

# Book II



# Archaic Bretonnia

# Enchantment !

Enchanted Items to be found in the "Corrupt Kingdom of Bretonnia"

By Lord Bain

In centuries past, before a veil of decadence descended upon the Realm of Bretonnia, mighty heroes defended the provinces from Chaos, Orcish and Undead raiders. They rode upon towering war-horses, bred from Elven stock, and wielded all manner of enchanted weapons and magical items. But their glories have passed into legend and the tools with which they defended the land are lost, scattered across the now corrupt Kingdom of Bretonnia... The magical items given here are designed to be slotted into your Bretonnia-based campaigns or included in adventures of your own design. They can be found in the hands of opponent NPCs, in abandoned crypts or at the end of a lengthy quest. These items could even be the purpose of a quest, with the reward being their capture!



The storekeeper looked up as the small brass bell on the door chimed to announce the arrival of customers. A scarred adventurer in worn, trail-stained clothing entered the shop, followed by a stout dwarf and an aloof looking elf.

"Gentlemen," chirped the storekeeper, "how may I help you this fine day?"

"Just browsing my friend," replied the man, tallest of the adventurers.

"Very well, friend, you take your time."

After a few minutes, the human warrior stopped before a glass-fronted cabinet containing an ornate Short Sword. "What is this?" he demanded.

"That" announced the storekeeper, "is the very blade used by Gilles le Breton to slay the beast of L'Endour. It is said that it was gifted to him by an old and powerful magician shortly before he died, and its magics are so powerful that they actually flood into the arm of its wielder, giving him the strength of ten men in battle!"

"Your claims are far fetched" remarked the warrior, "I should like to feel such a weapon in my grasp."

"Mais bien sûr, Monsieur" retorted the clerk as he fumbled with a small brass key to unlock the cabinet. Once it was open, he removed the sword and passed it to the warrior. As he tightened his hand around the weapon's hilt, the grizzled adventurer felt its power flow through and into him. He smiled and passed it to the elf wizard who clasped it in both hands. He too felt the sword's potency and knew that this was a weapon of unearthly power. He nodded silently to the human and handed it back to him, who in turn handed it back to the storekeeper.

"And how much would this set us back?" asked the warrior coyly.

"Let me see, shall we say 500 Francs, or gold to that value?" suggested the store man.

"Very good," the warrior nodded to the dwarf who swung a heavy satchel from his back onto the floor. From the satchel the sturdy dwarf removed a small wooden and iron bound chest and opened it to reveal the glittering profits from the group's most recent expedition. As the glint of gold caught the storekeeper's eye a wry smile spread over his face.

Each enchanted item is numbered sequentially from 1 to 12, this is to allow GMs to randomly generate an item 'off-the-cuff' so to speak, should your campaign suddenly require one.



## 1) The Sword of Lyonesse

This sword of a devout and honourable Knight of olden times was found by Repanse de Lyonesse on the wall of an ancient chapel. The weapon has a great draining power over nearby magical items.

The Sword of Lyonesse repels the winds of magic like an opposing magnet and creates a magical 'dead zone' which extends two yards around it in all directions. Whilst within this area, other magical weapons, artefacts and armour temporarily lose their magical abilities. All other magic items in the area revert to standard items of their kind. This means that attacks made with the sword treat enemy Magical Armour as standard armour, and other magical weapons will function only as ordinary weapons of their type, etc. However, it is consequently useless for the owner to have other magical items about

his person: they will not work either. Wizards are still able to cast spells though, since they channel the winds of magic through their own body.

## 2) The Blade of Couronne

*When Duc Tancred de Quenelles pledged himself to seek out and slay Heinrich Kemmler, a dreaded Liche, the King gave him this enchanted blade. This ancient relic weapon was found in an old ruined shrine in Couronne uncovered during the rebuilding and decoration of the west tower of the Chateau de Couronne. It was doubtless forged to be wielded against the undead hordes of Settra who beset that part of the kingdom centuries ago. Where it now lies is anyone's guess...*

The bearer of The Blade of Couronne gets a +20 WS bonus when in combat with undead creatures as the sword's own will guides it to strike the foul creature with unerring accuracy...

## 3) Chalice of Malfleur

*Created by an elderly Mage, the Chalice helped him bolster his spell casting abilities, but if he used it too often the excess winds of magic could burn his mind in a magical overload!*

A sip from the Chalice of Malfleur grants 2D6 bonus magic points, but if a double is rolled, the drinker suffers D6 wounds as well.

## 4) Moon Pendant

*A golden half-moon hung upon a braided necklace. On nights when the moon can be seen in the sky the wearer may dissolve into nothing more than a shadow, making them virtually untraceable...*

On clear nights when the moon is visible, the wearer may become 'invisible' at will.

## 5) The Beast Mace of Bastonne

*The huge Mace of Bohemond 'Beastlayer' de Bastonne is an awesome weapon, as weighty with magic as it is with iron. Its shaft is carved from the thigh bone of a monster slain by Bohemond and its bulbous head was wrought from meteoric iron by Dwarf Runesmiths.*

The Beast Mace confers upon its user a +2 strength bonus in combat, whilst each wound caused translates in actuality to D2 wounds.

## 6) The Virtuous Lance

*When Jasperre le Beau set out on his grail quest, he took the Virtuous Lance from a chapel in Sancerre, fancying that its long steel shaft and keen tip would make it an ideal weapon to employ against his enemies. He was well guided in his choice, for the weapon never failed him and the last thing many beasts felt was its sharp point piercing their scales.*

The Virtuous Lance bestows upon its user a magical bonus when he charges into combat against monstrous creatures such as Griffins or Hippogriffs on horseback with the lance levelled. After the combat round has been worked out, each wound inflicted will in fact cause D3 wounds. If a total of more than 8 wounds are caused then roll for a Critical Injury, as the monster is impaled by the Lance.

## 7) D10 Black Arrows

*Tipped with a dragon's tooth and with black feather flights from a Carrion Crow, quivers of Black Arrows are highly sought by archers of all skills for it is known that dragon's teeth can fell even the mightiest foe!*

If a Black Arrow hits and causes injury to a character, it causes D6 additional wounds over and above those rolled.

## 8) Bohemond's Shield

*When Bohemond 'Beastlayer' de Bastonne reached the end of his self appointed quest he washed the blood from his shield. The waters of the sacred springs cleansed the shield and imbued it with magical power.*

As well as acting as a normal but ornate shield, Bohemond's Shield casts a protective spell on its bearer which means that damage from non-Magical weapons will have only a 75% chance of causing wounds to him in combat.



## 9) The Grail Shield

*This ancient heirloom was presented to the Duc de Quenelles because of its rumoured powers against the undead and the Duc's renowned prowess in the struggle against the hordes of undeath.*

The icon of the Grail emblazoned on the shield shines with such a brilliant white light that it blinds all undead creatures within 3 yards and within a 90 degree arc to the fore of the shield. Undead creatures blinded in this way suffer a -30 modifier to both WS and BS.

## 10) Helm of the Dragon Slayer

*The lost helm of Jasperre le Beau is blackened with the fire of his many encounters, but even so it carries the blessings of the Gods of the Old Faith and will protect its bearer as long as he has no blood upon his hands.*

The Helm of the Dragon Slayer will protect its wearer from the affects of a dragon's fire breath, or any other type of dragon breath. What cannot be divined by the PCs, however, is that the Helm of the Dragon Slayer will



not protect anyone who has ever knowingly killed another human being, by combat, archery or otherwise.

### 11) Claw of Malgrimace

*After rescuing the daughter of a rich noble from the clutches of the ferocious dragon Malgrimace, a dragonslayer of old took to wearing the vanquished beast's claw about his neck.*

The claw has the power to protect its wearer against beasts lesser than Malgrimace – for he was the greatest dragon of his time, and his power lives on after his death. If the Claw of Malgrimace is worn on the outside of the bearer's clothing where it can be seen, they will cause *terror* in all monstrous creatures. Note that this is a magical and not psychological effect and creatures must test against it even if they are normally immune to *terror*.

### 12) Blessed Draught

*This flask of water was drawn from a secret and holy spring, which has long since vanished. The ornate flask contains Holy Water of extreme potency and a splash can be enough to banish the undead, or to revive those who are near to death.*

The "Blessed Draught" contains enough measures of Holy Water to be used 1d6 + 2 times. Each measure can be tossed at an undead creature to cause D6 wounds instantly. Alternatively, a measure can be drunk to heal D4 wounds. Two measures can also be poured into the lips of a character reduced to zero wounds to return him to having one wound remaining.



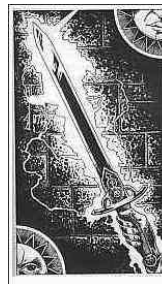
A few words from the author :

Anyone with the WFB 5th Edition Bretonnian 'Army Book' might notice that some of these magic items look a wee bit familiar. Well, err, ok, I confess: some of the names and descriptions of these items have been lifted from that very tome. It's just that reading the WFB 3rd Edition book, it mentioned that before it became corrupt, Bretonnia was not totally unlike the shiny version portrayed currently by GW. So I thought why not assume that the weapons and items used by the characters of today in WFB, were in fact used by heroes of yesteryear in WFRP? In fact, many of the Special Characters in the Bretonnian Army Book are supposed to be dead anyway! This particular slant on Bretonnian history explains how all of these great artefacts came to be lost and scattered, and provides a perfect excuse for your PCs to find them on their quests. Any way, I hope that you find these useful!



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"Genuine Short Sword used by Gilles le Breton to slay the beast of L'Endour"

*Encrusted with gems and imbued with the raw power of Gilles le Breton himself, this Short Sword is an ancient relic of great value...*



Engraved with the "Cutting and Smashing Rune", this is a cheaply made fake. The gems are glass replicas and the sword has been artificially aged to make it look ancient. It is still a magic sword though, created by an old Bretonnian wizard by the name of Jean le Fraude as part of a batch of ten for a friend of his that ran a weaponsmith's shop. The rune of Cutting and Smashing gives +1 strength, but unknowingly the character suffers from a -10 modifier to WS in combat, as the weapon is poorly made and ill balanced.

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# The Massif Orcal

An archaic region of Bretonnia where knights and greenskins still rule supreme

By Tom E. Green



The great mountain range that dominates central Bretonnia is known as the Massif Orcal. In the west, bare cliffs tower above the highlands of the Forest of Chalons. The interior of the territory is very rugged, with huge granite boulders, numerous springs and narrow but fast flowing rivers. The mountains have been occupied by Orcs and Goblins since even before the Elves came to the shores of Bretonnia; as a result the region is riddled with caves filled with all manner of unpleasantness. There are few marked trails and no roads running through the Massif Orcal, but one well worn track runs through the region from east to west.

During the war between Elves and Dwarves, a clan of Dwarves coming through Axe-Bite Pass from the east, built a great fortress within the Massif Orcal, the ruins of which have often been re-fortified by Orcs.

When Orc raids become frequent enough to come to the attention of the surrounding rulers, the might of Bretonnia is gathered en masse and the army advances into the hills to cast down the Orc strongholds and destroy every greenskin that can be found. Somehow the brave knights and determined troops are never able to completely eradicate the Orc and Goblin tribes and the process is repeated a year or two later.

Greenskins are not the only menace to emerge from the Massif Orcal. Skaven have long had a presence in the north-eastern part of the region. In the valley between Mont Cantal and Mont Tarn the earth is scarred by a great crevasse. Wider than any river in Bretonnia and so deep that the bottom cannot be seen from above, the gorge is known as the Black Chasm, for it lies in the constant shadow of the mountains to either side except for the midday hour in high summer, when the sunlight penetrates the darkness for a short while. It is in the depths of this chasm that the Skaven emerge from their under-empire to raid nearby villages for slaves, and to spread plague among the cities and towns of southern Bretonnia. On more than one occasion a great army of the Ratmen has emerged from the Black Chasm and marched into the rich valley of Bastonne intent on conquest. Each time the armies of Bretonnia have routed the hordes and slaughtered countless Skaven. Still the great gorge is inaccessible to mounted knights, and expeditions on foot have nearly always proven disastrous. To help contend with this problem the King of Bretonnia helped fund the building of a great keep on the slopes of Mont Cantal.

From the towers of this mighty fortress the knights of Bastonne keep constant vigil, watching the Black Chasm for any signs of the dreaded Ratmen emerging into the open countryside at the northern end of the gorge. They are kept

busy with small skirmishes and occasional larger battles, when the Skaven gather with numbers and boldness sufficient to assault human settlements.

Among the other denizens to be found in the Massif Orcal are Ogres, Stone Trolls and even the occasional Giant. The dominant Orc tribe in the eastern reaches is known as the Triste Soleil Tribe. On the western side, within the highlands of Chalons is the Goblin and Orc horde of the Araignée Clan Savages. Human settlements are rare within the Massif Orcal, and primarily consist of lordless peasants who lack proper hygiene and suffer from constant hunger, disease and are prone to superstition. The few knights in the region are little more than armed bullies who misuse the peasantry rather than protecting them from the monsters common to the area.



The region is fairly rich in metal ores and the few humans to be found are gathered into mining camps and villages supported by that activity. Also found mining the ore of the Massif Orcal is the enclave of dwarves called Grung Gand. The Dwarves are few in number and keep mostly to themselves. They are descendants of Dwarves who came to Bretonnia in ages long past and have little connection with Dwarves of the Worlds Edge Mountains. Nevertheless, they share many of the traits common to their kind; long memories and deeply-held grudges; reverence for all things old; and a love of gold. They are a hardy clan who are admired for their fighting prowess even without great numbers; a good ally but a bitter enemy.

The river Morceaux circles the southern foothills of the Massif Orcal and is fed by the numerous streams and small rivers that have their source within the heart of the region. Along the Morceaux can be found the Bretonnian settlements of Chimay, in the southern foothills, and Montluc on the eastern fringes of the region. The only castle of lasting significance is that of the barony of Giselles, just south of the Morceaux, midway between Montluc and Chimay. The Baron of Giselles has a reputation for diligence in fighting off the advances of Orc and Goblin raids on his holdings, and as a result is held in high regard by the neighbouring nobility. The Baron is also known for his enduring faith in chivalry and his worship of the Lady of the Lake. This is also true of the Duc of Bastonne.

North of the Massif Orcal are the lands of Bastonne. The Duke and his Barons support and protect the venerable Chapels that dot the surrounding hills and plains. It is to these chapels that unwed maids still go to serve the Lady of the Lake. Their duties include daily prayers and lighting of candles, but more importance to the Duc are their visits to the numerous watchtowers and small keeps to bring food to the knights and men-at-arms who stand guard against marauders from within the Massif Orcal.

