

**GURPS**

# CAMELOT

*Roleplaying in the Court of King Arthur*

*By Robert M. Schroeck  
and Peggy Schroeck*

**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**

The cover art depicts a scene from the Arthurian legend. In the center, a knight in ornate golden plate armor is kneeling, holding a sword that glows with a bright, golden light. To the left, a figure in a dark red hooded robe with a long white beard stands in a stone archway, holding a book. The background shows a stone interior with shelves containing various items like a skull and a vase. The overall lighting is dramatic, with the sword's glow being the primary light source.

# GURPS®

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*Roleplaying in the Court of King Arthur*

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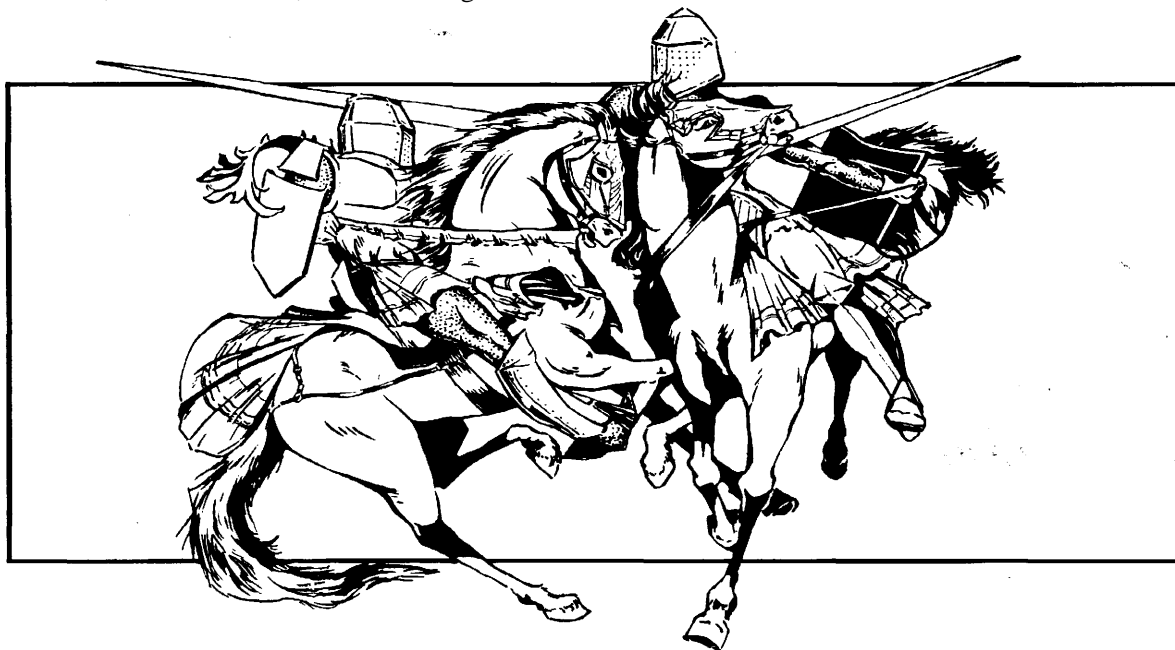
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# INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most enduring legend of the Western world is that of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. For 15 centuries the tales have survived, and in that time they have undergone changes that would astound their original tellers! But still, something remains the same at the core of the myth, something bright and glorious that transcends the stories and evokes a brilliant, perfect vision at the mere utterance of the word "Camelot."

*GURPS Camelot* seeks to evoke of that vision. More than just a simple game setting, *GURPS Camelot* will challenge the players - and the GM - to live the ideals at the heart of the tales.

Although tales about Camelot date back to the 6th and 7th centuries, it was not until the appearance of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* in 1136 that Arthur truly caught the public imagination. In less than 200 years, King Arthur went from a shadowy ruler in a few Welsh and Breton legends to a central figure in British and European culture. In France, a number of Breton tales were collected and embroidered to become what is now known as the *Vulgate* cycle. In England, stories ostensibly derived from "reliable sources" began to expand the sketchy career Geoffrey outlined. Arthurian verse appeared across the Continent.

The capstone was *Le Morte D'Arthur*, written by Sir Thomas Malory, and published by William Caxton in 1485. *Le Morte* drew together the widely diverse sources that predated it. Malory knew of both the French tales and British/Welsh traditions, and fused them in a masterly work that still survives as a classic today.

Malory's work set the standards and tone for Arthurian material for the next three centuries. It is considered the definitive reference and source to consult on the entire mythos, and has inspired countless later works. It, and the *Vulgate* which contributed to it, constitute the basis of the "mythic" Arthur.

However, the tales of Camelot are more than just myth. Scholars have begun to uncover the truth at the heart of the Arthurian mythos - the nearly-forgotten fifth-century warlord who drove a united Briton military force deep into the heart of France. This, too, can provide a colorful backdrop for gaming.

This book does not attempt to retell all the stories of Camelot. For that, the reader is referred to the works in the Bibliography, starting with T.H. White's *The Once and Future King* and Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. *GURPS Camelot* seeks to explain and interpret the background, and to present it in a fashion that will be most useful to the GM.

In the true *GURPS* tradition, the GM is not limited to one "standard" Arthurian setting. This worldbook provides detailed guides to the three basic milieus: the "mythic" Arthur as perceived in the Middle Ages by Geoffrey of Monmouth, Malory, Chretien de Troyes, and many more historians and storytellers; the modern or "cinematic" Arthur as seen through the eyes of fiction writers such as Mark Twain, T.H. White, John Steinbeck, Marion Zimmer Bradley and Mary Stewart, and the historical Arthur. Guidelines for mixing and matching these elements allow the GM to create his own unique version of Camelot, true to the spirit of the mythos but shaped by his own vision and goals.

Prepare to enter a glorious bygone era, a time of gallantry and chivalry, a spot of light amidst a world of darkness.

Welcome to Camelot!

## *About GURPS*

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

*Roleplayer*. This bimonthly magazine includes new rules, variants, new races, beasts, information on upcoming releases, scenario ideas and more. Ask your game retailer, or write for subscription information.

*New supplements and adventures*. We're always working on new material, and we'll be happy to let you know what's available. A current catalog is available for an SASE.

*Errata*. Everyone makes mistakes, including us - but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request.

*Q&A*. We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

*Gamer input*. We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings!

*BBS*. For those of you who have computers, SJ Games operates a BBS with discussion areas for several games, including *GURPS*. Much of the playtest feedback for new products comes from the BBS. It's up 24 hours a day at 512-447-4449, at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud. Give us a call!

## *Page References*

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to a page in the *Basic Set* - e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *Basic Set*, Third Edition. BY refers to the *GURPS Bestiary*, and FB the *GURPS Fantasy Bestiary*.

## *About the Authors*

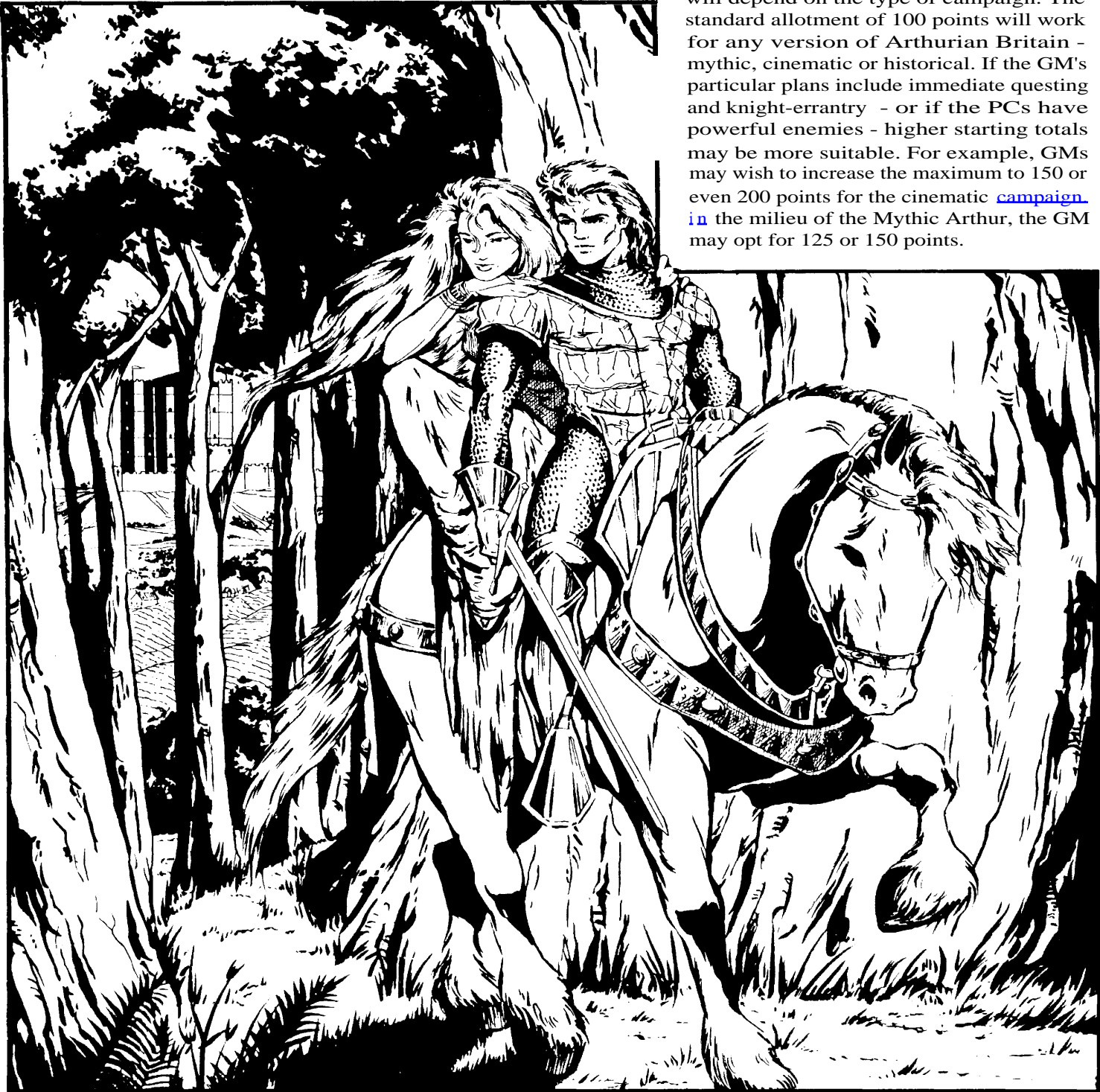
Bob and Peggy Schroeck were married in the middle of Bob's first effort for SJ Games, *GURPS International Super Teams*.

