he was killed on the battlefield. Once again, he pulled off the same resurrection stunt; entering a new body at the moment of its death and repairing it before walking away.

Experimentation has taught him that he can animate dead flesh and possess the living, but his biggest breakthrough was when he observed a death for the first time. As a person's soul leaves its body, Zotikos can slide in and become the new soul within the body as if it was its natural inhabitant. Zotikos can use his Healing Spirit Ability on any body he inhabits, but not those whom he merely possesses. Practically, this means that Zotikos can assume a new body by inhabiting the freshly dead and healing it of its cause of death. If he cannot find a suitable dying person, he can animate a corpse or control a living person until he finds one.

Over the last 900 years Zotikos has lived many people's lives. Some he has had for a long time, others for just a few years. In some

of these lifetimes despondency or anger have ruled and in others he has lived a venial and hedonistic life in the hope that this might bring an end to his endless reincarnation. Over the last century or so he has made peace with himself and with God (whom he holds responsible for his condition), and has only taken bodies with the consent of their natural owners: people suffering from fatal wounds, critical diseases, or with incurable pain. Although he gets to live out the rest of their lives, he promises he will do so with respect, and bring honour to their memory. Since the very beginning of his unnatural lives, Zotikos has served as the Orphanotrophos, a minister in the emperor's cabinet responsible for the defrayment of imperial charity.

Zotikos is a masterful politician. More than many he has the capacity for the exercise of patience, sometimes planning his schemes over lifetimes. He builds relationships amongst the city's orphans, using them as sources of information and leverage. He cares deeply for people — not just those of his flock — and while he might use people, he never exploits them. All of his intrigues now are for the betterment of mankind and the preservation of lives, and this occasionally puts him at odds with the other ministers. His investments have made him very rich but the profits all this wealth is poured into the running of his office, maintaining a modest lifestyle for himself.

Zotikos currently inhabits the body of Michael Serron, and has done so for the last 40 years. He is aware that this body is wearing out, and is looking for a suitable replacement. "Serron" is in his eighth decade, but is remarkably spry for his age. He is a little shorter than average, and is stick-thin. His hair and beard are both snow-white. His court garb consists of a kaftan (kabbadion) of white silk with a black trim. His truncated cone-shaped hat is covered in red silk and has a small red tassel. He rarely wears his kaftan outside of the Imperial Court (which he rarely attends in any case), but is fond of his hat and wears it constantly.

Lore (Politics)

(Success): The Orphanotropheion is the only government ministry that appoints its own ministers. Upon the death of the Orphanotrophos, the Master of the Orphanage of Saint Paul announces the ministry's next choice, who is almost always someone from outside the ministry. This is supposed to protect the inheritance of the orphans.

Lore (Byzantine)

(Success): Zotikos instituted the Office of the Orphanotropheion under Justin II (r. 565—578)

(Success): At Zotikos' funeral, some foul necromancy brought his body back to shambling unlife

Zotikos has Skills based on POW, INT, and CHA from one body to the next, but acquires Skills involving DEX, STR, CON, or SIZ from his body. Zotikos has lived for over 900 years, and has likely accumulated a great deal of other Culture, Languages and Lore Skills than those listed here. Characteristics in parentheses indicate the scores prior to suffering from Ageing. Zotikos has no aptitude for magic, although has amassed a great knowledge of it, especially the necromantic arts, in a bid to understand his powers and their origin.

He has some skill in Spirit Combat (and has the Spectral Combat Skill), but cannot initiate Spirit Combat.

Zotikos	Attributes
STR: 7 (12)	Action Points: 2
CON: 11 (13)	Damage Modifier: +0
SIZ: 14	Magic Points: 21
DEX: 9 (11)	Movement: 6 metres
INT: 16	Strike Rank Bonus: +13
POW: 21	Armour: none
CHA: 15	Abilities (when corporeal): Life Sense, Discorporate (self only), Healing (self only) Abilities (when spiritual): Animate Flesh, Death Sense, Eternal, Puppeteer
	Magic: none

