

# the **PENDRAGON** Campaign



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2702

Plot,  
Magic,  
& Scenarios





# the Pendragon Campaign:

**MAGIC** — the player-characters frequently contact magical knights and other minions from the land of the faerie. Britain is a battlefield for diverse traditions all possessing their own characteristic magics. The Saxons support their brute force with shapeshifting and weather-control magics. The Christians draw upon prophecies, miracles, and healings. The native pagan-Celtic followers of the Druids are backed up by illusion, emotion-control, and movement magics. The most important wielders of magic are detailed, along with the powers they manipulate.

**SCENARIOS** — the scenarios included in this book all occur during the earliest years of the Arthurian campaign. They start you on the way to your own *Pendragon* campaign. Included are two battles against the Saxons, a quest against an evil knight, and an expanded scenario to test the player-characters' personalities and courage.



**PLOT** — a detailed, year-by-year analysis of King Arthur's long reign integrates the stories of Malory, Nennius, and the French Vulgate with Welsh and Saxon sources to weave a deep, rich background for campaign episodes. Described are countless incidents deserving of expansion into their own scenarios.

**THE CHARACTERS** — background and chronology for King Arthur, Guenever, Lancelot, and Mordred is provided, including notes on the affair, Arthur's other sons, and related subjects. An analysis of the High Court and an annotated list of the up-and-coming knights of each phase help the gamemaster run a full campaign. A descriptive list of magicians, saints, and villains completes the Characters section.



**GAMEMASTER NOTES** — the whole book is begun with extensive notes about running a *Pendragon* campaign, including hints gleaned from the house test-sessions.

**DESIGNER'S NOTES** — the author ends the book by telling why he made the decisions that shaped the game.



## Plot, Magic, & Scenarios

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You must have the *Pendragon* roleplaying game rules to fully utilize this supplement.



# the **PENDRAGON** Campaign



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## Plot, Magic, & Scenarios

Coats of arms appearing in this book are from the 14th century manuscript of Duke Jacques D'Armagnac as recorded in Alfgar the Sententious' *Fabulous Heraldry*.



*Faerie Horse panel illustration  
by Lisa A. Free*



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# The Master of the Game

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*The Master of the Game*  
Director Dramatis

You as the gamemaster must shoulder the responsibility of running a campaign.

This book will aid you in fulfilling your task. You will probably feel something like young Arthur did, chosen by some unknown agent to a monumental role. But you, like Arthur, have some special coaching and secret knowledge. Arthur's came from Merlin the magician, while your sources are this book and a library of others even better.

Described below are the tools to create and shape a *Pendragon* campaign. This chapter provides details for using the game rules to help create the atmosphere of a fantasy feudal realm. This includes the geography of an imaginary Britain, its politics, the creatures that lurk outside man's domains, and the magic which underlays everything else. Without the major characters of Arthur, Guenever, and Lancelot the story cannot be Arthurian. But most player-characters will rarely glimpse these lofty personages, and so you, as the gamemaster, should be prepared to use several of your other favorite characters, including scoundrels as well as heroes.

The Arthurian character of your campaign will come from using the plot of the chronology. Camelot and the Round Table progress towards their destiny. The families of the player-characters will work out their own fates generation after generation. Each adventure has its own plot to test the characters' resolve.

## The Rules

Your job as the gamemaster is to instruct players on the rules. The campaign allows this to be done gradually. Romance, for instance, is not introduced until a generation after Arthur takes the crown, but familiarity with it will prove to be very useful.

When player-characters fight player-characters for anything or when they confront the universe, conflicts arise. Your job is to decide exactly which rules to use in a situation, and to oversee that they are carried out fairly. If the rules do not give specific instructions for the circumstance, you must make up a method to determine success.

## The Realm

Work out answers beforehand to problems which will inevitably arise from peoples' knowledge or ignorance of King Arthur and knighthood. Any information in this book can be accepted or rejected, as long as consistency is maintained within the campaign. Some facts will seem important. Some will not.

Certain activities of Arthur's are open to question. "Did he really kill the May babies? Was that a just act? How can the player-characters ever respect him now?" In the Chaosium house campaign this act was explained as youthful indiscretion, forgiven by the Church and people after great penance and humility. You might prefer the solution of Mary Stewart in *The Hollow Hills*, who blames it all on King Lot and Queen Margawse. Many medieval authors blamed it on Merlin, who disappeared from the story shortly afterwards.

People act in many different ways. "Do I have to put up with these pagans? Is that what love is?" Tolerance, for either religion or romance, is decided by the individual knight, not any government or literary policy.

Independently-minded modern players usually find the extent of loyalty's importance difficult to grasp. Their character-knights may be ordered by their liege to perform actions that they know are wrong. Failure to follow orders may result in the loss of the knight's status forever.

The affair between Lancelot and Guenever may be known to the players, but not their characters. Explain that the characters do not know about it, and should not suspect it for many years to come. If someone insists on trying, despite your insistence, you should feel free to diligently pursue him with Lancelot's kin to maintain his good name.

## Director Dramatis

As campaign-master for *Pendragon* you have responsibilities similar to the director of a major movie. Fortunately, your props are verbal and imaginative and do not cost millions of dollars. But they do require thought and communication in plenty, and work by the gamemaster is required to clothe and give life to the campaign skeleton of this book. The gamemaster may want to bear the elements of a movie in mind.

**Cast** — the cast consists of the player-character knights, plus whatever supporting actors the gamemaster needs. Instructions below discuss the ways to handle the main campaign characters (Arthur, Guenever, and Lancelot) and the secondary campaign characters (Gawaine, Mordred, Morgan, etc.).

Most interactions will be with ordinary people, whom the gamemaster must prepare beforehand. Think about ways to identify people by some distinctive feature, or by some select phrase which they repeat. ("I swear by my mother's sainted bones....")

**Props** — describe the physical setting. Speak in broad sweeping phrases first, then concentrate on important details at hand. Are there trees, and does it matter if they are in flower, in leaf, or bare? Are they crowded in a woods, spaced neatly in an orchard, or scattered across a plain? If indoors, mention the quality of furniture: is it rustic, ordinary, noble, or sumptuously royal?

**Costume** — clothe your characters. Begin with their coats of arms. Describe their general appearance using their distinctive features and quality of clothing. Select something special to differentiate one character from another.

**Dialogue** — script for the game may be done in character or by synopsis.

Synopses state the facts. "The king explains how the creature has been ravaging the countryside and destroying good knights. He says he can do nothing."

Spoken in character. "This monster is the ruin of our nation. It comes in the night and snaps the necks of cattle to eat, then sucks the blood before dragging its grisly feast to its lair. I have sent five of my best knights against it: one crawled back to die here in court, one was found in pieces, and three have not been discovered since they left. There is naught I can do but pray for deliverance by my lord, Arthur Pendragon."

**Timing** — most adventures should finish in a session. If the characters have taken the wrong track, or are too slow, the gamemaster must manipulate the situation subtly to arrange a confrontation early enough for the knights to complete the fight and return home before the evening ends.

**Background effects** — sound effects always add to the game. When the wind is moaning outside the castle, the gamemaster should



## The Master of the Game

coat of arms: Agravaine

make the noise while players discuss their options. If wolves are howling on the hill-tops nearby, howl. Clap and roar when the appreciative tournament crowd is pleased. During melee, toot out the noise of horns, make a horse scream aloud from a wound, and emphasize a fall by making a resounding thud when the character hits the ground. For court scenes softly play a tape recording of almost any medieval music to set the mood. Get bagpipe music for the wild Celtic hill kings, Gregorian chants to be background at a holy place, and chamber music for the feasts. The William Tell Overture is always appropriate for a hunt.

### Coats of Arms

The various coats of arms included in this book identify Arthurian kingdoms and lesser-known knights.

You are welcome to copy the charges and ordinaries used in these heraldic devices for creating other coats of arms. Be sure to change the color schemes.

*all coats-of-arms illustrations  
by Bill Keyes*

#### Agravaine



The nature of medieval vassalage guarantees no friendship to neighbors or fellow vassals of the same lord. Arthur's vassals were often at war with each other. The High King or his knights must separate the combatants and determine justice.

Familiarize yourself with the major personalities. "Is Sir Tristram always this dim-witted?" Yes, he usually is, and dangerous, too. "Is Lancelot really going to kill me for saying something questionable about him?" No, but his brother and cousins probably will. "Did Sir Kay really give me this horse for no obligation?" No, Kay never does anything without expecting a return.

### Cooperation

This roleplaying game is not designed to have a final winner and loser. Success in play comes through player and character cooperation, though rivalries and friction are inevitable. The success of the Round Table was due to its members working together; such standards should be emulated by successful character knights.

### Communication

All the game functions rely upon your ability to communicate information to the players. The gamemaster should prepare needed materials beforehand to make the job easier. Draw out the maps which will be given to players. Write out a list of names of the non-player-characters whom you will play, along with comments about distinctive features. If there is an important line of dialogue, write it down. Note down the statistics of characters or creatures who will fight. If they have important features or passions, write them down.

Imagine what the setting must be like beforehand. Does it look sunny or dark, is it indoors or outside? Does the setting smell musty, smoky, or fresh-green? Can any sound be heard — echoes, dripping water, footsteps, or the clash and screams of battle? Does the weather feel hot or cold, damp, windy, dry, or like static electricity? And if there is anything to taste, is it of superior taste, or like dry leaves; cool and sweet, or bitter?

People are visually oriented, so think about the appearance of the setting. Rather than covering every detail, choose one or two things which are noticeable and significant. For an exquisite sword, mention the gold and diamonds, but also point out the rubies which shape a dragon on the pommel. When you describe castles, one should be noted for its round and square towers, another for the dark wood of its drawbridge, and another for its unusually tall west tower. Use these as identifiers, perhaps even naming the weapon or castle after them. Hence you would have the Sword of the Ruby Dragon, or Castle of Round and Square Towers, or the Castle of the Dark Door.

Describe the scenery to the players. Unless this gives away secrets, you can do this from an overhead view, to let the players see. To give the sense of being there, describe the scene from the characters' point of view. If need be, get up and stand behind the players, then describe what their characters can see.

### Command the Participants

The gamemaster must exert control over the game and the players. Inactivity breeds boredom which leads to talk and joking that upsets the game. This duty is less imposing than it sounds. Most players naturally want to cooperate and communicate.

Every scenario has its slow parts, when player-characters must solve a puzzle, wait around in court, or watch another character in single combat. Those moments call for some extra preparation, or else the players' attention will wander and distract from the focus of the game.

To keep the players concentrating upon their characters and the game, I use the rule that "if the gamemaster hears it, the player-character said it." Off-color comments, game-related remarks, and snide asides are thus reduced to be character quotes which, if overheard by (say) the king, cause loss of glory, shame, and sometimes exile from court.

### Knowledgeable Players

A gamemaster may find himself with one or more players who are, or think they are, more knowledgeable than the gamemaster in all or part of the Arthurian legend, chivalric courtesy, heraldry, virtue, pagan custom, or faerie lore.

Do not be frightened or jealous of such participants. When their knowledge combines with your drive or intent, the campaign gains new depths of



expression. Integrating their knowledge and desire to communicate is a wise use of available resources.

To prevent overly-knowledgeable players from dominating play, assign them court characters who are appropriate to their knowledge and who can be consulted on a regular basis. These personalities should not be used in regular play. Depending upon his specialty of expertise, a player-character could be assigned to the position of royal clerk (current history), courtly noblewoman (chivalric courtesy), chief herald of Camelot (heraldry), a fire-and-brimstone priest (Virtue), a druid elder (pagan custom), or an ancient grandmother nurse (faerie lore). Such characters should be exceptional, outside the mold of ordinary knight-characters.

Allow the player-character some time to speak on the subject at hand, expounding as appropriate. Urge him to speak in character. Once expounded, the dissertation is done, and you should make clear that further statements are inappropriate.

Sometimes a zealous player is best integrated with a character who is a young zealot of such arcane knowledge. The gamemaster should let him talk on when he is busy preparing something, and stop him when it is time to play.

## USING THE GAME RULES

### Passions and Traits

Be sensitive when using character passions and traits. The gamemaster should use them to challenge, but not to insult or belittle the players and characters. Respect the fact that one knight may wish to remain chaste — don't pick on him by hurling one seductive damsel after another at him. The situation should allow him warning enough to see a seduction coming and to quit the place before it requires his Virtue roll.

### Giving Experience Checks

Give a check whenever the use of a skill, trait, or passion comes in an emergency. Emergency situations should be central activities of scenarios. Other occasions will arise as players have their characters work their way through situations. Be generous rather than stingy, but don't succumb to the temptation of giving every die roll an experience check.

Give a check whenever a player succeeds in making his die roll appropriately. The player may suggest it ("Can my character track the beast? Can he impress the old man by the path with his Courage trait?") or the gamemaster may demand it ("the wine smells delicious and he is tempted to drink it. Try to resist for your character with a Temperance roll").

Whenever the player directs the character to act a certain way, or when he behaves characteristically, the action should be rewarded by a check. If the player stands before the king or queen and gives a speech which impresses or pleases you, give the character an experience check for Orate, whether or not he attempted a skill roll. Whenever the gamemaster is entertained, a check should be given.

Don't give checks for unchivalrous deeds. For instance, knights have a right to slaughter almost any peasant for next-to-no reason. But the gamemaster should never give out experience checks to a knight for hunting serfs either for sport or experience. It is not appropriate to the game.

### Glory

Glory measures the social advance of the player-characters. You should study the sample knights provided with this game to see the anticipated scale. Each campaign may differ widely, with every individual gamemaster responsible for granting the points, and some will be more generous than others.

The following are nominal standard rates for various types of knights:

#### Average Adventuring-Knight Glory

Participation in a tourney	25 points
Gained in adventure	50 points
Passions: Love (family)	25 points
Love (wife)	50 points
Hate (Sir so-and-so)	10 points
Total per year	160 points/year

## The Master of the Game: Using the Game Rules

kingdom description: Anglia

### Terminology for Lands of Britain List

Capitalized places are those which appear in Character Generation chapter of the game.

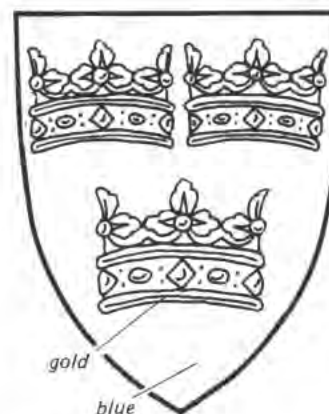
Liege (early, middle, late) indicates the sequence of rulers. Few specific years of anyone's reign are even hinted at in any Arthurian source. Gamemasters should use the death of kings as they will. Also, (pre) indicates pre-Arthur, (post) indicates post-Arthur.

### ANGLIA

Saxon/Wotanic

Lieges: King Quichelm Hrippasson (pre, early), Count of Anglia (middle), King Uffa Quichelmsson (late, post).

Anglia



*History:* the native Iceni tribe once lived here, but were driven out and replaced by the Saxon tribe called Angles.

*Landmarks:* Devil's Dike — earthen wall erected by the Saxons to hamper the movement of Arthur's cavalry into Anglia.

The Fens — a wild land paying homage to no one. Use the Marsh Encounter Table.

Guinnon — walled city, site of a Saxon rebellion, 520 (Nennius).

La Roche — castle of Camille the Sorceress. Site of rebellion, 520 (Vulgate III).

Quinqueroi Forest — forest home of the Red Knight, enemy of Percivale de Galis (Chretien, *Le Conte de Graal*).



## The Master of the Game: Using the Game Rules

definition: Hyde

kingdom description: Benoic

### Hyde

The hyde denotes a measure of land capable of supporting a peasant's family for a year. It is about 40 acres, but may be larger or smaller depending on the fertility of the land.

When a knight receives land, it is in the form of two hydes worked by the nearby peasants in return for the knight's protection.

The peasants each have their own hydes to work, and it takes about ten families to supply the labor to their lord knight. Thus the vassal-families of the knight hold about 400 acres or 10 hydes of land. Although the knight is responsible for those people, their land is not strictly his holding.

### BENOIC

(also called Moray)

Pict/Christian

Lieges: Duke Ansirus (early), Alisander le Orphelin (middle), Bellengerus le Beuse (late).

### Benoic



*History:* this region was never conquered by the Roman legions, though they tried. The piety and mercy of its first liege brought it to Arthur's fold.

*Landmark:* Castle of the Pilgrim — stronghold of Duke Ansirus, who made several pilgrimages to Rome.

Chivalrous, religious, or romantic bonuses (it would be unusual to get all these traits in one character, but not unusual for a character to be successful in one of these):

Chivalrous	100 points
Religious	100 points
Romantic (successful)	100 points

Thus the average player-character knight will gain between 100-500 (300 average) points of glory per year. The better knights, and most player-characters will get even more.

Knights who are not played will get less per year, but may still qualify for substantial glory points if they meet the standards for chivalrous, religious, or romantic bonuses. They will probably qualify for about 200 points per year.

For final comparison, Lancelot, riding about the countryside in disguised armor, attending tournaments, and acting his normal excellent self, earns about 1500 points per year during his active years. He gets 1000 points of glory from personal encounters (combat, traits), 100 for being chivalrous, 100 for other passions, 100 for successful romance, and squanders about 200 librum on entertainment (for additional glory).

### Losing Glory

If a knight's actions are villainous he will lose glory. Avenging a kinsman is not villainous, nor is slaughtering hapless commoners. Adultery, accidental murder, stealing herds and castles, and participating in ambushes are not villainous. Death, slaughter, and misery are a normal part of a knight's life. Mercy is not required, and so real villainy must be totally vile.

The gamemaster may take away glory from knights who perform these depraved actions. No witnesses need see the act. Use this power wisely.

A villainous act must be utterly unchivalrous and unknighly. It must violate both social and moral norms. Common villainous acts and suggested values are given below.

### Glory Loss from Villainy Table

minimum glory loss	action
50	killing a squire
50	being captured
50	raping a noblewoman
100	desecrating a chapel or church
100	killing a cleric or priest
100	killing a herald
100	killing a woman
100	killing an unarmed knight
100	killing a knight who surrendered
100	showing cowardice
100	offending a liege lord
200	killing a bishop
250	ganging up on a knight
500	killing an archbishop
500	killing a kinsman
all	denouncing or betraying liege
*	killing liege lord

• the killing of one's liege lord results in a loss of glory equal to twice that lord's glory upon death.

If a player-character becomes villainous and loses part or all of his glory, the benefits which he had previously gained are still kept.

### Villainous Knights

Knights become villainous when they attain negative glory. They have done so many bad things that they have become nothing but depraved, base-minded scoundrels.

Most villainous knights are gamemaster characters. If your players all want an all-villain campaign, you may do it, but it wouldn't be *Pendragon*.

The only advantage which villainous knights have is that they are hard to recognize. They always travel under false arms, so heraldry is useless to find them.



Breuse Saunce Pitie is the most famous villain knight of *Le Morte D'Arthur*. He appears, deceives the best knights, decapitates women, tramples unhorsed knights, and then vanishes into the brush, often wounded, never killed, never captured. Sir Carados of the Dolorous Tower and his brother, Sir Turquine, are also famous villains. King Mark performs his share of villainy, but never wipes out all the glory he receives for his landholdings.

You should develop a villain or two to plague the players' characters throughout the generations. Use the enemy family as a foil in the campaign, always ready to make life difficult for the player-characters.

### Presentations and Gifts

The gamemaster should occasionally create scenes the purpose of which is solely to praise the characters. The setting should be at court with plenty of famous knights to come up and congratulate the characters. Read some of the heralds' words of pompous praise. Mention how the crowd glances enviously or happily towards the recipients, how they ooh and aah at the tales of courage and adventure, catch their breaths at the sight of the beautiful gifts, and clap politely amidst a fanfare of trumpets upon the presentation.

Gift-giving is a popular way to show appreciation. Since generosity is a virtue among nobles, a guideline is provided for common rewards. Although unwritten, these standards are known and recognized by everyone.

#### Gift-Giving Table

For saving your life — half your ransom  
 For saving your wife's life — a quarter of your ransom  
 For saving your children's lives — a quarter of your ransom  
 For a small favor — 1D  
 For a big favor — 1L  
 Dowry for a knight's eldest daughter — 1d6+6L  
 To a harper who pleased you at a feast — 1D  
 To a harper who made a great song about you — 1L  
 To a holy person whose prayers probably helped you — 1D/year forever  
 To a holy person whose miracle or magic obviously helped you — 1L/year forever, or equivalent land  
 To a concubine for a year's upkeep — ½L

### Greater Rewards

Rewards for the players are necessary, and must be varied to maintain interest. At first, experience checks will be reward enough, but afterwards the gamemaster must be prepared with greater gifts.

Scale the rewards. Don't get too carried away and immediately make someone a count. For instance, household knights should first have their equipment upgraded to better armor, or perhaps be given a spare horse. Later the character may receive a gift of land, to be kept by him for life, which makes him a knight-bachelor. A later great deed would allow the lord to turn the gift into a grant, inheritable by the knight's heirs. Other parcels of land may be doled out later.

Remember that any knight who receives more than the two hydes necessary to support himself is also responsible for supplying additional knights from his increased grant. Knights do not receive extra hydes of land to supply them with profit. Expendable cash or goods comes from gifts, ransoms, or other captures.

### Madmen

Characters may go mad as a result of their passions and/or amors. They may also go mad as a result of some other gamemaster decision.

The rules state that a character who goes mad must be taken out of normal play and be temporarily turned over to the gamemaster for use as a non-player-character. They further promise experience checks for the time spent mad.

Instead of normal 1d6 training, characters mad with love receive the following checks each year: Awareness, First Aid, Folklore, Track, Grapple, Amor (for individual loved).

### Pious Knights

Some types of player-characters will insist upon being strictly pious knights, intent upon living a perfect Christian life in order to invoke the power and/or wrath of God in the form of game miracles.

## The Master of the Game: Using the Game Rules

kingdom description: Brittany

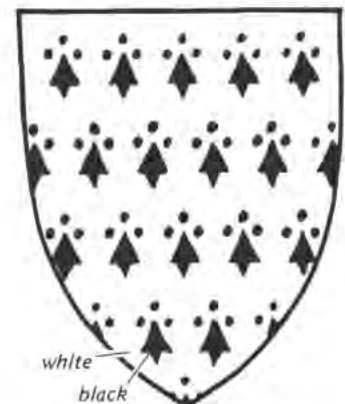
### BRITTANY

(also called Ganis, Little Britain, Llydaw)

Cymric/Christian

Lieges: King Hoel (pre-, early), K. Claudas of France (middle), Duke Hoel (late).

Brittany



*History:* the Celtic Roman tribes in this region joined with Cymric emigrants who came in several waves from Britain. Kynan Meriadoc, the first notable leader, marched with Emperor Maxen Wledig to conquer Rome in the fourth century. It was independent until King Claudas of France seized the kingdom in 518, and held until Claudas was ousted by Arthur in 536.

*Landmarks:* Broceliande Forest — a magical forest. Site of Barenton Fountain (Chretien, Yvaine; *Mabinogion*: "Lady of the Fountain"), also the site of the Garden of Joy made by Merlin, one of Merlin's reported burial sites (*Merlin*, by Robert de Boron), and site of Val san Retour (Vulgate).

Canoel — chief city of Parmenie (*Tristan*, by von Strassburg).

Carnac — megalithic site with hundreds of standing stones in rows.

Dol — a famous monastery.

Doleise — a fortress (*Tristan*, von Strassburg).

Fine Postern — region of eastern Brittany (*Tristan*, von Strassburg).

Landuc — the land and city of Laudine, wife of Yvaine (Chretien, Yvaine).

Lut — a city (*Tristan*, von Strassburg).

Parmenie — district between Normandy and Brittany (*Tristan*, von Strassburg).



## The Master of the Game:

### Campaign Overview

definition: Campaign Phases  
kingdom description: Cambenet

### Campaign Phases

The *Pendragon* campaign is divided into six phases of time, each fifteen years long. The first phase tracks events before King Arthur's crowning, while the last one starts shortly before his death. In all, King Arthur's reign is fifty five years long, including most of four phases.

The phases mark major changes in the attitudes of court, jousting techniques, armor, and weaponry available to knights. They track the changes from the court of a young idealistic king, through the pomp and splendor of the world's most royal court, up to the doom and decadence at the end.

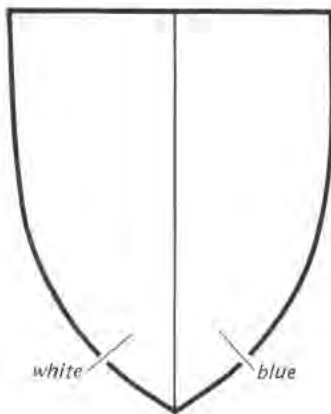
### CAMBENET

Cymric/Christian

Lieges: Duke Escan (early), D. Eustace (middle, late).

History: Carduel was founded by Romans and is still an important port and market. The city is often held by one of the neighboring kings.

### Cambenet



Landmarks: Bresquehan Forest – a forest between Cambenet and Norgales.

Carduel City – a.k.a. Carlisle. A large city, once Roman but now Cymric. Court city for Arthur.

Pennine Mts. – bleak moors, broken by steep valleys filled with dense trees.

Rowse, Castle de la – castle of a duke, who was Arthur's enemy until an encounter with Sir Gareth (532) (Malory VII, 31-32).

As the gamemaster you should always make it clear that players should expect nothing for piety besides a happy afterlife (and, perhaps, extra glory for religious virtues). Miracles and magic, even at the height of Arthur's enchanted realm, are beyond the reach of any knightly player-character. Devout, pious prayers do not warrant miracles.

Sometimes, when a game ends with everyone feeling bad, the gamemaster may be tempted to submit to miracles to reverse game results. Perhaps the game made a shambles of his intent, the Arthurian legend, or the sensibilities of his players. When provoked by a pious character, the temptation is dear for a miracle. But before submitting, wait a few days. Time to think will allow you to decide on a proper settlement of the mistakes, and also give you time to devise appropriate results.

You can decide, despite the errors and despite some character's prayers and successful piety and worship rolls, that everything occurred as it happened: total disaster. Perhaps the pious worshiper is the only survivor, who brings out characters' chattel property and bodies, and names new heirs (allowing even new characters, if needed) to get the goods.

Divine intervention, the miracle of devout prayer, is present in Arthurian Britain. But it is hard and rare to achieve. Don't cheapen the campaign with its excessive use – make its manifestation an exception to the real world.

## CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

### Pacing the Campaign

Adventures should occur once or twice per year to maintain a steady campaign pace. Occasional scenarios will require multiple sessions to resolve, and at other times you may decide that many years pass between sessions.

Active adventuring kills. Characters who wish to establish families should stay home for a year or two. If players find that all their characters are being killed off, they should slow down and spend a few years on something other than adventuring until some heirs are born, before continuing.

### Killing Player-Characters

Death will come to every campaign character eventually, and a quick death in combat is what a knight expects. Gamemasters should not be squeamish about having player-characters die while on adventures. Heirs provide some emotional relief for the bereaved players. Death must sting to give the lives of the living crispness and vitality.

### Campaign Escalation

The accumulation of wealth and power is inevitable as characters inherit their predecessors' treasures and win more of their own. A single knight's ransom can make another knight rich for life. The ransom of three knights is a vast treasure.

The campaign game has built-in release valves to handle increased riches. Tournament stakes increase as time passes. Raids become more serious. Land becomes more expensive to purchase. Costlier items, such as horse barding, become available.

Characters will also tend to become more powerful. The magic items which the gamemaster carefully distributed among many characters may end up in the possession of a single knight after three generations. Gamemaster characters also get more powerful as the campaign progresses, so that later adventures will be increasingly dangerous.

### Changing History

You should strive to include well-known Arthurian characters in your campaign. Their presence lends authority and authenticity. However, their inclusion always threatens the worst. For instance, what if Lancelot himself is jousting and happens to roll a 1, while the player-character rolls a critical success. What should the gamemaster do? Here are some suggestions:

You can fudge. "Well, a blow like that would have killed any normal man twice over, but not the staunch Sir Lancelot!"

You can invoke a *deus ex machina*. "A woman cries out from the crowd and rushes forward. Everyone gets a recognition roll – it is the Lady of the Lake. She pulls the truncheon from Lancelot's body, pours a salve over the wound, and kisses him gently on the lips. He wakes, slightly dazed."



How about surprise? "The dead knight's helmet is pulled off, make a Recognize roll — made it? You realize this isn't Lancelot! Someone else is wearing his armor!"

Or do nothing. Change history. "The great Sir Lancelot, once judged the best of knights, is dead." (And I pity the killer — both Lancelot's kin and Guenever would surely avenge even an accidental death.)

Most characters are dispensable anyway. Only the death of one of the three main characters would extensively change the campaign plot. Changing history will require some forethought, but nothing requires you to follow the campaign to its predestined end. You may decide to throw predestination to the wind, let any player-character become Guenever's lover, and maybe even allow someone else to become Pendragon.

### Ending the Campaign

The end of Arthur's reign marks the destruction of all that was cherished and held dear, gone from the world for five hundred years until rediscovered during the Middle Ages.

You may choose to continue your campaign. Perhaps Arthur and Guenever have a son, hidden away like Arthur was during his youth. Perhaps he was raised at court amid a circle of admiring nobles. Perhaps Lancelot married Guenever and became king after the death of Arthur.

My suggestion is to end the campaign. Once you have played through the whole saga you have had over a year of play. Your starting characters' grandchildren have come and gone.

If you want to keep playing, begin the whole campaign anew. Your foreknowledge will not harm the game. You can always rework the plot.



# The Setting

The setting chapter contains the geography of the land, including political and natural divisions, the nature of travel and encounters across the lands, unusual creatures that inhabit Arthurian Britain, and all magical matters of the land and its people.

## THE KINGDOMS

Most kingdoms have a population center, usually a city, which provides the goods necessary to equip knights. Wild terrain, usually wooded, surrounds the kingdom centers. Scattered through the woods, connected by seasonal dirt tracks, lie smaller clusters of human habitation which range in size from small peasant hamlets to large towns with rich castles.

Kingdoms are not measured by marked borders, but by how far down the roads the lord has gone to collect taxes. Size depends directly upon the prowess of the royal lord. When any liege takes office, usually after the death of the previous holder, all vassals are supposed to attend court and pay homage. Depending upon how the vassals feel about their new lord, they may come quickly, slowly, or not at all. Until the oaths are exchanged, the barons are formally independent, and can keep all their own harvests, ignore mandatory gifts, overlook summonses to battle, determine their own justice, and otherwise abuse royal prerogatives for personal gain. Powerful kings make sure the outlying regions pay homage to their central power. A strong king can dominate other local kingdoms, as did King Lot for his lifetime. Weaker kings are incapable of doing so.

Each king has a household of retainers, with officers, as outlined in the Object of the Game chapter of the *Pendragon* rules. He also commands an army of loyal knights. Sizes of armies, types of troops, and terms of service vary with season, year, and number of current grudges.

## The Setting: The Kingdoms

kingdom description: Cameliard

### CAMELIARD

Cymric/Christian

Lieges: K. Leodegrance (early, middle),  
Guenever (late).

History: King Leodegrance was a friend of  
Uther Pendragon.

Cameliard



**Landmarks:** Amans Castle — stronghold of a subking (Malory XVI, 7-9, 13).

Arroy Forest — this marvelous forest is the site of the Triple Quest, and thus includes the tower of maidens who despise good knights, the dwarf knight, a magical lake, and other wonders (Malory 16-28).

Use the Dense Woodland Encounter Table.

Carohaise — large city (Vulgate II).

Chariot Castle — magical stronghold of Morgan le Fay, where she takes Lancelot as prisoner (Malory VI, 3-4).

Peningue — castle of Sir Galihodin, site of a famous tournament in 534 (Vulgate V).

Trent River — main river of region.



**The Setting: Camelot**  
*coat of arms: Blamore de Ganis*

## CAMELOT

Camelot is the center of Arthur's magnificent realm. It is a place of man-made magic conjured into being by Arthur's dreams and hard work.

In ancient times Camelot was the capital of a pagan kingdom which was converted to Christianity by Joseph of Arimathea. However, the place lost its importance between then and Arthur's time, for it is not mentioned again except as Arthur's city.

Arthur chose the site to be his capital and began construction in 522 after his political and military situation was secure. The central palace was finished in less than a year as the laborers worked as if by magic, inspired by Arthur's dream and hard cash. The rest of the city was added over the years, always growing in splendor. The immense castle-palace was never finished.

The courts and customs of the High Court are at the center of Camelot. King Arthur and Queen Guenever set the fashions of the kingdom here, imitated closely by the courtiers and visiting kings. Those powerful personages each have their own private quarters, varying in size and splendor according to the status of the individual. These private courts imitate the styles of the High Court as best possible. The biggest courts, banquet halls, and gardens which are most like the Pendragon's court are the sections belonging to the Kings of Malahaut, the Dukes of Britain, etc.

Other significant parts of Camelot include its cathedral, gardens which house parts of the famous Camelot menagerie, stables which hold thousands of steeds, lofty mews with magical birds, and the stadium-sized tournament field.

Arthur has three main courts in Camelot: the Outer Court, King's Throne Room, and Round Table Hall. The Queen's Court is indoors, while her Court of Love is usually held in a magical garden outdoors. A Visitor's High Court is available for important occasions. The Great Banquet Hall is where the knights closest to Arthur normally eat, with several other banquet halls for lesser knights and servants.

The Outer Court is a parade ground and courtyard capable of holding both a teeming mass of commoners and a proud display of chivalry at once. Public assembly occurs here.

The King's Court holds the thrones of the High King, his Queen, and the heir-presumptive. The last-titled is hoped to be the son of the king and queen, and the gamemaster should even pointedly or subtly mention that hope each time the player-characters enter the throne room. Most of the time, however, it is Sir Gawaine's seat. If, in your game, Mordred is recognized by Arthur as heir, Sir Mordred sits there sometime after 559.

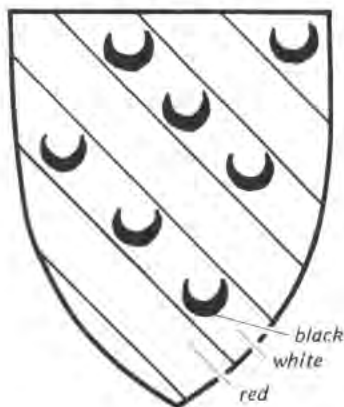
The Round Table Hall is used only when the Round Table meets, either annually at the Pentecost (the seventh Sunday after Easter), or at Arthur's command (such as the Christmas when Gawaine meets the Green Knight). The magnificent table measures a hundred and fifty feet in diameter, and is housed beneath a lofty dome. Singing birds fly overhead. The table is round with an open center accessible to dancing girls, jugglers, and other performers. The surface is spaciouly wide, with the open center two steps lower than the floor with the seated knights. The servants, entertainment, and miraculous events of the Pentecost assemblies occur in the middle, where all the Round Table knights can see. Banners and tapestries line the walls, commemorating the grand deeds of the noble knights. The seats of the knights are each ornate and beautiful, with their names gleaming in gold.

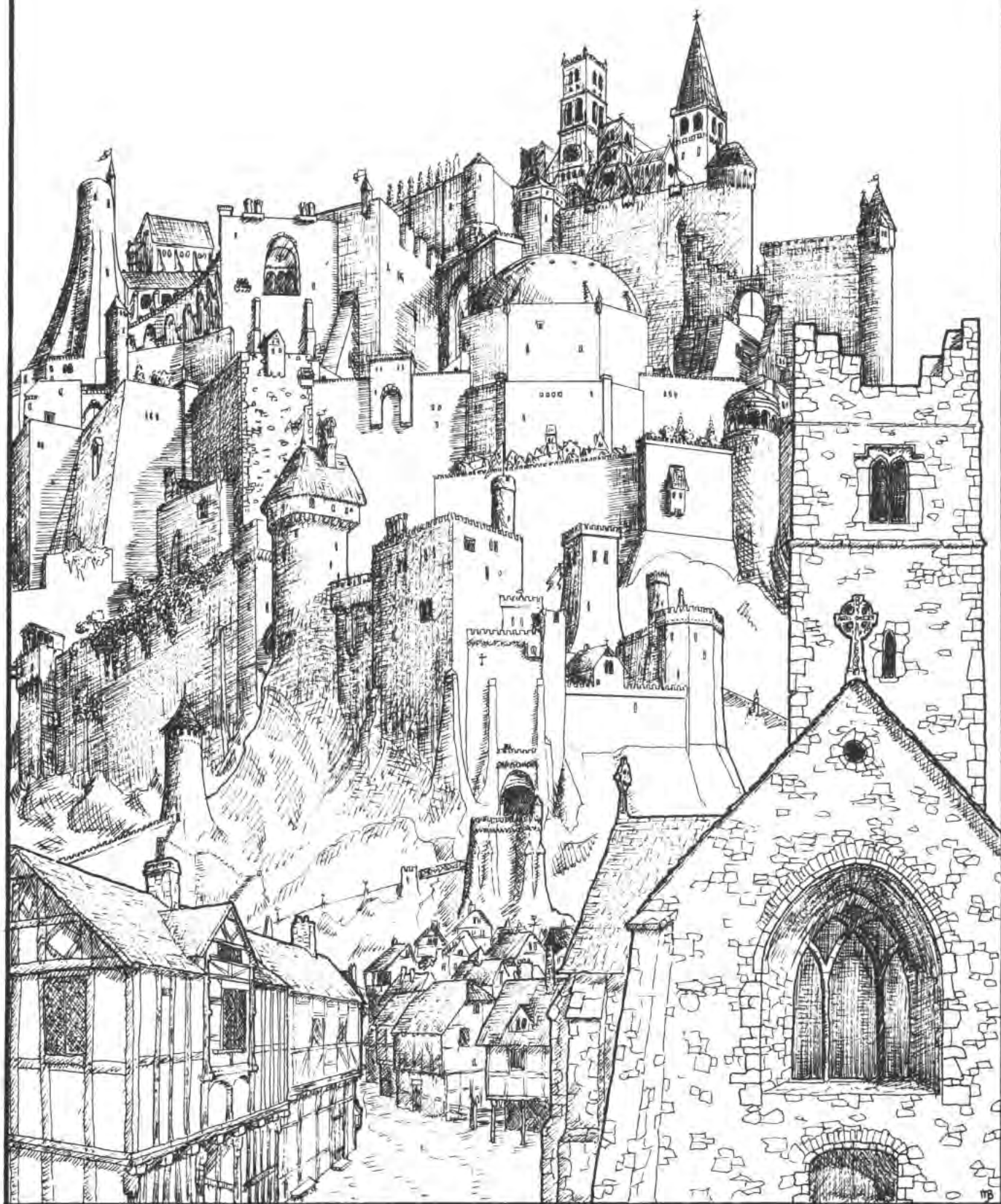
The Queen's Court is decorated with pale glowing marble imported from the Antipodes Islands, beyond the edge of the world. Despite any severe weather outside, sunshine always beams through the open skylight sections of the roof in daytime, and clear starlight at night. Guenever's throne alone sits atop the dais, and from here the Queen rules her private domains and affairs.

The Court of Love is a paradise of flowers, where each blossom symbolizes some portion of love's splendor and agony. Within its pathways are places for lovers to discover the symbolic truths of love, and to find inspiration for immortal private poetry. It mirrors the truth of the world and changes with each season, to test the passions of lovers. Although glorious under sunlight, this garden is most beautiful under the moon.

The Great Banquet Hall serves most of Arthur's knights for daily eating. Only other honored guests eat here; most knights eat at their own lord's hall, or at one of the dozen auxiliary feast halls used to feed lesser knights, unknown visiting

Blamore de Ganis







## The Setting: Other Court Cities

kingdom description: Cornwall

### CORNWALL

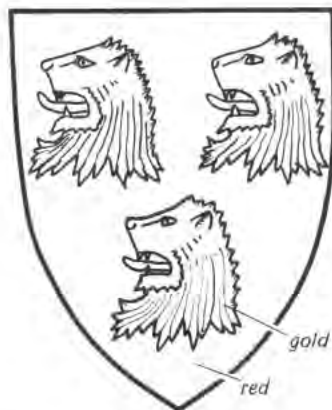
(also called Dumnonia by Romans)

Cymric/Pagan

Lieges: K. Idres (early), K. Mark (middle, late).

*History:* the ancient kingdom of Dumnonia was growing rich from its tin mines in the time of Christ, when the merchant Joseph of Arimathea used to visit. Since then it has remained strong, even semi-independent in Roman times. Cornwall is large and unruly, made up of many subkingdoms which are often in rebellion against ignoble King Mark. The larger sub-kingdoms are Devon and Lyonesse.

#### Cornwall



*Landmarks:* Arbray – major city in Lyonesse (Malory X, 50).

Carrum – a.k.a. Carhampton. Home of the monk Carannog, who received it from King Arthur for praying a dragon away (*Life of St. Carannog*).

Castle Dore – sixth century fortress site reputed to be King Mark's castle (Ashe).

Devon – regional name for eastern Cornwall.

Fosse Way – Roman road running from Isca Dumnonium, in Cornwall, to Lindum, in NE Logres.

Golant – monastery founded by St. Samson (*Life of St. Samson*).

ISCA DUMNONIUM – large Roman city, a.k.a. Exeter.

Kelliwick – site named as one of Arthur's meeting halls in Welsh legend (*Mabinogion*, "Kilhwch and Olwen").

Lyonesse – low-lying land, subkingdom of Cornwall. Land of Tristram.

Lyonesse Castle – castle guarding border of the subkingdom (Malory X, 50).