# History of Bretonnia from -1000 to 977

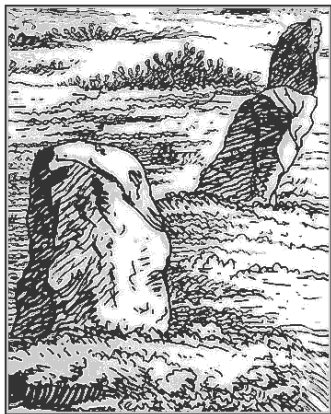
By Ryan Wileman

## -1000 - -800 I.C.

This period saw the lands that came to be known as Bretonnia inhabited by humans for the first time. Bands of hunter-gatherers gradually migrated over the Grey Mountains from the lands now known as the Empire. These kinbands were very primitive, and there was no uniformity of 'culture' as such. Clothing consisted of crude furs and weapons were stone and wood - essential in the constant fight for survival against the nomadic tribes of orcs and goblins that had already settled in the lands. The insular Wood Elves watched the encroaching humans with curiosity and some concern - whilst they were easily chased from the forest at present, they realised that the expansion and development of these men would bring fresh threats to them in time.

Collectively the people who moved into the land are now called the Bretonni, although the name was not yet used by the folk themselves. Their religion was too primitive to be compared directly with those of today, although worship of the Earth Mother is evident from some cave paintings that remain. As such the Bretonni followed an early incarnation of the Old Faith, trusting to nature and animistic spirits for survival and well-being. Wise men and women were early 'druids' - rare figures of mystery and power.

In addition to the migration from the east, there was limited migration north from the peninsula to the south. These people may have been forced north by the depredations of the skaven - the ratmen were beginning to encroach on the lands now known as Estalia, scouring the land for warpstone with little success.



Today, almost nothing is known of the earliest settlers of Bretonnia. The Dwarfs of the Grey Mountains have some records deep in their holds as do the Wood Elves of the Loren Forest, but neither has seen fit to tell the men of the land of their ancestors. Some druidic legends may refer to the people of this time, but these tales are veiled in allegory and symbolism. Examples of rock art has been found, most notably in the caves of the Pale Sisters and the Massif Orcal, and some standing stones may originate from this period. Most interesting is the recent find in a desolate part of Artenois - six stones stand around a deep lake in a grove of the forest. At the north edge of the lake is a cromlech, and painted on the interior walls is what seems to be a representation of a woman with broad hips. She is clutching two small humanoid figures, while dead bison, aurochs and fish lie at her feet.

## -800 - 0 I.C.

This period saw the first true tribes begin to emerge in Bretonnia, with nomadic hunter-gatherers settling and establishing agriculture on a small scale. Kin-bands fused together around fertile areas such as the river valleys of the Grismarie, Sannez and Morceaux, and along the coastlines, and with settlement came stable hierarchies and craft specialisation. External threats from orcs and goblins encouraged banding together yet further, but with larger groups of people defence became easier, and the population grew accordingly. With agriculture came domestication of animals - horses (possibly stolen from the Wood Elves), pigs and cattle were raised for food and labour. Metalworking began, possibly with the dwarf influence.

Dependence on the land for subsistence led to the further reliance on the Old Faith, and it is at this point the true druids became more important amongst the Bretonni. Although some worship of Taal, Rhya and Ulric was apparent in the north, the role of the druids became dominant. They formed an important class within society - not just as religious leaders, but also as judges and teachers. Although affiliated with the tribes of the land, they were bound by no chieftain and they came and went as they pleased, establishing an aura of power and mystery around themselves.

The expansion and settlement of the tribes did not go unnoticed by the Wood Elves of Loren, who began to perceive the potential threat of human civilisation to their kingdom. They made tentative contact with the Bretonni through the druids, frightening them to stay clear of the forest, and to leave the trees alone. The druids did not comprehend fully the nature of the Wood Elves, but through surreptitious insinuation the elves succeeded in imparting to the druids the means to increase their own power.

Towards the later centuries of this period the druid's power was at its height. Through the influence of the Wood Elves they realised that if the tribes were to advance and grow in numbers they would no longer fear and revere nature, but would begin to conquer it. The druids acted to suppress advancement and alliance between tribes, using the awe in which they were held to maintain the status quo.

A distinct culture within the Bretonni began to emerge during this period, and existing artefacts show a distinctive style which has some parallels with that of present day Albion. Metal was worked with swirling elegant designs, and heavily stylised animals are apparent. Warfare was conducted from horseback and on foot, with some use of primitive wooden chariots. The men would paint themselves with dyes such as woad, in imitation of the fearsome Wood Elf warriors that were occasionally glimpsed by terrified Bretonni.

A famous relic of this period is kept in the royal palace in Oisillon - the incorrectly-termed 'Helm of Le Breton'. This horned helmet predates Gilles Le Breton by at least 1200 years. It is a beautiful artefact, worked in gold and bronze with the characteristic swirling patterns of the Bretonni tribes of the period.

Another famous artefact from this period is the 'Marguilles Cauldron'. This impressive iron pot was

found in a lake near to the town that bears it's name - cauldrons are known to have had symbolic significance to the Bretonni. The front of the cauldron bears the image of a woman's face - even the stylised representation conveys beautiful and fearsome aspects of her character. Scholars have identified her with the Lady, whose worship is generally taken to have spread throughout the Bretonni during this period. The celebrated and patriotic Imperial scholar Galirus of Nuln stated that the Lady was the 'anthropomorphic representation of a primitive water spirit, akin to those feared by superstitious Kislevites'.



### Legendary figures

Theroux - several songs recount the adventures of this doomed hero, who fought against many legendary monsters in the Grey Mountains. He met his death at the hands of his fellow tribesmen, who did not recognise upon his return to his home 10 years since departing.

Merhuil - a mysterious druid who is said to have helped and terrified the mightiest warriors in equal measure. Myths tell that he had great power, and knew of things before they occurred.

Gringda - a witch who lived alone in the forests around what is now Guisoreux. The stories tell that she had dealings with daemons and was the sister of Merhuil.

### 0 - 400 I.C.

The beginning of Sigmar's Empire heralded a period of disruption and struggle for the people of the land. Sigmar's wars with the goblinoids forced many of the routed out of the lands of the Empire, many of which found their way across the Grey Mountains. This triggered many battles and raids on the farms of the Bretonni, casting into disarray the settled lifestyle which many now enjoyed.

In 94 I.C., Imperial records state that the Emperor of the day sent a representative to the people of Bretonnia to open trade links and forge an alliance against the goblinoids. However, this was clearly doomed to failure - the Bretonni did not speak with one voice, and the petty kings that came into contact with the Imperial party would not have trusted the strangers.

During the same century humans discovered and traversed the Nuvolone Pass, the route through the Vaults from Tilea. This may not have been the first time that humans travelled through the mountains, but it heralded

the opening of relations with the southern Old World. The lands of Tilea and Estalia had for centuries been more advanced than those in the north, and many settlers brought cultural and societal influence with them. For at least five centuries, they migrated into southern Bretonnia - some were fleeing the depredations of Arabian pirates, undead raiders and the skaven whilst others moved into the fertile valleys for economic reasons. Trade relations were established with the Bretonni tribes, which led to the founding of Brionne and Quenelles on the ancient elven ruins that form their foundations.

Despite the increasing conflicts with the goblinoids, as well as the establishment of trading colonies on the south, this period saw some of the small settlements grow into towns, including Guisoreux and Couronne. As predicted by the Wood Elves, the influence of the Old Faith waned, and the people began to adopt the newer gods as they held more relevance to their existence. The influence from the southern Old World brought new gods, in the form of Morr, Verena, Shallya, Myrmidia and Ranald. The escalation of warfare favoured renewed worship of the gods of war, with Ulric's influence in the north and Myrmidia in the south. Particularly noteworthy is the influence of Shallya - at some point during the 2nd century, a miracle occurred in Couronne. The healing waters were discovered, and the people of the town began to make offerings to the goddess. The news spread during the subsequent years to the south, and pilgrims began to flock to the temple which was established there.

Around the year 100, there are records of raids on the north coast by fleets of ghostly ships. Bleached skeletons stalked the lands commanded by sinister figures swathed in bandages. The events are recalled in the legend of Vitran, in which the eponymous hero sees his entire village slaughtered or taken prisoner by the undead. After many adventures, he boards one of the shadowy vessels and attacks the commander of the fleet, the Tomb Lord Settra, with a magical spear. He wounds Settra and makes good his escape with his family. The legend ends tragically, as his wife and children are borne away by the waves in the attempt to reach the shore.

The declining influence of the druids was not entirely a consequence of man's increasing confidence in the face of nature. The leaders of the Bretonni resented the power of the druids, and their power in society was slowly decreased. The kings and chieftains relied increasingly on their retinue for advice - a band of trusted warriors and advisors who formed a powerful protection against pretenders to his position.

Most significantly in this period, worship of the Lady of the Lake reached its height. She became an important part of the pantheon of the pre-unification Bretonni, representing the homelands and taking elements of other deities, especially those with declining influence such as Rhya. The Lady became a common rallying point around which the Bretonni could gather against the orcs and goblins that lived in the forests and mountains.

Culturally, this was a rich period of history for the future Bretonnia. Many songs and tales have passed down through the ages, telling of the bravery of the people in their conflicts with the orcs. In the surviving stories, the heroes are typically leaders and warriors first



and foremost. They are frequently pious worshippers of the gods, especially the Lady.



The Bretonni became more outward-looking, as contact with the Empire and the southern states increased. This was not always friendly - the Wasteland saw numerous skirmishes between the fledgling Empire and the peoples of northern Bretonnia. However, trade between the Empire and the Bretonni flourished - hampered only by the lack of unity amongst the latter.

### Famous figures

This period was one in which the Bretonni had many figures of immense significance, revered for their deeds and admirable traits. Many of these and others from subsequent pre-Le Breton centuries were later adopted by the various cults within unified Bretonnia as saints, particularly as the religious hierarchies realised the importance of these sacred human agents to the people of Bretonnia. History books and epics were scrutinised for relevant figures who could be deemed as acting for the gods, and consequently allow each religion to maintain and often enlarge their sphere of influence. Some of these figures were probably acting under the divine will of one of the gods, and others may not have been - the motives for subsequent canonisation vary from pious admiration to cynical politicking.



Sonnus - king and war leader of the Bretonni tribes of the west coast. He is remembered for his bravery in repelling the depredations of Settra.

Franais - an early named priestess of Taal, favoured and respected by the people until she denounced the Lady. She is said to have disappeared the same night that she made her famous 'Prophecy of Franais' - now immortalised in the songs of minstrels.

Vitran - see above.

### 400 - 977 I.C

The centuries preceding the unification of Bretonnia, saw the establishment of more rigid social classes and the feudal system that survives to this day. The disparate tribal groups were now geographically allied leagues, which roughly correspond to the regions that exist to this day. The leader of each league resided in the largest towns of the region, which had now become major centres of trade and government with formidable stone fortifications. During the 6th century the major cities of Bretonnia

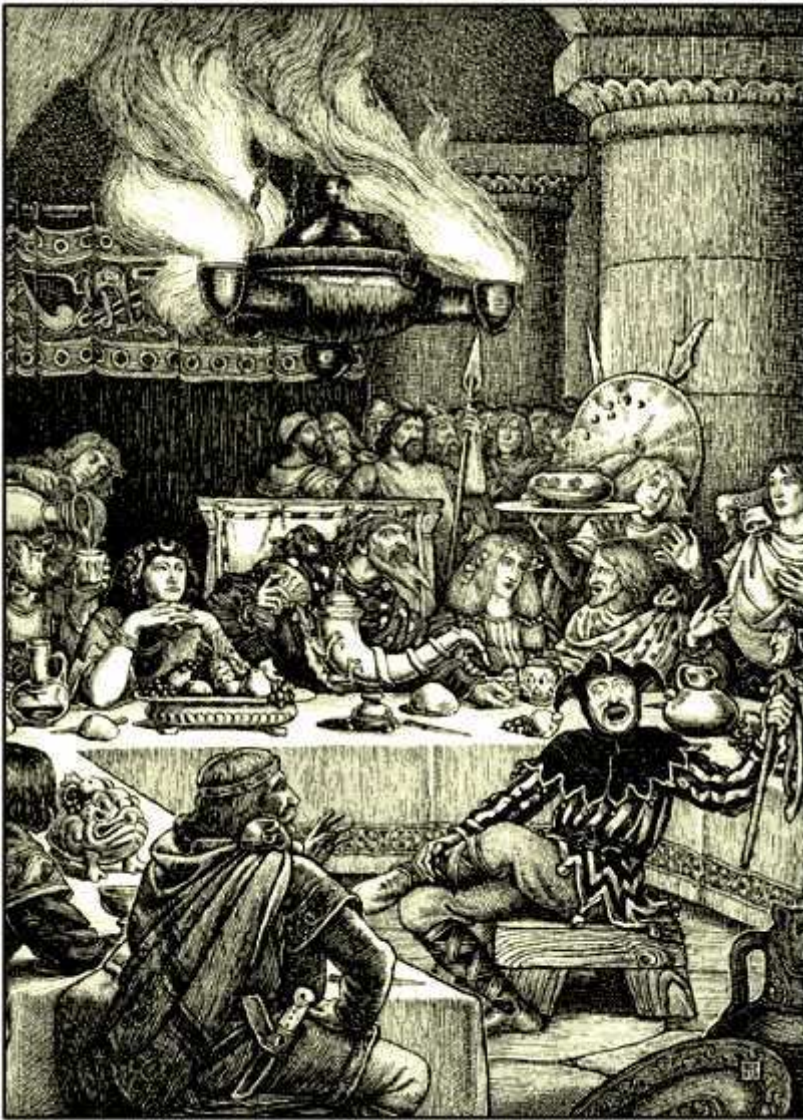


became truly established by formal declaration of the ruling parties. The various regions became kleptocracies - 'kings' extracted additional tribute from the rural peasantry to maintain permanent class of warriors and nobility, that had evolved from the tribal retinues of the past. The former have latterly been termed 'knights', and there is some evidence to suggest that the warriors adopted a code of honour, which by the time of Gilles Le Breton had become the code of chivalry. This code was centred around the Lady - who may have been adopted by the 'knights' as a patron at this time. She was assigned new traits of virtue and chastity - characteristics that suited the purposes of the new warrior class.

Artisans and crafts developed considerably, and a merchant class became well-established. This in turn opened up more trade with the Empire, and some cultural influence can be seen in the armour and weaponry surviving from the period. Contact with the lands of Tilea and Estalia became more fraught, as the knights and retinues of kings began to resist the uneven flow of revenue from the south into the city states of the southern Old World.