After seeing the aggravation, isolation and total nervous breakdown that writing caused her new husband, Peggy had to

try it herself ... just for the thrill. Both are members of the Society for Creative Anachronism, and feel as though *GURPS Camelot* had been compiled from personal interviews with Arthur and Company.

# 1 CHARACTERS

The starting point level for characters will depend on the type of campaign. The standard allotment of 100 points will work for any version of Arthurian Britain - mythic, cinematic or historical. If the GM's particular plans include immediate questing and knight-errantry - or if the PCs have powerful enemies - higher starting totals may be more suitable. For example, GMs may wish to increase the maximum to 150 or even 200 points for the cinematic [campaign](#). In the milieu of the Mythic Arthur, the GM may opt for 125 or 150 points.



*Characters*



For suggestions on appropriate character names, see the sidebar on p. 48.

### Nonhuman Characters

Races other than human are rare, but occasionally present in some of the tales. The GM may permit PCs to be of such a race. Full details on the nonhumans of the Arthurian mythos are given in Chapter 8.



## Advantages, Disadvantages and Skills

This section develops the advantages, disadvantages and skills given in the **Basic Set**, with notes on special applications

to the various sorts of Camelot campaign. Some new advantages, disadvantages and skills are also presented.

## Advantages

### Clerical Investment

see p. B19

In all three Arthurian milieus, Christian clerics are common; although divine intervention is known to the more legendary versions, the basic advantage cost of Clerical Investment remains 5 points. Note that Clerical Investment by itself is insufficient for those PCs who would be members of religious organizations; complete packages for various religious orders will be found on p. 13. To qualify for divine favor, see the Blessed advantage, p. 6.



### Legal Enforcement Powers

see p. B21

Legal Enforcement Powers does not exist as a separate advantage in Arthurian settings. Instead, it is subsumed under the rights and privileges granted by high Status and the Knighthood advantage (see p. 6).

### Literacy

see p. B21

In all its variants, Arthur's England is a pre-literate society. Although more frequent in the Mythic, Literacy remains an uncommon advantage. Historically, priests were the only regularly literate class, and then only in Latin; anyone who is literate was probably taught by a priest.

### Longevity

see p. B21

This is identical to Longevity as given on p. B21. Change the cost to 5 points for this and other backgrounds.

### Magical Aptitude (Magery)

see p. B21

Although magical creatures and objects abound throughout the various Mythic settings, very few humans are magically gifted. In order to possess Magery to any degree, an Unusual Background of **no less than 25** points must be purchased to explain how you happened to be so gifted. Examples: Merlin is the son of a demon (or of the Devil himself); Morgan le Fay grew up in a cloister and learned from books of magic kept there.

In the world of the historical Arthur, Magery *will* normally be entirely unavailable. However, at the whim of the GM, mystic powers may be at work; PCs gifted with Magery must then buy a 50-point Unusual Background. Another possibility, especially appropriate for the Pictish tribes of the northlands, would be shamanistic magic as described in **GURPS Ice Age** and **GURPS Mythos**.

### Military Rank

see p. B22

In the Mythic and Cinematic settings, Military Rank *per se* does not exist for any but the lowest foot soldiers in the various Arthurian military organizations. Ranks 0 through 2 are reserved for commoners and cannon-fodder, and do *not* confer any Status of any sort. On the contrary, a mature, career squire with one level of Stannis *will* outrank a Rank 2 veteran. For more details, see Status.

In the Historical setting, Rank suffers no such limitation. The Roman military system still exists, if slightly altered, and a man may reach high levels without having been born in the upper classes. Rank can confer Status (see p. B22.)

### Patron

see p. B24

A member of the nobility is the most appropriate Patron. A squire may take a knight as his Patron, but the knights must take the squire as a Dependent or Ally, depending on point value! Being squire to an NPC knight may be inconvenient unless the knight is a permanent member of the adventuring party.

### Reputation

seep. BI 7

For the purposes of Reputation, "All of Britain" counts as a large class of people. Each major region outside of Britain, such as Europe or the Middle East, also counts as a large class. "Everyone," for the purposes of Reputation, is all three of these areas combined. British characters with any Reputation at all outside of England will often have one Reputation for Britons and another, lesser, for Europeans.

If a character is created with an existing history as a knight of any merit, it is appropriate to take a reputation. Squires or "new" knights should not take a reputation except in very special cases, which may, at the GM's ruling, require an Unusual Background.

An important part of the growth of a knight, particularly a Companion of the Round Table, is the *development* of a reputation, good or bad. For many knights, the whole point of adventures, quests, and/or combat is to increase their personal fame. However, it is not a requirement that a knight of great prowess *must* be famous. Lancelot, the "best knight in the world," was an unknown in Britain when he first arrived. Arthur himself went from minor squire to High King of all Britain in a matter of minutes, and had to fight for every bit of the reputation he eventually gained.

### Status

see p. B18

As in any medieval setting, Status is the measure of a person's rights and power. Knights, especially the knights of the Round Table, are enforcers of law, with the "high justice" - judge, jury and executioner all in one package. Status also provides the equivalent of Military Rank, for only those of high birth may

command except in the Roman-influenced parts of the historical background

Use the following chart for Status when playing in a Camelot campaign:

Level	Example/Cost of Living
7	King Arthur, Queen Guinevere: \$20,000+
6	Court magician, archbishop, dukelsubking: \$10,000
5	Baron, bishop, prince of a subkingdom: \$5,000
4	Landed lord, Knight of the Round Table: \$2,500
3	Lesser lord, landed knight, abess, abbot: \$1,500
2	Unlanded knight, mayor, great merchant, priest (minimum): \$800
1	Squire, merchant, monk/nun: \$400
0	Freeman: \$200
-1	Servant, Serf: \$100
-2	Beggar: \$50
-3	Criminal: \$50

### Wealth

see p. B16

Through the classic tales, most knights seem to have no visible means of support. Some are aristocracy or even royalty, and can draw on the family coffers; the Round Table knights are almost certainly funded by the kingdom. However, many seem to exist in an economic vacuum. In a Mythic or a Cinematic campaign, the GM should feel free to waive the rules regarding income and cost of living. If he does so, Wealth as an advantage becomes effectively meaningless - for knights.

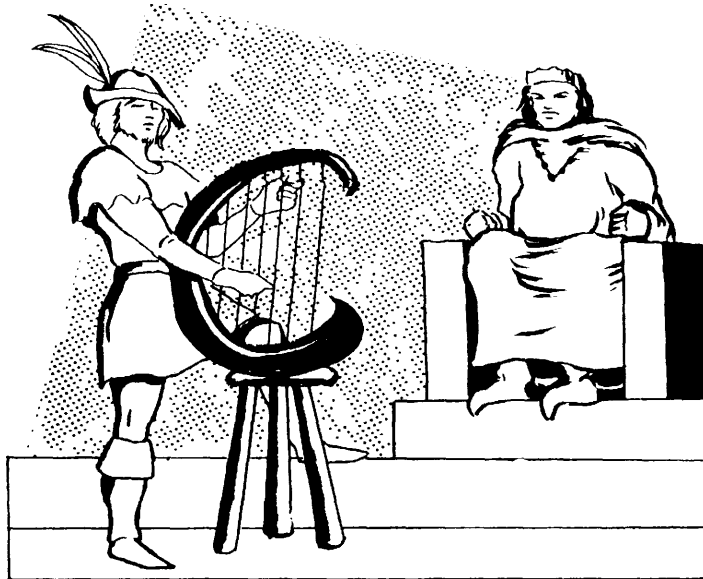
The common people do not fare as well. Even given the rosy state of the cinematic Britain, people still have to make money to live. (See the Job Table, p. 15.) Realistically, Average Wealth is the maximum for a commoner, freeman or serf.

## New Advantages

### Bardic Immunity

10 points

This advantage may only be taken by professional bards and minstrels, not dabblers in song. It represents the old Celtic laws and customs, still extant in Arthur's day, regarding bards.



These customs give them the right to sing what they please - or, in some cases, what they've been ordered to sing - without fear of serious consequences. If you have Bardic Immunity, you may even go so far as to sing a grossly insulting song to the king - you may be banished, but you can't be killed or imprisoned for it. You cannot even be whipped - harming a bard in any way is completely out of the question. The Immunity applies only to the content of your performances, not anything else you might do.

Proof of the bard is in the performance. As the official historians of a Celtic society, true bards could prove their position by performing epics and poems beyond the ability of the layman.

Should anyone violate a bard's Immunity, they risk damage to their good name. If the bard survives, or other bards hear about the offense, the offender will become known as a bad host, and will receive no more visits from traveling minstrels. And if the offense is severe enough, vicious satires about the offender will be composed and disseminated. These will injure the Reputation of the violator. If the violator has any Secrets, they are very likely to be found out and sung about.

In the Historical setting, these penalties are meted out by the Bardic College, a loose guild-like organization of professional minstrels and bards.

### Blessed

10120 points

The Blessed individual is especially favored by the divine power he or she serves. In most cases this will be the Christian God, but the GM may choose to allow Blessed persons of other faiths.

This advantage comes in two levels: 10 points for Blessed, or 20 for Very Blessed. The person must behave in a manner appropriate to the power he serves, or lose the benefits of this advantage. One may be Blessed *without* taking Clerical Investment.

Being Blessed provides certain benefits. Anyone known to be Blessed gets an automatic +1 Reputation among followers of his own religion. Additionally, a Blessed person gains a divine gift. In most cases this will be the Divination spell (see p. 26) at IQ level (IQ+5 for Very Blessed).

Other divine gifts are possible, at the GM's discretion. Lancelot, in some stories, was able to heal with his touch. Divine favor may also be displayed as exceptional Luck or, as in the case of Galahad, outright *deus ex machinas*, depending on the piety and unselfconsciousness of the character. Many Blessed individuals will be completely unaware that they *are* Blessed; their visions (or healing touches, or other gifts) *will* manifest only when they make heartfelt prayer to the power that they serve, or perform a fast or other sincere act of supplication.

Anyone who excessively exploits or abuses his divine gifts should have them taken away. Blessedness is not a crutch, but a reward, and the offender should more than amply demonstrate his worthiness before having its benefits restored to him.