Morris Forest – forest in Cornwall, which includes the Perilous Lake within its borders (Malory IX, 39).

Perilous Rock, Port of – where King Mordrains found an evil city, centuries earlier when the Grail first came to Britain (Malory XVII, 4).

St. Michael's Mont – high hill overlooking Lyonesse.

Terrabil – castle where Duke Gorlois was killed by Uther Pendragon (Malory I,

knights, and the hordes of squires left to fend for themselves. Other halls with simpler fare feed the city-sized population of servants and workers.

The cathedral of Camelot is a lofty buttressed structure with fifty stained-glass windows fifty feet high, each showing a portion of Christ's life and the Holy Grail. Masses are sung every day at Prime (about 6:00 AM), Sext (12:00 noon), and Vespers (about 6:00 PM). A dozen confessionals are always open. The areas around the cathedral house the priests, visiting clergy, and their knights and staffs. Several independent monasteries have separate quarters in other parts of the palace.

Gardens are cared for by gardeners with each trying to outdo the other with imported plants from far lands of the known and invisible worlds. None outdoes Guenever's Garden of Love, although some have special effects which temporarily eclipse the queen's in novelty. All the gardens contain decorated pens for display and control of wild beasts according to their needs. For instance, the Deer Garden has several herds of roving animals which do not molest the vegetation or landscaping, but carefully prune and clip it according to the gardener's command; but the lions are kept caged, and the fierce wyrm is held behind a magical barrier.

The stables are immense, and the magic of Camelot overcomes the Augean task of cleaning them each night. Thus, of all the stables in the world, these do not offend the civilized noses of the daintiest maiden or city-dweller. In Arthur's central stable, oats is always the fare, and sometimes destriers or magical steeds ridden by heroes can be seen.

The mews of Camelot house a miraculous variety of sport birds. Every known species is present, including species of eagles which only the king and queen, and their hawkers, may command. Only the healthiest birds are kept here, shining and keen-witted enough to help even the most amateur hunter.

The vast tournament field of Camelot is generous enough for two teams of 200 knights each to charge each other comfortably in front of immense stands for the two thousand viewers, a small town of shelters and storage sheds for lances, saddles, and spare weapons, with a nearby 50-bed hospital.

The magic of Camelot is expressed in every detail. It is spectacular and strange to the medieval mind. Your task as gamemaster is to bring it to life for the players.

Camelot seems much bigger on the inside than on the outside. The spaces between important places are crammed with roomy quarters for the thousands of anonymous servants and workers necessary to maintain the splendor. It works in magical ways beyond the understanding of the participants.

One easy way to portray this wonder is to describe modern standards of living without the trappings of technology. The marbled corridors are lit by a gently glowing light, rooms have hot and cold running water, and bathrooms are warm.

A familiar but exotic setting can be aided by accurately describing slightly anachronistic devices within the palace. Architecturally we have mentioned domed ceilings (the Round Table hall), flying buttresses (cathedral), and chimneys. Other unusual implements include a water clock or other simple machine, silk clothing, glass goblets, and forks for eating.

### Camelot's Location

Placing Camelot was very difficult for me. No one knows where it really lay, if it existed at all. Malory unequivocally states that Winchester was Camelot, then elsewhere contradicts himself and says or implies that Caerleon, Carlisle, or Westminster was the site.

Modern archaeology has uncovered an Arthurian-age fortress in Somerset. It is called Cadbury Castle, and nearby is the river Cam, with the battlefield of Camlann nearby. Popular fancy insists it is the site of the fortress of the historical Arthur. Modern writers tend to agree; even the musical *Camelot* says so.

The Iron Age fortress at Cadbury Castle, in modern Somerset, is the Camelot of *Pendragon*.

### OTHER COURT CITIES

Like most medieval kings, Arthur moves about the countryside with his court from location to location. The process is called a Progress. Royal court is held where the king stops.

Camelot hosts a permanent court, even when Arthur is absent. The Chancellor, Constantine of Cornwall, is always on hand to care for pressing business.

Additional royal cities mentioned by Malory and others are: Caerleon, Cardiff, Carlisle, Celliwig, Nantes, London, Orcades, St. David's, Westminster, and Winchester.

## HIDDEN LANDS

Those locations relating to the location of the Grail Castle have been purposely left off the map because no one knows where the Grail Castle is located. Even Sir Galahad, born and raised there, had a hard time finding his way back.

The small size of kingdoms in King Arthur's time allows the region to be set almost anywhere, and you as the gamemaster should feel free to decide the exact location within your campaign for yourself. The Lake District, between the Brequehan and Perilous Forests, is where the Chaosium campaign located it.

Contradictions exist within Malory; the land around the castle is ruined by Balin's Dolorous Stroke, yet later the same King Pellam rules rich and wonderful lands. When Lancelot and Bors, each separately, visited the region they noted nothing unusual. Figure out how you will use the Waste Lands theme. I prefer the ruined land version, myself.

The following names are relevant to the Grail Castle location:

Bliant Castle — a castle of King Pellam's where Lancelot, Elaine, and young Galahad lived.

Carbonek — the Grail Castle, where wounded King Pellam and the Grail Maidens live and the marvelous procession of artifacts occurs.

Case Castle — castle of Sir Pellam, five miles from Carbonek.

Goothe Castle — a castle near Listeneise.

Listeneise — the name of Pellam's kingdom.

Waste Lands — name for the region after the Dolorous Stroke.

## GETTING ABOUT

The most common mode of travel in Arthurian Britain is on horseback over a fairly-good road system built by the Romans. Several types of roads are distinguished and affect movement rates. Rates are shown in the Game Mechanics chapter of the Player's Book in the *Pendragon* game rules.

### Roman Roads

The Roman roads were built during centuries of Roman occupation. Many are still used in modern times. Roman roads were built to facilitate rapid army movements and aid trade during peacetime. In rural areas, the Roman roads have deteriorated now, and some lead nowhere: their original destinations have been abandoned since the Roman departure, leaving ruins and overgrown fields. Roman roads shown are always bridged.

### Roads

Normal roads are dirt tracks wide enough to allow a cart or wagon to travel along with little difficulty. Roads connect villages to towns, and towns to cities.

### Paths

Paths are dirt tracks usually only wide enough for a single horse to travel. Villages are connected to nearby villages by paths. Paths may also extend between widespread towns, or even through the woods, but become overgrown and lost if not frequently used. Paths are wide enough for carts.

### River Travel

Small boats plying rivers can carry horses. A normal barge carries two steeds and riders, if lightly loaded. Travel times on a river via poled raft or barge equal riding rates if traveling upriver, and double riding rates if traveling downriver.

### Sea Travel

Sea travel is very dangerous due to the irregular weather of the Irish and British Seas. Rapid wind and cloud shifts make it treacherous. Normal passage from Britain to Ireland is 1-10 days, while passage to the continent is 3-30 days. If close to the opposite shore, time is spent in waiting for reliable weather for the passage. Longer distances require the captain to wait for the best available weather, and hope to be fortunate enough to miss storms and swells.

Many journeys are hapless despite the best precautions. In Malory, Sir Tristram travels often by ship, and often suffers the difficulties involved. He and

## The Setting: Hidden Lands, Getting About

Arthurian Ships  
sub-kingdom: Devon

1, 3). Site of battle against Eleven Kings in 513 (Malory II, 10).

Tin Mines — Cornwall is often noted as a source of tin.

Tintagel — castle where Arthur was begat and born, where giants were fought, and Mark held court (Malory I, 3; VI, 11; IX, 39).

Totnes — city. Site where Brutus first landed, and also where Ambrosius and Uther Pendragon landed to invade Britain (Geoffrey).

### Devon

(subkingdom of Cornwall)

Cymric/Christian

Lieges: K. Erbin (early), K. Geraint (middle, late).

Landmark: Isca Dumnonium.

## Arthurian Ships

Several types of ships and boats are important: Saxon longships, common traderships, fishing boats, and coracles.

Longships are used exclusively by Saxons, both on and off Britain. They are long and wide, and carry a complement of 20-50 raiders. Player-character Saxons begin with some Boating skill, which can be used to pilot these craft.

Traderships are medieval caravels. Sails propel these round-bottomed ships, with long sweeps used in port and when becalmed. Towers rise fore and aft. Goods and horses and kept in holds. Passengers have personal quarters which are private, but very cramped.

A private fishing boat is too small to transport horses, but it can ferry a couple of knights and their equipment around. Two or three peasant fishermen pilot the craft, which always stinks of fish, usually leaks somewhat, and offers no physical comforts.

Rafts are common on rivers, and can be any size, depending only on the river and propulsion. Propulsion is by sweeps, poles, or a tow by oxen or men. Rafts often travel only downriver; when the journey is ended, they are broken up and sold for timber.

Coracles are leather boats made in Ireland. They range in size from one-man paddle boats to huge raiding craft which carry up to 20 raiders. These small craft could cover great distances, and Irish monks used them to travel from Ireland to Iceland, which was undiscovered in Arthur's time.



## The Setting: Encounter Tables

kingdom description: *Escavalon*

### ESCAVALON

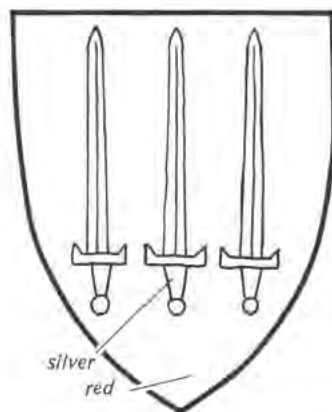
(also referred to as *Silures* and *Dobunni* tribes by Romans, and *Gwent* and *Hwicce* later on)

Cymric/Christian

*Liege*: Alain (early), D. Aurelius Caninus (middle, late).

*History*: the lower Severn and Avon river valleys are rich farmlands. Once thoroughly Romanized, this region is the center of Cymric population in western Britain.

### Escavalon



*Landmarks*: Avon River – rich river valley, center of population.

Black Mountains – southern range of the Cambrian mountains.

CAERWENT – large walled city first built by Romans a.k.a. Venta Silurium. Tatheus, an Irish scholar, holds classes here. His most famous student was Abbot Cadoc (*Life of St. Cadoc*).

Cardiff – city where Arthur once met in court (*Mabinogion*: “Geraint Son of Erbin”).

Carlion (-on-Usk) – castle, and site of old Roman fort, one of Arthur’s favorite palaces. Site where he was crowned (Malory I, 8; Vulgate III). Includes a college of astrology (Geoffrey).

Dean Forest – woods between Severn and Wye (*Mabinogion*: “Geraint Son of Erbin”).

Dinas Powys – castle occupied during Arthur’s historical period (Ashe).

GLEVUM – one of the Three Great Cities of Britain (Triads), a.k.a. Gloucester. Site of witches’ school (*Mabinogion*: “Peredur”).

Llancarfan – monastery founded by Abbot Cadoc, and famous as a refuge after the saintly abbot defied and tricked King Arthur (*Life of St. Cadoc*).

Llantwit Major – monastery founded and led by St. Illtud (*Life of St. Illtud*).

Lydney – city. At this site was an ancient temple to the god Nodens, as well as famous healing baths which were extensively rebuilt in Roman times after the coming of Christianity to Britain.

Usk River – river in S. Wales.

Severn River – one of the Three Great Rivers of Britain.

Isolt are becalmed one time, another time he and Sir Kehydus are shipwrecked on Isle Servage, and still another time his ship is forced ashore at Castle Pluere.

Sea storms can blow the travelers far from their course. On one voyage, Sir Tristram sets sail from Brittany for Cornwall, but ends up in Wales.

Gamemasters must determine the difficulty of sea travel. In some scenarios it might only be an irritating diversion to have characters blown wide of their intended landing. But the player-characters’ being in a storm and landing in an unexpected location can be the source of excellent adventure. A sea storm can be useful to divest unusually-rich characters of accumulated wealth, equipment, or horses.

## ENCOUNTER TABLES

Knights errant often wander about the countryside in search of whatever random adventure reveals itself. Wanderings often consist of days of travel interspersed with days of being lost.

Included in the *Pendragon* game is a color map of Britain. Water, plus six types of terrain, are shown on it: settled lands, open lands, woodlands, dense woodlands, uplands, and marsh.

When a knight travels about the countryside, a gamemaster may choose to use the map to follow his travels. In such a case, the random encounter tables (below) can be used, but you should ignore results which send you off table when inappropriate.

If you, as the gamemaster, do not wish to preplan wanderings, and also do not want to travel along the *Pendragon* map, then you can use the following tables to chart such adventures.

### Rates of Travel

For a full description of movement rates and travel times please see the Game Mechanics chapter in the Player’s Book of the *Pendragon* rules. The rates below are for mounted and foot travel.

Traveled Distance (in miles per day)			
	Roman road	normal road/path	wilds
leisurely pace	15	10	2
average pace	20	15	3
hurried pace	30	25	4

### Instructions

Seven encounter tables are each keyed to a particular type of terrain. The gamemaster should roll d20 once each half-day of travel to discover any encounter. Often nothing happens, while sometimes disaster after disaster will occur.

### Roman Road Encounters

The ancient highways of the Roman legions cut across Britain in bands four wagons wide, paved with cut stone, set on good foundations, and engineered to stay dry. They link the cities with each other, and are heavily traveled wherever they exist. These roads are more numerous than shown on the map, which shows only the major thoroughfares. Many still exist in the twentieth century; in Arthur’s time they are in a slightly neglected condition, but usable.

d20	result
1-3	light traffic
4-10	moderate traffic
11-14	heavy traffic
15-18	challenge knight
19	toll station: 1 D/steed, 1 D/person
20	road ends: next turn roll on Settled Lands table

Traffic on these roads contains all or some of the following: nobles with their entourages, messengers and heralds, traveling priests with entourages, wandering monks, peddlers packing their wares, hawkers selling food, merchants with horseloads of goods, farmers with carts, shepherds with flocks, farmers driving ox teams, wandering lone knights, squires on business, etc.

The gamemaster is left to design whatever adventure he wishes from such traffic, or ignore it as inconsequential.

### Settled Lands Encounters

Places which are densely populated offer little variation in their inhabitants. However, the dense regions are small and widely scattered.

d20	result
1-10	village
11-13	town
14-16	manor
17-18	small city
19	large city
20	wastes

Settled lands have many villages and towns, each surrounded by vegetable gardens and barley fields, that are separated by sparse waste woods. Knightly manors are abundant, and castles or keeps are often visible. Dirt roads connect towns, paths connect villages. During daylight, commoners can always be seen working about the settled lands.

### Open Lands Encounters

Open lands are composed of worked fields, interspersed with clumps of thick brush and trees. Both flat and rolling lands are open. In rolling lands, valleys and other rough ground, the earth is often covered by thick brush and woods.

d20	result
1-3	good road sighted: next roll use Settled Lands table
4-6	village
7-8	town
9-11	manor
12	small city
13-14	bandits
15-18	wastes: empty lands
19-20	nothing: next roll use Woodland table

Humans live in scattered towns and villages of varying size. Towns are connected by dirt roads, barley fields cover many acres, and castles are found at the center of every town cluster.

### Woodland

Most of Britain is covered by woodland. Trees and heavy clay soils make farming impossible. Settlements in distant clearings are self-sufficient and without regular communication to the nearest city. Dirt roads are often overgrown, and are usually impassable in winter. Paths here belong to animals and run between water and nowhere.

d20	result
1-2	nothing: next roll use Open Lands table
3-7	village
8-10	town
11-14	manor
15	bandits
16-17	nothing: lost, go nowhere
18	wild animals
19-20	nothing: next roll use Dense Woods table

Riding through these woods is slow, but possible. Routes can be found through thin areas, often from clearing to clearing, some of which have human habitations. Beware of faerie folk.

### Dense Woods Encounters

Thick growths of oak, ash, and thorn make some woodlands nearly impassable to mounted knights. Only a slow walk leading a horse is usually possible. Animal trails are often overgrown. Nonetheless, occasional meadows and clearings offer relief from the oppressive shadows.

d20	result
1-2	nothing: next roll use Woodland table
3-4	village
5	town
6-8	manor
9-11	bandits
12-13	wild animals
14-15	monsters
16-17	nothing: no paths available
18+	nothing: next roll, add 1d6 to result on this table

Sometimes a cluster of habitations can be found in a clearing, ruled by a proud lord or lady, isolated and backward, eager for news.

## The Setting: Encounter Tables

kingdom description: Escoce

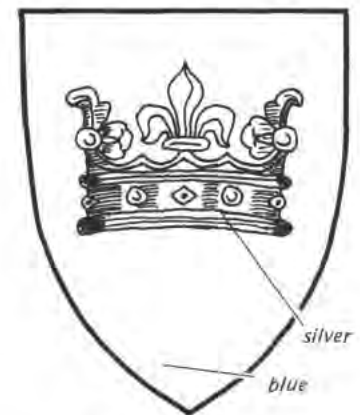
### ESCOCE

(also called Caledonia, Scotland incorrectly by Malory, and Maetae by Romans)

Pict/Pagan

Lieges: K. Carados (early), K. Mailcon (middle), K. Brude (late).

Escoce



*History:* this northern land was never conquered by the Romans. Part of the reason is its relative desolation, which makes lowlanders wonder how any humans at all could live there. Its Pictish natives often raid the southern lands to seize what they cannot make. Thus they have only a small propertied noble class, few properly equipped knights, and many terrifying screaming savage warriors, painted blue and waiting to attack at night.

*Landmarks:* Caithness — northern coastal region of the island.

Montescleire — the Shining Mountain (Chretien, *Graal*).

Penrhyn Blathaon — the northernmost promontory of Britain, in Caithness, often referred to in conjunction with Penwaeth (Cornwall), which was reportedly 900 miles away.



**The Setting: Encounter Tables***coat of arms: Gaheris***Uplands Encounters**

Uplands include moors, rough broken ground, and mountainous terrain. In general, Britain's mountains are flat-topped, covered with grass and shrubs, and cut by steep ravines which restrict travel on horseback. Ravines are often filled by dense woods. When an upland is poorly drained, it is usually covered by peat bogs and is called a moor. The only paths are animal trails.

d20	result
1-2	nothing: next roll use Open Lands table
3	village
4	meditating hermit
5-9	no path: go nowhere
10-12	bandits
13-17	wild animals
18-19	monsters
20+	nothing: travel deeper, add 1d6 to die roll next time

Uplands are almost empty of human habitation, and only rarely traversed by adventurous knights. Nomadic peoples seasonally graze herds here, and the ancient dwarf race of Pechs hide here.

**Marsh Encounters**

The low-lying coasts of Britain are covered by marshes. Carved by streams and rivers, dotted with islands and tracts of treacherous boggy ground, these areas are uncrossable except by the local peasants, who hold their secret routes dear.

d20	result
1-2	nothing: next roll use the Open Lands table
3-5	village
6-7	town
8-11	manor
12	small city
13	bandits
14-16	wild animals
17	monsters
18-20	bad path: go nowhere

Amid this wild land are islands of farms and even small cities, isolated and safe for the local lords.

**Explanations**

**Bandits** — these robbers give a bad name to varlets, villains, and knaves. They are often on foot, and are usually more poorly-armed than knights. Some, however, can be formidable. Bandits will not usually attack knights except with superior odds: 1d6/knight is average. Bandits in the Uplands are probably wild, tattooed Picts.

**Challenge Knight** — these knights are looking for a joust for the day. They are usually jousting for love, unless the local custom is otherwise. Roll d20 to determine the quality and number of opponents at each meeting with challenge knights.

**Hermit** — these solitary meditators may be Christian or pagan. They are usually glad to share their humble meals and abodes with any visitor.

**Large City** — these habitations usually have a rich and noble castle nearby. They always have a challenge knight nearby.

Gaheris

**Challenge Knight Table**

d20	result
1-4	average knight
5-8	good knight
9-12	excellent knight
13-16	special encounter (see below)
17	roll twice, treat further rolls of 17-20 as "average knight"
18	roll three times, treat further rolls of 17-20 as "average knight"
19	roll four times, treat further rolls of 17-20 as "average knight"
20	roll five times, treat further rolls of 17-20 as "average knight"

Special Encounter indicates that the challenge knight is a famous personage. Roll d20 and use the following tables.

Two tables are given. Gamemasters are urged to tailor their own lists according to need and character statistics available. Characters listed below all have statistics given as complete non-player-characters, or have a handy substitute listed.

These characters are usually accompanied by an appropriate entourage of squires, knights, and ladies. The gamemaster should decide what their business is: personal, family, or court. Alternately, the knights may be wandering alone as knight-errants, perhaps even with blank shields.

**Special Encounter During Earlier Phases (2 to 3)**

1. Agravaine	11. Kay
2. Arthur	12. Lak
3. Balin le Sauvage	13. Marhaus
4. Brastias	14. Merlin
5. Breuse Saunse Pitie	15. Morgan
6. Cadoc	16. Nimue
7. Carados	17. Pellinore
8. Gawaine	18. Samson (use Cadoc's statistics)
9. Griflet	19. Tor
10. Guenever	20. Ulfius

**Special Encounter During Later Phases (4 to 5)**

1. Agravaine	12. Mark
2. Arthur	13. Mordred
3. Breuse Saunse Pitie	14. Morgan
4. Cadoc	15. Nimue
5. Gawaine	16. Percivale
6. Griflet	17. Samson (use Cadoc's statistics)
7. Guenever	18. Tor
8. Kay	19. Tristram
9-11. Lancelot	20. Turquine (use Carados's statistics)

**Manor** – a manor is a knight's dwelling, where lives his wife and children, extra horses, and servants. Near it are usually a village or two, a mill, a church, and so on. Manors are not usually fortified, but they are increasingly likely to be so in less-inhabited country.

The lord of the manor sometimes waits at a ford, bridge, spring, or crossroads as a challenge knight.

**Monsters** – monsters occur only in the wildlands far from humans. You should choose any appropriate creature to appear to the characters. Most of the fairy types are classed as monsters by player-characters, but not all encounters need involve combat. Roll d20 when monsters are encountered, and consult this table:

**Monster Encounter Table**

monster	dense woods	uplands	marsh
Avanc	—	—	1
Barguest	1-2	1-2	2-3
Dwarf	3-4	3-4	4-5
Elf	5-7	5-6	—
Fiend	8-9	7-8	6
Giant, small	10-12	9-10	7-8
Giant, large	13	11	9
Giant, huge	—	12	—
Kelpie	—	—	10-13
Questing Beast	14	13	14
Selkie	—	—	15
Spriggen	15-16	14-16	16-17
Sluagh	17	17-19	18
Succubus	18	20	19
Worm	19-20	—	20

**Small City** – a small city usually has a formidable castle nearby, and a garrison of knights who rotate as challenge knights.

**Wild Animal Encounter Table**

animal	woodland	dense woods	uplands	marsh
Bear	1-3	1-2	1-2	1-3
Boar	4-6	3-5	3-6	4-8
Deer, Fallow	7-10	6-8	7-13	9-13
Deer, Red	11-14	9-11	14-15	14-16
Horse, Faerie	—	12	16	17
Lion	15-16	13-14	—	18
Panther	17-19	15-17	17-18	19-20
Unicorn, Greater	—	18	19	—
Unicorn, Lesser	—	19	—	—
Yale	20	20	20	—

## The Setting: Encounter Tables

kingdom description: Essex

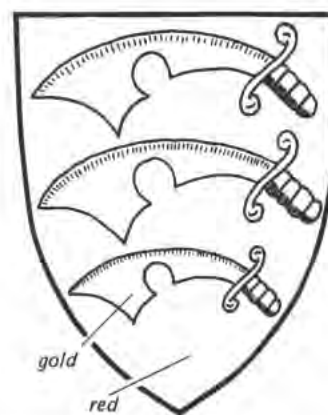
**ESSEX**

Saxon/Wotanic

*Lieges:* K. Aescwine (early), Duke of Essex (middle, late).

*History:* around 485, during the reign of Uther Pendragon, the Saxons attacked the Trinovantes tribe and seized their lands. The great city of London has often changed hands during the conflict between British and Saxon.

Essex



*Landmarks:* Colchester – walled city, former Roman provincial capital.

Ganis Castle – castle held by the Ganis clan from Arthur. An abbey is nearby.

London – large walled Roman city with ancient Celtic roots. Site of Arthur's pulling sword from stone (Malory I, 5). Includes Tower of London, a castle where Guenever defends herself from Mordred (Malory XXI, 1).

Orgulous Castle – castle where passing knights are taken prisoner (Malory IX, 3).

Quinquerol Forest – forest home of the Red Knight, enemy of Percivale de Galis (Chretien, *Graal*).

Westminster – large meadow; site of the great tournament where Elaine of Astolat appears (Malory (XVIII, 9).

Windsor – site of a hermitage where Lancelot hid for a while (Malory XVIII, 2).



## The Setting: The Magic of Arthur's Britain

kingdom description: Estregales

**Toll Station** – toll stations can appear anywhere that the gamemaster desires. They appear regularly on well-traveled roads. Standard toll is 1D/horse and 1D/person.

**Town** – towns are larger settlements of peasants, often with a manor nearby, usually with a challenge knight, and often with a toll as well.

**Village** – peasants live in clusters of buildings and barns. They are usually humble and dirty. Knights would stay in a village only if there was no other recourse.

**Wastes** – these lands are usually covered with forests, scrub brush, and rock. The locals use the area for firewood, wild foods, and grazing their pigs.

**Wild Animals** – these include common herbivores, carnivores, and some monster types. Decide what is appropriate. Roll d20 and consult the table on the previous page.

## THE MAGIC OF ARTHUR'S BRITAIN

Magic is real in the world of *Pendragon*. Most people see no difference between a magical effect and normal reality. The knights are used to marvelous sights. Everyone knows saints perform miracles. Druids hobnob at court. Ladies of the Lake live beneath enchanted waters. Magic is a natural part of the world. It is supernatural only insofar that most ordinary people cannot understand or control it.

Knights don't study magic. They know it exists, have probably seen it used, but do not quite understand exactly how something occurred. King Ban's army remembers riding with Merlin for several days through wilderness to reach Bedegraine, but do not know how they covered the 165 miles of ground so quickly without seeing a landmark. Sir Pellinore recognizes that he has been miraculously healed by a potion, but has no knowledge of what the potion is, how it works, or where it came from.

Some people in *Pendragon* seem to be magicians, while others appear to be magical in and of themselves. The line between beautiful women working magic and fairy women intruding gently into the world is indistinguishable. And for game purposes, it does not matter.

In some cases magic is used to explain some deed which is seemingly superhuman, but could be explained today by using modern engineering principles. Mary Stewart's Merlin uses such methods to move megaliths from Ireland to Stonehenge. When using such contraptions the gamemaster need not explain with engineering language – describe it in magical terms.

Magic is natural to the faerie peoples of Britain. Druids and pagan priests can reputedly perform magical spells. Everyone knows that both pagan and Christian worship services are effective for some magical effects.

*Pendragon* has no magic system. All magic is within the hands of the gamemaster, and is used to imitate traditional effects rather than to make comic-book flash-bang nonsense spells.

Magic should never dominate the game. The gamemaster should feel free to make palaces glow from a warm internal light, to serve exotic wines imported from Cathay, and to mark trails through forests with ancient stones. A magical event or curse can form the basis for an adventure. Magic can be used to save villains or characters. But never should the plot rely upon a magician to do something – this is an example of the gamemaster working versus himself, which only occurs at the players' expense.

## THE ENCHANTMENT OF BRITAIN

King Arthur's domains have taken on a magical quality all their own, independent of druids or saints. Its ancient wonders and heroic virtues evoke deep sentiments from the modern reader. Medieval readers and listeners felt the same pull; ancient magic tempts our imagination. The people and creatures which lived in Arthur's lands cannot be found today, but were natural then.

A theme within many Arthurian stories is the enchantment of Britain. For both Christian and pagan the world becomes more magical when life is lived properly. When man becomes bad, the magic disappears, as epitomized by the Dolorous Stroke which maimed King Pellam and created the Waste Lands.

As Arthur's brotherhood of the Round Table increases its power and prestige, Britain becomes more and more magical, culminating in the Grail Quest wherein the most perfect knights achieve the greatest magics. After the Grail Quest the best knights are dead or defamed, and the magic fades and breaks.

The gamemaster should strive to show Britain as more and more fabulous with the progression of time. Thus the campaign will go from the ordinary

### ESTREGALES

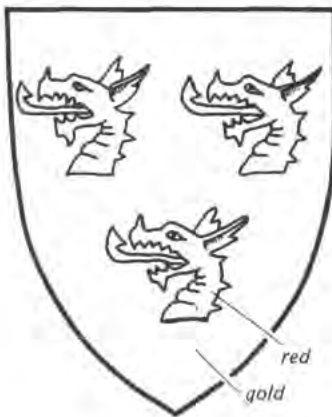
(also called Demetae Tribe by Romans, post-Arthurian Dyfed)

Irish/Christian

*Lieges*: K. Lak, (pre, early), Erec (middle, late).

*History*: after the Roman armies left Britain, Irish invaders seized lands and settled to rule the area. They have lived here ever since.

Estregales



*Landmarks*: Cardigan – a city (Malory XI, 12; Chretien, *Erec*).

Carmarthen – town, site of Merlin's birth (Ashe).

Kynke Kenadonne – city (Malory VII, 1, 34).

Menevia – site of St. David's monastery.

Roivant Forest – forest where Bors met the Lady of the Lake (Vulgate IV).

feudal world to the rich fantasy of Arthur's golden age. The enchantment of Britain is part of that age, and should be a part of the campaign.

The enchantment takes several forms: an increasing number of magical items appears, increasingly-tough opponents are encountered, the supernatural is more frequently met, and magical effects occur throughout the land.

For this supernatural phase the Welsh legends provide creatures and stories. In custom and background they are distant from the courtly ways of Malorian Arthur, but strange magic and primitive menaces pervade them that are suitable to pit against the developed player-characters.

During this phase you can use the great boar hunt, from *The Mabinogion's* "Kilhwch and Olwen." Though the original story is rough and tumble, it should prove appropriate for the characters.

Other Welsh tales tell of or hint at Arthur's invasion of Annwn and of his imprisonment in a castle of bones. Are they, perhaps, connected with the Grail Quest?

In some ways the enchantment of Britain can be seen as a war between King Arthur and the immortals of Faerie. In most cases the pattern is for Round Table knights to rescue beautiful women from evil knights who characteristically use red arms or wear red armor. These faerie knights from the Unseelie Court set bad spells on Britain. The war climaxes around the year 548 when King Arthur and trusted comrades invade Annwn, but is not over until Sir Galahad completes the Grail Quest.

### MAGICAL PEOPLE AND EFFECTS

Several types of supernatural workers frequent the world of *Pendragon*. Pagans, including many who are likely to be elves, use magic. Christians who exemplify their god can sometimes work miracles through prayer. In some instances, the effects of both types are similar.

The various effects are listed below. Magic users' names and facts are listed in the Characters chapter. The traditions they studied, and the types of magical effects each had, are:

- Western tradition — healing, summoning, prophecy
- Pagan (Druidic) — glamour, weather, emotion magics, healing, movement
- Christian holy men — healing, prophecy, miracles
- Wotanic — weather, shapeshifting (berserks)
- Necromantic — summoning

### Glamour

Glamour is the native Celtic magic. All the denizens of faerie have it to some extent. The illusion of Glamour is real for its duration: the chair you sit in is real, as the bread is real. Those wondrous items are always real for the elves, though they turn into leaves and rocks after the faerie court departs.

Sometimes glamour works in reverse. Everyone has heard of tales where a poor woman helps an elf as midwife, spinner, or baker, and is rewarded with a handful of hay. Later the hay becomes real gold.

Glamour can serve as a disguise. Merlin used it to make Uther Pendragon look like Duke Gorlois the night Arthur was conceived (Malory I, 2). Morgan le Fay made her men look like rocks when Arthur pursued her (Malory IV, 14). Dame Bragwaine used it to disguise Lady Elaine as Queen Guenever to Sir Lancelot (Malory XI, 2). Seriate turned Lionel and Bors into dogs to escape from murderous King Claudas (Vulgate III). Saint Cadoc used Glamour to trick King Arthur (*Life of St. Cadoc*).

The same form of disguise was used by the demons who tempted Grail questers. The devil appeared as a powerful black horse, as a beautiful woman, a wise man, and a woman riding a serpent.

### The Setting: The Magic of Arthur's Britain

illustration: sorceress Morgan le Fay



Sorceress Morgan le Fay. Illustration by Lisa A. Free.



## The Setting: The Magic of Arthur's Britain

coat of arms: Brian de les Isles  
Boons, Dooms

### Brian de les Isles



### Boons

Celtic society believed that its leaders had special privileges and powers which were bestowed by the citizen's agreement to be led. A leader got his rights from his people. Each owed certain things to the other, just as in medieval feudalism.

A boon is the debt which a Celtic leader owes to his followers. If he does not deliver that promised boon he does not deserve to be king, and will be cursed by the removal of his kingly powers. Boons often appear in Arthur, such as the one Arthur places on Sir Griflet (Malory I, 22) or the one Sir Melias requests of Sir Galahad (Malory XIII, 11).

### Doom

A doom is a fate which is placed upon someone. The sense of doom, called *wyrd*, is typically Saxon. However, the Britons went to their fates with the same tragic sense. The prophecies uttered by Merlin are often so consequential that they seem like curses.

When Pellinore returns with the head of the dead maiden, Merlin explains that it was Pellinore's daughter, who could have had a good life. "And because ye would not abide and help her, ye shall see your best friend fail you when ye be in the greatest distress that ever ye were or shall be. And that penance God hath ordained you for that deed, that he that ye shall most trust to of any man alive, he shall leave you there ye shall be slain."

"Me forthinketh," said King Pellinore, "that this shall me betide, but God may fordo well destiny." Courageously, Pellinore accepts his fate, but acknowledges that God might change that destiny (Malory III, 15).

Glamour is also the source of many elemental effects. Magical fire is real, and will cause real damage. Waves, holes in the earth, and sudden winds can be caused by Glamour.

### Weather

Weather is often affected by magic, usually to make it worse for human comfort. The British pagans worshiped many weather deities, especially impetuous Beli Llund, the furious wielder of the thunderbolt spear and lightning sword, god of Sun and Life. The Saxons were often accompanied by tempestuous storms, as if their gods roiled about in the clouds overhead. Everyone prayed for calm before setting sail in ships, prayed for good weather for their crops, and for short winters.

Mannanan is the pagan deity who rules over the seas and its storms. His special holy place lies beneath the waves, much as the ladies of the lake live beneath their waters.

### Shapeshifting

Shapeshifting enables one to turn from human into another, usually animal, shape. Celtic mythology is full of shapeshifters, such as Gwydion and his brother Gilvaethwy, who spent a year each in the form of stag and hind, boar and sow, and wolf and bitch (*Mabinogion* "Math, Son of Mathonwy"). Taliesin, the famous magical poet, sang a song of his many transformations into nearly everything in the universe (*Mabinogion* "Taliesin"). Malory mentions a knight, Sir Marrock, whose was turned into a werewolf by his wife (Malory XIX, 11).

Saxon shapechangers are berserks and ulfsarks, who grow into their shirts of bear or wolf. They turn into savage monsters of destruction, often immune to normal weapons.

### Curses

Curses are bad magic directed against an individual or a land. The bards, and hence other pagan magic users, had a potent curse in the use of a lampoon. When Kulwyd approached the court of his cousin, King Arthur, the porter refused entrance, and was threatened with this lampoon from the young visitor: "... I will raise three shouts at the entrance of this gate that will be as audible to the top of Pengwaedd in Cornwall as at the bottom of Dinsol in the North, and Esgeir Oerfel, the accursed ridge, in Ireland. All the women in the court that are pregnant will abort, and those that are not, their wombs will be consigned to sterility so that from this day forth they shall never conceive."

Such threats, or worse, are the protection of the pagan magicians. Such dire threats allow the powerful among them, especially Morgan le Fay, to move fearlessly amid the company of their enemies.

### Movement

Merlin the magician is often capable of rapid movement. He usually moves alone, but sometimes moves others as well. At least once he magically moved a whole army, from Brittany to Bedegraine. The speed of the demon horse carrying Sir Percival is also remarkable.

Ley lines may help explain such movement. Much of the British Isles are covered by a network of straight tracks laid over the land and marked by standing stones, pools, and other significant landmarks. Theorists believe that these once carried (and may do so again) the currents of magical earth energy which was tapped by the ancients for great projects. Stonehenge is one such project, and lies at the intersection of three very long ley lines.

Merlin, the Archdruid and heir to all the secrets of the Invisible World, probably traveled along those lines. Moving an army was much more difficult, of course, but not inconceivable.

### Healing

Succor to the wounded was of primary interest to knights. First aid was useful, chirurgery risky at best. Anything to aid healing is useful. Perhaps not surprisingly, magic which is used to heal is never considered the work of the devil. Healing concoctions are the major manifestations of healing magic in *Pendragon*. No one in Malory ever casts a healing spell, but many wounds are miraculously healed by potions, unguents, creams, bandages, and salves.

Dame Lynette, using ointment from a magical cup, performs the most spectacular healing. With it she makes Sir Gareth whole, and also resurrects a zombie-like minion who had been decapitated.

## Emotion

Love and seduction are major magical interests in Malory. Tristram and Isolt's crazed affair began with a magic drink. Lancelot and Bors never succumbed to mere lust, but were reduced to passionate submission only by magical potions. When King Arthur was bewitched by the false Guenever he was constantly imbibing her enchanted powders. Nimue caused ungrateful Dame Ettard to turn from hate to love for Sir Pelleas.

Fear can sometimes be induced. Sorceress enemies of Sir Marhaus were capable of making even the most courageous knights into "a stark coward to have to better of him." (Malory IV, 17-18)

Sleep spells are also known, Merlin slumbers Sir Pellinore when he is about to slay King Arthur (Malory I, 24).

## Summoning and Banishment

A holy clerk summons a demon to answer his queries concerning the death of a friend while Sir Galahad watches. Galahad shortly afterwards banishes a demon which haunted a graveyard.

Christian magic is effective against faeries and devils, and most other natural magical manifestations. Holy water, the sign of the cross, and other simple prayers are often all that is needed to protect a knight from evil inhuman forces.

Among creatures summoned by witches and pagan priestesses are invisible creatures which can maim and kill. The threat that such a creature is, in fact, present with Morgan le Fay adds considerably to her presence.

## Prophecy

Fortune telling is always tempting to those who worry. Merlin was more famous as a prophet than as a magician. His pronouncements were 100% true, sometimes without dubious interpretations.

Most prophecies are less believed. The pronouncements of doom made about Arthur's court are ignored, hushed up, or so astonishing that they cannot be believed. When pronounced in the campaign, they should have the doom-filled echo of the future.

The eagles of Loch Lomond provided an oracle. Each year, at spring, they sat on the islands and squawked out the future (Geoffrey, ch. IX, 6).

Prophecies are often as evil as they are useful. Merlin's interpretation of Arthur's dream provokes Arthur to the slaughter of innocents in the May Baby incident. The hermit who prophesies for Mordred outside Peningues turns the promising young knight into a bitter and evil foe of his father.

Prophecies are not always correct, or sometimes seem to be conditional. When Merlin delays King Lot's entry into battle it is because the magician knows that one of the two kings must die that day, and he prefers Arthur to live (Malory II, 10).

## Miracles

Miracles are impossible activities which occur in front of witnesses, upon the demand or need of a pious Christian, typically a saint-to-be. Miracles are sometimes utterly plain, such as the time when Saint Columba turned away the Loch Ness monster from pursuing a swimmer. Other times they are grandiose, such as the contest of thaumaturgy which Saint Patrick won in Ireland against the druids.

Miracles should be avoided except when totally appropriate. No one should expect a miracle to save him.

The miracles performed by the Holy Grail will be more impressive if they have not been cheapened by previous events.

## Potions

Potions constitute the only magic which might be available to player-characters.

Normally, only the women of certain families can make special concoctions which work like magic. Don't ask them how it's done — two women can stand and work side by side, pick the same herbs, say the same charms, soak the same type of cloth. One, who has the family touch, finishes a neat healing poultice which can immediately restore hit points. The other, without the touch, has a soggy green bandage.

Some people, with talents or special training, can brew potions without the family touch. Merlin, Morgan le Fay, and the Lady of the Lake can all certainly

## *The Setting: The Magic of Arthur's Britain* *Resurrection, Miscellaneous Minor Magic*

### Resurrection

Celtic myth tells of a cauldron of resurrection, notably important in the story of Bran and Branwen where the Irish use it to resurrect their warriors to fight again the next day. Those revived were unable to speak. This silence of the dead is common to many Celtic stories, although the later story tellers often forgot the initial meaning of the silence. Thus the story of the underwater city in Brittany, Caer Idri, mentions that its women were silent.

Silent warriors appear at least twice in Malory. Once Sir Lancelot enters a tomb to help his friend, Sir Brian of the Isles, and is assailed by many warriors who gnash their teeth, but are otherwise silent. The whole adventure was a trap devised by a sorceress. The second appearance is when a warrior of Lynette's attacks Sir Gareth to keep him chaste. The silent warrior is decapitated, resurrected, chopped into little pieces, and resurrected again.

Thus the player-character knights might hear stories of resurrection; perhaps some lady of the lake or enchantress queen possesses the Cauldron of Regeneration as well. A fine scenario can be based around bringing a friend to be revived, but the effect will not be what they hope.

I recommend you not bring characters back to life. Resurrection will cheapen your campaign. If you must, at least make the returnee a silent warrior unable to engender children, as in the Celtic legends.

