

Book VI



Miscellaneous

A Gypsy Night - Being an Account of his Encounter on the Road with a Gypsy Band by the Bretonnian Bernard Ponderelle

Author : Erik GREEN



It was with some trepidation that I first made contact with a gypsy fellow at the bar of the common room in a coaching house relais. We were in the deep south of our good country at the point where a minor trading road crossed the border between Lyonnais and Navarre. His swarthy appearance and brightly coloured but threadbare clothes marked him out as the worst kind of rogue and when he spoke his bizarre foreign accent confirmed it. This small, dark, bearded man spoke grudgingly and guardedly from around the old pipe that seemed permanently clamped between his teeth and I had to lean close in to make out his peculiar utterances. I was accustomed to spending the night in such establishments as my duties often required me to travel the length and breadth of fair Bretonnia but this was the first time I had ever seen one of his type in such surroundings and I made so bold as to enquire of him his business. The old gypsy fellow, for I judged him to be over sixty, was suspicious and reluctant to explain himself but I eventually made it clear that I was a harmless and curious academic and that I was happy to buy his wine for as long as he would talk. I don't know what I expected from my conversation with the man who turned out to be with a small family band of gypsy folk but I was certainly disappointed. The man showed no enthusiasm for anything other than talk of his horses of which he was inordinately proud and there were indeed several subjects which he either totally refused to talk about, such as his womenfolk, or else professed an almost total ignorance, such as his racial history. He was quick to take offence at any imagined slight and I had to be very sensitive to avoid him claming up completely, a skill that I have developed in my years of dealing with the Faculté Treasury Department.

I eventually surmised that this particular band of which my sorry fellow was the leader were camped outside of the village by the coaching house and my man had come into the common room to negotiate a horse trade with the patron. This business being concluded he was more than happy to while away the rest of the evening drinking my wine – and he mentioned once in a telling remark that he was more at ease here in a room full

of travellers than he would surely be in the village inn that was frequented by the local menfolk.

Having consumed more wine than is my habit, and with no small concern over explaining the bill to the purser, I made to take my leave and retire upstairs. I believed that Tomas, as he had belatedly introduced himself, would consider the night's meagre entertainment to be over but to my surprise he insisted that I accompany him back to his wagon to sample a brandy. I must admit that the initial curiosity which had driven me to seek out this fellow's company had been replaced by a sad reluctance to know more about his travelling existence and a night time trip out to his flea ridden hovel on wheels seemed much less appealing than my warm bed just upstairs. Nevertheless he was surprisingly insistent and piqued my interest with a reference to how all gypsy folk regarded generosity as the most important characteristic a man or woman could possess.

I followed the short fellow out of the coaching yard and along a dark lane thinking how strange it was that his brightly coloured clothes that seemed so garish in the candlelight earlier now seemed no brighter than the hedges we were walking past. We followed a stream through a small wood and came to a clearing that I assumed provided the villagers and now the gypsy camp with firewood. By the light of the moon I could see arranged in a neat circle a dozen or so of those small rickety looking wagons and in a corral nearby maybe twice as many horses. In the centre of the circle a fire was burning and as we stepped into the light it gave off I could see that the gypsy folk were arranged around it – some eating, some drinking, mothers tending to babies, older children tending to their younger. Tomas indicated me to sit between two men, dark, broad-shouldered and dressed as he was. I shook their hands that were strong and callused. "My sons," Tomas said simply but there was a touch of the pride there that I had only noticed before when he was talking about his horses. I could understand him being proud of having such strong capable looking sons but they had certainly taken after their father when it came to conversation. They were two dangerous looking rogues who gave the impression that they would just as easily slip a knife into my ribs as they would clap me on the back and swear to be my lifelong friend.

Tomas beckoned me to a wagon with another promise of brandy, he slipped inside and reappeared with an ancient looking bottle which he handed to me. Without waiting for me to take a drink he took me to another wagon where an elderly woman was sitting on the step. Next to her a small girl was playing with a kitten. Enjoying the kitten's antics, the girl's brilliant smile lit up her young face. Tomas spoke to the woman in a language which I didn't recognise while I looked at her. Nut brown skin and small wrinkled hands were covered in what appeared to be an assortment of old cloth randomly stitched together. The whole ensemble was topped off by a huge felt hat from under which bright brown eyes regarded me with a casual curiosity. Tomas turned back to me and made to leave. Indicating that I should keep the brandy bottle, he said, "she may tell you something of what you want to know. She is Mother."

I smiled as I sat on a step beside her and after briefly introducing myself I asked her what she knew of the origins of her people and their lifestyle. When she spoke it was in the carefully considered tones of a woman who was used to having her every word taken as law.

“My mother’s people came from,” she looked confused for a while, struggling to remember an unfamiliar name, “what you call the lands of Border Princes, but that was never their homeland. They lived there for generations that we cannot count but always as strangers, so this life is nothing new to us. We do not know names and places and times as we do not write things on paper as you do. All we know of the past comes from the stories and songs – and for them who can say what is the truth and what is not? Myself, I have studied some of your books once long ago – I believe that the land my ancestors called home is now in Kislev, as you call it.”

I felt bold enough after sipping some more brandy to enquire about the reputation of witchcraft that was often mentioned when people spoke of gypsies. My tutor stared coldly at me for a moment before smiling and saying, “of course we are all witches! How else do you think we had survived in the Border Princes land? In that land there are huge fierce men from the east who ride in bands and whose only pleasure is to kill and capture slaves. Monsters of men they are but even worse than them are the goblins, goblins who are without number, evil creatures that delight in the torment of our people. And there is worse than goblins in those lands as well, much worse. What is that keeps the Gitano people alive in a land where every living creature is their enemy and all of them are better organised and in bigger numbers? Who do you think protects the Gitano people and allows their children to grow? Is it the like of him?” She gestured over at Tomas who was lounging on a step near his sons. I thought to myself that the men of the band that I had seen looked like sturdy men who could certainly hold their own when trouble called on the group but I refrained from speaking my mind.

Taking my silence as agreement, she continued, “we are not liked, not trusted and we have many enemies. This makes our men strong, they have to be, there are too many people who would seek to take advantage of us and take away the small treasures we call our own.” At this point she patted the hand of the beautiful little girl who was sharing the step with her and I realised that she was no longer thinking about the Borderlands but that she regarded her band as being just as threatened here in Bretonnia. “Our men are quick to fight, some might think they like it, all of them see it as their duty. And they give no thought as to whether they win or lose, some would call that brave. But some of us have learnt that the best way to win a fight is to avoid it completely and we have learnt some tricks in desperate times that we have not forgotten since we have moved to your civilised land.”

When I asked why her people left the land of the Border Princes, her reply was thus: “We are a cursed people. We accept life as it comes and we live it as best we can, taking our pleasure whenever and however we are able. But this is because we are running away, running from a cruel goddess who seeks to control all of our people and destroy those who do not submit to her will. This we will never do, because we believe that we are not like the

cattle who will settle and feed and grow fat, but we are like the horses that once roamed in great free herds from sea to sea. Even though those days are gone – it is better for us to live a short life while running as horses than endure an eternity of slavery.”

As she was speaking someone in the camp started to sing, a slow mournful song, in a language that I couldn’t make out. The song gradually came to its conclusion and after a brief pause another singer started up. This time the song was more lively, hopeful and the singer was accompanied by a rhythmic hand clapping that seemed to grow in intensity until several of the young men and women were on their feet and dancing around the fire. The men were stamping their feet and posturing like roosters – the women flashing their bright skirts and whirling so that their long hair flew about them – its dark silkiness shining in the firelight. I looked across the fire to where the old man Tomas was sitting perched on the step of his wagon. He still had his ever-present pipe in his mouth and for the first time since I’d met him he allowed me to see a hint of a smile.

I passed a most enjoyable evening there and as the time wore on and the hypnotic music grew louder and more demanding, the level of brandy in the bottle sank lower and I found myself sadly neglecting my academic responsibilities. As Mother told me some of the old magical stories of her people’s travails in a distant land I regret to say that as I listened my eyes were irreversibly drawn to the dancing figures of the young women. How free and exotic they looked, how proud and yet at the same time tender and vulnerable. Just as I was becoming entranced by a pair of deep brown eyes seen smiling through a haze of woodsmoke and brandy, Mother signalled an end to her story telling. Two pairs of strong arms carefully but firmly lifted me from the step and directed me with all courtesy, ignoring my feeble protests, back to my room. I slept well that night having only one strange dream of horses running across an endless grassland sea, their riders all smiling carefree people with deep brown eyes. I awoke and breakfasted in a common room that seemed somehow cold and lifeless. I packed up and left the relais and for no reason I could tell, my horse just seemed to take me back to the little wood where the gypsies had made their camp although it was not on my way. I don’t know why I went there or what I expected to do but sadly when I reached the clearing it was empty and I was left with no choice but to turn my horse back on the long road to Guisoreux.



Heist! - A Road Encounter

By Lord Bain

As the adventurers are riding down the road, they will see ahead a black horse laying in the middle of the track; no matter what the PC's do at this point, the horse will not respond. As the PC's move to within 50 yards, they will see a bundle of rags lying close to the horse. If any one moves any closer they will discover that the bundle has the form of a woman dressed in filthy rags.

The woman will not respond to any thing the PCs do or say until they get within 5 yards. Once the PC's come this close, the woman will stand up and throw off her cape. At this point it will become obvious that the hag is in fact a dirty looking man in his late twenties with long matted light brown hair. From under his filthy clothes the latter will draw a loaded crossbow and aim it at the foremost PC. He will then demand that all travellers in the party drop their weapons and throw their valuables onto the floor. If the PCs comply, the man will demand that, with the exception of the PC with the crossbow aimed at his head, the party mounts up and rides back the way they came. Once the party has gone out of view, the robber will have the hostage PC lay face down on the ground before going round collecting the valuables and any interesting-looking weapon. He will then gather up his cape, mount his horse and ride off, after giving the hostage PC a kick for good measure.



This plan hinges on the victim's doing as the robber says. If the PCs are not willing to go along with the situation, there are a number of things they can do. The first is to rush the would be robber as soon as he pulls out the crossbow. If this happens the robber will step back and fire at the lead PC (I'm afraid this is going to hurt !). Having fired the crossbow's only bolt he will draw his shortsword and fight a retreat back to his horse. Once there, he will mount up and ride off. This is also what will happen if the PCs rush the robber at any time.

If, when the robber orders the PCs to drop their weapons and valuables they refuse, he will shoot the lead PC and ride off as described above. The robber's response to any other tactic will be to try and escape on his horse.

Whatever the PCs do there will be only three possible outcomes from the encounter :

1. The robber will ride off with the party's money and when the party returns to the encounter site they will find their friend waiting for them with bruised ribs.
2. The robber will escape empty handed on his horse.
3. The robber is either dead or captured.

If the robber took something that the PCs really want back, or if they just don't like being made to look like fools, then they can attempt to seek him out and try to get back their stuff, or their pride. If it is the robber that had to escape empty handed, he may well make another attempt at the group later for similar reasons. If the robber is captured or killed, the PCs can either dump him or hand him over to the next Road Warden Patrol they meet, in which case the PCs will be able to claim a bounty. If the robber is handed in to the authorities alive, it seems

NAME: Robert A. Rieux
 AGE: 27
 CAREER: Outlaw
 WANTED FOR : Robbery, Murder.
 BOUNTY (DEAD OR ALIVE): 100 Francs (GC)

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	46	48	4	3	7	41	2	29	26	35	37	31	25

SKILLS: Ride - Horse, Flee!, Lightning Reflexes, Concealment Rural, Silent Move Rural, Disarm, Set trap, Secret Language – Thief, Marksmanship.
 TRAPPINGS: Crossbow and 5 Bolts, Short Sword, Leather Jerkin and a Horse called Vitesse.

unlikely that he'll escape being hanged. If he is killed or dies by the PCs fault, his friends or relatives may want revenge.