Orcs were still a major problem for the Bretonni. Even the fortified towns were frequently besieged by hordes of goblinoids. In 577, a large host swept from the Massif Orcal and besieged a number of towns and laid waste many villages. The warlords of the orcs demanded tribute from the Bretonni, but to no avail. The Bretonni did not give in however, and the goblinoid hordes fell to infighting and eventual dissolution as is usually the case. This episode is fondly remembered by the Bretonnians as an example of the resolve and bravery of their ancestors.





From 632, the Norse begin to raid the northern coasts of the land, destroying the small ports and settling along the shores. Although they were feared and despised by the Bretonni, they gradually became integrated into Bretonnian society. They brought their interpretations of religion with them, and the noble families of Armorique and L'Anguille have some Norscan ancestry.

Although modern Bretonnians are largely ignorant of the fact, there was an attempt to unite the people of the land over 300 years prior to the coming of Gilles Le Breton. Delovic was the king of the Bretonnian tribes in Parravon, and records show that he called a conclave of the other kings in 650. He told them that the Bretonni needed to learn from the men of the Empire to the east, and join together for the benefit of all. It is not known how the other kings reacted - Delovic was assassinated by one of his own 'knights' shortly afterwards. Bretonnian historians now say that this was because he was attempting to unify the tribes with the aid of orcish forces, which he commanded through half-orc allies.

The town of Couronne grew considerably during this period, through trade with other nations and the influx of pilgrims to temple of Shallya. Soon it was the largest settlement in the land, and the head of the cult became a figure of considerable importance in the region. In

contrast, the worship of the Old Faith dwindled along with deforestation and the establishment of feudalism. It is now worshipped only amongst the simpler rural folk, while the more modern gods take precedence.

The Wood Elves occasionally communicated with the fledgling kingdoms of the Bretonni, but maintained their isolation and mystery. However, the rise in power and influence of the 'knights' disturbed the delicate balance of unspoken agreement between the two parties, and from 770-820 I.C. there were numerous skirmishes on the borders of the Loren Forest, as the local Bretonni warlords attempted to expand their lands. Inevitably these were unsuccessful, but relations were soured with the Wood Elves as the latter decided that the humans were still too immature race to be treated as equals.

Conflict also began to occur more frequently amongst the regions. The first half of the 10th century saw many clashes between L'Anguille and Moussillon, as well as between Parravon and Guisoreux. Although allegiances swapped and changed frequently, no king was able to make much of a dent in the territories of the others, and the constant threat of orc attack kept the various groups occupied on other things.

At some point in the 10th century I.C. Gilles Le Breton emerges, as celebrated in 'Le chanson de Gilles'. He was a knight in the retinue of a powerful king - the 'King' of Gisoreux. Gilles excelled at

commanding armies against the orcs.

## Historical figures

'King' Ysengrain - the leader that was foremost in his stalwart resistance of Orcish demands for tribute. 'Ysengrain's Proclamation' is still part of the pronouncement by the King of Bretonnia in an annual ceremony to commemorate the final 'defeat' of the goblinoids by Gilles Le Breton.

Delovic - see above

D'Arginan - a ship's captain known for his pioneering use of ancient naval techniques from the southern Old World to combat Norse attacks.

'King' Guilombe - the 'joyous' king. A figure of fun and humour in many Bretonnian stories, Guilombe was a notorious drunk and foolish leader. He is a popular character in some Bretonnian plays and children's entertainment. Although foolish, his ridiculous flights of reason occasionally have some perverted logic to them.

## Rough Justice?

Mob Law in Archaic Bretonnia  
By Lord Bain



In most civilised areas of Bretonnia - if any area of that corrupt nation can be called 'civilised' - the barbaric practice of 'Man-Caging' died out centuries ago. In the most backward regions however, it still goes on, unchecked and unchallenged...

*It had been half-score sunrises since the last group of travellers had passed by and given Pierre a sip from their cow-hide canteens. Now a flock of ravens was circling overhead and Pierre knew that he would not last much longer. If he could just hold out for another week his sentence would be complete and he would be free. Oh, why did he do it? He should've known better than to take that loaf of bread, but he had been so hungry... He realised now that back then he didn't know what true hunger was. Pierre knew now alright, locked night and day in a road-side cage so small he could neither stand nor sit comfortably and was forced into a perpetual crouching position. He hadn't tasted food for nearly a week, and he was so weak now that he felt even if someone were to come he might not be able to muster the strength to beg for scraps of rancid meat.*

*But then, in the distance he saw a cloud of brown dust being thrown into the air farther along the narrow dirt road. As it got closer Pierre saw that it was a group of four travellers riding horses and cantering along in the mid-afternoon heat. As they came within earshot he hauled himself up to as near a standing position as he could manage and began to shout.*

*"Good Sirs! Good Sirs! I beg of you! Spare a splash of water for a wretch like me! Good Sirs! I beg of you!"*

*As the horsemen approached they slowed to a trot and passed him at a walking pace.*

*"Sirs...? Please..."*

*"Please... Water..."*

*The leading horseman removed a canteen from his saddlebag and plucked out the cork with an audible 'pop'. Slowly he raised the neck of the bottle to his lips and took a long hard swig.*

*"Please...?"*

*The horseman took another mouthful but this time held the cool fluid in his mouth and sloshed it around between his teeth. Turning in his saddle to look down on the filthy creature locked into the cage hanging from a road-side tree, he spat out the liquid in a fountain of yellow water mixed with saliva and mucus. The rancid plume hit Pierre full in the face, soaking his once passable shirt, and the riders laughed heartily as they spurred their steeds and galloped off into the distance.*

*The prisoner felt himself moved to tears, but his eyes were too dry and no tears came as he began to suck the vile liquid from his clothing. He knew he was done for...*

### The archaic practice of 'Man-Caging'

In the back-water villages of Bretonnia, the rounds of visiting magistrates are few and far between, and very few settlements can afford to employ one of their own. Out in these barren regions justice invariably means rough justice at the hands of the locals who look after their own interests and those of their friends whenever any small-minded accusations of barbarism and cruelty are made. The construction of a purpose-built gaol is an expensive affair and guards or gaolers don't come cheap either. The use of the practice known as 'Man-Caging' is believed to have started in the village of Sauleville near to the Wood Elven realm of Athel-Loren. Petty theft was rife in Sauleville and internment in the village stocks was starting to lose its value as a deterrent. The wealthiest farmer in the village was expected to keep order and so he went to visit the old priest of Verena who lived on the hill and asked him for advice. The old priest looked around her cottage and his eyes fixed upon a bird cage which hung in the corner of the room, he had an idea...

'Man-Cages' are often found hung from posts at busy road junctions near a settlement. They take the form of large iron cages constructed from bands of metal and hung from tree branches where available or from wooden stakes driven far into ground at a slight angle. They are generally about a foot and a half wide by four feet high, which means that the unfortunate inside is unable to sit or stand but has to slump against one side. The heavy cage doors are sealed shut with padlocks or clasps and miscreants are trapped inside until the local villagers decide to let them out. 'Man-Caging' is used as a punishment for everything from theft to adultery and the length of punishment can vary greatly from crime to crime, region to region, or on the collective mood of the armed mob on any given day. The figures given in the table below are an indicator only and can often be much more severe (though when dealing with angry Bretonnian peasantry they will very rarely be less!). It is not unknown for prisoners to be left 'Man-Caged' « until



such time as another crime is committed which is considered more befitting of judicial assessment ». Those who are dealt this sentence very rarely have the opportunity to leave the man-cage, let alone re-offend.

Crime	And Punishment
Minor Public Blasphemy	6 days in a 'Man-Cage'
Pub Brawling	2 weeks in a 'Man-Cage'
Theft of a Bread Roll	5 weeks in a 'Man-Cage'
Theft of a Goat	7 weeks in a 'Man-Cage'
Arson of a Public Building	9 weeks in a 'Man-Cage'
Murder	Indefinite 'Man-Caging'

'Man-Caged' prisoners rely on the charity of travellers and passers-by for food and water. Often this is given not so much out of good-will, but as a sadistic act by locals who would rather see the criminal suffer in a state of near-death than die prematurely. If the accused has family in the area then they will no doubt bring him supplies, but many are fearful to do so in case the other villagers feel they are being too soft on the errant relation. Several clerics of Shallya tour the areas giving humane support to the prisoners in the form of food, water and blessings, but even they know better than to preach too fervently against the practice, whatever their own opinions on the cruelty of the punishment might be. The survival of captives rests on their sentence being completed before dehydration and starvation take their inevitable toll. This is not always a guarantee, as villagers occasionally 'forget' when it's time to let someone out!

The backwoods regions of Bretonnia are some of the few remaining areas of the Old World where Jean 'la justice' Jonson, little-known Saint of Verena is openly venerated, generally in his local aspect as the 'Patron Saint of Man-Caging'. Not a lot is known about this mysterious character from Bretonnia's past, but it is believed in some areas that Jean 'la justice' Jonson was Sauleville's resident Priest of Verena and the original brain behind 'Man-Caging'. Runes and symbols of Verena are often inscribed onto the 'Man-Cage' and it is not unknown for a priest of Verena to make tours of towns and villages blessing all the 'Man-Cages' *en route* and calling upon their god to make them secure.

### Coming across a 'Man-Cage'

The PCs might come across a 'Man-Cage' at any road junction close to a town or village and more than four or five days ride from one of the great walled towns.

*As you approach a cross-roads ahead, you see a strange construction hanging from a tree and swinging slowly in the breeze. The large and gnarled oak stretches up into the sky but a sturdy looking branch extends out at a ninety degree angle towards the dirt track. From the branch a thick chain descends from a clamp to a large cylindrical cage of rusty iron bands. Locked within, a bundle of filthy rags peers out at you imploringly...*

About 90% of all villages in archaic areas of Bretonnia have at least one 'Man-Cage' and larger settlements can have multiple cages (D3+1) hung in a group. There is a base 60% chance that any cage is

occupied. You may modify this figure up or down depending on the region or simply rule that it is or isn't occupied as the adventure requires. If you want a truly random 'Man-Cage', you can generate the occupant by rolling on the chart below :

D100 Roll	Occupant
1 – 10	Skeletal remains
11-16	Maggot-ridden corpse
17 – 19	Elf
20 – 22	Dwarf
23 – 25	Halfling
26 – 100	Human

If the poor wretch in the cage is still alive, he will beg for food, water or to be released. If the PCs know anything about local customs, they will know better than to help anyone sentenced to 'Man-Caging' to escape, unless they have a very good reason...

### Breaking open a 'Man-Cage'

Should the PCs want to free someone from a 'Man-Cage', you can use the figures below to calculate how difficult it will be :

Toughness	D3 +3
Damage	D8 +4
Lock Rating	(D4 +1) x 10%

After a length of time in a 'Man-Cage', a person will be reduced to a grovelling wreck, weak from malnutrition and dehydration and often broken in spirit. If you need a profile for a freed prisoner, you can use the one below as a basis :

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
2	10	10	1	1	2	15	1	14	14	14	14	14	19

Don't forget that anyone freed from a 'Man-Cage' will be unarmed and dressed only in rags.

### Adventure Hooks

#### Help me kinsman!

This Adventure Hook only applies to adventuring parties containing a dwarf PC. As they approach a 'Man-Cage' the group realises that the occupant who at first glance appears to be a man, is in point of fact a dwarf. As they get close to the cage the prisoner singles out the dwarf PC and cries out to him. He will call on his fellow stumpy and claim that it is a kinsman's duty to aid any dwarf that finds himself unjustly trapped like this. The 'dwarf', however, is actually a level one Illusionist who was caught using 'Cloak Activity' to steal from a local village. He decided to assume the 'Illusionary Appearance' of a dwarf in the hope of appealing to the dwarf's sense of loyalty to his race. He managed to use a handful of clay-rich earth from the ground below his 'Man-Cage' to fashion a rough humanoid face mask to



carry out the necessary enchantment. The remains of this mask may be noticed below if a close search is carried out. If the PCs free him, he will be so scared of the PC's reaction to the truth that he will decide to try and flee as soon as he can. Whilst vigorously shaking the dwarf's hand he will begin to mutter strange words and before they know it he will have cast *Produce Small Creature* to create a snake and have it crawl up the dwarf's arm and under his clothing. Whilst the PCs try to calm the madly thrashing dwarf and remove the snake from his shirt, the Illusionist will run off down the road as fast as possible. Will he escape? If not, what will the PCs do when they recapture him and he turns back into a human?

### Help me, I'll do... anything!

As above, but in the hope of appealing to a party of impoverished adventurers, the Illusionist takes the form of an alluring and scantily-clad human female (or male depending on the majority orientation of the party)... She (he) will get as close as she (he) can before releasing the summoned snake into the lead PC's clothing. Then, as above, she (he) will make a run for it. If she (he) fails to get, the PCs might have a few questions for a scared and panicked girl, and even more for the dishevelled and dirty young magician she soon turns back into !

### Ghosts of the past !

Near to the site of an old abandoned village, at a cross-roads where three dirt lanes meet, the PCs find a bleached skeleton crumbling at the bottom of an old 'Man-Cage'. As the PCs approach, the ghost of the long-dead occupant appears in the lane ahead of them:

*"Heeelp me... laaaay my soul to ressssst... pleeeaaaase... Heeeeeeelp meeeee..."*

The ghost of Christophe Deloppe, con-man and wrongfully convicted murderer, is cursed to walk the earth forever until its bones are laid to rest. It cannot go further than two and a half miles away from its remains, but the PCs will not know this... All the time that the PCs remain within that distance, the ghost will haunt them, spooking their horses, blowing out their camp fire and keeping them awake with late-night howling. It will beg them to lay Deloppe's bones to rest, which is the only way to allow it to move on the next plane of existence. Once the bones have been buried, the ghost will thank the PCs and fade away into nothing. The ghost of this murderer, though, will not rest so easily, and once the bones have been buried the ghost's haunting will be transferred onto the last character to touch his remains. The ghost will make itself invisible to anyone but the PC he is haunting. Christophe's ghost will follow the PC around wherever he goes from now on, begging that the PC prove his innocence. He won't leave the player alone until he returns to the village and, guided by the ghost, starts to ask questions about the corpse in the 'Man-Cage'. Christophe was in fact framed by an angry farmer he conned out of 100 Francs ; the farmer had borrowed that money from his neighbour who demanded it back. To fix all his problems, the farmer killed the moneylender and set it up to look like Christophe did it. Only if the PCs can expose this retributive injustice will the ghost depart and move on to the next world.