### Miscellaneous Minor Magic

*Beneficent:* Bless Crops, Churn, Double Yolks, Enrich Cows, Find Household Item, Find Way Home, Heal, Hearthfire, Kill Rats, Milk, Rain, Reap, Sing, Spin, Tan, Wash, Weave

*Maleficent:* Blight Barley, Blunt Tool, Break Eggs, Call Rats, Creak, Distract, Elf Dart, Elf Stroke, Enrage Dog, Fall, Itch, Lame, Kill Cow, Mold Beans, Palsy, Pox, Rash, Slip, Sneeze, Sour Milk, Stumble, Toads, Warn Rabbit, Wasps



**The Setting: Creatures***coat of arms: Carados of the Dolorous Tower*

Carados of the Dolorous Tower



make several types of potions. Even to them the potions are still rare and extremely valuable.

Normal potions are listed on page 25 of the Player's Book of the *Pendragon* game. Suggested here are other potions, including some from Arthurian romance, and others from need. Gamemasters should make up whatever their campaign especially needs.

**Special Potions**

**Madness cure** — when anointed on the temples, this salve cures a mad person after a few more hours of sleep.

**Disease cure** — this potion is usually disease-specific. It will help stop illness, but will not replace hit points lost while sick.

**Instant total healing** — a miraculous salve, reportedly made only by Morgan le Fay.

**Befuddlement** — a dream-like stupor is induced when victims drink this potion. It lasts for a variable time (1d6 hours).

**Invulnerability Ointment** — this potion must be rubbed over a person's whole body, where it will act as magical armor until it wears off. It begins with protection of up to 10 points, and wears off at the rate of one point per day.

**Healing Water** — drawn from the holy well at Glastonbury, this water will completely replenish all lost hit points to the recipient, as long as the recipient is Christian and has a Piety of 16 or more.

**Other Magics**

Occasional other magical items are mentioned in various Arthurian stories. Here are some, plus others from our imagination.

**Invisibility Signet** — when the stone is turned into the palm, the wearer must receive a Valor roll whenever the gamemaster demands it. If successful, the wearer will remain invisible and undetectable, if he is also immobile and silent.

**Ring of the Shield** — this charm keeps the wearer from bleeding overmuch from his wounds. Thus the wearer of this charm can never take more than 6 points of damage from a single wound.

**Mantle of Chastity** — if a woman who is unfaithful to her husband wears this, it will be indiscreetly short and revealing. A chaste woman will be politely covered.

**No die roll here** — if the woman has ever been unfaithful, the dress is short.

**Lucky Lance** — this weapon raises the Lance skill by 5 points even over 20.

**Blood Sword** — this blade always does at least 2 points of damage when it strikes, even through armor.

**Mail Fist** — a sword which cannot be dropped.

**Forge Bright** — a sword which glows in the dark, and is also warm to the touch.

**Elven Chainmail** — this looks and wears like light chainmail, but yields 16 points of protection.

**Bridle of Peace** — this halter, once placed over an animal's head, causes that animal to obey the person who placed it.

**CREATURES**

Enchanted Britain shares its terrain with many creatures other than the heroic knights of Arthur's exalted court. Non-humans live wherever humans do not. Many are malevolent to humans, others neutral, a few actually friendly.

The unearthly creatures found in King Arthur's land are taken from Malory (faerie horse), native folklore (redcap, goblin, paulag cat), heraldry (griffin), and medieval legend (manticore). The mix must be handled delicately, but ought to be attempted.

The creatures below are each worthy of several sessions centered upon them. The advance of my campaign was confronted three times before its defeat, and lived for three generations. Many of these appear only singly, or indeed are unique.

Use these unusual creatures wisely. Spread them out through the campaign to keep inhuman things special and unique.

Valor rolls should always be attempted when a knight confronts a monster. Meeting an unusual creature or being in dire circumstances is exactly the type of situation which warrants a valor check.

Gamemasters should feel free to modify these creatures, perhaps by switching some of their powers around (for example, fachans could be given sticky skin, or fiends be given the ability to be invisible from the front and back). You can also create your own monster statistics.

### Basilisk

The basilisk is an unnatural creature hatched from a cock's egg by a sitting toad. It has powers from the devil himself. Everyone knows that a basilisk can kill as easily as looking at you. This monster should be avoided, and a knight loses no glory points for running from it. It looks like a huge snake with a feathered cowl wearing a crown and its body is decorated with six white lengthwise stripes.

The basilisk is composed of living poison. This poison is so potent that nothing can touch the beast and survive. If one is speared, the poison eats away the weapon and creeps up to attack the wielder. Its venom can be spat as well, doing terrible damage to anything touched. The basilisk is so accurate that it can lie down on its back and spit into the air at birds which, when slain, fall right into the beast's mouth. The only thing dangerous to a basilisk is a certain type of weasel.

SIZ	5	Move	3	Major Wound	50
DEX	10	Damage	1d6	Unconscious	13
STR	10	Heal Rate	3	Knockdown	5
CON	50	Hit Points	55	Armor	20

**Attacks:** spit poison @ 20 with a range of up to 25 yards doing 15 points of damage per turn for 1d6 turns.

**Note:** basilisks dodge one attack @ 25; and attack once per round.

### Fachan

Malice and trouble are the work of this monster with no good intents for any human. A fachan has one leg, one hand protruding from its chest, one eye in the center of its forehead, and a crest of unyielding hair on its head. It carries an iron flail and is protected by a mantle of hard-to-pierce feathers about its body.

SIZ	15	Move	3	Major Wound	30
DEX	15	Damage	7d6	Unconscious	11
STR	25	Heal Rate	6	Knockdown	15
CON	30	Hit Points	45	Armor	20
APP	3				

**Attack:** flail @ 18.

**Note:** A fachan can only be seen from the sides. To see a fachan when facing the creature's front or back the viewer has to receive a successful awareness skill roll against the fachan's hide of 20.

### Faerie Horse

Elf immortals breed special horses for the use of faerie royalty and heroic elf knights. These proud animals are greater than any mortal steeds, and are of unsurpassed beauty. They are usually gleaming white, with ears and mane of either red or green.

They need no rest, are swifter than mortal steeds, and are sometimes capable of speech and thought. Unlike most horses, these fight for their master, and also allow the rider to melee.

SIZ	35	Move	10		
DEX	25	Damage	8d6		
STR	40	Heal Rate	6	Major Wound	17
CON	17	Hit Points	52	Knockdown	35
				Unconscious	13
				Armor	10

**Attacks:** trample @ 10 for 4d6 damage.

## The Setting: Creatures

illustration: *Faerie Horses*  
*Weasel*

### Weasel

The only weasel important here is the one dangerous to a basilisk. Characters might know what specific kind is needed. They might find out by reading a bestiary (if they have the book and receive a successful Read Latin roll). But as noblemen they probably do not know where to find it, nor will their particular kind of hunting skill be able to capture one. Searching for a weasel is worth a separate adventure. I suggest a journey to London to find the book, traveling about to find an authority on animals (Morgan le Fay or Nimue, perhaps), and then some subsidiary task for the witch, whose minions can get the live animal for the player-characters.



*Faerie Horses illustration by Lisa A. Free.*



## The Setting: Creatures

illustration: Griffin

Yvaine Meets the Fiends

### Yvaine Meets the Fiends

(Having accepted the hospitality of a castle, the knight learns he must unwillingly fight two fiends. He accepts this fate.)

"Thereupon, the two hideous, black sons of the devil come in, both armed with a crooked club of cornelain cherry-tree, which they had covered with copper and wound with brass. They were armed from the shoulders to the knees, but their head and face were bare, as well as their brawny legs. Thus armed, they advanced, bearing in their hands round shields, stout and light for fighting."

(Yvaine has a hard time against them, but finally prevails with the aid of his faithful lion.)

(Yvain, Chretien)

### Fiend

These sons of the devil are begat upon innocent women by wicked incubi, and thus force an earthly form upon a diabolical entity. Though humanoid, they are black and hideously twisted. They wear armor and fight with clubs.

SIZ	18	Move	2	Major Wound	15
DEX	5	Damage	9d6	Unconscious	8
STR	35	Heal Rate	5d6	Knockdown	18
CON	15	Hit Points	33	Armor	5 natural
APP	3				

**Attacks:** club and shield @ 10-19. Also wears 12-pt armor.

Alert readers will notice that Merlin's origin is the same as that of the fiends. Chroniclers were sure to note that the enchanter was saved because he was baptised by his mother, a nun, immediately upon birth.

### Fomorian

A fomorian is an evil Irish elf with great strength of magical origins. Kingdoms of fomorians exist on the Other Side, from where come raids against the good elves and mankind. The features of a fomorian are often misshapen and monstrous.

SIZ	30	Move	5	Major Wound	20
DEX	20	Damage	12d6	Unconscious	13
STR	40	Heal Rate	6	Knockdown	30
CON	20	Hit Points	50	Armor	10
APP	1				

**Attacks:** armed with standard weapons.

### Goblins

Also called bogeys, boggles, and other names, these bad faeries mean humankind harm of either mischievous or malicious nature. Their danger stems not from combat, but from a myriad of small things which can drive a man mad through pinching, tickling, and itching boils. They delight in scaring and laming horses, and leading lone travelers astray, often into treacherous bogs. The worst among them carry elf-stones which can penetrate armor and skin without leaving a mark to fester deep within a body. If not cured by mid-winter the victim loses a point off a statistic of the gamemaster's choice.

Normal statistics are meaningless for these faeries. Iron frightens them, for its wounds are invariably fatal to goblins. Combat against them is unknown for they can dodge so well they seem to disappear at will.

Goblins are typical of the common faeries in British folklore, and illustrate the way that most faeries should be used. They are not worthy of combat, and their worst troubles are not the kind which cause a knight direct danger. Perhaps they are sendings from an enemy magician, or maybe they are mere warnings to the player-characters not to go deeper into the woods because more powerful faeries may be there.

### Griffin

This monster has the rear body of a lion and the wings, head, and foreparts of an eagle. It is huge, has a special taste for horse meat, and also hates humans. It comes from the land of Hyperborea, and chooses bleak mountain chains for its habitat.

SIZ	40	Move	16(fly)	Major Wound	25
DEX	55	Damage	8d6	Unconscious	16
STR	40	Heal Rate	7	Knockdown	40
CON	25	Hit Points	65	Armor	18

**Attacks:** 2 clawed paws @ 17 each against one or two targets; or 1 grapple @ 10, whereupon it flies upward and drops the hapless foe. Both forms of attack are done while swooping from the air.



Griffin illustration by Lisa A. Free.

### Hippogriff

This creature, perhaps born of heraldic quartering, is part lion, part eagle, and part horse.

SIZ	30	Move 14(fly)	Major Wound	10
DEX	55	Damage 5d6	Unconscious	10
STR	15	Heal Rate 3	Knockdown	30
CON	10	Hit Points 40	Armor	10

*Attacks:* hooves @ 12, striking while swooping upon the foe.

### Lion

The legendary lion is found throughout Malory: Sir Ywaine has one for a friend, Sir Percival aids one on the Grail Quest, four of them escort the magical white stag through the forest.

SIZ	40	Move 5	Major Wound	20
DEX	20	Damage 7d6	Unconscious	15
STR	30	Heal Rate 5	Knock Down	40
CON	20	Hit Points 60	Armor	10

*Attacks:* 2 paws @ 15 each, separate attacks against one or two targets. Alternately, one bite against prone foes only @ 10, +8 damage.

### Manticore

This man-eating beast has three rows of wicked teeth and the stinging tail of a scorpion. Its red eyes glow at night and its voice resembles the sibilant notes of a flute. Although it originates in far-away India, an individual or two have been seen in the rugged mountains of Britain, coming out only to feed upon humans. It is so powerful a leaper that no walls can hold it. Contrary to some legends it does not have wings.

SIZ	45	Move 11	Major Wound	25
DEX	20	Damage 9d6	Unconscious	18
STR	45	Heal Rate 7	Knockdown	45
CON	25	Hit Points 70	Armor	10

*Attacks:* 1 bite @ 10 at full damage rate, and 1 tail sting @ 20 for 4d6 damage.

### Merpeople (Merrows)

These denizens' women are extremely beautiful while the men are incredibly ugly. They appear on the surface of the sea both before and after storms. Some coastal dwellers say the merfolk cause those storms to drown sailors and fishermen and to take both corpse and soul to their cold deep lairs.

The mermaids are beautiful and vain. They are most often seen sunning on rocks after a storm clears, or floating upon the deep sea. They are human from the waist upward and love to comb their long hair. They sing like angels and can incite men's passions with their songs. Some are powerful, possessing the magic of prophecy, healing, and other pagan faerie powers.

Mermen have green bodies, faces, hair, teeth, and have long red noses. They wear special caps with red feathers, which let them whisk about the sea like birds in the air, and which can be used by humans to survive underwater. They sink ships to take cargo to decorate their underwater homes and keep the souls of drowned men in lobster cages.

SIZ	10	Move 4(swim)	Major Wound	15
DEX	15	Damage 3d6	Unconscious	6
STR	20	Heal Rate 5	Knockdown	10
CON	15	Hit Points 25	Armor	5
APP	25 (mermaid)	5 (merman)		

*Attacks (mermaid):* opposed Lustful trait against the Chastity of resisting member of the opposite sex. One win and the victim follows the maid into the water. Two wins and the victim goes beneath the water with his new lover.

When the victim is in the water and he attempts to resist, the mermaid will drag him under using her STR against his. The victim can match his STR, or use some other method to escape. Escape may come through threats or the doing of damage. Iron might scare her away, or calling upon the name of God may be successful. The gamemaster should decide what is appropriate.

### Known Facts About Lions

Scientists say that Leo has three principal characteristics.

His first is that he loves to saunter on the tops of mountains. Then, if he should happen to be pursued by hunting men, the smell of the hunters reaches up to him, and he disguises his spoor behind him with his tail. Thus the sportsmen cannot track him.

The Lion's second feature is that when he sleeps, he seems to keep his eyes open.

The third feature is this, that when a lioness gives birth to her cubs, she brings them forth dead and lays them up lifeless for three days – until their father, coming on the third day, breathes in their faces and makes them alive.

The compassion of lions, on the contrary, is clear from innumerable examples – for they spare the prostrate; they allow such captives as they come across to go back to their own country; they prey on men rather than on women, and they do not kill children except when they are very hungry.

They say the litters of these creatures come in threes. The short ones with curly manes are peaceful: the tall ones with plain hair are fierce.

(T. H. White, *The Bestiary*, p. 7-9)



**The Setting: Creatures***illustration: Raven Witch*

**Attacks (merman):** trident attack @ 15. A merman will almost never attack a human with a trident. His real power is the ability to create storms to wreck ships or cover an escape.

**Panther**

The panther is a legendary cat which sometimes inhabits Britain. It is smaller than a lion, and prefers to lie in ambush to attack solitary foes in the deep woods. When surprised, perhaps on a hunt, it is considered wonderful sport.

According to White's *Bestiary* the panther was considered to be "truly variegated colour, and it is most beautiful and excessively kind." Also, the panther was a sworn foe of dragons, and had an incredible belch which was proof against the great monsters.

SIZ	15	Move	7	Major Wound	15
DEX	20	Damage	3d6	Unconscious	7
STR	15	Heal Rate	3	Knockdown	15
CON	15	Hit Points	30	Armor	5

**Attacks:** bite @ 15, +3 damage; or 2 claws @ 10 each against 1 or two targets.

**Paulag Cat**

This monstrous feline is featured in a Welsh poem, wherein Sir Kay dispatches it with considerable trouble after it swims ashore at Anglesey. It is tawny with a spotted coat.

SIZ	35	Move	10	Major Wound	25
DEX	25	Damage	7d6	Unconscious	15
STR	35	Heal Rate	6	Knockdown	35
CON	25	Hit Points	60	Armor	15

**Attacks:** 2 paws @ 10 each, or 1 paw @ 18.

**Raven Witch**

Members of a certain school of pagan witches can transform themselves into wicked ravens to help their friends and harm their foes. They appear as sorceresses and warrior women in the story "Peredur" and as fighting birds loyal to Owain in the story "The Dream of Rhonabwy," both from *The Mabinogion*. Appearing in a flock numbering between six and twelve individuals they also masquerade as armed and armored human women with pagan magic powers.

**Raven Shape:**

SIZ	10	Move	10(fly)	Major Wound	20
DEX	50	Damage	3d6	Unconscious	8
STR	15	Heal Rate	3	Knockdown	10
CON	20	Hit Points	30	Armor	5

**Attacks:** 1 peck done while flying @ 10; or lift, wherein multiple birds grapple a foe and lift him into the air, where they then peck him @ 20, and the lifted foe can only strike at one of the ravens at a time at half his ability with dagger or grapple. To lift, the gamemaster must roll the ravens' combined STR in opposed resolution against the SIZ of the foe.



*A Raven Witch  
Undergoing Transformation.  
Illustration by Lisa A Free.*

### Redcap

This evil fairy prefers to live in ruined places where wicked deeds were done by men. He is tall and light, with gleaming red eyes, fangs, talons on his fingers, and a red cap which he soaks in the blood of his victims. One known in legend could not be beaten in combat. When he was finally defeated through exorcism, the only reminder of the redcap was one of his long teeth. The individual detailed below, though somewhat weaker, is still formidable.

SIZ	12	Move	4	Major Wound	40
DEX	10	Damage	8d6	Unconscious	13
STR	35	Heal Rate	7	Knockdown	12
CON	40	Hit Points	52	Armor	25
APP	5				

*Attacks:* greatspear @ 18; if disarmed he uses 2 claws @ 8 each.

### Sluagh

The Sluagh (*slooa*) are often called the Host. They are the host of the unforgiven dead; tormented souls who fly through the air, fighting meaningless battles which frighten mortals who hear them.

When they fall upon a traveler, the character must make his Valor to confront them. Success or failure does not matter except for the experience check gained. The host, gibbering and wailing, snatches the victim, pinching, beating, dropping, and dragging him through rocks, mud, and brambles. The victim always takes at least 1d6 damage (no armor) during the night, rolled at this time.

At several (1d6) moments during the night, the host offers its victim a chance to escape by doing some simple, but wicked, deed, usually throwing elf darts, or somehow causing miscellaneous malefic magic to be used against friends, neighbors, or innocent good people.

If the character agrees and performs the task then he will get a check in some vice. Appropriate trait checks are: Selfish, Deceitful, Arbitrary, Vengeful, Cruel, or Cowardly.

Failure to agree to the deed causes the host to get angry and do 1d6 more damage (no armor) to their guest.

All offers of escape are lies. They will continue tormenting their victim until the sun rises.

### Succubus

A succubus is a demon of lust and desire. In the male form it is called an incubus and in the female form it is called a succubus. As the latter it sucks life force from men, then changes shape and seeks women victims to impregnate with its polluted seed. Children born of these unions are called Fiends.

SIZ	10	Move	n/a	Major Wound	n/a
DEX	15	Damage	n/a	Unconscious	n/a
STR	15	Heal Rate	n/a	Knockdown	n/a
CON	20	Hit Points	n/a	Armor	n/a

*Attacks:* seduce with a Lustful of 20.

A succubus may approach a lone traveler or guard once per night and use her seductive ability to overcome caution. Roll her Lustful against the victim's Chaste if he tries to resist.

Success by the succubus saps the victim of 1d6 hit points per success. If the victim did not try to resist, or was overcome, he will not recall the incident at all, though he will recall a very pleasant dream.

If the would-be victim wins against the succubus' Lustful, he loses no hit points and the succubus dissolves and never returns. The victor will recall the nightmarish event in full vivid detail.

### Trees

Much of Britain is covered with forests. The trees are part of the setting, present and passive, but sometimes they are more.

The woods are the haunts of faeries, and some trees are closely bound to faerie powers. Passing close by a faerie haunted tree at night will net the careless traveler bruises and pinches from tiny faerie fingers.

*Rowan:* this is especially useful to druids who can use it to build fires to conjure spirits. By scattering fresh rowan berries over the flames the druids can force the

## The Setting: Creatures

illustration: Redcap

*A Redcap Awaiting the Next Victim.  
Illustration by Lisa A. Free*



## The Setting: Creatures

### The Troit Boar

#### The Troit Boar

Arthur has summoned his warriors and traveled to Ireland to find the mighty boar.

"And the dogs were let loose upon him from all sides. That day until evening the Irish fought with him, nevertheless he laid waste the fifth part of Ireland. And on the day following the household of Arthur fought with him, and they were worsted by him, and got no advantage. And the third day Arthur himself encountered him, and he fought with him nine nights and nine days without so much as killing even one little pig. The warriors inquired of Arthur what was the origin of that swine; and he told them that he was once a king, and that God had transformed him into a swine for his sins."

The boar then swims to Britain, where he lays waste to Wales while the entire household of Arthur hunts and fights against them. The piglets are gradually slain at the cost of several good warriors each. After epic struggles warriors seize the razor and scissors, but the fight for the comb devastates Cornwall.

"Then Arthur and his hosts proceed until they overtook the boar in Cornwall, and the trouble which they had met with before was mere play to what they encountered in seeking the comb. But from one difficulty to another, the comb was at length obtained. And then he was hunted from Cornwall, and driven straight forward into the deep sea. And thenceforth it was never known whither he went .... ("Kilhwch and Olwen" from *The Mabinogion*).

spirits to answer questions with hidden answers. A whip of rowan can calm any horse bewitched by faeries.

*Oak*: these trees are special because they attract lightning which carries the power of the high gods in its fiery bolt. Food can often be found on stumps of felled oaks, but it is always enchanted to poison the unwary traveler who eats it. The faeries do that to avenge the loss of their tree. Oakmen, the resident spirits, are sometimes responsible for protecting nearby animals from hunters.

*Willow*: these trees can actually uproot themselves at night and walk about, often muttering loudly to frighten travelers.

*Elder*: this is often the tree into which witches transform themselves. Never chop an elder without gaining the permission from the tree. Burning elder wood is a sure way to invite the devil into a home.

#### Troit Boar and Piglets

This gigantic creature (called *Twrch Trwyth* in Welsh) and its brood appear in the story of "Kilhwch and Olwen," in *The Mabinogion*. Kilhwch, a cousin to King Arthur, needs the razor, comb, and scissors which lie between the boar's ears. An extensive list of adventures precedes the actual hunt, such as magical whelps which were reported to be the only dogs capable of holding the boar motionless. The piglets are formidable enough, capable of destroying Arthur's best warriors in groups, and the boar itself is almost impossible to slay.

##### The Boar:

SIZ	45	Move	10	Major Wound	50
DEX	15	Damage	15d6	Unconscious	24
STR	45	Heal Rate	10	Knockdown	45
CON	50	Hit Points	95	Armor	50

*Attacks*: tusk slash @ 25; and trample @ 20 against downed foe, and unopposed stomp causing all horses and opponents afoot to have to receive DEX rolls, failure indicates they fall down; plus acidic slaver which does 5 points of damage to armor (destroying it permanently) or to people (treat as damage). Even when the boar loses an opposed resolution its slaver splashes opponents as the boar gnashes wildly about.

##### A Piglet:

SIZ	30	Move	8	Major Wound	25
DEX	15	Damage	7d6	Unconscious	14
STR	40	Heal Rate	7	Knockdown	30
CON	25	Hit Points	55	Armor	25

*Attacks*: tusk slash @ 20 and trample against downed foe @ 15 and slaver (as above) with strength of 5 against its opponents each round.

#### Troll

The Saxons brought their monsters with them, of which this is one. A troll often has multiple heads, is hostile to humans, and is so uncivilized he uses only the crudest weapons.

SIZ	30	Move	7	Major Wound	20
DEX	10	Damage	10d6	Unconscious	13
STR	30	Heal Rate	5	Knockdown	30
CON	20	Hit Points	50	Armor	10
APP	3				

*Attacks*: club @ 17; or 2 fists @ 12 each; or thrown rock (5d6 damage).

#### Water Cattle

These faerie animals are a blessing to anyone whose herd they join. Both bulls and cows are known, usually either being snow-white (lowlands) or dun-colored (highlands), and occasionally red or black. Bulls always sire many healthy calves, and cows inevitably calf handsome, sleek offspring. These animals remain until offended, whereupon they depart with all their offspring, even those which have been killed for a feast. In at least one case the bull sacrificed himself in combat against a kelpie to rescue his kind owner.

SIZ	35	Move	8	Major Wound	25
DEX	15	Damage	7d6	Unconscious	15
STR	35	Heal Rate	6	Knockdown	35
CON	25	Hit Points	60	Armor	15



*Attacks:* charge @ 18, +10 additional damage; or horn gore @ 15; and trample against downed foe @ 20.

### Water Leaper

Shaped like a legless frog with fin wings, this terrifying monster leaps from the water and glides along its surface to snatch boaters from their craft and drag them underwater to drown. It is almost helpless if beached or trapped on deck, although its frantic thrashing is dangerous to anyone struck. A Water Leaper has no redeeming virtues.

SIZ	10	Move	5(fly)	Major Wound	15
DEX	20	Damage	2d6	Unconscious	6
STR	15	Heal Rate	5	Knockdown	10
CON	15	Hit Points	25	Armor	5

*Attacks:* bite while in flight @ 15; or thrashing about @ 10, doing 4d6 damage.

### Worm

These giant serpents are undoubtedly of demonic origin, for they exude an essence discernible by all good knights. They can breathe fire and have very tough hides. Also, they have the ability to rejoin their severed parts and regenerate damage.

STR	35	Move	11	Major Wound	25
DEX	30	Damage	7d6	Unconscious	15
STR	35	Heal Rate	6 *	Knockdown	35
CON	25	Hit Points	60	Armor	10

\* some regenerate at rapid rates, perhaps up to 6 points per melee round.

*Attacks:* bite @ 15; tail lash @ 10. May only be used against two different foes.

*Special:* fire breath @ 10. This does normal fire damage, at a rate of 1d6 damage ignoring all armor, except for the first time hit.

### Wyvern

This dragon-like creature is two-legged and winged. It is smaller than most of its draconic kin, but usually lives in family groups of 2-6 individuals.

SIZ	20	Move	13(fly)	Major Wound	20
DEX	60	Damage	5d6	Unconscious	10
STR	25	Heal Rate	5	Knockdown	20
CON	20	Hit Points	40	Armor	8

*Attacks:* bite @ 15; or (while flying only) two claws @ 15 (3d6 damage each).



# The Characters

*Pendragon* players control a single extended family of characters. The gamemaster may temporarily animate a hundred non-player-characters during a campaign.

Three categories of gamemaster characters are identified. They are the main campaign characters (Arthur, Guenever, and Lancelot), the secondary campaign characters who are well-known and will commonly interact with the player-characters (including Gawaine, Kay, Gareth, Tristram, and others), and minor figures who are individualized for the gamemaster's use.

Statistics for these characters are given in the Characters book of the *Pendragon* game. You should use your favorites to appear at tournaments, on the road, at court, or in whatever other way your play demands.

## THE MAIN CHARACTERS

King Arthur Pendragon, Queen Guenever, and Sir Lancelot du Lac shape the overstructure of their world. The relationship between these three defines the structure of the whole campaign. The whole Arthurian world pivots and changes

## The Characters: The Main Characters

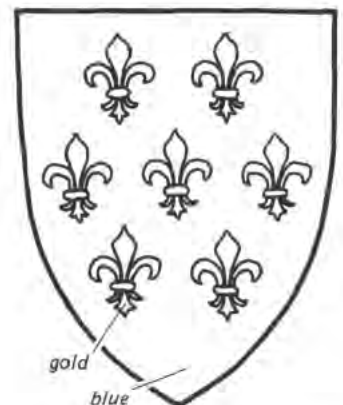
kingdom description: France

### France

Saxon/Christian

*Lieges:* K. Claudas (early), his sons, and British conquerors (middle), Lancelot and kin (late).

France



*History:* the Franks are a germanic tribe, much like the Saxons, who conquered their land centuries earlier. King Claudas (Clovis) united the many Frankish tribes, and also Christianized them. When Clovis died he divided his lands among his three sons, with their arguments resulting in the destruction of France as a political power. His history is documented by Gregory of Tours, who spitefully ignores the whole role of Arthur during the era.

## The Characters: The Main Characters

kingdom description: *Ganis*

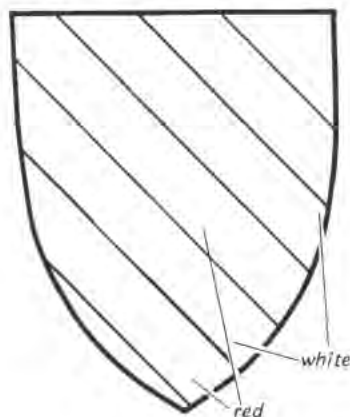
### GANIS

(also called Guienne, Aquitaine)

Cymric/Christian

Lieges: K. Ban (early), K. Claudas of France (middle), Sir Lancelot (late).

Ganis



*History:* this region of Gaul was distinct from other nearby regions because of its dominantly-Visigoth population and its proximity to Spain. Refugees from unsuccessful Roman-British armies settled here in the third and fourth centuries. Allied with the sailors of Brittany, they monopolized the Atlantic trade between the Mediterranean and Britain.

*Landmarks:* BENWICK – city where Lancelot was born, and where he retired after leaving Britain (Malory XX, 18). Also called Bayonne.

Trebes – city of King Ban (Vulgate III).

according to these characters and no one can escape their influence. When the king, queen, and knight are in harmony the kingdom is peaceful and prosperous. As the affair deepens the land changes, the enchantment weakens, and hidden jealousies inspire unchivalrous knights to rash murder and senseless mayhem. When the relationship between the three shatters, so does the wonder of Britain.

The affairs of the court are far removed from the everyday life of the knights. Rarely will your players' knights personally interact with the High King, his wife, or the invincible Lancelot. Even attendance at court functions will normally offer only a distant view of the Pendragon. Yet the court is the vehicle which disseminates the royal word, and so any time spent at court brings one closer to Arthur and his queen.

### King Arthur Pendragon

King Arthur is very active early in his reign. He leads in battle, and even goes off on solo adventures. Yet few individuals are initially his trusted companions. Player-characters should seek to get close to him through battlefield courage, good advice, or other means. Once trusted, a man remains Arthur's close friend.

Once the island is pacified and King Arthur settles down to administer his domain he becomes more formal and less approachable. The concentric circles coalesce around him and channels are made. The upper hierarchy only changes slowly. Opportunities for large scale change are rare.

King Arthur should be played as an aloof and regal personage while in state, but when among his friends and near-equals he is gregarious and personable. The friendship he shows most knights is genuine. At the same time, Arthur is stern and sensible, fiery and passionate. Through most of his reign he continues to adventure as a knight-errant in disguise. His prowess and skills are never doubted, and the additional protection of his sword and scabbard make him invincible.

Arthur is always a human being, and even when in state his formal demeanor often gives way before his sense of justice, generosity, or idealism. He makes every effort to be a good king, loved more than he is feared, trusted by the trustworthy, and always respected even by enemies.

The Herod-like May Baby incident is Arthur's one great crime. Such a crime is unjust, and Arthur works hard afterward to prove and maintain that he is in fact just and repentant. He raises several churches, recompenses the damaged families, and perhaps spends some time in hair shirts and sack cloth.

Anyone who does not forgive Arthur deserves a Vengeful check every time he mentions the incident. Almost everyone in the Arthurian stories begins by making some terrible mistake, but then recognizes his error and betters himself through the ordeal.

### King Arthur's Chronology

his age	year	events
0	492	born at Tintagel, hidden by Merlin in Forest Sauvage.
18	510	pulls sword from stone, crowned, fights Caerleon and Bedegraine, recognized as king of Logres.
20	512	May babies incident, 2nd war begins
21	513	battle of Tintagel ends 2nd war, Arthur repents for errors, Cambria and Northlands swear loyalty.
22	514	wed to Guenever; receives Excalibur and scabbard.
23	515	war against invading kings (Badon).
29	521	troubles with Morgan le Fay.
35	527-528	war against Rome.
38	c. 530	war against Ireland.
39	531	Borre, Arthur's son by Lyzianor, knighted & begins adventuring (eventually slain by Kay).
41	533	Mordred, Arthur's son by Margawse, knighted and begins adventuring.
44	536	war against France.
48	540	enchanted by Annowre, rescued by Tristram.
52	544	King Mark pays homage to Arthur.
62	554	Grail Quest strips Round Table of knights.
66	558	Queen Guenever kidnaped, rescued by Lancelot.
71	563	affair of Lancelot and Guenever exposed, war against Lancelot divides Round Table.
72	564	war in Brittany against Lancelot, and Romans, destroys many good knights.
73	565	Battle of Camlann, Arthur wounded and taken to Avalon.

## The Sons of Arthur

King Arthur's lack of an heir to the throne of High King must have been a continual worry to him and, especially, to the Queen. Some of your player-characters, striving to produce a son of their own, will be able to sympathize with the king's agony. The tragedy is not without its irony when we realize that Arthur did have sons: two of them.

Borre le Cure Hardy (the Strong Heart), son of Arthur and Dame Lyzianors, is discussed in detail in Chronology, year 531. He is little-known and unimportant to the grand scheme. It seems incredible that Arthur did not at least try to reveal Borre's possible claims, especially later in his reign when an acknowledged heir might have helped stabilize things. Unless, of course, Borre was killed earlier than Sir Urre's healing, where he appears. Judging that Arthur forgave Kay for killing Borre, I imagine it occurred when Borre was young, before Arthur got to know him and before Arthur realized he would have no heirs.

Arthur seemed unaware that Mordred was the son who would be his downfall, despite his own dreams and Merlin's prophecies. The story of Arthur's line is not finished until Lancelot and his armies kill Melehan, Mordred's son, and an unnamed brother. Then does the line of Pendragon end.

Another son of Arthur is named in Nennius. "... and the name of the man who is buried in the mound is Anir. He was the son of Arthur the soldier, and Arthur himself killed him there and buried him." I have left his fellow out of the chronology altogether. Maybe it was another Arthur. You may do as you please, or need to do.

## Queen Guenever

The High Queen has been portrayed in more different ways than almost any other Arthurian character. She is sometimes a noble and sensitive woman, trapped by her love. Other times she is a power-hungry mistress, lewd and manipulative. Sometimes she is a timid and fearful woman, more victim than queen. All accounts agree upon her possessive jealousy.

Like Arthur, the queen should remain aloof from most characters. She acts primarily through the vehicles of her Queen's Knights and her Courts of Love. The former do her bidding willingly, and in the latter she wields the judge's baton over the hearts and emotions of the maidens of Camelot. When a woman complains of her lover's conduct, the Courts of Love will determine the correctness of the lovers, and perhaps impose penalty for the wrongdoing. Thus can the queen control others.

Guenever's agony, unspoken in Malory though often mentioned in modern renditions, is Guenever's childlessness. The characters, struggling to raise a family of their own to inherit their goods and fame, should have an inkling of this trouble.

### Queen Guenever's Chronology

her age	year	event
0	497	born in Cameliard.
17	514	wed to Arthur.
22	(519)	early kidnaping date.
29	526	meets Lancelot.
35	(532)	middle kidnaping date.
50	547	drives Lancelot mad.
53	550	Lancelot returns to court.
61	(558)	later kidnaping date.
66	563	discovered with Lancelot, runs away, returns to Arthur.
67	564	seized by Mordred.
68	565	enters nunnery at Amesbury.
76	573	dies.

## The Kidnapings

Guenever, like many heroines of Western legend, has a history of being kidnaped. Through the literary development of the legend, her captor has remained the same, with several variations on spelling his name (Melwas, Meliagrart, etc.) and her place of imprisonment as well (Voirre, Goirre, Gore, etc.).

However, her rescuers have not always been the same. The earliest tales imply that Sir Bedivere, one of Arthur's oldest companions, first rescued the queen (as in Mary Stewart's novels). Hints of other, or older, tales imply that Sir Kay or Sir Gawaine once rescued her.

## The Characters: The Main Characters

kingdom description: Garloth

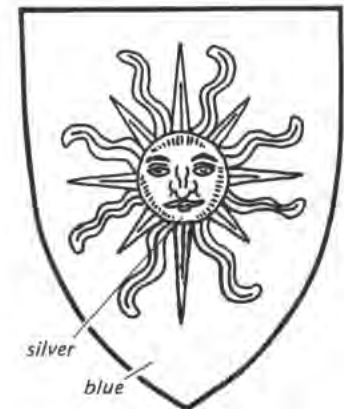
### GARLOTH

(also referred to as Votadini Tribe by Romans, Bernicia by Saxons, post-Arthurian Manaw Gododdoin)

Cymric/Pagan

Lieges: K. Nentres (early, middle), D. Galeshin (late).

Garloth



Landmarks: Bamburgh – site of Saxon stronghold established in 547 (A.S. Chron.).

Cheviot Hills – rugged hills.

Dere Street – Roman road extending from Lothian to Eboracum.

Dolorous/Joyous Garde – castle of Sir Lancelot.

Dolorous Mount – site of battle in 512 (Nennius).

Mt. Agned – site of a battle which began the second rebellion of the Northern Chiefs (Nennius).

Melrose – abbey.

Pelownes – castle whose lord captured Palomides (Malory X, 84-85).

Windesan – city, site of garrisoning in 510 (Malory I, 18).



**The Characters: The Main Characters**

illustration: Queen Guenever with Hawk

The earliest kidnaping is dated 519 — if this is the date you choose, Guenever must be saved by someone else before Lancelot shows up to dominate the field in rescuing queens. You may wish to ignore the event.

The 532 and 558 kidnapings are actually the same event, and you should take your choice of dates. If you choose one of these dates, Lancelot is definitely the Queen's rescuer. Malory implies that this event marked the change in the relationship between Lancelot and Guenever from one of Amor to one of Love. The Vulgate cycle places the event much earlier than Malory. I prefer the middle date. Make your own choice. In both versions Sir Lancelot finally rescues the queen, beds with her, but is accused of adultery by Sir Meliagant, who is subsequently killed by Lancelot in a duel which is of questionable morality.



Queen Guenever  
Exercising Her Favored  
Hawk in the Garden of Love.  
Illustration by Lisa A. Free.

## Sir Lancelot

Sir Lancelot du Lac is the greatest knight of all Christendom, a paradigm of virtue. His presence dominates any situation. He personifies all chivalrous virtues. His example inspires the whole court.

However, he has two serious flaws. First is his berserker-like rage which fells all who oppose him, and many who do not. However, the good knight always gives mercy to anyone who asks it, and so offsets this manner.

Second is his sinful and adulterous love for Queen Guenever, wife of his liege King Arthur. Their love is in accordance with the rules of Romance, but in defiance of Law, Friendship, and Loyalty.

The facts of Lancelot's prowess and his murder and mercy are all well known. The facts of his affair are not.

Lancelot's presence or absence at court is critical. His life marks the progress of the campaign. Many events are so important that the campaign must move around him. When he is not noted to be present or absent from court in the chronology below, it is up to you to decide his location and actions. Remember that he often spent time riding about as a knight errant, often in disguise in later periods.

### Sir Lancelot's Chronology

his age	year	event
0	510	born in Brittany.
18	528	arrives at Arthur's court. Hero of Roman War.
19	529	wins Dolorous Garde, conquers Duke Galahaut, and declares his secret love for Guenever.
20	530	absent from court for one year.
21	531	returns to court, joins Round Table.
22	(532)	middle date for kidnaping of Guenever.
23-24	533-535	absent from court for two years.
23	533	Lancelot goes mad, captured by Morgan, escapes, captured again.
24	534	Lancelot visits Carbonek, Galahad engendered upon Elaine.
25	535	Lancelot escapes again, at Peningues Tournament. Rides around in Kay's armor, returns to court. Twelve years pass.
37	547	Elaine and Galahad visit court. Lancelot goes mad.
38	548	Lancelot cured of madness, moves in with Elaine and Galahad. Three years pass.
41	551	Lancelot returns to court with Ector and Percivale. Two years pass. Elaine dies.
44	554	absent from court. Grail Quest.
45	555	Sir Urre's healing. Seven years pass.
48	(558)	Later date for kidnaping of Guenever.
52	562	Elaine of Astolat incident.
53	563	adultery uncovered. Division of Round Table, war at Joyous Garde.
54	564	war in Brittany. Arthur withdraws.
55	565	Lancelot enters a monastery.
63	573	Lancelot dies.

## Sir Mordred

Although not one of the three major characters, Sir Mordred deserves close individual scrutiny. He presents many challenges to the roleplaying gamemaster. Several questions about him arise from Malory.

According to one passage, Mordred was brought up until the age of fourteen by an anonymous good man, who then brought him to court toward the end of Arthur's reign. However, no such incident is mentioned in Malory's version or any other version of the death of Arthur. In the alliterative *Morte Arthure* (one of Malory's sources) Arthur calls Mordred "my foster-child of old" and "a child of my chamber," which probably gave Malory this impression.

Other sources indicate that Mordred was considered a member of the Orkney clan. The wicked knight certainly acknowledges this kinship with such deeds as murdering Sir Lamorak. He often associated with Sir Agravaine of Orkney. A French source says a note was found with the shipwrecked baby which stated he was Lot's son.

I suggest you not stress the facts of Mordred's origins. His origins are critical to his motivation, but his secret thoughts will rarely be spoken to anyone — his deeds show how he feels, but not why.

## The Characters: The Main Characters Handling the Affair

### Handling the Affair

The love affair of Sir Lancelot and Queen Guenever is one of the best known parts of the King Arthur legend. The love affair was the reason that the stories were written, and this illicit affair is critical to the plot.

The affair must be handled properly to keep a campaign balance. No one at court knows about it, and Arthur does not believe it until the very end. The players might know, but their characters certainly don't. Keep reminding players that their characters know nothing of the affair.