Marie de Martel

By Jonathan Tee

Some of the locations in this article are taken from a map of Estalia by Alfred Nuñez.



Marie de Martel was born in 2478, the youngest daughter of Henri de Martel, 2nd Baron de Martel, and Catherine de Semblancy, aunt of the present Duc de Lyonnais, François de Semblancy. In 2492 she was married to Prince Juan de la Cuenca, of Viero, a small principality in the Irrana Mountains. Her dowry

took the form of a trade agreement between the Duchy of Lyonnais and the Principality of Viero.

For the next four years Marie de Martel had little to occupy her time apart from trying to produce the customary 'heir and spare' for the much older Prince Juan. In 2497 she gave birth to Ann-Marie de la Cuenca. The hoped for male heir never arrived as in 2498 Prince Juan died in a hunting accident.

The Privy Council appointed Don Carlos Pizariso, the head of Viero's foremost noble family, regent until Ann-Marie was old enough to marry into the Vieran nobility. Marie de Martel had other plans for her only daughter and arranged a secret deal with Queen Juana la Roja of Bilbali. If Don Carlos Pizariso were to be removed in favour of Marie de Martel she would agree to a marriage between Ann-Marie and the infant nephew of Queen Juana. The Queen agreed and in 2500 Don Carlos Pizariso stepped down as regent under diplomatic pressure from the Kingdom of Bilbali.

Marie de Martel quickly moved to secure her position as regent, bringing in troops from her cousin's Duchy of Lyonnais. Nobles close to the Pizariso faction were relieved of the burden of affairs of state, and their offices transferred to loyalist, Bretonnophile nobles. When concerned Bilbalian diplomats enquired after Ann-Marie's betrothal arrangements they were met with silence.

With tensions developing between Bretonnia and Bilbali over privateering, Queen Juana could not afford to let a Principality bordering her main ally, the Kingdom of Novareno, fall under Bretonnian domination. In 2502 a small contingent of Bilbalian Jinettes passed through the Kingdom of Novareno and began raiding isolated farms in the lowlands of Viero. The 'Rough Wooing' of Princess Ann-Marie had begun. Over the course of the next four years constant Bilbali raids sapped the morale of the people and the coffers of the Vieran government. Something had to be done, and so in 2506 Marie de Martel appealed to her cousin the Duc de Lyonnais for aid. Later that same year a large Bilbalian raiding party was ambushed and utterly destroyed by troops belonging to the Duchy of Lyonnais

and the Bretonnian Order of the Hawk. Since this time there has been uneasy peace between Viero and Bilbali.

Marie de Martel has managed to maintain her position with her cousin's support, although there is much dissent in the Principality as a result of the heavy Bretonnian presence. Recent doctrinal differences between branches of the Cult of Myrmidia in Viero may yet lead to further trouble, perhaps even within the ranks of Marie's supporters. However, the main threat remains Bilbali, and outright war between Bilbali and Viero is likely to draw in the Kingdom of Bretonnia.

Marie de Martel – Noblewoman

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	25	31	3	3	6	41	1	35	52	66	65	65	45

AGE: 32

SKILLS: Acute Hearing; Charm; Etiquette; Evaluate; History; Public Speaking; Read/Write; Ride Horse; Secret Language- Classical; Speak Additional Language- Old Worlder Estalian, Tilean, Wastelander and Reikspiel dialects; Theology;

TRAPPINGS: As Appropriate

QUOTES: "There is simply no comparison between a woman who is armed and one who is not." - Marie de Martel explains the arrival of Bretonnian troops in Viero to the Vieran Privy Council.

"The Princess-Regent never lacks good excuses to break her word" - Francesco Elizondo, Bilbalian ambassador to the court of Carlos IX of Magritta.

"Marie de Martel preaches only peace and good faith, though she is the enemy of both one and the other. Of course, had she honoured either of them she would have lost her state many times over." Pandolfo Soderini, Second Chancellor of the Republic of Remas, in his controversial treatise 'On Statescraft'.

"So Marie de Martel lied, schemed and double-crossed to seize control of a petty principality in a remote part of Estalia? De Semblancy must be so proud; look how well his little cousin upholds the family traditions." - Attributed to Arnaud Alphonse Capucinet by the *Oisillon Spectator*, a populist pamphlet currently in circulation around Guisoreux.

PERSONALITY AND MOTIVATIONS: Marie de Martel is, by Lyonnais standards, a decent woman, although her political enemies would not describe her as such. Unlike her cousin she has no liking for pointless cruelties, and she struggles to conceal her distaste for the affairs of his court. For the most part Marie de Martel is content to resolve difficult political issues through negotiation and conciliation. Nevertheless, the Princess Regent is prepared to show her claws when faced with a threat to her rule or her daughter's succession. The recent burning for heresy of Verenan priests suspected of Bilbalian sympathies attests to Marie's ruthlessness. When receiving diplomats the Princess Regent behaves in a witty and charming, almost flirtatious, manner. However, she can quickly become steely and cold when the occasion demands.

Political commentators are divided over the matter of Marie de Martel's underlying aims. Some believe she intends to extend Bretonnian, and particularly Lyonnais

influence into north eastern Estalia with the ultimate goal of transforming Viero into a Bretonnian province. Others believe she is more concerned with safeguarding her daughter's throne against those both inside and outside the Principality who covet it.

SECRETS: Marie de Martel has more secrets than your average ruler. Her arrangements with the Directorate of Marienburg and the pirates of Sartosa would be enough to shock even the most jaded Vieran noble. Even the Duc de Lyonnais would be surprised by her 'understanding' with the Duke of Zaragoz, or her negotiations with a number of Norscan Jarls concerning the fate of the Kingdom of Novareno...

Conflict in the south gazette articles

By Jonathan Tee



A jolly Orc-al hunt

Chimay, province of Lyonnais. 9. Brumaire 2512

The annual hunt in the Massif Orcal for Goblinoids and other vile beasts was a stirring success this year. The Duc de Lyonnais wore a striking crested helm and gold-leaf covered full plate combination, and was accompanied on the hunt by a number of prominent nobility including the Comte de Cabourg, the Baron de Martel and the Comte de Castelnau, younger brother of His Majesty the King. The hunt was very productive, with over two hundred goblin and fifty orc heads taken over the course of the week.

Casualties were light this year amongst the peasants, unlike last year where the Goblinoids encountered bore primitive bows. No nobility were injured and only one noble had to be disqualified, for unsportsmanlike use of a ranged weapon. The Comte de Castelnau retained the title of Master of the Hunt for another year, his party taking almost half the quarry. On the last day the Hunt were entertained by a spectacular magic display before the Comte de Castelnau was presented with the ceremonial Master's Horn.

Antoinette de Gris
The Guisoreux Gazette

Vieran castle controversy

Magritta. 16. Brumaire 2512

Those of us who express an interest in the affairs of foreign lands have long been enthralled by the dispute taking place almost upon our southern border. The avaricious Queen of Bilbali has been prevented for some twelve years now from taking possession of the small Irranan principality of Viero by the determined efforts of the Regent Princess Marie of Martel. This extraordinary state of affairs took another turn this month when sources at the Magrittian court revealed the full extent of Princess Marie's remarkable building program to the world.

A string of the most modern fortresses in Estalia are reportedly under construction along the Novarenan border. Magrittian sources reveal that the fortresses are unlike any previously constructed in the southern Old World. The fortifications are thought to be designed with the placement of cannon and musket-men in mind, and it is believed that the slanted stone walls are impervious to all but the most fearsome magicks and artillery.

Due to the rich iron ore deposits in its highlands Viero has long been known for metal work. A recent rumour that its weaponsmiths have established a method for the production of iron cannon, may be relevant when one considers the nature of the new Vieran forts.

The Vieran ambassador to the court of King Carlos IX, Don Archibaldo de Avea, hotly denies the rumours circulating in the city. As he remarked to me, "*These rumours are of the most ridiculous and unreliable sort. They are no doubt the work of mischief makers and gossip mongers of the lowest order.*" However, the Novarenan ambassador disagrees, "*Vieran fortress construction is a real and immediate threat to the peace of Estalia. The King and Government of Novareno strongly urge Her Royal Highness Princess Marie, in the name of blessed Shallya, to reconsider her actions lest they lead to yet more suffering amongst her people.*"

One question currently occupying the minds of Magrittian diplomats is how Marie de Martel has been able to fund such an ambitious project, especially at a time when her armed forces are placing a great strain on the Vieran treasury. The obvious financier of any such endeavour would be Princess Marie's cousin the Duc de Lyonnais. However even the De Semblancy purse would be strained by such a commitment. Some suspect a foreign power such as the Bretonnian or Imperial crown, perhaps hoping to expand their influence into northern Estalia. Others point the finger at Bilbali's trade rivals, Marienburg, Erengard, and the Tilean City States. Whatever the truth, it seems Princess Marie has once again outmanoeuvred the slow witted Queen of Bilbali.

Michael of Albion
The Guisoreux Gazette

Religious unrest in Viero

Viero 12. Pluviose 2513

Men who feel a strong calling to the Cult of Myrmidia tend to be of a disciplined and obedient nature. So it may come as a surprise to learn that Myrmidian priests and laymen have been involved in rioting in the Principality of Viero. These dissenters are incensed by the actions of Marie de Martel in placing a shrine to Saint Leonidas in the Temple of Myrmidia in the city of Viero. The dissenters follow the heretical belief, sadly widespread in Estalia, that St. Leonidas is a fiction invented by the clergy of Navarre. The cult of Myrmidia in Viero had, until the advent of Princess Marie's regency, supported this blasphemy. However since that time Marie de Martel has been able to convince the local High Priests of the error of their ways and the cult has come to accept the sacredness of St. Leonidas.

The recent unrest appears to have been organised by a small group of heretics to coincide with the consecration of the Saint's shrine. These troublemakers seem to have incited local ruffians and other villainous types into violence. According to reports a number of drunken Tilean mercenaries were also involved.

Swift intervention by the Princess's own Irranan Guard and the court sorcerer Senor Basil Cordarez ensured that the riot caused little damage to property or loss of life. Nevertheless, the Vieran authorities must be deeply concerned by this new development. That none of the ringleaders is believed to have been captured is also worrying.

Sources at the Vieran court have indicated that Bilbali is almost certainly supporting the dissenters. Ruffians involved in the rioting revealed in interrogation that one of the ringleaders went by the name of Guido, a common Bilbalian name. Further evidence comes from one of the Tilean mercenaries involved who, when put to the test, is said to have revealed that he was in fact an agent of the Bilbalian government.

In a recent statement Cardinal Claude de Vendome pledged his full support for the Vieran government, *"The dissenting priests are the vilest of heretics. Their impudent denial of the teachings of St. Leonidas reveals their vile intent to lead their followers away from the true path and into the arms of the Dark Powers. The Cult of Myrmidia in Bretonnia supports the actions of our Vieran brother priests and the government of Her Highness Princess Marie in crushing this blasphemy."*

Fr. Henri Trudeau
The Guisoreux Gazette

NOTE: more info on the Verenan Estalian Inquisition is available in Xavier Sanchez Loro's article which you can find at StS. Heretics, magicians, non-humans, Arabs beware, nobody can hide from the Estalian Inquisition !