### The Wrath of Verena...

In a 'Man-Cage' the PCs find a man who offers them 100 Francs to release him. He assures them that "this whole thing was just a big misunderstanding" and that if they free him he can lead them to a buried cache of gold he hid just before he got cornered by the angry heathen locals. He is in fact (and quite unusually) being completely truthful. If the PCs reject his offer and leave him where he is then the encounter goes no further. If they decide to release him, however, they're in for a bit of trouble. The last Cleric of Verena to pass by placed a guardian spell on the 'Man-Cage' which will summon a "Causidicus Arbitras", if the cage is broken or the locks smashed or picked. The occupant of the 'Man-Cage' will count as the Summoner and so the Servant's first act will be to skewer him with his sword. After this, it attack the PCs who attempted to defy its master's laws and will fight until banished, destroyed or magically restrained long enough for the characters to leg it...

#### ~CAUSIDICUS ARBITRAS~

(Lesser Demonic Servant of Solkan)

PHYSIQUE: Humanoid

ALIGNMENT: Lawful

PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAITS: Causes fear in other creatures and is therefore also immune to fear.

SPECIAL RULES: Subject to 'instability'.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	60	0	4	3	5	60	3	89	89	89	89	89	10

Causidicus Arbitras takes the form of a powerfully muscular humanoid swathed from head to toe in perfectly white robes. A large white cloth hood covers its head and hides its face in shadow, and all that can be seen are two burning white dots for eyes. It is armed with one huge, double-handed, double-edged magical sword, which glows with incandescent light. When summoned, a thick white mist rapidly gathers out of which the demon emerges swinging its blade in lightning fast arcs of death...

### Experiencing 'Mob Law'

PCs caught breaking the law in the more wild regions of the corrupt kingdom of Bretonnia can at least thank whatever gods they worship that they haven't been caught within the always harsh and the often lethal legal system of the more densely populated areas. Instead, they must contend with the rough justice meted out by the yokels and bumpkins of the superstitious countryside. The heathen masses have a tendency to be inconsistent in their punishments which can vary along with not only the crime, but also with the mob's mood and other unpredictable factors.

As soon as a character is accused of a crime whilst in the vicinity of a village in rural Bretonnia, a mob will gather and will come after the defendant with burning torches and cudgels aplenty. At this point skipping town or resisting 'the mob' becomes a very tempting option, but if this goes awry it will count very badly towards the

character later. The procedures of ‘rough justice’ are pretty standard throughout the kingdom. ‘The mob’ will drag the accused out into the centre of the settlement where they will be forced to the ground whilst the villagers decide what to do. Any wronged parties, along with any witnesses will then shout out demands for the accused to be punished. The accused then gets the chance to make shouted pleas in their defence for a few minutes before the shouting of the rabble drowns out their voice.

As one possible sentence, ‘Man-Caging’ your PCs is a very harsh thing to do as a GM. I would suggest letting your players see an NPC get ‘Man-Caged’ and threaten them with it as an incentive not to break the law! If they do cross the line, don’t feel too bad about imposing it on them. The punishments for minor crimes are rarely lethal so why not give one of your PCs the chance to add a spell in a ‘Man-Cage’ to their life story? Of course, with a group of PCs, what is there to stop the other players from busting their friend out of the mini-prison? Naturally, the possibility of indefinite incagement might be enough to put them off. If they do decide to go ahead with a miniature ‘Great Escape’, then good for them, but they’d better be ready to leave town as fast as they can. Angry villagers have been known to hire bounty hunters to track down ‘Cage-Breakers’...

### Guilty or innocent : How rules ‘the mob’?

To represent a ‘mob trial’ in WFRP, a character is allowed to make a single Fel test modified according to the chart below. A success indicates that the character has been released by the mob, a failure indicates that ‘the mob’ has ruled against the defendant.

	Modifier
<b>Accused has committed previous crimes in the area:</b>	-10 per crime
<b>Accused uses ‘Law’ skill</b>	-10
<b>Accused uses ‘Blather’ skill</b>	+10
<b>Accused uses ‘Etiquette’ skill</b>	+5
<b>Social Class of accused (see Apoc Now pg21) A/B/C/D</b>	+20/+10/-10/-20
<b>Social Class of accuser / victim (see Apoc Now pg21) A/B/C/D</b>	-20/-10/+10/+20
<b>Evidence against-</b>	
<b>Confession:</b>	-40
<b>Caught in the act:</b>	-40
<b>Witnesses:</b>	-15
<b>Circumstantial Evidence:</b>	-5
<b>Resisted ‘the mob’:</b>	-20
<b>Accused lives locally</b>	+20
<b>Accused speaks Old Worlnder with anything other than a Bretonnian accent</b>	-20
<b>Accused is not human</b>	-20
<b>Accused is a vegetarian</b>	-10
<b>Role-Playing</b>	-30 to +30

### Calculation of Punishment

To find out what punishment ‘the mob’ feels is appropriate, consult the chart below and pick the crime description which is closest to the crime the character is accused of and modify the punishment’s severity as you see fit.

More serious crimes (such as *Worship of Chaotic Gods*, *Practice of Necromancy*, or *Practice of Demonology*, etc) will, of course, be punished by public execution/burning!

Crime	Duration of time locked with the village ‘Man-Cage’
<b>Minor Blasphemy</b>	1D10 days
<b>Rioting (street brawling, etc)</b>	D3 weeks
<b>Petty Theft</b>	D6 +2 weeks
<b>Blasphemy</b>	D6 +2 weeks
<b>Assault</b>	D8 +2 weeks
<b>Serious Theft (including debt)</b>	D10 +2 weeks
<b>Rape</b>	D10 +2 weeks
<b>Grave Robbing</b>	D12 +2 weeks
<b>Arson</b>	D12 +2 weeks
<b>Desecration of holy Temple or Shrine</b>	D12 +4 weeks (plus eyes cut out)
<b>Murder</b>	Indefinite
<b>Heresy</b>	Indefinite
<b>Freeing a ‘Man-Caged’ prisoner</b>	Indefinite



### Getting Released

On the day on which the punishment is due to end, there is invariably one very repentant ex-con awaiting release and eager to be free (or else a somewhat less talkative corpse). The problem, however, is that once ‘the mob’ has calmed down, they often forget who is in the ‘Man-Cage’, exactly why they are there, or when they are due to be released. There is generally only one set of keys and it is not unheard of for these to be ‘misplaced’. On the final day of the punishment, there is a base 50% chance of someone from the village remembering to come and to let the character out. The next day this increases to 60%, the next day 70%, and so on until someone remembers. If the character has friends within the settlement, they will do their best to lobby for their release and will each increase the chance by 5% each. Note that reminding the locals won’t automatically get your friend free, as the key still has to be found...

## Being 'Man-Caged'

Being locked within a cage day and night, day in – day out, come rain or shine, with very little food or water will have a serious affect on a character's physical condition. Firstly, a character's WS, BS, Dex, Ld, Int, Cl and WP will fall by 10 points and his M, S, T, and I will drop by 1 point for each full or part week that he is engaged, down to a minimum of 10/1. This represents the overall affects of being caged, (like physical weakness, loss of motive skills, and sapped Will Power, etc) but not its most lethal affects. Normally if a character is unable to get access to food and water he will die within a week or so. In a road-side 'Man-Cage' however, there should be at least one traveller a day who is willing to stop and give a mouthful of water and a crusty piece of bread to a

starving prisoner. On a day-to-day basis, then, a 'Man-Caged' prisoner should get enough food to survive ; but if, over a number of days, the prisoner fails to beg adequate food from passers by his condition will start to deteriorate. To calculate if a character has blagged sufficient rations in any given week, you should make one test against his Fellowship (+10 for possession of the skill: *Begging*). If the test is passed; the character has managed to scrape together enough sustenance to last another week, if the test is failed; the character loses a wound. If the character's wound count reaches zero, they're dead!

This means that an average human (W=7, Fel=29) will lose one wound a week (in addition to losing 10 or 1 points from most other characteristics) if he rolls 30 or more on a D100. The average human will lose one of his seven wounds a week, 7.1 weeks out of 10. This (if my math is correct) means that the average human will die after about ten weeks in a 'Man-Cage'. This means that only the average length of the worst specified punishment (D12 +4 weeks for "Desecration of holy Temple or Shrine") is likely to kill. Of course, due to the highly fickle nature of how the terms of punishment are created by 'mob law', characters may be slowly starved to death for much lesser crimes. "Petty Theft", for example, carries a maximum penalty of eight weeks in a 'Man-Cage', which could kill a character who only managed to succeed on one of his eight 'Fel' rolls! Most 'Man-Cage' punishments are non-lethal ; however, if criminals do die, then 'the mob' that put them there will not be shedding too many tears!

On a psychological note, being 'Man-Caged' rarely does very much for a character's mental state. To represent this in the game, a character will gain one Insanity Point for each full or part week he spends in a 'Man-Cage'. If these bring his total to the point where a Disorder is obtained, you can either pick one, roll for one on the chart on page 83 of the WFRP rulebook or use the following 'Man-Cage' specific list.

D100 Roll	Disorder
<b>1 – 10</b>	Claustrophobia
<b>11 – 20</b>	Catatonia
<b>21 – 30</b>	Dementia
<b>31 – 40</b>	Gluttony
<b>41 – 60</b>	Hatred:
(plus D10):	
1 – 5	Of the villagers who put him in the 'Man-Cage'
6 – 7	Of all characters of 'Lawful' alignment
8 – 9	Of all characters who worship or follow Solkan
10	Of everyone...
<b>61 – 70</b>	Introversion
<b>71 – 80</b>	Phobia:
(plus D6):	
1	Of the villagers who put him in the 'Man-Cage'
2	Of all characters of 'Lawful' alignment
3	Of all characters who worship or follow Solkan
4	Of cages of any kind
5	Of representatives of the law
6	Of large crowds or mobs
<b>81 – 100</b>	Minor Disorder

If a PC gets 'Man-Caged' you may wish to simply skip the period as time lost and tell you players something along the lines of "You spend seven weeks locked in a 'Man-Cage'... and then you're free to go" – with a few penalties, of course. Alternatively, you may wish to add a few random events to the time to give you something to role-play out with the PC. For each week or part week that goes by, roll on the chart next page.





D100  
Roll Random Event

- 1 – 4** Nothing unusual this week!  
A group of local youths stop to throw stones at the ‘Man-Caged’ character and cause him to suffer an additional wound.
- 5 – 8** Nothing unusual this week!  
A mysterious brown robed stranger (a chaos cultist) passes by and will smash the lock on the cage if the prisoner passes a Fel test.
- 9 – 12** Nothing unusual this week!  
It rains all week and the character suffers an additional –10 to WP through depression.
- 13 – 16** Nothing unusual this week!  
A kindly priestess of Shallya stops to see to the prisoner’s wounds and heals D3 of them.
- 17 – 20** Nothing unusual this week!  
A Cleric of Solkan stops to examine the ‘Man-Cage’ and uses his staff to poke the prisoner and cause one wound.
- 21 – 24** Nothing unusual this week!  
The ‘Man-Cage’ is needed for another still more loathed criminal, the prisoner is set free!
- 25 – 28** Nothing unusual this week!  
The region is hit by a vicious and violent storm with claps of thunder and forks of lightening flashing all around. The character suffers an additional D3 Insanity Points.
- 29 – 32** Nothing unusual this week!  
A sunny pleasant week makes being ‘Man-Caged’ seem ‘not too bad really’. The character gains no Insanity Points this week.
- 33 – 36** Nothing unusual this week!  
The food given by a passing traveller is off and gives the PC an additional wound and awful stomach cramps!
- 37 – 40** Nothing unusual this week!  
The character makes the most of this ‘Thinking Time’ to reflect on his situation. He ‘gets a few things straight in his head’ and loses D4 Insanity Points.
- 41 – 44** Nothing unusual this week!  
A band of passing travellers stop to point and laugh at the character, before moving on.
- 45 – 48** Nothing unusual this week!  
GM’s choice, pick one of the above!
- 49 – 52** Nothing unusual this week!  
Nothing unusual this week!
- 53 – 56** Nothing unusual this week!  
Nothing unusual this week!
- 57 – 60** Nothing unusual this week!  
Nothing unusual this week!
- 61 – 64** Nothing unusual this week!  
Nothing unusual this week!
- 65 – 68** Nothing unusual this week!  
Nothing unusual this week!
- 69 – 72** Nothing unusual this week!  
Nothing unusual this week!
- 73 – 76** Nothing unusual this week!  
Nothing unusual this week!
- 77 – 80** Nothing unusual this week!  
Nothing unusual this week!
- 81 – 84** Nothing unusual this week!  
Nothing unusual this week!
- 85 – 88** Nothing unusual this week!  
Nothing unusual this week!
- 89 – 92** Nothing unusual this week!  
Nothing unusual this week!
- 93 – 96** Nothing unusual this week!  
Nothing unusual this week!
- 97– 100** Nothing unusual this week!  
Nothing unusual this week!

### Recovering from ‘Man-Caging’

Sadly, Insanity Points can only be removed by a really good physician or wizard. However, the physical effects of ‘Man-Caging’ will heal over time. The percentage characteristics (WS, BS, Dex, Ld, Int, Cl and WP) will recover at a rate of five percent for every day of full rest once freed. The non-percentage characteristics (M, S, T, W, and I) will recover at a rate of one point for every two days of rest once released.



*The dilapidated city of Quenelles, close to the Loren Forest is the only settlement of its size in the whole of the Old World where ‘Man-Caging’ is still carried out. In the centre of its expensive paved market square stands an old and gnarled oak which has stood there since before the city’s oldest residents can remember. Hung with no less than seven individual ‘Man-Cages’, the cruelly embellished edifice is infamously known to the locals as “L’arbre de Justice”. In recent years the ancient tree has become something of a tourist attraction, with the purveyors of rotten foodstuffs which ply their trade in the square around the tree being amongst the few traders in the city to turn a healthy profit. It is a testament to the vindictive cruelty of the city’s inhabitants that the rotten food sold to be thrown at the unfortunate prisoners frequently sells for more than the (reasonably) fresh food sold from the carts which line the square around the tree!*

# Witches in Bretonnia

By Rory Naismith

*'I? It is not I who you must fear. My body is but a vessel, a tool. The power which fills me is undying, unconquerable. It lies within me as the seed of future children lies in men and women, and like them it will only grow and become stronger than you can ever imagine. If you kill me, it shall be all the greater and the more vengeful when it wreaks its vengeance. My master awaits your minds and souls beyond the gates of death!'*

- from the confession of Guillaumette Maury

The word 'witch' conjures up definite images in the Bretonnian mind. Some hearers – mainly men – like the idea of naked maidens running round and round a fire waving sticks about and screaming in ecstasy. Suspicious, gossipy women see anyone who lives differently as beyond the bounds of respectability, with just a fine line dividing the eccentric from the terrible witch. The nation's aristocrats consider accusations of witchcraft as one more political tool to use against rivals, and as a method of keeping the masses appeased.

Whilst all of these conceptions and more are common, they are based on slightly more than paranoia and distrust. There is a small but very real and very dangerous element of genuine witches who worship the dark powers and possess harrowing supernatural powers. Their unspeakable designs against the very fundamentals of Bretonnian society serve to keep fear and hatred of witches alive.