I do not believe that Lancelot carried on an active carnal affair for his whole career. I believe that this love was, at first, pure Amor. In Malory VI, 10, Sir Lancelot speaks out against adultery to a woman. He was probably still chaste at that time. However, his every visible public action will be to respectfully honor the Queen, including the arts of Romance.

Sometime, probably at the Meliagant kidnaping, Lancelot and Guenever consummate their love. Malory places that event very close to the end of the campaign. The Vulgate says it was consummated during the False Guenever affair, which I dislike. Whatever their carnal activities, their outward and visible activities would not change, and the court would admire their Amor.

Naturally every constant Amor generates gossip. Provide current gossip so that players be able to keep track of what their characters know. If they insist on blurting something out, treat it as one of the many prophecies which occur in the story. Few believe these dire forecasts, and sometimes Lancelot gets angry enough to kill people. In the later campaign Lancelot's kin and allies butcher anyone who whispers such slander about their leader. At that point you might want to let your players gossip, but only in character of course.

The years accumulate rumor and innuendo, but Lancelot and Guenever never publicly reveal themselves. Arthur receives hints and bald statements from Morgan le Fay and from King Mark, but he doesn't believe them. He doesn't want to — Lancelot is his best knight, and he loves his wife.

After the Grail Quest Lancelot becomes somewhat careless, which eventually leads to his betrayal by Agravaine and Mordred. The truth is known. The romance is over.

## The Characters: The Main Characters

kingdom description: Gomeret

### GOMERET

(also referred to as Ordovices Tribe by Romans, post-Arthurian Gwynedd)

Cymric/Christian

Lieges: K. Pellinore (early), K. Maelgwynn of Gwynedd (middle - d. 547), Rhun (late).

Gomeret



Landmarks: Bangor – famous monastery.

Bangor Iscoed – famous monastery.

Bardsey Island – one of the sites reputed to be Merlin's resting place, where he is in a house of glass with nine guests and the Thirteen Treasures of Britain (early Welsh poems).

Bottomland Cantrev – land sunk before Arthur's reign. Also called Cantrev Y Gwaelod.

Cader Idres – mountain, called Chair of Idres, after the giant who cut a great cliff into the Chair's shape. Anyone who spends a night sitting in it will be found in the morning dead, mad, or a poet.

Cambrian Mountains – Welsh mountains.

Castle of Maidens – castle ruled by wicked brothers who imprisoned all passing knights, eventually driven out by Galahad (Malory XIII, 15-16).

Chester – city, based on an ancient Roman camp.

Dee River – river.

Degannwy – site of Sixth Century fortress (Ashe).

Dinasdaron – castle, court city for Arthur (Chretien, *Graal*). Site of very ancient fortress, and probably center of worship for Bran (Ashe).

Dinas Emrys – castle. Site where Vortigern built his tower, and where Merlin made his first public prophecies (Geoffrey). Also a sixth century fortress (Ashe).

Hautdesert – castle of Sir Bercilak de Hautdesert, the Green Knight who is Gawaine's opponent in the Beheading Test (*Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight*).

Llangollen – monastery. Founded by Collen in the Sixth century (*Life of St. Collen*).

Menai Strait – waterway separating Anglesey from Wales.

Scaudone – city (Chretien, *Graal*).

How much was ever revealed or admitted? In Malory XX, 19, King Arthur and his army sail overseas against Lancelot:

"And there King Arthur made Sir Mordred chief ruler of all England, and also he put Queen Guenever under his governance; because Sir Mordred was King Arthur's son, he gave him the rule of his land and of his wife."

Earlier sources give no such reason. Mordred is left in charge because he is competent and seems loyal.

Years earlier Arthur had committed a terrible blunder to forestall a nightmare which was interpreted for him by Merlin the Enchanter, whose prophecies always came true. It is hard to believe he would walk so willingly into the doomed fate.

Perhaps he was enchanted by the faeries — his spirit held captive in the Castle of Bones, as told in a Welsh legend. His fate was clear, as seen in his dream of the Wheel of Fortune. Like Balin, King Arthur approached his death with pride and courage.

Perhaps King Arthur did not really know, or admit, that Mordred was his son. Arthur was certainly capable of lying to himself about his wife and best friend, and might deny this fact despite rumor, innuendo, and whatever wickedness Queen Margawse or Mordred chose to reveal.

Maybe he did know, and didn't publicly admit it. T. H. White presents Mordred as an overcultured, bored, and cynical bastard, tolerated by all because he is the High King's nephew, and excused for everything by Arthur through a sense of guilt.

Perhaps Arthur thought the curse had been lifted with the death of Sir Borre, and therefore trusted Mordred.

Maybe Arthur, and everyone, knew of the true relationship between them, but either did not care or excused both Arthur and his hapless son.

### Sir Mordred's Chronology

his age	year	event
-1	511	Queen Margawse visits the boy-king Arthur, falls in love (receives a critical Lust roll), and is impregnated by her brother.
0	512	Mordred born in Orkney on May 1, taken with many others to King Arthur, and set adrift. Miraculously, Mordred survives, and is raised by "a good man."
14	526	(?) Mordred brought to court.
20	532	knighted, begins enterprising career.
22	534	Peningues tournament. Beforehand he is informed of his paternity and cursed future. Begins career of mockery and doom.
25	537	mocks Alisander le Orphelin. Here he is already called a "false knight."
27	539	mocks La Cote Mal Taile.
28	540	from this time on, Mordred is counted among Star Knights of Phase Four: Apogee.
32	544	tricks King Mark.
40	552	strikes down Sir Lamorak from behind.
43	555	with Sir Agravaire, kills Sir Dinadan during the Grail Quest.
51	563	with Sir Agravaire, discloses affair of Guenever and Lancelot. Round Table unity shattered.
52	564	Mordred named regent of Britain when King Arthur and Sir Gawaine sail to besiege Lancelot at Benwick.
53	565	usurps throne, besieges Guenever in London. Battle of Camlann, when Mordred is killed and fatally wounds Arthur.

Whatever the reason, King Arthur trusted Mordred with regency of the land, and protection of his wife. Arthur must certainly have been surprised at Mordred's interest in Queen Guenever.

King Arthur's reasoning is his own secret. You should have some idea of whichever idea you prefer. Hint at all of the above. Refuse to be pinned down.

Remember that if you never give anyone the secret of Mordred's incestuous birth, no one in the campaign can disrupt the final drama of the heroic tragedy.

Modern authors all treat Mordred differently. If he is active in your campaign, choose a personality. He may be evil and overtly-villainous, as in T. H. White; a victim of misunderstanding and fate, as in Stewart; a distant and vague figure, never fully explained, as in many medieval manuscripts; or merely a cynical misanthrope, as in Karr and Bradley.



The High King's court is necessary to the game. Player-characters should often visit there, always hear rumors if its events, and remember that it is the center of the world. They should mingle with the Round Table as much as possible. Although most player-characters will probably not be Round Table knights, they will associate with other more famous knights who are.

The court structure can be viewed as a series of concentric circles. At the center is King Arthur and his circle of intimates: Guenever, Lancelot, Gawaine, Kay, Bedivere, and others of their household. Surrounding them are the Round Table knights, then the Queen's Knights, followed by an array of official servants. The next circle consists of knights who hold land from the Round Table knights, and here sit many of the kings of the British Isles. The outer circle includes all the rest of knighthood.

Within this circle of influence there are wedges of specific kin-groups whose power spans the whole social spectrum. Three groups are most visible: the (Northern) Orkney clan, the (Continental) Ganis clan, and the (Gomeret) Galis clan. Player-characters may try to maneuver their families into similar positions of importance and should be urged to do so. Characters will form opinions of their own concerning which clans are most friendly to theirs. You should subtly influence the characters' opinions by showing one or more of the clans as being the bad guys from your player-characters' perspective. Not that they need be evil, but maybe they bend the rules most, or are bullies, or are always the first to introduce a new advance in the tournament rules. Maybe their leaders are rude, or they have some superstitious religious practice. Details are left to the game-master, and can be developed over time.

Each clan is listed below. Some knights are given in the statistics book, while others will be useful only as random names to use in an emergency. See the next chapter for an explanation of the Phases.

#### The Orkney (Northern) clan

The Orkney clan is led by Sir Gawaine. They are mostly northerners, and the leader is also Arthur's blood kinsman.

2nd Phase — Agravaire, Gaheris, Gawaine.

3rd Phase — Gareth, Mordred, Ywaine the Bastard (Yvonet Li Avoutres), Ywaine the Knight of the Lion.

4th Phase — Gingalin, Florence, Lovel, sons of Mordred.

#### The Ganis (Continental) Clan

The Ganis clan is led by Sir Lancelot, and includes kinsmen from Brittany and Ganis.

2nd Phase — Blamore de Ganis, Bleoberis de Ganis.

3rd Phase — Bors de Ganis, Ector de Maris, Galahad, Lancelot du Lac, Lionel.

4th Phase — Helin le Blanc.

#### The Galis (Gomeret) Clan

The Galis clan includes some of the best knights of the Round Table, but lacks leadership after Pellinore's death and never acts in concert the way the other two do. The clan thus loses strength and fades from the story.

2nd Phase — Lamorak de Galis, Pellinore of the Isles, Tor le Fise Aries.

3rd Phase — Aglovale, Dornar, Percivale.

In addition to these famous knights, the king's court would include their wives and daughters as handmaidens to the queen, bastards as household knights, and poor cousins as men-at-arms and kitchen helpers.

#### Courtiers

**Bedivere** — Sir Bedivere the Butler is one of Arthur's loyal friends and faithful administrators. He is never an important character, except in the oldest stories where he is noted for rescuing the queen.

When I use Bedivere he is a foil to Kay. In short, Bedivere is the kindly official at court.

**Gawaine** — he is King Arthur's kinsman and heir. Malorian stories indicate that Gawaine exploited his relationship to the king in pursuing his blood feuds. Many knights spared him because he was Arthur's nephew. But everyone has enemies, and Gawaine had plenty of loyal friends to witness his noble deeds as well.

### *The Characters: The High Court and Important Clans*

*coat of arms: Balan*

Sinadon — city, once favorite of Maxen Wledig.

Snowdon Mt. — famous mountain. In Welsh, called Eyrie, or Place of Eagles. Atop it is a bottomless lake where lives an avanc. Rhita the giant lived there until killed by Arthur (Welsh folklore).

Wirral — Sir Gawaine was sent to the Wirral Forest. Wirral is still the modern name for the peninsula between the Dee and Glein (modern Mersey) rivers (*Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight*).

Balan



## The Characters: Knights of Note

kingdom description: Gorre

### GORRE

(post-Arthurian Rheged)

Cymric/Pagan

*Lieges:* K. Uriens (early), Bagdemagus (middle, late).

*History:* the somber uplands of Gorre host lonely outposts of mankind, far on the fringes of civilization. Its peoples never surrendered to the Romans, and its shadowed vales are homes for many strange customs and creatures. These folk are a stubborn, conservative lot who cling to their old ways. Even towards the end of Arthur's reign deplorable practices are carried on.

Gorre



*Landmarks:* Carteloise Castle – site of the Uncourteous Lady (Malory XVII, 7-9).

Carteloise Forest – a waste forest where Grail questers saw the vision of the White Hart (Malory XVII, 9).

Four Stones Castle – castle, mentioned by Balin; also the burial site of Sir Meliagrance, and so probably his castle (Malory II, 6; Vulgate IV).

Gaihom – capital of Gorre (Vulgate).

Galowey – a region, the western portion of Gorre (Chretien, *Graal*). Also, many characters in Malory are from here, such as Galleron of Galowey.

Gloevant Forest – a forest (Vulgate IV).

Isle Estrange – castle, whose lady played Lionel false (Vulgate V).

Red Launds – region from whence comes Sir Ironside (Malory VII, 2-18).

Sorhaut – favorite city of Duke Gala-haut the Haut Prince (Malory I, 18; Vulgate IV).

Surluse – a region which cannot be entered without winning a joust (Malory IX, 7; Vulgate III).

Repenting for a disastrous murder of his youth (depicted in Malory III, 6-8), Gawaine is afterwards unflinching in his courteous conduct towards women of all ages and staunch in his mercy.

Sir Gawaine is an excellent personality to be the characters' main contact at court. He is close to Arthur, of great personal importance, rich, and friendly. Gawaine is generous and very human in his emotions, and his worst fault is a terrible thirst for vengeance marring his otherwise splendid personality.

*Kay* – Sir Kay the Seneschal is also King Arthur's foster brother, hence one of his few childhood friends. Kay's loyalty to Arthur never failed, despite the accidental killing of the king's son.

Sir Kay is famous for his bitter speech. No one escapes the wrath of his tongue. He rudely awakes the starry-eyed squires who arrive to see the glitter and gold. Kay makes everyone vouch and account for equipment, take their proper place in lines, and is quick with the rod to any squire who is too slow.

*Bishop Baudwin* – although outranked by the Archbishop, Baudwin is the most popular priest in Arthurian legends. He apparently begins as a heroic knight, becomes a priest, and ends as a hermit visited during the Grail Quest. He is the ranking Christian at Arthur's court, in charge of the splendid cathedral there.

*Constantine of Cornwall* – this person, through his father Cador, is somehow related to Arthur. He is undoubtedly an able administrator and renowned workhorse. Whenever Arthur leaves Britain Constantine is left in charge. Eventually, Constantine also becomes King of Cornwall, after Mark's death. Before his death he witnesses the conquest of Logres by the Saxons.

### Kings of Importance

Noblemen of all ranks crowd Arthur's court. Some carry petitions for judgment, some have offers or requests. Many hang around because it is the place where action begins, or because they can always get a free meal.

Kings, however, visit because they are leaders, almost the equals of Arthur, with sovereign rights of their own. Some are personal friends to the High King, while others could never earn such a privilege. Yet all are welcome, and all are treated graciously.

Many kings are idle noblemen who leave the governing of their realms to their wives and stewards while they gain glory on the tournament circuit, where they often appear in the lists. Included are Berrant le Apres known as the King of the Hundred Knights, King of Malahaut; Pellinore, King of Gomeret; Lak, King of Estregales; Bagdemagus, King of Gore; Lot, King of Lothian; Galeholt, the Haut Prince, King of the Long Isles; Tradelmas, King of Norgales.

### KNIGHTS OF NOTE

Many knights are noted in King Arthur's time. In fact, as time goes on the elders tend to drop from sight and be replaced by younger knights making names for themselves.

Listed here are knights who are the up-and-coming stars of Britain during the phases of Arthur's reign. These are the knights whom everyone talks about, even if they talk about some other favorite of their own as well. These guys are just too famous to ignore. In general, they reach this list when they become Extraordinary Knights (gain more than 8,000 Glory). They may appear for a little while in the phase previous to the one they are named in, but are less important.

Several knights are given for each phase. These will certainly vary from campaign to campaign. Use your own favorites. They will continue to be famous after their phase (unless they are killed, like Pellinore or Marhaus). In the plot chronology they are called Star Knights.

#### Phase One

This phase only has feudal warlords. There is no room for individual knights to shine forth from the gloom of the dark ages.

#### Phase Two

*Balin le Savage* – also called the Knight with Two Swords, this hero was outlawed from Arthur's court and spent the rest of his short life trying to atone for his error. He was doomed and struck the Dolorous Stroke, then marched to his fated death fighting his beloved brother, Balan. He is killed in this phase.

*Gawaine* – nephew to the King, this chivalrous knight is a staunch upholder of the throne. He is discussed more fully under Courtiers above. Knighted in 514,

he dies at the end of Arthur's reign in 564 (phase 5) shortly before the High King's death.

*Griflet le Fise de Dieu* — this man was knighted while Arthur was still young, and made his name during the early years as a redoubtable fighter. He was knighted in 512. He may have aided Arthur in his last battle against Mordred and died there. He may have been killed when Lancelot rescues the queen from the stake (563, according to Malory), or else could be the knight who returns Arthur's sword to the lake (Vulgate) and survives Arthur.

*Marhaus* — this Irish knight was famous when Arthur became king, and performed many chivalrous deeds. He became a knight of the Round Table in 522 and was killed by Sir Tristram in a duel in 529.

*Pellinore* — although the Knight with the Strange Beast was willing to challenge Arthur early in the High King's reign, this king of The Isles was a loyal vassal to Arthur by 513, when he aided the monarch against the rebels. He spent much time pursuing the Questing Beast, which he never caught, and was murdered by the Orkney clan in 523.

*Tor le Fise Aries* — this bastard son of King Pellinore was knighted while Arthur was still young (514), and he proved himself in Arthur's wedding adventures and the war against the invading kings. He was killed when Lancelot rescued Guenever from the stake in 563.

### Phase Three

*Breunor le Noir* — also known as La Cote Male Taile. This knight set off on his first quest into impossible tasks, most of which he won, and ended as lord of Pendragon Castle. He was a good friend of Sir Lancelot's. His death is unrecorded, but occurred after Guenever's ill-fated dinner party (561).

*Galeholt the Haut Prince* — this Irish lord was conquered by Lancelot and afterwards was Arthur's loyal vassal and Lancelot's confidante. He died of melancholy when he thought Lancelot was dead sometime in Phase Four.

*Lamorak de Galis* — this son of Pellinore was usually listed as the second or third best knight of Britain. He took many honors until killed in 552 by the Orkney brothers, who were angered at his loving their mother, Queen Margawse.

*Lancelot du Lac* — the most famous knight of the Round Table came to Arthur's court at the start of this phase, and never left his foremost position. His history is covered in detail earlier in this chapter. His time at court begins in 525 and ends in 563, when he flees with Guenever and destroys the brotherhood of the Round Table.

*Palomides the Saracen* — this knight was one of the best knights of the realm. He had a constant rivalry with Tristram for the love of Queen Isolt. She did not reciprocate Palomides' emotion at all, yet he was inspired to greatness by his love nonetheless. He appears as early as 531 at the Irish Tournament, and his death is unreported, though he left Britain allied to Lancelot in 563.

*Ywaine le Chevalier au Lion* — this cousin of Gawaine's was a son of Morgan le Fay and King Uriens. His adventures began with his banishment by Arthur in 521 and continued unabated through his long life, which ended at Arthur's side in the Battle of Camlann, at the hands of Mordred, 565.

### Phase Four

*Bors de Ganis* — this knight is one of the most pious of the realm. He is one of three who achieves the Holy Grail, and the only one who returned to tell of it. He is Lancelot's favorite relative, and leads the clan when Lancelot is absent. He comes to court with Lancelot, in 525, and departs from the story to fight Saracens after Lancelot dies in 573. He dies in the Holy Land on Good Friday.

*Dinadan* — this knight displays a provocative sense of humor, a skeptical disposition towards jousting for love, and a sincere dislike of the frivolities of courtly romance. He is a fierce fighter, though always begging off from fighting, and a troubador with druidic bardic traditions to sing. He is also an intimate friend of Tristram. He is killed by Agravaire and Mordred in the Grail Quest (554-557).

*Gareth Beaumains* — this brother of Sir Gawaine achieved fame when he was abruptly knighted and sent on a quest, which he fulfilled admirably (532). He was always counted among the best, and in my mind outstripped Lancelot in loyalty, but was killed when Lancelot rescued Guenever from the stake in 563.

## The Characters: Knights of Note

coat of arms: *Borre le Cure Hardy*  
kingdom description: Ireland

Borre le Cure Hardy



### IRELAND

(also called Leign, Leinster)

Cymric/Pagan

Liege: K. Anguish (early, middle, late).

History: for game purposes, Ireland indicates the ancient kingdom called Leign. The region was never invaded by Romans and has often sent raiding parties eastward to Britain.

Ireland



Landmarks: Anguish Castle — castle where King Anguish lives (Malory VIII).

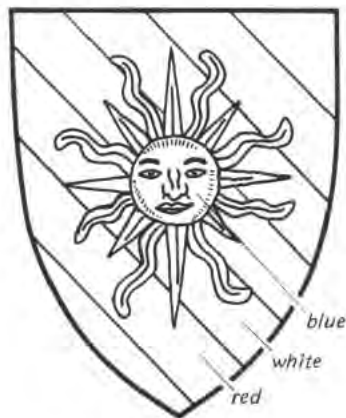
The Launds — fief held by the sister of King Anguish.



## The Characters: The Magic Workers

coat of arms: Ector de Maris

Ector de Maris



*Mordred* — the youngest of the Orkney brothers, Mordred was the bastard child of King Arthur and his half-sister, Queen Margawse. Though a good and fine knight at first (532-534), Mordred soured and brought about the destruction of the Round Table by revealing Lancelot's affair with the Queen (563). He eventually killed, and was killed by, his liege and father in battle (565).

*Percivale de Galis* — a holy, chaste, and humble knight who achieved the Grail, Percivale's career began in 545 with great prophecies, which he fulfilled, and ended when he achieved the Holy Grail in 556.

*Tristram of Lyonesse* — the story of this knight's affair with Queen Isolt is a direct contrast to the discreet relationship of Lancelot and Queen Guenever. Their love affair was one of love madness run rampant, and I am inclined to agree with T. H. White's analysis of Tristram's character: that he was tough, and mouthed the platitudes of chivalry, but never quite understood what it was really about. Malorian characters agree he is one of the two best knights in Britain. Knighted in 529, his career outside Cornwall and Ireland began during Phase Four. He died in 559, foully struck down by King Mark.

### Phase Five

The old-timers are still alive in this era — newcomers have a hard time making a name for themselves. Mordred leads the disaffected knights to new customs, such as the Blood Feud, which do not result in Star Knights. A few newcomers are noted for their adherence to the old ways, but fail to attain the fully exalted status of the older knights.

*Lavaine* — this knight was a staunch friend of Sir Lancelot, brother of the Maid of Astolat who died because Lancelot would not love her. He came to court about 562, and went into exile with Lancelot. His death is not recorded.

*Urre* — this knight from Hungary had been wounded by a knight and cursed by a Spanish witch so his wounds would never be healed except by the world's best knight. After years of agonized wandering he came to Camelot and was saved by Lancelot, who became his liege afterwards. He accompanied Lancelot into exile, and his death is unrecorded.

## THE MAGIC WORKERS

*Annowre* — this sorceress lives in the Forest Perilous, and is Nimue's dire enemy. Annwre also lusts after King Arthur. The story of her demise, at the hands of Sir Tristram, King Arthur, and Dame Nimue, is in Malory IX, 15. She knows glamour and emotional magics.

*Bleise* — mentioned in Malory I, 17, he was Merlin's master, though Merlin later eclipsed his teacher in magical skills. Bleise was not a druid; he wrote. He was Merlin's secretary, thus presumably the clerk who wrote down all the prophecies, parables and deeds which the archdruid pronounced. His magic was probably of the Western tradition (see Gareth Knight, *The Secret Tradition in Arthurian Legend*). Thus he knows healing and summoning magics.

*Brisen* — "one of the greatest enchantresses that was at that time in the world living," she works for the lords of Castle Carbonek, the Grail Castle, first to effect the conception of Galahad (Malory XI, 7-8), and then to help Lady Elaine seduce Lancelot again (XII, 4). She knows glamour, healing, and emotion magic.

*Camille* — this chatelaine of Castle La Roche supports a Saxon rebellion in Anglia (year 531) and treacherously captures King Arthur, Duke Galeholt, and Sirs Lancelot, Gaheris, Gawaine, and Ector. She knows glamour, weather-working, and summoning magics (Vulgate III).

*Enchantress Queens* — this coven of conspiratorial enchantresses, unnamed except for titles, appears sporadically throughout Malory. They are apparently powerful heathen priestesses who occasionally cooperate, probably on the high holy days of their sacred year. Morgan le Fay usually leads them. One of these women is probably named Sebille.

Queen of the Eastlands — this Roman queen helps kidnap sleeping Lancelot (Malory VI, 3-4). She probably knows healing and summoning magic.

Queen of Soresan — this Cymric queen helps kidnap sleeping Lancelot and takes him to Castle Chariot (Vulgate V). She is probably a pagan.

Queen of Norgales — this Cymric queen is a major assistant to Morgan le Fay. She is one of the kidnapers who went to Castle Chariot (Malory VI, 3-4), was a recipient of a letter from King Mark to hunt for Alisander, helped Morgan tor-

ture Elaine, and was present to carry away dying Arthur. She is undoubtedly a pagan (druidic) priestess, with some of the powers of the Ladies of the Lake.

Queen of the Out Isles — this Pict queen was one of the four who tried to seduce Lancelot at Castle Chariot (Malory VI, 3-4). She is undoubtedly a pagan (druidic) priestess.

Gwenbaus — this brother of Kings Ban and Bors (and thus Lancelot's uncle) was a learned scholar who often hobnobbed with Merlin. He enchanted a whole party for a beautiful king's daughter, married her, and afterwards created a magic chessboard. Though he and his wife died, their magical dancing-ground continued forever until broken by Lancelot (Vulgate III).

Lady of the Lake — the title, Lady of the Lake, is used to describe several important women of the King Arthur stories. Scholars speculate they were once one character, but became divided up because troubadours slightly changed their original story.

These women have all the traits of faerie folk. They are beautiful, live under lakes served by youthful workers, have tremendous magical powers, and tempt handsome virile men to come live with them forever. They have glamour, weather, movement, healing, and emotion magics.

They can be treated either as faeries or as women who have learned much pagan magic. The effects would be the same. The player-knights would not be able to tell the difference anyway.

Ladies of the Lake include: Nineve, Nimue, and Vivian.

Linnet, the Damosel Savage — Dame Lynette is the maiden who brought Sir Gareth Beaumains from court to liberate Castle Dangerous. With a magical cup she twice heals a serious thigh wound of Gareth's and resurrects a zombie-like soldier who was chopped into little pieces (thus she clearly knows healing magic). She weds Sir Gaheris, and is never again mentioned in Malory. Various symbols associate her with the old pagan faerie magic, similar to Nimue's.

Merlin — the Archdruid of Britain is at least 60 years old when Arthur pulls his sword from the stone. He helps Arthur become king, and five or so years later he is gone, imprisoned under a rock. According to the medieval writers he was the victim of love. According to modern pagans, searching for ancient or hidden meaning in old stories, he was sacrificed voluntarily to the powers of the mighty earth dragon which he served. Whatever the reason for his death, his time with Arthur the King is limited.

Merlin is Archdruid because he qualifies to be such. No one gave him the title. He wears the mantle of Archdruid because he fulfills the prehistoric magical requirements and he knows all types of magic.

Merlin's parentage is unusual. His mother was a chaste nun, visited at night by either an elf or an incubus who impregnated her. At birth the child was quickly baptized a Christian, so the devil could not enter the infant, but he always had strange powers. As a young child he prophesied the loosing of the dragons at Vortigern's Tower. Master scholar Bleise then taught Merlin the basics of magic. Merlin also spent many years studying alone in the woods, accompanied only by the faeries and ancient powers. He was learned in book ways and natural ways, and became advisor to King Uther Pendragon, and later to his son.

Merlin freely shared his knowledge with other seekers. Morgan le Fay and Gwenbaus are among his students, as well as Nimue who finally imprisoned him. No one attained his level of knowledge until Taliesin qualified as Archdruid years later, but all sought to be as great as Merlin had been.

Morgan le Fay — the wicked pagan sister of Arthur's is very active early in his reign, but eventually retires from active court involvement. Her castles and followers dot the countryside to trouble good knights loyal to Arthur, but her deep intrigue soon ceases. Morgan is a colorful character with many possibilities. The gamemaster, through information sources and rumor, should always blame evil events on her, even if she is not responsible. Any suspected ill-doing is her fault, every illness her sending, and each knight's death attributed to her spells.

Her name, Morgan the Fairy, describes the immense magical powers available to this woman. She is Arthur's youngest sister, still older than he, raised in a nunnery where she learned to read and write, and then studied in the wilds with Merlin.

Morgan passionately developed hatred for Guenever, desire for Lancelot, and contempt for Arthur. After some very wicked trouble, such as stealing the scab-

## The Characters: The Magic Workers

kingdom description: The Isles

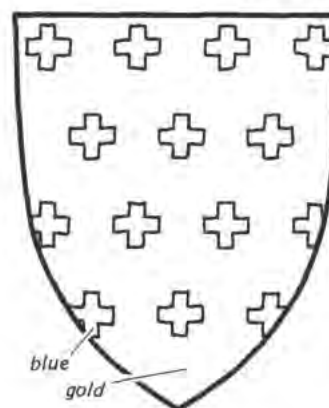
### THE ISLES

Cymric/Christian

Liege: Pellinore, later subkingdom of Gomeret.

History: this region is the birthplace and paternity of King Pellinore, enemy of the Orkney clan. These are wide, flat islands, rich in farmland and cattle, providing their lords with wealth. Before the Romans came they were sacred druid isles.

The Isles



Landmarks: Aberffraw — capital city of The Isles and/or Gomeret (*Mabinogion*: "Branwen").

Anglesey — largest island of The Isles where Sir Kay fought and killed Palug's Cat, a huge speckled man-eating monster (early Welsh poem).

Holy Isle — smaller island of The Isles.

Menai Straits — water separating The Isles from Britain.

## The Characters: The Miracle Workers

kingdom description: Kent

### KENT

Saxon/Wotanic

*Lieges:* Octa (early), Duke of Kent (middle), King Aethelbeorht (late).

*History:* this kingdom was perfidiously granted by Vortigern the Traitor to the Saxons in 450. For many years before Arthur, the king of Kent was also Bretwalda.

### Kent



*Landmarks:* Baram Down – large field, site of battle between Arthur and Mordred (656).

Canterbury – walled city, built by Romans.

Dover – castle and city. Important seaport for travel to the continent. Arthur lands here to combat Mordred (Malory XXI, 2).

Rochester – the bishop of this city brought threats from the Pope to Arthur and Guenever (Malory XX, 13).

Thanet – this region was the first gift of British soil to the Saxon mercenaries who later turned on their employers (A.S. Chron).

Watling St. – Roman street which ran from Dover to Chester.

Weald Forest – dense forest.

bard of protection, Morgan retires from active involvement. She is very friendly to Arthur when they meet again years later, and she is one of the four queens who carry his body away to Avalon after the battle of Camlann. Perhaps she mellowed with age, or was transformed by her magical pursuits.

Read the fiction by Karr and Bradley for two sensitive and sympathetic treatments of this wicked woman of romance, and Loomis (*Arthurian Tradition*) for an understanding of her divine roots as the water-mother goddess.

*Nineve* – this is the name used for the evil Lady of the Lake. She appears in Malory (II, 3-4), where she demands the head of Sir Balin, but is killed by him instead. Merlin then calls her “the wickedest woman alive,” and heaps other abuse on her as well.

This description is discordant with the woman who gave young King Arthur the magic sword Excalibur, and the Lady of the Lake appears later to imprison Merlin. Thus there must be several, as explained in the entry above.

Though killed early in the campaign (514), the presence of this type of wicked sorceress should give the gamemaster some ideas for scenarios.

*Nimue* – the good Lady of the Lake gently provides magical help for Arthur's court after the disappearance of Merlin. She seems to be a young woman when she first comes to Arthur's court, and probably remains young the whole time. She takes Sir Pelleas as her husband/lover early in the campaign (521). She is one of the four queens who bear away the dying Arthur to Avalon.

Nimue knows glamour, healing, movement, and prophesying magics.

*Seriade* – this magician first appears as a servant to Viviane, the French Lady of the Lake. She shows great magical prowess when she rescues Bors and Lionel from King Claudas by turning them into hounds. She later appears to bring messages from Viviane to Lancelot (Vulgate III). A competent and courageous lady, she is eminently suitable to be a player-character contact. She knows at least glamour, possibly healing magics as well.

*Viviane* – this French Lady of the Lake raised Lancelot and gave Arthur his magic sword. She is senior to other Ladies of the Lake. She also aided the love affair between Lancelot and Guenever. She has control of all types of pagan (Druidic) magic.

## THE MIRACLE WORKERS

Christian miracles may be more appropriate to your campaign. This list of wonder-workers is taken from historical 6th-century saints active in western Britain and Brittany.

*Cadoc* (Welsh *Cadog*) – was an energetic missionary for the British church throughout south Wales and Brittany, and also visited Cornwall, the Long Isles, and Ireland. He founded, and was Abbot of Caerwent Llancarfan. There he gave sanctuary to an outlawed enemy of Arthur's for seven years. When Arthur found out, he was outraged. A court found Cadoc had overstepped his limits, and the monk had to pay a fine of 100 cows. To make things difficult, Arthur demanded cows that were red in front and white behind. Miraculously, Cadoc produced the herd but when Arthur had accepted the payment the cows turned to ferns. Astonished, Arthur granted the abbey the right to give anyone sanctuary for seven years, seven months, and seven days.

*Carannog* – he was descended from the royal house of Gomeret. He set adrift a floating altar, vowing to preach wherever it landed. Seeking it, he came to a land where King Arthur vainly sought to vanquish a worm ravaging the land. When the holy man inquired after his altar, the King promised to return it if the Saint would rid him of the noxious serpent. Through the miracle of prayer, the worm surrendered to Carannog, who banished it. Arthur returned the altar, and also gave the monk land, called Carhampton, for a church.

*Collen* – he was once a hermit at Avalon, or Glastonbury Tor, when he received a summons from Gwynn ap Nudd, the ruler of Annwn, a kingdom of faerie. Reluctantly the monk obeyed, but he refused to eat or drink, and he condemned the soulless creatures and their glamour. When the elves got angry, Collen sprinkled them all with holy water and they disappeared. Afterwards no pagans worshiped there, and the ancient Christian monastery grew stronger. Later he founded the monastery of Llangollen.

*Deiniol* – called “of the Bangors” because he founded two famous monasteries,



Bangor Fawr on the Menii Straits, and Bangor Iscoed, in Orofoise. His feast day falls on the 11th of September.

*Dewi (David) the Waterman* — this native of Estregales traveled to the Mediterranean, studied monasticism, and was consecrated a bishop. He returned to his native land, founded a dozen monasteries, and was named primate of the island after the death of Dubricus. He is the patron saint of Wales.

*Dubricus* — this primate was the Archbishop of Britain early in Arthur's reign. He apparently cooperated with Merlin to have Arthur crowned. He was old when Arthur's reign began, and was replaced by Dewi.

*Gildas the Wise* — he was from Strangor (Strathclyde) and his family resisted Arthur, who defeated and killed them in battle at the Isle of Man. This monk, who in about 650 wrote a famous treatise scolding the Christians for their intemperate ways, never mentioned Arthur by name because of this grudge.

*Illtud* — this abbot founded the great monastic school of Llanilltyd Fawr (Llantwit Major, Glamorganshire). Saint Samson was one of his most famous students, as were some early British kings mentioned by Gildas.

*Nascien* — this ancient is so holy he has lived for 500 years to witness the coming of his descendant, Sir Galahad, the Perfect Knight. Nascien was a brother to Joseph of Arimathea, the saint who first brought the relics of the Grail King to Britain. He is a major figure in the Quest of the Holy Grail. Previous to that he was a hermit in the woods, or waited at Castle Carbonek.

*Padern* — this holy man was abbot of Llanbadarn Fawr when Arthur arrived one day. Rudely, the king demanded a fine cloak from the abbot's cell. When the king grew hostile, Padern said "Let the earth swallow him," and Arthur was swallowed by the ground below his feet up to his neck. Padern released him after Arthur begged forgiveness.

*Pellam, the Grail King* — several holy relics were brought to Britain in ancient times, and have been kept safe by descendants of the original family who brought them. The family finally settled at Castle Carbonek.

*Queen of the Wastelands* — this holy woman was instrumental in aiding the Grail Knights during their search. She was also one of the four queens who carried away Arthur's body after the Battle of Camlann.

*Samson* — this vigorous proselytizer of the faith was born in southern Wales (c. 490) and died in 565 at Dol, a monastery he founded in Brittany. He was also active in the Channel Islands, Cornwall, Cambria, and Ireland. He was a monk, hermit, and bishop.

## VILLAINS

Several important characters in *Pendragon* are villainous. Some notes to help them survive are given below.

*Agravaine* — a foul-tempered brother of the courteous Gawaine, Sir Agravaine seriously abuses his privilege of being the High King's nephew. He will murder in secret, slander, and fight against anyone who accuses him of wrongdoing. Yet most folk fear Gawaine's vengeance (with Arthur's backing) and allow him to get away with his deeds.

*Breuse Sans Pitie* — this knight, the Knight without Pity, makes numerous appearances in Malory, lopping women's heads off, striking from behind, and riding over downed foes. Yet he always escapes. His trick is to outfight any one foe, and to outrun (aided by his faerie horse) all others.

*Carados of the Dolorous Tower* — this wicked knight, "made like a giant," imprisoned his conquered foes, refusing ransom or fair treatment. For several years he captured knights, including many from the Round Table, until killed by Sir Lancelot.

*Garlon the Invisible Knight* — he has the power to make himself and his horse invisible, though his horse can be heard. He is ill-mannered, ignoring the rules of hospitality in his own home. Worse, he delights in striking down both knights and women by surprise. He plagues the land until slain by Sir Balin, early in the history. It is surprising to find that this dastard is brother to King Pellam, the Grail King. Perhaps it is just a measure of the magic of the place, abused by this poltroon.

*King Mark of Cornwall* — especially vile, since he is an anointed king with divine rights and the people's support. He does many vile things, such as riding in dis-

## The Characters: Villains

coat of arms: Breuse sans Pitie  
kingdom description: Logres

Breuse Sans Pitie



## LOGRES

(also incorrectly called England by Malory since the Angles and Saxons had not yet conquered the region)

Cymric/Christian

Lieges: none (pre), King Arthur (early, middle)

*History:* when the Romans came they conquered all of the lowlands, and when they departed the local tribes were left in command again. Throughout much of the island the local lords became independent kings, but here they continued to cooperate and maintain some unity. The eastern regions, once ruled by Saxons, reverted to their pagan beliefs.

Logres



*Landmarks:* Adventurous Shield Abbey — abbey where sits a white shield with a bloody red cross, left centuries ago by Nasciens. Anyone carrying the shield from continued next page

## The Plot

the Abbey was struck down by a white knight (Malory XIII, 9-12).

Ambrosius' Dike(s) — earthen walls erected by Aurelius Ambrosius, the first Pendragon. These were to hamper the Saxon army movement and provide superior observation, and were not manned along their length.

Amesbury — monastery; Guenever retired here (Malory XXI, 7).

Ake St. — Roman road running from Corinium to London.

Avalon — marshy lands south of the Severn Sea. Here lies an illusionary lake, home of the Lady of the Lake, Lisle of Avalon, and others.

Bath (Aqua Sulis) — city famous for its natural mineral baths, good for healing.

Badon — rebuilt ancient fortress, site of battle in 518 (Nennius).

Bassus R. — battle site in 514 (Nennius).

Beale Valet — castle where Palomides and Dinadan stayed for a night (Malory X, 25).

Bedegraine Castle — site of Arthur's victory against rebel kings in 510 (Malory I, 14-17).

Bedegraine Forest — dense forest identified with Sherwood Forest (Malory I, 17).

Black Cross Abbey — the Black Cross was erected by an enemy of Joseph of Arimathea and was stained with a martyr's blood (Vulgate I).

CALLEVA ATREBATUS — a.k.a. Silchester. Walled Roman city, still occupied.

Camelot — once a pagan castle-city, it was greatly expanded to become Arthur's fabled capital after 522.

Camelot Forest — forest separating Cornwall from Logres, which includes the Black Cross Abbey.

Camlann — field where Arthur and Mordred end their lives and the campaign in 565 (*Mabinogion*: "The Dream of Rhonabwy").

Campacorentin Forest — forest where hunting maidens were a danger to knights (Vulgate IV).

CORINIUM — large walled Roman city a.k.a. Cirencester.

Damas Castle — castle of Sir Damas, a wicked lord who imprisons knights and withholds land from his brother (Malory IV, 12).

Devil's Dike — earthen wall made by the Saxons to hamper the movement of Arthur's cavalry into Anglia.

Dolorous Tower — castle-home of Sir Carados, a powerful knight who takes many good knights prisoner (Malory VI, 7-9).

Dubglas R. — site of five battles in 516 (Nennius).

DURNOVARIA — large walled Roman city a.k.a. Dorchester.

Ermine St. — excellent Roman road running from London to Eburacum.

Fens — wildlands, paying homage to no one. Use the Marsh Encounter Table.

Fosse Way — excellent Roman road running from Isca Dumnonium to Lindum.

Glastonbury — site of Joseph of Arimathea's first abbey, of Arthur's "burial," and of Lancelot's hermitage (Malory XXI, 6,

guise to murder his foes, attacking from secret, and plotting against his nephew Tristram, a great knight and true lover. His gripe against Tristram may have some grounds, as the cuckolded husband. His unroyal behavior does not. He is finally killed by Bellengerus le Beuse, whose father and grandfather were both murdered by this monarch.

*Mordred* — a good knight until a prophet condemned him and his future at the Peningues Tournament. There he turned nasty, being happy to provoke other Round Table knights; vile, when he helped reveal the affair of Lancelot and Guenever; and finally evil, when he led a rebellion, tried to seize Guenever for his wife, and killed his father, King Arthur.

*Morgan le Fay* — Arthur's sister is discussed at length under Magicians, above. To keep in line with the story, it is all right for the gamemaster to blame any bad occurrence on Morgan, whether she did it or not. She certainly is wicked enough to cause plenty of trouble. With a network of castles and confederates, such as the Enchantress Queens, Morgan remains a potent force in Britain until the end.

*Turquine* — this knight spent twelve years avenging the death of his brother, Sir Carados. Like the other villain, he was a powerful knight who liked to imprison his foes, and was eventually conquered by Sir Lancelot. He and his brother are typical of the robber-barons who occupy the outlands of Britain.