Navarre in mourning

Rochefort. 21. Pluviose 2513

Mourners gathered today at the Temple of Morr in Rochefort to lay to rest the body of Father Willem de Rochefort, Priest of Myrmidia and youngest brother of the Baron de Rochefort. The congregation included the Duc de Navarre, a cousin of the dead man, and Cardinal de Vendome. Numerous military persons of the lower social orders were also in attendance, attesting to Father Willem's deep humility and the affection he inspired in adherents of the Cult. Vernon de Pablise, High Priest of Morr read a simple yet touching sermon, in which he noted that Father Willem died, as he had lived, fighting evil and promoting virtue.

The Duc de Navarre is said to be deeply saddened by the manner of his cousin's death; murdered by bandits whilst preaching in the highlands of Viero. The culprits are still at large and all across Navarre people are praying to Verena that these thugs be brought swiftly to justice.

Antoinette de Gris
The Guisoreux Gazette

Autodafe in Guaniar

Rochefort. 29. Pluviose 2513

In one of the most sinister autodafes to date, the infamous Estalian Inquisition continued its campaign of terror in northern Estalia, burning no less than fifty in one week. Officially, it was this time a secret cult dedicated to the Master of unspeakable pleasures Slaanesh that was uncovered. As usual the supporting evidence was thin and consisted mainly in lurid testimonies and confessions obtained after a forceful investigation. Nevertheless this comes as a great personal success for ambitious inquisitor Gutierrez, who despite being responsible for the eviction of the Inquisition from Viero last year is fast becoming one of the most influential leaders of the organisation. Needless to say the news was not well received in Bretonnia, where the act was condemned by both the Cult of Verena and the Navarrese provincial parliament.

Readers may be surprised to learn that the autodafe took place in the Irranan city of Guaniar. Indeed, the Mountain People have traditionally been hostile to the Estalian Inquisition and its exactions. They have also prided themselves on their independence towards the Bilbalian power, retaining a neutral position in the brooding conflict between Novareno and Viero. Should this change in any way, a well-informed source from Oisillon Palace entrusted to me that *"it would become necessary to redefine the nature of the relations between the Irranan duchies and the Kingdom of Bretonnia..."*

C. Labaston
The Guisoreux Gazette

Navarrese bandits raid Novarenan farmsteads

Brionne. 5. Floreal 2513

Navarrese bandits are reported to have resumed their raids on farmsteads around the Novarenan town of Graus. Diplomats from Novareno angrily accused the Duc de Navarre of complicity in the attacks, but the Duchy has so far denied all involvement. Cross border raiding in the Graus area has been so severe over the past few decades that many Novarenan farmsteads have been fortified by worried landowners. It is suspected that Navarrese noblemen sponsor the raids, although nothing has ever been proven.

Francis Fischler
The Guisoreux Gazette

Merchants protest at Bergbres tariffs

Oisillon. 8. Floreal 2513

A deputation of merchants from across the kingdom recently petitioned Cardinal Dumourieux to relax the taxes on goods entering and leaving Bretonnia along the Guisoreux-Marienburg road. The leaders of the Merchant's Guild argue that the land route is less expensive to police than the corresponding sea routes and so should attract less tax. They also claimed that the tariffs made it more difficult for them to compete with Imperial merchants. Cardinal Dumourieux promised to consider the matter further, but government sources indicate that he is unlikely to make any changes to the present system.

Eric Vendeaux
The Guisoreux Gazette

Beastmen in the forest of Chalons

Forest of Chalons, province of Gascogne. 19. Floreal 2513

Forces of the Duchy of Gascogne rushed to the Forest of Chalons recently after a numerous host of Beastmen were sighted by gendarmes patrolling the Viejoncourt-Mufflons road. The beastmen are described as being of rat-like appearance and seemed to be headed towards the Massif Orcal.

The Duchy appears to be taking the threat very seriously. Your humble correspondent was forbidden from travelling with the army due to the danger the beastmen could present to his person.

Armand Jouinard
The Guisoreux Gazette

Bilbalian forces amass on the Vieran border

City of Viero. 21. Floreal 2513

Worrying rumours of a Bilbalian military build up along the Vieran border with Novareno have been spreading through the capital in the last few days. The Vieran government has neither confirmed nor denied these accounts, but it is common knowledge that a number of Bretonnian mercenary units have left the capital in the last few days, heading north.

A renewal of open hostilities between Viero and Bilbali could not have come at a worse time for Marie de Martel. Continuing religious unrest in the country means that a great deal of the Princess' troops are occupied with the task of maintaining order within the Principality. Also the fortification program along the Vieran border is still at an early stage and will provide little protection in the event of invasion.

It is thought that the Bilbalian action may be in part a response to the suppression of the Myrmidian dissenting priests by the Vieran authorities. The Bilbalian Cult of Myrmidia does not recognise St. Leonidas and Queen Juana has expressed sympathy for the dissenters' cause.

Michael of Albion
The Guisoreux Gazette



Heretical cult responsible for death of Father de Rochefort

City of Viero. 10. Prairial 2513

It emerged today that the foul murder of Father Willem de Rochefort, cousin of the Duc de Navarre, was carried out by a band of heretical Myrmidians. These so-called religious men go by the name of the 'Swords of the Congregation' and follow the beliefs of dissenting Myrmidian priests.

The Swords of the Congregation were too cowardly to admit to their dreadful deed and only the combined efforts of both the Navarrese and Vieran authorities was able to uncover their involvement.

The Vieran Chancellor released the following statement to the people of Viero early this afternoon, *"The vile murder of a Myrmidian priest will not go unpunished. I say to both the foul heretics responsible for this crime and to their Bilbalian masters: "There will be a reckoning, make no mistake about it. Wherever you hid we will seek you out, and when we find you, you will feel Verena's wrath."*

Sources in the Vieran government warn that further attacks should be expected and the Cult of Myrmidia has posted Templars at all its main sites. It is thought the Swords of the Congregation are linked to the Bilbalian Government which supports the same vile heresy, that St. Leonidas is not of divine nature.

Michael of Albion
The Guisoreux Gazette

Pere
Willem



Bilbalian ships raid Brionne

Brionne. 12. Prairial 2513

The people of Brionne were in a state of shock today after the Bilbalian attack which claimed so many lives early yesterday morning. Whilst readers will be relieved to learn that no persons of noble birth were killed in the attack, property damage, and loss of life amongst the peasantry was significant.

Soon after first light, three Bilbalian galleases sailed into Brionne's main harbour and opened fire upon the ships at anchor. The merchant vessels the *Lustrian Hind*, and the *Catspaw* were severely damaged and a number of dockside buildings were destroyed by cannon fire. The Frog and Parrot a popular inn for sailors was struck by a mortar shell and its uppermost floor devastated. Some fifteen sailors are thought to have lost their lives in this building alone. The Bilbalian ships were eventually driven off when the city militia brought mangonels to bear on the raiders.

Governor de Jolensac will no doubt be concerned by questions the raid has raised concerning Brionne's coastal defences. Cannon emplacements at the mouth of the Brienne are supposed to protect the city from direct attack, and it seems these were ineffective in the dark. The Royal Navy also appears to have allowed the ships to slip past its patrols.

The Bilbalian government has neither confirmed nor denied responsibility for the attack but it is believed that the matter will be further discussed before the Court at Oisillon. It is unlikely that the Duc de Navarre will let this insult to his people's honour pass unpunished, and the people of Brionne are expecting further troubles ahead.

Francis Fischler
The Guisoreux Gazette

Investors rejoice as the Southlands company signs deal with local chiefs

Guisoreux. 15. Prairial. 2513

The wine is flowing in Guisoreux as investors toast the rise of Southlands Company shares on the Marienburg Exchange. The Company shares defied concern over troubles between Bretonnia and Bilbali to rise a meteoric 21% on the Exchange as a result of the recent swords for slaves deal.

The deal, agreed between Southlands representatives and local Chiefs guarantees a constant supply of labour for the Company's sugar plantations. Investors hope the new workers will be more productive than the Bretonnian bondsmen originally set to work on the plantations, who were unsuited to the jungle climate.

Company Chairman Angevin de la Courcelle sought to reassure Shallyans concerned over the ethics of the deal, *"The swords for slaves deal will undoubtedly be of great benefit to the Southlander tribes, allowing them to better defend their lands against the diabolical Lizardmen which infest the jungles. In return we take the most criminal elements of their societies and educate them in the ways of civilisation and the worship of the True Gods. Everyone profits from the arrangement except perhaps the Lizardmen."*

Eric Vendeaux
The Guisoreux Gazette

Vieran and Bilbalian forces clash north of Viero

Viero. 12. Messidor. 2513

Yesterday morning Bilbalian forces crossed the border into Viero and were met with fierce resistance from Vieran forces. Whilst the invaders were repelled, it is thought the Vieran army took heavy casualties. This assault clearly flaunts all the laws and customs of war, taking place as it has prior to a declaration of hostilities. Today Cardinals Dumourieux and de Vendome together denounced the attack as *"unwarranted aggression"*.

It is thought that Templars of the Order of the Hawk played a key role in repulsing the Bilbalians, a clear indication of which side Myrmidia favours. Other notable troops involved in the battle included the Perrache Stranglers a band of Lyonnais mercenaries fast becoming famous for their heroic cavalry charges, and a detachment of Princess Marie's elite Irranan Guard.

Much of Marie de Martel's army is already tied down dealing with Swords of the Congregation heretics and the resumption of hostilities with Bilbali will stretch her forces to breaking point. Whether the Duc de Lyonnais can afford to spare any more troops for his cousin remains to be seen. Certainly without outside help Marie's regency is likely to come to an end.

Michael of Albion
The Guisoreux Gazette

Primitive goblin writings discovered

Altdorf. 16. Messidor. 2513

The famous explorers Baron Henrich von Kaiserwald and Erlich Danneken today presented the findings of their two year expedition to the Darklands to a packed Grand Hall of the University of Altdorf. Perhaps the most controversial discovery is the evidence of primitive Goblinoid writings found near Mt. Gunbad. Inscribed on a parchment, believed to be formed from pulped fungus, are a series of colourful pictograms. The parchment has already gained the nickname 'Issue 1 of The Gunbad Growler' thanks to the quick wit of the students.

Professor of Sigmarite Theology Anders Burckhardt dismisses the idea of goblin writing.

"In my opinion the 'Gunbad Growler' is merely a series of primitive pictures perhaps intended for some decorative purpose. The idea that Goblinoids have evolved such a sophisticated system as a written language is laughable."

Luther Fountainbleu
The Guisoreux Gazette



War declared on Bilbali

Oisillon. 24. Messidor. 2513

Cardinal Dumourieux confirmed that a declaration of war has been issued to the Bilbalian government, *"The continued assaults upon the honour of Bretonnia and her allies cannot be ignored. This is why His Royal Majesty King Charles III declared war upon the Kingdom of Bilbali today. All true patriots welcome the opportunity to uphold the glory of their King and country."*

As readers will be aware, Bilbali has been behaving in a threatening manner to both Bretonnia and her ally the Principality of Viero for some time. Not only are the Bilbalians supporting the heretical Swords of the Congregation in Viero, they are believed to be behind the foul acts of piracy perpetrated on Bretonnian shipping in recent months. The outrageous attack by Bilbalian raiders upon the port of Brionne, and the unwarranted invasion of Viero by Bilbalian and Novarenan troops have brought matters to a head.