It should be very difficult to gain the Blessed advantage during play, but not impossible. In addition to having the necessary points, the character must have acted (in the GM's opinion) in an exemplary manner vis-a-vis the laws and strictures of the power he serves, out of faith in that power. The character also must not be doing so for the express purpose of becoming Blessed. (The player may so plan, but the *character's* ethics and morals must not come from his own ulterior motives.) One must first become Blessed before becoming Very Blessed in this fashion.

### *Knighthood*

*Varies*

The path of knighthood comes in three stages in Cinematic and Mythic Britain:

*Knightly Candidate*: 5 points. You are working to become a knight. (See *Squire*, p. 14.) You have the right to use a lance in combat, to accept quests, to make and answer challenges and to hospitality from all allied people and nobles. However, you have no extra Status nor Legal Enforcement Powers unless specifically given a mission by royal decree. Your knightly rights are provisional - at the end of a given time, you must return to

court and give a true account of your deeds to prove yourself worthy of knighthood. Note that some knights merely get their knighthood from being born into a noble family; if you are such and become a knight "the hard way," by first being a knightly candidate, it will aid the later development of your Reputation.

*Knighthood*: 20 points, or +15 if you were a Candidate already. You receive all the benefits of a Knightly Candidate, as well as a +1 to Status (to a maximum of 6) and Legal Enforcement Powers at the highest level. You may only be legally punished by challenge from another knight. You gain the right to be called "Sir." You may or may not have a Duty to a greater knight, a noble or the King; some knights' allegiances were too loose to be worth any points.

*Companion of the Round Table*: 15 points. Prerequisite: Knighthood. This incorporates an additional +1 to Status (5 points), +1 to Reputation (5 points), Patron: Round Table on a 9 or less (10 points), and a Duty to Arthur and the Table on a 9 or less (-5 points). A Companion of the Round Table may grant knighthoods. Note that when taken as part of this package, the 5-point Duty does *not* count against your normal 40 points of disadvantages.

Note on buying Knighthood: The character must buy one of the above advantages at creation if he ever hopes to become a knight. However, it is recommended that the GM *not* require the character to pay earned experience to upgrade from Knightly Candidate to Knight, or from Knight to Companion. Instead, it is recommended that the GM grant these advantages by fiat (thereby increasing the point value of the character) when the character has earned his new niche through noble deeds. Exactly what is needed to earn such an upgrade is up to the GM, but a series of interlocking adventures spread out over several gaming sessions is recommended, at a minimum. It is not so much the success at these tasks that determines a candidate's worthiness for an upgrade, but his ability to comport himself in a knightly manner. Note that it is perfectly possible for a Knightly Candidate character to simultaneously acquire Knighthood and Companion, if his deeds warrant it.

### *Unaging*

*IS points*

You never grow old. Your physical age is fixed at maturity and will never change. You never have to make aging rolls. You may not take the Age disadvantage.

## Disadvantages

### *Code of Honor*

*seep. B31*

Note that most "knights" in the historic setting *will* not be encumbered by extensive Codes of Honor. Chivalry is a medieval invention, and was applied to the stories of Camelot. In an accurate depiction of 5th-century Britain, warriors *will* be likelier to have a strong loyalty (Sense of Duty) to their comrades-in-arms and their leader rather than a rigid Code of Honor.

In the mythic Camelot, however, the Code of Honor will be the rule, although it will vary greatly; all knights are not cut from the same cloth. There are differing levels of honor, ranging from that of the robber knights who roamed Britain between the reigns of Uther and Arthur, through that of many good knights who were but indifferently honorable, to the strict tenets of the Round Table.

Most knights possess a subset of the *Chivalric Code of Honor* which costs -10 points. They may define exactly which parts of the Chivalric Code are kept and which are discarded, but the GM is advised not to allow more than two elements of the Code to be excluded from the final version.

The *Pirate's Code of Honor*, at -5 points, is suitable for the more ethical robber knights and their like. On the other end of the spectrum, the Code of the most dedicated Round Table knights is the standard Chivalric Code, worth -15 points. For some knights, Vows (see p. B37 and p. 8) may be taken to add even further strictures!

It is possible for villainous knights to possess what could be called "evil" codes of honor. For instance, Breuse Sans Pite (see p. 98) seemed to murder knights out of some deep-seated moral imperative rather than out of any quest for personal gain. Such "evil" codes should be just as restrictive to the character as any "good" code, requiring him to take certain actions and refrain from others.

Any character who purchases one of the Knighthood advantages (see above) may take the Modified Chivalric or standard Chivalric Code of Honor at creation *without* it counting toward his normal 40 points of disadvantages.



### **Dependents**

*see page B38*

A knight's love need not be his dependent unless the love usually travels with the knight. (An example of this is Galahad and Dindane on the Grail Quest.) More commonly, a knight's younger squires (if any) will be dependents, as well as any servitors unable to competently defend themselves. Older squires may well qualify as Allies!

### **Duties**

*see p. B39*

Duties are a major part of most knights' lives. While a few knights are without liege-lords, and are thus "free-lances," most have at least a duty to their immediate feudal lords. No knight with a lord will have a Duty with a frequency of less than Fairly Often (9 or less). Foot soldiers (or "gallowglasses") will usually be of the "home militia" type, called up from the farms and villages when needed. Any man who acts as a gallowglass will have an Occasional Duty to his liege lord.

### **Enemies**

*see p. B39*

Enemies are common in all the tales of Camelot. Often the enemy is a single, powerful figure, such as Morgan le Fay. A single foe with 200+ points should incur more than the usual base cost of -10 for a single 100-point individual; instead, count them as the next higher level, for a base cost of -20 points.

### **Pacifism**

*see p.35*

Surprisingly, this is not an impossible disadvantage for a Mythic-era knight! Although almost all knights were viciously competent in battle (a virtual prerequisite for the position), some displayed behavior which could be construed as Self-Defense Only or Cannot Kill Pacifism. Also appropriate is Cannot Harm Innocents. This is a "subset" or weaker form of Cannot Kill; you cannot take both. A knight who takes Cannot Harm Innocents may use deadly force **Only** on a foe who is attempting to do him serious harm. Capture is not "serious harm," unless the knight is already under penalty of death! A knight who Cannot Harm Innocents will never intentionally do anything that causes or even *threatens* injury to the uninvolved. -10 points.

### **Social Stigmas**

*see p. B27*

Common social stigmas for the Arthurian settings are:

**Infidel:** -10 points. You are an ethnic Arab and presumed to be a Moslem (although, like Sir Palomides or Sir Priamus, you may actually be Christian). You get a -2 on all reaction rolls, but +2 from other "infidels." If you are a Christianized Arab you still suffer from the stigma, although if you have a Reputation, it will override the stigma's reaction penalty - but **Only** when you are recognized! (This stigma is normally suitable only for the Mythic and Cinematic settings - but see the *Saracen/Infidel* archetype on p. 13.)

## **New Disadvantages**

Some of the new disadvantages described below might be most appropriate in a "Silly Arthur" campaign (see p. 65), although they would not be out of place in a more normal game.

### **Compulsive Carousing**

**-5 points**

You have an uncontrollable urge to party. You must go in search of a social gathering at least once a day, and participate for at least an hour. You will try any alcoholic beverage without a second thought (you may even sample hallucinogenic plants

*Outsider, outlaw, or barbarian:* -15 points. This covers a wide range of possibilities: Picts, Angles, Jutes and Saxons, but not Europeans in general. Outlaws, while not uncommon, are rarely immediately identifiable; outlawed/banished knights are subject to a bad Reputation or reduced Status rather than a Stigma.

In the classic Arthurian settings, women do not suffer a social stigma for their sex. In the historical milieu, the memory of Celtic warrior queens such as Boudicca is still strong, although the GM may, at his option, impose a -5 point Second-Class Citizen stigma (see p. B27) to reflect the anti-female bias of the early Christian teachings that converted Britain. In the Medieval and Cinematic settings, though, women are not only not second-class citizens, they are given a great deal of respect. Additionally, while they are subject to the strictures of their marriage vows, they have a good deal of personal liberty. In at least one instance, two women of the court (Dames Elyzabel and Lore of Carlisle) pursued a quest on their own.

### **Vow**

*seep. B37*

Vows are the bread and butter of a Companion of the Round Table! Some knights take special vows permanently, as a means of personally extending the code of the Round Table and demonstrating their worthiness. More commonly, short-term vows are made: "I vow to ride forth and search for the missing Sir Lancelot for a year and a day!" "I **VOW** to fight for the honor of the Queen in the coming challenge, should no greater knight than I step forward to take up her cause." A knight may swear such temporary vows frequently, although vows which conflict with each other may be taken at the same time. For example, the two vows given above would conflict, since the one swearing cannot fight in a challenge *and* be riding forth at the same time.

Some vows may be abandoned without loss of honor. An example of this would be the frequent vows made, as in the example above, by members of the Round Table to find Lancelot. Once Lancelot is found, or returns on his own, such a vow is considered to have expired, even if the declared time limit has not been reached. However, casually ignoring a vow, particularly one made in public, should result in a penalty of some sort. Most commonly, this would be a loss of 1 or more levels of Status, expulsion from an order of knighthood, or even divine displeasure expressed in the form of Unluckiness or even the Cursed disadvantage (see p. 9)!

It is not uncommon for a knight to be forced into making a promise at swordpoint. Rarely will such a promise be considered a Vow, although some highly chivalric knights will feel honor-bound to fulfill it. As usual, the GM will have the final say.

Despite their magnitude (or lack of it), vows taken during the course of play should not be assessed against the point total of the character.

and concoctions simply for the experience), and you aren't particularly picky about your romantic partners.

### **Compulsive Vowing**

**-5 points**

You can never just *agree* to do anything, you have to make it a sacred vow. "I vow always to eat what is put before me, without complaint." "I vow to tolerate no unkindness to animals." Though they will often be trivial in nature, you will treat every vow you make with the same utter solemnity and dedication. Often you will tack extraneous vows on to legitimate ones,

### **Characters**

"I vow not to trim my beard until Sir Lancelot is found." "I vow never to refuse a challenge made in the king's name, and to dedicate a shrine for each challenge I fight."