Skills: Athletics 36%, Bureaucracy 152%, Commerce 71%, Courtesy 105%, Customs 112%, Deceit 87%, Evade 38%, Endurance 64%, Influence 80%, Insight 77%, Language (Arabic) 45%, Language (English) 58%, Language (Greek) 95%, Language (Latin) 86%, Language (Turkish) 73%, Literacy 132%, Lore (Byzantine) 172%, Lore (Orthodox Church) 89%, Lore (magic) 102%, Lore (spirits) 107%, Oratory 86%, Perception 77%, Stealth 35%, Willpower 142%

Respect (Church) 70%

Loyal (to Emperor) 60%

Preserve (the Lives of Others) 110%

1d20	Location	AP/HP
1—3	Right Leg	0/5
4—6	Left Leg	0/5
7—9	Abdomen	0/6
10—12	Chest	0/7
13—15	Right Arm	0/4
16—18	Left Arm	0/4
19—20	Head	0/5

Combat Style: Self Defence (quarterstaff, club, knife, sling; Cautious Fighter) 16%, Spectral Combat 87%

Weapon	Size/Force	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Quarterstaff	M	L	1d8	4/8
Knife	S	S	1d4	5/4

VARDARIOTES

The Vardariotai are the city police force. Their primary remit is maintaining public order; they have little interest in crime prevention. They wear a distinctive red coat and breeches under their armour, and their headgear (when not wearing helmets) is a tall cylinder of yellow-dyed wool, folded in half and pinned down. They carry red-painted clubs and a manglabia — a 1 ½ metre whip of bullhide which has both the flexible and the entrapping weapon traits.

Vardariotes
Action Points: 2
Damage Modifier: None
Magic Points: 11
Movement: 6 metres
Initiative Bonus: +12 (−4 for armour) = +8
Armour: Medium Greek Armour (ENC 27/2)
Abilities: None
Magic: None
Skills: Athletics 47% , Brawn 44%, Commerce 54%, Conceal 32%, Craft 47%, Deceit 49%, Endurance 43%, Evade 62%, Customs 66%, Gambling 36%, Greek 62%, Influence 47%, Insight 49%, Locale 37%, Lore (Byzantine) 66%, Lore (Strategy and Tactics) 31%, Oratory 31%, Perception 37%, Streetwise 56%, Unarmed 31%, Willpower 52%
Respect Church 54%, Loyal to Praitor 54%, Covet Respect 54%

1d20	Location	AP/HP
1—3	Right Leg	6/5
4—6	Left Leg	6/5
7—9	Abdomen	6/6
10—12	Chest	6/7
13—15	Right Arm	6/4
16—18	Left Arm	6/4
19—20	Head	7/5

Combat Style: Self Defence (quarterstaff, club, knife, sling; Cautious Fighter) 60%.

Manglabliaros (manglabia, club, unarmed; Do or Die) 52%

Weapon	Size/Force	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
<i>Manglabia</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>1d4</i>	<i>8/6</i>
<i>(Entangle & Pin Weapon)</i>				
<i>Club</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>1d6</i>	<i>4/4</i>
<i>Knife</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>1d4</i>	<i>5/4</i>

In a fight a Vardariotes attacks with his club and parries or wards with the manglabia.

- ϕ Attacks with club usually employ the Flurry special effect (from the Do or Die Combat Style Trait) or Stun Location
- ϕ Attacks with manglabia (usually from the Flurry special effect) treat any parrying weapon as one size smaller (due to flexible trait). Uses the Entangle special effect if the Flurry is successful.
- ϕ Parries with manglabia treat any attacking weapon as one size smaller (due to the entrapping trait). Special effects include Pin Weapon (without needing to roll a Critical)

PHYLAX OR CITY WATCH

The Phylax are the city militia, organised on a district level from its citizens to prevent crimes and fires, and to bring wrongdoers to the city's justice.

Use the Statistics for the Vardariotes, with the following changes:

- ϕ Reduce armour to Padded (2 APs) for Chest, Abdomen and Legs and Half Plate, (5 APs) for the Head, no armour for arms.
- ϕ Initiative Bonus changes to +12 (−2 for Armour) = +10
- ϕ Change Passions to Respect Church 54%, Loyal to Community 64%, Resent Vardariotai 54%
- ϕ Change Manglabliaros Combat Style to Phylax (short spear, kite shield; Cautious Fighter) 52%

Weapon	Size/Force	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
<i>Shortspear</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>1d8+1</i>	<i>4/5</i>
<i>Knife</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>1d4</i>	<i>5/4</i>