A fleet is believed to be sailing south from L'Anguille to deal with the Bilbalian pirates and naval experts think Bretonnia will quickly come to dominate the seas off northern Estalia. The cowardly Bilbalians have nothing to match our Royal Navy, whose ships are among the most mighty in the known world.

The Duc de Navarre is reportedly assembling a large army upon the Novarenan border with the intent of punishing that sorry Kingdom for its craven capitulation to the will of Bilbali. It is not known at present whether the northern Duchies of Bretonnia will be contributing to any land force, although the Cult of Myrmidia has pledged support in the form of Templars and battlefield clerics.

Armand Jouinard
The Guisoreux Gazette

A Travellers Guide to the Principality of Viero

By Jonathan Tee

The Principality of Viero is a small landlocked nation in the north-eastern corner of Estalia. Surrounded on two sides by the hostile Kingdom of Novareno it has nevertheless thrived as a centre of the iron trade. No more than twelve leagues from Bretonnia's southern borders, Viero has in recent years exerted an influence far greater than its size upon the affairs of that mighty kingdom.

Geography

The Principality has two main geographic regions. The Irrana Mountains occupy two thirds of the country and supply Viero with iron and other metals. The remaining third of the country is fertile lowland and much of it has been cleared for agriculture. Some areas of woodland remain of which the Royal Forest just east of Viero itself is the most notable.

Politics

Marie de Martel's reign as Regent has seen the outbreak of hostilities with Bilbali and Novareno as well as religious unrest due to her 'Bretonnisation' of the Myrmidian and Verenan cults. Her expulsion of the Inquisition has made her powerful enemies although it does mean that Viero is one of the few Estalian states to possess a community of magicians. The dissenting Myrmidians of the Swords of the Congregation has led opposition to the religious reforms and recent demonstrations have begun to concern the government. There have been some diplomatic triumphs for the Regency. Marie de Martel has forged a strong alliance with Bretonnia, founded on her blood ties with the Duc de Lyonnais, and this has enabled Viero to resist Bilbalian attacks. Her negotiation of rights of passage for Bretonnian troops with the normally neutral Duchy of Guaniar has enabled the Duc de Lyonnais to provide valuable military assistance. Perhaps most advantageous of all, Marie de Martel has secured financial backing from the Marienburg Directorate, keen to cause trouble for its trade rival Bilbali.

The People

The people of the lowlands are closely related to the Navarrese and Novarenan peoples. They are farmers, merchants and artisans for the most part and quite affluent by the standards of the region. The people of the mountains are of different stock. Their culture is fiercely Irranan, and there is little common ground between them and the lowlanders. Their clan affiliations play an important role in their lives and the local chieftain can count on their support in times of war. Although poorer than the lowlanders, it is the highland Vierans who are the

most loyal to the ruling de la Cuen family, which is itself of Irranan descent.

Cities



Viero is often called the city of blacksmiths, and it is famed for the quality of its tools and blades. Guns have been manufactured here since Prince Juan de la Cuen, who had an unhealthy interest in cannons, encouraged foreign gunsmiths to settle in the city. With 2,500 heads of households at the last census it is not large by Estalian standards. The royal palace is actually a castle and sits on a hill in the centre of the city. Beneath it are temples and courts and below them the river. The river Cuen surrounds the castle on three sides and neatly separates the administrative district from the rest of the town. A single bridge connects the castle to the residential and commercial districts of Viero. Behind the main gate to the city lies the marketplace where can be found a variety of fine steel and iron goods. Merchants travel from as far afield as Magritta to purchase Vieran steel work, although the recent hostilities with Bilbali have curtailed trade somewhat.

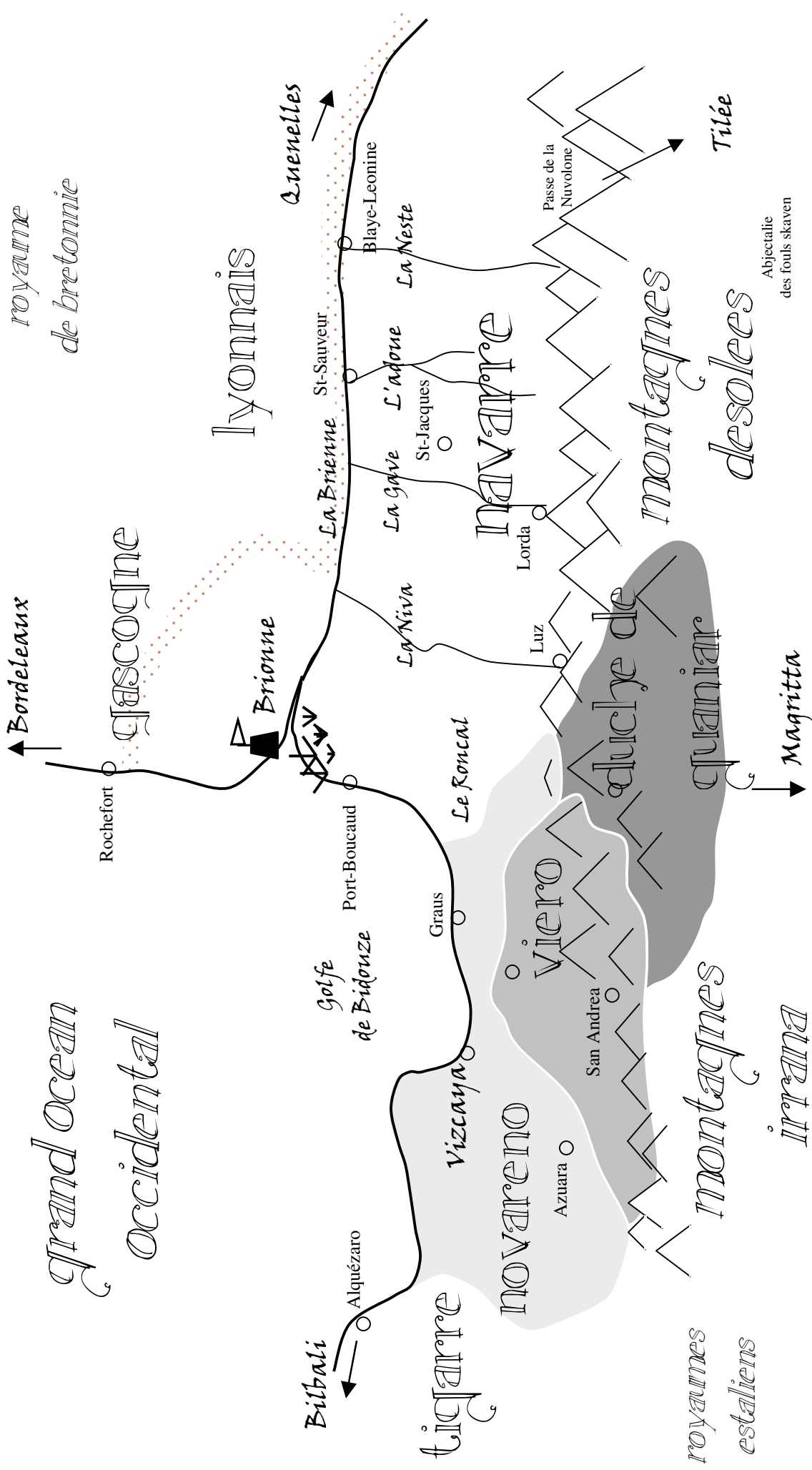


Pertuisane.

San Andreas, about five leagues south-east of Viero, is the principal highland settlement. In times past it has been the capital of the Principality. These days the town is mainly known for its iron. Iron ore is smelted in furnaces across the town, and the recently introduced blast furnaces beyond the town walls produce fine quality steel for the smiths and cutlers of Viero to the north. Caravans of iron merchants regularly travel the northern road to Viero and the route is perhaps the best policed in Estalia.

Printed in Parravon - IC 2512

50 Lieues



Xavier Rousseau's Gazette Chronicles

By Rory Naismith

The Great and The Good: Leading Factions of Bretonnia

Here, far from the glitz and glamour of the Oisillon Palace, it is easy for us to forget - or in some cases even know - who controls our lives and our kingdom. Few citizens can fail to recognise the illustrious name of our monarch, King Charles III de la Tete d'Or. But who has the ear of the King? Which lords and ministers decide on his policies and direct the state? It is time, citizens, for an appraisal of the situation of the great factions at the Oisillon Palace; of the men and women who lead our beloved kingdom.

First and most powerful of all is the Chief Minister of His Royal Highness the King: Cardinal Henri Armagnac Dumourieux. The Cardinal is amongst the kindest of the big players at the Oisillon Palace; as a good cleric of Shallya, he has regular distributions of wine, bread and pamphlets made from the Chapelle de St Ortaire, all from his own pocket. Cynics may have something to say about his motives, but cynics' heads roll from the guillotine every day. The Cardinal and his faction of favour-hunters and dependants are in the ascendance just now; the King entrusts his most important business to the Cardinal, who virtually runs the kingdom for much of the time.

Not to be outdone is the Duc de Lyonnais, François de Semblancy. Old fashioned to say the least, the Duc is master of the most conservative faction in the land. That is not to say it is any weaker; on the contrary, its love of tradition and proper noble rights makes them as strong-willed and proud as anyone. The Duc and his many companions have a centuries old reputation to uphold, and they don't like upstarts challenging their dominance at all. To our benefit, De Semblancy and the Cardinal, at loggerheads in the court, vie equally for the hearts and minds of the good citizens of Guisoreux; the Duc's agents, in the light of Dumourieux's distribution of food, are arranging a free festival for all-comers at the end of the month.

Although these two are the most important and competitive forces in the Palace, with the most resources to devote to courting our support, they are not without company. Prominent in the Palace but unfortunately too tight with their purse-strings to arouse this writer's excitement is the Granvelle family. These nouveau-riches from l'Anguille have made a big impact on the nation's finances and have a member on the State Council...but they are yet to do anything to gain the favour of the good people of Guisoreux. In this case the Duc de Lyonnais' hatred of these sea salt-smelling northerners can be fully justified.

Also hailing from the chilly north are the Knights of the Holy Blood. Only in the most venerable archives of the university library can armour such as theirs be seen! Though too pressed for cash to be very generous, they

manage to put on a good joust every now and again. The old and older sets from l'Anguille - the recently reinvigorated Loiseau and the reactionary de Cabourg - have yet to make their mark on Guisoreux or, for that matter, on the court itself.

The real fun-lovers in the Palace must be the southerners. Hubert de la Motte, a clever and charming young man from Bordeleaux, has won over the citizens of Guisoreux with the wine of his home city, which he sometimes gives out in impressive quantities (may all the gods bless him). Just as popular with the ladies at court is Alphonse Capucinet, all the way from Navarre. He may have an odd accent and a strange taste in coiffeurs, but for his generous donations to the temples and chapels of our fair city no-one can give censure.

This is the situation as it stands, or at least as an outsider can best discern it; intrigue and backstabbing alter the balance of power every day. The Palace is filled with rich and ambitious gentry dying for the king's attention - and the intelligent ones realise that one of the best ways to political power and to King Charles's heart is through the hundred thousand screams of Guisoreux.

I, Xavier Rousseau, shall keep the fair folk of Guisoreux informed of future developments.

The Lords And Ladies Of Bretonnia

No other land is as inundated with aristocrats as our fair Bretonnia. Their presence can be felt even here in Guisoreux; who has not seen their gilded carriages and sedan chairs pass through the streets, a path cleared by a mixture of awe, fear and bodyguards? Outside the city, it is they who control the lives of the people. Here, in the blessed, beautiful city of Guisoreux, their influence is, fortunately, not so directly felt; we citizens, with our exemptions won over the centuries, have earned the right to look on and accept the occasional favours - and sometimes the furies - of our ancestral elite.