**Who are Witches?** The majority of people who are accused of witchcraft in Bretonnia are innocent; or, at least, innocent of witchcraft. They have nothing to do with dark magic or evil, and merely find themselves the target of jealousy, fear and hysteria. These are the most common reasons for witch-hunts; the poorly-educated lower classes develop a suspicion of some unfortunate, which spills over into violence at the least provocation. At other times, petty disputes and envy can lead to people being denounced as witches, sometimes openly, sometimes behind closed doors, leading to the slow but insidious spread of rumours that inevitably get embroidered in the telling.

In the close-knit peasant communities of Bretonnia, which are dominated by superstition, this process is all too common. If the victim doesn't notice the wary glances and hushed conversations, the first they hear of any action against them might be a rowdy crowd of neighbours outside their home in the dead of night. Often, not a word about such events ever reaches the authorities. The quietest, most barbaric parts of the land are littered with the unmarked graves of those left slaughtered by the witch-crazed mob.

There are some 'good' witches, however, who do indeed possess magical (or seemingly magical) abilities but are in no way connected with the powers of chaos. They are able to do little more than give locals welcome

advice on the finer points of life, brew age-old potions and poultices, and sometimes use low-level magic in aid of others. Some of these individuals worship Ecate, but regard her more as a mother-figure and mistress of magic than as an evil deity; in time, however, they occasionally become tainted and corrupted by Ecate and her husband-son Khaine's true nature, unwittingly turning to evil.

In towns, witchcraft is treated slightly differently. The urban populace of Bretonnia is barely more educated or tolerant than their country cousins, and the constant degradation, poverty and toil of their lives lends itself even more to occasional outbreaks of violence at any possibility of evil magic. Indeed, to some extent the authorities encourage the townspeople's fear of witchcraft so that they direct their energies and worries in that direction rather than towards the local leadership. Witch-hunters receive official sanction to bring a set number of 'sorcerers' to justice; whether the town contains that many genuine witches matters little to the rulers or the witch-hunters. Scholars who look into the witch-hunt phenomenon with a clinical eye believe that it is founded on a combination of genuine fear and outrage at apparently increasing chaos activity in Bretonnia, and a deep frustration and resentment felt by the masses at their hardship and ill-treatment by the rich. The witch-hunts are simply one way of redirecting this pent-up anger, explaining why so many apparently innocent people are branded as witches; they are merely a focus for discontent, seized on the moment.

Witches are not drawn exclusively from the lower orders. Members of the nobility and middle classes sometimes find themselves charged with witchcraft, too, often as a result of political manoeuvrings or simple hatred. It is also, however, true that the wealthier, better-educated elements do seem to find the dark gods and forbidden arts more appealing. Many bright young men who leave to study magic in Altdorf, it is claimed by reactionary elements in society, bring back more than a love of Imperial beer and a few mouldering scrolls.

In the case of those not involved with black magic, enemies bring charges against them by running whispering campaigns, or hiring someone to 'produce' evidence and launch a trial. The aristocracy, like their tenants, take a close interest in witchcraft; trials attract great crowds of well-born spectators, especially when one of their own is up on trial. Though a judicious disapproval is shown to anyone who is even suspected of witchcraft, the nobility, with wizards to advise them and possessing generally superior education, can differentiate between genuine cases of witchcraft and accusations made on less secure grounds for worldly motives. But openly declaring so spoils the excitement and can lead to charges of aiding and abetting witches. Nevertheless, the opinion of the majority can usually be guessed at: those considered to be innocent and the victims of slander are received with laughter and catcalls; those whose accusations are based on more solid evidence meet with vehement cursing, pelted fruit and spitting. In fact, the pampered ruling set of Bretonnia, when faced with a genuine user of evil magic (particularly one drawn from their own ranks), are just as incensed and fearful as the lower orders.

It is rare but not unheard of for Druids and wandering elementalists to be prosecuted as witches by fearful,

ignorant peasants and ambitious witch hunters. Even some followers of Taal who live especially wild, isolated lives beyond the bounds of society may be misconstrued as witches. Ironically, although most witch hunters are well-read on the cults and strictures of Chaos, Khaine and other unacceptable gods, the cults of Taal and the Old Faith are only vaguely understood by non-initiates.

## Evil Witches



Genuinely evil witches, who use necromancy, daemonology and other black arts, are relatively rare; but there are secret covens of witches in many parts of Bretonnia, both amongst the benighted peasants in the deepest countryside and amidst the aristocrats and bourgeoisie

of the towns. These covens actively worship the gods of Chaos, and in some cases have existed for centuries - possibly more; like the rural adherents of Taal and the Old Faith, for them the worship of Chaos or Khaine is simply a part of village life as it always has been. In fact, these peasants probably don't see worshipping these gods as wrong, or perhaps not even bad; it is simply the way things are done in their village and they don't know any better. However, there are a few - mainly in towns - who turn to the Chaos gods in full knowledge of what they are doing, and revel in the diabolical powers that are granted to them. These are undeniably the most dangerous of all, and include not only peasants and urban lower classes but nobles, academics and even corrupt clerics. In the cities of the coast, the cult of Khaine is especially popular; there are several riotous cults of young nobles and wealthy merchants who indulge in ritual slaughter and blood drinking. It is believed that a small number of Dark Elves head up these groups and try to co-ordinate activities all along the coast.

Further inland, there are many covens and cults dedicated to Ecate, the goddess of witchcraft and both wife and mother to Khaine. In fact, there are probably as many groups dedicated to Ecate as there are to the other chaos powers. Her worship, it is speculated, may have been passed on by some of the last Elves in the Old World who fled from the burning coastal cities to hide their dark beliefs in the forest. In time these were passed on to the incoming human tribes, who have kept them alive ever since. In fact, the talent for magic and witchcraft that is displayed in some areas may be a result of lingering Elven blood in the local population. Covens of Ecate tend to be amongst the most cruel and savage of all, taking delight in slaughtering innocents, corrupting the weak and causing general mayhem. Wild midnight sabbats are most common amongst covens and cults of Ecate, which are almost exclusively composed of women in Bretonnia. Whilst chaos covens tend to use secrecy and cunning to preserve and increase their power, Ecate's followers are far less subtle; fear and cruelty are their greatest weapons against retribution. Rivalry and even outright feuding

between covens dedicated to different deities is not unknown; even groups knowingly or unknowingly working for the same power find themselves in conflict from time to time.

All of these witches make use of necromancy and daemonology, and engage in human sacrifice, deviant sexual revelry and many other unwholesome customs; it is a rare few confessions extracted from members of such cults that has created the popular image of witches. Desperate and dangerous, real witches are only caught very rarely, for they nearly always keep their illicit practices well hidden, and can call on mighty magic to protect themselves should the worst happen. More than one witch-hunter has met his end going up against what he thought to be a batty, cackling old crone with an amusing glint in her eye...

## The Gypsies

The Gypsies of Bretonnia suffer a great deal of mistrust and prejudice at the hands of the settled population. These travellers are disliked for being openly 'different' and for the separate nature of their lifestyle; it is seen as unnatural for people to travel constantly, outside the natural system of authority and society, owing loyalty to no lord or master. Gypsies are said to be totally untrustworthy and liable to steal, rape and murder at the first opportunity. They feature in stories told to frighten children, where Azbou the Gypsy with his serrated knife, hairy hands and huge lips is a popular fiend conjured up by parents and teachers.

In spite of this prejudice, the Gypsies still preserve their own ancient customs and traditions, including a distinct language. Aside from Ranald, Taal and sometimes the Old Faith, they tend to worship Ecate; a goddess with definite connections to evil, although not generally revered in that aspect by the gypsies. It is from their devotion to her that they gain their unusual talent for fortune telling and magic.

The spread of the witch-hunts has hit the Gypsy population hard. Accusations of witchcraft are used to sanction acts of violence against Gypsies whenever they settle near a Bretonnian community, excusing the riots and cries against the 'invaders'. Witch-hunters, latching onto this hatred, frequently direct their energies at Gypsies too, virtually guaranteeing a guilty sentence. It is not unknown for witch-hunters to actually follow in the wake of Gypsy bands, hounding them constantly until they pass over the borders of the Kingdom.

Whilst it seems that there is a tradition of magic-use and especially fortune telling amongst the Gypsies (which witch-hunters and fearful peasants quickly interpret as collusion with the chaos gods), few actually use evil magic. Those who do, however, tend to be if anything more dangerous than other witches, for Gypsies have a strange affinity with magic and fortune telling which is easily turned against those they deem to be enemies. They frighten other gypsies into servitude and turn the whole band into a wandering cult. Corrupt and misleading futures are read to pervert the minds of visitors, and animals and children disappear around the camp of a gypsy witch as she uses them in weird curses, vile



concoctions and dire spells. It is partly thanks to them that other gypsies have gained such a bad name.

## Beliefs about witches

'Because she looks like one!'

There is a definite witch stereotype current in Bretonnia. This does not quite reflect the reality of witch covens and genuine users of black magic (who usually strive to look as normal as possible), but does help to explain why the public targets the people they do.

To the average Bretonnian, a witch is a stooped, warty old crone, who lives alone in a ramshackle cottage.

She is prone to cackling and muttering curses, and will undoubtedly keep a cat, owl, raven or any other animal, which is without a doubt some daemonic familiar in disguise. She will also, naturally, possess a cauldron and a broomstick for brewing wicked potions and flying to debauched sabbats. No-one ever pauses to think that an old woman would be decidedly lonely, hungry and dirty if she did not live with a pet, a cauldron to cook in and a broom to do the cleaning; but that is not the point. Anyone who fulfils some or all of these criteria and is unpopular with the neighbours runs the risk of being called a witch, especially if a witch-hunter is active in the area.

Although this is the most widely held image of a witch, it is commonly believed that beautiful, virginal maidens might also be witches - they may, after all, be crones or evil spirits masked so as to weaken the resistance of red-blooded Bretonnian men. This also helps to explain the unpredictable and irrational actions of the young to their elders. Men can also be considered witches; typically, it is old men who live alone and are wont to talk to themselves that arouse the most suspicion.

'When shall we three meet again?'

It is an accepted belief that witches work in covens (cults) and gather regularly at great, hedonistic meetings called sabbats. What witches actually do at a sabbat is subject to wild and fanciful speculation: scholars who spend too much time alone in dark libraries with scented candles and fanciful, wide-eyed tavern bawds are responsible for spreading the most outlandish rumours. Devils and daemons are imagined to lead naked witches in great dances, singing lewd and blasphemous songs as weird, inhuman pipers provide an enchanted melody. Babies are sacrificed, cooked and eaten, with the odd blond virgin, black cockerel or lamb thrown in for good measure. Wild acts of sexual deviancy are committed,

often involving the most unlikely of couplings. New spells to wreak havoc on the hapless people of Bretonnia are passed round like recipes for sweet pastries. The meetings close with the witches swearing to uphold their allegiance to the chaos gods, then flying home mounted on a broomstick or an eggshell.

These sabbats are said to take place in the dead of night at isolated places touched by the power of evil spirits: bleak moors, misty pools, shady woods, craggy rocks and deserted ruins are commonly regarded as the places where witches gather. Most villages, in fact, are proud to boast a place somewhere in the



vicinity frequented by ghosts and where witches meet for sabbats; the inhabitants of neighbouring towns and villages argue over which attracts the biggest number of witches (sometimes reaching quite absurd levels; as high as 10,000 in some cases), as if they actually wanted the forces of darkness to bless their home in particular. Notably, very few villages will be able to give any proof other than old legend saying that witches ever actually meet at the site in question; nobody will actually admit to having been there recently or to having seen anything odd there, but everyone will know somebody else who has. Whether this somebody exists is another matter entirely.

In reality, the idea of covens and sabbats is founded on more than a grain of truth. Most witches do not operate alone, and meet regularly with fellow witches, from the same or nearby communities. These gatherings are not always much like the outlandish romps envisaged by fantasists; they are quiet, forbidding affairs, often with a great deal of diligent chanting, oath-swearing and magic-working needed to achieve any results. Worshippers of Ecate and Khaine, however, do resort to far more debauched and wild excesses than others. And what all witches do is far more subtle and disturbing than popular imagination could even conceive.

A witches' coven - typically numbering between two and ten individuals; any more would make discovery likely - is really little more than a chaos cult, which meets to invoke the favour of their dark master. They know that indulging in overt magic or drawing attention to their meeting would be extremely dangerous; real coven meetings more often take place in secluded, sheltered areas, and protection is nearly always used (both magical and otherwise). In fact, urban covens, where all the witches live in the same town, normally meet exactly where no-one would ever expect: under the very noses of the authorities, in an attic or a cellar or a deserted workshop.

Sabbats also take place at certain times. These occasions involve several covens coming together at the same time to engage in collective devotion to the dark gods; there are particular nights of the year, linked to the lunar cycle and beliefs about magic, which are held to be particularly auspicious for witches. Surprisingly, the public and the genuine witches generally seem to be in agreement on this fact; sabbats are said to take place mostly on le Jour des Sorcieres at New Year and on le Jour des Mysteres in the summer.

Those who meet at a sabbat represent a larger, slightly more organised cult, which usually recognises a leader of some sort. It is up to this leader to direct the others in worship and to issue general commands. Sabbats are slightly closer to the popular image than might be expected. Dancing - sometimes in the nude - and chanting are common, and sacrifices must be made; when chaos entities appear, they may well engage in sexual activities with the witches present (it is said that pretty maidens are taken from the front, whilst crones are taken from behind so as not to offend the daemons with their ugliness). However, sabbats are very rare and always extremely carefully guarded. Also, the place where they meet is nearly always changed every year, with those meant to attend only being told shortly before they must make their journey. Those few who have learnt of the genuine witches in Bretonnia speculate on the number of sabbats, and believe that there may be perhaps half a dozen; some say there may even be some sort of vague provincial organisation, based either on ancient, long-forgotten boundaries or on some insidious plan to infiltrate and bring down civilisation. It is only the witches themselves, however, who may hold the key to this debate, and the small number that do fall into the clutches of the witch-hunters are rarely forthcoming.

Not only evil, chaotic witches hold sabbats and form covens. Since women and peasants getting involved with magic in any way are looked on with extreme suspicion, it is not surprising that those who do so are forced to meet in secret. Those who have picked up knowledge of herbalism and a little magic from ancient tradition discuss their knowledge in secret. Similarly, rural worshippers of Taal, Rhya and the Old Faith, who have followed their gods with strange rites for longer than there has been a Kingdom of Bretonnia, hold secret meetings at places of especial significance for their faith, such as stone circles, blessed groves and faery pools. Their moonlit gatherings, marked by chanting in forgotten tongues, veneration of skulls and trees and dressing in masks, are easily mistaken for chaos worship by witch hunters and commoners alike. Great celebrations are held at the equinox of each season, which look worryingly like sabbats to the untrained eye. Even fully-fledged druids and clerics of Taal are sometimes burnt at the stake for witchcraft.

