

The Oisillon Palace

By Rory Naismith

"Ne'er had mine eyes beheld such splendour...a palace, a mansion of the gods, all shining-gilded with gold and purest marble. Within its mighty walls, beyond its luxurious extern, I soon found yet more to dazzle and enthrall; more, I say, than mortal man may dare to dream. Chamber upon chamber, stretching to heaven and hell and back, each one full gloriously ornamented with the most elegant and precious trinkets. And yet all - all this wondrous show of riches and magnificence - was built for but one man...I could not fail but ask myself, could it be that one man could fully take in the Oisillon Palace, or be it that the King of Bretonnia is, as the peasants claim, not a man but a demi-god?"

- Enrico Cattiatore, Tilean scholar, 2507 IC, describing his visit to the Oisillon Palace



The Oisillon Palace is the heart of Bretonnia, the heart of King Charles III's beneficent rule. It is where the King and many of his nobles reside, and as such most of the important decisions are made there before being passed along to the provinces and central government in Guisoreux. Indeed, some of the administrative work is carried out within or nearby the Palace itself by the clerks, lawyers and messengers who daily attend on King Charles.

Physical Description:

Quite simply, the Palace is enormous! Cattiatore's description (see above) does not exaggerate; there are rooms almost beyond count within the main complex, ranging from vast and dazzling ball rooms and apartments decked out by the very best artists and craftsmen the Old World has to offer, down to the drear and functional servants quarters. The Palace is, of course, far larger than even King Charles and his most hedonistic subjects could ever use at one time. Many rooms lie locked and unoccupied, with the furnishings covered in sheets; some have not been opened for decades, save for occasional games of hide and seek or careful inspections by diligent servants. King Charles and his predecessors do not see the Palace's immense size and excess space as in any way wasteful or superfluous: after all, nothing is too much for the King. The Oisillon Palace is not simply a place for the King and his noble subjects to live in, it is a tangible symbol of the majesty and might that is Bretonnia; thus, the King's palace should be infinitely larger than any other monarch in order to fulfil the Bretonnian rulers' vision of themselves and their state. On a more practical level, the size of the Oisillon Palace allows the fickle aristocrats to move their apartments from one side of the complex to the other in order not to get bored, and they are able to live in proximity to the King without living on top of each other. The grandeur of the Palace is not lost on the many ambassadors and guests who visit; there is a huge number of guest rooms, subtly graded in terms of quality according to the prestige of the visitor. Some of the most 'sensitive' rooms are fitted with observation devices and, it is rumoured, hidden traps.

In terms of architecture, the Palace combines a number of styles; most of it is soaring, curved and graceful, painted in shades of cream and pastel to look like something from an angel's dream; other parts look like the castles and fortresses of old Bretonnia, though considerably altered in the interests of comfort and aesthetics. In fact, the heart of the Palace is a very ancient castle, first built by King Guillaume I in about 1300 IC. Although virtually all of the old castle has been removed, one of the walls has been built into the present structure and can be seen on the side of one of the inner courtyards. On midsummer night, the servants claim that the sounds of revelry at King Guillaume's court can still be heard; and it is said that anyone who attempts to climb the ruined spiral staircase in the wall that once led up to a tower will be eternally ensnared by Guillaume's debauched throne room.

Inside the Palace, the areas meant for the nobles and especially for the royal family are as luxurious as possible: no expense is spared to make them comfortable and attractive for their foppish, demanding occupants. Paintings, ornaments, suits of armour, plaster fittings, rich tapestries and more are all to be found adorning the rooms for the nobility; the King's apartments are, quite literally, the most sumptuous in the Old World. Few save Charles's personal servants are allowed into these rooms, and those that are come out staggered by the opulence within. All nobles have an extra +20 modifier to Fellowship tests taken when dealing with anyone unused to such surroundings.

The 'Chambres des Fêtes', which include several large dining rooms, a theatre and the grand ballroom, are said to be the nearest thing to heaven on earth, partly thanks to the delicate ceiling paintings of winking cherubs bearing up King Charles and his illustrious ancestors. It is the custom, whilst dancing below, to fix one's eyes on those of one of the cherubs before casting around for a partner; the nobles believe that each guides the eyes of future lovers together and unites them on the dancefloor, and it is uncanny the number of times that dance partners confess to having looked at the same cherub.

Servants' accommodation is a great contrast to that of their masters. Although generally quite clean (for lower-class Bretonnian standards) and roomy, they are still bare and spartan; the furniture is cheap and serviceable, and there is virtually no decoration. In fact, the masters' stables are better furnished and equipped than most of the servants' rooms.

Areas of the Palace:

The Royal Apartments:

As has been said, there is really no beating the King's private chambers in terms of luxury and opulence. Everything in them is the best; the softest linen (changed twice a day); the smoothest silk; the finest paintings and ornaments; the most voluptuous and charming serving girls. Not just the King lives in this section of the Palace, but also his wife, his brother Tancred, a few more distant relatives and the King's closest friends (such as Louis Villeroy, Charles's current favourite). Musketeers guard the gold-inlaid doors that lead into the apartments; there is only one entrance, used by both servants and masters. Anyone entering is questioned on their purpose; many are sharply turned away by the stern-faced musketeers. In contrast to the fairly lax security elsewhere, there are always at least six musketeers and a sergeant watching the door. A single, very long gallery - which by tradition holds portraits of the Kings of Bretonnia (another tradition says that when there is no room left in the gallery, the Kingdom will fall) - runs all the way from the royal apartment to a balcony at the opposite end of the Palace, overlooking the Grand Courtyard.

The Servants' Quarters:

The large majority of the Palace's great number of servants have their rooms here. These are tightly packed dormitories, with only the Majordomes and a few other higher-level servants having their own rooms. Dingy corridors and steep, winding staircases make the area extremely difficult to find one's way about in; but the servants have to get used to it, for a virtual labyrinth of small corridors and staircases extends across the Palace from here, allowing them to move quickly and unseen from one place to another. Learning the course of the 'Warren', as the servants know it, takes many years. Some have got lost for hours - if not days - in the Warren, and emerging into any of the masters' chambers other than one's destination constitutes grounds for instant dismissal, or worse. The immense kitchens are located at the eastern

end of this area, and are midway between the grand dining area and the storehouses where the supplies come in.

The Guards' Quarters:

Sited at the head of the Great Courtyard to ward off any trouble, this militarised area is where the guards of the Palace are quartered. Like the servants' quarters, these are infinitely less comfortable than the nobles' apartments further back. This part of the Palace is made to look almost like a miniature fortress: armouries, murder holes, portcullises and thick stone walls can be seen all round. What observers tend not to realise is that these are almost entirely for show; the fine, delicate lines, selected so as not to spoil the view of the Palace, would crumble and break under any attack. Prettiness and good paintwork are the hallmarks of the Palace's 'defences', and the guards tend to spend a good deal of their time improving plasterwork, cleaning and painting.

The noble born and finely trained musketeers constitute the elite of the guards of the palace. They head the regular guards who keep watch in and around the Palace and whose efforts are not always consistent. Some of the latter do not actually come from Bretonnia, but are recruited from the Switzer cantons. These troops are respected for their ability to keep silent and stern come what may, and are more stoic and determined than any others. By long-established precedent, a Switzer is always in charge of the Musketeer guard outside the royal apartment. This custom dates back long before the building of the Oisillon Palace; in the distant past, the Kings kept no regular household troops in the style of the Musketeers and, following the assassination of King Louis II (d.1596 IC) by a group of drunken knights who misheard a curse from the Cardinal of Myrmodia, the rulers arranged to have a small force of tacit, loyal Switzers employed to act as personal guards to the king.

All the guards take an immense pride in their work despite their many shortfalls and are carefully selected for their strength, bravery and loyalty (if not always for their wits).

The Administrative Wing:

Here are to be found the clerks, records and archives that run the King's estate and the Palace. Bare floorboards and a strict economy are evident as one wanders these quiet halls, silent save for hushed murmurs about percentages and quotas, and the busy scratching of countless quills. Messengers and petitioners arrive daily from Guisoreux and elsewhere, bringing messages from other parts of the Kingdom; the near-critical situation of royal finances ensures that the clerks, accountants and lawyers are constantly running on adrenaline, and the Marienburg merchants sell vast quantities of exotic and stimulating eastern spices (usually brewed into a hot, dark drink) to the administrative staff at the Palace. Unbeknownst to the lower ranks of officials, the Minister of Finance - Pierre Granvelle - often comes here, stripped of his elegant attire, and is recognised only as a stressed, intelligent and very efficient manager.

The Stables:

Much more than just stables (though stables there certainly are, in great abundance and quality), this part of the Palace houses many of the bulkier objects that are needed in the Palace, though mainly on an occasional basis. Large, darkened halls contain sinister, dust-sheeted masses in great quantity; they include deck-chairs and wrought iron tables for summer; sledges for winter; pianos of many types; spare furniture; and there are other piles in the darker corners that no-one knows anything about nor, for fear of venturing too far from the light, dares to investigate. Rumours persist that a few young servants have disappeared with only a faint scream and a whisper of dusty wind whilst in a chamber thought to contain artefacts brought back from the Crusades in Araby many centuries ago. Locks have been placed upon the doors to this large room, known as the 'Khedive's Treasury', and it is a closely guarded secret amongst the most senior servants that these heavy padlocks have to be replaced and fervently blessed and replaced every month.

The Nobles' Apartments:

Slightly over half the Palace is given over to accommodation for the many aristocrats who come to be in attendance on the King, leaving their estates to the management of relatives and stewards. Some have never actually visited their lands; others split the year between the Palace and the provinces. The many suites and chambers are split into blocks and sections according to the courtly factions that dominate court life, with the largest and most favoured factions (the De Semblancy faction and the faction surrounding Cardinal Dumourieux) having the rooms nearest the royal apartments: a mark of great prestige. Wide, red-carpeted corridors run between the various apartments, and are used by the nobles when descending to meals, attending court and other occasions. Venturing out of one's chambers is almost like stepping into no-man's land: both gentlemen and ladies are coy and awkwardly polite, always on the lookout for any sign of misdemeanour or weakness that can be pounced upon in the cut-throat world of courtly intrigue that dominates the Palace.