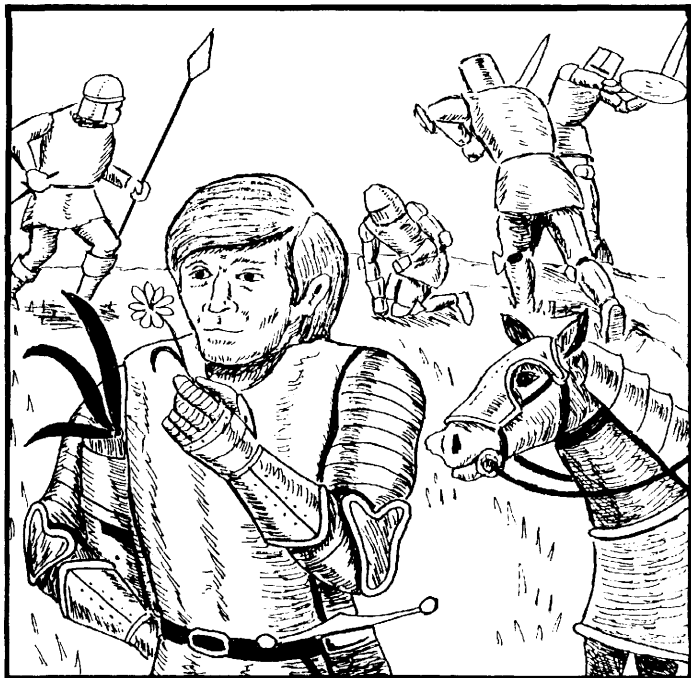
**Cursed** -75 points

Like Unluckiness, but worse. When anything goes wrong for your party, it happens to you, first and worst. If something goes right, it misses you. And any time the GM feels like hosing you, he can, and you have no complaint coming, because you are cursed. You can't buy this off just by spending points - you must determine what has cursed you and deal with it, and *then* spend the points.

**Glory Hound** -15 points

This is an advanced case of Overconfidence (p. B34); a character may not have *both* Glory Hound and Overconfidence.

You insist on being in the limelight - you will always take the greatest risks, create complex plans that feature your abilities, lead the charge, etc.



**Lover's Distraction** 15 points

This affliction affected many knights, from Lancelot on down. It is the unlucky tendency for a knight in combat to suddenly go into a trance or stupor upon unexpectedly catching sight of his lady. During this trance, which is filled with deep romantic thoughts about the lady or their love for each other, the knight is effectively catatonic - he can be led about, shouted at, even pushed over, without rousing him. He is unable to make any Active Defense. However, any solid blow, such as a slap or a strike with a sword, will immediately bring him to his senses, even if it does no damage. If left to himself, the knight will wake up again in 2d minutes.

Before any combat is entered by a knight with this disadvantage, and if the knight's love is present, the GM secretly rolls 3d. On roll of a 6 or less, he will be struck by the Distraction.

The exact moment is up to the GM, who should decide based on the humorous or dramatic potential of the scene, as well as any other disadvantages the knight might have, such as Unluckiness or Cursed.

**Secret** *varies*

A Secret is some aspect of your life (or your past) that you must keep hidden. Were it made public, the information could harm your reputation, ruin your career, wreck your friendships, and possibly even threaten your life!

The point value of a Secret depends on the consequences if the Secret is revealed. The worse the results, the higher the value, as follows:

**Serious Embarrassment.** If this information gets around, you can forget about ever getting a position at court, gaining a knighthood, or marrying well. Alternatively, your Secret could be one that will simply attract unwanted public attention if it is known. -5 points.

**Utter Rejection.** If your Secret is discovered, your whole life will be changed. Perhaps you will lose your patron, and be rejected by friends and loved ones. Perhaps you will merely be harassed by admirers, cultists, or long-lost relatives. -10 points.

**Imprisonment or Exile.** If the authorities uncover your Secret, you'll have to flee, or be imprisoned for a long time (GM's decision). -20 points.

**Possible Death.** Your Secret is so terrible that you might be executed by the authorities, lynched by a mob, or assassinated if it were ever revealed - you would be a hunted man. -30 points.

If a Secret is made public, there will be an immediate negative effect, as described above, ranging from embarrassment to possible death. There is a lasting effect - you suddenly acquire new, permanent disadvantages whose point value equals *twice* that of the Secret itself! The points from these new disadvantages go first to buy off the Secret, and may then (at the GM's option only) be used to buy off other disadvantages or (rarely) to buy new advantages. Any unused points are lost, and the character's point value is reduced.

The new disadvantages acquired must be appropriate to the Secret and should be determined (with the GM's assistance) when the character is created. Most Secrets turn into Enemies, Bad Reputations, and Social Stigmas. They might also reduce your Status or Wealth - going from Filthy Rich to merely Very Wealthy is effectively a -10 point disadvantage. Some Secrets could even turn into mental or physical disadvantages, though this would be rare.

Similarly, if the GM allows you to buy off old disadvantages with the new points, these too must be appropriate to the Secret. The most common disadvantages that could be bought off are Duties and Dependents.

In general, a Secret appears in a particular game session if the GM rolls a 6 or less on three dice before the adventure begins. However, *as for all other disadvantages of this type*, the GM need not feel constrained by the appearance roll - if he thinks the Secret should come into play, it does!

When a Secret appears, it is not necessarily made public. The character must somehow prevent the Secret from being revealed. This may require him to cave in to blackmail or extortion, to steal the incriminating documents, or even to silence the person who knows the Secret. Regardless of the solution, however, it's only temporary - the Secret will appear again and again until it is finally bought off. Secrets may be bought off automatically through exposure (see above) or with earned character points over the course of play.

## Skills

The Cinematic and Medieval Camelots are both set in a Tech Level 3 society; the Historical Arthur is TL2. No skill inappropriate to the TL of the chosen setting may be taken. No unarmed combat skills except for Brawling (and, optionally for those who own **GURPS Martial Arts, Wrestling and Pancratium**) are known.

### Languages

In the Historical setting, the native language of the Britons is Old British, a Celtic tongue which is the precursor of modern Welsh. (Old British is completely unlike modern English, which is a crossbreed Germanic/French tongue.) This is a Mental/Average language skill.

In the Mythic and Cinematic worlds, English is the native tongue. The GM and players may want to use "Malorian" Middle English structures and idioms (see the Glossary, p. 127) in Mythic games, and modern English for Cinematic. For the purpose of cross-world interaction, modern English defaults to Middle English-2, while Middle English defaults to modern English-3.

In all three settings, Latin is also available to the educated, and is always known by members of the priesthood. Additional languages available in each version of the mythos will be listed in the appropriate section.

### Heraldry

*see p. B58*

This is not a skill available in the Historic setting, except to allow the character to identify war banners, troop standards, and the like; the classic personalized shield device had not appeared in the "real" 5th century. Some decorated shields had appeared, more so among the Irish than the British, but Heraldry as described by the skill was not formalized until the 12th century.

In the Cinematic setting, Heraldry could almost be considered a prerequisite for knighthood; nearly every knight had his own device, and knowing the devices of your friends - and enemies - was vital to their safety and yours.

## New Skills

### Bardic Lore (Mental/Hard)

**Defaults to IQ-6**

A true bard **will** know many songs and poems, long and short, memorized word for word. On a successful roll, he can perform one accurately; a failed roll means he forgot or garbled something. A separate roll, on Bard skill, is necessary to make the performance exciting!

A bard does not necessarily have skill in composing new poems (though the best do); that is the Poetry skill.

### Chess (Mental/Easy)

**Defaults to IQ-4  
or Strategy-4**

This skill is not available in the Historic setting.

This is the ability to play a good game of chess. It also includes the knowledge of game etiquette and tournament procedures. A necessary social skill in the court of King Arthur, chess is often studied as a Hobby skill (see p. B54), although in a campaign focusing on the Court and its members the GM may require that it be purchased at the regular point cost.

Chess is a culturally-related skill; those who have grown up in a culture where chess is known will have a default of IQ-4 or Strategy-4. Someone who has had no prior exposure to the game, but is given at least an hour's instruction, will gain an

### Characters

In the Mythic setting, personal shield devices were common, but while many knights possessed the Heraldry skill, it often was of little or no use. It was common for knights to travel with blank, covered, or even borrowed shields! Many are the stories of two solitary knights who met and fought, only to discover that they were old friends - or even brothers - after the battle.

### Lance (Physical/Average)

*see p. B51*

In addition to Riding, Lance has one other prerequisite in the Mythic and Cinematic settings. No one but a knight or knight-candidate is legally permitted to use this weapon.

### Physician/TL (Mental/Hard)

*see p. B56*

In Arthurian settings, the herbalism aspect of this skill comes to the fore. Many enchanters and enchantresses may be nothing more than herbalists, capable of brewing sleep potions, hallucinogens and other seemingly magical drugs from plants commonly found in the British countryside. Even in a "realistic" historical setting, such herbal compounds are allowed, and may be the source of many incidents in the tales.

The creation of poisons is **not** a direct function of this skill - but see the Poisons skill (p. B67), which defaults to Physician-3.

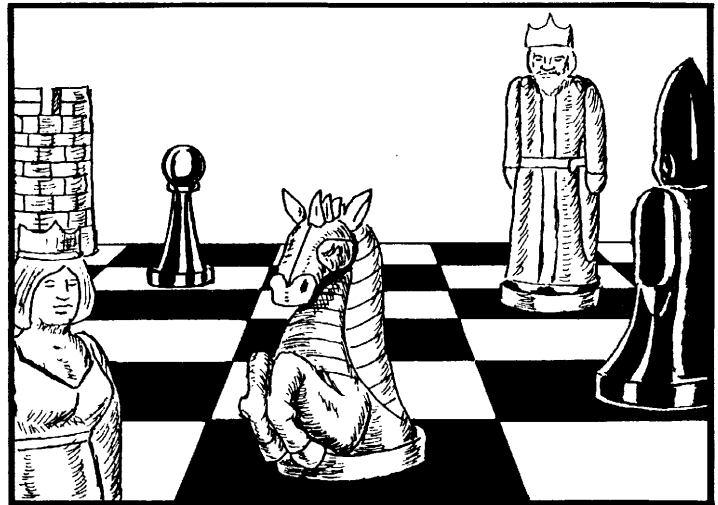
For more information on the making of herbal preparations, see p. 21.

### Tactics

*see p. B64*

Although strategic planning is seen often enough, tactical efforts are virtually non-existent in any legendary or cinematic Arthurian retelling. Combat either has been formalized almost into an abstract, in the case of jousting, or is a hopeless free-for-all melee (tournaments). Tactics, as a skill, is unusual for the average knight.

Of course, in a historic setting, the niceties of chivalric combat do not exist; Tactics becomes a very necessary skill.



identical default skill. At the GM's option, Strategy can default to Chess-4.