CLUES

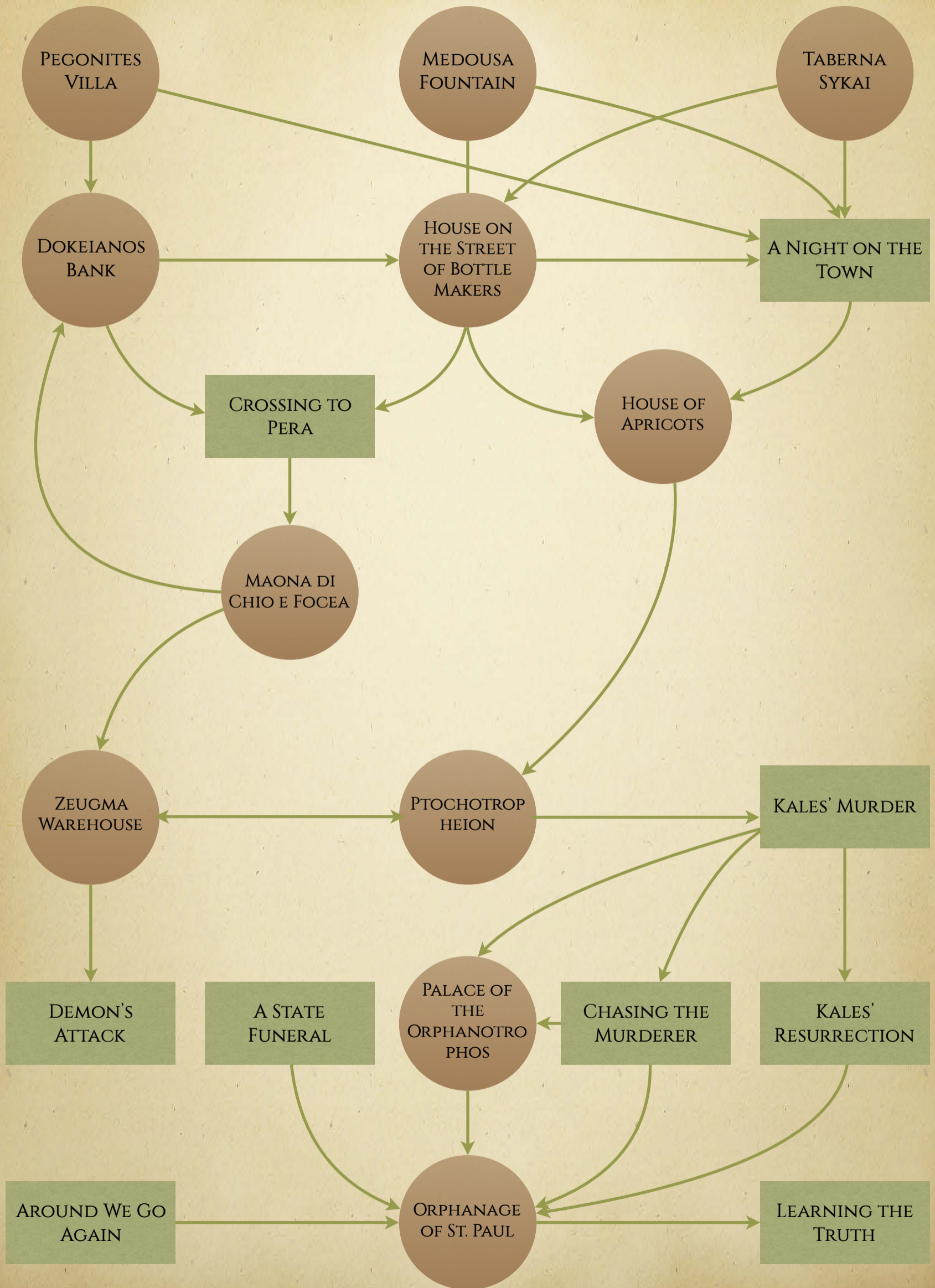
All the clues available throughout this scenario are summarised below. Each clue is presented with its location in the text.

Clues in parantheses do not point directly to a location or event.