The 'Chambres des Fêtes':

Comprising the huge rooms that are used for occasions within the Palace, the 'Chambres des Fêtes' lie between the royal apartment and the nobles' apartments. Ballrooms, dining rooms, meeting rooms and others with no fixed purpose are to be found here, including the huge and near-celestial Grand Ballroom; there is also a private theatre for the amusement of the King and his nobles, with an in-palace troupe of players and musicians laying on performances every day. Their master is, unusually, a Wood Elf by the name of Uthlin Saramir, who has been overall director of the Oisillon Palace's entertainment every since it was built. Although he is all smiles and charm with the King and his courtiers, it is said that his steely gaze and long willow rod have reduced many players, dancers and musicians to tears and screams during rehearsals. Just like every servant (and noble, for that matter) Uthlin and his companions know that they

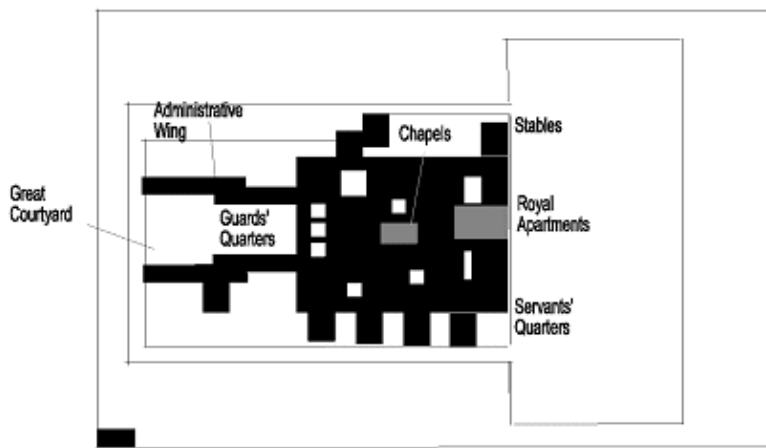
must put on a brilliant, dazzling performance whenever the King desires: given Charles and especially his wife's critical attitudes towards music and theatre, the troupe is kept in constant readiness to perform an extravaganza, and those who can't hack a fifteen-hour day are thrown onto the streets.

The Great Courtyard:

Just in front of the Palace itself, facing Oiseau, is the Great Courtyard: a large open area which comprises the space between the two front wings of the Palace and a substantial expanse beyond. A series of three high iron fences run across the Great Courtyard, and varying numbers of gates through them are opened for different occasions; the innermost two are never opened. The outermost fence extends all the way around the Palace grounds and is many miles in length. Some sections are not very well kept, and people and animals could slip through to tackle the hedges, dogs and woods beyond. Those who know the Palace and its perimeter well can usually find some way of getting in, and once through it is possible to make one's way into the main complex itself; the guards are mostly stationed at the front to ward off gaping churls and look good in their surcoats, whilst the nobles rely primarily on self-confidence and burly servants to keep the occasional curious interlopers out of harm's way.

One or more regular guards are stationed at the many small gates in the outer fence, which are used for discrete comings and goings by both masters and servants. Although this technically means that there is nothing more than a wall or fence standing between the King of Bretonnia and the wilderness, the situation is not quite so bad as one may think. For a start, the fences surrounding the Palace itself and the immediate surroundings are very high and well-maintained (and, according to some sources, protected by magic), and could easily stand up to the efforts of a peasant mob. Beyond this area, there are dogs and dense thickets making access to the Palace difficult. Also, the guards make up in numbers what they lack in wits; patrols are frequent, and there is nearly always a group of guards fairly near at hand, especially close to the Palace. They are ready to summon reinforcements or, in dire circumstances, send word to the Musketeers and even the army barracks midway between Oiseau and Guisoreux.

At the front of the Oisillon Palace, just inside the second of the three high fences and rising slightly over the top of it, there is a high, wrought iron rostrum, embossed with the letters CR III: it is from here that King Charles III de la Tete d'Or speaks very occasionally to the public, giving them messages and speeches in time of crisis or on some special occasion. In his reign so far King Charles has only ascended the rostrum four times, and three of those were to dispel rumours of his death. The rostrum is more often used to deliver messages from the King, royal decrees or, rarely, gifts to the joyful masses. It is more usual for the King to appear at the balcony above the main entrance to the Palace itself; this is far too distant from even the second fence to be seen clearly or targeted by any missile, but even so distant a



glimpse of the King is enough to send assembled mobs into paroxysms of delight and patriotism.

The Chapels:

The Bretonnian royal family have always been pious, though not always on a regular basis. However, when the Oisillon Palace was constructed it was decided early on that a large complex would house a chapel to every major deity worshipped in the country. Thus, at the heart of the Palace (almost dead in the centre, in fact) there is a series of interconnected chapels and temples, with accommodation attached for the clerics who serve them. Both nobles and servants are able to use these chapels, although there is a clearly defined hierarchy within them: the aristocrats get comfortable seats close to the pulpit or altar, whilst the lower orders are discretely placed in a gallery or behind a screen. Although the different tenets of the various deities represented are there to be seen, there is a generally more stylish, luxurious and ostentatious feel to all the chapels. Paintings, plaster fittings and elaborate decoration can be found in all, with subject matter and colouring showing the difference. The largest chapels here are those of Shallya, Myrmidia, Manann and Morr. Each of these is staffed by two clerics and four or more initiates, who organise daily services and minister to those who request aid. Smaller chapels are dedicated to the cults of Taal, Ulric and the Lady of the Lake, with just one cleric and one initiate on hand. Some of these chapels fulfil other roles, too; the chapel of the Lady of the Lake, for instance, is the centre of activity for the Knights of the Holy Blood when they are at the Palace, and the spacious chapel of Myrmidia is by tradition the place where extremely sensitive trials involving the nobility are held, often presided over by the Cardinal of Myrmidia and sometimes the King himself. A few faithful souls who have died in the Palace have chosen to be interred here, buried beneath great inscribed slabs in the floor of the chapel of their liking, a monument for all to see. This comes at no small fee, but it is a little-known fact that these tombs also act as morbid vaults for those expecting to use them and for the families of the deceased, encouraging their use by the especially rich and protective. Covered by rocks weighing many tons, there is little way even a very ingenious thief could break into any of these tombs to find what lies within.

In the midst of the plotting and backstabbing that constitutes life at the Palace, a spell in the quiet of the

chapels appeals to many nobles and servants - although it has been whispered that some initiates and even clerics are not above accepting bribes to listen in when worried visitors confess their fears and misdemeanours. Worse, a few late-night visitors to the chapels have heard odd sounds, almost rapturous screams, emanating from the chapel of Morr. Pere Urbain Grainier, the presiding cleric of Morr, is a young and intelligent man, apparently highly respectable due to his noble birth (he has links with the De Semblancy family); perhaps the only odd thing about him is the voluminous and secretive correspondence he carries out with 'student friends' in Middenheim and Nuln, and the occasional large packages that arrive for him, which one inquisitive porter claimed had air holes punched in the top.

People in the Oisillon Palace:

The King and Nobility:

Altogether only a few hundred people live in the Oisillon Palace with the status of 'masters'. These include the King himself and his household, together with the various factions of the nobility and a few other honoured visitors such as foreign ambassadors and favoured wizards, scholars and physicians (at least a few of all three are always on hand as official royal servants). Needless to say, they all live a life in which they want for virtually nothing; servants are in constant attendance, and they live in the midst of splendour and beauty. They see very little of the immense work and cost that goes into maintaining this quality of existence.

Normally they will not rise until at least about 11 am (some do not even get to bed until then, however, and live a virtually nocturnal existence) and must then spend an hour or more dressing and taking a lengthy toilette. This applies to both men and women; fashionable dress is complex, very expensive, difficult to put on and usually impractical. Currently the 'in thing' for both is to simulate peacocks and phoenixes; outfits are covered in multicoloured stitching - flame-coloured for men, blue and green for women - and ladies wear enormous fake peacock tails up to eight feet long.

Once the aristocrats have woken and dressed, it is customary to assemble in the Grand Ballroom around 3 pm to greet the King if he so wishes. This is the great event of the day; the factions gather into groups, eyeing one another from across the glittering ballroom and vying

to approach and draw the King's favour. Gaining his ear is vital to advancing oneself, so there is a great deal of very well-mannered pushing and shoving to get access to the King. Occasionally there have been broken fingers and raised fists as particularly impassioned courtiers conflict for an audience with King Charles, who either sits atop his throne or meanders amongst the assembled crowd. However, since any hint of genuine violence in the King's presence would be grounds for banishment, there is at least a show of decorum and organisation; so much so that Charles rarely notices anything other than a large crowd before him. Sometimes, however, he declines to greet the nobles, in which case they remain in their apartments and take their meals there (breakfast is usually forgotten or else eaten in private), perhaps venturing out if they've arranged to meet someone, either in another set of apartments or in one of the many rooms available for use; excursions into the extensive gardens and grounds of the Palace are also common, especially in summer. It is common, when leaving one's apartment at any time, to take at least a couple of burly but well-appointed bodyguards; the poor state of the regular guards is a frequent source of amusement. Of course, if King Charles decides he wants to emerge, then nearly all those present in the Palace will attend; not to do so would be to invite dishonour and possible retribution from the slighted monarch.