'For the vain price of four and twenty years...'

Contracts with the chaos gods are believed to be vital in granting witches their supernatural powers. When they first devote themselves to a life of evil and cruelty, it is claimed, witches sign pacts with their infernal masters stipulating the conditions under which they will serve. Often these are imagined written in the most outlandish of

ways: they might be written on cured human flesh, in virgin's blood, in ancient and forgotten tongues, or backwards. Finding a witch's pact with the chaos gods is rare, but if one is found then even the most hardened and merciful of observers are forced to accept the suspect's guilt. As might be expected, though, forged pacts are far from unknown, but convincing ones are very hard to fake, and are only produced in trials directed by the wealthy against particularly detested foes. Unless, that is, a real witch is involved.

Chillingly, this belief is based on fact. Most witches, who usually function as part of a chaotic cult, do indeed sign some sort of pact detailing their arrangement with the chaos gods. These are powerful documents, and it is said that destroying or ripping one causes a witch to go blind (one or two cases are on record to prove this). Consequently, they are very well hidden by their owners; many are buried or placed in equally inaccessible places such as at the bottom of wells or in tombs.

The text of an apparently genuine contract discovered during the trial of Jehenne de Brigue, verified as such by a revered cleric and no less than three wizards, is given below. The first part, written in a hand more commonly found in texts worm-eaten with age and shunned by right-thinking men, is in the Dark Tongue; the second part was apparently written by Jehenne herself, and is marked at the end with her blood and with another, unidentified substance thought to be the 'mark' of the document's other signatory.

*'I, Lord Slaanesh, have today accepted the pact of alliance with Jehenne de Brigue, who is of our kingdom. We promise her the love of men and women, mastery in the unseen arts, worldly honours, pleasures, knowledge and riches. She will fornicate every three days; intoxication will be dear to her. She will offer to us once per year a living tribute; she will trample underfoot the sacraments of the lesser deities, and she will speak unto us our prayers and render unto us our rites. By virtue of this pact, she will live blissfully for twenty years among humans, and finally will come to us her Master. I, Lord Slaanesh, Despoiler of the Pure, do sign and affirm this contract.'*

*'My Lord Slaanesh, I acknowledge thee as my prince and master, and promise to serve and obey thee as long as I shall live in this world and the next. I renounce all other deities and their saints and holy rites, and all the prayers and petitions by which the faithful might intercede for me. And I promise thee that I will do as much evil as I can, and that I will draw everyone else to evil, for the furtherance of my Lord Slaanesh and his designs. I renounce all former allegiances, swearing my body and soul unto Lord Slaanesh alone. And if I fail to serve and adore thee, and if I do not pay thee homage thrice every day, I give you my life as thine own. Made this year and day by me, Jehenne de Brigue.'*

## Maleficia

'Maleficium' is the name applied to the evil magical acts perpetrated by witches. Aside from the summoning and binding of daemons, most Maleficia cited on the part of witches are more peasant in character. Typical examples include making milk go sour, damaging crops, causing poor weather, inflicting minor curses such as warts and killing animals. Witches are also accused of creating potions from herbs and other substances, which can be used to further the witch's ends or to be given to favoured disciples; love potions used to seduce recalcitrant men are the most common brew witches are accused of producing. Many of the witnesses called during witch trials will give apparent 'evidence' of Maleficia ('My whole herd stopped giving milk after *she* looked at them! Well, three of 'em at least').

True witches do make frequent use of evil magic, but are far more insidious and imaginative than the witches of popular legend. They do not focus on crops and cows, and if they do so the effects are far more subtle and long-term. Rather, they use their spells and daemonic blessings to further the interests of the chaotic gods, sowing the seeds of fear and dissent amongst others. Some do not even go this far, and use magic only for self-defence and personal gratification. As for the potions and lotions, a great many elderly women in rural communities do know how to use herbs and traditional remedies to prepare medicines and perhaps one or two so-called potions. The vast majority of these, however, do not use any magic; on the contrary, they are often highly valued, being just as effective as the remedies purveyed by apothecaries and physicians at exorbitant prices. However, the brewing of any potion or herbal remedy can be seized upon by anybody as evidence of witchcraft.

## Adventure ideas



### CAMPAIGN IDEA: La Chambre Ardente

It all began as an apparently rather innocuous investigation ordered quietly by King Charles III de la Tete d'Or. Rumours had been picked up by his agents that

an international ring was supplying aristocrats at the Oisillon Palace with poisons and potions, which it was thought were being used to kill off unwanted husbands, wives and political enemies. Initial inquiries led to a certain Marie Bosse in a large Guisoreux town house, who worked as fortune-teller and seer for the great and the good; many of her clients were nobles up from the Palace. She was caught in a covert operation, tricked by a planted 'client' into revealing the real nature of her services: poisons of many deadly types were offered, the ingredients of some of which were enough to condemn Bosse as a witch. She was arrested, together with a beautiful high-class courtesan lodging with her known simply as 'La Dame Vigoreuse' (she never revealed her real name; many claimed she was the illegitimate daughter of an aristocrat, escaped from a nunnery, but did not know the identity of her parents).

Whilst the King's investigators could already be proud of themselves, it was at this point that the famously merciless witch-hunter Nicholas de la Reynie got involved. He had been conducting research of his own that linked Bosse and La Dame Vigoreuse to far more than the sale of a few poisons, reading Tarot cards and the seduction of aristocrats. He found, on further investigation, a secret shrine hidden in abandoned cellars beneath Bosse's town house, devoted to Slaanesh, the god of depraved pleasure. Most worrying of all, many of her noble clients had partaken in lewd rituals there according to Bosse's own testimony and certain papers found at her house and elsewhere. Incriminating 'objects' - including whips, knives, bloodied clothes and damning documents - were found in the blasphemous shrine and swiftly spirited away to the securest dungeons in Guisoreux.

Fearing a scandal, the King took Reynie into his confidence and (fortunately in one of his more rational moods at the time) had a private interview with the witch-hunter. A crisis of dangerous proportions threatened to rack the heart of Bretonnia; transcripts of confessions from Marie Bosse and La Dame Vigoreuse, extracted without torture, implicated several *hundred* aristocrats in the poisoner-cultist circle with which Bosse was involved, amongst them some of the most illustrious names in the land. The only name ever given to this great cult was 'L'Ecole de la Nuit'; the School of Night.

Reynie was placed in charge of an exceptional institution: 'La Chambre Ardente', the Burning Room, named as such for the hundreds of candles used to light it. The witch-hunter himself was one of the leading members of the body which sat in judgement of those brought to the Chambre Ardente, and alongside him were some of the most noted scholars, wizards, witch-hunters and lawyers in the land, assembled by the King to cleanse his court of witchcraft and destroy the School of Night. The Chambre's existence was top secret, and its orders were carried out by the King's Musketeers, who were under unprecedented orders simply to obey and ask no questions. Clearly the task facing the Chambre Ardente, even with the unlimited support granted by a terrified King, was enormous; nearly all of those named by Bosse and La Dame Vigoreuse were indeed involved with witchcraft to some degree, knowingly or unknowingly. What was to be done to those accused was a delicate question: to have tortured everyone implicated would



have soon brought the affair into the open, whilst to have executed even half of those named would have constituted an unacceptable holocaust which could never be explained to the shocked survivors, even less to a raging populace. The affair of the *Chambre Ardente* was indeed one of the gravest threats to strike the Bretonnian court, though the only alternative - the *School of Night* - could have been incalculably worse.

How the *Chambre Ardente* and the *School of Night* are slotted into the game is up to you. It would be quite possible to have the players as the initial investigators employed by the King to track down Marie Bosse via one or two vague hints left by a few murdered aristocrats. They could then move on, either working with, against or replacing Nicholas de la Reynie in revealing the shrine in Bosse's house and tracking down a few other initial suspects. After this, the players could become part of the *Chambre Ardente* themselves, uncovering, questioning and possibly bringing to justice some of the most important individuals named. The challenge of keeping all of this invisible to the rest of the nobles at the Oisillon Palace and to the public should make everything even more tricky. How the whole *Chambre Ardente* affair winds up is left open: perhaps the conspiracy is simply too large, and the King reluctantly dissolves the *Chambre*, 'liquidating' anyone with knowledge of it? Would the individuals involved with the *Chambre* decide to turn a blind eye to the rot that permeates the court, or else would they pursue a clandestine campaign against the corrupt nobles? Maybe the *Chambre* could become tyrannical, or even infiltrated by those it wishes to prosecute? What are the credentials of Nicholas de la Reynie and the other members; can they be entirely trusted? Could the *Chambre* could even discover who is the devious master of the *School of Night* (undoubtedly a major personality at court), capture them and put an end to the whole sordid business? Whichever eventuality you choose to go with, the *Chambre Ardente* could easily be worked into a very substantial campaign.

### 'Get thee to a nunnery!'

The many nunneries across Bretonnia have acquired a reputation for corruption and licentiousness. Perhaps this is because so many who retreat to the cloister do so merely because they are the unwanted daughters of noble families, superfluous and unnecessary after their father decides no more dowries can be paid and elder daughters have forged enough alliances. Others are 'fallen women', young aristocrats who have become pregnant after an ill-advised flirtation; or the illegitimate daughters of wealthy and prominent men. Whatever their origins, the nuns of Bretonnia are often simply shut off from the world and men just as they reach sexual maturity. Many are forced by boredom and frustration to turn to forbidden activities in the dark and silent corridors of Bretonnia's nunneries, merely in the hope of escape, diversion or attracting men to their plight. Possession, sexual license and worship of evil gods are frequently alleged, and witch-hunters are becoming ever more frequent visitors to Bretonnia's nunneries.

La Barroche is a large nunnery dedicated to Shallya and Sainte Isabelle the Chaste located more or less

midway between Oiseau and Guisoreux in a secluded area of down-to-earth farmers. It is home to many young women condemned for the reasons given above. A shaded carriage arrives nearly every week to deliver a new member to the congregation, which is ruled over by the formidable Sister Udinot. Until recently, La Barroche was a discreet semi-secret amongst the nobles at the Oisillon Palace and in Guisoreux, but a few shocking discoveries have drawn undesired attention to Sister Udinot's community.

At first it was just a cruelly slaughtered lamb, but shortly after rumours spread of children going missing from the nearby villages. In desperation, the local peasants assembled outside the nunnery crying for an explanation. Sister Udinot told them firmly that she would take steps to find out who was responsible, and affirmed that the sisters of La Barroche had nothing to do with it. Although Sister Udinot did organise a search (she is either deceived or blinkered to the events at La Barroche), nothing was ever found. Only three days later another incident brought damning evidence against La Barroche: one sister, identified as Macette Ruilly (illegitimate daughter of the Baron de l'Equenne), was found dead, her throat cut, lying naked in a grove close to the nunnery, surrounded by crude but unnerving symbols daubed onto the trees. Immediately cries of witchcraft were raised, and it is at this point that the players become involved.

Sister Udinot wants them to come and go as soon as possible and with as little fuss as possible; she is keen to maintain the reputation of La Barroche and does not want to jeopardise the hefty 'donations' received when new nuns are sent. Within the nunnery, there are in fact two groups of nuns devoted to dark arts: one is a cult dedicated to the worship of Ecate (of which Sister Ruilly was a member); the other is a smaller group devoted to Tzeentch, the Lord of Change. The latter coven was responsible for slaying Ruilly, for they had discovered that their rivals were attempting to invoke a ritual granting them immense power (which they feared would be used against them). Tensions are running high in La Barroche. Not only are there these two cults opposed to each other, but the more innocent mass of sisters may not prove so innocent in the company of any male player characters.

### A Cry for Help

As the players travel through a provincial town, they are approached by an anxious-looking man. He identifies himself as the agent of the Viscomte Mervilliers, a local magnate. The Viscomte's beloved daughter Desle has been accused of witchcraft and, according to Mervilliers' representative, is innocent of any such monstrous crime; he claims she has been targeted by the Viscomte's enemies on the council of the local town in which the players are currently staying. There certainly is a dispute between the two, for the council wishes to gain greater jurisdiction over its own affairs, and hopes to quietly arrange some sort of deal while the Viscomte worries over the fate of his daughter. Desle is a fairly plain but intelligent and persuasive young woman, the only surviving relative of her father, who has put all his affections and hopes into her. It was her high level of

education that stirred initial suspicion amongst the local peasants (who see a woman's place as most definitely in the kitchen), which the council picked up on and decided to turn to its advantage. Antoine Anjeux, an eager young witch-hunter out to make a name for himself, has signed a contract with the council, ostensibly to cleanse the town of witches, but by a secret verbal arrangement to charge Desle Mervilliers with witchcraft. A substantial sum has already been given to him; the rest of his payment is to come after the Viscomte has surrendered some of his powers.

The players will be hired by the Viscomte de Mervilliers. Usually renowned as a tough, uncompromising man, he is currently in a state of shock, trembling and weeping with fear for his daughter. He is ready to promise almost anything if she can be proved innocent or somehow brought to safety, but has not yet heard anything of the town council's plan. To try and do this, the players can try anything they like. They might attempt to legally prove Dehl's innocence; more action-minded groups may simply go for a jail break and a quick get away. The best plan is to bring proof of the deal between Anjeux and the council to light, though to do so may well be dangerous. After all, Anjeux would be just as happy to add the players to his tally of victims and will pursue them with the full force of the law.

### Something wicked this way comes

The cities situated on the western coastline of Bretonnia, especially blighted Moussillon, are the stomping ground of wild-eyed avengers who call themselves 'Libertas ab Tenebris'. Their diligent work is undoubtedly beneficial in the area of Moussillon, where just about everyone has some sordid secret they ought to die for. But elsewhere the trouble they cause through indiscriminate slaughter in the name of religion makes for serious trouble with the locals.

Bordeleaux is suffering from an unusually tense situation at the moment thanks to one of these zealots; a situation which the players could find themselves dragged into or hired to resolve. Over the past two months, 14 women (and 5 men) have been found dead in the narrow back streets of the harbour area. Normally the watch takes little note of the deaths of whores and thieves, but all the bodies were found mutilated in a disconcerting and bloody way; all had had their throats cut almost to the spine, 11 had had a pentagram cut into the chest, and the hearts of the other eight had been removed. Moreover, one or two of the victims were respectable and even wealthy, such as old Madame Lesous, widow of a rich merchant. The watch was at a loss to explain the killings, and could do little more than send even more patrols into the shadowy streets around the waterfront.

