

BERSERKER'S GAME

The rules of the game itself are lost to history, though a second hand narrative dating to the fifteenth century was discovered still embossed in the lambskin vellum of a *Malleus Maleficarum*. They called that book 'The Hammer Of The Witches', a trusted counselor and defense when the haunted shrews crouched behind every rock and in every shadow. The certain marks of pumice rubbing betray someone's attempt at sponging away the writing, but it was sure enough under the curator's ultraviolet.

The revealed narrative doesn't so much outline the rules as describe the effects on lunatics when they played the Berserker's Game. It was a pastime suited uniquely to drive schizophrenics and madmen to their mouth-foaming limits. That was its point entirely. The text mentions a knife and barbed dice, some sort of gears in the center of a round table - possibly an engraved map. Other than those precious few crumbs and some frantic, confused lines about bargaining and mutilation, we're left to our imaginations.

Or at least, we were.

In a dusty chest in St. Catherine's monastery beneath Mount Sinai and long hidden behind a masonry wall, a new text was found in 2017 and only recently translated under commission from the Hakluyt Society. Though much was still left to speculation, a recreated gameboard has been constructed and careful re-enactments staged at the Museum Of Mankind in London. For unknown reasons, the Hakluyt agreement prohibits release of the details behind the Berserker's Game, and the public has so far been barred from observing. Disturbing images have been release online in recent weeks however, that seem to show scholars and businessmen with wicked, giggling grins shuffling babbling homeless people inside under cover of night. In a possible confirmation of this, London reported a ten-fold increase in missing persons reports.

A dubious sixteenth century quote from an anonymous Moorish scholar regarding the game is spurious, but interesting given the rumors of addiction and madness:

"Burn them. For the love of your god and your people, burn them all."