It is in the evening and hours of darkness that the masters of the Palace really come to life. Balls and parties take place every other night, often celebrating birthdays, anniversaries of various occasions and some religious festivals. Fancy-dress is a common aspect of balls, with masques being especially popular. Wine, punch and cognac flow freely, and many courtiers (especially young gentlemen) get inebriated every night, sleeping it off during the day and waking themselves up again for another evening's entertainment with strong smelling salts. Morals are also very flexible, and some aristocratic couples have amazingly tolerant and liberal relationships based on a combination of mutual ignorance and discretion. Frustrated love affairs, illegal offspring and desperate medical remedies for infection and pregnancy are amongst the more unsavoury and less-discussed troubles that face the nobles at the Oisillon Palace.

The Servants:

A truly vast number of people live in and near the Palace working as servant in some capacity or another. These include cooks, maids, cleaners, footmen, Majordomes and countless others. Some are brought in from the provinces by their masters, but the majority live all year round in the Palace. The most important set of servants in the Palace are those who wait on the King; only those who display the most impeccable manners, loyalty and (in the case of women) comeliness are ever elevated to this position. Posts on the King's staff are highly coveted: not only is the pay increased and the prestige value immense, but on retirement it is customary for dutiful servants to be sent away to a comfortable place in the country with a good pension - so they do not use their knowledge to any untoward purpose. It is also not uncommon for once-beautiful and submissive maidens to leave quickly and

quietly with somewhat more to remember the King or one of his courtiers by. The location of these 'little places in the country' is a very well-kept secret.

The servants' day begins much earlier than that of their masters. All are up and about by 6 am at the latest; some rise two hours earlier. A great many tasks must be carried out before the aristocrats awake: cleaning of the corridors and main chambers, cooking and getting ready for the rest of the day's events (there is something special going on virtually every day somewhere in the Palace) are the main ones. Once the masters begin to appear, when most of the frenetic work of cleaning and preparing is done, the servants make ready to attend to the nobles. This is a demanding job; nearly all of them need help to be washed and dressed, and demand food and drink to be brought to them. They also consider it a slur on their honour to ever be in a room where there are no servants at all; they imagine they are expected to wait on themselves.

Taking care of the masters occupies the rest of the day for the servants. Things get even more busy and complicated in the evening as the main meal of the day approaches. Something spectacular is expected every night, and the head cook is called out and ridiculed (sometimes injured) if the food is not up to scratch. The Oisillon Palace gets through a new head cook about once every six months.

The festivities and entertainments that inevitably follow dinner take up the evening and night for the servants, and cleaning up after them often lasts until the early hours. To cope with problems such as these, certain groups of servants, who receive higher pay, sleep during the day and keep strange nocturnal hours so as to see to these duties whilst the bulk of the staff snatch a few well-deserved hours of sleep before starting it all again the next morning.

The Majordomes:

The highest-level servants in the Palace are the Majordomes. Recruited from the most devoted, fastidious and well-mannered young men, the Majordomes undertake a long and arduous training in a special college located outside the Palace in the town of Oiseau, known as 'Le Centre Lidou' after its founder. After a ten-year education, they are ready to become the personal manservant to an aristocrat. Majordomes have an extremely strong sense of dignity and propriety; doing things 'correctly' and keeping up a routine in the face of all inconveniences are their aims. The best Majordomes keep calm and well-organised at all times; all problems and needs are foreseen, and they are never surprised or flustered enough to betray any sign of real emotion. A mastery of etiquette and the countless delicacies of running a great household are also included in a Majordome's training.

In his time, a Majordome becomes attuned to his master's requirements, whilst his master comes to depend absolutely on the Majordome's trust, judgement and powers of organisation. Maintaining their reputation in the eyes of other servants - and especially other Majordomes - is another important part of a Majordome's duty, and he literally never lets his guard down to show

any sign of weakness to lesser (or greater) mortals; dignity must be upheld at all times.

Amongst themselves, Majordomes' conversation turns to the greatest Majordomes of the past; those who have served the greatest masters most successfully, and anecdotes are lovingly recounted of order and cleanliness triumphing over all the odds. One of the most famous Majordomes was Pierre Jeyves, Majordome to Duc Philippe Duplessy, the aristocrat and explorer. Jeyves followed his master on his ill-fated expedition to the New World, and during the harrowing trek through steaming, stinking jungle that followed, he managed to shave the Duc's moustaches every morning and have a freshly laundered shirt ready hanging on the tree beneath which he slept every night. It is said that

those Majordomes who fail their master in some irredeemable way kill themselves, traditionally by poison.

Player Character Majordomes:

It is rare, but it is possible for VERY professional and well-regarded individuals to come straight into the position of Majordome without spending their youth at Le Centre Lidou, though this is dependent on finding and serving a noble (and, as the best Majordomes swear, the master must be an aristocrat, never a wealthy commoner), and on gaining acceptance from other Majordomes. There is no formal guild structure, but word gets round quickly about anyone trying to pass himself off as a real Majordome. Majordomes are accorded a great deal of respect by non-nobles (+20 to Fellowship tests) for their inscrutability and links to the upper classes. For those player characters who may wish to become Majordomes, the career details are given below. Note that before taking on this career, the character MUST be attached to a person of suitable rank (a person of noble birth). Since the Majordome is expected to spend every waking moment seeing to this person's needs, it is very difficult for them to serve someone who is not a member of their party. Bear in mind that the relationship between a Majordome and his master is not simply a scam to force one player to follow the beck and call of another; there are certain expectations of the master, too, and it is hoped that this relationship will allow for interesting and rewarding roleplaying.

ADVANCE SCHEME

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
	+10	+10		+1	+4	+20		+10	+10	+20	+40	+30	+10

CAREER ENTRIES: BASIC: Artisan's Apprentice, Scribe, Servant, Squire, Student.

CAREER EXITS: ADVANCED: Charlatan, Forger, Spy.

SKILLS: Acute Hearing, Cook, Etiquette, Heraldry, Read/Write, Shadowing, Silent Move - Urban, Tailor.

TRAPPINGS: Two very clean and smart suits; sewing kit; copy of *Follenvie's Guide to the Ancient and Glorious Nobility of Bretonnia*.

The Guards:

Several hundred guards of various types live in and around the Palace, including about a company of Musketeers. They are divided into a large number of patrols and sections, although in practice duties are

generally undertaken on an as-and-when basis depending on who can remember what exactly needs doing and who's there to do it. The most important task of the numerous general guard is to be seen by the peasants, proving that more than high fences, arrogance and pastel-coloured stonework protects the King.

Meeting the Guards:

Anyone drawing near to the outer fence during the hours of daylight has a 10% chance of meeting a regular guard patrol; this rises to 20% at the second fence, and 60% at the inner fence (even the regular guards tend to notice someone get that far). However, if anyone does attempt to enter the Palace directly, there is a 90% chance that someone will see them, and a 75% chance that they will raise a hue and cry. All of these probabilities are half as likely at night time, and each should be repeated every twenty minutes. Also, on special occasions or when a crowd of peasants assembles for some reason, a patrol of guards will always appear within ten minutes. Actually within the Palace (that is, beyond the last great fence), there is always a 65% chance of meeting a guard patrol, and there is a 20% chance that this patrol will be of Musketeers. There is always a heavy guard of Musketeers outside the King's apartments.

Not surprisingly, those caught trying to enter the Palace are severely punished: commoners can expect to receive at best a severe beating and a period in Oiseau's dungeon; at worst, they may be killed or mutilated.

The Management:

This is the name applied to the body that is charged with the overall control and management of the Oisillon Palace. It consists of personnel from the administrative department, the royal household and the head servants; about a dozen individuals in all who come together for a meeting every Monday, Thursday and Saturday (or whenever duty calls). Plans for important celebrations, the King's wishes and other information is discussed at the meeting, and the relevant persons are made aware of any decisions taken. The two most important members of the Management are Gui Pollux, the King's Majordome (a dark, middle-aged man well known for his acid wit, poker face and faultless conduct), and Victoire Udote, the former accountant and lawyer with the unenviable task of managing the financial affairs of the Palace (he is famed for his nervous twitch, stutter and delicate digestion; all of which have appeared in the three years since he took on this position). Amongst the servants, the Management is a feared and omnipotent body that can at any time give them their notice or, it is rumoured, worse (word is occasionally heard of particularly inept maids and footmen being found strangled in dark alleyways in Oiseau).

The administration:

A small army of clerks, lawyers, scribes, accountants and others have offices in the Palace. Some of the higher-level officials do not actually live in the dismal rooms provided for them in the Palace, but have houses or apartments outside in the town. They lead extremely stressful lives, staggering from one expensive near-disaster to the next in the name of King Charles. Few have the inclination, let alone the time or the energy, to get involved in matters far

removed from work, sleep, strong spiced drinks and the occasional cheap meal.

Non-humans:

There are very few non-humans present in the Oisillon Palace on a regular basis. A few Halflings work as cooks or as entertainers for the nobles (who find their small size extremely amusing); there is a troupe of eight Halflings who work with Uthlin Saramir and the other members of the in-palace entertainment group. Their leader is Ilmo Sackaspuds; he enjoys a fearsome reputation amongst the staff as the only individual able to stand up to Saramir.

No Elves except Uthlin Saramir actually live permanently in the Palace. In fact, there has been some speculation as to why Saramir does stay; he has not left the Palace grounds ever since it was built, and - most interestingly - he has never spoken to another Elf in that time, scorning the presence of visitors. This may be due to his somewhat unusual behaviour, for an Elf; he is obsessive, prone to excitement, arrogant and prone to resorting to curses and even violence. The master of Palace entertainments is not exactly approachable on the motive for this dislike of other Elves, and only occasional wild rumours give any hint as to the supposed truth. Some of these state that he is actually a fugitive, seeking asylum amongst humans; others believe that he is beholden unto the Kings of Bretonnia for some reason; the most fanciful (and treasonous) claim is that he is not a Wood Elf, nor even an Elf from the Kingdom of Ulthuan, but rather a Dark Elf from across the ocean, watching and studying the humans for his own and his masters' mysterious ends.