Now events have taken a turn for the worse. First, 10 days ago, Caehlin Perrithir - a Sea Elf merchant living in the small colony at Bordeleaux, which is sited close to the harbour area where the other human victims were all found - was discovered killed in exactly the same way as the 11 humans; cut through the throat and with a pentagram etched onto his chest. The Elves were aghast at this murder of one of their own, but at first simply put it down to the violence and ignorant that had to be expected

from humans - and Caehlin was always regarded as a bit of a loner anyway. However, three days later the quiet, picturesque Elven colony was awoken in the dead of night by the anguished screams of a second murdered Elf. Eann Freingond was not just a trader like Caehlin, but a highly educated High Elf from Ulthuan, who had come to Bordeleaux, he claimed, to conduct research into the ancient Elven empire. It is feared by the governor that his death could have serious repercussions for relations between the Elves and Bretonnia.

Since then, two more humans have died - one a Marienburger with a removed heart, the other an elderly local woman with a pentagram on her chest - and three copies of a mysterious letter have been sent to the captain of the watch, the governor of Bordeleaux and the chief magistrate of the Sea Elf colony. Alarm bells are ringing all over the city. The watch and the governor are clamouring for decisive action, and the Elves are on the point of leaving the city in outrage. In this divisive letter, signed by 'a defender of truth and purity', the writer claims to have discovered damning evidence of a cult of Khaine led by the Elves (some of whom, including the late Caehlin Perrithir and Eann Freingond, are Dark Elves seeking to spread their insidious presence into the Old World) and numbering many corrupt humans, too. According to the writer of letter, it is this cult which is removing people's hearts. He (or she?) only 'cleanses' victims with the pentagram to save their souls.

Is the letter genuine, and can its statements be proved? Could a meeting be arranged with the 'defender of truth and purity'? How many members of the cult of Khaine survive? Should investigators seek the cult alleged to exist, or try and track down the anonymous 'defender'? And if they were to go after the vigilante, who would deal with the worshippers of murder? But perhaps the most immediate question is what the cultists, if cultists they be, are going to do with the nine hearts they've got in their possession...



# Witch Hunters and Witch-Trials in Bretonnia

By Rory Naismith

*'A seeker of the truth must needs be true of heart and firm of resolution. For the servants of darkness are many, and the powers which are granted to them by their daemonic masters are great indeed. They will not hesitate to lie, kill and blaspheme. For this reason, it is needful that every body and soul be watched and suspected. None can say how the evil ones manifest themselves in their attempts to lead us astray from the path of righteousness. Not a single breathing, living creature must escape our vigilance.'*

- taken from the 'Liber de Maleficiis' by Dominic Gordel

According to the Bretonnians, witch-hunters are those charged with finding witches and bringing them to justice. This is seen as a vital and highly praiseworthy duty, and witch-hunters can become almost rich and famous for sending lots of witches to the stake and making the public feel safer. But the issue is not usually so simple as that. Whilst the majority of common people are glad merely to be told that a witch has been caught and are keen to let populist witch-hunters do the telling (for a price), all too often the more cunning and dangerous real witches go unchallenged. There are some professional witch-hunters, however, who work against the very real threat that worshippers of Chaos and other dark gods present. Equally dedicated to the hunting of witches are the fanatical witch-hunters; zealous and bloody vigilantes who take it upon themselves to cleanse the kingdom.



## Witch-Hunters in Bretonnia

Witch-hunters are far from so common in Bretonnia as they are in the Empire, or as Inquisitors are in Estalia. Indeed, the whole witch-hunt phenomenon is less widespread in Bretonnia than it is elsewhere; it serves primarily as an occasional outlet for general discontent and fear amongst the masses. This means that real witches are often able to pursue their unspeakable practices undisturbed, giving further justification to the activities of witch-hunters; the kingdom is caught in a vicious circle.

Bretonnian witch-hunters are a mixture of clerics and laymen, all of whom must display knowledge of witchcraft, either through knowledge of folklore or learning from scholarly works. To help aspiring witch hunters, the presses of Guisoreux and Parravon turn out many tomes giving long, self-aggrandising accounts of witch trials by famous witch-hunters, but there are also some worthy texts containing genuinely useful information. Many populist witch hunters are the younger

sons of noble families, who have little but self-confidence, arrogance, a taste for high living and a little education to show for their early pampering. They find the position of witch hunter exhilarating and profitable. However, there are others, more professional, who take their duty far more seriously, putting more care into picking out genuine witches and not relying so much on popular fear and unrest to get them a conviction. A small number are driven by deep-seated religious convictions which override all else. They are more vigilante than witch hunter, and kill without a second thought anyone they believe to be a witch or in some other way connected with evil. The authorities and other witch hunters work hard to downplay the gruesome escapades of these fanatical witch hunters.

Most Bretonnian witch-hunters spend more of their time travelling, reading and writing than hurling fiery sermons at terrified peasants. After all, there is only so much ire and bile that can be directed at hapless old women before the mob loses interest. The populist, pleasure-seeking element of witch hunters also enjoys spending the high fees they charge for successfully hunting down witches. On the other hand, when the serious witch hunters do come to pursue a suspected witch after a long intermission, they are all the more determined to put all their energy and effort into the case, whoever the defendant may be and however flimsy the case. For any witch-hunter to have a suspect acquitted or found not guilty is seen as a sign of incompetence and stupidity; something they would never tolerate. They are not above corruption, and can find their professional opinion swayed by large amounts of money and a prudent word or two.

## Publicity and Modus Operandi

### Populist Witch Hunters

Generally, the aristocratic element, which gets involved for the money and excitement, revels in the publicity of huge public trials, surrounded by screaming peasants and comely maidens. The most successful ones - the ones who get the crowds most excited and find the most witches to heckle - become celebrities in their own right, treated with awe and respect by the lower classes and feted by the nobles and rich merchants. They work in the most public way possible, dressing in expensive, well-tailored black and white clothes so as to conform to the public's ideal of a witch hunter. Most wear a plethora of religious emblems, which they brandish and wave about as if the forces of darkness were trying to sneak up behind them. In public, they talk loudly and make a lot of grandiose statements, backed up with a great deal of movement and hand gestures. All of this is very impressive for the peasants, who feel comforted in the presence of someone who so clearly 'knows his stuff' about witches.

Money and fees are probably the greatest concern of populist witch hunters, and they demand substantial payment (as much as 50 gold pieces for the most famous and popular individuals) for every witch convicted. Nevertheless, since fear of witches is not confined to the lower classes, those with the money are glad to pay,



believing that by employing a witch hunter they are doing their bit for the community and ensuring favour with the gods.

Populist witch hunters live a peripatetic life, going from one town to another, sometimes at the request of the local authorities who want to make use of their services. They tend not to work in the countryside unless being employed by a local lord. Not surprisingly, most enjoy a very comfortable and expensive lifestyle, although the ultimate goal is to save enough cash to buy their way into the nobility.

### Professional Witch Hunters

More 'serious' witch hunters only resort to witch trials conducted before a baying mob once all else has failed. To them, getting the right person is generally more important than getting paid. However, that is not to say that the right person is always one whom they ought to be punishing; even witch hunters who seek those they see as witches might in fact be targeting innocents, druids or others with no knowledge of black magic and Chaos, which are their greatest enemies. On the other hand, some very dedicated witch hunters of this kind see all uses of magic outside the regular, accepted clergy as witchcraft; wizards, druids and others find themselves actively hunted down.

Learning and education are the primary weapons the professional witch hunters. All possess a great deal of knowledge about witchcraft, Chaos, Khaine and other occult matters. Most have been to university or undergone training at an important monastery. The majority of professional witch hunters are actually clerics, perhaps members of the religious orders that devote themselves to hunting witches. The order of Saint Antoine (see below) is the largest such group, but there are a few others based in Bretonnia's major cities.

Unlike the popular witch hunters, these dour professionals try not to arouse the emotions of the public, preferring to keep their minds pure and unsullied by darkness (it also makes them less likely to breathe extra colour into witness statements). In fact, they do not even try to attract attention to themselves, usually wearing simple and well-worn clothes to disguise their true purpose. They do not live the rich, luxurious lifestyle of other witch hunters, mainly because their fees are smaller and less frequently paid. Also, nobles and the various arms of local government do not accept them so readily as populist witch hunters, seeing them as at worst interfering and dangerous, at best dull, boring and pedantic. However, it is even more necessary for them to travel than it is for populist witch hunters, as they do not find it so simple to just pick an old woman out of the crowd and brand her a witch. Instead, they conduct careful investigations to try and discover those who might be witches; more often than not their suspicions are unfounded, and they must move on again.

### Fanatical Witch Hunters

A small number of witch hunters try and ensure their victims never even reach a trial; they latch on to suspects and execute them swiftly and with no chance to plead for mercy. They stalk the alleyways and darker corners of

Bretonnian towns and cities with a dagger in one hand, a holy book in the other; nothing can shake these individuals' faith. But this element is small and marginalised; the authorities look on them as crazed vigilantes trying to overreach themselves, and offer hefty rewards for their capture. Even the peasants have very mixed feelings about them: most rightly fear and suspect these religious zealots, but the most pious secretly approve of and sometimes even help their work. Other witch hunters dislike these militants, too, for they tarnish the good relations they have with the public and the government. For the most part, this type of witch hunter is one who has a great deal of faith and (sometimes) a little education; young clerics, initiates, students and the sons of nobles and rich merchants fill their ranks.

The villages in the region of Moussillon in particular are home to many such determined witch hunters, who have taken it upon themselves to prevent the spread of the blight that afflicts the city. They form a loose but feared and powerful brotherhood known as 'Libertas ab Tenebris' (Freedom from the Darkness), which has become a byword for merciless, draconian slaughter and rule through fear. The locals are perhaps as afraid of the avenging knives and swords of Libertas ab Tenebris than they are of the occasional supernatural horrors that emerge from Moussillon.

According to the few rumours that come out of Moussillon, this group was formed some 25 years ago by a zealous witch-hunter called Dolimon Frejus, a wizard who decided to turn to witch-hunting after finding his twin brother, Mael, had devoted himself to daemonology. Whether Dolimon ever caught up with his brother is not known, nor is it certain whether he is still roving the forsaken slums surrounding Moussillon. One or two fanatics have chosen to spread the work of Libertas ab Tenebris to the other large cities of Bretonnia, most notably L'Anguille and Bordeleaux on the coast, which they see as equally full of sin and evil ready to spread into the rest of the kingdom.

### Organisation

There is no central authority regulating witch-hunters; anybody can call themselves a witch-hunter if they want to, but professional witch-hunters normally have some sort of support in their work. Clerics will receive funding and publicity from their cult organisation, which may direct them to suspected cases of witchcraft; some are members of orders particularly dedicated to the hunting and destruction of witches (the largest such order is that of Saint Antoine). Others might attach themselves to a noble, who supplies them with money in return for good publicity with those who attend the trials. It is not unknown for these noble patrons to use their witch-hunters for political ends, having them gather 'evidence' against a particular enemy or to whip up popular anger against witches when the local lord wishes to raise taxes. Some witch-hunters have no regular patron, and work without income except what is taken from witches they discover (one result of being condemned for witchcraft is confiscation of all property; in many cases this part of the sentence is carried out prematurely by acquisitive

neighbours). Temporary contracts are also signed, with nobles, temples or town councils paying a witch-hunter to 'cleanse' their territory over a specified period. Often he will be ordered to root out a set number of witches to his employer's satisfaction; if not enough real witches can be found - which is frequently the case - then he must fulfil his contract by other means, no questions asked.

Professional witch hunters do request a contribution for each witch they discover, but nothing like the extravagant fees demanded by others. They live hard lives, often forced to seek food and shelter at shrines and temples through want of funds. Needless to say, the vigilantes of 'Libertas ab Tenebris' and the ilk would never even think of asking payment for their work; they see themselves as carrying out a crusade. They also consider themselves above the laws of this transitory world; stealing, breaking and entering and committing other crimes does not trouble fanatical witch hunters.

## Witch Trials

Witch trials only come about when a witch-hunter gets involved, for it is they alone who have the will and knowledge to conduct such a procedure correctly. Populist witch hunters are the ones which especially love large and public trials, and the trials detailed below are how they turn out under their direction.

The witch-hunter will have either carried out his own investigations or (more usually) will have been informed that someone is a witch; rewards are offered for those who report on witches, and all denunciations are totally anonymous. He then apprehends the suspect and imprisons them before bringing the unfortunate out for the trial. If in a town, this will be conducted in a courthouse, temple, hall or sometimes in an open square. Rural trials take place either in the local temple or simply wherever an open space can be found. Witch trials are major events, and much of the local population will turn out to watch and listen, alternately jeering, screaming and gasping in horror at what is revealed. The suspect is bound - traditionally with iron manacles - in front of the witch-hunter, who conducts his 'prosecution', listing and embellishing the 'facts' of the case to gain maximum reaction amongst the assembled crowd. Witnesses are called to back up the witch-hunter, and are always primed - and sometimes bribed - beforehand. Virtually no-one is prepared to challenge the word of the witch-hunter or any witnesses, partly through sheer enjoyment of the spectacle, and partly through fear of being challenged with charges of witchcraft themselves.

It is helpful, though not essential, for the witch-hunter to obtain a confession from the suspect; they set the seal on anything the witch-hunter might say, giving a measure of justification. Confronted with the twin pressures of a fierce witch-hunter and a crazed mob, some submit instantly, agreeing to anything put to them in hope of ending the trial. Others are reticent, and stubbornly refuse to admit to the accusations laid against them. In this case, the witch-hunters either take no notice and go straight on to passing sentence (after all, they expect witches to try and deny their activities), or else tortures the suspect. All manner of tortures might be employed, and many witch-

hunters travel with a torturer or else make use of the facilities in local prisons or castle dungeons. See below for a list of tortures sometimes used in Bretonnia.

Once the trial is done and (hopefully) a confession has been produced, the witch-hunter then either accepts the verdict of the assembled mob (which is nearly always a resounding 'guilty!') or, if the trial is taking place before local magistrates or juries, he turns to them for reckoning. Under Bretonnian law, it is technically up to these groups to judge all cases, even witchcraft, with the witch-hunter merely serving to bring in and prosecute the witches. However, in the face of a wild-eyed witch-hunter and an enraged crowd of citizens, there are few judges brave enough to declare anything other than a guilty verdict. In spite of this, there are a few enlightened councils and clerics who do dare to insist on firmer evidence than most witch-hunters provide, or even refuse to sanction the use of torture. Unfortunately, most such radical demands are made when the suspect is wealthy or aristocratic; the authorities may have already received a hefty bribe, or else expect to get one after the trial.