## MINOR CHARACTERS

A host of nameless and faceless characters will be needed by the gamemaster. Most of those needed are primarily for combat, such as knights to fight at a tournament or a battle, bandits, howling savage Picts, Saxon warbands, men-at-arms guarding their lord, or possibly an outraged mob of peasants.



# The Plot

No Arthurian chronology can ever be correct; all are fiction. The best have an internal consistency which demands recognition. Phyllis Ann Karr, in *The King Arthur*

*Companion*, delineates a chronology drawn primarily from Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, and based upon events and ages of newly-appeared characters. This chronology draws on hers' for its foundation and includes many changes and additions. Some details on changes are contained in the Designer's Notes.

As the gamemaster, you should feel free to alter the chronology as you please. Not all Arthurian stories are as neat as Malory's. In my own campaign I had no time to fit in Merlin's disappearance when shown on this timeline, but did not want to miss the chance to portray a doddering wise man, lovestruck from his perch of high magic. Thus, seven game years after he was shown to have been imprisoned in the chronology, Merlin appeared in my campaign, collecting powerful magic items to make up the Thirteen Treasures of Britain to take into his tomb.

## The Passage of Time

The *Pendragon* campaign presents an opportunity to participate in the growing and changing world of King Arthur. His reign is a long one — 55 mortal years — time enough for the grandchildren of original characters to reach adulthood. Customs will change, different opportunities will present themselves, and thus the accumulated lifetime of experience will vary from generation to generation.

Five phases mark the progression of time in *Pendragon*. Certain things begin or change in each phase. Each phase lasts fifteen years, and five phases complete the campaign, making the whole campaign last seventy-five years. (If played out at a rate of 1 game year per real week, the campaign will last about one and a half years.)

The campaign plan anticipates a rate of game escalation which will be apparent in the accumulation of glory, land, improved weapons, and disposable cash.

Gamemasters should strive to maintain the controls outlined, such as restricting certain items until later in the game. Everyone will probably become rich enough without the gamemaster's overt aid.

### How to Use the Chronology

This chronology has three applications to a *Pendragon* campaign. All relate to its use with player-character knights.

For the player-characters as spectators, this chronology marks the passage of time. One-time events pass: Arthur is married, the Dolorous Stroke is struck, Lancelot first comes to court, and so on. You should remind players that this new hero is so-and-so's son, or grandson. Remind them that this murder is the result of such-and-so's feud. Sometimes they will watch some famous adventure begin, and a year or two later hear of the result.

As participants, the player-characters are affected by some events along with everyone else. They should certainly participate in major wars, their lord's wars, major tournaments, and events such as searching for the queen. Many adventures should be offered as voluntary: the search for Merlin, several searches for Lancelot, the hunt for the boar Troit, and the Grail Quest (except for Round Table knights, for whom this quest is mandatory).

Your job as gamemaster is to put the player-characters into a story as replacements. Making up new plots is both taxing and tedious. You should do what all the medieval storytellers did: retell an old tale with new heroes.

Insert player-characters into established tales. Using this method, character-knights could replace any of the knights on (for instance) the Adventure of the Hart, Brachet, and Lady (year 514, Malory III, 5-15); or any of the knights of the Triple Quest (year 521, Malory IV, 16-28).

Retell the same story with your own heroes, in a different place, with different non-player-characters. Medieval storytellers used this method extensively. Three different stories are told about Guenever's kidnaping. Three good stories use the same plot and motif: Gareth Beaumains, Alisander le Orphelin, and La Cote Male Taile are all unknown new knights who accept their maiden quest from a sharp-tongued young woman. Lists of such repetitions are endless — take the hint. Even this chronology has several repetitions of stories (for instance, the sinking of Gwyddno Garanhir's land in Phase One and the sinking of Lyonesse in Phase Five). Believe me, your players will appreciate the recognition and react accordingly to their previous actions.

## PHASE ONE: ANARCHY (495-510)

This era is intended to teach, through play, the rules of the game. No background color, personality, or politics should interfere with the instruction.

### Synopsis

*Events* — desperate struggles by leaderless men bring anarchy to Britain. The Saxons raid everywhere. The strong rule.

*Wars* — constant wars against Saxons, Irish, Picts, and other British tribes.

*Adventures* — simple adventures to teach the game system.

*Customs* — feudal military knighthood, without frills. However, the custom of hospitality should be stressed.

*Escalation* — none.

*Characters* — Pendragon loyalists: Brastias and Ulfias of Logres; Bishop Baudwin of Britain; Merlin the Enchanter; King Lac of Estregales.

Pendragon enemies: King Lot of Lothian; King Uriens of Gore; King Ryons of Norgales; King Cradelmas of Norgales; King Brandegoris of Strangore; King Nentres of Garloth.

*Star Knights* — none. The feudal reality here offers no chance for chivalrous sports. The big names of the phase are the warlord kings.

### Chronology

A more detailed version of the Phase One chronology is given later, in the Scenarios chapter.

#### 495 — BATTLE OF ST. ALBANS

King Uther Pendragon has been sick, and without his leadership the Saxons have been plundering the island. Aided by Merlin the Magician, Uther calls together all the forces of Britain. Strapped to a stretcher, the High King leads the army to victory.

## The Plot: Phase Two

10). Although it was once a pagan holy place and gate to their Other World, St. Collen exorcised it while he was living as a hermit during Arthur's early reign (*Life of St. Collen*).

Jagent — a castle near Camelot (Malory X, 8).

Lambor — a castle (Vulgate VI).

Lalut — town, tower where Enide lived (Chretien, *Erec*).

Landoine Forest — a forest in eastern Logres (Vulgate IV).

LINDUM — a large, walled Roman city, a.k.a. Lincoln, which has occasionally been in Saxon hands, but not since Arthur was crowned (Geoffrey).

Lonazep — castle-site of famous tournament (Malory X, 52).

Mount of Frogs — isolated hill, where live three giants eventually killed by a knight of Arthur's, Ider, son of Nuth, who died doing the task (early Welsh poem).

Ontlake Castle — castle of Sir Ontlake, a good knight (Malory IV, 12).

Oxford — city.

RATAE — walled Roman city, and like all the rest, a former provincial capital. A.k.a. Leicester.

Salisbury Plain — rolling chalk downs dotted with ancient standing stones, of which the greatest is Stonehenge (q.f.). Site of Arthur's last battle (Malory XVII, 23; XXI, 3).

Sauvage Forest — a vast forest covering central and northern Logres, much of it without roads, much of it virgin and trackless. Within its confines live hidden kingdoms, cut off from the outside for years.

St. Albans — city, site of the church and grave of the first martyr of Britain (Geoffrey). Site of Uther Pendragon's last battle (Malory I, 4; Geoffrey).

Stonehenge — this site is prehistoric, but recently Merlin the Magician has added to it. A ring of stones was erected to commemorate the murder of the British lords at the "Long Knives" treachery (453). Shortly after he led an expedition to Ireland to get a magical rock for the central altar stone, under which are buried both Arthur's father and uncle (Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, parts 4, 6).

Thames River — one of the three great rivers of Britain, its valleys are thick with farms and manors when there is peace. Before Arthur, the Saxons kept it depopulated.

Trent River — large river, tributary of the Humber. It marks the north edge of Logres (Malory I, 7).

Tribruit River — site of a battle in 514 (Nennius).

VENTA BELGARUM — walled Roman city, a.k.a. Winchester. Includes St. Stephen's Church, where sits the sword Arthur pulled from the stone until Mordred uses it at Camlann.

Vagon — castle whose lord is friendly to the Round Table (Malory XIII, 8).

Watling St. — excellent Roman road running from Dover to Chester.



## The Plot: Phase Two

kingdom description: *The Long Isles*

### THE LONG ISLES

(also called *Dal Riada*)

Irish/Christian

Liege: D. Galeholt (early, middle).

Long Isles



*History:* a couple of generations ago, an ambitious Irish tribe sent adventurous settlers eastward who seized land in Britain. Since that time the Irish have expanded their holdings and the kingdom holds land on both sides of the Irish sea. Duke Galeholt, the gallant son of the old king, has assembled a mighty navy which rules the Irish sea and has seized a score of coastal lands for himself. These invaders are called Scots (which means raiders), and they will eventually give their name to the whole region now called Scotland.

After the battle the sneaky Saxons poisoned the wells, and the king and many noble-men died. The great barons among them met to choose a new leader, but they were unable to decide who among them should be High King, and they went their separate ways.

### 495 – NEW SAXON INVASION

LOGRES (Wessex) – two Saxon chieftains, Cerdic and Cynric, storm ashore in Hampshire. A retaliatory attack by forces from Logres contains the Saxons in a small area, but cannot dislodge them (*A. S. Chronicle*, year 495).

### Births of People to be Famous

If your characters traverse the countryside they might meet these infants. It is a good time for Merlin to prophesy their fates.

- (493) – Arthur (Tintagel)
- (495) – Gawaine (Lothian)
- (496) – Agravaine (Lothian)
- (497) – Gaheris (Lothian)
- (497) – Guenever (Cameliard)
- (501) – Tristram (Lyonesse)
- (508) – Lancelot/Galahad (Brittany)

### 497 – SINKING OF CANTREV Y GWAELOD

This magical land is destroyed when unknowing visitors offend its guardians.

### 500 – SAXONS SEIZE ANGLIA

Angles invade Anglia, defeat Icini tribe.

### 501 – SAXON REINFORCEMENTS

LOGRES (Wessex) – the Saxon chief Port and his two sons, Bieda and Maegla, land in Portsmouth (*A. S. Chronicle*, 501).

### 508 – MORE SAXON EXPANSION

LOGRES (Sussex) – Cerdic and Cynric win major victory, found the Kingdom of Wessex (*A. S. Chron.*).

## PHASE TWO: UNIFICATION (510-525)

### Synopsis

*Events* – Arthur, body squire to Sir Kay, draws the fated sword from the stone and anvil in London on New Year's Day, 510. After many desperate battles he is recognized as High King. During the peace which follows he starts the Brotherhood of the Round Table, chivalry, and the holding of tournaments.

*Wars* – unification of Britain (Logres, Cambria, Cumbria); invasion and conquest of Saxons.

*Adventures* – Dolorous Stroke; quarrel of Arthur and Morgan; first kidnaping of Guenever.

*Customs* – Round Table instituted, chivalry introduced; first tournament (before Bedegraine).

*Escalation* – first tournaments introduced.

*Characters* – Star Knights: Balin le Savage, Gawaine of Orkney, Griflet le Fise de Dieu, Marhaus of Ireland, King Pellinore de les Isles, Tor le Fise Aries. Others of note: Sir Garlon the Invisible Knight.

### Chronology

#### 510, Jan 1 to Easter. THE NEW HIGH KING

LOGRES (London) – January 1. Arthur pulls sword from the stone, declared High King (Malory, I, 507).

CAMBRIA (Escavalon) – Easter. Arthur crowned at Caerleon.

BATTLE OF CAERLEON – Young Arthur is proclaimed High King by the people, but five rebellious kings quarrel with him. Arthur courageously meets them in battle and is saved by the common people of Caerleon flooding onto the battlefield (Malory I, 8-9).

#### 510, June

LOGRES (Leicester) – First Tournament (Malory I, 10-11).

BATTLE OF BEDEGRAINE – Aided by Merlin the Magician and armies of Kings Ban and Bors, King Arthur's superior tactics overcome the enemy's numbers. Although he stops the eleven enemy kings, Arthur loses many men (Malory I, 14-17).

#### 510-521 ARTHUR'S TWELVE BATTLES

Nennius lists 12 battles which Arthur fought, omitting the last, Camlann. They are:

1. At the mouth of the River Glein.
- 2, 3, 4, and 5. On the River Dubglas.
6. On the River Bassus.
7. At the Caledonian Forest.
8. Fort Guinnon.
9. City of Legions.
10. On the shore of the River Tribruit.
11. At Mount Agned.
12. At Mount Badon.

None of these can be precisely located, either through literary or archaeological means. Despite that, all are precisely located on the full map.

Use the Twelve Battles whenever you wish. If you like large-scale conflict and military speeches, use them all. Emphasis on large-scale battles is appropriate in this era. They become fewer, until Phase Four has none. Don't worry about the exact dates. I simply inserted one whenever I needed a battle to liven up the action.

Since Arthur's battles in Nennius were fought to establish his kingdom, I argue that this is a list of his early battles. I also figured that, though Arthur led them all, not all his knights fought every time. Sometimes while the king was leading his army, the player-characters were maintaining peace in their homelands.

Nennius' twelve battles are unknown in the Malorian tradition. I wanted to retain Arthur's Saxon Wars, and for convenience subtracted the Malorian Battles (Caerleon, Bedegraine, Tintagel, Beale Adventure) and the Caledonian and Mt. Agned Battles (which are in Scotland) and River Glein (arbitrarily made to be against Picts and Irish) which left five against the Saxons placed in the Chronology.

An interesting and grim experiment is to muster the army and march to the Dubglas, where they fight four battles within the summer season, each a month or two apart. Player-characters will learn the value of high Healing Rates, and of the third rank in a battle.

All the battles should occur before 522. By that date Arthur's Pax Britannia is assured and he begins to build Camelot. The final list, amended with tentative campaign dates, is:

- 510 – Caerleon (against 5 Rebel Kings) (Malory I, 8-9).
- 510 – Bedegraine (against 11 Rebel Kings) (Malory I, 14-17).
- 512 – Mt. Agned (against Northern Kings).
- 513 – Tintagel (defeats 11 Rebel Kings) (Malory II, 10).
- 513 – River Tribruit (against Saxons).
- 514 – River Bassus (against Saxon Invaders).
- 514 – River Glein (against Picts and Irish).
- 515 – Humber (defeats 5 Foreign Kings) (Malory IV, 2-3).
- 516 – Four Battles of Dubglas (against Saxons).
- 518 – Mt. Badon (defeats Saxons).
- 520 – Fort Guinnon (defeats last Saxon Rebels).
- 521 – Caledonia Forest (defeats Picts and Irish).

#### 511 – A YEAR OF PEACE

COURT – Margawse visits with sons; Mordred begat (Malory I, 19).

#### 512 – THE MAY BABIES INCIDENT

LOTHIAN – (Mordred born.) May Babies incident (Malory I, 27).

BATTLE OF MOUNT AGNED – after Arthur's May Baby atrocity, the northern lords kill and rob the High King's people. Arthur retaliates and leads his army northward, fighting King Lot and his allies at Mt. Agned in Garloth. The second rebellion begins (Nennius, Malory).

CORNWALL – Boudwin murdered. (Tristram born.)

#### 513 – END OF THE REBELLION

CORNWALL – Balin and Balan capture King Ryons.

BATTLE – at Tintagel the second rebellion is defeated.

CORNWALL – after the death of King Idres, Mark becomes King of Cornwall.

COURT – Arthur's nephews, the Orkney brothers, come to court and swear loyalty.

#### 514 – THE WEDDING OF ARTHUR AND GUENEVER

COURT – Arthur and Guenever wed, Gawaine and Tor become knights (Malory III, 1-4). The adventure of the Brachet, the Hart, and the Lady takes place during the wedding feast.

#### 514 (?) – THE DOLOROUS STROKE

Malory's book II contains the tragic story of Sir Balin, the Knight with Two Swords. He is ill-fated from the start, yet is one of Arthur's more important early supporters. Some of his earlier exploits have been mentioned under the year 513.

The Dolorous Stroke was the one which wounded King Pellam, the keeper of the Holy Grail. Some claimed that this injury to the spiritual guardian of the land permitted malignant entities to be released, and pagan forces to gain in strength.

Balin enters the Grail Castle with a companion, who receives a cup of Garlon's blood and departs before everything collapses. Could the player-characters replace this companion to witness this apocalyptic event?

Afterwards Balin travels to his death at an unnamed city and ford. However, no characters will be in the city to witness his passing, since to do so would mean they underwent the troublesome custom which slays Balin. Perhaps they could witness the fight, and Merlin's subsequent miracles, from the far side of the ford (Malory II).

#### 514 – BATTLE OF RIVER TRIBRUIT

This conflict is against an army of raiding Saxons who are confronted in Logres by Arthur's army (Nennius).

#### 515 – BATTLE OF THE RIVER BASSUS

Saxon raiders from overseas are the enemies here, undoubtedly tempted by the promise of the loot accumulated by an unconquered king. Arthur meets them in battle in the land between Logres and Soresstan (Nennius).

#### 515 – BATTLE OF THE RIVER GLEIN

Arthur's troops often caught, and killed, small bands of Irish or Pict raiders. Their kings sought to punish Arthur, and the armies met at the River Glein (Nennius).

#### 515 – THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MERLIN

Merlin the Magician, Archdruid of Britain, Prophet of Truth, departs shortly after Arthur marries Guenever. He was bewitched by the charms of Nimue, Lady of the Lake, who enchanted him into a chamber of glass, where he lives forever between life and death (Malory

## The Plot: Phase Two

### Battle of Tintagel

### The Brachet, the Hart, and the Lady

#### Battle of Tintagel

All Arthur's old enemies rally to Lot's banner, including many new ones, especially Ryons of Norgales. Before the battle Arthur is considerably aided by the personal heroism of Sirs Balin and Balan, who capture King Ryons and bring him to Arthur. Merlin the Magician also helps by confusing King Lot with prophecies until the rest of the rebel army is destroyed. Eleven enemy kings are killed. Leaderless, the enemy forces are destroyed one by one. The rebellion ends (Malory II, 10).

#### The Brachet, the Hart, and the Lady

During Arthur's wedding feast a marvel occurs: a white hart appears, pursued by a white brachet and thirty black hounds. The brachet bites the hart, which leaps and knocks down a visiting knight, who grabs the dog and departs. A woman rides into the feast and demands the brachet be returned to her. Arthur says he cannot, whereupon a knight, all armed, rides in, grabs the woman, and rides away.

Afterwards Arthur must be urged by Merlin to send knights on the adventures. Perhaps Arthur felt it was all a dream, or an entrancing glamour made by the archdruid. At Merlin's urging, Sir Gawaine is sent after the white hart; Sir Tor is sent for the brachet and knight; and King Pellinore is sent for the lady and knight.

Their adventures are typical of the marvelous adventures which player-characters will expect. You might send the player-characters on these adventures, instead of one of the participants. With some modifications to account for several player-character knights instead of the single knight of the story, any of these plots can be used (Malory III, 5-15).

**The Plot: Phase Two**

*Battle of Mount Badon, Adventures of  
the Knight With the Lion*

**Battle of Mount Badon (518)**

The Saxon arrogance was uncontrollable by this date. Their Bretwalda claimed to have preeminence on the Island, and he mustered all his armies to prove it. King Arthur, long anticipating this, met the attack from prepared positions.

The combined Saxon army, augmented by raiders from overseas, moved up the Thames valley and then turned southeast, toward Camelot.

The epic scope of the Battle of Badon is incontestable. I am amazed that traces of it did not remain more prominently in Malory. Modern authors who deal with the conflict give it great importance. My own favorite rendering, which I imitated in my campaign, is from *Firelord*, by Parke Godwin.

After this defeat, the Saxons are quiet. Towards the end of the campaign a few youths make trouble. After King Arthur's death the Saxons explode in conquest (Nennius).

**Adventures of the Knight With the Lion (523)**

Sir Ywayne, mentioned in the Triple Quest, above, is the son of King Uriens of Gore and Morgan le Fay. He is the hero of one of Chretien de Troyes' poems. It is a great story, full of marvels: a magic spring with terrible powers; giants, both friendly and hostile; a noble lion, thankful for its life being saved; beautiful women; true love; love madness; contrition and reconciliation. Sir Ywayne perseveres with his chivalrous virtues throughout his trials, and so in the end succeeds.

Several incidents can be taken from this story as parts of your plots. Troubadors after Chretien certainly did, since these occur over and over again, often with only slightly changed names or details.

However, I would not suggest that any normal player-character have a lion as a friend (Chretien, *Ywayne*).

IV, 1). Although his death is portrayed as a betrayal, Merlin's sacrifice is believed by some to be voluntary and natural to the spiritual progression of the earth (Gareth Knight). Others, however, place the evil of the May Babies incident upon him either because he was guilty (Karr) or because he was willing to accept the blame (Stewart).

516 – Bagdemagus discovers Merlin under a stone, but does not immediately return to court (Malory IV, 5).

518 – Bagdemagus returns to court.

**516 – BATTLE OF THE HUMBER**

Arthur was invaded by an alliance of foreign kings who apparently did not believe his reputation. The fight was very close, and afterwards Arthur built the Abbey of Beale Adventure in thanks for his victory (Malory IV, 2-3).

**517 – THE ADVENTURE OF THE GREEN KNIGHT**

COURT – an unknown knight, gigantic and armed in green armor, comes to King Arthur and proposes the beheading test: today, here and now, anyone who dares may cut off the Green Knight's head; but in one year the challenger must come to the Green Knight's court, at Hautdesert, and have his own head cut off.

A player-character might take this challenge instead of Sir Gawaine, and thus be responsible for instituting the green garter worn by all subsequent knights of the Round Table.

**517 – FOUR BATTLES OF DUBGLAS**

The growing hostility of the Saxons resulted in a series of deep probes by valiant knights and warriors. Arthur's army met them each time on the banks of this river (Nennius).

**518 – BATTLE OF MOUNT BADON (see side text)****518 – BRITTANY CONQUERED**

K. Claudas of France conquers kings Ban and Bors of Brittany. Galahad (Lancelot) is taken by Viviane under her lake. Later her servant, Seriadé, brings Lionel and Bors there too, to join others such as Sersause le Breuse.

Shamefully Arthur does not act to aid his allies. He is rebuked afterwards for this lethargy. Apparently King Claudas set up Duke Hoel as his vassal, though Hoel later rebelled to join Arthur.

**519 – GUENEVER KIDNAPED**

Various stories relate several incidents wherein Arthur's queen is kidnaped. In the earliest his close friend, Sir Bedivere, apparently rescued the queen. In later tales Gawaine rescues her, and in the latest stories Lancelot does. Even those which portray Sir Lancelot as savior conflict: Chretien de Troyes depicts Lancelot's exploits as occurring early in Arthur's reign, while Malory's rescue is late, after the Grail Quest.

You decide on your campaign's rescue of the queen. Does it occur once, and if so, when and by whom? I prefer, in the tradition of retelling every good story more than once, that the queen be kidnaped several times. Perhaps once early rescued by Bedivere (or some player-character?), later by Gawaine (or perhaps some player-character?) and finally by Lancelot, late, after the Grail Quest.

See also the entries for 532 and 558.

**520 – BATTLE OF FORT GUINNON**

The crushing defeat at Badon is followed by a spasmodic rebellion by the survivors, who took up residence in this fort until defeated by Arthur's army. Gamemasters should use it as a chance to give player-characters a chance at Mercy, Forgiving, and Generous. Or the opposites (Nennius).

**521 – MORGAN PLOTS AGAINST THE KING**

COURT – Morgan le Fay and Accolon of Gaul try to kill King Arthur, but fail (Malory IV, 6-12).

Morgan flees and hides scabbard (Malory IV, 13-15).

Poison cloak affair (Malory IV, 16).

These events should be immediately followed by the Triple Quest.

**521-522 – THE TRIPLE QUEST**

521 – COURT – Sir Ywayne is banished from court, accompanied by Sir Gawaine and, later, Sir Marhaus (Malory IV, 16-27).

522 – Ywayne, Gawaine, and Marhaus return to the Round Table court (Malory IV, 28).

**521 – BATTLE OF CALEDONIAN WOODS**

After Arthur defeated the northern kings, he took responsibility for their defense. Raids by Picts from Escoce and Irish from the Long Isles resulted in this battle in the north (Nennius).

**522 – CAMELOT FOUNDED**

King Arthur chose to create a new capital to reflect his glorious reign. Upon ancient ruins he laid the foundations of his fabulous city, which transcended all the imagined wonders of the Middle Ages.

The city is never completely finished, and is always being improved.

**522 – TRISTRAM'S CHILDHOOD MERCY**

CORNWALL – Tristram, age 10, pardons his stepmother for trying to poison him, and is sent to France to study.

Player-characters might be visiting Cornwall at this time, and witness this merciful action. It will give them much food for later thought if they encounter this great hero from Malory.

**523 – KING PELLINORE MURDERED**

Unknown Location – King Pellinore murdered by the Orkney brothers to avenge their father's death.

**523 – ADVENTURES OF THE KNIGHT WITH THE LION (see side text)**



This event occurs off-stage in Malory, because it was done in secret by the Orkney brothers. It is one event of the Orkney/Galis feud.

## 525 – LANCELOT ARRIVES AT COURT

**COURT** – Lancelot is one of many unknown knights (including Lionel and Bors) to arrive and receive knighthood by King Arthur. However, during the ceremony Viviane, the Lady of the Lake, arrives to supply the young knight's equipment. While the fabulous arms are brought forth, Arthur fails to gird Lancelot's sword on, which is accomplished by Queen Guenever instead.

This action is a violation of normal liege/vassal procedures, which insist that the liege gird on the sword. The fact that Queen Guenever did so instead of Arthur is given as an excuse that Lancelot owed feudal vassalage to his lover Guenever as well as loyalty to his rightful lord.

## PHASE THREE: CONSOLIDATION (525-540)

**Events** – after unifying Britain, King Arthur's knights set off to conquer the robber-barons and more isolated regions for their lord. The king also proves his power with several foreign campaigns.

**Wars** – Roman Conquest (527-538), Irish Invasion (529-530), French Conquest (536).

**Adventures** – conquest of the robber-barons and clearing the roads of mischief. Romance motivates much errantry.

**Escalation** – 12-point full plate armor becomes available.

**Customs** – Romance introduced, with many young knights and ladies taking full advantage. Full tournaments popular, but with increasingly-high stakes for the loser: armor, then armor and horse, then full ransom by the end of the phase.

**Characters** – Star Knights: Breunor, La Cote Male Taile; Galeholt, the Haut Prince; Lamorak de Galis; Lancelot du Lac; Palomides the Saracen; Ywayne le Chevalier au Lion.

## Chronology

### 526-528 – THE ROMAN WAR

526 – **COURT** – Roman ambassadors demand tribute (Malory V, 1-3).

527 – **CONTINENT** – Arthur wars with Rome, slays Emperor Theoderic, and occupies Rome. Arthur is declared Emperor by the Pope (Malory V, 4-12).

528 – **BRITAIN** – British army returns home laden with treasure; great victory celebrations are held (Malory V, 12).

529 – Arthur Disinters Bran's Head (see side note).

### 528-531 – LANCELOT'S EARLY ADVENTURES

To prove himself worthy of a seat at the Round Table, Lancelot sets off on errant adventuring as soon as possible, quickly gaining a name for himself by his martial ardor. During this time he meets and kills Sir Turquine as well as many others. He avoids court, even remaining disguised to aid King Arthur in the Irish war and Camille's Rebellion (below).

During this time player-characters will be on their own adventures, but may likely meet Lancelot, perhaps disguised, perhaps in company with other knights.

### 529-530 – THE IRISH WAR

This conflict is cobbled together because Arthur is often said to be King of Ireland, but in no Malorian tale earns the title. Player-characters are not expected to participate in both the Cornwall and Surluse events, but may be present at one and the invasion.

**CORNWALL** – King Mark refused tribute to the Irish king since his accession to the throne, but this year Sir Marhaus, a knight of the Round Table, has come to demand it. Sir Tristram, Mark's young nephew, is knighted, accepts the challenge of single combat, and mortally wounds the Irishman.

**SURLUSE** – King Arthur gathers an army which drives back the raiders with several skirmishes, and marches on Surluse. There is the stronghold of Duke Galeholt, a Dal Riadian nobleman. The great battle is forestalled when Lancelot personally convinces Duke Galeholt to make peace with Arthur.

**IRELAND** – intent upon punishing the overseas relatives to Galeholt, King Arthur prepares an invasion fleet. A defending army is fought, defeated, and King Anguish pays homage to Arthur. Tribute is paid, and the army returns home.

### 530-532 – THE FALSE GUENEVER

I dislike this tale, taken from Vulgate II, because it disrupts a long and chaste affair between Lancelot and the Queen; it also puts too much power in the hands of the Pope for comfortably-Arthurian legends.

Supposedly, a look-alike is substituted for the queen, who hides away with Lancelot in the kingdom of Surluse, protected by Duke Galeholt. Arthur is quite content for two and a half years, until his supposed-queen rots away from Papal interdiction.

### 531 – THE IRISH TOURNAMENT

To commemorate his new status as a friend to King Arthur, the Irish king holds a great tournament. Many Round Table knights participate, but all are defeated by a stranger named Sir Tramtrist. Sir Palomides is especially shamed (Malory VIII, 9-10).

After the tournament the Irish king's wife discovers that this stranger, Tramtrist, is the killer of her brother. King Anguish, however, preserves his hospitality, Tristram challenges

## The Plot: Phase Three

### Arthur Disinters Bran's Head

#### Arthur Disinters Bran's Head (529)

Bran was one of the ancient gods of Britain, a ruler of magic and lord of darkness. His life is full of marvels, and before he died his friends decapitated him. For seven years the wondrous head entertained them, and then ordered itself buried outside London. It prophesied that no invaders could harm Britain as long as it was there.

Arthur disinterred the head, and afterwards the bards called it one of the Three Fatal Disclosures. A triad lists the Three Closures, then lists the Three Disclosures. The triad ends with, "And Arthur disclosed the head of Bendigeid Vran ab Llyr, because he chose not to hold the Island except by his own strength. And after the three disclosures came the chief invasions upon the race of the Cymry" (Triad 53). In the *Pendragon* campaign the invasions occur after Arthur's death.

Such an important event will be done with pomp and magnificence. Arthur will have his troops on hand, a viewing stand for the nobility, another for Archbishop Dubricius and a hundred or so other priests. The cold shadow of an immense, but invisible, dragon passes over the crowd, flying west. As the diggers cart away the soil and the priests chant the sky darkens, rumbling and chill winds blow from the west.

The Lady of the Lake steps forward and makes a prophecy, later turned into a triad. Arthur thanks her for her words, then commends the workmen to continue. Hail pelts the work area, but nowhere else. When the great head is finally raised from the grave, only brave knights (Valor roll) will descend into the pit to attach chains. The head is huge and moldy, still caked with blood, and its eyes open when raised. Its voice, basso profundo, expands upon the coming doom of Britain for this vile deed. Everyone is frozen from fright as the head spews its words. It names the leaders of Britain's downfall, "Ceawlin and Cutha, Melehan and his father." Finally Arthur shakes himself from his lethargy and glamour, and announces that the land must be held by courage and strength, not old magics. The spell is broken, the old rotten head is

## The Plot: Phase Three

coat of arms: *Mador de la Porte*

dragged to a waiting fire, and burned into ashes. The sky clears.

As soon as the ceremony is over messengers arrive. Sir Turquine has captured Sir Kay, the Saxons of Anglia threaten rebellion, and Irish raiders have landed in Cambria.

the Irish knights to prove he was wrong, "and here is my body to make it good, body against body." None take the challenge, so Tristram gets a Justice check.

This event is a good chance for player-characters to witness hospitality customs in action. King Anguish protects his guest against everyone, despite the charges brought against Tristram. Also, Tristram's challenge to the Irish barons illustrates the knight's right of trial by combat. Finally, the characters can witness the budding love affair between Tristram and Isolt, and the birth of Palomides' hate for Tristram.

### 531 – CAMILLE'S REBELLION

Lady Camille aids her people against Arthur. Using her magic she captures Arthur, and using guile she captures Lancelot, Galeholt, Gawaine, and Ector. However, Lancelot escapes, gets help (Kay, and others), and storms the castle in time to save the king. When Sir Kay burns Camille's books and boxes, she kills herself from grief.

### 531-? – ARTHUR'S FIRST SON

Arthur's early romance with dame Lyzianors, after the Battle of Bedegraine, resulted in the birth of a son. He is called Lohot (Welsh Llachu) or Borre. Surprisingly, little is actually said about this man who would seem to be an heir apparent to the Pendragon throne. What is related is confusing, but offers clues for a great scenario.

Sir Borre le Cure Hardy would have been of knightly age about 531. Eventually he became a knight of the Round Table (Malory I, 17), and is listed among those present to try to heal Sir Urre. However, the Vulgate says that Borre killed a giant, and Sir Kay killed him out of jealousy. A Welsh source says that Arthur's son (here called Llachu) had the particular habit (or perhaps geas) of sleeping upon the corpse of whomever he had slain before returning to court. Kay found him asleep and slew him, but later confessed and was forgiven by Arthur. I doubt that Kay killed Arthur's son intentionally, and I doubt that even King Arthur would have forgiven his seneschal for such a vile deed if it were intentional.

### 532 – GUENEVER KIDNAPED

This is one recommended year for this significant action. I believe this kidnaping to mark the change of Lancelot's Passion for Guenever from Amor to Love.

See also entries for 519 and 558.

### 532 – ADVENTURE OF GARETH BEAUMAINS

The motif of an unknown knight accepting a great and doomed challenge is popular in Arthurian tradition. Gareth Beaumains is one of the major knights of the Round Table, and though no player-character ought to replace him in his story with Dame Lyonors and Castle Dangerous, some player-characters will deserve the chance to try.

Once again, with a little bit of manipulating the opponents to suit the player-characters' numbers, this story can be the basis for many marvelous encounters (Malory VII).

### 532-536 – TRISTRAM IN CORNWALL

The famous Cornish knight spends most of his time in Cornwall these years, except for the two excursions below. As witnesses to these events the player-characters can help in small ways, such as finding Tristram wounded on the trail, spying for one or the other party, or traveling with them.

532 – CORNWALL – affair of Mark, Tristram, and Segwarides' wife sets Mark's heart against his nephew (Malory VIII, 13-14).

533 – COURT – Tristram aids King Anguish against the Ganis clan, and brings Isolt to King Mark for marriage (Malory VIII, 25).

Here the Ganis clan has brought a surprise legal suit against the Irish king, who has no champion to fight for him. Note the fanatic Love (Family) of the Ganis clan and Sir Blamore's immense Pride (wherein he would rather be killed than spared in defeat). Also Tristram gets a Justice check when he defers judgment to the kings of the contest, and Mercy when he advises Anguish to spare Blamore. He also gets a Loyalty (Liege) check when he accepts Isolt as his reward from Anguish, and then turns her over to King Mark as a wife.

534 – IRELAND, CAMBRIA – Tristram brings Isolt home. Gamemasters should check the custom of Sir Breunor at Castle Pleure (Malory 24-26) for an adventure in the campaign. Make sure that the characters have a woman with them, whom they care about.

534 – CORNWALL – Mark and Isolt wed (Malory VIII, 25). A tournament is held.

535 – CORNWALL – Lamorak sends Horn of Chastity to Mark's court (Malory VIII, 34). Note the use of Chastity here. Several other adventures can be taken from this part of Tristram's story also.

535 – CORNWALL – Tristram and Isolt caught in adultery, Tristram flees to Brittany (Malory VIII, 34).

### 531-533 – MORDRED'S FIRST YEARS

Mordred reaches age 20 here, and is knighted (Vulgate III). He rides about, accompanying several knights on good adventures and proving himself worthy of being King Lot's son. This is a good time for player-characters to meet Mordred.

534 – Halley's Comet, called the Red Dragon, appears in the sky and portends great events. Prophets may proclaim it to be a sign of a coming wonder (Galahad), or of a terrible future (Mordred goes bad).

### 533-535 LANCELOT AND MORGAN LE FAY

Lancelot and Morgan le Fay have several encounters which Malory strings together into a single narrative, but which take several years in the Vulgate. Other affairs of Lancelot's are also woven in. The extended version is given.

This period is important because Lancelot is in prison so often that other knights might be able to win a tournament at the High King's court. He is also wandering around the countryside, so may show up to save player-characters, joust them down, or require their aid.

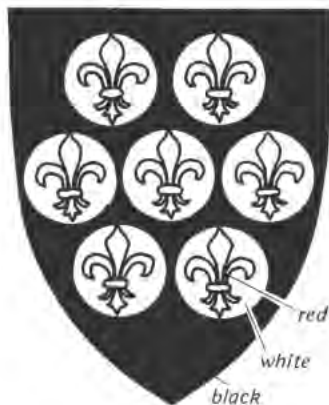
533 – CAMBRIA – Lancelot captured by Morgan, escapes, captured again (Malory VI, 1).

534 – CAMBRIA – Lancelot escapes Morgan, attends Peningues Tournament (below).

534 – CUMBRIA (Listeneise) – Lancelot visits Carbonek, begets Galahad upon Elaine (Malory XI, 1-3). The Red Dragon appears in the sky.

535 – CUMBRIA (Nohaut) – Lancelot takes Dolorous Garde, later returns to court.

Mador de la Porte



Malory ignores this tournament, but it is detailed in Vulgate IV. Before this engagement Lancelot and Mordred met a priest who revealed Mordred's incestuous conception and prophesied his evil future. Mordred slew the priest in rage, and tried to get himself slain in the tournament to prove the priest false. Condemned instead to live, Mordred afterwards turned worse and worse.

#### 535 — METAMORPHOSIS OF GWION BACH (see side note)

#### 536 — ARTHUR'S WAR AGAINST FRANCE

FRANCE — Arthur learns that King Claudas has imprisoned one of Guenever's cousins for several years. Arthur declares war and invades. Arthur is victorious, and sends Sir Lionel to ask for the lady back. However, as a child Lionel killed the king's son, and the king's Hate for Lionel overcomes his Justice (Vulgate III-V).

BRITTANY — Tristram aids Duke Hoel against the French. The duke offers his daughter's hand in marriage as a prize for the aid, and lovesick Tristram accepts it (Malory VIII, 3).

#### 536-537 — ADVENTURES OF ALISANDER LE ORPHELIN

536 — Knighted (Malory X, 34).

537 — Adventures (Malory X, 34-39). Alisander le Orphelin is one of the "Young Knight with Scornful Woman" stories which are so popular in Arthurian tradition. Alisander is one of the Cornwall knights who is wronged by King Mark. Alisander gains great fame, but never becomes a Round Table knight, and is murdered by King Mark years later. He is a kinsman of Tristram's.

#### 537-540 — ADVENTURES OF TRISTRAM

These stories are full of incidents which the gamemaster can use in his campaign. Almost anything which Lamorak does will even be unfamiliar to Arthurian fans among your players.

537 — BRITTANY — Tristram married to Isolt le Blanche Mains. Upon learning the Round Table speaks shamefully of him, he returns to adventure in Logres (Malory VIII, 37).

538 — CAMBRIA — Tristram and Lamorak at Isle Servage (Malory VIII, 37-39).

540 — Tristram and Lamorak become friends (Malory IX, 11).

540 — Tristram saves Arthur from enchantment by Annwre in the Forest Perilous (Malory IX, 16).

#### 539 — ADVENTURES OF LA COTE MALE TAILE

Yet another version of the "Young Man Saddled with Nasty Woman" story. Again, this one can be dismembered into adventures for player-characters (Malory IX, 1-9).

#### 540 — GILDAS WRITES

Gildas Sapiens was a priest who wrote a fiery denunciation of the British people in this year. He called for them to improve their wicked ways lest the wrath of God, in the fury of the Saxons, be again loosed on them (*De Excidio Britanniae*).

### PHASE FOUR: APOGEE (540-555)

**Events** — the Pax Britannia of Arthur Pendragon has the whole world in its magical prosperity. The Enchantment of Britain enters a phase of expansion as powerful Round Table knights interact with the magical courts of the Other Side. And subtly, old wounds fester with murder and intrigue. The Quest of the Holy Grail finishes the phase with ambiguous blessings.

**Wars** — none!

**Adventures** — the Enchantment of Britain continues. Increasingly-powerful characters tackle the immortal realms: the kidnap of Guenever, rescued by Lancelot; the giant boar hunt; Arthur's invasion of faerieland and subsequent imprisonment; the Grail Quest.

**Customs** — tournament and jousting stakes are raised to include ransom, armor, and tack. Madness is popular among the heroes (Lancelot, Tristram).

**Escalation** — a few suits of 14-point Gothic plate appear; towards the end of the phase, destriers are available.

**Characters** — Star Knights: Bors de Ganis, Dinadan, Gareth Beaumains, Mordred, Percivale de Galis, Tristram de Lyonesse.

#### Chronology

#### 541-542 — ADVENTURES OF SIR TRISTRAM

Hiding in the woods to be infrequently with Isolt, the famous lover goes mad from jealousy. Discovered, cured, and recognized by Mark, he is outlawed. Player-characters may be interested to witness the events.

Tristram adventures with a vengeance after his banishment from Cornwall.

541 — CORNWALL — Tristram goes mad (Malory IX, 18-21).

542 — CORNWALL — Tristram found, cured, banished by Mark's court for ten years, departs (Malory IX, 22).

543 — Tristram carries Shield of Rebuke to Castle of Hard Rock tournament (Malory IX, 40-43; X, 1-2).

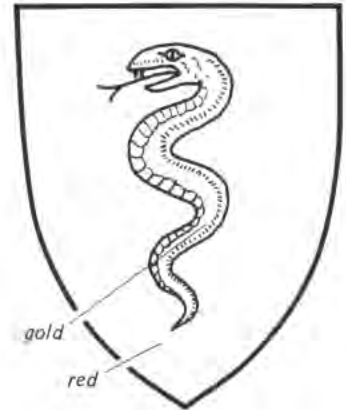
543 — Battle of Lancelot and Tristram. Tristram joins Round Table (Malory X, 5-6).

#### 543 — CASTLE OF THE HARD ROCK TOURNAMENT

To this tournament Sir Tristram, in disguise as usual, brought a shield imposed upon him by Morgan le Fay. Though the shield carried a message to the king, Arthur failed to either notice or believe it (Malory IX, 40-43; X, 1-2).