At the head of the whole system there lies the greatest lord of them all: King Charles III de la Tete d'Or. Even in our city, his word is life and death; just as it is - or at least should be - for everyone in the kingdom, duke or serf.

Below him in the pecking order come the highest echelons of the aristocracy. The De Semblancy, the Capucinet, the Dumourieux, the Amboise family, the Granvelle family, and a few other well-known names; the ones that lie closest to the King and, by accident of birth or by 'fortuitous' acquisition, hold onto the largest tracts of land. Each of these leading factional heads sits on top of a whole mass of supporters, dependants and companions, collectively known as a 'clientage', with their leader as 'patron'; the members of each clientage go to make up the aristocracy of Bretonnia, all of the comtes, viscomtes, ducs and barons. Just as these 'clients' expect their leader to dangle baubles in front of them every so often (such as odd bits of land, a good word when looking for a position or an advantageous marriage), so the big players demand the loyalty and support of their underlings - from time to time they demand their wealth and even their lives, too. And, whatever the cost, woe to he who defies his lord.

Some of these factions are more cohesive than others; the Duc de Lyonnais, François de Semblancy, for example, rules his large cadre of lesser nobles with an iron fist - just as his ancestors have done with these lesser nobles' ancestors for hundreds of years. Cardinal Dumourieux, however, cannot claim the same benefits of lineage as De Semblancy; he has welded his large but ramshackle faction together over the last few years, so that it now matches even De Semblancy's following in size and prestige. Although he must be given credit for this achievement (no easy feat considering the somewhat fickle attitude possessed by many of our gentle folk), this writer can only wonder how much longer the whole house of cards can stay standing, especially in the face of De Semblancy's constant intrigue. Much of this actually takes place in our own city, safely removed from the delicate environment of the Oisillon Palace.

Outside a few favoured towns and cities which, like Guisoreux, have gained the freedom to decide their own future, just about everyone in the Kingdom lie directly or indirectly under the control of one of these major factions. Down through the lesser nobility and the local gentry, their demands and troubles reach all the way to the peasants toiling in the fields; onto them falls the ultimate responsibility of paying for the political games and luxurious lifestyles of our aristocrats.

Virtually everybody with an ounce of power or an acre of land can count himself somewhere in the great ladder of clients and patrons that extends up to the major factions and, eventually, to the King himself. Is this good for the nation? Is it good that a pampered dandy or scheming machiavel can control the destiny of so many from the marbled halls of the Oisillon Palace? Every day complaints and mutilated fugitives come into the city from the provinces, visible proof of the injustice wrought on Bretonnia by its leaders. Perhaps it is only the armed troops or the distributions of food and drink that keep the whole city from boiling over in indignation; the rest of the land is too shackled by the gentry to react.

But it is not for us to judge. However, seeing the debauchery and cruelty of so many nobles and the inebriated state our so-called gentry get into when they abandon their comfortable apartments in the Oisillon Palace or come up from the provinces, I count myself lucky to be able to take a step back and not imagine the fate of myself, Xavier Rousseau, and of my fellow citizens in their hands.

Wyrd Doings: Wizards in Bretonnia

'And are you, or are you not, a witch?' That was the question that the leader of the mob - one of the dirty, poverty-stricken-academic looking sorts that seems to spring out of every rabble to air its woes - put to the unfortunate man besieged in the middle of the Place de la Paix, accused of witchcraft.

That man was Simonin Lamadon, graduate of the Altdorf school of magic, highly educated and with more power in his little finger than all the mob's fists could muster. Someone who knows how to handle himself when in dire straits. He smiled as he told the rioters where to

turn for the truth. He didn't need to speak a second time; the crowd's faces turned to each other, muttered and soon dispersed.

'Read,' he said to the dusty student and his companions with admirable composure, 'the Guisoreux Gazette.' Simonin Lamadon is also, I forgot to say, a personal friend.

Monsieur Lamadon's recent plight highlights the dangers that plague wizards in our great city, and indeed throughout the kingdom of Bretonnia. He and others like him invest years of effort and immense amounts of money in learning the 'art' as they like to call it. Simonin, as he told me during a meeting at the Eighth Heaven tavern, spent fully nine years in attaining full proficiency at magic. It was only two years ago, after the untimely death of Monsieur Jacques Fretrier-Ballisse, that he received his 'Permis de Magique' or, as I've heard it called in the alleys and highways of Guisoreux, the Cursed Coin. Now Simonin Lamadon can proudly call himself, together with the other twenty-four holders of the 'Cursed Coins', one of the King's Sorcerers: the best wizards in Bretonnia, under the King's protection and required to give him help and advice whenever summoned.

I was lucky enough to actually hold, if only for a short time, Simonin's small golden Permis de Magique. He keeps it always about his neck, on a long silver chain. Silver, to discourage the darker things that lurk in the dark beyond dreams and occasionally challenge those who study the art.

The Permis was not an especially beautiful or dazzling object; it was heavy, heavier even than gold ought to be. My whole arm seemed to grow gradually more leaden the longer I held it, and I could have sworn it took on a greater sheen as I let go and the medallion swung back into Simonin's manicured palm. Upon its surface was etched the royal arms, together with an IX; this was the ninth of the twenty-five Permis de Magique. So the story goes, these twenty-five were made from the crown of the Duc de Brisolles, fabled magician-noble of the 13th century, who was defeated by St Marc in a contest of supernatural skill.

Regardless of the history surrounding the Cursed Coins, they certainly carry their weight today. Anyone hindering their wearers can expect the full weight of King Charles's power to come crushing down on them. A magician armed with a Permis can go anywhere and do - almost - anything, and expect to get away with it; such is the power that these objects command. There's an indefinable something about the small gold piece, barely two inches in diameter, that seems to reach out to all who see it. Wizards, so Simonin tells me, see it like a furnace in the darkness. Naturally, there are responsibilities, too. Sometimes quite onerous responsibilities. There is always at least one wizard at the Oisillon Palace providing advice and occasional entertainment for the King and his minions. Also, thanks to their education and power to see far more than meets the eye, wizards are regularly ordered to act as ambassadors or plenipotentiaries of the royal government. Simonin himself spent two months in Miragliano last autumn on the King's orders, negotiating a new treaty over the shipment of wine glasses to Bordeleaux. A fellow bearer of the Permis de Magique, who will go unnamed for fear of sullyng his peace-loving

name, was recently ordered to accompany an armed expedition in the Grey Mountains, and in times past up to a dozen wizards have joined the King and his armies on the march into Estalia and the Empire. Even the King's Sorcerers fear blades and cannonballs; being the best is not always easy...or safe.

But what of those who do not bear the Cursed Coins? There are wizards all over Bretonnia, some honest, some dishonest, and some just downright evil. The problem for the rest of the people comes in telling them apart. It is all too common for them to simplify the issue and cry 'witch!' at the first hint of magic. Even the lords and ladies still fear black magic, and see wizards as little more than a flashy and expensive drawing-room entertainment. Progress is slow; anyone who mutters, owns a broom or keeps a cat is liable to be charged with witchcraft in some rural areas I've known. Those who openly call themselves wizards can expect little more than stern silence, curses and, if they tread on anyone's toes, the stake.

Wizards in Bretonnia face an ambiguous present and a tough future. On the one hand King Charles, his servants and a rare few others see wizards for what they can be: a useful part of society and government. That's why Simonin Lamadon and the other twenty-four carry the *Permes de Magique*.

On the other hand, ancestral fear of witches and all types of magic turns the public against them, uniting rich and poor in ignorance and terror of that which they don't understand. The law, too, is unkind to magicians. Summarising all the reams of legal jargon and centuries of confused legislation, one arrives at the following conclusion: magic is allowed, witchcraft is not. Where the one ends and the other begins is the big question.

Xavier Rousseau

Magic over the Counter?

The '*Liber Ingens de Magicae Artibus Veris*' ('The Bumper Book of True Magic') sounds grand enough, and it certainly looks the part: thick, spells written in Classical, bound in red leather, big pentagram on the cover, smell like a musty old loft (I would be curious to know how this is achieved in the short time since the book was printed). Any aspiring wizard would be proud of it, and would soon be able to do anything from summon a daemon to seduce the girl of his dreams. Looking about the streets of Guisoreux, it seems that many have already seized the opportunity promised on the inside cover by the book's publisher to 'learn the secrets of the magical arts' and 'know the truth behind the tapestry of visible reality'.

Simonin Lamadon, a more experienced wizard acquaintance, is not so impressed. He lifts up the hefty tome with a sigh, and rolls his eyes. This is not the first copy he's seen.

After I was sent my copy by a friendly bookseller, I asked him to take a look. According to Simonin, the only magical feat that anyone could possibly link to the '*Liber Ingens de Magicae Artibus Veris*' is managing to hawk it for 35 Francs, sometimes more. In spite of the impressive turns of phrase - 'O lord of the heavens and of the infernal realms, attend to my plea' - and suitably eldritch diagrams (goats' heads, stars and naked bodies - mostly, predictably

enough, female - feature highly), Simonin is convinced that no supernatural effect whatsoever could result from any amount of the chanting and candle-burning prescribed by this book. And let it be remembered that Simonin Lamadon is one of the King's Sorcerer's, armed with a *Permis de Magique*; there can't be many in Bretonnia who know more about magic than him. I'll take his word that the book is worthless.

Unfortunately, it seems that a great many people, mostly ambitious, otherwise intelligent young men and women, have been taken in by the offers of power and adventure, and have eagerly parted with their 35 gold pieces. Cartloads of the work must have arrived in the city, and I've heard that pirated editions are already being secretly produced. Details of the original's producer, however, remain scanty. All the information contained in the '*Liber Ingens*' itself is the name of the printer's city - Parravon - and his initials, B.R.

Parravon is, after Guisoreux, perhaps the second-greatest printing centre in the Old World. Dozens of printers work there, churning out vast runs of texts on all manner of subjects. Most of these are exported, either through the nearby Axe Bite Pass into the Empire, or else back down the Grismerie to Guisoreux and the rest of Bretonnia. The city's comparative freedom from prohibitive laws gives printers more liberty than they find elsewhere, and they have carved themselves a lucrative niche in the economy of the Old World. Yet none of my contacts in the city know any printer with the initials B.R. Nor can they tell me anything more about the origins of the '*Liber Ingens*' save that it is being sent off in vast quantities both in caravans across the mountains and in barges up the river into rest of the kingdom.

Indeed, it is in connection with the '*Liber Ingens*' that Simonin Lamadon has recently been asked by His Majesty King Charles III to go on a diplomatic mission to Altdorf - just one of the duties that comes from bearing one of the Cursed Coins. Complaints have been emerging from the highest levels of the Imperial government; apparently the ambitious youngsters of Altdorf, Nuln and Middenheim are as enthralled by the tome as our own. The Imperial authorities, however, seem to be taking it all very seriously; they see the influx of copies of the '*Liber Ingens*' as nothing short of a dangerous and subversive plot to warp the bright young things of their greatest cities. Stern letters have been sent, and (though Simonin is reluctant to divulge too many details) further action has been threatened unless something is done.