For those found guilty of witchcraft, the sentence is invariably harsh. Death is by far the most common punishment meted out; burning, drowning, hanging and beheading are all used in various regions of Bretonnia. More often than not the execution is carried out in public, to the delight of assembled spectators. On rare occasions, wealthy witches might escape the death sentence, but only in return for a forfeit of all lands and titles, arranged surreptitiously with the witch-hunter or the local legal authorities. Known wizards who are found guilty of witchcraft (that is, of using black magic or of using magic to harm others and commit crimes) may either be executed or else sent to Guisoreux to have the Iron Brand applied. Said to have been crafted ages past by St Marc in order to defeat the fabled sorcerer Duc de Brisolles, anyone who is marked with the Iron Brand is permanently deprived of all magical powers. It is kept in a deep and highly-guarded dungeon in Guisoreux, and prisoners are sent under close escort from all over the kingdom. The loss of magical power - that which defines a wizard's very existence - is a shameful and debilitating punishment for most magicians.

Professional witch hunters' trials take place in private (often in a temple), usually without the public even knowing what is going on. This is because more often than not the individual on trial is more than likely a genuine witch; there would undoubtedly be a panic if such knowledge were to be made public.

The magistrates regulating these trials are either clerics or highly respected lawyers, officials and professionals who can bring their skills and wisdom to bear on the case. In fact, it is far from unknown for them to actually find the defendant innocent if the witch hunter's case is not convincing enough.

## Other Creatures

Although witches are the most common victims of witch hunters, that is not to say they are alone. Professional and fanatical witch hunters see themselves as general preservers of the religious and spiritual equilibrium, in the

same way as the king and his government are supposed to keep order in secular life. For this reason, all threats of this kind are dealt with. Vampires, evil wizards, lycanthropes, ghosts, the undead and incursions of Chaos might all be tackled by devoted witch hunters, but most still see witches as their primary enemy, not least because they are (or are at least thought to be) far more numerous than these other dangers. Also, it doesn't take that much hunting, usually, to deal with many of these horrors, which present a far greater prospect of swift and painful death; many witch hunters, even professionals and some fanatics, are quite happy to stick to witches and call in someone else when they come against anything different.

If they find themselves going up against enemies with physical as well as magical or spiritual powers, then witch hunters are not averse to calling on the public, the king and the nobility to help them. Whether these individuals have the guts or not to face such dangers is another question; witch hunters may assemble a crowd eager to save their home from some occult peril, but there are far fewer ready to confront that peril in person (as the unfortunate witch hunter may find to his cost when things start to look bad).

Populist witch hunters, although they might sometimes throw in an accusation of vampirism or consorting with the dead to keep their trials fresh and entertaining, will normally blanch at the thought of tackling anything really dangerous. At best they will hand the case over to a professional witch hunter (very quietly, with a good excuse, so as not to ruin their reputation) and get out of town; at worst they will just get out of town and try to forget they ever saw anything.

## **The Order of Saint Antoine**

The order of Saint Antoine is the largest, oldest and most powerful clerical order dedicated to hunting witches. It is made up of priests of Verena (and a few of Morr, Myrmidia, Ulric and Shallya) who are empowered by special royal order to hunt down witches and other supernatural menaces to the kingdom.

St Antoine was a priest of Verena who lived in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and was famous for his erudition and determination to rid the land of witches. After moving to the great city of Couronne, Antoine attracted far more fame and support, receiving requests to travel all over Bretonnia to help combat witches. The King at the time, Bernard II le Pieux, was famous for his religious conviction, and gave a great deal of support to Antoine. Eventually he went so far as to grant the cleric special powers allowing Antoine to travel anywhere in the kingdom to hunt witches with full royal support. On Antoine's death, Bernard again assisted in effecting the cleric's final request: that an order of like-minded priests be set up to carry on his work. Ever since, the order of Saint Antoine, with monetary help from the king, the Cardinal of Verena and from other generous patrons, has continued to hunt witches. Although the order has shrunk somewhat in the last few decades, it remains free from corruption, as only those clerics truly committed to its cause choose to join nowadays. When conducting their duty, members of the order work closely with local

temples and judicial authorities, which usually support them thanks to the reputation the order enjoys across the land; clerics in particular see the order of Saint Antoine as a force to be obeyed and respected, partly because it is well known that the head of the order has the ear of the Cardinal of Verena. On a few occasions, foreign rulers in Estalia, Tilea, the Border Princes and the Empire have asked for members of the order of Saint Antoine to aid them. There is actually a small Tilean branch of the order of Saint Antoine active in the south-western Empire.

The temple to Verena dedicated to Saint Antoine in Couronne is the headquarters of the order, which maintains a few temples, shrines and other facilities (including, it is rumoured, torture chambers) in the largest cities of Bretonnia. Its current head is Martin d'Arromanches, a venerable but tough and clever priest of Verena. Members are supported by pensions given from the order's funds, although these are not large; donations to the order have also fallen in recent times. Nevertheless, the order of Saint Antoine is still very widely respected and does sterling work in protecting the spirits of all Bretonnians.

## **Bretonnian Witch-Hunters and Game Rules**

As you might expect from reading the above, Bretonnian witch hunters are a little different to the witch hunter detailed in the Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay rulebook. The Witch Hunter advanced career is essentially for a far more militant Imperial-style witch hunter who relies mainly on force of arms and unswerving determination to do his job. This career would, however, work very well for a fanatical witch hunter in Bretonnia; someone driven to kill without compunction and pursuing a personal crusade against witches. They would certainly have need of the weapons skills here, although the GM may decide not to let them have access to the Public Speaking skill; after all, they don't get many opportunities to address the crowds. Also, entry to this career should work differently; it would take some very profound experience, or the encouragement of a current witch hunter, to get someone to turn to this career. Turning aside after adopting this path would be very hard indeed. As such, the career entry rules should be more flexible.

Professional witch hunters would probably not actually follow the 'witch hunter' career as it is listed in the rulebook. Rather, witch-hunter would be a title they ascribe to themselves that describes what they do, not just what they are; most would actually be Scholars, Lawyers, Clerics, Wizards or possibly Templars. All should also have access to skills representing knowledge of witchcraft, such as History, Identify Magical Artifact, Magical Awareness and Secret Language – Classical; really learned witch hunters may even know Arcane Language – Demonic or Speak Additional Language – Dark Tongue. In addition to these skills, which could be acquired by spending time in study or working with another witch hunter, a professional witch hunter should have access to all normal skills and trappings from their regular career.

Populist witch hunters would most definitely not follow the Witch Hunter advanced career. Most would be



Demagogues, or at least Agitators, representing their rabble-rousing nature. In addition to their normal trappings, they would also have a set of sombre black clothes (this is how the public thinks witch hunters ought to dress) and one or more hefty tomes on witchcraft (which are used more for show than anything else, to be dramatically consulted or quoted from at the climax of a trial).



## Torture in Bretonnia

*'Can I truly be called a man now? I have screamed my heart and soul out, I have lain bare my innermost fears and hopes for the perusal of villeins. Before I came to this place, I was the favourite of my lovers for my skill at music. Now I shall be fortunate if I can take my beauty by the hand ever again without crying out...I hope you are satisfied, my friend.'*

- Le Comte de Louanges, after being tortured for treason

Those being tried for witchcraft and other serious crimes such as treason, murder, theft, and rape are often threatened with torture. Generally the rich are exempt from torture, whilst the poorest members of society might go through agony just for stealing a loaf of bread. Bretonnia is at least imaginative if not always consistent or efficient when it comes to torture; many different types of are used, some far more violent, cruel and bloody than others.

The severity of torture is not always what might be expected; one suspected witch might simply be treated with thumbscrews or the rack, whilst another criminal may be unfortunate enough to be subjected to Strappado. Some are not tortured at all. In general, however, the very worst tortures - Squassation, the Thousand Cuts and the Iron Maiden - are rare and reserved for the most serious crimes; traitors, genuine witches and worse. Throughout every application of torture, the victim is constantly asked to confess to their crimes or to reveal what the torturer wants to know, sometimes with soft and sweet murmurings, at other times with curses, screams and physical blows.

Most judicial authorities in Bretonnia have access to torture facilities in their prison or in the local lord's dungeon; large towns also possess private, semi-legal torture chambers where - for a price - the most excruciating methods can be used to elicit information from victims.

Some of the methods of torture used in Bretonnia are detailed below. In game terms, every time a person is subjected to torture, they should make a Will Power test, with modifiers either for the severity of the torture or for the number of times it has been applied. Generally, each application of torture after the first in the same session will carry a cumulative -10% modifier; especially severe tortures such as the Thousand Cuts, Squassation or the Iron Maiden will also carry an additional modifier to Will Power of -10% or more. Thus, the first application of normal torture is made with no modification to Will Power, but the second application causes a -10% penalty, and the third -20%. More serious torture would have an initial -10% modifier, rising to -20% on the second application and so on.

If any test is failed, then the subject confesses to whatever the torturer wants them to, whether the confession is genuine or not. Note that torture need not necessarily cause many wounds; its object is to cause maximum pain, not always crippling injury. In fact, obvious evidence of excessive torture is sometimes enough to swing the authorities in the opposite direction, since a public outcry would result otherwise. The Thumbscrews and the Rack inflict one wound for the first use, about one Wound for every two times it is applied after the first, or for every two levels the severity is increased. For instance, a witch who is first put on the Rack and refuses to confess suffers one Wound; assuming she holds her tongue, no Wound is suffered the second time the Rack is tightened, but another Wound would be suffered the next (third) time. On the other hand, Squassation, Strappado and the Iron Maiden would be very dangerous, causing at least D3+3 wounds per use, or as much as D6+4 for Squassation.

In addition, every time torture is applied deduct one from the victim's Toughness. When this characteristic reaches zero, they pass out and, if left without proper medical care, may well die after suffering some of the more severe tortures.

**Thumb-screws (or Gresillons):** a vice is used to crush the victim's thumbs. This is a very common torture for witches in Bretonnia, as it leaves few marks for people to use to challenge the witch-hunter's methods.

**Strappado:** a torture imported from Tilea, in which the victim's hands are tied behind their back and fitted to a hoist. This is then used to lift the unfortunate subject up, so that eventually their arms and shoulders are dislocated. Weights might be attached to the limbs to increase the agony.

**Squassation:** a particularly savage Bretonnian adaptation of the above. After being raised above the ground, their shoulders already dislocated and heavy weights attached to their limbs, the hoist is suddenly slackened so that they drop several feet before the rope is tightened again. Those put through squassation can have every bone in their body dislocated or broken; sometimes their arms are actually

pulled out. Few survive more than one or two applications, and those who do are ready to confess to anything...if they're still conscious. In one famous case of a genuine witch - eventually burnt at the stake - Margherite Dolcine endured no less than nine applications of Squassation, merely laughing each time the dumbfounded and increasingly frightened torturers put her through it.

**Pricking:** based on the idea that all witches have a 'cold' mark somewhere on their body where the dark gods have applied their blessing. The suspect is stripped and shaved all over - often in public - then pricked hundreds of times with a pin or small knife to try and find their 'witches' mark'. Pain and blood loss force many into a premature confession; few if any victims actually have a 'witches' mark'.

**The rack:** the victim is attached by their wrists and ankles to a pulley which is gradually tightened.

**Estalian Boots:** as the name suggests, this torture came originally from Estalia. The victim's feet are enclosed in two 'boots': vices which enclose the legs, sometimes just four pieces of wood bound tightly together. These are then either tightened by hand, or else wedges are hammered in, shattering bone and crushing flesh.

**Thrawing:** the victim has one or more ropes tied round their neck, by which they are jerked violently about. This can be far more dangerous and painful than it sounds, especially with burly torturers and stone cells involved.

**Water torture:** this painful but complex torture involves forcing a flexible pipe attached to a large barrel of water into the subject's mouth and throat, forcing them to drink constantly even as the pipe is forced down their gullet into the stomach. When it reaches the stomach, the pipe is sharply withdrawn - often causing internal injuries, occasional disembowling and always immense pain - and the process begins again if the victim still refuses to confess.

**The Thousand Cuts:** a rare and especially barbaric torture in which the victim is tied naked to a stake and the torturer cuts off fingers, ears and lumps of flesh until they confess.

**Pincers:** red hot pincers are used to burn and tear pieces of skin from the victim.

**The Flaming Agony:** the victim's feet or hands are placed in lead or leather boxes, which are then filled either with boiling water or fat, or with molten metal.

**The Iron Maiden:** thought to be an Imperial import, this rare, bloody and usually fatal torture requires a specially prepared box shaped like an upright coffin (often with a beautiful maiden carved on the lid, hence the name). Once the victim is placed in the coffin, a lid fitted with long spikes is closed over them so that the spikes pierce their flesh. They might then be left in the iron maiden, bleeding and suffering ever greater agony until either the coffin is opened or the subject expires.

## Ordeals

Ordeals are another common form of trying a witch, usually resorted to in the absence of a witch-hunter. They are based on the ancient lore of peasant society, and as can be seen they do have a great deal of rationality behind them. Even so, the placebo effect is a documented fact (even in Bretonnia), and it is possible that calling on the help of good, lawful deities can impart some genuine power to these superstitions.

The basic concept of trial by ordeal is to put the suspected witch through some sort of test to prove whether or not she (or he) is a witch. These revered customs can be carried out even by the most simple of peasants, who relish the opportunity to do something out of the ordinary or to get themselves back on a hated member of the community.

Typical ordeals include

**Swimming:** This involves throwing the witch into the nearest well, pond or stream to see if she floats. Those who float are witches; those who sink are innocent but often drown anyway as few spectators have either the will or the initiative to drag them out.

**Ordeal by fire:** This ordeal requires the suspect grasping a heated iron bar and carrying it twenty paces. If the subsequent burn, after being bound for a week, has healed then the suspect is a witch; if it festers then they are innocent.

**Ordeal by faith:** In this trial, the 'witch' is called upon to recite a certain Classical catechism against dark magic, which they are allowed to hear once before having to repeat it back. If the suspect makes the slightest error in pronunciation or pauses significantly then they are guilty. Many villages will entrust their eldest male resident with learning this catechism, which is known as 'La preuve des fees'. A rough translation of it would be: '*Undone be ye legions of darkness, and begone from this place. May our hearts be bold and let our words be true, and may ye trouble us no more*'.

**Waking and walking:** This trial is particularly favoured by more 'lenient' authorities, since it is far less cruel and messy than other trials and tortures. Basically, the witch is deprived of sleep. They are placed into a perpetually lit room, covered so no difference can be told between night and day, and left bound up with guards in constant attendance. Whenever the suspect looks to be going off to sleep, the guards (who are rotated so as not to allow any slackening) shake them into wakefulness and douse them with cold water. Few can sustain this trial for longer than a few days, and are then ready to confess to anything before at last being allowed to rest in peace.