*The Plot: Phase Four*  
coat of arms: Colgreance  
Metamorphosis of Gwion Bach

Colgreance



#### Metamorphosis of Gwion Bach (535)

Gwion Bach accidentally spoiled the witch Ceridwen's plans for her son, Morvan, who was the ugliest man on earth, by tasting the Brew of Inspiration before her son did. Enraged, she pursued him all through Britain, both of them changing shapes in flight or pursuit. He became a hare, she a greyhound; he a swift, she an eagle; he a trout, she an otter; until finally he became a stalk of grain and hid in a threshing room. She became a great black hen and ate him. (He will turn up again in 549 as Taliesin.)

Player-characters will have little to do in this adventure, except perhaps to watch and wonder at the marvelous transformations of this typically odd Cymric metamorphosis. They may be given the choice to help or hinder either of the two parties, thereby earning their future friendship or enmity.

Incidentally, Ceridwen's son survived Arthur's last battle (Camlann, 565) because he was so ugly that all the combatants thought he was a devil on the battlefield, and so avoided his approach.



**The Plot: Phase Four**  
*map of King Arthur's Conquests*  
 kingdom description: *Lothian*

### LOTHIAN

Cymric/Pagan

*Lieges:* K. Lot (early), Q. Margawse for her son, Gawaine (middle), a steward for Gawaine (late).

*History:* this region was never truly conquered by the Romans, who came and built a wall, then retreated a few years later. Since then the kings maintained a surly independence from the southern rulers of Logres until the coming of the Pendragons.

### Lothian



*Landmarks:* Antonine Wall – ancient Roman wall built by Emperor Antonine, but manned for only a few years before being abandoned. In Arthur's time, it is in ruins.

Belrepeire – Castle of Blancheflor, lady of Sir Perceval (Chretien, *Graal*).

Castle of Maidens – a.k.a. Daneborc, Edinburgh castle, site of a great tournament (Chretien, *Erec*).

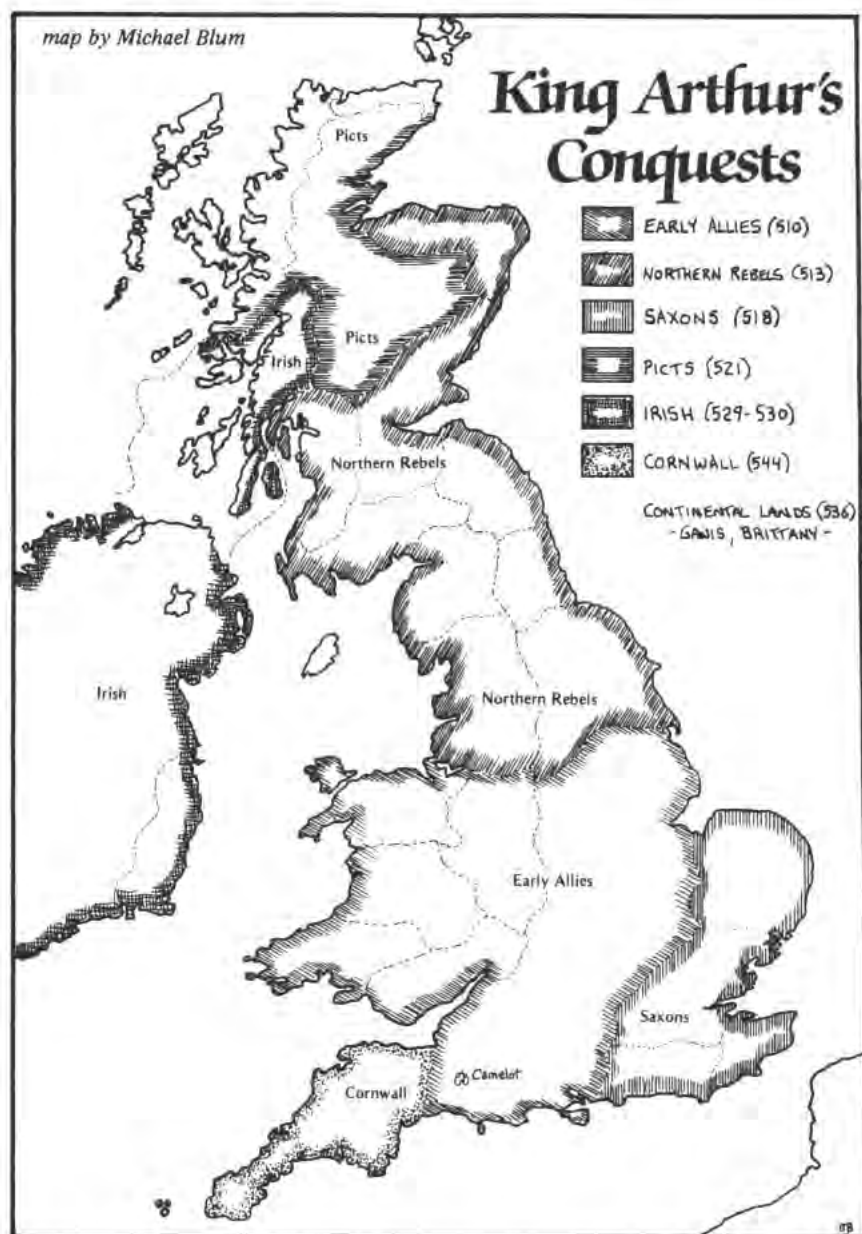
### 543-544 – KING MARK'S ATTEMPTED REVENGE

King Mark (plus Lancelot and some others) travels incognito, giving player-characters a chance to participate in the fun, or to bear the brunt of these adventures.

543 – CORNWALL – Mark's court humiliated by Round Table knights (Malory IX, 37).

544 – LOGRES – Mark sneaks into Logres, captured (Malory X, 7-16).

COURT – Mark pays homage to Arthur, who enforces peace between Mark and Tristram, who return to Cornwall (Malory X, 21-22).



546 – CORNWALL – Dinadan's lay sung at Mark's court (Malory X, 31).

Dinadan's lay is that Mark is ignoble, but it must have been well-written to be effective. Note the immunity which the harper Eliot enjoys here. The ancient British bards enjoyed such immunity, and also had the power to lampoon with magical satires which could harm a king. Dinadan's lay is derived from that British custom.

Also, an older story tells how King Mark had asses' ears, like King Midas did, and the revelation of the British story has a similar plot to King Midas, in that Mark's barber revealed the secret. Perhaps Dinadan learned the secret and sang that as well? Or expounded upon King Mark's famous cuckoldry?

### 544 – FRIENDSHIP TOURNAMENT

King Arthur sponsors a tournament to acknowledge the homage which Cornwall (King Mark) has paid to the High King. Several of the best knights sit it out, desiring Gawaine's kin to win if they can. They couldn't, due to Sir Lamorak, their hated rival. Although promised Arthur's protection, Lamorak doesn't trust to stay near the Orkney clan and departs.

After the tournament King Mark swears homage and fealty to King Arthur, then swears friendship to Sir Tristram. Together with Queen Isolt they return to Cornwall (Malory X, 21).

### 543-545 – SOME EVENTS OF THE GALIS CLAN

The kinsmen of murdered King Pellinore continue to suffer the wrath of the Orkney kin. Sometime before these years Sir Dornar was killed by them. Lamorak, nursing a grudge of his own, antagonizes Gawaine also, both in tournaments and by becoming his mother's

lover. When Percivale de Galis arrives with such promise, Gaheris' hatred apparently bursts – he rashly and senselessly murders Queen Margawse, his mother, and allows naked Lamorak to arm, then escape.

543 – Adventure of Lamorak and Palomides at Morgan's Castle (Malory X, 17).

544 – Lamorak shames Gawaine at Friendship tournament (above).

545 – COURT – Percivale arrives at court amid great prophecies (Malory X, 23).  
Margawse murdered (Malory X, 24).

#### 546 – EREC AND ENID

This famous knight made enough of a name for himself to be immortalized in one of the poems by Chretien de Troyes, as well as by Tennyson. The tale is delightful in itself, wherein a great knight falls in love with a young maiden, marries her, and then falls into distrust and tests her chastity while proving his prowess. Erec is the son of King Lak of Estregales (Chretien, *Erec and Enid*).

#### 546-546 – LANCELOT AND ELAINE OF CARBONEK

546 – LISTENEISE – Bors visits Carbonek, where he recognizes Galahad, and convinces Dame Elaine to bring him to court (Malory XI, 4-5).

547 – COURT – amid great pomp and splendor Elaine of Carbonek and young Galahad, age 12, visit Camelot. Dame Brisen, the enchantress, again dupes Lancelot into sleeping with her lady. Guenever discovers his seeming duplicity and becomes very jealous (criticizes her Jealousy). Lancelot, confronted by the impossible, fumbles his Amor and goes mad (Malory XI, 6-9).

2 years – Lancelot mad. Knights search for him. He roams about naked and wild, sometimes tended by compassionate strangers, and at other times he is the village fool (Malory XII, 1-5).

#### 547 – OPPORTUNISTS RAID BRITAIN

Minor raids can occur throughout Arthur's reign. These are similar, but more intentional. Characters searching the land might be asked to aid locals against raiders like these.

NOHAUT – BRITISH SAXONS SEIZE OPPORTUNITY – A new generation of Saxons, raised under Arthur's reign, have grown to maturity. Some, such as Prince Ida, long for the sovereignty which their fathers had. When the knights disperse to search for Lancelot, Ida takes the land and builds a fortress at Bamburgh, and names himself King of Bernicia (*A. S. Chron.* 547).

CORNWALL INVADED BY SAXONS – "Sessoines," led by Sir Elias invade the land. Mark attempts to withstand them without aid, but eventually succumbs and asks Tristram for aid, who wins against them (Malory X, 28-30).

#### 548 – THE HUNT FOR THE TROIT BOAR (see side note)

#### 549 – TWO GRAIL HEALINGS

To prepare for the upcoming Grail Quest, the holy artifact's magical properties are shown a couple times in Malory.

Percivale and Ector, searching for Lancelot and failing to recognize each other, fight until both are helpless. Percivale receives a Pious, Worship, and Love (God) roll and both are saved by the Grail (Malory XI, 11-14).

Lancelot, recognized by Elaine, is brought to Carbonek and healed (Malory XII, 4).

Such events need not be confined to these two, but the Grail should not appear often. Remember, miracles are rare. This section also shows two of the theatrical effects to use when the Grail reveals itself.

#### 549 – THE NEW ARCHDRUID REVEALS HIMSELF

GOMERET – King Maelgwn Gwynedd challenges Elphin to contests. Elphin is saved by Taliesin, the boy-wizard, who shames the court poets and predicts Maelgwn's death (or does he curse him?) by the "strange beast."

The events of this contest are quite entertaining, and parts might be used in adventures with player-characters. Alternately, watching the contest where the boy makes the poets say "blwrm blwrm" can be quite amusing (*Mabinogion*, "Taliesin").

#### 548-552 – THE YELLOW PLAGUE

History records a terrible plague which swept Europe from east (the Yellow Plague of Rhos) to west (Vlad Velen, or Yellow Pestilence), reaching Britain about this time. Taliesin, the boy-wizard, prophesied that King Maelgwn would die from "the strange beast," and another story tells how the king tried to hide in a church, but peeped through a keyhole and saw his death.

No plagues occur in Malory. You can ignore it also, unless you need to clean up some paperwork. By this time some families will have become unwieldy with non-played, and never-to-be-played characters of obscure relationships and desperate namings. Other families will be smaller, but still too large to keep track of. Use the plague as an excuse to thin out numbers, or to allow the players to weed out their own files.

If someone demands a system, roll any die with these results: odd = survived, even = died.

#### 551 – TOURNAMENT AT JOYOUS ISLE

551 – LISTENEISE – Le Chevalier Mal Fet sponsors a great tournament against all comers. No one beats him. At last Sir Percivale recognizes the stranger as Sir Lancelot. Percivale and Ector de Maris, Lancelot's brother, persuade him to return to court. Lancelot leaves Elaine forever (Malory XII, 6-9).

#### 552 – SURLUSE TOURNAMENT

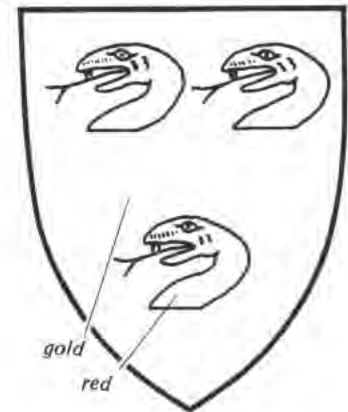
The Surluse tournament is one of the longer tournaments described in Malory. Many famous knights participate, and naturally carry the day for prizes. During the tournament Palomides fights a challenge with a stinking Saracen, Dinadan japes, and Lamorak is recognized by Arthur, despite a disguise (Malory, 40-49).

#### 552 – SIR LAMORAK MURDERED

Although not shown in Malory, Lamorak is pursued and murdered after this tourna-

**The Plot: Phase Four**  
coat of arms: Erec le Fise Lac  
The Hunt of the Troit Boar

Erec le Fise Lac



#### The Hunt for the Troit Boar (548)

Malory never mentions this event. I put it in because it offers a chance to combat a gigantic foe without Lancelot present to claim all the glory. It is representative of the magnitude of the growing enchantment. This monster is clearly from the Other Side when it begins to ravage Wales.

The story of the hunt for the mighty boar is contained in "Kilhwch and Olwen." Arthur is no great monarch here, but a Welsh hill chieftain with a band of superhuman followers. I suggest you ignore the heroes and their powers (or else assign them to the faerie knights of your campaign). Also ignore the list of magical items needed, and even the request of Kilhwch if you want.

This immense creature will require the skill and wit of dozens of men. The lesser pigs which accompany it need fewer opponents, and one of them should suitably trouble your player-characters. That way they get some individual glory (*Mabinogion*, "Kilhwch and Olwen"). Also see p. 28.

## The Plot: Phase Five

kingdom description: Malahaut

sub-kingdom description: Middlesex

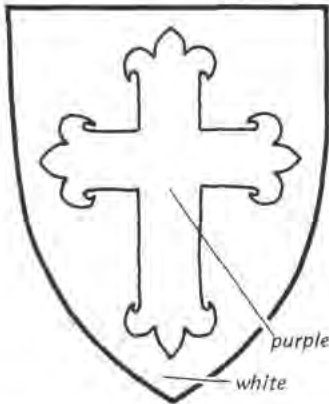
### MALAHAUT

Cymric/Christian

Lieges: Berrant le Apres (early, middle), Marant (late).

History: the ancient tribe of Brigantes, proud and rebellious against the Roman yoke, were centered here. Their independence continues, though the king was conquered by Arthur.

### Malahaut



Landmarks: Catterick – city. At this site was fought the battle of Catterick, 573 (Welsh poetry).

Dere St. – excellent Roman road running from Eburacum to Lothian.

EBURACUM – a.k.a. York. Large walled Roman city. Arthur once held parliament here (Malory V, 3).

Emine St. – excellent Roman road running from Eburacum to London.

Pendragon Castle – castle held by Brian of the Isles, a noble foe of King Arthur, until liberated by Sir Lancelot and given to La Cote Mal Taile (Malory IX, 5-6, 9).

Pennine Mountains – flat-topped, bleak mountains of central Britain, deeply cut by steep ravines.

Yorkshire Moors – bleak, open, and flat-topped hills, devoid of tall plants.

### Middlesex

Saxon/Wotanic

Lieges: King Icel Eomaersson (early), Duke of Middlesex (middle, late).

History: Eomaer Angeltheowsson came from Saxony with a great band of adventurers to seize land from the troubled Britons.

Landmarks: Astolat – castle where Sir Lancelot hid for a while. The lord's son, Sir Lavain, became Lancelot's devoted follower; the daughter died of unrequited love (Malory XVIII, 8).

ment by the Orkney clan, minus Gareth who afterwards foreswore any special love he had for his clan. This was a matter of great talk away from Orkney ears.

### 550-554 – TRISTRAM AND ISOLT AT JOYOUS GARDE

550 – CORNWALL – Tristram in prison (Malory X, 50).

551 – CORNWALL – Percivale frees Tristram from prison, who flees with Isolt (Malory X, 51-52).

553 – Lonazep tournament (below).

554 – Isolt decides to return home to Mark; Tristram and Palomides fight, Palomides baptized (Malory XII, 11-14).

### 553-555 – MORE TREACHERY BY MARK

This story continues the history of vile King Mark, and also lays the foundation for its end with the knighting of Bellengerus le Breuse. Remember that these people are all kinsmen of Tristram also.

553 – NORTH (Benoiic) – Alisander murdered by Mark, who traveled the length of Britain in disguise to strike down his kinsman by surprise (Malory XI, 11-14).

555 – Bellengerus le Breuse knighted.

### 553 – THE RED CITY

Sir Palomides takes this quest while on the way to the Lonazep tournament. It is a neat little story which should be lifted out by a gamemaster and used as an adventure for his player-characters (Malory X, 59-64).

### 553 – THE LONAZEP TOURNAMENT

The Lonazep tournament is the longest tournament described in Malory. Present it as such in your campaign also – there will not be many after this (Malory X, 65-81).

### 554-557 – THE QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL

The sacred quest for the mystical Holy Grail is a high point in the history of Camelot. The greatest marvel of Britain came to Camelot and entranced all present with its beauty. Everyone participated in its magic and glory. All sought to again know that sacred presence, and set off on the great quest.

Nascien the Hermit warned everyone that the quest was not a search on the physical plane, but a test of piety, faith, and purity. Only someone who fulfilled every trait could succeed. At that time the world's best knight, Sir Lancelot, is superseded by his pure and chaste son, Sir Galahad.

In literature, Percival (variously spelled Peredur or Parzifal) is the first knight to discover the Grail. Later tradition found his innocence too restraining and added or recognized Bors and Lancelot as successful and semi-successful claimants to be true Grail Knights. Finally, an anonymous monk penned the tale of Sir Galahad, a truly Christ-like figure whose presence in the King Arthur legends transcends allegory.

Your handling of the Grail Quest can be done in one of several ways.

Have the player-characters join the heroes on the path, with a chance of success. After all, at the climactic mass, the three Grail Questers are joined by nine other knights. Success in this method must, obviously, be according to the Christian virtues.

Go along as long as possible, combating the enchantments and fighting Round Table knights. The slaughter, by accident, misrecognition, and passionate hatred, is great. Everyone on the quest will be required to make many Passion rolls.

Create an alternate Grail path. Simple research will show you the pagan roots of the legend, and some more esoteric research can help you define your own allegory. Suggestions can be found by pursuing the Welsh stories of a War with Annwn, Arthur's invasion to seize a magic cauldron, and Arthur's imprisonment in the Castle of Bones.

## PHASE FIVE: DOWNFALL (555-570)

Events – court intrigue grows: Sir Patrice is poisoned, Lancelot is banished by the queen, Sir Tristram is murdered. Romance becomes tragedy when Elaine dies of love. The epic becomes sordid when Mordred uncovers the affair of Lancelot and the Queen. The realm dissolves into a civil war of great, hopeless battles. Arthur is wounded and carried away. Lancelot separates from his love and retires. The romance fades. Dark Age history intervenes.

Wars – civil war (563), against Brittany (564), civil war (565).

Adventures – rebellion in the outer realms plots danger for characters in this phase. Monsters roam. Thieves abound in numbers.

Customs – blood tournaments popular between enemies. Civil discord fomented against establishment.

Escalation – chainmail barding available for horses.

Characters – Star Knights: Urre of Hungary, Lavaine of Astolat. Others: Mordred, Constantine.

### Chronology

#### 557 – THE END OF THE GRAIL QUEST

557 – Bors de Ganis, the last quester, returns home with the end of the Grail story.

The knights return as their hearts fail them. Gawaine is first, say many. Others are not counted precisely, except that these are known not to have returned at all: Dinadan, Yvaine the Bastard, King Bagdemagus, Percivale de Galis, Galahad, plus others named and unnamed, but "King Arthur and Queen Guenever made great joy of the remnant that were comen home...."



After the Grail Quest feelings are different. The adventures opened old wounds and created new ones. Many of the best knights are dead.

Lancelot also changes, and becomes less careful in his liaisons with the Queen. Rumors and gossip spread.

#### 558 – GUENEVER KIDNAPED

According to Malory this event occurs after the Grail Quest. Most other storytellers put it much earlier (see entries for year 519 and 532).

Immediately following this should occur the Adventure of the Knight and the Chariot.

#### 559 – THE KNIGHT AND THE CHARIOT

To prove that it is not always shameful to ride in a cart, as Queen Guenever claimed, Sir Lancelot set off for a year of adventures without a horse, only a cart. He did deeds of such renown that neither Malory nor Chretien detail them, though they are undoubtedly listed in the Vulgate.

I guess he would not joust too much, though.

#### 559 – SIR URRE OF HUNGARY

Sir Urre, aided by his grieving mother and sisters, has been searching Europe for the world's best knight. Only he can heal Urre's cursed wounds. After every knight present at the High King's court tries, Sir Lancelot (who arrived late) attempts it and miraculously heals the wounds (Malory XIX, 10-12).

The list of knights, with occasional asides on otherwise obscure individuals, is a compilation of names from most previous books of Malory.

#### 559-560 – FOUL DEEDS IN CORNWALL

559 – CORNWALL – the tension of his nephew's love for his wife finally breaks Mark, and with a trenchant glaive he slays the best knight of Cornwall. Isolt, heartbroken at the funeral, collapses and dies on Tristram's grave.

560 – Lyonesse sinks. Tristram's paternity, groaning under the evil loss of its lord, joins other Celtic lands under the waves.

Gamemasters can use this scenario as they will, which is a doublet of the Gwyddno Garanhir scenario of Phase One, with the difference that the lord (Tristram) is not present to hinder the intruders. This time the players should be better educated, and if given the same opportunity will probably not perform the same deeds to sink the land. They may take the ruler's place and try to defend the maiden against the non-player-characters who will sink it. Ultimately, the player-characters must fail. Glory comes in the trying, not always in the doing.

#### 560-563 – DECADENCE AT COURT

560 – COURT – Lancelot banished from court by Guenever (Malory XVIII, 2).

561 – COURT – Poison attempt on Gawaine. Lancelot returns to save Guenever (Malory XVIII, 2-8).

562 – Winchester Tournament, including the Elaine of Astolat affair (Malory XVIII, 9-20). Christmas Tournament (Malory XVIII, 21-24).

563 – COURT – Lancelot and Guenever caught together. Many Orkney men killed (Malory XX, 1-7).

King Arthur condemns Guenever to burn for her adultery, but Queen Guenever is rescued by Lancelot. Many good knights, including Sir Gareth, are killed by Lancelot's attack (Malory XX, 8-9).

#### 563 – CIVIL WAR

NORTHUMBERLAND – Civil War with Lancelot at Joyous Garde. Guenever finally returns to Arthur. Lancelot and his supporters retire to France (Malory XX, 10-18).

#### 564 – WAR AGAINST LANCELOT

BRITTANY – King Arthur and Gawaine besiege Sir Lancelot, and Gawaine is badly wounded several times. Arthur learns that Mordred has usurped his throne and incited a rebellion. He prepares to leave, but is detained by an old foe, the Romans (Malory XX, 19-22; XXI, 1).

#### 564 – ATTACK BY THE ROMANS

BRITTANY – heartened to know that Arthur is warring against his best men, the Romans and French ally to take vengeance. Their approach is noticed and Arthur meets them in open battle. Although King Arthur is victorious, he must depart the continent. Sir Kay is killed in the conflict. Delayed by poor administration and bad weather, he prepares to cross the channel (Vulgate).

#### 565 – THE LAST YEAR

KENT (Dover) – King Arthur lands with his army. In the battle, wounds received by Gawaine from Lancelot break open fatally. The forces of Mordred (probably Saxons) are defeated and driven off (Malory XXI, 2-3).

(Baram Down) – King Arthur again meets Mordred in battle, and again defeats the usurper.

LOGRES (near Camelot) – Battle of Camlann. The armies of Arthur and Mordred are decimated, and all the best of both sides are dead. Arthur kills Mordred, but receives a fatal wound. After either Bedivere or Griflet disposes properly of Arthur's sword, Excalibur, the king is taken away to Avalon forever.

#### 566 – THE END OF THE STORY

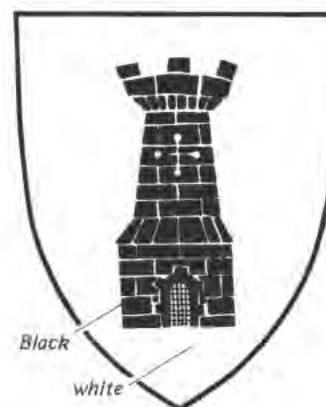
Sir Lancelot learned too late of Mordred's rebellion, and although he tried to reach Arthur to help him he did not make it in time. He comes to Camelot and finds that King Mark has plundered the city, and the sons of Mordred have seized control of the land. Lancelot and his men kill the children of Mordred and destroy their army. Another, smaller, force invades Cornwall under Sir Breunor and kills King Mark.

Sir Lancelot speaks to Guenever, who has become a nun at Almesbury. Lancelot becomes a hermit at Glastonbury abbey (Vulgate).

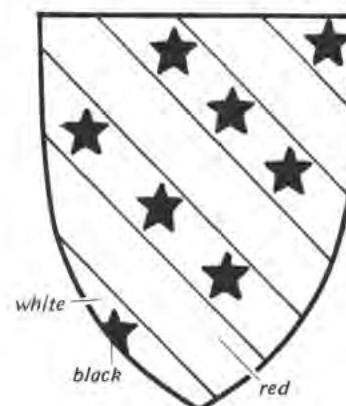
### The Plot: Phase Five

coats of arms: Turquine and Lionel

Turquine



Lionel



## The Scenarios: First Session — 494

kingdom description: *Norgales*

### NORGALES

Cymric/Pagan

*Lieges*: K. Ryons (early), K. Tradelmans (middle).

*History*: the wild lands of Norgales are subject to whichever pennath among the many there can conquer the rest. Many robber barons and sorcerers hide in its wilds.

Norgales



*Landmarks*: Black Launds — fiefdom of Sir Percard the Black Knight, a noble enemy of King Arthur. Killed by Sir Gareth in 532 (Malory VII, 7).

Dangerous Castle — castle held by Dame Lionors, who became wife of Sir Gareth. Site of a great tournament in 532 (Malory VII).

Darnantes Forest — another name for Malory's Perilous Forest (Vulgate).

Glein River — site of a battle in 515 (Neunius).

Green Tower — castle-home of Sir Pertelope the Green Knight, a noble foe of Arthur's, conquered by Sir Gareth in 532 (Malory VII).

Hard Rock Castle — site of a tournament won by Tristram (Malory X, 7).

Inde — city-holding of Sir Persant, the Blue Knight, conquered by Sir Gareth in 532 (Malory VII, 12).

La Beale Regard — castle, or ruins. Castle of Morgan le Fay; she imprisoned Alisander le Orpelin there until it was burned by the earl of Pase in 537 (Malory X, 36-38).

Lestroite Marches — region also called The Narrow March. Lord there insists on visitors defending the road for a half day, and he seeks a winner to wed his daughter (Vulgate III).

Mortaise — a land of bandits (Malory VII, 24).

Nigramous Castle — castle-stronghold of the sorceress Hellawes (Malory VI, 15).

Pase — castle-home of Earl of Pase, an enemy of Morgan le Fay who destroys La Beale Regard.

Constantine of Cornwall is named king after Arthur (Malory XXI, 13; Geoffrey).

### 568-570 — RETURN OF THE SAXONS

568 — MIDDLESEX — Ceawlin, K. Wessex, defeats K. Aethelbeht, Kent, and asserts himself as one of the most powerful Saxon kings.

570 — LOGRES — Kings Ceawlin and Cutha (of Wessex) absorb Midlands and the upper Thames into their kingdom.

Ceawlin is named Bretwalda, high king of the Saxons.

### PHASE SIX: POSTSCRIPT (570+)

#### The Last of the Round Table

572 — Lancelot becomes a priest (Malory XXI, 10).

573 — Guenever dies, Lancelot dies, Ector de Maris arrives for the funeral. The last of the Gais knights depart for the Holy Land (Malory XXI, 11-13).

Battle of Katreath (which inspires the poem "Gododin") drives North Britain under Saxon domination.

574 — knights in Holy Land (which at that time is a province of the Roman Empire, but that is unimportant) (Malory XXI, 13).

#### The Saxon Conquest

577 — LOGRES — Battle of Deorham. South Britain succumbs to Saxons, who capture Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath (A.S.Chron.).



# The Scenarios

To make the task of starting your campaign easier, this chapter helps the gamemaster enact the entire first phase of the campaign. Each scenario, acting as an example, is given to illustrate a different aspect of the *Pendragon* campaign. Think how you can change the campaign storyline for your own campaign. As the gamemaster, you will make up many scenarios for your players.

### The First Phase

The feudal era of play is the simplest to learn, and it should be used to train the players in all the basics of the rules. If they learn early, through simple adventures, the players will later do the routine tasks without problem.

The pace of the campaign is accelerated beyond the suggested 1 year/session rate. Adventuring kills characters, and it is important to give the player-characters enough respite to beget several potential heirs.

### FIRST SESSION — 494

At this meeting you should explain what the campaign is to be: a chance to play a knight in the world of King Arthur. Explain what a player is, and what the gamemaster is. Give whatever credentials you feel are necessary to prove your ability and/or right to be a gamemaster: simply knowing the rules and being confident enough to try are all the credentials you will need for the players to be satisfied.

Generate characters. Help the players along. Give them good and useful advice about which skills are going to be useful (i.e., Battle, Awareness, Lance).

Do not use the Homeland Table randomly at this phase. If you do, characters will be scattered all over the map, some for and others against Arthur during the early rebellions. Avoid the problem by starting all the player-characters in the same kingdom. They could also belong to one or two clans.

All characters could come from Logres, the kingdom which will be Arthur's, or you could choose some smaller property and make it your personal favorite land, perhaps ruled by a king who owes no fealty to anyone.

Famous gamemaster-characters who are landholders of Logres include Sir Brastias, a knight-vassal of Queen Ygraine; Sir Ulfius of Logres, Uther's closest and most trusted companion; Baudwin of Britain, probably not yet a bishop; Sir Hervis de Revel and Sir Galagars, both mentioned once in Malory as being

"old knights" in Arthur's early reign; and Archbishop Dubricus, head of the British church.

Tell the players that they will be generating many characters during the campaign. State that all characters in the campaign are expected to die, either of wounds or old age. Mention that later you will show them how to generate families to inherit land and titles, and those characters will need to be rolled up. Finally, warn them that sometimes luck is bad and casualties are high, and so they may have to try several characters before one establishes a family.

The first session should include some combat to familiarize everyone with the methods. Begin with some quick jousts of player-characters against player-characters. Send the new characters into the woods the way Sir Ambrut goes in the examples of play, using one or two skills, a DEX roll or two, and a fight against bandits.

Return the characters home and help them work out their first winter's Experience Checks, Annual Learning, and Family rolls.

## SECOND SESSION — 495

Start by reminding the players that the Saxon tribes of the southeast coast are a constant threat to the people of Britain.

Tell them how the High King, Uther Pendragon, has been sick for some time, unhealable even by Merlin the Magician. As everyone knows, when the king is ill the land is in trouble, especially from the Saxons. Everyone, including the player-knights if they are veterans (characters with considerable previous experience), have fought skirmishes against them, and lost.

Now, however, High King Uther has summoned all his barons to war. Everyone will act in harmony and defeat the invaders once and for all.

Character introduction should follow. It might be helpful to make a chain of command, stemming from the King of Logres (Uther) through the intermediary lords, to the knights, and the squires. It will help everyone understand their precise vassalage relationships.

Show on the big map where the troops muster and meet the king. If the characters see the king, they see that he is pale and thin, carried about propped up on a stretcher. Merlin is not present anywhere. Archbishop Dubricus is present.

The army marches to St. Albans, where the Saxon army is plundering the city. The invaders muster out of the city and from the countryside to meet the British army in battle.

### Battle Statistics

**Battle Size** — size is determined by the number of knights involved. Uther has about 1000 knights from Logres, 500 from Cambria (Wales), and 500 from the north (Cumbria). The Saxons have 1000 "knights" of their own. Thus the total is 3,000 knights which, on the Battle Size table, is just enough to be called large. The extraordinary number of squires and experienced footmen present here is enough to convince me the battle was truly large.

Choose rank commanders and unit commanders. Rank commanders should be nobles or famous knights, such as Ulfius or Brastias, or Baudwin of Britain. Unit commanders of importance include those knights who must make a Battle roll, from player-characters who command other player-characters to important non-player-characters. Use the subcommanders named below if you have no other favorites.

**British Commanders** — High King Uther Pendragon; King Lak of Estregales; King Lot leading the northerners.

**Saxon Commanders** — Aelle Bretwalda, Kings Octa and Eosa.

**Ferocity** — 5.

**British Modifiers** — outnumber foes more than 2-1 (+10), better outfitted (+5) = +15 to Uther's 15 skill = 30 Battle skill. In game terms, Uther rolls a Critical Success on a 10 or more.

**Saxon Modifiers** — outnumbered more than 2-1 (-10), on a hill (+5) = -5 to Aelle's skill of 17 = 12.

Help the players choose the right ranks for their characters. Warn them against putting characters with a Battle skill below 10 in the front rank. Remind them that the front rank will probably have to retire before this ferocious battle is finished, which means that the second rank will probably have to fight. Hopefully the third rank will not have to fight. Squires should be limited to the third rank.

Fight out the battle according to the rules in the Battle section of the Knight's World chapter. Do it slowly. Make sure everyone knows what he is doing. When a rank has to retire, describe it, and get the next rank prepared.

Uther is the winner of this battle, tied upright upon his charger holding aloft his shining sword of victory. But it is a hard-fought battle, and the fate of the player-characters' unit should not be predetermined. Any survivors will get rewards as victors and be treated as heroes of the fight.

## The Scenarios: Second Session

— 495

coat of arms: Sadok

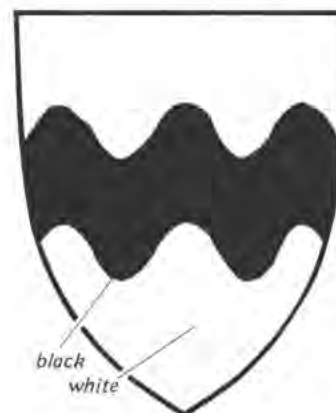
**Pennine Mts** — flat-topped, bleak mountains of central Britain, deeply cut by steep ravines.

**Perilous Chapel** — a chapel converted to sorcerous uses by Hellawes. Here Lancelot encountered a band of knights whom he fought, but who did not speak, presumably because they were raised from the dead (Malory IV, 2).

**Perilous Forest** — a forest thick with adventure. The sorceresses Annwre and Hellawes live here, and here too is the 14-year long timeless dance which Gwenbaud made for his lover (Malory VI, 15; Vulgate II, 5).

**White Tower** — castle-holding of Sir Perimones, the Red Knight, conquered by Gareth in 532 (Malory VII, 10).

Sadok





## The Scenarios: An Adventure

coat of arms: *Ozana le Cure Hardy*

Glory for participants in this battle is normal for its size: equal to 300 (large battle participant) + the number of knights under your command + the personal Glory gained (if any).

### After the Battle

Make sure everyone receives first aid. Let the player-characters try to fix each other, but if none of them are competent, then an army surgeon is always at hand, probably with a skill of 16. Send those who require Chirurgery to the hospital at the Church of St. Albans. Have the characters' leaders circulate and promise rewards to them. Both leaders and knights speak with excitement of the victory feast to come.

Alas, even Merlin the Magician is unprepared for the magnitude of Saxon perfidy. After the battle the villainous Saxons poison the royal well, and the king and many noblemen die. All player-character nobles and unwounded must receive a roll of their CON against the poison potency of 10. Failure indicates they take 10 points of damage. Wounded knights do not drink from this well — they are in another part of town.

Many noblemen become ill, and those already wounded mostly die. Uther is obviously dying, and under Merlin's direction the High King summons all noblemen to come to his bedside immediately.

When everyone is gathered Merlin addresses King Uther, "Sir, shall your son Arthur be king, after your days, of this realm with all the appurtenance?"

'Then Uther Pendragon turned to him, and said in hearing of them all, "I give him God's blessing and mine, and bid him pray for my soul, and righteously and worshipfully that he claim the crown upon forfeiture of my life."

'And therewith he yielded up the ghost, and then was he interred as longed to a king, wherefore the queen, fair Igraine, made great sorrow, and all the barons.' (transcribed from *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Malory I, 4).

The player-characters should return home afterwards. If their immediate lieges are alive they will collect the rewards promised. If not, they won't. They will, however, see King Lot herding off a lot of horses when he goes, and leading wagons groaning with booty taken from the Saxons.

The situation of the characters in Logres is exactly that of all Britain: there no central authority to unite the many lesser lords. It will be well if the characters' own liege is dead. Let the characters discuss their plans and options. Leave the situation dangling while the players figure their characters' experience checks, annual learning, families, and aging.

## THIRD SESSION — AN ADVENTURE

After returning home and having some time to recover from wounds (or die from chirurgery), the characters each have a dream that Uther Pendragon summons them to come to a nearby oak grove which is reputedly haunted. Each knight's dream is slightly different: some see themselves called, some watch their friends be summoned, some knights dream of a solitary summons while others go in a crowd, some see lieges other than Uther, etc.

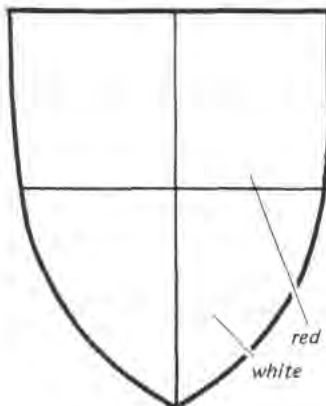
The urge to obey is mysterious and overwhelming, and if players make their characters' Folklore roll they will know that a magical compulsion draws them. A successful roll deserves an experience check.

Knights may try to resist the compulsion in several ways. Many clever schemes may be concocted, but some reason should exist for the success of any such resistance. I would allow a successful roll of either Worship (confessing at a chapel, thereby receiving protection through absolution) or Piety (true devotion instills God's grace) to protect a knight from the magic. If a character simply refuses to go, you must not force him. However, his sense of guilt is so deep that he loses 1 point of Loyalty to his liege. Once such a sentence is pronounced he might change his mind, but he will keep the point loss in any case.

### Running the Scenario

Everyone who goes on the moonless night must make a Valor roll at the edge of the shadowy woods. A failed roll means that the character hesitated for a minute, probably spying closely into the darkness. This failure means the character will arrive late, unless all the player-characters failed, whereupon all will arrive concurrently. A successful Valor roll gets an experience check and the knights view the following vision.

Ozana le Cure Hardy



They ride down a trail nearly closed by overhanging branches. The brush is so dense it prevents any riding off-trail. Tell everyone to make an Awareness roll, to get them anxious, but even if they make it they hear nothing except night noises and get no experience check. The trail turns abruptly to the right, and the knights face a clear glade, lit by a dim, dreamlike glow.

In the center of the field rises a hill, visible as if from a long distance. It is surrounded by trees, and from amid them crawls a large black serpent which slithers around the hill, widdershins (counter-clockwise), and finally settles atop it. Its head rises high above its coiled body. As happens in a dream the serpent turns into a fortress: its body becomes the walls, and a tall tower rises where the head had been. Many gates pierce its sides, and with a loud clang leap open. From each door a small black serpent slithers into the woods, quickly returning with fledgling eagles, young lambs, and wolf cubs struggling in their mouths. From the tower a thick black smoke spills heavily to the ground, oozing down the hill on all sides, covering all the fort, hillside and forest.

The acrid smoke stings the knights' nostrils, and each must make a CON roll. Failure indicates they were overcome by the fumes and passed out, unconscious. If so, they fall from the horse and must take 1d6 damage, as normal, from the fall. Success indicates they were not overcome.

After a fit of coughing, or passing out, the glen will be clear under the bright starlight. The late characters arrive when all signs of the event are gone. Allow, and urge, the players to react, through their characters, to the event. What did they think? How do they feel? Even though the characters have just heard your description of the vision, urge the players to explain the event through their characters' eyes. Latecomers will ask for details. Let discussion go on for a little while.