Aside from Uthlin Saramir, there are fairly frequent Elven embassies to the Palace from Loren, which, lying within the boundaries of Bretonnia, has close and by and large good relations with the court. The visitors do not approve of the extravagance and luxury of the King's court, but are always made welcome for their exoticism. By ancient tradition, a deputation of Wood Elves visits the court for a week during the summer every three years. This is a major event, with great gift-giving on both sides and reaffirming of old alliances. Since this is more or less the only regular visit of the Elves to a human court, the Empire, Marienburg and other states are always very keen to have officials and representatives on hand to court the visitors. The culmination of the visit, which was last held in 2510 IC, is a great party and contest in the grounds of the Palace. An immense feast of both Elven and Bretonnian delicacies is prepared; there are jousts between nobles from Bretonnia, Loren and many other lands; archery contests - dominated by the eagle-eyed Elves - take place; and dancing and tale-telling continues until the sun rises the following morning.

Ulthuan occasionally sends ambassadors to the Palace, but only very rarely; letters are the most frequent mode of communication. The last time a High Elven visitor came to the Oisillon Palace was in 2502 IC, and even then the wise mage who came with a small company of fellow Elves spent only four days in the Palace, and passed most of those in studying intensely the Nigle Marbles and other parts of the royal collection.

Dwarfs naturally dislike the hedonistic and opulent nature of the Palace. A few Dwarf artisans were

contracted during the building of the Palace years ago, but a long-running dispute over pay and conditions the stubborn craftsmen left shortly before completing their work. There was some bad blood, and (it is said) a good deal of drunken violence between the Dwarfs and the human workers; a fond story still told by the servants and guards that one Dwarf, out of wits on cheap ale, fell into the cavity between two layers of stone together with all his tools and was accidentally walled up the following day, never to emerge again. The plaintive sounds of his hammering for help can still be heard echoing through the halls of the servants' quarters. Nowadays, no Dwarfs live in the Palace permanently, and only one deputation of ambassadors from the Dwarfs' holds in the Grey Mountains has ever been to the Oisillon Palace. They did not like what they saw, and were laughed at by the dandified aristocrats; the Dwarfs swiftly concluded their business and departed. Now, all communication with the Dwarfs is carried out by messenger, despite the King's entreaties for another embassy to help shore up relations on the fragile Imperial border running along the line of the Grey Mountains.

The Grounds:

Around the Oisillon Palace are very extensive gardens, forests and other grounds; about ten square miles of ornamental garden, all told, together with about fifty square miles of wild land for hunting and other purposes.

The gardens are amongst the most picturesque and well-kept anywhere; a legion of gardeners works year-round to keep them so. There are long, beautiful avenues lined with tall trees. Courts and open spaces are provided for a number of sports, and there is a track suitable for racing on horses or traps; whilst the men enjoy the racing (the Duc de Lyonnais and Arnaud Alphonse Capucinet are great riders and even greater racing rivals), the ladies enjoy betting on the winner, though they are not above doping horses and loosening wheels on traps. Flowers, shrubs, herbs and other plants can also be found in the gardens for the pleasure of the King and the nobles, for in the summer and spring they tend to spend most of their time out of doors admiring the greenery and taking part in games and entertainments. Gardens of all styles can be found, from lakeside groves to very formal walled gardens with well laid-out borders and pretty ornamental fountains. Merely finding one's way about the gardens is a challenge, even for some of the gardeners themselves; some have devoted their entire lives to making one tiny part of it absolutely perfect, and watch with pride as the King or one of the greatest nobles pauses to admire their work. The topiary gardens, the life's work of Jules Pagnol (who died recently in a tragic accident, falling from a ladder whilst working on his beloved creations) are especially well-liked; Pagnol had a special flair for making uncannily lifelike and animated topiary hedges, and his works include dogs, cats, lions, birds, flowers and even dragons. For some reason, however, the other gardeners never liked Pagnol or his secluded part of the garden, and are very superstitious about it. None would dare venture in there alone.

At the heart of the gardens, which extend behind the Palace complex, there is a hedged-off patch containing a

number of tall trees that look conspicuously unkempt amidst the tightly-ordered splendour of the other. No-one, not even the Palace gardeners, are allowed into this garden on King Charles's express orders. Exactly why this is so is a painful secret known only to the King, a few of his closest friends, and his oldest servants; none dare speak openly of it for fear of arousing Charles's sorrow and, with it, his wrath. If they can be persuaded to speak, they will explain that this was the favourite garden of Charles when he was a boy, before the death of his father. There, he and his brother and sisters used to play; at this point the teller reminds the listener to note the word *sisters* as at present the King has but one sister, Annette, wife of the Duc de Semblancy. However, the King did at one time have another sister, elder than Annette, who used to dote on him and, in return, attracted his especial affection. Her name, Claudine, is never to be spoken, thanks to Charles's orders. The story goes that, whilst Charles was aged only seven, he and his beloved sister were playing in this garden, and chose to climb one of the tall trees that are to be found there. Whilst their nanny sat nearby, afraid of muddying her petticoat, they climbed higher and higher. Suddenly there was a scream and a crash, and the young, beautiful Claudine lay on the ground beneath the tree with a broken neck; she died in agony two days later. Charles was bereft: no-one was able to console him, and for days he refused even to speak. Eventually he returned to something approaching his former self, though those who knew him said something had changed, had died in him with Claudine and even to this day remains bitter and unhealed. All he ever said of the incident, and even this he soon regretted, was that 'the man in the mask pushed her'. According to hearsay, voices can be heard as the chill wind howls through the forbidden garden; some say they is the screaming of a child, others that it is mad, cruel laughter from beyond the pale.

Oiseau, the Town:



Ever since the building of the Palace began (about fifty years ago, under King Charles I l'Énorme) and the court moved in permanently (in 2498 IC), the once-peaceful and quiet village of Oiseau has expanded into a quite substantial town. Most of those

who live there are connected in some way to the Palace; many have a relative on the serving or administrative staff, and others work outside the Palace itself, for example in producing the many items consumed on a daily basis in the Palace. A good number, however, live there for no better reason than that they are near the King and the most important nobles in the land, and go in daily hope of receiving some sort of employment or favour. A few do have this luck, and certainly the chances of finding some sort of decent work here in the staff of one aristocrat or another are quite high; but even so, there are masses of unemployed people wandering the streets in seek of some sort of entertainment and way of earning money. The constant traffic of messengers, wagon-drivers and visitors in connection with the Palace also brings custom to the

town's many taverns, inns, traders and red light districts - and a few of the more adventurous and extroverted aristocrats from the Palace descend from time to time to take in the sordid delights the peasants of Oiseau have to offer.

Even more so than other Bretonnian towns and villages, the buildings of Oiseau have been thrown up in a hurry with little care for safety, aesthetics or health. It is not actually very big at all, but constraints laid on constructors by the Palace authorities mean that all building must take place in a ludicrously small space. Houses are very tall - up to six stories - with the streets below being dark, narrow and extremely winding and irregular; the place has been likened to a maze, with dead ends and u-turns aplenty. The majority of the buildings were intended only as temporary, and collapses are not infrequent. The streets are knee-deep in dirt and rubbish, for drainage in the town is very poor. Crime, too, is very much in evidence, for there is both a large percentage of people out of work, and a high number of people with money (pay from the Palace). Assaults, murders and robberies are commonplace, and it is a brave soul who roams the dingy heart of Oiseau after dark, especially on a Friday (traditionally the day when the servants get paid).

But in the midst of the squalor and thuggery that dominate the dirty and crowded town of Oiseau, there is a surprising level of reverence for the King: none will hear a word said against him, and those who speak poorly of Charles and his government are amongst the first to fall foul of the town's many footpads. Equally, aristocrats who attend the brothels and taverns are treated with deference and awe and respect. The clearest manifestation of this patriotism is in the Chapelle du Roi, which is located close in the servants' quarters of the Palace itself. This simple, rather austere temple is a place of pilgrimage for people across Bretonnia afflicted with the 'King's Evil'; a painful and all-but incurable illness that causes unsightly blemishes and spots to appear all over the body and can, in extreme cases, prove fatal. It is said that the only way of getting rid of the King's Evil is to be touched by the King of Bretonnia himself, and it is in order to serve this need that the Chapelle du Roi exists. Travellers arrive almost daily from across the Kingdom in the hope of being touched by the King and cured of their agony. They stay in hostels around the Chapelle, where little trinkets and mementoes of the visit can be bought from the town's traders. Pere Jules keeps the Chapelle, with the dutiful aid of two old and doughty sisters that have seen virtually every skin complaint known to man and are inured to the most nauseating of sights (and smells). King Charles obliges the devotion of his subjects by coming on the last Sunday of every month to touch those afflicted with the King's Evil, always closely guarded by at least a dozen Musketeers. Although the success rate is far from 100%, even those few physicians who have come to the Chapelle scoffing at the pious hopes of the simple pilgrims come away amazed by the instant recovery shown by a few. The most cynical claim this to be some sort of act to show off the supernatural power of the King, but most believe that Charles III - like every other King of Bretonnia for over 1000 years - has the divine power to heal the King's Evil.

Daily Events in the Oisillon Palace:

For every day the characters stay in the Palace, roll a D100 on the table below to see what's going on. Feel free to create other events and occasions as you need; this is intended only to supply fill-in action before moving on with the rest of an adventure. Remember to tailor the affects of each one depending on whether the characters are masters or servants.

01-10 PARTY: Either a birthday, a religious festival or something else, such as the King's whim (equal chance of each). Much time spent by the servants cleaning and preparing; much time spent gossiping and dressing by the masters. Includes dancing, buffet and lots of drink. Doesn't start until evening; lasts until the early hours. There is a 50% chance that a party will be themed in some way; themes may include fancy dress, masques or basis on the music and culture of another country.