Chess is similar to the TL skills in that it is not merely a game but a body of knowledge that grows progressively through time. Although to the average player it would not matter, this knowledge is indispensable to those of master level (Skill 20) and higher. In fact, the knowledge of past techniques and gambits is of such utility to the chessmaster that if he is playing another master from a culture or time with a less extensive body of chess knowledge (GM's call), he has a + 1 to his effective skill. This bonus applies only when playing another master of the game, as less-skilled players would miss the subtleties.

It is possible to simulate a full game of chess. To do so, a series of Quick Contests are made. The GM keeps a running score for each player, following these guidelines:

Won Contest	+ 1
Won with a Critical Success	+ 3
Failed Roll	-1
Critical Failure	-3

A successful roll which still lost has no point value.

## Character Types

These are basic roles which make excellent starting-places for characters in harmony with the essential nature of the legends. (These archetypes apply almost exclusively to the Cinematic and Medieval sub-genres; more realistic character types are dealt with in the chapter on the Historical Camelot.)

### Bard/Minstrel

Traveling bards and minstrels can move quickly and easily from place to place, and meet every level of society from nobles to peasants. They carry news and messages as well as entertainment, and are almost always welcome wherever they go. In addition, they are still close enough to Celtic tradition that they remain the keepers of oral history. Most importantly, even in Arthur's day, the "diplomatic immunity" of the bard or minstrel protects him. (See *Bardic Immunity*, p. 6.)

A minstrel should have Bardic Immunity, at least one Musical Instrument, Singing and Bardic Lore skill. Eidetic Memory (30 point level) is useful, as are Musical Ability and Voice.

### Companion of the Round Table

Contrary to popular belief, the Knights of the Round Table were not always paragons of virtue. Many — *most* — were worldly and proud, or earthy and sinful. They were even worse after the Grail Quest was concluded. In some cases, they were not even exceptional knights, having gotten their position through family influence. The following are the absolute minimum requirements to qualify as a Companion:

Knighthood; Companion of the Round Table (see p. 7); Status 4; Wealth (Wealthy or better); Code of Honor (Modified Chivalric, see p. 7); Heraldry; Lance; at least three melee weapons; Riding; Shield; Savoir-Faire.

A more noble knight would add something similar to the following (this is only a suggestion, and not a hard-and-fast set of requirements):

Reputation +3; Code of Honor (full Chivalric); Sense of Duty to Country and King; Honesty; all combat skills at 14+.

A Companion does not have to be British, nor does he have to be a Christian. The Saracen Palomides served many years before being baptized; knights came from as far as Constantinople to become members of the Table.

The player who first achieves a score 10 points above his opponent's is considered to have won the game. If there are **three tied contests in a row**, the player who is behind is considered to have forced a draw. He can always choose to decline the draw and continue playing. (If the players are tied at the moment, both must agree to draw, or the game continues.)

Each Quick Contest represents approximately 1 minute of game play; thus, a master will almost always defeat a novice in a matter of minutes, while evenly-matched players of any level *will* take much longer. Of course, the GM has the option of resolving the entire game with a single Quick Contest, but the minute-by-minute simulation can be more exciting for the participants!

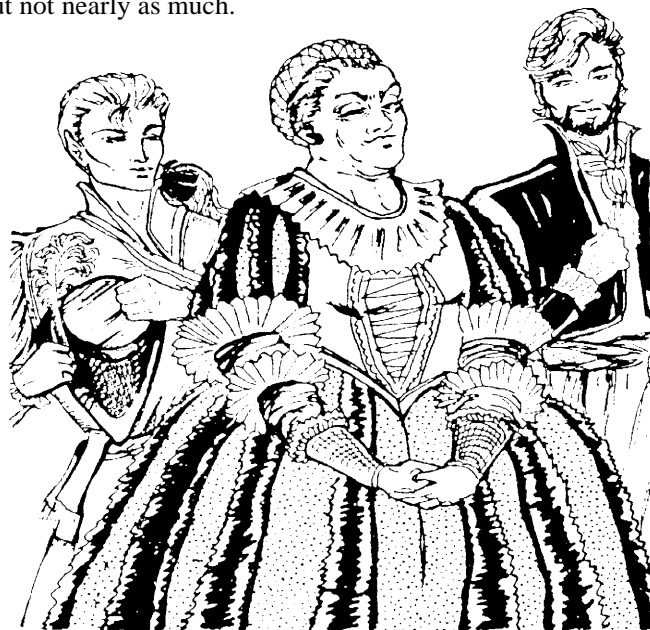


### Darnosel/Dame/Lady

Women in Arthurian society have remarkable freedom; damsels often ride alone across the country without fear. Older women ("dames") often hold positions of immense authority — witness the various Ladies of the Lake (p. 53). Widowed noblewomen often controlled castles and huge tracts of land; in at least one subkingdom (Malahaut), such a dame acted as vice-regent to the king.

There can be no set "package deal" for the Arthurian woman, despite the distressingly regular appearance of nameless "generic" damoiseis in the tales. While some exist solely to be Dependents for their knights, others have goals and motivations which can confound and confuse the men around them. Damsels and dames often have unusual or esoteric knowledge, from herbalism to sorcery.

Older women often have authority or status accorded them due to their age. Younger women are still treated with respect, but not nearly as much.



## Dwarf

It is hard to go anywhere in the Malory or Vulgate Britain and not come **across** a dwarf servant; they are strikingly common. There has been speculation that they may have been members of a conquered aboriginal race - the "Prydn" or "Little People" of Parke Godwin and Mary Stewart. They may also simply be victims of genetic dwarfism, for there is at least one mention of a damsel related to a dwarf becoming the lover of a knight.

The dwarfs that appear in Malory and the Vulgate do not, temperamentally, fit a single mold; they range from sarcastic bumpkins to genteel majordomos. Their size and seemingly universal poor looks put them at a distinct disadvantage in a world of armored knights and beautiful ladies, but an ingenious player can make clever use of a dwarfs shortcomings.

An Arthurian dwarf follows these lines: Appearance: Average or worse; Dwarfism; Social Status -1; Social Stigma: Servant Race (-5 points).

## Knight

Knights come in all levels of skill and quality. Contrary to pop culture tradition, the Knights of the Round Table are a minority in Britain, the cream of the crop (mostly). The majority of knights were private champions, mercenaries, and rank beginners. Additionally, there was a sub-category of knight which is called here the Knight of Renown. This was an experienced but independent knight with a reputation - usually well-deserved. (Companions of the Round Table are themselves actually a subclass of Knights of Renown.)

A knight need not be rich (although it does help greatly), nor does he have to be high-born. In at least one source, Percival is a farm boy, and several knights of the Round Table started out as kitchen help or other lowly castle staff. There is, however, a difference between being a knight and being knighted. Anyone can put on armor and a sword, get on a horse, and call himself a knight. Being knighted is another thing entirely - see *Knighthood*, p. 7, for its privileges and duties.

The potential knight must have at least 1 point in all of the following skills. This is enough to qualify him as a beginning *knight* (or a deteriorating oldster). Riding, Lance, at least two Melee weapons, and Shield. Useful but not mandatory are Heraldry, Animal Handling and Armoury. Although he may possess the Knighthood advantage, more likely he is a *Knightly Candidate* (p. 7).

A Knight of Renown is much more skilled than the basic knight; he normally has several different melee weapons to his credit, holds himself to some chivalric or personal Code of Honor, and often has several social skills such as Chess, Savoir-Faire, Fast-Talk and Diplomacy. He always has a Reputation; he may or may not be properly knighted, but in either case, he usually takes the honorific "Sir." He may qualify for the Round Table, if he is not already a member.

While in the historical setting almost all characters (with the exception of some Saxons) will be British-born, knights from the Continent are commonly found in the Medieval and even Cinematic settings. Knights from as far as Hungary and Constantinople came to Britain because of Arthur's fame.

A "generic knight" character template is on p. 99.

## Lady Knight

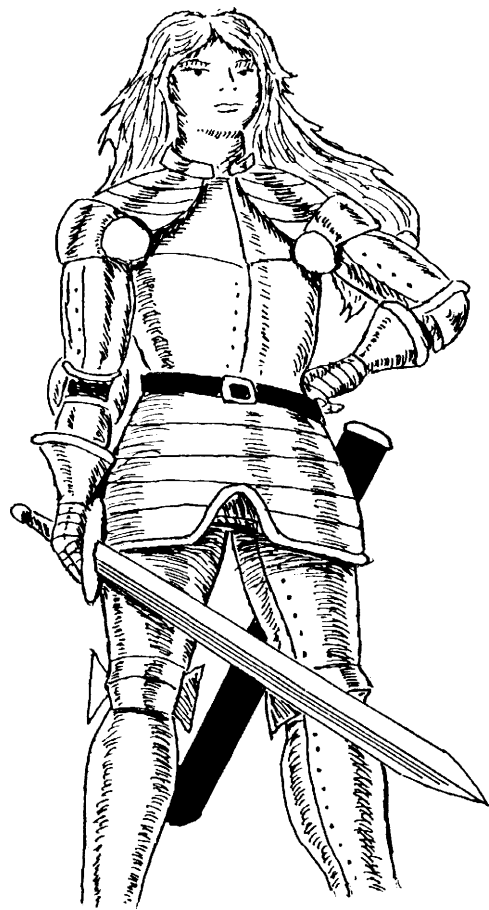
Few women bore arms and/or armor in the Vulgate and Malory. Avenable, under the name Grisandoles, followed the historically accurate tactic of disguising herself as a man and made her way from squire to seneschal in Rome, presumably being knighted along the way. The Damsel of la Beale Regard took up

sword and shield on one occasion with such ease *as to suggest* that she was very familiar with their use. By stretching the evidence, perhaps three or four other dames and damsels could be added. But no woman ever made it to the Round Table.

However, it is clear that a female knight is not ruled out. In later tales growing out of or inspired by the Arthurian mythos, fully qualified female knights appear, such as Bradamante of the Roland legends, and Britomart and Palladine in Spenser's *Faerie Queen*. By the time Malory wrote, at least one woman (the so-called "Joan of Caesarea" whose tomb was excavated in Israel) had ridden armed and armored with the Crusaders.

The lady knight in Camelot's Britain may choose either openness or disguise. In either case, she must possess the basic requirements for a knight as given above. The woman "undercover" must also possess Disguise and/or Acting at a high enough level to make her continued success plausible. The openly female knight may (at the GM's option) have to take a -5 point Social Stigma (Female in a Man's Job) to represent the automatic belittlement she will receive from many people. However, this can be used to her advantage, especially if she is highly skilled in battle. Her opponents will continually underestimate her, at least until her Reputation grows!