Our own leadership has wisely taken the advice of Simonin and his fellow wizards, and is quite content to sit back and let the book's purchasers learn their own mistake. Spending 35 Francs is quite enough punishment, they feel. Nevertheless, although it has not yet spread as much in provincial towns, the book may cause quite a stir when it does. How many peasants, or small-town judges, for that matter, would be able to tell the difference between a genuine grimoire and the pulp-magic printed in the '*Liber Ingens*'? Already the countryside is gripped by panics about witches; what reaction the antics of high-spirited wizards-in-waiting might provoke none can dare guess.

Xavier Rousseau

Colleges, Chancellors and Chardonnay: The Guisonne University, part I



A throng of dirty, drunken young men, with a few equally bedraggled young ladies mixed in amongst them, pours through the streets of Sudpont in the early morning, overturning market stalls and frightening the horses. Chants and whoops rise from the faceless mass, made gaudy by an occasional banner. One would almost have thought that civilised life had come to an end, that once again the downtrodden paupers from beyond the city walls had broken in. But no; the guards stand by, watching keenly lest any onlooker interfere with the raucous procession before its members reach their goal - the river - and throw themselves into it.

It's Prairial Week again, in the middle of Floreal. Parties have begun, and no tavern, street sign or beast of burden on the South Bank is safe from the threat of student pranks. The academic year is over; let the celebrations begin. The students are free for the summer. Last night's bacchanalian spectacle aside, this writer has much to say for the great and glorious Guisonne University, being himself a proud graduate. I too once cast myself into the murky, stinking waters of the Ois, survived, and went on to become the (moderately) rich and (slightly) respectable man that I am today. So much, and probably a lot more, could be said of each of last night's revellers; without being a graduate of one of the illustrious colleges of the Guisonne, entry to the higher clergy, royal service and the professions is nigh on impossible. Not only does Guisonne provide an education superior to anything else offered in the Old World, it is home to a body of men (and, nowadays, women) who will make up the kingdom's highest echelons in the not-too-distant future. Friends and contacts - the old boy network - are the lifeblood of the Bretonnian elite, and a good many of them will be made during one's time at the Guisonne.

I have sung the praises of my beloved house of learning for long enough; it now behoves me to furnish the Gazette's readers with a few pertinent facts. The Guisonne university's history as an institution of learning goes back well over a thousand years, closely associated in the earliest period - around the 12th century IC - with the Grande Chapelle de Guisoreux, which was responsible for training priests of Verena. I will not bore you with details, but suffice it to say that over some 600 years this ecclesiastical school grew to be much more than just a local seminary, attracting students from all over the kingdom and beyond. Eventually laymen also began to take an interest, and tensions grew up over whether students had to be priests or not. A few cults other than the Verenan also got involved. The resultant confusion is part of the reason we have so many different colleges

today, with such a long history of animosity. At length, King Guillaume III decided that enough was enough, his decision being prompted by a rather sordid affair involving the head of the Grande Chapelle (who still held theoretical authority) and some of his students, both boys and girls. In 1789 IC the Grande Chapelle was divested of its ancient powers and by a new charter the Guisonne university was set up. The name comes from an old form of the city's name used in all the old titles previously lavished on the colleges. The only remnant of the Grande Chapelle is the Chapelle itself, which is now the rather grand, if dilapidated, university chapel, situated next to the equally dilapidated Great Hall (once the refectory of the Grande Chapelle). Since the good King Guillaume couldn't bring himself to completely break with the old regime, services are still held twice a day and on St Bernard's day all students and masters are obliged to attend service. St Bernard's day being in Nivoise, the crush to get out of the cold and into the church has seen more than one unfortunate accident in the past.

Today, the university proudly upholds its time-honoured traditions. There are dozens of strange customs and practices; the year-end leap into the Ois for one; the hatreds between various colleges and love-hated relationship with town people others. The colleges vigorously defend their ancient privileges, sometimes violently. The chancellor of the university, Cardinal Gibaud de Rennes, has a virtually impossible task to keep order amongst the squabbling scholars and intriguing deans, not to mention the countless treasonous and heretical ideas that proliferate in the minds of Guisonne academics. The fact that the current chancellor is the Cardinal of Verena does not, fortunately, imply any new subordination of the university to the cult; rather, De Rennes was once a very successful master at Cardinal College and was actually appointed chancellor before becoming Cardinal. And a damned good chancellor he's been so far, at least in the eyes of the colleges, for he is strictly conservative and winces at any thought of change. Still, close sources have intimated that this quiet, intellectual ascete can be quite determined when his mind is set on something.

The much-vaunted Staff Disciplinary Committee (first set up by royal order in 2289 IC after a number of students were implicated in an assassination attempt) is poised somewhere between being an amateur dramatics society and a secret police force. The exact number of members of the committee is not known even by the committee itself, but effective leadership lies in the hands of a withered venerable gent known simply as 'The Old Man'. Long ago, so this writer has heard, he was dean of one of the grander colleges, but after selling private information to the government was sacked...and immediately recruited to head up the Disciplinary Committee. This body is jeered and loudly disregarded by the colleges and their staffs, but every once in a while it takes some unexpected, arbitrary and sometimes bloody action that serves only to antagonise the colleges yet further.

The Guisonne cannot be described in one mere page, and like so many before me I have failed. Nevertheless, I shall take up my tale in a future article on the students and their colleges.

X.R

Colleges, Chancellors and Chardonnay: The Guisonne University, part II



As I promised, I return once more to tell you of the wonder that is student and college life in the great Guisonne university. The first thing that must be stated is that, contrary to what thick-browed innkeepers and stick-in-the-mud lordlings might tell you, there is no 'typical' Guisonne student. There is still an element of the old 'chardonnay and strawberries' set to be found carousing the streets of Sudpont every night, but the new endowments and general tightening of standards that has taken place over the last century have brought new academic life to the old colleges. At Ste Joan college (founded 2484 IC by Duchess Martine Courlommiers) even women can now find a university-level education; as only the most forward-thinking of families would think of sending their daughters here, it is in fact far more academically-inclined than a number of more prestigious all-male colleges.

There are thirteen colleges in the Guisonne university; others have been and gone over the centuries. The first was, of course, the Grande Chapelle itself, but the oldest surviving college is d'Orsay (founded in 1288 IC). It has a reputation for being the most conservative and snobbish college of all, taking in only those noble sons who meet their high social standards. Academic life here is tepid to say the least; the masters are known for their girth rather than their literary output. However, it is the wealthiest college, dutifully endowed by many rich and successful alumni and charging a fortune for entry. D'Orsay's buildings are the grandest and its students the most pampered in the university. The exclusive college library is rumoured to contain no less than twelve texts...

At the opposite end of the scale to d'Orsay are Cardinal college (founded 1532 IC) and the Faculty de Sorbet (founded 1302 IC). The former is the best theological school in the Old World. There is no question on that matter; it attracts the brightest, most committed members from all over the Old World. Officially, it is still a seminary of the cult of Verena; all members must take lesser orders (which in practise means nothing more than they have to attend services twice a week), and a fair number go on to become high-level priests. However, the college is also celebrated for the study of history and ancient languages, and even attracts members who become priests of other cults, most notably of Myrmidia, Morr and Shallya. Cardinal Dumourieux, a graduate of Cardinal college, is the official Master of the college. The Faculty de Sorbet is even more prestigious than Cardinal college. It only accepts graduates, and is picky even

among them; it truly does take only the very best students. On the other hand, once chosen, no student of the Faculty ever has to pay a penny. It is also unique in boasting the presence of Yrlith Quirnull, the only Elf to have ever taken up teaching in a human land; he takes on those few patient and gifted enough to learn the complex Elven tongue and appreciate the Elven history and literature. Just where this institution, consulted on matters of law from as far away as Kislev, gets its considerable funding, is a mystery. Unkind students (probably bitter at being refused a place) say a former master did a deal with the dark gods, and that all who enter the Faculty have to sell their soul.

Other important colleges include the Louisienne (founded by the Duc de Flandres, Louis le Noir, in 1511 IC), now regarded as equal (if not superior) to Cardinal college for law; it is patronised by many wealthy lawyers of Guisoreux and other big cities, who train up their most promising pupils here. Fontaine college (set up by Abbe Michel Fontaine, a Shallyan cleric and healer, in 1477 IC) is, like Cardinal college, still technically a religious institution, but in reality its links go no further than allowing its famous medical students to minister to the needy as part of their tuition in Shallyan hospitals. Grantum college (founded 1681 IC by an aristocratic philanthropist, Baron Lamont) is well-known for its 'revolutionary' and subversive nature; no year goes by without one or more students being taken to court. Many of Grantum's intake comes from the very lowest echelons of society, their tuition paid for by the generous Lamont fund. There is a great deal of antipathy between Grantum and Stratum (founded 1500 IC) colleges; Stratum is closely linked to the government, and is famously orthodox. As the colleges are situated very close to each other, brawls and shouting-matches are common. Maison Neuve (founded 1746 IC by a consortium of Guisoreux merchants) is a large but poor college; although it cannot afford to subsidise the education of its students, it does not charge so much as most others. The smallest college in the university is La Seconde Maison (founded 2296 IC) when a major disagreement amongst the masters of Maison Neuve led to some being sacked (or 'sent down' as the Guisonne saying goes). They set up their own college in outrage, which continues to thumb its nose at anyone who tries to interfere with it, purely on principle. Claron college (founded 1354 IC by a Verenan cardinal) is known as the 'metaphysics college', for more than any other it has embraced the arts of mathematics and physical and natural science, deviating sharply from its religious beginnings (the college 'went secular' in 1789 IC in outrage at the misconduct of the master of the Grande Chapelle). Charles Hall (named after its founder, a cleric of Morr, in 1606 IC) is still little more than a seminary for the cult of Morr; its students are sombre and studious, rarely seen on the streets. Quite the opposite could be said of the poorest college, Quenelles (founded by the Comte de Quenelles in 1485 IC), whose students are said to be on good terms with local beggars.

The Guisonne university is a world within a world; I cannot do it justice in words alone. It is a place to be experienced, not described. Take a Cardinal graduate's word for it.

X.R

Parravon: Yesterday's City of Tomorrow



In the last few years, my home city of Parravon has been undergoing something of a renaissance. Not that I ever felt that it was anything less than a great and pleasant place to live; but since coming to Guisoreux one comes to concentrate on 'great' rather than 'pleasant'. A recent visit to Parravon has, after many years of uncertainty, swayed me strongly in favour of going back to my roots. There seems to be a certain something that seduces those born in Parravon into returning...or rather prevents them from ever truly leaving. Something just seems to drag us back, wherever we may go.

Parravon's location near the Imperial border has, given the comparative peace with the Empire in recent years, seen burgeoning trade pass over the Grey Mountains to Altdorf and Nuln; ever-larger amounts, too, are in demand along the Grismarie at Guisoreux. For those merchants who may be reading, Parravon and its various industries mean big money; the city is richer than ever, with many booming trades. Apples (used to make a wonderful cider and a sweet, aromatic, highly intoxicating spirit called 'Pommeraye') are grown along the fertile banks of the Grismarie in the Vale of Parravon, which extends some 5 leagues beyond the city in either direction. Grain and several other kinds of fruit are cultivated, including vines which go to make the distinctive local red wine. The fat, fortunate farmers of the region scoff at the idea of a poor harvest. All the produce of the Vale goes into Parravon: partly for reasons of logistics, partly because there is an ancient antagonism towards those who live outside the Vale, in the rest of Bourgon. Not even I, a proud local boy, can tell why: they call us devils; we call them unclean and witless bumpkins: it's as simple as that.