11-20 BANQUET: Held on special occasions, usually memorials of famous battles and events, and some religious occasions. Cooking goes on all day (probably for several days before as well) with many extra helpers being roped in. Most of the lavish food (ten or more courses is the norm) served at the banquet in the evening goes uneaten; it is discretely shared amongst the staff or given to the royal hounds and swine.

21-30 SCANDAL: One or more members of the nobility have had some shocking secret either insinuated or revealed. Aristocrats spend the day hurrying about in excited little groups, making servants run hither and thither with notes and letters. More often than not rumour blows any scandal out of all proportion (though genuine filth is far from difficult to dig up), and most are forgotten within days. If men are involved, there is a 25% chance that the scandal leads to a duel with either swords or pistols. The servants probably notice little; they generally do not concern themselves with the masters' affairs of this type.

31-40 NEWS: A major piece of new information stirs the life of the Palace. There is an equal chance that this will be of a political nature or of a personal nature, concerning the King or one of the most important nobles (or one of the servants, depending on where the player characters are working in the Palace). Typical bits of political news might be a declaration of war, a particularly juicy scandal, the death of a ruler, an important battle, or a major foreign wedding. Personal news may be something like a death in a family, a marriage or a scandal outside the Palace. News is avidly discussed for the next two or three days, then forgotten.

41-50 DIPLOMATIC EVENT: Two or more nations with ambassadors at the Palace strike a deal or have some other important business. This may be the signature of a treaty, a declaration of war, the arrangement of a dynastic marriage or an alliance. There is a 50% chance that the dignitaries and states involved lay on a banquet or party to mark the occasion.

51-60 CRIME: Someone has committed a crime in the Palace. There is a 50% chance that the culprit will be known, and a further 50% chance that the guilty party will

be a servant. The crime will always be something noticeable and significant to attract the gossip of either servants or masters (or both); typical crimes that might attract such attention are thefts, rapes, assaults and murders.

61-70 BIRTH/DEATH (50% chance of either): Someone of the player characters' social level has either died or given birth. Both occasions call for considerable activity, especially on the part of servants; noble deaths mean services and burial, with an attendant wake; noble births mean lavish parties and banquets in honour of the new-born. Births and deaths among the servants gain little if any notice from the masters, but mean just as much to the staff.

71-80 VISIT: Someone pays a visit to the Oisillon Palace. They may be a foreign ambassador, a rich and well-known aristocrat, a scholar, a wizard, an explorer, a foreign aristocrat or ruler, a troupe of specialised entertainers or a famous artist. All of these will draw the adoration of the aristocrats for a little while, but generally they lose interest after a couple of days. Servants tend not to pay much attention to important visitors, as they rarely get a chance to converse with them or enjoy their talents.

81-90 SPECIAL ENTERTAINMENT: An unusual entertainment is laid on for the masters. Examples might include a play, a concert, an excursion into a more distant part of the Palace gardens, an especially elaborate and important banquet or party (the King's birthday, for example) or a large-scale game (hunts and horse-races with attendant betting are not unknown). This calls for particularly hard work from the staff, who have to work flat out from dawn till dusk getting everything running smoothly.

91-00 NOTHING: Nothing of particular note is happening today; an unusual enough event in itself in the Oisillon Palace!



Adventure Ideas:

The Attics:

Partly because of the problems associated with building cellars and basements in the Palace, for the water table is extremely high in this region (digging down just a couple of feet releases a trickle), the Kings' architects built in a great many attics and towers which soar over the main chambers and thoroughfares of the Palace. These serve a number of purposes today: the tallest, most conspicuous central tower, known simply as 'La Grande', houses a great clock and bells that chime in the hours of day. Its keeper, Monsieur Jourdain, is a reticent and shadowy figure who is said to be paranoid about coming into contact with the ground and has spent years in 'La Grande', having his meals sent up by winch. He is extremely protective about 'his' tower, and resents anyone entering, let alone questioning his work. What he would do to anyone who entered unannounced is unknown; and due to the fact that the workings of 'La Grande' are said to be made of gold to facilitate correct timekeeping, there are those who might be desperate enough to consider such a venture.

Other areas of the attics and towers are given over to storage and, known only by those close to the King, to the holding of important political prisoners. They are kept in cages, suspended above a ground covered with sand, and under constant guard; exactly what these unfortunates have done to merit such treatment is a mystery, and one is even compelled to wear a mask at all times to hide his identity.

Great swarms of bats have colonised the attics, and can be seen swooping around the towers and upper stories of the Palace during the hours of darkness. It is a common belief amongst the people of the town that the bats watch over the Great Courtyard in front of the Palace, and will attack anyone who dares try and sneak across. Everyone can speak of a friend of a friend who knew someone that suffered this fate, but it is enough to discourage all but the most foolhardy from attempting an attack on the Palace.

La Chambre Noire:

King Charles III de la Tete d'Or, like his father and grandfather before him, knows the value of an efficient secret service, which can keep down the most dangerous political enemies and plots against the crown. Very few, even amongst the nobility, know anything of La Chambre Noire other than its name and vague purpose; many suspect (quite rightly) that it is based in the Oisillon Palace. In fact, La Chambre Noire is just that: 'The Black Room'. It is found in the heart of the royal palace, far from prying eyes, and has no windows or anything else on the walls; moreover, to guard against the members of the group who control the extremely delicate service from knowing each other's true identity, meetings take place in absolute darkness, with the members each entering from a separate door and being guided to their seats by a chord. Only the Master of La Chambre Noire knows the real names of all the members - and his own identity is the most closely guarded of all. These details, however, are almost unknown outside La Chambre Noire itself; but its

reach goes further and deeper than even the King himself could guess. Much speculation goes on amongst the aristocratic inhabitants of the Palace as to who might be a part of La Chambre Noire, and rumours run rampant, stirring the hearts of young heiresses. A few rash and daring noble gentlemen, seeing this, have it put about that they are actually members of La Chambre Noire themselves. Those who make such claims soon learn their folly: a dagger with the blade half snapped off is the first warning, a full dagger is the second, and death is the third.

The Masons:

The fickle aristocrats who people the Oisillon Palace are constantly demanding changes and improvements to their chambers: a new door here, an extra wall put in there, these two rooms joined together, ad nauseam. The frequent changes in ownership of the various rooms force yet more changes to suit the requirements of new occupants. To fulfil all these requirements, the Management employs a corps of elite craftsmen known as the Masons. They are expert builders, joiners, plasterers, masons and carpenters, and at a moment's notice they are able to go to any set of rooms in the Palace via the Warren of servants' corridors and carry out the requests of the Palace's privileged inhabitants. Their work rarely gives cause for complaint, and they have an extremely strong work ethic shown in secret handshakes and what almost amounts to a whole other language that can be understood amidst the sounds of sawing and hammering so common in their work. More importantly, however, they sometimes take advantage of their position to build in little extras, for a price: secret rooms, hidden corridors, and hiding places. It is said that a Mason with full knowledge of all these secret rooms can make his way from one side of the Palace to the other without being seen. Often these secret rooms are built in return for generous contributions to the Masons' Society, and are used by intriguing aristocrats to spy on their fellows, or to effect discrete nocturnal visits to ladies' (or men's) chambers. The head of the Masons, Monsieur Jacques Trouvier, is a loveable rogue from Bordeleaux, famed for his stereotypically common accent, plebeian attitude and grubby, dusty clothing; as well as being an absolute, self-proclaimed authority on anything to do with building or construction, he insists on knowing all of the secret annexes built by the Masons, and is constantly being sought by various nobles for nefarious ends. The many who use their rooms for rather more than decorous conversation and delicate evening pastimes soon learn that there is far more behind Trouvier's gold-toothed smile than they would believe; he and his men do a handsome trade in blackmail on the rich inhabitants of the Palace.

One of our Comtes...:

Marriages are a common way of great aristocratic families forming alliances, and since the most important noble families congregate at the Oisillon Palace, weddings (with, of course, lavish celebrations and buffets to die for at the reception) are not uncommon. However, the recent wedding of the young heir to the County of Deols to Baroness Varine Udinot has begun to raise the suspicions

of a few relatives on both sides. For, two days after the wedding took place, a body was found, so horribly mutilated as to be beyond facial recognition, in a dark alley in the town of Oiseau. Normally no-one would have taken note of one more killing in the rough and hectic backstreets inhabited by prostitutes and thieves; but a sharp-eyed urchin noticed that the body wore a ring belonging to the bridegroom, and earned himself a few pennies by returning it to the Palace. It was clear to see that the heir had, apparently, 'misplaced' this ring; it was not on his finger by the time the families came to look. Word of the discovery was kept hushed up by the heir's family, but it appears the body also has a gold tooth: another distinguishing mark of the bridegroom (whose name was Henri du Guesclin). Although both families seem to be perplexed by the discovery, they are becoming ever more suspicious of each other and are considering taking steps to find out exactly what the opposition knows: whose is the body found in the alleyway? Who slaughtered him in such a cruel and bloody way? Why did he have du Guesclin's ring and a gold tooth? And, most important of all, if it really is du Guesclin lying dead and slashed, then who is the young man now enjoying his first week of wedded bliss with the ravishing Baroness Varine Udinot? Serious doubts and a scandal of the first order could be aroused if it turns out that an impostor (though, it must be said, an impostor who has not yet put a foot wrong and is the spitting image of du Guesclin as he always has been) has taken advantage of the charms of Baroness Udinot and cast the whole succession of the families' lands into question.

