

# RELIGION AND CUSTOM

*“Favored by the Lady, I am. She took all my children, and now I’m too old to work. Spare a copper?”*

- ANONYMOUS L’ANGUILLEN BEGGAR



Much as the Empire is shaped by the cult of Sigmar Heldenhammer, Bretonnia is shaped by the Cult of the Lady of the Lake, who is often simply called the Lady. Within Bretonnia, no one else could possibly be meant. There are, however, deep differences between the two Cults. Most notably, whilst the Cult of Sigmar claims the allegiance of all in the Empire, the Cult of the Lady is almost entirely restricted to the nobility. Further, the agents of the Lady take all children who show magical talent before they reach the age of three, and these thefts have left profound scars on the national psyche.

## THE LADY OF THE LAKE

### Goddess of Bretonnia

Revered throughout Bretonnia but barely known beyond, the Lady of the Lake is a truly regional goddess. She stands for purity, nobility, and courage in the face of danger. She is the ideal lady, everything a knight should love and strive to serve. In the minds of many knights, the Lady *is* Bretonnia, in a mystical sense.

Unlike virtually all other Gods of the Old World, the Lady is encountered by her mortal worshippers in this world. All Grail Knights met her at the climax of their quest, and the Grail Damsels are also said to be initiated by the Lady herself, though they speak very little of it. As a result, when the Lady is portrayed, she is portrayed consistently: a young woman of great and somewhat unworldly beauty, clothed in white, with a narrow golden fillet holding a white veil on her head. In one hand, she holds the Grail.

The most prominent difference between the Cult of the Lady and the other religious orders of the Old World is that the Lady has no Priests or Initiates. Instead, she is served by the Grail Knights—the flower of Bretonnian chivalry—and the Grail Damsels, women taken from their families as children and raised by the Fay Enchantress to serve the Lady with mysterious powers.

### SYMBOL

The Lady has two symbols. The first is the Grail, the magical cup from which her Grail Knights drink and from which Grail Damsels and Prophetesses are believed to draw their power. It is depicted as a golden goblet with a wide base, narrow stem, and flaring cup.

The Grail is often shown decorated with the Lady’s other symbol, the fleur-de-lis, though those who have seen it insist that it bears no ornament other than its superb shape. The fleur-de-lis, a stylised lily, primarily symbolises purity and only secondarily the Lady.

Finally, it is common for the Lady to be depicted directly—on banners, after the manner of the one she gave to Gilles le Breton, or in stained glass. Over time, stained glass depictions have become extremely popular, as the light shining through them recalls the light that is supposed to surround the Lady. Most Grail Chapels have such a window.

### AREA OF WORSHIP

The Lady is worshipped within Bretonnia, primarily by the nobility. Both knights and their ladies worship her, and Bretonnians outside their own country normally maintain their