The city itself is famous for its good air and soil, and horticulture is a favourite pursuit of rich and poor alike; gardens surround the tall, narrow stone houses (a fixture of the Vale of Parravon, built from stone quarried from cliffs along the northern edge), and only in the very densest areas is space a problem. The cliffs above the city are terraced by yet more gardens, nestling amidst the crags and caverns. The Parc St Gudule is reputed to be one of the best gardens in the Old World, and was created in the 18th century IC by the famous 'Capacite' Doisneau: the greatest and most eccentric gardener ever to have lived. Citizens brag that Doisneau so excelled himself with the labyrinth, which is said to get a little bit taller and more bristley every time someone gets a bit too lost and does not emerge; and with the topiary animals which according to gossips come alive to prowl the shadowy

groves at night, silent as rustling autumn leaves.

The biggest growth in Parravon's trade has been in the new industry of printing. Although invented in the Empire, progress there is patchy; here, safely over the border, printers have been able to set up dozens of workshops. They do a brisk trade, dispatching barges and wagons full of the latest volumes over the Grey Mountains and down the Grismarie every day; Parravon is second only to Guisoreux in the scale of its printing trade, and the margin between them is small. The printers of the city constitute a significant power bloc, able to influence both leading merchants and the masses, and the lack of age-old guild formalities means that the printers are able to make up their rules as they go along. Also, the majority of them are not native to the city: many educated but poor men come from all over Bretonnia in search of work, and there are large numbers of Imperials in the city as well, mostly connected with the printing trade (Parravon can even boast a temple to Sigmar, recently consecrated, much to the chagrin of pious locals; it is the target of much ire). Many of them are political or religious exiles, thumbing their noses at enemies over the border in an ongoing war of pamphlets and posters. Their rivals across the mountains do not stand idle, and it is not unusual for murders and intrigue amongst the various printers to break out over some obscure religious or political quibble in the troubled Empire. The locals and the authorities oppose this foreign interference when it spills over onto their streets - quite understandably.

As yet there is no formal guild organisation of printers, but there is the association of 'Blackteeth': these are those responsible for working the presses, often young and relatively well-educated. Lucien Musset is the most prominent of the Blackteeth leaders; he was expelled from the Guisonne university under shady political circumstances, and through slick talking and a passion for challenging authority has risen to become foremost agitator amongst the Blackteeth, dominating the unofficial committee that organises their actions. The Blackteeth's name derives from the slang term given to the printing blocks with ink applied to them (which often covers their hands and face), and they have been able to command important concessions from the print masters and even the city authorities through threats and protests. Much of this is down to their ability to churn out a great deal of propaganda to support their cause. Opponents of the Blackteeth, including the richest printers and merchants fear their rising influence, but the frequent lack of a decisive hand in the city's government makes firm action difficult.

Until fairly recently, Parravon was ruled by the Bresson family, the Comtes de Parravon, who had been masters of the city since (so cherished tradition says) before the formation of the Empire; a popular story relates how the city resisted an attempt by Sigmar Heldenhammer to impose himself upon them, thanks to a flock of giant bats which flew, as if directed by some guiding intelligence, from the caves in the cliffs above the city and awoke the people at the critical moment. Other legends tell of the unusual foibles and fancies of the Bressons; one old favourite, only ever repeated in hushed tones to frighten children, tells how one Comte in the 10th century IC, Marcel Bresson 'le Diable', made a pact with

the Dark Gods granting power to himself and good fortune to the city...in return for certain sacrifices and other eldritch conditions which even today have a hold on all natives of Parravon. Whether this fanciful tale is linked to recent rumours of some unseen horror stalking the night in Parravon is not my place to say, but visitors should not fear as no-one born outside the city has yet been targeted.

Since the death of the last Comte (Marcel Bresson III 'le Fou') in 2468 IC, government of the city devolved to a city council led by the royal governor, presently Duc Armand de Coquerone. Coquerone is a relation of the Lefevre family (the Bresson's long time rivals in Bourgon), brought up near Guisoreux and at the Oisillon Palace, who has been far more outgoing in political circles than most of his kinsmen. The extent of his connections with Rainier d'Argonne, Comte de Domme, head of the Lefevre clan, is a hotly debated topic at every tavern in the city. His wife, Adeline Coquerone, niece of Rainier d'Argonne, keeps a tight rein over the governor's household and only emerges from her husband's mansion in a covered coach on rare occasions at unusual hours: wits say she is afraid of what the people might do to the daughter of a leading Bourgon bumpkin landowner. Others, myself included, are becoming more and more perturbed by Duchesse Coquelone's peculiar behaviour, especially as I have heard on the grapevine that she is ingratiating herself with aristocrats of the old Bresson line.

The Governor must share his power with the city council whose most noteworthy members are Baron Robert de Boron, leading landowner in the Vale of Parravon with close links to the Bresson comital line; Mme Alienor Bertin, young but canny widow of the city's greatest merchant; Pere Jean-Pierre, dour and forthright high-priest of the city's impressive cathedral of Morr; and Andre le Bosse, master of a dozen languages, graduate of Cardinal college and head of the most important printing house in the city, 'L'Atelier du Bosse'.

The city's potentially sensitive position near the Imperial border means that there is a constant military presence, which is based in the Chateau Blanc: a large and well-defended fortress perched on the edge of the cliff overlooking the city and the nerve-centre of the Grey Mountain frontier. It is joined by tunnels to a chain of

smaller forts and outposts all along the northern edge of the Vale of Parravon: these and a series of castles and watch-towers between the Vale and the Grey Mountains are all directed from the Chateau Blanc. The Chateau's commander, Captain Frambaud Lande, is the closest thing to a resident general: he was appointed personally by the Marshal of Bretonnia, and still owes some allegiance to the Duc de Semblancy. Lande is a tough and fanatical commander, risen from the ranks through shouting and glowering at superiors. He treats his men with great brutality and constantly suspects an Imperial attack even though the mountain border has been quiet for over a century now. Malicious whisperers claim the bodies of his men are sometimes hurled from the towering Chateau Blanc onto the roofs of the city below. Lande and his men are first and foremost concerned with manning the fortresses of the Grey Mountain frontier and the Vale of Parravon, but are also responsible for policing the city. Much to his chagrin, Lande has little real political power in the city unless it comes under attack; this does not stop him quite openly venting his hatred of Imperials and other foreigners, who frequently find themselves led by burly soldiers up the long, winding staircase that leads through the cliffs to the dungeons of the Chateau Blanc. Not surprisingly, patrols of the troops into areas settled by Imperials often turn into running battles, but Lande reportedly encourages his men to stir up trouble so as to keep their combat skills up to scratch.

Xavier Rousseau



**Captain Frambaud Lande (top)
and City fortifications (left)**

The Dunkelburg Inheritance

Pre-generated Characters and Campaign summary

By Twisted Moon



This article consist in 6 player characters (PCs) in their first career and an adventure summary. Before considering to play the adventure (which takes places in eastern Bretonnia) you will need to read the PCs background carefully. The complete version of the campaign is available at the Bretonnia-Project website.

GM notes

Although a relatively minor noble family, the Dussoliers are active in the Bretonnian political arena, and Norris Dussolier's father the Baron Dussolier holds an important position within the Bretonnian secret service. This is a divided and unruly branch of the bureaucracy, with no central authority and riven by deep-rooted suspicions. With the arrival in Montluc (Montluc is a small town lying on the road between Parravon and Quenelles in the Bretonnian province of Bourgon) of Lady Thylda-Carina Lauschenburg von Dunkelburg, newly exiled from the Empire, Baron Dussolier has concocted a plan to annex land from the southern Empire. As a test of Norris' capability he has been detailed to entertain Thylda-Carina and elicit information from her. The secret service is particularly interested to find out whether the Slaaneshi cult in Dunkelburg is still active and loyal to Lady Thylda-Carina. If so they plan to finance a coup d'état by the cult (with Bretonnian troops as 'advisors') and have Lady Thylda-Carina recognised as head of a protectorate held as a fief of the Bretonnian king. The fact that this will place an active Slaaneshi worshipper in a position of power in the heart of the Old World does not strike the Baron or his superiors as a matter for concern, due to their ignorance of the powers and temptations of Chaos.

Depending on how Lady Thylda-Carina is played (and access to Realms of Chaos : Slaves to Darkness), it might be applicable for her to become a Champion of Slaanesh, and replace the usual character development system with

the Chaos rewards system. In this case it would be best for the GM to allocate rewards and mutations, or the PC could rapidly become an obvious mutant and be forced to flee, probably becoming a villain NPC.

Campaign Summary A Dangerous Ally (Part 1)

Aloisius Boudewijnszoon Van Odland is a Witch-hunter from the Wasteland. It was he who was responsible for uncovering The Velvet Teat, the Slaaneshi cult of which Lady Thylda-Carina was part. Aloisius was most displeased by the leniency that resulted in Thylda-Carina's death sentence being commuted to exile from the Empire, and has continued pursuing the case. This has led him to travel to Bretonnia on the trail of Jonathan, another of the cultists. He currently believes he is working with the sanction of the Duc de Parravon, Armand de Coquerone, but in fact his Bretonnian 'escort' (of four soldiers led by a Sergeant) is under orders to prevent him from doing anything to upset the status quo (and especially the King).

Jigme Longsheath, the leader of The Velvet Teat, wishes Thylda-Carina to return to The Empire and rule the cult by his side. He has selected Jonathan as messenger because although he is a long-time follower of the cult he can still pass as 'normal' in human society. When Jonathan manages to contact Thylda-Carina, they are both surprised to be offered aid by Bastien Dussolier, le Chevalier de Montluc. Le Chevalier proposes to give Jonathan a message of friendship for Jigme, including a password by which the beastmen will be able to recognise agents of the Chevalier. At a later date the Chevalier will send arms and 'military advisors' to the cult to assist them in a campaign against the Lauschenburg family. Jonathan leaves Montluc mounted on a finely equipped horse with a message to the leader of the Beastmen,. However, he gives in to temptation on the return journey and rapes and murders a pedlar . He is caught red-handed by Aloisius Boudewijnszoon Van Odland and his Bretonnian escort. Aloisius wishes to take him back to Dunkelburg for interrogation, hoping to show the authorities their mistake in allowing Thylda-Carina to go free. But since the crime was committed on Bretonnian soil, he is told permission must first be sought from King Charles III de la Tête d'Or. There is no chance that the King will permit a felon to be extradited to the Empire, but Aloisius is ignorant of this fact, and so agrees to wait with his prisoner in the town of Vingtiennes, a days journey from the Axe Bite Pass.

A Dussolier family spy in Vingtiennes sends a message to le Chevalier by carrier pigeon. Le Chevalier sends Norris and his companions to rescue Jonathan and get the mutant back into The Empire with the message. The journey to Vingtiennes will take the PC's six days. During the journey they have the opportunity to learn of events in Dunkelburg; more about the character of the man they are seeking to rescue; of a smugglers route over the Grey Mountains; and of an Outlaw Chief also being held in Vingtiennes (which may aid in the rescue attempt). This part of the campaign deals about rescuing Jonathan and passing into the Empire.