One possibility is that some Arthurian heroes were actually disguised female knights. What, for instance, if the saintly and pure Percival was actually a woman in disguise? This would be an excellent way to confuse and thwart players who know too much about the Arthurian cycle.





## Pict

Perhaps the sole remaining vestige of Britain's original native population, the Picts lived north of Hadrian's Wall, controlling most of what is today Scotland. They have been portrayed as barbaric and primitive, but part of that image is no doubt based on British prejudices. More cultural information on the Picts is found on p. 39.

A Pictish character is built along these lines: Primitive (-1 TL); Social Stigma: Barbarian; Language: Pictish at IQ. Acute Senses are appropriate, but not mandatory. Survival and Animal Handling skills will be possessed by all Picts; males will have the Bow and perhaps Spear skills, while women tend more towards a shamanistic role. Pictish sorceresses are not unlikely! It will be a rare Pict who leaves his tribe to live on the south side of the Wall, but an exceptional one as well.

## Priest/Hermit/Monk/Nun

Christian clerics of various types are very common in the Medieval setting, less so in the Cinematic. Although none really joined quests in the texts, there would seem to be no real prohibition against doing so.

The men of God who appeared in the stories can be divided into three classifications: Priests, Hermits, and Monks.

*Priests* are ordained and normally have a church or congregation to serve. They are usually members of the church hierarchy, although some priests maintain small, remote shrines.

Priests must take the following: Clerical Investment; Literacy; Social Status 2 or higher; Patron: Church (Reasonably powerful organization, appears on 9 or less); Duty to Church/Congregation (10 or less, non-hazardous); Minor Vow: Chastity; Theology at IQ; Latin at IQ.

*Hermits*, or "anchorites," are reclusive men of faith, not formally connected to the church. They sometimes establish group residences called hermitages, although it is not uncommon for them to reside singly in more rustic abodes and live off the land. They occasionally will offer hospitality to traveling knights, especially those on a holy quest. Hermits very often were retired knights.

Note that women can be hermits, too. Female hermits are called " anchoresses," but are also referred to as simply "recluses."

Hermits will possess: Reputation: Holy Man/Woman (even if undeserved! +1 from Christians); Strong Will; Minor Vow: Chastity; Major Vow: Devote life to prayers and piety; Survival for the appropriate terrain at IQ. Some hermits may have Odious Personal Habits, such as Doesn't Ever Wash (-2) or Self-Flagellation (-3). Vows (especially strange ones) are likely; fasting and continual prayer are typical. They are often well-educated, with Literacy and Latin, Calligraphy and Theology all at IQ or better. They commonly know herbalism or healing magic, either through being Blessed or through their own efforts.

*Monks* are ascetic clerics who operate out of monasteries and abbeys, providing succor to the poor and sick, but also fostering scholarship; monasteries are often *schools*. They do not leave the monastery.

Although there may be various orders of monks in Britain, no distinction is made in the Vulgate and Malory. (In truth, no formal orders had yet been established by Rome in the 5th century.) A generic package: Clerical Investment; Literacy; Patron: Order (Reasonably powerful, appears 9 or less); Social Status 1; Minor Vow: Chastity; Major Vow: Aid the poor, sick and helpless; Latin and Theology at IQ; Calligraphy at DX.

Much that is said of monks is also true for nuns; the sister order(s) have the same basic package. They receive less attention

in the cycle, and seem to be more reclusive than their male counterparts. Both groups may have unusual resources and talents among their members. Morgan le Fay reportedly learned magic from the nunnery where she grew up; physician/herbalists would also not be unlikely.

Note that *none* of these character types is automatically Blessed; the vast majority are probably *not* Blessed. However, most of those encountered by Arthur and *his* knights appear to be touched by God - they interpret dreams, utter prophecies, and guard holy relics. A Blessed cleric is a challenge to play, but potentially just as interesting is an all-too-human cleric, along the lines of Robin Hood's Friar Tuck. Eventually *earning* the Blessed advantage might be a long-term character goal for such a one.

## Robber Knight

The Robber Knight is a common sight during the interregnum between Uther and Arthur. These are horsemen who live by plunder and extortion. If sources are to be trusted, there were a large number of such villainous knights at the time Arthur assumed the crown, and many remained to be slowly wiped out as his reign progressed.

A powerful robber knight can make an excellent Enemy for an adventuring group, especially one set in the early years of Arthur's reign. Weaker ones can be used as cannon fodder for more powerful bosses, or as comic relief.

Robber knights are built on the same basics as Knights (p. 12), except that they will possess the Pirate's (or an "Evil") Code of Honor instead of the Chivalric (if they have a Code of Honor at all). "Ethical" robber knights with various Pacifisms and a Sense of Duty to local commoners are possible, and may give unexpected opponents a turn.

## Saracen/Infidel

The people called "Saracens" in the Arthurian tales are today's ethnic Arabs. As portrayed in both Malory and the Vulgate, they are a warlike people, as sophisticated in the arts of arms and armor than the British. They have their own chivalric code which makes their knights highly honorable in the eyes of the British. Although it is anachronistic, they are implied to be followers of Islam. The Saracens present in the tales tend to be darkly handsome.

More than one Saracen sought out membership on the Round Table. For a player willing to deal with the problem of being perhaps the ultimate outsider in Arthurian society, playing a Saracen provides an unique opportunity. Such a character need not be a knight; almost any "Briton" character type could be represented as a Saracen for an unusual twist.

Another possibility would be Christianized Saracens acting as spiritual and geographic guides during a Middle Eastern quest. For the ultimate in stereotype breaking, a Saracen priest (complete with the Blessed advantage) is entirely possible!

It is highly unlikely for a Saracen to have been present in the real 5th-century Britain.

The only real requirement to be a Saracen is the Social Stigma: Infidel disadvantage.

## Saxon

To be a Saxon is to be the blood-sworn enemy of the Britons, especially the Round Table. In many versions of the tales, the settlement of the Saxons on the eastern coast of Britain, and their inexorable push inland, were two of the prime reasons for the formation of the Round Table. Perhaps one reason they were persecuted so strongly is that their social/political structure was

much more democratic than the Britons' feudal system, and was seen as a dangerous and unnatural. Another reason certainly was that they were pagans with an established tradition of human sacrifices.

A Saxon will have Reputation: Dangerous, Insane Foreigners (-1 from Britons); Social Stigma: Outsider, Outlaw or Barbarian; Language: Saxon (Germanic) at IQ (native tongue). Cultural Paranoia would not be out of place for Saxons settled in Britain, considering how often they were attacked by the British. For the same reason, combat skills are common among the population (not to mention the fact that the original Saxon settlers were mercenary fighters).

### *Sorcerer/Sorceress*

True mages are rare in Arthur's Britain, and most are female - see Magic, p. 19. They are widely diverse in style and approach, and cannot be easily categorized. Only a few make their living solely on their ability as mages, and these are the most powerful: Merlin, the various Ladies of the Lake(s), and Morgan le Fay. The rest *all* seem to be employed for their other, more mundane, skills.

The simple restrictions of point level and spell selection make it impossible to build a player character on a par with Merlin (and, indeed, there should be none). Mages (who require only Magery and their spells) should be balanced out with employable skills. Samples of this include Dame Brisen, who acted as a personal companion/servant to Elaine of Carbonek; and Helyes, who was chief clerk to Duke Galeholt despite his great magical talent. Few indeed are the mages without any kind of patron or employer.

Some "sorcerers" or "sorceresses" may be nothing more than TL2 or 3 physicians - herbalists. See p. 21.

A priest/white magician (see sidebar, p. 22) would have to be discreet, but would be a very viable character in this milieu. A hermit/mage would be even more likely, though less suited for use as a PC.

### *Squire*

A squire is a young man or boy "apprenticed" to a knight. In the course of acting as a servant and/or companion to his master, he is expected to learn the basics of knighthood.

A beginning squire is built on the following: Knightly Candidate (see p. 7); Patron (Powerful individual, available 15 or less); Duty to Patron (15 or less); Youth. Very useful will be Animal Handling and Armoury. Other knightly skills are unlikely for a new squire; these abilities are expected to be learned during his apprenticeship.

Older squires may be nearly as skilled as a full knight. Such a squire, a couple of years from being knighted, would have a minimum of a half-point in each knightly skill (see Knight, above). A hard-working squire of a good knight will be much better than this - a formidable fighter.

The patron knight takes his squire (or squires - he may have as many as he can handle) as a dependent. Squires can be even younger than 15 (11 was not an unknown age), in which case they do not take the Youth disadvantage, and instead are built as per Children, p. B 14. Because of their youth, squires are universally non-combatants and are never threatened by ethical knights. Particularly young squires may serve as pages in the court until old enough to bear arms.

There is a second type of squire. This is a man who has elected not to become a knight, instead opting for a career as a squire. He will be built on the same lines as an older squire, above. He can continue as a servant to a knight or some high-

born person, but he often becomes more than servant; in fact, such squires often become companions on the field of battle and off, mentors, and even friends. Tristan's tutor Gouvernail is a good example.

At least one squire in the Vulgate became lord of a castle; it would not be impossible for others to duplicate the feat, although it would be uncommon. A squire who holds a manor will have Status 2, and may take Wealth (Comfortable or Wealthy).