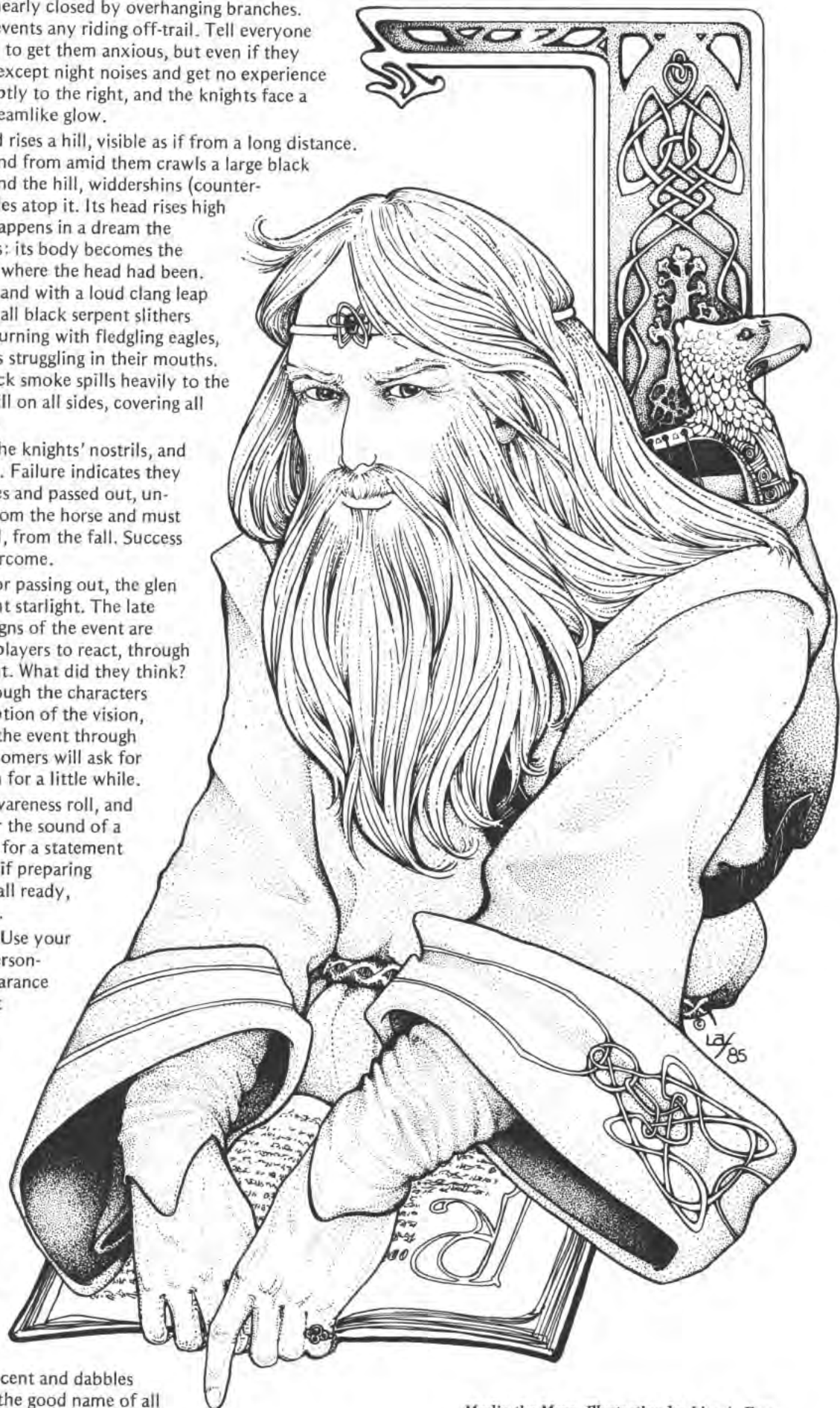
Tell them to make an Awareness roll, and if any of the characters hear the sound of a large beast to the west. Ask for a statement of intent from everyone, as if preparing for combat. When they are all ready, Merlin appears among them.

Present Merlin properly. Use your own interpretation of his personality. Does his magical appearance amuse him, or does he use it to cow the knights? Use whatever method you feel is most likely to impress the player-characters.

### The Problem

Merlin will explain the meaning of the vision. Before he starts he will say it is a scene of what is and what is yet to be, though the future can be avoided if they act quickly enough.

Sir Gromer the Devil is a shameful knight who delights in harming the innocent and dabbles in sorcery. He has defamed the good name of all knighthood by murdering his own liege, then burning his liege's family and retainers in their dead lord's castle.



Merlin the Mage. Illustration by Lisa A. Free.

## *The Scenarios: Years 496 to 499*

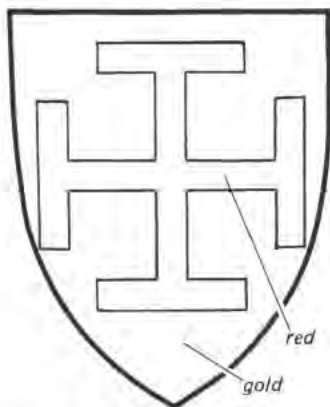
kingdom description: Northumberland

### **NORTHUMBERLAND** (also called Norhaut)

Cymric/Christian

Liege: D. Clarience of Northumberland.

#### Northumberland



*Landmarks:* Cheviot Hills — rugged hills.

Dere St. — excellent Roman road which runs from Eburacum to Lothian.

Hadrian's Wall — ancient Roman defensive wall abandoned centuries ago. Now in ruins, some of its mile towers are inhabited by knights or bandits.

Northumberland Forest — forest where lives Belise, the teacher and scribe of Merlin (Malory I, 17).

Pennine Mts. — flat-topped, bleak mountains of central Britain, deeply cut by steep ravines.

Wandesborow — city-castle. When Saracens attacked Arthur's enemies, this castle was garrisoned against the Saracens (Malory I, 17-18).

No lord now knows of this incipient trouble. But Merlin, archmage and prophet, has seen that these knights in the glen can be sufficient to thwart the danger. Furthermore, if the characters can seize the opportunity, the archmage will make sure one of them is invested as the tower's lord. Merlin prophesies that "a great lord will be born there." He promises that if the knights move swiftly they can act before the bandits are prepared for an assault.

Let the players decide what to do. If any knights stayed away, they can be asked to join also. Merlin makes no demands about who participates.

Merlin stresses that urgency is foremost. If the characters are slow, they will fail. Gomer the sorcerer doubtless has demonic help to build his walls, and may probably finish his tower by daybreak, as happens in many fairy stories. Once the tower is built, the chance to nip the evil in the bud will be lost. Getting aid from your liege, who is deep in sleep this late, will be unusual, difficult, and time-consuming (and will probably forfeit any chance at the lordship).

Merlin can get the player-characters to the head of a road which leads to Sir Gromer's site, and direct them to the castle. At the point of departure Merlin will invoke God's aid for the player-characters, then depart.

#### **Setting**

If the characters scout the area, give them the Layout of Ground map which shows as much of the area around the half-finished tower as they could scout. If they approach directly, describe what they see using the map as a guide.

Sketch the layout in approximate scale for tabletop play. Place the visible guards on the map, and put the knights' figures on the table when they are visible to the bandits.

#### **Solutions**

The only solution here is to kill or drive off the bandits. They will not parley fairly, are unchivalrous, and will not surrender without a fight.

#### **The Antagonists**

Use three bandits (taken from the Characters book of the game) for each player-character knight, plus one for each player-character squire (if any).

As for Sir Gromer, he is a surprise. He is not a knight who dabbles in sorcery after all, but is a Fiend, as in the Creatures section of the Setting chapter. This foe will probably kill a couple of characters. They will earn the land if they win.

#### **The Combat**

The precise events will depend entirely upon the characters' actions. The defenders' plan is to gather into groups and then rush out to fight. The actions of the player-characters will modify their actions afterwards, but avoid the urge to coordinate the activities of these untrained bandits. This is probably your own first experiment at massed combat, so practice by keeping them in small groups.

Sir Gromer wants his bandits to tire the invaders with many small wounds. Sir Gromer is careless of his losses, but the bandits themselves will flee when half their number are killed.

Sir Gromer will appear when his lackeys flee, or when half the player-characters are dead or unhorsed. He will fight to the death, for he has plans for this place and cannot afford to leave. His coat of arms is a black serpent on a yellow field.

If the characters fail their first attempt, send them back again, even if they need to generate new characters to try. The castle need not have been improved, assuming that the previous attack sufficiently delayed any progress.

#### **Results**

When successful, the best qualified character should be selected as lord of the tower, with a noble rank of banneret. Merlin might allow the survivors themselves to choose the one among themselves who deserves the honor. The new lord must also swear fealty to your favorite Logres personality. Other participating knights might also get land-grants on this plot, held in fief of the new banneret.

### **FOURTH SESSION — 496 to 499**

Always begin by reviewing the current situation as known by the player-characters. During the time between sessions, they will probably have thought up many



questions which the gamemaster should answer before play begins. Always reserve the option to remain silent and force the players to send their characters to an appropriate source to learn esoteric information.

Tell the players that four more years have passed. It is now 499. Help the players take care of their characters' annual learning and families. The purpose of this long break is to give the characters several years to establish a family. Some will succeed, some will not. All should try, and keep trying.

Report that the Saxon raiders are raiding through the south and east, and rumor says the Irish and Picts are active in the west and north as well. Every traveler mentions the marvel which has appeared mysteriously at London: an anvil atop a stone, through which is thrust Uther's Sword of Victory. Inscribed on the rock, in gold, it says:

*Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone and anvil, is rightwise king born of all England.*

If someone suggests that they go and see this sword, pick up the impromptu thread and play it out. Much of your gamemastering will consist of such improvised events. Use or ignore the encounter tables, depending on your own familiarity and confidence with it at this early stage. In London, stress the walls, the markets (now dominated by Frisian traders), and the cathedral of St. Paul's, whose courtyard holds the fabled stone. Urge them to try to pull out the sword; everyone else is trying.

Soon the gamemaster's favorite leader from Logres appears and asks or orders the player-characters to help in battle. A new wave of Saxons have landed in the kingdom of Wessex and the British army marches to meet them.

### Battle of Portsmouth — 499

Small Battle — choose rank commanders. This time a banneret might even command a rank.

British Commander — one of the Logres lords.

Saxon commanders — Cerdic, Cynric, and Port.

Ferocity — 3.

British Modifiers — outnumbered by foes 2-1 (-5), better outfitted (+5) = 0 modifier to Battle skills.

Saxon Modifiers — outnumber enemy 2-1 (+5), foot vs. horse (-5) = 0.

Help the players less this time. Choose your own preference for this battle. Decide whether you intend to have the Saxons or the British win, stack the Ferocity in your favor, and fight out the battle according to the rules. This battle should not require the whole of the session to play.

According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the Saxons were victors of this fight. You could justify a British player-character victory as being in a preparatory battle, or deny the *A. S. Chronicle*.

### FIFTH SESSION — 500 to 505

Pass through six more years of experience. Intersperse them with several skirmishes against Saxon raiders and travels to different parts of Logres and friendly kingdoms. Use the large map to indicate where the characters travel about the island. Point out (or deliberately go to) interesting places such as Stonehenge, Glastonbury, or the ruined city of Camelot, where ancient pagan kings once ruled. You may or may not use the Encounter Tables if traveling.

Especially visit London and view the Sword in the Stone. Any knight in Britain can try to pull it out. Urge them to try, and when they do so roll the d20 and check it before telling the players the sword did not move. Tell anyone who asks that all you need to do is roll 21 on d20 (impossible, of course) for their characters to be High King.

Such activities may well take up a whole session with great satisfaction.

### SIXTH SESSION — THE ADVENTURE AT CANTREV Y GWAELOD

This adventure nominally occurs in 497, but you can move it to anytime you wish. (The same scenario occurs later, in Lyonesse in 560.) This scenario illustrates the use of personality traits in play.

This is a testing scenario. Many such tests occur in the King Arthur genre; Gawaine and the Green Knight is the best example. The Grail Quest is the best source for obvious moral tests: is Percivale chaste or not? What will Bors do when his brother tries to kill him? Is Lancelot truly contrite and chaste? Other, more subtle tests abound. Only true lovers can escape from the Val sans Retour;

### The Scenarios: Years 500 to 505. Cantrev y Gwaelod kingdom description: Orkneys

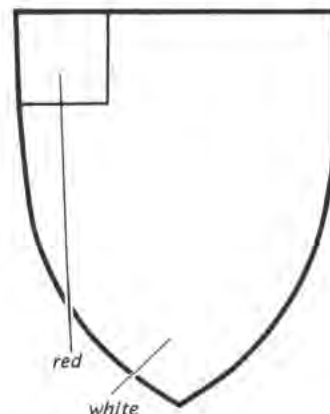
#### ORKNEYS

Pict/Pagan

*Liege:* K. Lot (early), no one (middle, late).

*History:* in Arthur's day these now-barren islands were rich and thriving enough to populate a city where Arthur held court. The wild shores and interior also hold many mysterious creatures, such as Pechs and Selkies.

Orkneys



*Landmarks:* Broder's Ring — ancient site of standing stones.

Orcanie — city. Site of Lot's home, and also one of Arthur's court cities (Chretien, *Grail*).

## The Scenarios: *Cantrev y Gwaelod*

map of *Cantrev y Gwaelod*

only someone truly merciful can avoid the evil fate suffered by Gawaine in his first quest; Gareth and La Cote Male Taille have their humility severely tested.

This scenario is to test the personality traits and the behavior of the characters. It deliberately tempts and tries to cause the characters to err. The destruction of the land is the presumed outcome of the game.

In fact, if the characters somehow manage to prevent the sinking of the land, they must learn later that someone else has done it.

### Introduction

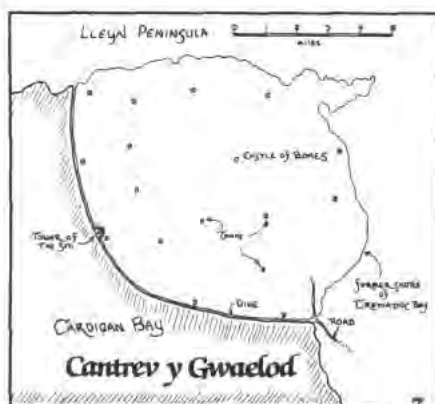
Bishop Baudwin of Britain, a famous fighting priest, has been visiting friendly kings to unite them against a new onslaught of Irish raiders from overseas. Most of Uther's allies respond favorably since they have been victims of the raids. Many kings, including the characters' liege, have sent contingents of knights to work under the command of the Bishop.

The knights assemble in Caerleon. Before they ride out they assemble in the Roman amphitheatre where the aged archbishop Dubricus gives the army a blessing. Following Baudwin of Britain, the army marches westward into Estregales where the Irish pirates are currently active.

The player-characters are assigned as a group, under the command of either their ranking member or a gamemaster non-player-character. They, along with many other units, are sent through the countryside to chase down the Irish, who in small bands pillage undefended farms and towns.

The gamemaster should arrange several small combats. Use Irish Raiders from the statistics book, with the Skirmish Battle rules.

The player-character patrol continues along the coastline of Cardigan Bay, northward. Finally they sight a wondrous castle far ahead to the left, along the low-lying shore. It is becoming dark, and a blustery wind is sending heavy clouds shoreward. Surely it will rain tonight. In fact, it will rain through the entire scenario. Any sane knight will seek refuge within the castle.



map by Michael Blum

### Setting

*The Crossroad* — at this spot the characters meet the hag.

*The Dikes* — these earthen dams stand against the raging Irish Sea. When riding along their tops the player-characters may make an Awareness roll. Success indicates that they see the land is lower than the ocean.

*The 16 Cities* — each of these places is the same. They are each a magical town, full of happy peasants who spin silk and samite from hay. Here even the beggars ride horses.

*Tower of the Sea* — player-characters will spend most of their time here. It is explained in detail below.

### The Crossroad

As thunder crashes among the western clouds and raindrops splash off the knights' armor, they find a crossroad. A poor dirt trail leads straight ahead, while off to the left, high above the seething water, a good road stretches into the distance.

Here, holding her rags close amid the blustery wind, hobbles an ugly hag. (Her APP would be equal to -16.) She has ash-gray skin, a long pocked nose, skin gnarled with hairy growths, and a fetid breath, like putrid meat.

Even if the knights attempt to ignore her, the horses will not. Upon passing by they will shy away from her, even trying to ride off the road. As the knights seek to hold the steeds they will see the hag, who stops and regards them all with contempt.

Upon seeing her, all players must make a Valorous roll. Success indicates the character saw what was coming and held his steed (and gets a Valorous check). Failure indicates the knight's horse jumped, and he must try a Riding roll. Success on the Riding roll allows him to control his horse (no Riding check) but failure in this means that he did not, and he will be tempted to let the horse go. He must receive a Cowardly roll which, if successful, gets him a Cowardly check as his horse bolts to the rear. A failed Cowardly roll means he held himself somewhat well, even though afraid, and with a wild horse.

The hag says: "Another batch of heroes to seek the countess, I suppose. You will have to be better than the last ones, if you want to keep your heads. Not everyone can rescue that beautiful prisoner."

*The Scenarios: Cantrev y  
Gwaelod*  
coat of arms: Aglovale

"But save time and your strength and take the seaside path. The other leads only to trouble and death. Just remember, don't speak to the lord of your mission here. Soldiers he likes, wooers of Tryamor he does not."

She turns and vanishes into the darkness, walking through brambles too thick for a horse to penetrate. If characters pursue her, they will find only wind, rain, and darkness.

Tell the players to choose a path for their characters. They can go north, on the path not recommended; west, on the seaside road; or south again, whither they came.

If the poor north trail is taken, it will dwindle to nothing amid the raging rain. Occasional lightning shows the way. At one point little gnarled men (one per three knights), with glowing eyes and dragging long clubs, will appear in front of the knights, who must receive Valor rolls. As usual, failure to make the Valor roll causes a check for Cowardice. "Turn back!" commands one. Unless the knights do so they will have to fight the creatures, who are spriggans. They will enlarge to combat size when necessary. Their intent is not to kill (though they might, by accident). Take the spriggans' statistics from the Creatures section of this book.

If the spriggans win, they will take unconscious knights (and corpses) to one of the towns. There, a local wise woman will apply a magic balm which adds 1d6 HP per day. Only the dead cannot be helped by this.

If the knights win the combat with the spriggans, or if they turn back and wander, they continue to stumble around in the darkness and rain until they come to one of the towns. Any resident will welcome them to their humble (but clean) abode. However, every knight must succeed in a CON roll, or lose 1d6 hit points to illness incurred riding around in the rain.

The towns are small, very tidy places. Down comforters cover every bed, clothes are well-cut and well-mended, and plenty of hearty food and drink is available. The peasants are happy, probably singing and dancing when the knights stagger in, coughing and clanking. The locals show respect for and humility to their betters. If any knight asks why they are so well off, the peasants simply say they are blessed to live in a bountiful land.

When characters are ready to leave the town, a guide will take them directly to the Tower of the Sea.

If characters ride along the western seaside path (the one recommended by the hag), they will also pass a village and witness the pleasant life of this land. As they ride along the dike, they may try an Awareness roll. Success indicates they notice the sea to their left is higher than the land to their right.

### The Castle

The castle is sturdy and well-manned. The porter is quite courteous. He asks that all swear to the rules of hospitality and if the characters do so, he beckons them in. They enter the well-cleaned outer courtyard, where the horses will be led away by grooms. A seneschal leads the visitors to a tower chamber where they can wash and refresh themselves.

Locate the knights here. This is their room. It has fine down mattresses and comforters, brass Roman braziers for room heating, and colorful wall hangings to keep out drafts. The player-characters will meet each night here. Allow them to talk, and if they wish privacy, let them know that they have it here.

After they are cleaned up a butler comes in to take them to meet the castle lord. Entering the court doors, the visiting knights will be ushered forward to meet the host lord, Count Gwyddno Garanhir.

The court hall is large, its floors strewn with rushes, and walls hung with rich tapestries. Suggest the characters attempt a roll for Cymric Custom: success shows that the characters recognize the tale sewn into the tapestries — the legendary wars fought between Kings Gwydion and Pryderi over some pigs. The hall has a high ceiling, and at the far end sits Count Gwyddno Garanhir. His throne is carved from a single piece of ivory, decorated with finely-wrought silver and imported ebony. Beside him, to his left, sits a woman whose radiant beauty diminishes the elven craftwork of her plush oaken throne.

An elderly adviser, later to be introduced as Sir Seithenin, stands at the count's right hand. Sitting lower, on an almost toy-like throne, is a very young boy whose attention wanders, who will be ignored by his elders until put to bed early every night, and who has no part in the scenario.

Aglovale





## The Scenarios: *Cantrev y Gwaelod*

kingdom description: *Out Isles*  
sub-kingdom description: *Roestoc*

### OUT ISLES

Pict/Pagan

Liege: King Lot (early)

History: these wild islands have never been reconquered since the first Pictish settlers landed ages ago. Raiders from the island have plagued Britain and Ireland ever since.

### Out Isles



### Roestoc

(post-Arthurian Elmet)

Cymric/Christian

Landmarks: Blank Castle – castle whose lords are Sirs Bliant and Selivant. They kept Lancelot here while he was mad (Malory XII, 1-2).

Camulodunum – castle. Roman fort built to protect the pass through the Penines.

Conisbrough – city. Once the capital of the Saxon kingdom of Soresan when it held all the surrounding territory (Geoffrey).

Maris – the Marsh. Wet bottomlands east of Roevant. Home of Ector de Maris.

Six guards dressed in red and white livery stand to each side of the thrones. They carry glaives and swords. Other courtiers, apparently knights of the realm, are on the court floor, clustered to the sides and corners.

Count Gwyddno Garanhir will ask the visitors their names, after being presented by his herald. His attitude is that of a friendly old count glad to see visitors from the outer world.

Roleplay through this by letting the characters introduce their knights, explain their business, and so forth.

After the knights finish their introduction the count will introduce his wife, Tryamor, and his advisor, Sir Seithenin. "But I can provide more than cold oratory," says the count. "Let us begin the welcome feast."

The varlets who work in the castle all wear the same red and white livery of the foot guards. Such uniform dress is very unusual in this phase of history, and the gamemaster should point out the fact. They will bring out fine boards, benches, and tables for the dinner, cover all with clean linen, and quickly have maidens carrying out fine ewers to serve wine.

### The First Dinner

The lord and lady of the castle are friendly and open, sharing their lives and history with the characters.

Count Gwyddno is a rich and generous count of Cambria. He is a pious man who has been blessed by his goddess with land, wealth, and children. "And with friendly visitors like these," says the count. "Nothing more is needed in the world."

The wine comes out. "Fine wine, from the land of Troy where our ancestors ruled, brewed for the parade of Bacchus, but seized by Brennius, my ancient ancestor who plundered Rome, and saved until this feast."

Anyone who desires to indulge in the wine may do so. All who wish to be temperate must succeed in their roll, or else the heady aroma and bouquet which wafts from the crystal bottle seduces them to take a sip of the ambrosial wine. Successful Temperance rolls deserve an experience check.

Count Gwyddno is clearly indulging in the wine. In fact, as the meal progresses he falls asleep. Lord Seithenin shakes his head ruefully and says, "His geas is to drink anything before him, but he always falls asleep from good drink." Aided by servants, Seithenin carries the count to bed.

The countess, beautiful Tryamor, watches the servants guide her lord to bed. She turns to the visitors and speaks. "This has been good wine, but two nights hence will be the sure night for tasteful indulgence. That night, after the bard speaks of the Swan Knight, ask my lord for Noah's wine."

Countess Tryamor then turns the conversation to the subject of treasure and greed. Everyone who engages in the talk can attempt a Generous/Selfish roll. Everyone may speak on the subject, unopposed unless they wish otherwise, for an experience check at either. The fair dame (and the gamemaster) note who is the winner among the greedy. If no one attempts a Selfish roll, the dame will note who fails their Generous check in the worst way. After a while the countess will depart.

A resident knight will suggest a drinking contest. Player-characters are urged to participate. Settle the whole messy affair with an Opposed Indulgence roll. The winner is the last one awake (and also the one with the longest hangover).

Eventually the feast ends. The servants stretch out in the corners, under and atop tables, and seek sleep. The visiting knights will be escorted to their private chamber.

That night a serving maiden will visit the knights and request the winner among the greedy to accompany her in secret to meet an unnamed person. If he refuses she will ask the second, third, and so on. If no one agrees to go she will depart. She will not explain anything, but will act quietly and furtively.

### First Secret Meeting

The meeting is with Tryamor, who huddles in a small chamber off the kitchen. Her maid goes off to keep a lookout. The princess addresses the knight.

"Courageous knight, my thanks to you for coming here. I seek aid from someone who will have pity on a captive woman, and who is not afraid to act when the time comes. Will you help me?" she pleads.

"The kind lord here is generous with the gifts of others. He came here and took all from me, then made me his slave wife despite my protests. No one pro-

tests for me now because they fear him. He will murder anyone who contests his claim. But someone must bring me justice."

Characters may want to try Merciful and Just rolls. Success yields an Experience check and shows they were moved by that emotion to help her. Flat refusal to be swayed yields a check for Cruel, or Arbitrary and Suspicious.

"It will be worth your while, I promise," she says. "You must seize the Cup of Ogmios at the feast to be held two nights hence. It is large, and worth the ransom of ten knights with their equipment. If you succeed then it will be yours. We can prepare him, and I will give you a signal — watch for it. Then act with courage and boldness!

"I know a way to aid your task. You must ask the lord for Noah's wine. You are his guests and he cannot refuse without appearing stingy. It is a heady liquor and I am sure the old guzzler will not be able to resist drinking it himself. When he is drunk you can take the cup. Once you have hold of it you must not stop until you are past the borders of this land. Then I will be free."

### First Patrol

At dawn Sir Seithenin will ask the knights if they wish to accompany him on patrol. If asked, he will say that he expects little trouble from the likes of mer-men or worms, though trouble from the weather will undoubtedly cause some pain.

The local knights make no effort to accompany the elder knight. They never go in this weather, they confess.

All characters who remain at the castle must engage in a mandatory tournament of chess, at the insistence of Tryamor. Ten household knights, each with a skill of ten, will participate with the visitors. The prize, everyone is pleased to note, is a kiss from the countess.

Those who venture out on patrol into the storm are accompanied by Seithenin and a band of hearty peasants, wearing oiled leathers and carrying various digging tools.

The patrol goes north along the dike, then south. At intervals Sir Seithenin stops and instructs the peasants to work, who set to with shovels and picks to labor on the dam.

Player-characters present may all get a single Awareness roll. Success indicates that they realize the water level is higher than yesterday. In fact, the waves lap at the top of the dike.

### Second Dinner and Secret Meeting

Dinner that night is as festive as the previous night. Everyone ignores the black stormy night broken only by the crashing voice of lightning. Sometimes the thunder disrupts the poets and singers, or causes the dancers to fall on the floor, but the food is good and the wine plentiful.

Count Gwyddno again begs to go to bed early. After he leaves, the countess turns the conversation to the subject of extramarital affairs. All who seek to impress the beautiful young woman with this talk get an Amor (Tryamor) roll of 3d6. The participants must then receive opposed resolution rolls using this Amor against each other. As before, note the character's rates of success in this endeavor.

Later, a maidservant will approach the sleeping knights. The method of request will be the same as before: the winner of the resolution and then, if necessary, the losers in succession.

The meeting is with Tryamor, who huddles in a small chamber off the chapel garden. Her maid goes off to watch. The princess addresses the knight.

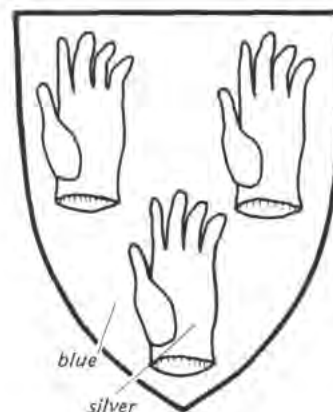
The countess will again spin her sad story of her birthright's loss and her lord's crimes. She will prey on the knight's Mercy and Justice, as she had the previous night. If that fails, she turns the talk to other things.

In any case, she will also protest that Count Gwyddno has never enjoyed her favors, which deserve to belong to a heartier man. Confined in close quarters and tempted by such speech, the knight's action should be ruled by a Chaste/Lust roll. Either successful roll gets a check, but the young countess will not engage in any amorous activity other than a single kiss for a promise to help.

"Tomorrow night is a feast, and if the old lord does not complete his rituals, I will be free forever. Help me then, and when I call for your aid you must steal

*The Scenarios: Cantrev y  
Gwaelod*  
coat of arms: Meliagrant

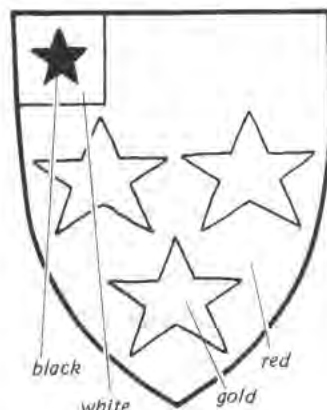
Meliagrant



## The Scenarios: *Cantrev y Gwaelod*

coat of arms: *Sagromore le Desirous*  
sub-kingdom description: *Sorestan*

### Sagromore le Desirous



#### Sorestan

(also called Eastlands according to Malory, Lindsey by Saxons)

Saxon/Wotanic

*History:* this sub-kingdom of Logres was controlled by the Saxons for many years.

*Landmarks:* Battle of Humber – site of Arthur's battle against Five Foreign Kings (Malory IV, 2).

Beale Adventure, Abbey of – abbey founded by King Arthur to celebrate his close victory over Five Foreign Kings (Malory IV, 3-4).

Deira Forest – forest region inhabited by Saxons since the time of the Roman occupation, and location of a future Saxon kingdom.

Delectable Isle – this pleasant-sounding place is barely mentioned and not ever fully described (Malory X, 59).

Humber River – a large river upon which banks Arthur fought a battle against foreigners in 516 (Malory IV, 2-4).

Red City – the rightful lord here, King Hermance, was killed by his wicked stepsons (Malory X, 59, 62-64).

me away to the rear postern where I will have horses waiting. Take me away and I will be your true lover forever.

"I know one way to ensure our escape. You must ask the lord for Noah's wine. You are his guests and he cannot refuse it without breaking custom. It is a heady liquor, and I am sure the old guzzler will not be able to resist drinking it himself. Ask for it after the bard sings a song about the Swan Knight. When the lord is drunken, we can escape together."

### Second Patrol

When Sir Seithenin asks for volunteers this time, several characters may say they'll go, but checking the weather conditions will cause everyone to get an Energetic roll. Success indicates that they will receive a check for it. Failure means they get a check for Lazy. A character who defies his Lazy check and goes anyway will also get an Energetic check.

This patrol is similar to the other, but the water is even higher than before. The blustery wind sends whitecaps cascading over the earthworks. Several small breaks exist, and the workers diligently repair them.

### The Third Feast

This feast is much like the others. Everyone is happy, friendly, and courteous. Entertainers keep laughter alive. Fair maidens serve fine wine. Haunches, roasts, and whole baked birds weigh down the tables.

Count Gwyddno Garanhir seems happy, and asks his bard to recite a tale. A handsome bearded young man complies with an old pagan story, the Knight of the Swan.

The Knight of the Swan seeks a woman he saw in a dream – the Shining Queen. He discovers she is the wife of the King of the Castle of Bones, and he prepares to steal the woman by stealth. Before he acts however, a crow brings him a head, which describes the story of its own failed sleuthing. The Knight of the Swan then alters his plan and walks through the front gate to confront the hoary old king. Heroic combat ensues, but finally the Swan Knight wins, marries the queen, and becomes king.

If a player asks to try his character's Cymric Custom roll, let him. Success indicates that the listener knows more about this Swan Knight: that he resisted three temptations; of drink, of lust, and of treasure. He won because he was forthright, honorable, and courteous. (Privately give this information to the players making successful rolls.) When the song is done, the bard retires.

Four alternative courses of action exist. In the second and third courses, some options overlap. The four possible results are that the characters do nothing; the characters do what the countess asked; the characters confront the count directly; the characters renounce the treachery of the countess.

### Do Nothing

If the characters do not act, then the feast will continue, they may all become falling-down drunk and sleep with serving wenches, and the next day wake to a bright dawn and go their way.

### Do What the Countess Asks

If the characters do what the countess asks, thereby disrupting all civilized hospitality and falling for the countess' temptations in full or part, the following events will ensue.

*The Wine of Noah* – when a guest asks Count Gwyddno if he would serve the wine of Noah the count's eyes widen in surprise. "That is a rare vintage, which I had thought to save until my two hundredth birthday. But no one will ever speak badly about my hospitality." He orders the wine brought forth.

"This is sometimes called the Wine of Shame," he says, "Because in the eastlands, where the sun rises from the dead, lived a sailor named Noah. After a long voyage he drank from this brew, and fell senseless to the ground so that his children mocked and shamed him. Some of that ignoble brew is here, for our drinking."

All Christian knights, as well as all knights who succeed in a Roman Custom roll, will recognize this as a biblical story, about Noah after he landed his ark on Mount Ararat (Genesis 9:20-24).

When unstoppered the clay jug releases an aroma which causes everyone to get their Temperance (at -5) or Indulgence (at +5) roll. Success in either gives an experience check.



## The Scenarios: *Cantrev y Gwaelod*

kingdom description: *Strangor*

The wine is poured into an expensive goblet, which is then carried by Tryamor from guest to guest. Everyone who made their Indulgence or failed their Temperance will drink it. She will not hand the goblet to the knights she has personally plotted with until after she takes it to Sir Seithenin and her lord.

The wine acts as a potion of sleep with a strength of 10. Everyone must attempt a CON roll, opposed by the wine. That is, they must roll equal to or less than their CON, but greater than 10. Success indicates the characters are pleasantly inebriated but not drunk, while failure indicates they fall asleep. Sleeping drunks will not awake for 24 hours, or until they are in danger from drowning. If they pass out they will see the following scene as they fade from consciousness.

When the wonderful goblet reaches Sir Seithenin, the gamemaster should roll his d20, look at the die, and say, "Made his Loyalty." Describe the scene, "The elder knight looks at his lord, toasts him, then toasts the visiting knights, and slowly begins great gulping, each slow and separate, gulp, *gulp*, GULP. He carefully lowers the goblet to the table, smiles at the count, and falls backwards from his stool so his robes are thrown open. Count Gwyddno, somewhat dumfounded, picks up the goblet and peers into it, and then carefully places it on the table before him.

"He does not like me to drink," says the count. "I guess that is one way to prevent it. I will be sober tonight, now."

*The Cup of Ogmios* — the incredibly-wrought Cup of Ogmios, empty now, is on the table before Count Gwyddno. The cup is of solid gold, with pearls around the lip. Engraved on the cup are scenes of Ogmios himself hunting, singing, and playing. A strange script, unknown to all but bards (*i.e.*, Ogham) runs around the base of the cup. Tell the chosen knight that the countess looks poignantly at him — he knows the time is close.

The Countess rises from her throne, says, "My good lord, face me," and when the count does so, she takes his hands and says, "Now, Sir (name of promised knight), take the vessel as you swore."

The knight gets three rounds to act before any defender reacts. Ask his player what he plans his character to do this round. If he becomes indecisive, tell him that he stands there doing nothing, and then ask everyone else their intent. Someone else may grab the goblet. Give that character an experience check for Selfish and continue. Quick-thinking, prepared knights can be up and out of the room in three rounds, bearing the countess with them (if one of them so desires).

One thing which cannot occur is an attack upon the count, which will always be stopped by the dozen guards armed with greatswords. The count will quickly react to fight after his men are engaged, or he will run to safety.

On the fourth round, Count Gwyddno will react, and order his guards and courtiers into action. They will all jump to do so. Remember, everyone is unarmored at this time, even the guards, and any sword hit can be disastrous.

A few kills against the defenders will cause them all to withdraw and properly arm. The pause will allow the player-characters to do likewise. Once armed, their route of escape is either to their horses at the stable or (if preplanned) with Tryamor to the rear postern.

At the stable, the horses are ready if the players make their characters' Squire rolls. Otherwise, they must wait while the defenders accumulate. Each melee round sends 3 more footmen to fight against each knight who tries to break out. The count's knights will join afterwards, and accumulate until the odds are truly hopeless. Characters can surrender themselves completely to the mercy of the count if they wish. The characters will then be thrown into the dungeon, indefinitely. Though ransom is offered, the surviving characters' lord would probably not pay it for unchivalrous knights.

The cupholder should have opportunity to escape presented to him, and have to take it no matter what happens to his friends. When horses are not ready, his will be. Give the cup-bearer the chance to hesitate once or twice, but tell him that the cup says (in the Countess' voice), "Run, forget your friends, or join them in death."

At this stage your job is not to keep the characters alive, but to make their deserved death as colorful as possible. But don't drag it out. Accept surrenders. If the visiting knights surrender with the cup, they will be tossed into prison.

*The Escape* — if the visiting knights do not attempt to steal the cup but to try to go away with the countess, the abduction will be similar to the scene described above. Most attempts to abduct the countess will be accompanied by attempts

### STRANGOR

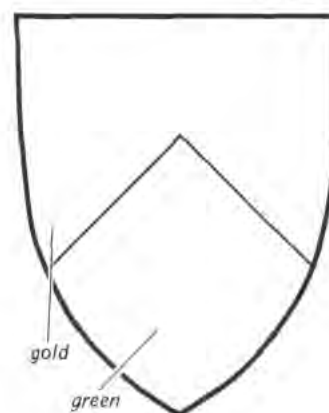
(also referred to as Damnonii Tribe by Romans, as Scotland wrongly by Malory, post-Arthurian Strathclyde)

Cymric/Pagan

*Liege*: K. Brandegoris (early), K. Carados (middle, late)..

*History*: this ancient British kingdom began as a Roman ally in the 3rd century and maintained its independence from the Saxons.

Strangor



*Landmarks*: Alclud/Dunbarton — city. Base for Arthur's wars against the Picts (Geoffrey).

Antonine Wall — ancient Roman wall built by Emperor Antonine, but manned for only a few years before being abandoned. In Arthur's time it is in ruins.

Caledonian Forest — the great northern woods. A battle was fought here in 521 (Nennius).

Loch Lomond — a large lake with an island in the middle of which dwell oracular eagles who each year prophesy the future (Geoffrey).

Gloeant Forest — a forest (Vulgate IV).

## *The Scenarios: Cantrev y Gwaelod*

### **The Land Floods if the Countess Is Successfully Kidnaped, or the Cup is Stolen, or if Gwyddno is Killed**

If some characters are deserted, passed out back at the tower, the awakening knights find themselves lying in inches of cold salt water. Shouts and screams break the air, crashes and curses shatter unconsciousness. The inebriates waken amid chaos, as servants and women splash about trying to find safety.

Sir Seithenin lies atop a table which floats and stirs slightly in the eddying waters. He has not mended the dams today, and they have overflowed.

Feet of water flood the lands to the west. More flows eastward. A horseman can escape if he moves swiftly.

The alternate escape, with the countess' help, offers a view from the distance. As dawn lights the sky for the first time in days the characters look back. Along the western dikes a sheen of water is visible where the flood is spilling over the dam. Ask for Awareness rolls. Success indicates that they see great white waves crash over the dikes, spreading a raging wall of water to drown the countryside. The sound, a dull roaring which does not stop, drifts to the watchers. They can see the towns disappear under a wave taller than their rooftops.

Tryamor will then chuckle in delight, say "I am free," and turn her now-hideous face to kiss her lover. She has become the hag from the crossroads. Such just desserts are due those who so abuse the tenets of hospitality. If for some reason the character tries to kill the hag, she curses him with ugliness before executing a miraculous escape aided by magic. The character's face comes to resemble a human toad's, with the loss of half his APP statistic.

to steal the cup. In either case, if the countess is involved, success is much more likely.

Countess Tryamor did her best to prepare the escape. Horses and knights' personal possessions are waiting at a rear postern. When the knights break from the courtroom, she leads them thence, where they may mount and escape into the countryside.

Pursuit is close. Behind them, in the night, dogs are barking and, with an Awareness roll, the thunder of horses' hooves may be heard.

But this is Gwyddno's land, and he knows the shortcuts. Ahead, after the escaping knights turn a corner into a glen, awaits Gwyddno and one knight for each escapee. The count challenges the bearer of the countess by name. Others challenge the companions of the abductor. If he does not release her voluntarily, Countess Tryamor twists from the knight's arms and runs to the sidelines to watch.

Combat follows. For Gwyddno, use the statistics for an old Cymric king (King Lak). For his retainers, use statistics for good knights.

If the countess is recovered, the count will withdraw with his men, leaving wounded and dead foes behind. No refuge will be obtained from the happy peasants of the land. They are Gwyddno's subjects, and loyal to him.

### **Confront the Count Directly**

The characters can try to free the countess by asking outright for the cup and her hand, as the Knight of the Swan did.

This is the preferred route, but not one which most player-characters are likely to win. They are probably not the equivalent of the legendary Swan Knight in virtue and statistics.

*The Drinking Contest* — Count Gwyddno says, "It is prophesied that no one who cannot win a contest drinking the Wine of Shame can ever supplant me in my wife's arms. You and your companions must drink against us."

However, Gwyddno does not indulge. His champion, old Seithenin, stands in. His Indulgence is 20. See the entry above (the Wine of Noah) for effects.

*The Wrestling Contest* — "Anyone can have this cup," says the count, "who can outwrestle my champion to take it. The rules are that the winner is whoever makes three out of five falls."

The opponent is the ugly hag of the crossroads, who is terribly nimble in this contact sport. If the character tries to back down from the wrestling (either due to her ugliness or her being a woman) she walks over and grabs him, initiating the combat.

Use opposed Grapple skill rolls. Her Grapple is 25, so that she receives a critical on a roll of 15 or more. If the character does not have this optional skill, he can use one half his DEX roll instead.

If a wrestler loses to her three times, he must make three rolls on the Aging Table. If he loses less (wins the match) he need not roll at all.

*The Combat* — "Anyone who wants to marry my wife," says the count, "must conquer me first. You may choose any weapon, as may I. Our fight is to the death or surrender." Use King Lak's statistics for Count Gwyddno.

The fight can be won by a lucky and diligent combatant. In such a case let the survivors go, with the countess. They deserve it.

As the sun rises the maiden laughs in delight. "I am free at last," she says, "of that ancient curse. I promise you again, forever, to be your loyal wife."

### **Renounce the Countess' Treachery**

Accusations against the wife of the host is a terrible responsibility to confront. She could turn the accusation about, playing the part of Potiphar's wife, and enrage her husband against the guests.

However, truth and virtue are rewarded in *Pendragon*. This is a good response. Gwyddno Garanhir asks for proof, and the only proof needed is the word of a knight. Offers to fight for the truth, etc., are acknowledged but not accepted.