A Misunderstood Masterpiece:

Christophe Marlieu was regarded as the best playwright Bretonnia - nay, the entire world - had ever produced. Dashing, young, handsome and incredibly gifted, he had been brought to the Oisillon Palace by order of Uthlin Saramir, who had heard tell of his talents in the theatres at Parravon. The King and all the courtiers were suitably dazzled by his eloquence and by performances of some of his past productions; more than one of the pretty young ladies took a particular liking to the playwright, and he is known to have passed the night with at least two. But people were most excited by what he told them of his latest work: Doctor Fustian. A tale of magic, Chaos and intrigue, it tells of a proud and ambitious scholar who sells his soul to the dark gods in return for supreme magical powers. Having been written in conjunction, so Marlieu said, with a friend who had studied magic and the occult at Guisoreux (and has now disappeared completely), it included many authentic and chilling details bound up with Marlieu's own inimitable verses. The tragedy came, however, just as rehearsals for the play were about to begin. After going into his lavish guest chamber to put the finishing touches to his work, nothing more was heard of Marlieu. All that was found the following morning when the servants entered was the completed manuscript of Doctor Fustian, neatly stacked on the playwright's desk. A slip of paper on top of the document bore the one word 'Ready' in red ink, written in a hand different to that of Marlieu. In spite of Marlieu's absence, Saramir has chosen to continue with the

production; the King is expectant. On reading the manuscript, everyone agreed that the play was frighteningly good, there was no doubt of that. But already fears and unusual events have begun to occur. Those who read the text or try to copy it begin to see *things* out of the corner of their eye, and awake at midnight from strange and chilling nightmares. During rehearsals, the lights mysteriously dim, and unearthly whispers and applauding are heard from the empty theatre. Most worrying of all, one or two of the players swear blind that in the climactic summoning scene one extra face appeared amongst the cast. Some are having serious doubts about whether or not to continue, that it would be best to look for Marlieu and consult him before staging the play. But the King and Saramir are adamant; the show must go on...

The Treaty:

The presence of so many foreign ambassadors in the Oisillon Palace - which is almost unique in this way - means that shady deals and complex intrigues are always going on behind the scenes. No-one, least of all the King, knows everything that is happening at any one time, and the situation changes on a daily basis. In the past, wars have been declared on the basis of what has been said and done in the Oisillon Palace, and none of the major states of the Old World can afford to be without a presence. Indeed, some have gone so far as to say that if the Oisillon Palace sneezes, the Old World catches the cold.

One such negotiation has recently been going on between Piet Ruystier of Marienburg, and Fernando Garcio Sanchez of Magritta. The deal aimed at setting new customs tariffs and formalising trading arrangements between the two powers, and had been carried out in relative though not obsessive secrecy. However, on the day the document was to be signed, Ruystier found that his copy had been stolen and one of his servants killed. Already worried, he then learnt that his companion had suffered similarly - though in his case the thief was caught. The culprit was Didier Legriffe, a not especially bright but greedy serving boy. He has named, to the shock of Sanchez and Ruystier, the Granvelle family of L'Anguille as his employers. It is certain that they have interests in damaging the economic power of Marienburg, and something Sanchez has not told Ruystier is that before negotiations were concluded Pierre Granvelle approached him with a similar offer. But Legriffe is far from trustworthy, and the Granvelles would never admit to such a scheme; could it be a double-bluff, with Legriffe being paid by one of the Granvelles' enemies to sully their name?

The Royal Collection:

Over the centuries, the Kings of Bretonnia have accumulated a huge collection of artworks and antiquities which must altogether add up to a staggering value. The thousands of paintings, sculptures and objets d'art - amongst them works by the most highly respected of Tilean masters, together with gilded and dazzling relics of old Bretonnia - mostly adorn the Oisillon Palace, with the choicest pieces of course in the King's own apartments. However, there is a very substantial portion of the

collection which rarely sees the light of day and is very poorly documented. These works are housed in a number of chambers, storerooms and safes across the Palace, usually locked up, with the priceless antiquities and cabinets of curios inside covered in dust-sheets and forgotten to all but the most erudite of scholars. The King is generally willing (depending on his mood) to allow anyone who looks intelligent and socially acceptable to study his collection, and will have the Musketeers confront the Guards to dig up the relevant key.

One particularly contentious and mysterious series of artefacts in the collection are those known simply as 'The Nigle Marbles'. These are a series of beautiful and intricately carved marble friezes showing scenes of diabolical worship and weird rites from millennia gone by, which are stored in a dark and thick-walled room in the heart of the Oisillon Palace. Strange writing and even stranger pictures cover the marble slabs, and have defied the intellects of the Old World's greatest minds. Although the nobles know nothing of the marbles other than they exist (old lumps of rock, however pretty they may be, cannot hold their interest for very long), many learned scholars in Guisoreux, Nuln and elsewhere have written long monographs on what the marbles might possibly mean. All that is known for definite is that the slightly eccentric Comte de Nigle brought them back from the last of his voyages into the South and east; there are rumours that he had them cut from ancient ruins somewhere in the South Lands, whilst armed men held off the degenerate cannibals who sacrificed to the 'Great Changer' at the ruins. There was at one point a journal kept by an officer under Nigle, from which these few facts have been learned, but the journal - last seen in Guisoreux - has been lost for many years, and some now doubt its existence.

The strangest events surrounding the Nigle Marbles began a year ago, when two swarthy men claiming to come from Estalia arrived in the Palace and petitioned the King most forcefully to view the marbles. Concerned by the strange accents, features and unaccounted eagerness of the visitors, King Charles consulted all the Estalian ambassadors present at the Palace and all of them denied the men came from Estalia. Charles refused them access to the marble, where upon they flew into a rage and attempted to force their way towards the room containing the precious artworks. How they knew which way to go in the labyrinthine Palace is a mystery, but after a hard fight both were killed by the Musketeers. Since then, no less than three similar men have attempted to break into the marbles' chamber; one was actually caught whilst attempting to open the door with an axe and clung onto the door so forcefully that his hand had to be cut off. None have disclosed what importance the marbles have for them; all, however, had a series of tattoos on their chests similar to the weird signs on the marbles.

'By the pricking of my thumbs...:

Witchcraft or divine intervention are used as explanations for just about every inexplicable event in Bretonnia until something better can be suggested. It is unfortunate that witches and sorcerers are currently more in vogue than kindly gods, for a great many people across the land have been tried and punished for using illegal magic to cause

harm. Any accusation of witchcraft is taken very seriously by almost the entire community; everyone has a genuine terror of the dark powers and what they might do to them. This paranoia stretches from the lowest to the highest classes, and is as much to do with fear and vindictiveness as it is to do with genuine concern about the encroachment of dark powers; the majority of those who suffer are innocent. Even the Oisillon Palace is not exempt from the supposed taint of evil, and it is a grave insult to call anyone (especially a lady) witch or hag.

In the high-stakes intrigue that takes place every day amongst the nobility, allegations of witchcraft are not unknown. Their basis, however, is more often political or personal; after a few days of fevered gossip, the suspect is brought before a religious court and, in the company of illustrious nobles and clerics, asked searching and revealing questions. Aside from a serious loss of reputation, nothing usually comes of these trials, though the hapless victims often leave in disgrace even after being declared innocent. But one recent case has bucked the trend of witchcraft trials at the Palace. Jeanne des Anges, the pretty and soft-spoken young wife of the Comte de St Ortail, was charged out of the blue with attempting to murder the Duc de Lyonnais, François de Semblancy. The Duc was livid with rage; according to him, he discovered a pig's heart nailed to the door of his bedchamber, his horses had had their blood sucked by something inhuman and one of the servants found, in a shrub outside a window from the Duc's apartment, a doll made in the likeness of De Semblancy and skewered with pins and knives. This discovery coincided with an inexplicable illness that the Duc de Lyonnais had been suffering, which miraculously cleared the day the doll was found. François wants nothing less than burning at the stake for Jeanne des Anges.

The plot thickened when the factional affiliation of Jeanne's husband became clear: the Comte de St Orteil is one of Cardinal Dumourieux most prominent clients and supporters. The Comte's patron did not abandon him in his hour of need; the Cardinal has brought to bear all his intellect and influence to defend Jeanne in her upcoming trial. This is not just an especially sensitive political manoeuvre on the part of two great factions; it seems there is more to the Duc's accusations than a mere wish to damage his opponent's support base, and many reliable witnesses exist who swear that what he alleges did in fact take place. A spy in the Duc's employ has also uncovered documents showing that Jeanne was educated at an isolated convent in Bourgon well-known for its lewd and heretical practices and which was burnt down in a fire just six months ago. With seemingly damning evidence of real witchcraft on his side, the Duc de Semblancy has a strong case, and looks forward to publicly humiliating the Cardinal and his clients in court (the King himself has already expressed a strong interest in the case). But Dumourieux is clever and resourceful; neither is he a man to let the truth, however sordid and damning it may be, stand in his way.

Major Characters in the Oisillon Palace



Charles III de la Tete d'Or of the House of Blois, King of Bretonnia

DESCRIPTION: Aged 27. Tall. Definite regal air...most of the time. Shoulder-length blond hair; handsome face; fairly fit, though starting to get slightly overweight. Elastic face, which shows very clearly his current emotional state.

Prone to violent mood swings: roll D10 to determine current state (changes normally every few hours) : 1=rage (+30 Ld, -10Int, -10Cl, +20WP, -10Fel), 2=brooding anger (+20Cl, +10WP, -10Fel), 3=sullen and sarcastic (+10Int, +10Cl), 4=melancholic; refuses to talk of present (-10Ld, -10WP), 5=normal, 6=unusually cheery (+20Ld, +15Cl, +30Fel), 7=frenzied - and often inspired - activity to help rectify all the world's ills (+30Ld, +30Int, +10Cl, +25WP, +20Fel), 8=physical, aggressive and juvenile (+20Ld, -10Int, +30WP), 9=lusty (not always for girls) (+15Ld, +10Int, +30Fel), 10=abject sorrow and tears at his own inadequacy (-10Ld, -10WP, -10Fel).