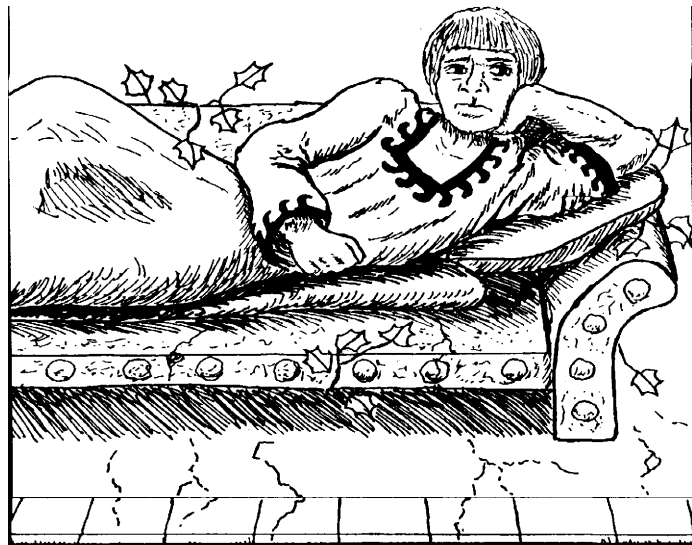
### *Would-Be Roman*

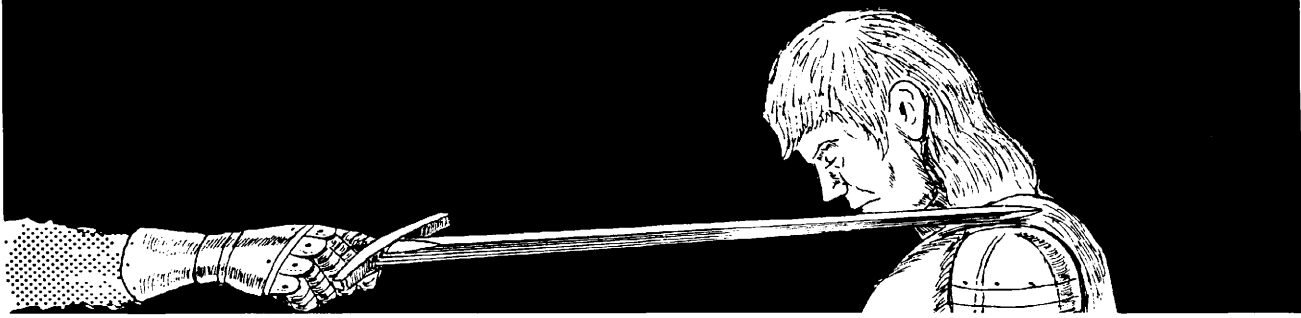
This character type is ideal for all three subgenres of Arthur, provided the campaign date remains in the 5th century. This is the Briton who remembers when Rome still occupied the land, and life was good. Or perhaps they are actual transplanted Roman citizens, stranded by the withdrawal of the legions. Either way, they will usually be rich landowners or other aristocrats whose families held positions of favor with the Roman colonial government. Even years after Rome withdrew, they still keep Roman-style homes, wear Roman-style fashions, cut their hair in the Roman way ... Some look forward to the day that Rome will triumphantly return to Britain. Many of them look down upon the "rabble" which has come to the fore in Britain's government.

This does not mean that they are potential subversives - Guinevere herself, among others, is said to have come from Roman stock. They are merely victims of a cultural shipwreck, trying to do the best they can in what they see as a barbarous land.

The would-be Romans can be played as comic blusterers or the tragic remnants of a once-great republic/empire. For any wanting to learn the ways of diplomacy or government, older Romans are a wealth of knowledge, and may even act as advisors. Helping one return all the way to Rome could be the unifying theme of an extended campaign.

The would-be Roman or true Roman is built as follows: Literacy (in Latin); Status 2+; Wealth (Comfortable to Very Wealthy); Quirk: Thinks of the time Rome was in Britain as a Golden Age. Skills should be appropriate to an aristocratic landowner, but must include Language: Latin at IQ or better. Would-be Romans who last long enough eventually gain the disadvantage of Reputation: Crazy Old Coot (-1 from all young Britons).





## Job Table

The table on p. B 194 is ideally suited to Arthurian settings, but is by no means complete. Add the following for more variety:

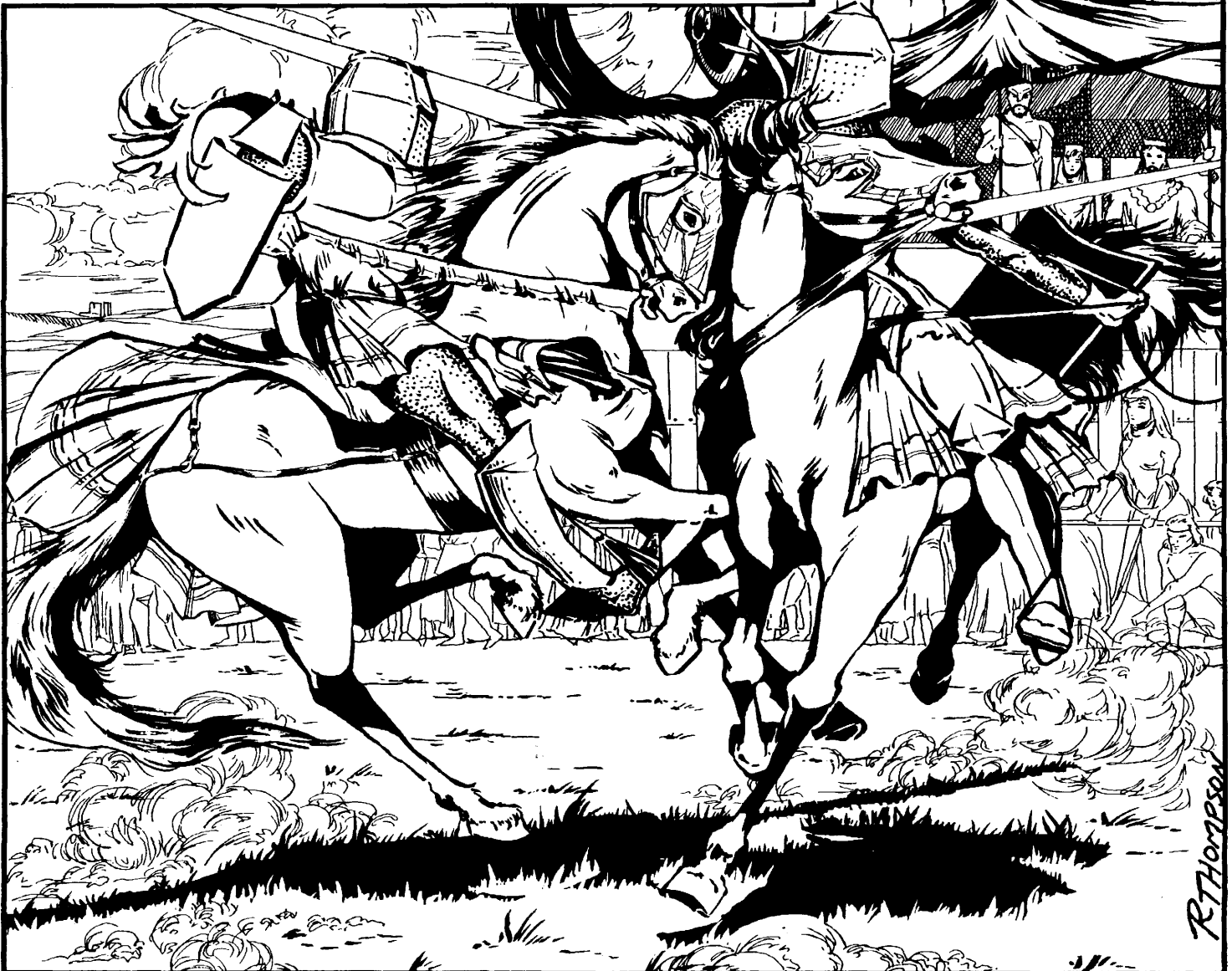
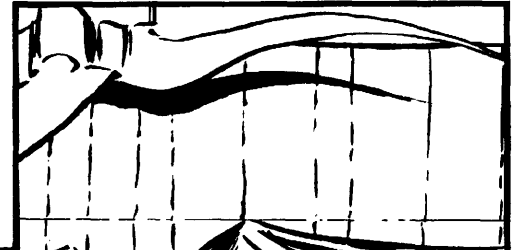
<i>Job (Prerequisites), Monthly Income</i>	<i>Success Roll</i>	<i>Critical Failure</i>
<b>Poor Jobs</b>		
Beggar* (no prerequisites), \$100	10	-1i/3d
Hermit* (appropriate Survival), \$100	PR	2d/5d
Monk* (Vow of Poverty, Theology at 12+), \$50	IQ	-1i/-3i
Serf (no prerequisites), \$50	IQ	-2i, 2d/6d
Street Vendor* (no prerequisites), \$120	IQ-1	-2i/1d
<b>Struggling Jobs</b>		
Herbalist* (Physician/TL2 or 3 at 14+), \$15 x skill	PR	-2i/2d, accused of witchcraft
Laborer (ST 10+), \$300	ST	LJ
Peddler* (Merchant 12+), \$15 x skill	PR	-1i/-4i, 3d
Sailor (Seamanship 10+), \$150 plus room & board	PR	2d/3d
Scholar (Literacy; Research at 12+; History, Literature, Theology, or Mathematics at 14+), \$350	Best PR	LJ/-1i, LJ
Traveling Artisan* (Craft skill 11 +), \$200	PR	-1i/-2i
<b>Average Jobs</b>		
Astrologer* (Astronomy/TL2 or 3 at 14+, Fast-Talk at 12+), \$450	Best PR	LJ/-2i, 2d, L
Barber (Professional Skill: Barber at 12+, Physician and Surgery/TL2 or 3 at 10+), \$400	Best PR	LJ/2d, LJ
Clerk (Literacy, Accounting 12 +) \$375	PR	
Court Entertainer (Bard, Musical Instrument or Acrobatics at 16 +), \$25 x Best PR, plus \$2 x each other PR	PR-2	-2i
Herald (Bard, Heraldry, Savoir-Faire at 13 + ; optionally Artist/Heraldic at 12+), \$500	Best PR	LJ/LJ, -3i
Scribe (Literacy, Calligraphy 12+), \$450	PR	LJ
Spy (at least 5 Thief/Spy skills at 15 +), \$25 x lowest PR	Best PR-1	3d/6d, LJ
Squire (varies; see p. 14), room & board	Best PR	LJ
Wizard (Charlatan)* (Sleight-of-Hand, Fast-Talk, Bard at 12+), \$400	Best PR	-1i/-3i, 3d
<b>Comfortable Jobs</b>		
Doctor/Leech* (Diagnosis, Physician, Surgery/TL2 or 3 at 15 +), \$550	Best PR	-3i/3d, LJ
Mayor/Lord Mayor (Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Administration at 12 +), \$600	Best PR-1	-2i/-4i, LJ
Palace Servant (IQ I 1 +, Savoir-Faire 10+, Diplomacy 10+, any specialized skill 13+), Best PR x \$20 plus room & board	Best PR-1	LJ/2d, LJ
Priest* (Clerical Investment, Literacy, Theology and Latin at IQ), \$500 or \$5 size of congregation x average Status of congregation if 2+, whichever is greater	Best PR	-1i/-3i, LJ
<b>Wealthy Jobs</b>		
Courtier/Lady-in-Waiting (Status 2 +, Savoir-Faire 12 +), \$500 plus \$100 x Status	PR-2	-2i/-4i, LJ
Seneschal (Administration 14 +, Area Knowledge: Castle 13 +), \$750	Best PR	LJ/-3i, LJ

\*freelance occupation - income is earned when roll is made exactly. See p. B 193 for more information. See pp. B 192-194 for more information on jobs.