<i>Clue Source</i>	Type	Clue	Points to...
Pegonites Villa	Place	Sophia Pegonitissa	Dokeianos Bank
		Andras	(Kales liked red-headed women)
Taberna Sykai	Place	Iannis Olybriou	House on the Street of Bottlemakers
		Iannis Olybriou	Gjorgya Gorgo at the Medousa Fountain
		Iannis Olybriou	(Kales needed money)
		Iannis Olybriou	A Night on the Town
Medousa Fountain	Place	Ring, if identified	Pegonites Villa
		Gjorgya Gorgo	House on the Street of Bottlemakers
		Conversation	(Kales needed money)
House on the Street of Bottlemakers	Place	Conversation	A Night on the Town
		Hidden pouch	Dokeianos Bank
		Alum	Maona di Chio e di Focea
		Tatula	Figlio Levorato at the Maona di Chio
Dokeianos Bank	Place	Nipha	(the PCs aren't the only ones looking for Kales)
		Mika	House on the Street of Bottlemakers
		Mika	Maona di Chio e di Focea
A Night on the Town	Event	Tomas Dokeianos	Zeugma Warehouse
		Unjustly gaoled	House on the Street of Bottlemakers
		Looking for brothels	House of Apricots
		Coincidence	Iannis Olybriou at the Taberna Sykai
House of Apricots	Place	Prostitutes	House on the Street of Bottlemakers
		Sveta	(Kales was in love with Sveta)
		Sveta	(Kales had a job in Pera)
		Sveta	Ptochotropheion
		Sveta beaten up by...	Gjorgya Gorgo at the Medousa Fountain

MYTHIC CONSTANTINOPLÉ: LIFE'S LONG CONSEQUENCES

<i>Clue Source</i>	Type	Clue	Points to...
Maona di Chio e di Focea	Place	Bartholomeo Giustiniani	Figlio Levorato at the Maona di Chio
		Figlio Levorato	(knows something he's not saying)
		Follow Levorato	Zeugma Warehouse
		Follow Levorato	Tomas Dokeianos at the Dokeianos Bank
Zeugma Warehouse	Place	Petrides	Ptochotropheion
		piece of mastic	(mastic is tainted)
		Lurking around	Demon Attack
Demon Attack	Event	Zakchuros	(how Kales was injured)
Ptochotropheion	Place	Visitor	Kales' Murder
		Brother Rafaelos	(red-haired prostitute)
		Kales, if cured	Tomas Dokeianos at the Zeugma Warehouse
		Kales, if cured	Figlio Levorato at the Maona di Chio
		Crushed rose	(reason why he was on the shore)
		Jar of mastic	(there was something more to his job)
Kales' Murder	Event	Follow attacker	Chasing the Murderer
		If attacker succeeds	Kales' Resurrection
Chasing the Murderer	Event	Might lead to...	Palace of the Orphanotrophos
Kales' Resurrection	Event	Follow Kales	Orphanage of Saint Paul
State Funeral	Event	Follow Kales	Orphanage of Saint Paul
Around We Go Again	Event	Request from Principal	Orphanage of Saint Paul
Orphanage of Saint Paul	Place	Zotikos	Learning the Truth



Mythic CONSTANTINOPLE

Kales Pegonites is the man that everyone wants. He's gone missing, and there are several people looking for him for different reasons. But finding him is only part of the deal: Kales has found himself mixed up in a mystery as old as The City itself.

Life's Long Consequences is intended to showcase some features of Mythic Constantinople, particularly the seedier side of life. It is suitable for characters who have newly arrived in the city as well as those who have been here longer. It is designed to have a little of everything: investigation, social interaction, skulking and sneaking, as well as combat, emphasising that surviving the City of Wonders requires more than just a strong arm and a sharp blade.

But the adventure can be adapted to any large city without too much trouble; the only requirement being a foreign enclave of merchants, placed on the other side of a river or on a nearby island. In fact, owning Mythic Constantinople is not essential to run this scenario, although it does provide context and background information that will bring this adventure alive. The scenario can easily be set, with a little adaptation, in Thennla, perhaps, or Mythic Rome. And of course, the Greek nature of the city makes this scenario ideal for intrigue in Meeros.

Welcome then, to a Byzantium that never quite was, and join the search of Kales Pegonites. Why do so many want him? What will they do when they find him? Indeed, is there anything left of him to be found... These answers, and more, await in the labyrinthine streets of the Queen of Cities...



TDM231

Mythras

THE DESIGN
MECHANISM

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