

Aretizo Village

This small fishing village, on the south-west coast of Spiros Isle, has a population of 429 souls. Its claim to fame is the annual haul of garum fish when they swarm near the lamexos Reefs each spring for spawning. These fish are ground into a meal-like texture, and transported in barrels to the Monastery of Holy Spiros to the east, where they are allowed to ferment, spices added and then made into a continent-wide famous delicacy much favoured by chefs Artemisia-wide.

Originally the village, like all else on Spiros Isle, was ruled by rather easy-going Dwarf-lords. But with their overthrow and genocide by the fanatical monks of Holy Spiros, who had been expelled from their native country of the Leonder Imperium, the village has suffered under the direct supervision of the priest, Rev Father Ercole Farinas, installed in the new Church of Holy Spiros. He is a dour unfriendly man, supposed to be celibate, though several maidens have stated to their parents that he is far from that! He is a stickler for any hint of dissent – which he calls heresy – and has recently sentenced the son of the former (now deceased) mayor, to death by the Wheel. In addition, his house has been burned to the ground as warning to all that dissent from Monastery rule is not tolerated. The original Mayor's House has been occupied by the commandant of the monastery armed forces in the Keep.

Death by the Wheel was adapted from a gruesome method of execution of the enemies of orcs in the homeland of the Monks of Holy Spiros. Here, the 'criminal' is spreadeagled onto the wheel which is revolved at speed by a team of horses, for at least an hour. If the criminal is not killed by the effects of centrifugal forces, he/she is then to rot and die slowly of thirst and exposure to the weather.

The victim/heretic/rebel was Georgios Kalimata. He had advocated 'setting aside' a certain amount of garum in the basement of the lighthouse to sell on the black market, thus raising funds to help the poor in the village and surrounding area. The taxation by the monastery has left most of the town destitute, but they still all (mostly – the grimy street residents are an exception) take pride in their gardens and houses. But the feeling of resentment is high, and only a spark may set off full blown rebellion. Already, one child, who threw rotten tomatoes at the priest, was whipped and put in the stocks for 3 days straight. He is still recovering at home. Luckily, none of the villagers caused him any damage, and some even gave him food and water under cover of darkness, to sustain the lad during his punishment.

The old Keep, where the dwarf-lord's seneschal had resided, has been converted into a repository of all goods and money taxed (looted) from the villagers – a full 35% of all goods is the going tax rate, enforce by a goon squad of 20 brothers of the monastery who reside either in the Keep or in houses made vacant by eviction of the previous owners.

In the 'haunted' Magatman Woods, resides a healer, whose remedies are efficacious, more so than the feeble spells of the Monks. Madam Rita is valued by the villagers and has been protected from the Monks several times in the past. They have left her alone after the last attempt to arrest her, because of the major unrest it causes, giving even the callous monks pause.