1. Lady Thylda-Carina Lauschenburg von Dunkelburg

Human; Female; Age 16; 5'7" (1m74); 139 lbs (63 kg).; Light brown hair; Hazel eyes
Chaos – Slaanesh

As the youngest child of the ruling family of Dunkelburg, Thylda-Carina's life was one of indulgence, with her father and elder brothers seeking to satisfy her every whim. However, all this extravagance only encouraged her to seek more and more excess, until finally she became totally devoted to the pursuit of pleasure. Thylda-Carina joined some of the young people of the village near her manor house as they spent nights in the forest nearby conducting rituals to one they called 'Slaanesh', the Lord of Pleasure. First these rituals only involved the villagers, but then as Thylda-Carina was drawn deeper into the cult strange creatures emerged from amongst the trees. These creatures melded the form of humans and animals, and in their total immorality showed her new sensations beyond her wildest dreams. However, as their rituals became more depraved so the cult became less circumspect and was discovered by a witch-hunter. After a show-trial all the peasants were burnt to death. Thylda-Carina's father interfered on her behalf, and her death sentence was commuted to exile. Only one loyal servant volunteered to accompany Thylda-Carina across the border into Bretonnia; but this was more out of a misplaced belief in her inherent innocence than through any desire to aid her 'studies'.

So far Thylda-Carina's stay in Bretonnia has been rather dull; although fortunately she has found a place to stay with the Dussolier family in the provincial backwater of Montluc. It is obvious that Baron Dussolier has plans to use her to his political advantage, but since these plans involve throwing his son at Thylda-Carina she has no genuine complaints. Admittedly, Norris is a rather poor physical specimen, but she overcame any such fuss before her exile; also his questionable morality seems to be quite compatible with Thylda-Carina's desire to renew her worship of Slaanesh. The only hindrance seems to be the common girl Lilas, who is obviously infatuated with Norris, but if she could be persuaded to join in too, so much the better.

Noble – Level 1; Social standing A10

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	30	29	4	3	5	35	1	35	34	28	28	31	34
	+10	+10			+2	+10		+10	+20		+10		+10
													44

Fate points: 4

Skills:

Blather; Charm; Consume alcohol; Etiquette; Fleet footed; Gamble; Heraldry; Luck; Musicianship; Read/Write – Reikspiel; Ride – Horse; Seduction; Wit.

Trappings:

Expensive clothes; Jewellery (worth 36 GC); Knife (I+10, D-2, P-20); Riding horse; 15 Imperial Crowns (GC).

2. Thadius Procknow

Human; Male; Age 40; 5'6" (1m70); 145 lbs (66 kg).; Corn hair, Dark brown eyes
Good – Shallya

Thadius worked for many years as a general house servant to the Lauschenburg family, and watched Lady Thylda-Carina grow up. He is utterly devoted to her and although an inverted snob (who believes rulers are born, not made) he was glad when she started spending time with the villagers, thinking this would make her aware of the needs of the people, and a better follower of Shallya. Thadius was utterly devastated when the allegations of Slaaneshi worship were made public, and refuses to believe that any member of the gentry, least of all such an innocent child, could be capable of such things. This, combined with the thought of improving his station from house servant to personal servant, led to his volunteering to follow her into exile. At present Thadius is serving as her personal guard, as well as servant. He is determined to clear her name, and return Lady Thylda-Carina to her family, her honour restored. This is likely to happen very soon since they have been fortunate enough to be taken into a household dedicated to the worship of Shallya. Thadius has left his own family back in Dunkelburg; and is saving his wages to send back to them; hopefully when he is given permission to visit. He is contemptuous of Lilas, in whom he sees all the faults Lady Thylda-Carina has been falsely accused of, and considers her to be a fortune seeker attempting to get her claws into Sire Norris.

Servant; Social standing D11

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	36	28	3	3	5	29	1	35	24	28	37	23	38
	+10				+2	+10						+10	
			4 [†]	4 [‡]	6	39*							

Fate points: 4

Skills:

Dodge blow; Lightning reflexes; Very resilient[‡]; Very strong[†].

Trappings:

Bedroll; Club; Dagger (I+10, D-2, P-20); Livery; Pot helmet (1AP head); Travelling clothes; 14 Imperial Crowns (GC).

3. Sire Norris Dussolier, Écuyer de Montluc

Human; Male; Age 20; 6'0" (1m83); 133 lbs.(60 kg); Yellow hair; Grey-blue eyes
Neutral – all gods

Eldest son of the Dussolier family, and heir to the estates of Montluc, Norris has been groomed for power from a very early age. He has spent his spare time in various dissolute activities – mainly gambling and whoring in the nearby town. It was on one such trip, several months ago that he met up with Lilas. She proved herself a competent bawd, and when she showed an interest in sleeping with him herself, Norris wasn't about to refuse. Recently he has persuaded her to join him when visiting some of his previous 'conquests'. With the arrival of Lady Thylda-Carina Lauschenburg von Dunkelburg, newly exiled from the Empire, life seemed to take a downturn. Norris was asked to keep the lady company, and discover as much as possible about her family's estate; he assumed this could only mean his father had plans for them to marry. In Norris' limited experience of the Imperial nobility, he had come to consider them all cold and dull – only interested in telling unlikely morality tales about the temptations of the dark powers and combats against strange monsters in dank forests. Happily Thylda-Carina has shown herself to be completely different. Norris has been spending a lot of time with Thylda-Carina, and he is rapidly becoming attracted to her. The vague rumours he has heard about the reasons for her exile have only made her seem more mysterious and alluring.

Noble –Level 1; Social standing A15

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	31	32	3	2	7	32	1	33	29	28	35	26	37
	+10	+10			+2	+10		+10	+20		+10		+10
											45		

Fate points: 3

Skills:

Acute hearing; Blather; Charm; Etiquette; Excellent vision; Gamble; Heraldry; Luck; Night vision – 10 yards; Public speaking; Read/Write – Bretonnian; Ride – Horse; Sixth sense; Specialist weapon – Fencing; Wit.

Trappings:

Expensive clothes; Jewellery (worth 33 GC); Knife (I+10, D-2, P-20); Rapier (I+20, D-1); Riding horse; 21 Bretonnian Francs (GC).

4. Bonar Marais

Human; Male; Age 28; 6'2" (1m90), 160 lbs.(72 kg); Silver hair; Hazel eyes
Neutral – Myrmidia

Bonar hails from Bordeleaux, where he worked for a number of years as bodyguard to a wealthy merchant. However, one night the merchant was killed by an assassin, who slipped into the house, undetected by the guards, and slit his throat whilst Bonar slept in the adjoining room. Having gained an undesirable reputation (and no references, surprisingly enough), Bonar was unable to get any other work in Bordeleaux. Hearing about civil war in the Empire he decided to travel there and hire himself out as a mercenary; however, he had only made it as far as Montluc, when news came through that the civil was had abruptly ended. Bonar found himself at a loose end in Montluc. He conducted odd jobs for people, hiring himself out as a bouncer to a number of rough inns and brothels, until he became friendly with Lilas Denicourt. When Lilas began to work exclusively for Norris she introduced Bonar to the young noble and arranged for him to be employed as Norris' bodyguard. Bonar is well paid to protect Norris, and is currently prepared to die doing it, since his reputation is important to him. This is a second chance he didn't expect to get. However, the job is harder than Bonar had expected since Norris' is prone to slipping away without warning for a night in the less salubrious parts of town. Bonar has also noticed that Lilas seems to have fallen for the aristocrat, and suspects the feelings are not mutual; he feels protective towards Lilas and is a little concerned for her.

Bodyguard, Social standing D14

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	32	29	3	4	7	28	1	27	32	28	35	37	28
	+20		+1		+2	+10	+1						
			4*				2						

Fate points: 4

Skills:

Disarm; Scale sheer surface; Specialist weapon – Fist; Street fighting; Strike mighty blow; Strike to stun; Very strong*.

Trappings:

Bedroll; Dagger (I+10, D-2, P-20); Knuckle dusters; Leather jack (0/1AP body); Pot helm (1AP head); Sword; 10 Bretonnian Francs (GC).

5. Lilas Denicourt

Human; Female; Age 18; 5'2" (1m58); 114 lbs (51kg).; Corn hair; Hazel eyes
Neutral – Ranald

After being orphaned at an early age, Lilas quickly learned to look after herself on the streets of Montluc. Her childhood was spent begging, stealing and running errands for anyone who would trust her; this included a number of the towns brothel keepers, and after a time Lilas found a niche for herself guiding ‘gentlemen’ around these establishments. One of these gentlemen turned out to be Sire Norris Dussolier, Écuyer de Montluc, and seeing a good opportunity Lilas set out to make herself indispensable to him. When it seemed as though he might have learnt enough about the slums of Montluc to dispose of her services, Lilas decided to offer to sleep with him herself. Unfortunately this business-like attitude has not entirely worked out since Lilas has now fallen in love with Norris. Although certain that Norris returns her feelings he has not stopped visiting prostitutes, and her suggestion that he should do so back-fired when he countered that perhaps she should join him. With the arrival of Lady Thylda-Carina Lauschenburg von Dunkelburg on the scene Lilas has become increasingly jealous. Norris is spending more time with Thylda-Carina, and although he says it is at his father’s orders she is not convinced; even if this is true the idea that Norris’ father might be arranging an advantageous marriage has entered her mind.

Bawd; Social standing D8

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	39	30	3	4	7	38	1	30	26	26	30	23	33
	+10	+10			+2	+10							+10
				5*		48							

Fate points: 4

Skills:

Acute hearing; Bribery; Excellent vision: Secret language – Thieves; Street fighting; Very resilient*; Wit.

Trappings:

Knife (I+10, D-2, P-20); Leather jack (0/1AP body); Short sword (I+10, D-1); Worn street clothes; 7 Bretonnian Francs (GC).

6. Pascal Carmet de Hautmont

Human; Male; Age 22; 5'6" (1m71), 144 lbs (65 kg); Ash blond hair; Hazel eyes
Good – Shallya

As the third son of a minor noble family from Hautmont, it has always been unlikely that Pascal would inherit, and even if he did the family fortune has been dwindling for as long as he can remember. Thus, the options were simple: a career in the military, commerce or the church; a gentle soul protected from the world by his devout Shallyan mother, the church seemed like the best option. However, upon beginning his training at Couronne Pascal was brought into a sect following the example of Saint Timoteo (one that is popular with many Shallyans of Noble birth), and at best he is now left with a vague sense of paternalistic responsibility towards those less worthy than himself. Pascal finished his training at the great temple in Couronne a little under a year ago, and his first post is as assistant to the family cleric of the house of Dussolier, based in Montluc. As a noble this suits him very well, his delicate sensibilities not being challenged by close contact with the great unwashed. Since the arrival of Lady Thylda-Carina Lauschenburg von Dunkelburg Pascal has been assigned as Norris' confessor; the reason given in private by his superior was 'to protect Norris from the influence of that debauched Imperial hussy'. However, having heard Norris' confession and stories of his life-style Pascal suspects that it is Thylda-Carina who is at risk from the close relationship, rather than her companion.

Initiate; Social standing B6

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	31	27	3	3	7	22	1	34	26	37	30	34	33
					+1	+10					+10	+10	+10
												44	

Fate points: 3

Skills:

Astronomy; Blather; Cure disease; Etiquette; Heraldry; Read/Write – Bretonnian; Scroll lore; Secret language – Classical; Theology.

Trappings:

Knife (I+10, D-2, P-20); Robes; Symbol of Shallya; 8 Bretonnian Francs (GC).

Saint Timoteo

Saint Timoteo was killed by a madman whilst tending to an outbreak of cholera in a slum district of Quenelles. His cult has subsequently been perverted to serve the cause of those wishing to maintain the social status quo of Bretonnia. His death is used as an example of the instability and ungratefulness of the poor, and to warn of the anarchy which they could cause, doing harm to themselves and others. The threat to the ruling class, who provide most of the members of this sect, is highly emphasised.