QUOTES: *'I deem it so', 'Men, take him away and execute him! And I want to watch this time!'*, *'Please, accept the castle. And the horses. Please, please I beg you, take them! Take them all!'*

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	45	40	3	4	9	40	2	35	40	40	30	30	40

SKILLS: Charm; Dance; Etiquette; Game Hunting; History; Public Speaking; Read/Write; Ride; Secret Language - Classical; Specialist Weapon - Fencing Sword and Lance; Strike Mighty Blow; Strike to Stun; Wit.

POSSESSIONS: Extremely opulent and luxurious clothing (the best money can buy); Jewelled Fencing Sword; Jewelled Dagger;

Cardinal Henri Armagnac Dumourieux, Prime Minister

DESCRIPTION: Aged 48. Tall and thin, with a gaunt face. Very piercing stare; seems never to blink. Sudden, quick movements. Speaks as if he knows everything, but always keeps tight rein on conversation. Gives very little away. Raises eyebrows a lot. Holds hands lightly together in front of him when thinking. Imperious and forceful with anyone other than the King. Comes across as a man with hidden - and dangerous - potential.

QUOTES: *'I agree, sire', 'Really? Would you care to enlighten me?'*, *'I believe I have wasted quite enough time'*.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	35	30	3	4	10	55	1	45	71	79	80	70	45

SKILLS: Charm; Etiquette; Haggle; History; Immunity to Disease; Law; Magical Awareness; Public Speaking; Read/Write - Classical and Old Worlder; Scroll Lore;

Secret Language - Classical; Speak Additional Languages - Tilean, Reikspiel and Estalian; Theology.

POSSESSIONS: Very high quality red robes of a Cardinal; *Energy Jewel* mounted as necklace; *Ring of Protection* (against poison attacks); Dagger.

Hubert de la Motte, Comte de Frejus and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

DESCRIPTION: Aged 30. Average height and slim build. Long, delicate hands. Dark, shoulder-length hair. Very handsome, tanned face; although this attracts the ladies (with whom he gets on very well), he tends to get on the nerves of many men. Looks at people very closely during conversation, often making use of silences when he's speaking to someone new. Poker-faced when he wants to be. Very deep blue eyes.

QUOTES: *'That would not be the best of plans, old fellow'*, *'What would Heloise say if she saw me like this?'*, *'You know I could have you killed in a moment if I wanted'*.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	55	45	5	4	11	66	2	60	62	66	60	55	65

SKILLS: Arcane Language - Magick; Cast Spells - Petty Magic, Battle Magic 1 and 2, Illusionist 1 and 2; Charm; Consume Alcohol; Dance; Demon Lore; Disarm; Dodge Blow; Etiquette; Gamble; Heraldry; History; Identify Magical Artifact; Identify Plants; Identify Undead; Law; Luck; Magical Awareness; Magical Sense; Manufacture Potions; Manufacture Scrolls; Meditation; Musicianship; Prepare Poisons; Public Speaking; Read/Write - Classical and Old Worlder; Ride; Rune Lore; Scroll Lore; Secret Language - Classical; Seduction; Sing; Speak Additional Languages - Tilean and Reikspiel; Specialist Weapon - Fencing Sword and Lance; Strike Might Blow; Strike to Injure; Strike to Stun; Wit.

SPELLS: 30 magic points; choose spells as appropriate.

POSSESSIONS: Flashy and very high quality clothing; *Amulet of Enchanted Jade*; *Fencing Sword of Protection* (automatically parries one attack per round); Dagger; 100GCs in Jewellery.

François de Semblancy, Duc de Lyonnais and Marshal of Bretonnia

DESCRIPTION: Aged 38. Very tall and muscular (always tried to use imposing presence to best effect). Black, bushy hair, with big eyebrows and a beard. Fiery eyes that tend to scare whoever he is looking at. Shouts and resorts to violence a lot. Very physical; always moving. Forms opinions quickly and sticks to them doggedly.

QUOTES: *'I despise you and all your kind!'*, *'Nine before breakfast! I think that's the record.'*

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	70	60	6	5	13	60	3	65	70	45	50	65	40

SKILLS: Consume Alcohol; Disarm; Dodge Blow; Etiquette; Heraldry; Luck; Orientation; Public Speaking; Read/Write; Ride; Secret Language - Battle; Specialist Weapons - Fencing Sword and Lance; Strike Might Blow; Strike to Injure; Strike to Stun; Very Strong.

POSSESSIONS: Dark and very high quality clothes; Fencing Sword *Additional Damage* (double normal damage); *Breastplate +2* (3 APs body); Dagger; 200 GCs worth of Jewellery.

Pierre Granvelle, Minister of Finance

DESCRIPTION: Aged 29. Short and thin. Pale skin and light brown hair, cut short; not especially ugly, but doesn't make good impression, especially on nobles. Hands and fingers often ink-stained. Quite often unshaven. Always preoccupied with something, and rarely halts or looks at anything other than ledgers for any period of time. Hurries. Feels slightly awkward dealing with people other than clerks and lawyers, especially women of his own age or younger. Very committed to his work, both for the King and for his family.

QUOTES: 'Not now!', 'Erm, yes...hello...!', 'But if only we could reduce the annual deficit by 7.8% then we could go on to...!'

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	35	35	3	4	8	50	1	40	45	65	35	50	40

SKILLS: Arcane Language - Magic; Etiquette; Heraldry; History; Law; Numismatics; Read/Write - Classical and Old Worlder; Secret Language - Classical; Secret Signs - Lawyer; Super Numerate.

POSSESSIONS: High quality clothes; Pen and ink; several ledgers or scrolls of accounts and figures; Fencing Sword; Dagger; 10GCs in cash.

Pulchrezzaia Colonna, Queen of Bretonnia, second wife of Charles III

DESCRIPTION: Aged 16. Short and quite plump, but wears a corset. Round, shiny face with olive skin. Not especially attractive or pleasant; tends to be blunt and open with everybody. Raven black hair that she always wears in a complex style to make herself look taller. Smiling and giggling a lot when happy. Doesn't take anything seriously unless it displeases her; many things displease her, and when displeased she gets extremely loud and tearful. Gets displeased if she doesn't get have her own way. Very strong Tilean accent.

QUOTES: 'I am NOT amused!', 'Oh, what a lovely ring! ', 'Off with his head!'

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	25	25	3	3	7	35	1	35	40	35	25	25	40

SKILLS: Dance; Luck; Read/Write; Sing; Speak Additional Language - Bretonnian; Strike to Injure.

POSSESSIONS: Very showy and expensive clothes (the height of fashion); Fan; 500GCs worth of Jewellery.

Tancred Blois, brother of King Charles III

DESCRIPTION: Aged 17. Average height and build. Shoulder length blond hair, usually worn as a ponytail. Deep, contemplative eyes; thoughtful expression. Very handsome, with pale, clear skin. Quiet and unobtrusive; dislikes having to appear on state occasions. Shy in front of crowds. Warms to anyone who speaks to him about history and study, but will remember to check himself as if hiding something a short way into the conversation.

Because of the King's affection, he feels indebted to his brother.

QUOTES: 'Do I have to?', 'You've read Erebirius? So have I! What did you think of chapter nineteen, the one about the battle of Fermace?...!'

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	40	40	3	3	8	45	1	40	45	50	50	45	45

SKILLS: Arcane Language - Magick; Cast Spells - Petty magic, Battle Magic 1; Etiquette; Heraldry; History; Identify Magical Artifact; Luck; Magical Sense; Numismatics; Read/Write - Classical and Old Worlder; Ride; Secret Language - Classical; Speak Additional Languages - Eltharin, Estalian, Tilean and Reikspiel; Specialist Weapon - Fencing Sword; Story Telling. NOTE: Tancred is VERY reluctant to show or discuss his magical skills to strangers.

SPELLS: 18 magic points; choose spells as appropriate.

POSSESSIONS: Very good quality clothing; *Amulet of Thrice-Blessed Copper*; Fencing Sword; Dagger; One or two small books or pamphlets on favoured topics tucked away somewhere; 10GCs in cash.

Annette de Semblancy, wife of the Duc de Lyonnais and sister of King Charles III

DESCRIPTION: Aged 24. Average height and slim build. Long blond hair that she is fond of wearing let down and stroking whilst thinking. Inquisitive but pretty face, with keen eyes. Tends to stare. Believes herself to be cleverer than she actually is, and fancies herself as a great manipulator. Thinks too much about what she is going to say and do. Enjoys reading romances, which give her quite a few odd and old fashioned ideas on expected behaviour.

QUOTES: 'Alas, sir knight, for I make great dole', 'I've got him wrapped around my little finger!'

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	25	25	3	3	6	40	1	45	50	40	45	40	60

SKILLS: Charm; Dance; Etiquette; Heraldry; History; Luck; Read/Write; Speak Additional Language - Tilean.

POSSESSIONS: Very high quality clothes; One or more romance books; One or more 'secret' letters; Dagger; 250GCs worth of Jewellery.

Arnaud Alphonse Capucinet, Baron de Montaubagne and brother of Richard Trenchant Capucinet

DESCRIPTION: Aged 25. Tall and thin, but very athletic. Long legs. Black hair, worn long but swept back, often with a little bit of grease in it (a Navarrese custom which does not attract the approval of sophisticated courtiers). Dark, handsome but playful and mischievous face. Sits very close when talking to someone, especially to a woman; may also try to take a woman's hand and lavish praise on her. Emotional and quick to anger; flourishes sword a lot and makes use of long but heartfelt oaths. Often involved in duels with brothers and husbands who feel aggrieved. More cunning than he appears, and fond of obscure poetry and historical anecdotes. Strong Navarrese accent; he and his few fellow Navarrese are seen as slightly wild and uncouth by the other nobles,

who always think twice about accepting their offers to dance.