After quizzing the characters, Gwyddno will question his wife, Tryamor. She will confess, proudly, that she did as she was told, and instructed these knights in ways to prove themselves dastards, and become wealthy thereby. But they resisted, and are to be honored for it.

Count Gwyddno will turn and congratulate the characters on their honesty. He will reward them as follows: to he who did not fall for the cup temptation, a

gold cup worth 25 L; to he who did not fall for the seduction, a promise to speak with the father of whomever the knight wishes to wed, with good words to assist the marriage suit, and a charger with +2 CON; to everyone else; a fine cloak of noble fur (ermine, etc.) worth 2 L.

### The Return

The characters must return to their own lords afterwards. Let them discuss what occurred, how they acted, their success or failure. Ask them what they will tell their liege, give them some time to discuss it (perhaps until next session), and then ask for a report from the knights, in person.

*The Hag Tryamor* — the gamemaster must be prepared to run the hag Tryamor as a non-player-character after this adventure is over. I suggest that she remain at court, during which time she reveals to everyone what laws of hospitality the knight broke to get her. The hag is probably very proud of the knight. He, undoubtedly, will wish to have nothing to do with her. Everyone will certainly make much of his basic social error, a most shameful act which will cause the more conservative people to completely ostracize the knight from their company. Although it is not enough to lose knighthood over, his reputation is badly tarnished.

Any dastard who liberates this witch deserves to be plagued by her afterwards. That dubious deed also sets up a very difficult scenario which the characters would otherwise avoid. That scenario must be of your own making, and it should in some way let the knight make up for his errors. It should be dangerous and capable of killing all participants.

Success in that mission restores the lost Glory of 200 points, and adventurers should have gained more during the quest. Countess Tryamor, beautiful again, will be glad to receive the atoning knight or knights, cite their heroism, and allow them to continue their Amor for her. Alternately, she might be satisfied to neatly sum up their lessons, give them each a kiss, and depart forever from the story.



# Bibliography

## Fiction

Modern fiction serves well to acquaint readers with King Arthur. After a while, the reader's situation is like the medieval listener: he knows the characters and plot, but looks for a new interpretation of personality or twist of story to provide a pleasant surprise. Inevitably one or another version is favored, and is chosen to provide the emphasis for campaign and character background.

Each author works hard to explain the inconsistencies and problems of the Arthur cycle: why did Arthur let the affair go on so long? Why did Arthur make Mordred regret?

Many of the works use varying amounts of history and romance in their setting. Even the most historical novels (Stewart, Godwin) still rely on the romance of knights for their story. Some of the most romantic tales (Steinbeck) concede to the popular theory that Camelot is at Cadbury Castle, Somerset.

Bradley, Marion Zimmer. *The Mists of Avalon*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1982.

Women retell their real parts in the Arthurian cycle. Queen Igraine, Queen Margawse, mostly the priestess Morgan le Fay, but also the least likable Guenever I have encountered in literature. Also portrayed is my favorite interpretation of Morgan le Fay.

This book gives the best synopsis of reconstructed pagan British ceremonies and attitudes of all on the list. The workings of

Viviane's spell can be understood if you read the book by Gareth Knight, in the non-fiction bibliography.

Godwin, Parke. *Firelord*. Bantam 1982.

This is a historically-oriented book, and one which surprised me several times with its twists of plot. However, the sequel is so non-canonical that I shudder to even consider it a part of the Arthurian cycle. The book contains my favorite portrayal of the Picts/pechs (called Prydn).

Karr, Phyllis Ann. *The Idylls of the Queen*. Ace Books, 1982.

This Arthurian mystery unravels three plots during the final years of Arthur's decadent era: Who killed Sir Patrice with the poisoned apple? Who killed Queen Margawse? And who, exactly, killed Sir Lamorak from behind? Bitter-tongued, sharp-eyed Sir Kay sleuths the answers in an adventure rife with gossip and decisive interpretations of the many court personalities. This book has my favorite interpretations of Kay and Nimue.

Steinbeck, John. *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights*. Ballantine Books, 1977.

A great American novelist pours forth his love for this subject, bringing characters alive. Too much psychoanalyzing of the characters sometimes bogs down the flow, but the antiquated dialogue and description create a delightful portrayal of the middle ground of understanding. The worst part to read (like Malory) is at the start. For no known reason, Steinbeck never finished the project, and so it does not portray the Grail Quest or the Death and Dishonor era. This book has my favorite interpretation of Lancelot.

Stewart, Mary. *The Crystal Cave; The Hollow Hills; The Last Enchantment; The Wicked Day*. Ballantine Books, 1971, 1973, 1980, 1984.

This deservedly-famous fantasy author-ess leans more heavily towards a historical Arthur than most authors. Her setting is post-Roman Britain, with an emerging noble class armed as cataphracts, and the plot for the first three books is drawn from Geoffrey of Monmouth, not Malory. Merlin is the fascinating and believable main character for the first three books. In the last one, a confused muddle of history and doom explain the fate of the Pendragon family, but do little to explain away the problems. This is my favored interpretation of Merlin the Magician.

Taylor, Keith. *Bard*. Ace Fantasy Books.

This book is about a pagan Irish bard in a mixed historical/romantic Britain similar to the land portrayed in the *Pendragon* game. Although I found the character too powerful to be very interesting, the stories give situations and characters perfectly adaptable to a campaign. I like the portrayal of Saxons in this book.

White, T. H. *The Once and Future King*. 1958.

This edition, which I have already recommended, is a great source for detailed information on the Middle Ages and the background for the romantic point of view. This book contains my favored interpretation of both King Arthur and of Mordred (a real villain).



## Nonfiction

Most entries in this section are translations of old Arthurian tales, scholarly interpretations of the same, and books useful for background in *Pendragon*.

Algar the Sententious. *Fabulous Heraldry*. William Linden, 1976.

This book is the source for the heraldic arms shown in *Pendragon*. Whenever possible, I have used only entries from the fourteenth century manuscript by Duke Jacques d'Armagnac.

Anonymous. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*.

Although compiled years after the events it records, the *Chronicle* is believed to contain the germs of fact. The list of battles and heroic combats charts the spread of the English over the island, and hints at the British victory of Badon (which is not, however, mentioned).

Anonymous. *Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight*. Penguin Books, 1959. Translated by Brian Stone.

This Anglo-Saxon poem, written in the fourteenth century, is a pearl of medieval literature. Sir Gawaine, most courteous and upright of the knights, accepts the Beheading Test and sets off on a classic quest, beset each day by an amorous wife left home while her husband hunts. This book's analyses and notes are very helpful for understanding subtleties and anachronisms.

Anonymous. *The Quest of the Holy Grail*. Penguin Books, 1959. Translated by P. M. Matarasso.

This manuscript was first written between 1215 and 1230. Malory used this as a source, but removed all the allegory and religious explanations. Though crafted with literary genius and full of poignant and sensitive scenes, this Grail version is somewhat spoiled by its excessive adoration of chastity.

Anonymous. *The Welsh Triads*.

The druidic bards and their later heirs, the Cymric *conteurs*, were each supposed to memorize 350 well-known stories. They invented the *Triads* to help them remember, many of which have outlived their stories. My knowledge of the *Triads* is gleaned from several books, especially notes of Lady Charlotte Guest's *Mabinogion*.

Anonymous. *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances*, commonly simply *Vulgate*. 7 vol. Riverside Press, 1916. Edited by H. Oskar Sommer.

Originally compiled between 1215 and 1230, this collection was the major source for Malory. I only lately gained access to this, which is untranslated, but heavily glossed. Though sometimes contradictory and often confusing, this collection gives further details to many knights only mentioned in Malory.

Alcock, Leslie. *Arthur's Britain*. Pelican Books, 1973.

This is an excellent overview of what we know about King Arthur, beginning with documentary evidence, cultural and archaeological information on the post-Roman British and Saxons. Recommended introduction to the subject.

Ashe, Geoffrey. *A Guidebook to Arthurian Britain*. Aquarian Press, 1983.

A place-by-place description of landmarks in Britain which are associated with King Arthur and his legends. Well-illustrated and very informative. Many of the place names too obscure to put onto the large map can provide simple scenario ideas.

Ashe, Geoffrey. *King Arthur's Avalon*. Fontana Books, 1957.

This is a history of Glastonbury, including the intriguing interweaving of history and legend which turned this ancient pagan island into a grail site, a British monastery, and finally made it the reputed site of Arthur's burial.

Ashe, Geoffrey (ed.). *The Quest for Arthur's Britain*. Paladin, 1971.

This anthology of contributions by many famous scholars scans the entire Question of Arthur, from history and archaeology through legend and literature. It is a good introduction for anyone who wishes to learn about those subjects, and many of the site maps can be useful in a campaign.

Attwater, D. *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints*. Penguin Books, 1965.

Thumbnail sketches of many famous saints (and former saints) are given here. Thumbing through I found more than thirty British saints from the *Pendragon* era.

Bede. *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Washington Square Press, Inc., 1968. Translated by James Campbell.

Finished about 732, this work by the genius of Saxon literature begins with an account which ignores Arthur, but mentions the Bretwalda who opposed him. Then follow accounts of the Saxon conquest, quickly replaced by marvelous tales of Christianity through the ages.

Bloch, Marc. *Feudal Society*. 2 volumes. University of Chicago Press, 1964. Translated by L. A. Manyon.

These books give details on the growth and development of social institutions through the Middle Ages. When I had to convince some players of how important Loyalty (Liege) was in those days, I quoted pages from these books.

Bond, Janet and Colin. *The Secret Country*. Warner Books, 1976.

This survey contains folklore about standing stones and other legendary sites where stones move at night, healing occurs, dragons lurk, and maidens are turned to rock for dancing on Sunday. Fascinating in its own right, it also gives many ideas for scenarios.

Bottomly, Frank. *The Castle Explorer's Guide*. Avenal Books, 1979.

This is a wonderful handbook of short entries to explain parts of castles (what is an oubliette? A put-log hole?), customs (definitions of tenure, honor, knight-service), places to find castles (Acre, Holt, Pembroke-shire), and miscellaneous facts (outremer, salt, William the Conqueror, sortie, etc.). Briggs, Katharine. *An Encyclopedia of Fairies*. Pantheon Books, 1976.

My favorite handbook of faerie lore, this alphabetical listing includes general facts, whole stories, and a cross-indexing system that makes it a delight for the reader. Some entries provide ideas good enough for whole scenarios.

Brown, A. C. L. *The Origin of the Grail Legend*. Russel & Russel, 1943.

This author is an early proponent of the Celtic origin of the Grail legend, and this volume is full of synopses of Irish and Welsh stories which can serve as sources for your own scenarios.

Chretien de Troyes. *Arthurian Romances*. Dent Dutton Pub., 1977. Translated by W. W. Comfort.

Chretien was instrumental in popularizing the Arthurian legend and linking it to the romantic ideal. He wrote between 1170 and 1182. This edition contains four of his known poems: "Erec et Enide," "Cliges," "Yvain," and "Lancelot," but does not have his unfinished "Con du Graal."

Darrah, John. *The Real Camelot: Paganism and the Arthurian Romances*. Thames and Hudson, 1981.

A fascinating book which investigates the relationship of Frazer's Nemean grove priesthood to the Arthurian cycle. It gives the best illustration of how the old stories were preserved to give the cycle its odd familiarity and magic.

Eerdman, Wm. B. *Eerdman's Handbook to the History of Christianity*. Wm B. Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1978.

A candid compilation of facts outlining the growth of the Western religion. Recommended to everyone unfamiliar with this subject.

Eschenbach, Wolfram von. *Parzifal*. Vintage Books, 1961.

This is the German Grail cycle which provided inspiration for Wagner's moving opera. Many feel this is the best version of the Grail legend. It does not impose monastic prejudices upon the mystic Christian experience, and offers many tender, warm portrayals of both women and foreigners.

Ford, Patrick K. *The Mabinogi and Other Medieval Welsh Tales*. University of California Press, 1977.

This rendition of the major tales of the Mabinogi is especially useful in its speculations on the primitive myth which underlays the four main tales, and also for its speculations on Taliesin.

Geoffrey of Monmouth. *The History of the Kings of Britain*. Penguin Books Ltd., 1966. Translated by Lewis Thorpe.

In 1047 this book was a best-seller. It introduced the cycle of the British hero Arthur to the nobility across the European continent, beginning its meteoric rise to popularity which would last for five centuries.

Gildas. *De Excidio Britanniae*.

Gildas was a priest who wrote a scathing denunciation of both British leaders and people about 540. He names several living kings, cites several known saints, and mentions the battle of *Mons Badonicus*, or Badon, but never names his contemporary, King Arthur.

Graves, Robert. *The White Goddess*. The Noonday Press, 1977.

The late poet-laureate of England explores the mysteries of ancient Celtic myth using his poetic arts of inspiration and intuition. Often instructional, occasionally silly, and usually bewildering, it is worthwhile if you can struggle through.

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Originally translated from the Welsh and published in 1877, this book is a collection of Welsh Arthurian stories; four interesting and bewildering stories of very old, and half-forgotten mythology, plus a collection of stories about Taliesin. Very valuable, also, are the author's extensive notes which give supplemental information on other Welsh references, especially the *Triads*.

Heer, F. *The Medieval World*. Mentor Books, 1961. Translated by Janet Sondheimer.

This book provides important information on the social and historical era during which the Arthur stories were being popularized. It explores the case of the Jews, the romantic revolution, heresies, and the Inquisition.

Karr, Phyllis Ann. *The King Arthur Companion*. Reston Publishing Company, Inc. 1983.

A definitive catalog of the hundreds of characters, places, and things in Malory's book. This excellent book reconstructs the careers of many secondary characters, turning them into complete personalities. Its places are the basis of the map in *Pendragon*, as its chronology serves as the start of the *Pendragon* timeline.

Knight, Gareth. *The Secret Tradition in Arthurian Legend*. The Aquarian Press, 1983.

This book will be nonsense unless you know a little bit about the Kaballah and about Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophism. Once past that, though, the mystical interpretation of the major plot lines is quite sensible and fascinating. And, incidentally, helps explain the background philosophy of the Atlantean tradition portrayed in Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon*.

Lindsey, Jack. *Arthur and His Times*. Barnes & Noble, 1966.

The best book I have found which analyzes the historical context of the downfall of the Roman Empire and of King Arthur. The emphasis on earlier history answers such questions as who was Pelagius and what, exactly, was Pelagianism? Or who was the Emperor Maximus, famous to the Welsh as Maxen Wledig? Or why did Vortigern give the mercenaries land which cut him off from the Channel?

Logan, Patrick. *The Old Gods: the Facts about Irish Faeries*. Appletree Press, 1981.

A casual book useful to understand how the old worshiped deities of a people are worn down into fairies.

Loomis, Roger Sherman. *Arthurian Tradition & Chretien de Troyes*. Columbia University Press, 1949.

While it is always interesting to read the exciting translation of Chretien, this book compares the four Arthurian poems and analyzes them in light of Celtic legends and other medieval Arthurian literature. Though sometimes pushing a little too hard for pet theories, this book is the best one I've read to get an understanding of Chretien. A very useful glossary aided my mapping.

Loomis, Roger S. *The Development of Arthurian Romances*. Harper & Row, 1963.

The 500 years of Arthurian development are traced here, by a leading scholar in the field. He manages to make understandable the literary transition from a footnote in history to the greatest event of western literature.

Loomis, Roger S. *Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance*. Haskell House Publishers, Ltd, 1967.

This book (first published in 1927) by an eminent scholar of Arthurian literature contains some outlandish ideas repudiated in the introduction to this second edition, as well as many germs and theories of his later fame.

Loomis, Roger S., Ed. *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*. Oxford University Press, 1959.

This definitive volume includes thirty scholars from the field and covers every major Arthurian writing now known, with background information and detailed internal analyses. Though sometimes ponderous and pedantic, this volume is a must for anyone who investigates the background of Malory's tales.

Malory, Sir Thomas. *Le Morte d'Arthur*.

Malory's book is the basic text for the *Pendragon* campaign. Entries given in the text as an (X, Y) format are references to the Caxton edition, where X = his book number, and Y = his chapter number. Several versions of the book are available through bookstores.

Penguin Books, 1969 (two volumes). Edited by Janet Cowen.

This is my favorite version, and the one most quoted in the *Pendragon* text. It has the right balance of archaic words and modernized text without squeamishness.

Bramhall House, 1962. Rendition by Keith Baines.

This one is the easiest to read if you are uncomfortable with strange words. It does not have the chapter divisions from Caxton. I don't like the way some of the knights are interpreted in this version, but it is a good start.

University Books, Inc., 1961. Edited by John C. Wilson.

This version has no modern paragraphs or punctuation and may be difficult for beginners to read. It has an excellent table of contents, including all the synoptic chapter headings. It also has a fair index to proper names — the only one I have found to date.

Malory, Works. Oxford University press, 1971. Edited by Eugene Vinaver.

In 1934 a handwritten manuscript was discovered at Winchester College which copied the original manuscript written by Sir Thomas Malory. This landmark book presents that manuscript, which is considerably different in places from the one printed by Caxton, especially in organization. Paragraphs and punctuation are modernized, but spelling is not.

Two versions are available from the publisher. The larger contains an extensive introduction, critical apparatus, and a glossary not included in the smaller.

Markale, Jean. *Celtic Civilization*. Gordon & Cremonesi, Trans. 1978.

My favorite comprehensive survey of this remarkable culture through the ages, including well-established facts and speculation. The latter is mature, entertaining, and intellectually-satisfying.

Markale, Jean. *King Arthur, King of Kings*. Gordon & Cremonesi, 1976, Trans. 1977.

An excellent investigation into Arthur the man, and Arthur the myth, drawing on many sources not ordinarily available. This book is highly recommended to anyone studying the origins of the immortal tale.

Markale, Jean. *Women of the Celts*. Gordon & Cremonesi, Trans. 1975.

This book explores the feminine in Celtic mythology and legend, and shows how the powerful women's mystique was revealed in story and legend. Jean Markale is a Breton scholar and any book by him is recommended.

Matthews, W. *The Ill-Framed Knight*. University of California Press, 1966.

This book inquires closely to discover what we can about the author of *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Sir Thomas Malory. It closely investigates three probable candidates. Since proof is not present, or subjective, final conclusions are left to the reader.

McEvedy, Colin. *The Penguin Atlas of Medieval History*. Penguin Books, 1961.

History as seen through maps to the delight of all map readers. Political maps chart the ebb and flow of barbarians over the centuries.

Miller, Helen Hill. *The Realms of Arthur*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969.

A good beginning book to learn the social and historical background, and possible historical sources of the legendary Arthur, including the growth and development of the legend.

Nennius. *Historia Brittonum*.

This document was written around 800 and is the first record of the historical King Arthur. Nennius calls him *dux bellorum* rather than *rex*, and lists twelve battles against the Saxons.

Oldenbourg, Zoe. *The Crusades*. Pantheon Books, 1966.

The beginning of this book gives an excellent, and occasionally shocking, synopsis of medieval life and standards. The bulk of the book has nothing to do with *Pendragon*, but does record the lives of the men who enjoyed listening to the earliest versions of the King Arthur cycle.

Phillips, Guy Ragland. *Brigantia, a Mystery*. Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1976.

This book investigates the central region of Britain where lived the powerful tribe of Brigantes. The survey covers Roman times to the present and illustrates some interesting customs which have apparently continued for centuries.

Rhys, John. *Studies in the Arthurian Legend*. Clarendon Press, 1891.

A classic work exploring the King Arthur legend, especially in its relationship to other Celtic legends. Recommended for everyone seeking some of the deeper meaning of the myths.

Rutherford, Ward. *The Druids and Their Heritage*. Gordon & Cremonesi, 1978.

A no-nonsense analysis of the druids and their practices, eliminating the myth and revealing the wonder of their reality. I recommend this book highly.

Strassburg, Gottfried von., *Tristan*. With the Tristan of Thomas. Penguin Books, 1960.

The German poet based his version of this famous love story on a British version, now mostly lost but presented here to complete von Strassburg's unfinished manuscript. This 1210 rendition is a passionate story of a magical love-madness which betrays all the loyalties of chivalry. It is a much better story than Malory's version, but its unchivalrous truths and ironic irreverence are unthinkable in Malory's version.

Stenton, D. M. *English Society in the Early Middle Ages (1066-1307)*. Pelican Books, 1951.

If you are unfamiliar with the general way of life in the Middle Ages, especially at court, I recommend this book. During the years covered by the book the Arthurian legend was gaining popularity among the noble classes of Europe.



# Designer's Notes

Squire, Charles. *Celtic Myth and Legend*. Newcastle Publishing Co. Inc., 1975.

Stories and explanations of the rich Celtic lore reveal many of the characters and tales which evolved, over centuries, into the many people and events of the King Arthur legend.

Tannahill, R. *Sex in History*. Stein and Day, 1981.

This book presents an illuminating history of relationships between the genders from neolithic to modern times, always with good taste, humor, and irony. Especially important to *Pendragon* is the section on the Romantic Revolution.

Tennyson. *The Idylls of the King*. etc.

The poet laureate of England composed these Victorian interpretations of King Arthur and his knights, and is responsible for reviving most of the non-scholarly interest in the subject during this century. Although seeming quaint today, and often not in the character of Malory at all (all the gentlemen knights of the Round Table have proper wives), the poems still read with a lively lilt, and present more than a few fine turns of phrase.

Tuchman, Barbara W. *A Distant Mirror: the Calamitous 14th Century*. Ballantine Books, 1978.

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The author of *The Once and Future King* compiled this rendition of a medieval zoology book, complete with spurious facts and allegory. Few fabulous beasts appear, but it is illustrative of the knowledge known by the educated in medieval times.

Wise, Terence. *Medieval Warfare*. Hastings House, 1976.

Every aspect of military affairs are touched upon in this book, and it is excellent to introduce the subject to beginners. Armaments, armor, weapons, and tactics of field warfare and siege are well-covered.

In boyhood, I played with plastic knights, and read. My first encounter with the shining chevaliers of literature was inspiring enough to set off a lifelong search to find out the truth about Camelot.

By the end of grammar school I absorbed Howard Pyle's version of the stories, along with Bullfinch's, and read everything else similar, such as Pyle's *Men of Iron*, and Hugo of the *Silver Hand*, and Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

As I grew older I ran out of fiction and began absorbing medieval history. I found King Henry II, founder of the Plantagenet dynasty, no less remarkable than King Arthur. King Henry supported several early authors of Arthurian legend and probably served as the royal model in tales spread by the *conteurs*.

The Arthurian cycle underwent continuous transformation. Every generation of storytellers wove current court fashions, customs, or fancies into their tales to entertain their hosts with wondrous things which were familiar, yet distant from the squalid luxuries of their drafty feudal castles.

Only within the modern age have the stories not been updated with modern fashions. The advent of the printed page has fossilized the setting of King Arthur. Lord Alfred Tennyson, poet laureate for Queen Victoria, resurrected the tales of medieval pomp and splendor as a vision of a golden, bygone age. But Tennyson, like all storytellers before him, made some changes to suit his audience. His included changes in manners and custom to suit his Victorian patrons, such as the requirement that all Round Table members be properly married.

Most recent custom has been to maintain the feudal setting, harsh manners, and sometimes brutal plots and to add the modern trappings of introspection and psychological analysis. This effort supports our strong literary current to strip away some of the glamor from these once-shining heroes, all in an effort to make them, as in every generation, more like us. Today, we live better than any medieval baron, grander than any feudal poet imagined, yet we still search these same deep mines of storytelling art to find solace and meaning in our lives. Perhaps we are not as different from our cruder ancestors as everyday luxuries such as supermarkets would make us feel.

I sought appropriateness to the period and the Arthurian cycle. In playtesting, I discovered that players' preconceptions are often limited or wrong. Modern perspectives cannot exist comfortably in the feudal world. I sought to teach a feeling for appropriateness to the players. Finally, I strove to include obscure facts which would surprise, delight, and challenge even the most erudite scholar.

In *Pendragon* valiant knights struggle for fame, justice, and honor in an unfair world. Objectives not consistent with legendary chivalry and romance are beyond the scope of the game. Kings are simply the most powerful knights, bound by the same code despite their higher status. Magicians, grossly misrepresented in most fantasy games, are never quite accepted by the virile knights. Women have secondary roles, and peasants are rarely mentioned, except derogatorily or as faceless members of a mob.

I agonized over the morality of such segregation; ignoring women, magicians, and common people is far outside my personal behavior. But I wanted to present Arthur's world without the insertion of modern social standards.

Derived from the *RuneQuest* roleplaying game, the system used in this game has been deliberately kept as simple as possible. I am indebted to Ken St. Andre for showing me the math which turned my original two die rolls dependent upon a table into the current resolution system. The additional die rolls needed for damage in combat were added later to yield variable results valuable for play.

## Source and Setting

Malory's book of stories, the main source for the game, is the first modern rendition of the King Arthur tragedy. *Le Morte d'Arthur* is the most complete, succinct (except perhaps for the tale of Tristram), and accessible source.

Since none of the literary sources are complete enough for a roleplaying game, I drew additional information from other texts to complete the whole.



When conflicts arose between sources, I accepted chivalrous and romantic tradition before historical records and native faerie tradition.

Many lesser conflicts did arise, such as determining the location of the Archbishop's seat. Malory calls the primate of Britain the Archbishop of Canterbury, but Canterbury was not an important ecclesiastical seat until 597, when Augustine came to convert the Saxons. The papal legate was opposed by British bishops whose archbishop was at Menevia, in Wales. Other traditions state that Dubricus was archbishop before St. Dewi (David) of Wales moved the office to Menevia. I chose to ignore the Canterbury anachronism and use the Welsh alternatives to make Arthur's Britain more exotic and unknown in small ways.

### The Timeline

I had fun with the timeline by including events taken from every Arthurian source. I also added several historic events not previously included in Arthurian lore.

The chronology is largely based upon the "Tentative Chronology" presented in Karr's *King Arthur Companion*. Inevitably I made many changes, one of which I wish to explain.

I changed the century, which was based on two dates (435, 454) taken directly from Malory and the Vulgate. Since these are the only specific dates given, it was hard to reject them utterly. But fifth century Britain was the site of a number of well-documented historical events: the famous letter from Emperor Honorius in 410, the landing of Hengest and Horsa circa 428, the Cuneda and Cornovii migrations circa 430, and the visit of St. Germanus of Auxere circa 440. It has no place for King Arthur.

The next century, however, is a perfect hideout for a legendary era. The only real records of the period are the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and various saints' life histories, both sources compiled long after the events recorded. So I added a century to the two given dates, making them 535 and 554. Conveniently, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* hardly conflicts with the imposition of Arthur's reign into its history.

Taliesin, like Arthur, is another Welsh character from history and legend combined. He lived during the end of the sixth century and composed poems which recorded defeats of the northern Cymry by the Saxon invaders. In legend, he is a wonder-child and the supreme poet, an incarnation of mystic knowledge and experience. His appearance at the end of Arthur's reign is symmetrical with the disappearance of Merlin, another archmage, near the beginning.

Fitting in King Maelgwyn was easy. He was the King of Gwynneth (*Pen-dragon's* Gomeret) who is roundly condemned in Gildas' scathing essay, and who also appears in the legends of Taliesin, where his moral character is little improved. Thus he is a historical figure from the King Arthur period. The kingdom of Gomeret, named by Chretien (and identified as Gwynneth in Loomis' *Arthurian Tradition*) needed kings' names for the gamemaster's book, so the fit was fortunate.

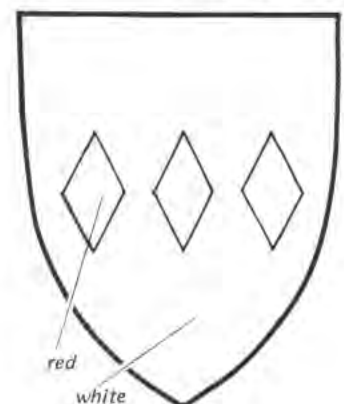
Arthur's conquest of Rome was hard to fit in. The defeat of any number of petty kings could hardly equal humbling Rome; the problem was compounded by the non-existence of the Western Roman Empire in the era assigned to Arthur. Theodoric the Goth, who ruled all Italy, Spain, and Provence in the sixth century, seems a natural substitute for Lucius. Theodoric dies at a convenient date, a suitable victim of Arthur's conquest. Since Arthur never returns to Rome and apparently ignores his Mediterranean conquests, history reforms and flows on undisturbed to Theodoric's heirs.

Since the French dynasty begun by King Clovis disintegrated among his heirs during the period of Arthur's conquest, Gaul provided only a few problems of incorporation. I can easily imagine that the multitude of knights who accompany Lancelot into exile and receive large fiefs in Gaul did also at the expense of the weak Merovingian kings. Gregory of Tours, a chronicler of the time, undoubtedly ignored King Arthur out of spite, much as Gildas, another living witness, refused to name Arthur the victor of the battle of Badon, for he resented the High King for both personal and family reasons.

In the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, most dates are of Saxon victories; their advance measures the Saxon conquest. Generally the dates are before Arthur's reign or after its end. Ida's founding of the Kingdom of Northumbria in 547 became a challenge when I realized that it was done on Lancelot's land during his absence. I first rationalized that this Saxon king was a friend of Lancelot's, possi-

*Designer's Notes*  
coat of arms: Nabon le Noir

Nabon le Noir



## Designer's Notes

kingdom description: *Sugales*

### SUGALES

Cymric/Pagan

*Lieges*: King Belinans (early), Dodinas (middle), K. Cinglas (late).

*History*: this kingdom represents the untamed Welsh hill tribes which never fully surrendered their ancient ways.

### Sugales



*Landmarks*: Abblasoure – a castle where Sir Galahad could not hear a mass, probably because it was pagan (Malory XIII, 14).

Cambrian Mts. – the mountains of Wales; they are generally flat-topped and covered with grass and heather.

Dean Forest – the forest between the Wye and Severn rivers (*Mabinogion*).

Llanbadarn Fawr – monastery. During Arthur's time the abbot is St. Padarn, who causes the earth to swallow Arthur for his tyrannical impudence (*Life of St. Padarn*).

Llyn Barfog – called the Bearded Lake. Arthur came here to fight a monster. Fairy cattle are known to come from here, as does a green-skinned lake fairy (*Folklore*, Ashe).

Orofoise – a region (Vulgate II, VII).

Orquelenes – city whose lord is Sir Guirionelant, enemy of Sir Gawaine (Chretien, *Graal*).

Pluere Castle – a.k.a. Castle of Tears. Castle whose lord has a wicked custom until visited by Sir Tristram (Malory VIII, 24-27).

Red Castle – a holding of the Lady of the Rock stolen from her by Sirs Edward and Hue (Malory IV, 26).

Roche de Sanguin – castle. Ladies imprisoned there make precious "vert et sanguin" cloths (Chretien, *Graal*).

Sauvage Forest – a vast forest covering central and northern Logres, much of it without roads, virgin and trackless. Within its confines lie hidden kingdoms, cut off from the outside for years.

Severn River – one of the three great rivers of Britain.

Watling St. – excellent Roman road running from Dover to Chester.

bly even the seneschal doing his job to defend the land by building a fortress in a strategic place. That neither Ida nor his descendants expanded their realm for a generation was further support for my solution. Finally, however, I took the simpler path and decided that Ida's was a rebellious act which succeeded, but which was checked when Lancelot returned.

### The Peoples

Saxons dominate the earliest stories as Arthur's earliest foes. He fought them and halted their invasion for a generation. Early chronicles by Nennius and Geoffrey of Monmouth depict Arthur combating the traditional Sassenach foes of the Welsh. But the history of combat against invaders was eclipsed by the glamor of the High Court, unvanquished save by internal dissent. When Saxons came to form a large part of the audience for the stories, enemies familiar to the current era were used instead. During the times of Malory, the Moslem menace was feared for political and religious reasons, and so Saracens were inserted instead of Saxons. Many modern writers have reinserted the Saxons into the story.

This same urge for historical authenticity has caused the reintroduction of late-age Romans into the story. Geoffrey of Monmouth calls Arthur's uncle the last Roman, and this plot was followed in the enormously popular series by Mary Stewart.

The remnant Romans provide the cycle with a touch of exotic history. They are a reminder of the once-golden age of the *Pax Romana*, lost to the barbarians, but replaced by Arthur's Peace. The civilized notions of trade, peace, and a unified political state were introduced and maintained by Roman custom, and died only with their cities. The Romans symbolize the imperial past and future potential of the island.

In contrast, the Picts are crude and savage, mostly because their lands are too poor to allow them anything else. Before Arthur's time they had successfully plundered the island several times. However, the image of the screaming savage painted blue with woad is a modern misconception made popular by Robert E. Howard in his *Conan* and *Bran Mak Morn* stories. Because I find this image both amusing and entertaining, the popular rather than historical version is included.

### Religion

Arthur's court, with all its trappings and holy days, is assuredly Christian. Some knights are portrayed as more pious than others – Palomides, though not baptized, was known to lead a pious Christian life. The Grail trio of Bors, Percivale, and Galahad were all deeply reverent. Even Lancelot repents and suffers the agony of spiritual revelation. On the other hand, Gawaine receives scoldings by priests for his worldliness. Although little evidence exists to allow atheist-knights, I would never demand that every character be religious. I felt the religious role was important enough to be included as an option.

Paganism was included in the game despite its absence from Welsh or French sources. The magic which colors the Arthurian cycle draws on pre-Christian stories of pagan gods and heroes. Arthur's knights and kings perform miraculous deeds and meet incredible beings in magical places. For storytellers, the old Welsh gods become new heroes dressed in bright clothes. Like wild hill tribesmen, they visit church once a year for form's sake, then partake in ancient seasonal festivities the rest of the year. Bearing feudal arms, the characters still exhibit magical traits inherited from prehistoric times.

Malory's Gawaine, derived from Gwyr the Bright God, is endowed with the increase of his strength until noon, with a corresponding decline towards evening, just like the sun-god. Percivale, known as Peredur in Wales, quests for the Grail, like the old god called Pryderi. Lancelot's rescue of the Queen, the Grail quest, his betrayal of a friend, and his many conquests are all reflections of the forgotten Celtic god Lug Lonnemnech. Morgan le Fay shows all the mysterious qualities of Modron, the Brythonic mother-goddess, mother of Mabon, the son-god whose strange life history was recorded by Welsh story-tellers as *The Mabinogi*. (Don't take my word for it, see Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition*.)

Pagan magic is everywhere. The ancient sage Merlin begins the magical world of Arthur by arranging the tryst wherein Arthur is begotten. Arthur's magic recognition through the sword drawing is echoed later in a more obviously mythic story when Galahad draws Balin's sword from a similar stone. The women met in strange woods usually have faerie traits. Pagan beliefs are echoed in the mysterious challenge knights who are always waiting at magical fountains, ready to fight to the death for their beautiful queen.

As for Wotanism, the commoners' religion was similar to that of the British pagans, but I have no respect for the chiefs' belief in Wotan (Odin). My portrayal of Saxon religion as a worldly belief devoid of spiritual meaning is part of the slanted presentation of the rude, powerful Saxons.

## Places

The geography of *Pendragon* is taken from four sources: Malory and other romances, history, legend, and necessity.

Most Malorian locations are from Karr's *King Arthur Companion*. However, her sources do not include references to the lands mentioned by Chretien, which I obtained from Loomis's *Arthurian Tradition*. Including Gomeret and Estregales forced some changes on the first map, as did my learning that Strangore and Estrangore are variant spellings of the same name.

Malory, along with most writers, mentions England (or Logres); Wales (often called Gales or Galis), and Scotland. I was first disturbed by this since England was named after the Angles, a Saxon tribe not yet in possession of the island; the name Wales comes from a Saxon word meaning foreigner; while Scotland was named after the Scots, an Irish people expanding from their homeland during the sixth century in the first step of a centuries-long conquest of northern Britain.

I substituted Logres for lowland Britain, Cambria for Wales, Cumbria for northern Britain, and Pictland for the northernmost land. England, or Saxonia, designates the southeastern coast where the invaders live.

Among the kingdoms, Norgales in particular deserves some explanation. Norgales means north Wales, but the land lies far outside the current Welsh land. However, the kingdom of Strathclyde was said to be Welsh by the Saxons, by which they meant British. In comparison with Cambria, or South Wales, it is certainly northerly. Apparently Steinbeck had a similar thought in mind when his knights fight near both Norgales and the Humber river at the same time.

Benwick and Ganis were difficult to place. According to Malory, Lancelot's Benwick was Beaunne, a city in Burgundy. But that is too far removed from Britain for my comfort. However, the city of Bayonne, an important seaport, lies upon the shore of Aquitaine, home of Queen Eleanor (a probable model for Queen Guenever), and more importantly, home of the romantic troubadour tradition which so colored the Lancelot-Guenever love affair.

For Ganis I settled on Gascony, along the Bay of Biscay. It surrounded Benwick, and Lancelot is clearly a member of the de Ganis clan. This also explains why Arthur received trade from the Mediterranean. Also, various tales describe how Britons settled there years before: first from Constantine's army which dissolved upon his death, and then from the survivors of the army of Maxen Wledig.

## Conclusion

I seek expression through creating roleplaying games; to exercise the imagination is to exercise the soul. Pretending to be a knight in the world of King Arthur stimulates the mind, imagination, and psyche of every participant and is good for mental, spiritual, and emotional health. Seeking and experiencing the infinite variety of human experience in the realm of myth and legend can only aid the inquisitive seeker.

The popularity of the King Arthur cycle has been recently on the rise again. Perhaps our modern trappings have not buried us completely, and we are not as far removed from those rough-and-tumble times as we may hope to be. The long era during which the stories originally became popular was like our own time; unexpected social growth troubled the natural order, spiritual development outstripped the institutions which once spontaneously sprang from the spirit, oppressed classes rebelled in subtle or traditional ways (romanticism for the former and heresies for the latter).

Yet throughout that troubled period the ideals and vision of King Arthur as the good and just king prevailed among both the landed gentry and the impoverished peasants. The popularity and poignancy of the Arthurian cycle has often faded and grown, but never disappeared. It is now more popular than ever, with more new novels appearing each year. Something intangible lives in this legend, something which people strive to recapture.

Roleplaying games offer a chance to take part in the ancient legends, when heroes conquered monsters and demons and were rewarded with health, wealth, and happiness. Everyday problems were expanded to mythic proportions, con-

**Designer's Notes**  
sub-kingdom description: *Surluse*  
kingdom description: *Sussex*

## Surluse

Cymric/Christian

*Lieges*: K. Gloier (early), D. Galahaut (middle, late).

*History*: any knights entering this land must joust at a bridge. If defeated, they must remain to help defend it (Malory I, 18; Vulgate III, IV).

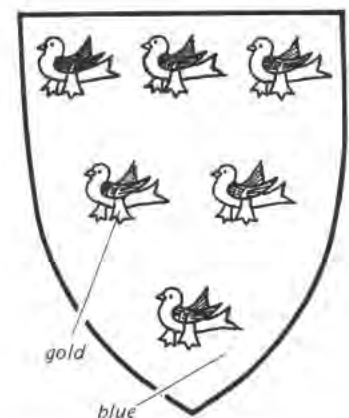
*Landmarks*: Sorhaute – city.

## SUSSEX

Saxon/Wotanic

*Lieges*: Aelle Bretwalda (early), Duke Sussex (middle, late).

Sussex



*History*: the Saxon invaders who seized this land were notorious for their slaughter of the residents of Andreacaster, a Roman fort nearby. The leader quickly fought his way to become Bretwalda of the Saxons.

*Landmarks*: Andreada – ruin. Former Roman fort sacked by the invading Saxons. Chichester – city.

Hastings – city. Home of the Haestinga clan.

Magouns – castle. Constable is Sir Bellangere, and here is raised Alisander le Orphelin (Malory X, 32-34).

Portsmouth – city, old, but named after a recent Saxon invader.

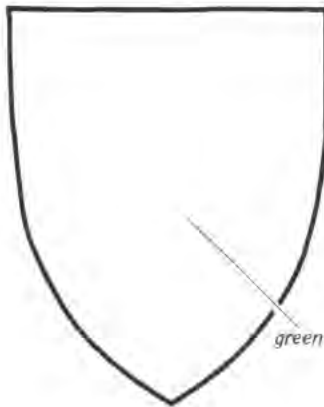
Stane St. – good Roman road leading from London to Portsmouth.

Weald Forest – a dense forest, thinly settled.



**Designer's Notes***coat of arms: Meliodas**sub-kingdom description: Wessex*

Meliodas



fronted by the heroes, and overcome with powers exaggerated by the champions' virtues.

To participate in the old tales was a fond daydream for medieval peoples. They entered the magic world of their dreams and fantasies when they listened to these tales. Roleplaying is more effective than daydreaming because it offers the chance for collective fantasizing. When several people cooperate to create such a make-believe event, everyone's personal participation is intense and real.

King Arthur has provided me with tremendous satisfaction and entertainment for many years. Now, I seek to share Arthur's world with you. Enter into the magic realm. Let those dreams within you stir, come to life, and be tested.

signed,

Greg Stafford

**Wessex**

Saxon/Wotanic

*Liege:* K. Cynric (early, middle, late)

*History:* a Saxon adventurer, with several shiploads of loyal followers, seized this region from the British. However, they have not expanded much beyond the coastal regions.

*Landmarks:* Portsmouth – city.

Southampton – Duke Hoel landed here with an army to help his kinsman, Arthur, against the Saxons (Geoffrey).

Wictis – Roman name for the Isle of Wight.

*Notes*  
*coat of arms: Segwarides*

Segwarides