QUOTES: 'You have the eyes, my dear, of a goddess', 'Have at you, you gutter-born, rat-suckling poltroon!', 'A gentleman, good sir, will stand for anything in the name of his fair lady.'

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	55	30	4	4	10	51	3	57	55	50	40	45	68

SKILLS: Charm; Dance; Etiquette; History; Luck; Read/Write - Classical and Old Worlder; Ride; Secret Language - Classical; Seduction; Speak Additional Language - Estalian, Tilean; Specialist Weapons - Fencing Sword, Lance, Firearms, Parrying Weapons; Wit. POSSESSIONS: Very high quality and very chic clothes; Fencing Sword; Left-hand Dagger; Small book of Tilean poetry; 100GCs in Jewellery; 20GCs in cash.

Typical Inhabitants of the Oisillon Palace

Servant

DESCRIPTION: Clothes will be cheap, dirty and functional for back-room servants such as cooks and gardeners. Footmen, maids and others who work in the presence of the nobility will wear very clean uniforms, usually livery. All servants put on an inferior and self-effacing air in the presence of visitors and nobility.

QUOTES: 'Yes, m'lud', 'Don't dirty my shirt, you great ****! The Comte'll kill me!'

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	25	25	3	3	6	30	1	30	25	25	25	25	30

SKILLS: 10% chance of Cook; 40% chance of Dodge Blow; Etiquette; 30% chance of Flee!; POSSESSIONS: One suit of clothes (either very high quality or very poor quality depending on function); Handkerchief; D6 pennies.

Majordome

DESCRIPTION: Usually old, dapper and inscrutable. Always dressed immaculately in plain but smart clothes. Poker-faced. Usually goes unnoticed. Always ready with a helpful comment or penetrating observation. Very wary of young women and commoners.

QUOTES: 'Very good, sir', 'Will you be requiring the cat o' nine tails again today, sir?', 'One wouldn't have thought a duster could be put to so many good uses, sir.'

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	30	30	3	4	7	40	1	40	40	45	60	45	40

SKILLS: Acute Hearing; Cook, Etiquette; Heraldry; Read/Write; Shadowing; Silent Move - Urban; Tailor; 50% chance of Wit. POSSESSIONS: Two or three very clean suits; Several handkerchiefs; Sewing kit; 2D6 pennies.

Noble

DESCRIPTION: Arrogant. Regards commoners as another species. Short attention span; normally leisure

driven. Fawning when dealing with superiors. Always dressed in the height of expensive fashion, which is usually highly ostentatious.

QUOTES: 'Oh, what a charming footman, Albert! Can I have him?', 'One does tire of diamonds after a little while.'

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	35	25	3	3	6	30	1	25	45	25	35	30	45

SKILLS: Charm; Consume Alcohol; Etiquette; 50% chance of Heraldry; Luck; Read/Write; Specialist Weapon - Fencing Sword (men only).

POSSESSIONS: Many very expensive suits of clothing, frequently changed; Fencing Sword (men); Makeup; Wig (optional); 12D6 GCs in jewellery; 2D6+10 GCs in cash.

Ambassador

DESCRIPTION: Usually fat and middle aged. Likes to talk about themselves and their experiences in the past, which are almost always very long, involved and boring. Highly opinionated; vendettas against one or more nations and individuals. Fond of dice and cards.

QUOTES: 'They don't like it up 'em, those damned Imperial swine!', 'I remember; it was back in '85, when I was serving in the Wasteland with General Dupont. Charming chap, shame about the shoes. Oh, and that cannon; who ever would've thought to put one there? Where was I?...'

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	45	40	4	4	8	35	2	30	50	45	50	45	40

SKILLS: Blather; Consume alcohol; Etiquette; Gamble; Haggle; Heraldry; History; Read/Write; Speak additional language - Bretonnian; Specialist Weapon - Fencing Sword.

POSSESSIONS: Expensive but well-worn clothes, often with some sort of national livery or badge incorporated; Well-ornamented Fencing Sword; Medals; 2D6 GCs in cash.

Guard

DESCRIPTION: Big and brawny, but awkward looking. Quite clumsy. Wears armour and livery like child forced into Sunday best. Doggedly loyal. Very simple; talks slowly, with a strong peasant accent.

QUOTES: 'Mind your head, m'lady', 'Where's my spear?', 'I am at attention, sir'.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	40	30	4	4	8	30	1	25	35	25	30	25	30

SKILLS: Specialist Weapon - Polearm; Strike Mighty Blow; 50% chance of Disarm; 60% chance of Dodge Blow; 50% chance of Strike to Stun; 25% chance of Flee! POSSESSIONS: Suit of livery; Mail coat (1 AP body/legs); Helmet (1 AP head); Shield (1 AP all locations); Sword; Spear; Dagger; D6 pennies.

Sergeant

DESCRIPTION: Strong and tough, though always old and sometimes fat. Shouts all the time. Tries to look

menacing when nobles present. Thinks a lot of himself. Very competitive.

QUOTES: 'AAAA-TEN-Shun!', 'I'm glad you like 'em, sir. Bunch o' maggots, I know, but we've got to do the best we can, haven't we sir?'

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	50	35	4	4	10	40	2	30	45	25	35	30	30

SKILLS: Specialist Weapon - Polearm; Strike Might Blow; Disarm; Dodge Blow; Secret Language - Battle Tongue; Strike to Stun.

POSSESSIONS: Suit of livery; Mail coat (1 AP body/legs); Helmet (1 AP head); Shield (1 AP all locations); Sword; Spear; Dagger; Stick; 2D6 pennies.

Musketeer

DESCRIPTION: Tall and athletic. Extremely loyal and serious; puts a great deal of importance on work. Low opinion of regular guards. Wears flashy uniform with pride.

QUOTES: 'Yes, sir!', 'You're not worthy to wear that uniform!'

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	50	40	4	5	10	50	2	40	45	40	45	40	40

SKILLS: Disarm; Dodge Blow; Secret Language - Battle Tongue; Specialist Weapon - Fencing Sword, Parrying Weapons, Firearms; Strike Mighty Blow; Strike to Injure; Strike to Stun; 50% chance of Very Resilient (add +1 T to profile above).

POSSESSIONS: Mail Shirt (1 AP body); Very impressive uniform, kept meticulously clean; Plumed Hat; Fencing Sword; Left-hand Dagger; Blunderbuss and shot; 50% chance of Pistol and shot; 10% chance of two Pistols and shot.

Mason

DESCRIPTION: Tubby, with big arms and a round, cheery face. Laughs a lot. Insubordinate and occasionally lecherous. Always covered with and smelling of dust. Usually has a pencil behind ear and two or three tools stuck into belt. Very unkempt.

QUOTES: 'I won't be finished till Tuesday. Or maybe Saturday', 'Fancy a pot of ale?', 'I'm going to need five bits o' seven-by-two and twenty six treble-T screws', 'You'll never do it if you carry on like that, my lad'.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	30	25	4	3	9	30	1	50	40	30	40	30	45

SKILLS: Blather; Carpentry; Charm; 20% chance of Lightning Reflexes; Spot Traps; Stoneworking; Strike Mighty Blow; 40% chance of Very Strong (add +1 S to above profile).

POSSESSIONS: Dusty and very functional clothes; Many pencils; Two or more tools; D6 pennies.

Visiting Scholar

DESCRIPTION: Old and dignified. Unused to such luxury. Finds it hard to concentrate on or follow courtly matters. Intimidated by young people. Very

knowledgeable and keen to discuss subject. Often very ill-informed on non-academic topics.

QUOTES: 'Oh dear, it's not like it was in my day', 'That was the Comtesse? What was she doing so close to the punch-bowl?', 'Well, it all started back in the year 679 by the Imperial reckoning. The Bituriges had just founded their new capital at Biturigernum, and...'

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	25	25	3	3	6	40	1	30	45	65	40	45	40

SKILLS: Arcane Language - Magick; Astronomy; Cartography; History; Identify Plants; Linguistics; Magical Sense; Numismatics; Read/Write; Rune Lore; Secret Language - Classical; Speak Additional Language - GM's choice.

POSSESSIONS: Good quality clothes; Several hefty and obscure tomes; Pen and ink; Set of notes on current studies; Letters of commendation from various nobles and universities; Dagger; D6 GCs.

Clerk

DESCRIPTION: Intense and stressed. Doesn't like being interrupted. Tends to twitch a lot, as if standing still were alien. Always darting glance about. If not constantly spoken to will start muttering about money and try and walk away. Often carrying a (sometimes cold) cup of a hot, enervating drink. Face and fingers stained with ink. Bags under eyes.

QUOTES: 'Not now!', 'Henri! Have you got those figures yet?', 'Please let me get on with my work'.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	25	25	3	3	6	40	1	30	40	45	45	40	40

SKILLS: Law; Numismatics; Read/Write; Secret Language - Classical; Super Numerate.

POSSESSIONS: Sombre clothes; Mug of enervating spiced drink; Pen and ink; Several poorly bound scrolls; Dagger; 3D6 pennies and D6 GCs.

Actor

DESCRIPTION: Tense and panicked-looking. Tend to have strong habits such as nail-biting or toying constantly with a lucky charm. Optimistic and smiling, but both come across as forced. Often painfully thin. Changes to a different person on the stage or in the orchestra.

QUOTES: 'We'll be ready by tomorrow. We have to be (hahaha)', 'Who's going to play the quadruple-bass? Jacque's got the Sweating Fever!'

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	30	30	3	3	7	45	1	45	40	45	30	40	45

SKILLS: Acting; 50% chance of Art; Blather; Charm; Comedian; Dance; Musicianship; Public Speaking; Read/Write; Sing; other 'showmanship' style skills at GM's discretion.

POSSESSIONS: Plain and cheap clothes (when not performing; costume or smart clothes worn at these times); Pen and ink; Well-thumbed script or musical score; D6 pennies.