# 2

# JOUSTS AND TOURNEYS

A knight's whole life revolved around battle. When his lord was not at war, the knight might ask permission to go on a quest, or to patrol the lord's lands looking for bandits to slay. When there were no foes at all to fight, the knight would spend his time in training himself or his squires. The best and toughest training came from the mock battles known as tournaments, or "tourneys."



Tournaments were not just for training. They were great spectator sports. They could settle grudges . . . or create new ones. A tournament might feature real pitched battles - though usually not to the death. There will also be formal one-on-one combats called jousts (see below), and mock battles with non-lethal weapons. And there would be contests for the non-noble fighters . . . swordsmanship, archery, wrestling, quarterstaff and more.

In a historical campaign, real tournaments won't happen - not for hundreds of years. In a Cinematic or Mythic campaign, a tournament is a great social event, and will be combined with a fair, a festival, a banquet and everything else imaginable. A tournament is a time for intrigue, and a chance for a new knight to build his reputation.

## Non-Lethal Combat

Most early weapons training takes place with blunted or wooden weapons, so that the fledgling warrior will not take too much damage. In some places, even duels are fought with non-lethal combats.

### Blunt Weapons

Blunt weapons have the same size, weight, and balance as their lethal counterparts, but they are not as dangerous. Sharp edges are blunted and wrapped in leather; crushing surfaces are padded. Blunt weapons always do crushing damage, regardless of the damage type of the weapons on which they're modeled.

Furthermore, they are designed to sting rather than really injure, and so they do half the damage appropriate for the weapon. Roll the proper damage for the weapon, divide it by two (rounding down), and then subtract the DR value of the armor. The result is the number of hits actually inflicted on the victim.

### Conducting Non-Lethal Tourney Combat

In a non-lethal combat, the opponents wear their normal armor but are armed with blunt weapons. Each player should use a scratch sheet with two column headings, labelled "Perceived Damage" and "Real Damage." While combat is going on, resolve attacks exactly as if each blow were a genuine one with a genuine weapon. Put all hits taken in the "Perceived Damage" column and note any additional effects, such as a crippled limb) there. This damage is what would *have been* inflicted on the character, if the combat had been fought with real weapons.

Then, for the "Real Damage" column, follow the procedure outlined for blunted weapons, above; take the amount of damage the weapon did, halve it, subtract DR, and apply any remaining hits to the character as crushing damage. This damage should be recorded in the "Real Damage" column, and is actual damage that the character has taken.

For example, Sir Lancelot and Sir Kay are practicing with blunt broadswords. Both are wearing light plate armor, which has DR 6. Lancelot swings and Kay fails to parry or block. Lancelot rolls 10 points of damage.

In the "Perceived Damage" column, subtract Kay's DR 6 armor; 4 points of damage get through. Since a broadsword is a cutting weapon, that damage is multiplied by 1.5, so Kay has taken a total of 6 hits - theoretically. Put 6 hits on the "Perceived Damage" column.

For the "Real Damage" column, take the 10 points of damage. Halve it. The result is 5 hits - not enough to penetrate Kay's DR 6 plate. Thus, no hits should be counted in his "Real Damage" column.

Kay will "count the blow," shouting "Well struck, sir knight!" - see the sidebar.

### Honor and Calling Blows

Theoretically, the opponents in a non-lethal combat are supposed to react to the "Perceived Damage" column as if it were actually happening to him. In other words, these fighters are trained to recognize the force of a blow and interpret it as if the weapon were lethal.

So, honorable fighters react to the damage they're supposed to be taking. In an informal sparring match, this will just be a verbal acknowledgement, whether "Well struck, sir knight!" or "Caitiff knave, you got me again!"

Some contests try to simulate a real fight more closely. If, in the "Perceived Damage" column, a fighter's limb is crippled, he fights without it. (If it's an arm, he fights with one weapon, no shield. If it's a leg, he fights from a kneeling position.) If, in this column, his HT drops below 0, he interprets the last blow as sufficient to render him unconscious: He falls over and acknowledges defeat. Acknowledging blows in this manner is called "calling your wounds."

A fighter can always choose to ignore his "Perceived Damage" column and go by the real damage he has taken - this is referred to as "not calling your wounds." This is dishonorable, and in tournament situations, referees try to keep an eye out for such behavior.

On the other hand, a fighter engaged in non-lethal combat can win favor with the audience by hamming it up - enacting violent death throes, for example, when he's taken a "mortal wound."



### Jousting Lances

Obviously, jousting would quickly wipe out the flower of British knighthood if it were conducted with real lances. In the interest of safety, tournament jousting is done with blunted wooden lances, specially designed to break if they strike very hard. These blunted lances do thrust+3 *crushing* - not impaling - damage, and break if they hit for more than 15 points of damage. If the damage rolled for a successful hit with a jousting lance is greater than 15, the lance snaps, doing 15 points of damage to the target.

In some tourneys, the object is not to unhorse your opponent, but to break a set number of lances - usually three - on his shield. In such contests, the lances are usually weakened even further, breaking on 10 or fewer points of damage.

### Jousts and Tourneys



## Jousting

### A Sample Joust

In this joust, Sir Uriel and Sir Tancred face one another. Both have ST 13, DX 12 and HT 12, Riding-15, Shield-12 and Lance-12. Each knight is carrying a 14 foot jousting lance. Both are wearing light plate, for PD 4 and DR 6, and carrying medium shields for PD 3, bringing their Blocks to 13. Their warhorses have ST 45, and do 5d+3 crushing damage.

In the first pass, both knights attack simultaneously, since their lances are the same length. (In a simple joust between two riders, it is not necessary to use a map - simply assume both have sufficient room to get to full speed.) First, Uriel rolls to hit, taking a -2 penalty for his 14-foot lance. He rolls an 8, and hits. Tancred must roll to Block; he misses with a 15. Since the attacks are simultaneous, Tancred rolls to hit before Uriel's damage upon him is calculated. He is also rolling against Lance-2, due to the length of his lance. He misses with an 11.

Now Uriel's damage to Tancred is resolved. Uriel rolls 12 points of damage, of which 6 get through Tancred's armor. Tancred must now roll to remain in the saddle; this calls for a Riding roll, taking a penalty of -2, since the blow did at least 8 points of damage, but less than 16. Tancred rolls a 10, which succeeds.

For the second pass, Tancred calls for a 12-foot lance. This time, Uriel attacks first, since he has the longer lance. He rolls against his Lance skill, still at -2, and gets a 10, which hits. Tancred rolls a 12 to Block - he caught the blow on his shield, and may be unhorsed. Uriel rolls 24 for damage. This exceeds the break-point of his jousting lance, which splinters, doing only 15 points of damage. To stay on his mount, Tancred must make a Riding roll, again at -2. Thus, he needs a 13 or less; he rolls a 7, succeeding comfortably.

In his attack against Uriel, Tancred is now rolling against his unadjusted Lance skill, since he is using a 12-foot lance. He rolls an 8, which hits. Uriel rolls a 15 on his Block, and misses, so he'll take damage. Tancred's damage comes up a 14; Uriel's armor stops 6, so the knight takes 8 hits. He must make a roll against HT to avoid being stunned, since he took damage greater than 1/2 his HT. He rolls a 14, which misses - Uriel is stunned. Now, Uriel must roll to remain on his horse. This roll takes a -2 penalty for the damage and an additional -4 for being stunned, so he needs a 9 or less. Uriel rolls a 12, and falls to the ground, taking an additional 1 d-4 damage for the fall. This damage comes up 1; Uriel has the wind knocked out of him when he lands, but is not unconscious.

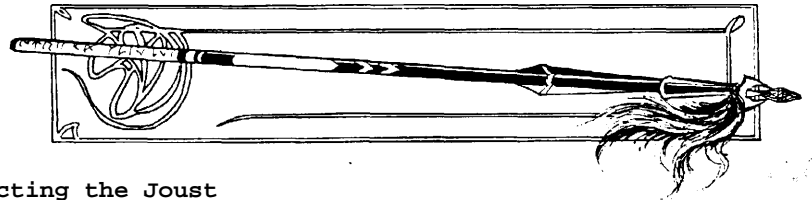
**A joust - a formal combat between two mounted knights - uses the basic mounted-combat rules on pp. B135-137. In a formal joust situation, there is absolutely no need to play out every step the horses take. They make one pass, and the riders make one attack each. If nobody is unhorsed, a minute goes by and both riders will be ready for another pass.**

**In a joust, the contestants usually start 50 to 100 yards apart, to allow the horses room to get to full speed. When the lancers come into range of one another's lances - usually at three hexes distance - they roll to hit each other. Because lances hit almost simultaneously, both fighters roll to hit the instant their opponent comes into range, regardless of whose turn it is.**

**If both lances are the same length, they hit simultaneously. Each rider rolls to hit, and to block, if necessary, before damage for either attack is assessed. If, however, one lance is longer than the other, then the attack of the rider with the longer lance is completely resolved before the other lancer rolls to hit. Thus, the rider with the short lance may take damage, be stunned or even be unhorsed, before attempting his attack.**

### Horses

**Stats for various types can be found in the GURPS Basic Set and the GURPS Bestiary. Most jousters will use warborses - the bigger and meaner, the better.**



### Conducting the Joust

**Several different styles of tournament fighting are seen in literary and cinematic sources. In the basic joust, combat is agreed to be just to the "first fall." This is the most Cinematic of formats.**

**It is possible - if two knights are using lances of the same length - for both to be unhorsed simultaneously. If this happens, the combatants may continue their combat on foot with their preferred weapons. This hand-to-hand combat after the joust is the distinguishing characteristic of the second major combat style. This is, in fact, the standard mode of tourney combat in most Mythic tournaments. The format of these one-on-one combats parallels the usual course of the more deadly battles between knights-errant in the field. In many ways, the one-on-one is similar to the modern concept of the duel, and is the usual format used for challenges of honor and trial by combat. In a non-lethal tourney, it is normally pursued until one party yields to the other.**

**Certain rules of conduct apply to this particular variant. An unhorsed knight may also choose to continue to attack his adversary with a melee weapon, but this may be considered unchivalrous in some quarters. It is definitely unchivalrous for a mounted knight to attack an opponent who is on foot. This gross violation of honor would be dealt with severely. In many tournaments, striking at a foe's horse was the act of a scoundrel, usually punishable by death.**

**The third style of tournament combat is the melee. Malory tells of many cases where knights would stage pitched battles, with up to several dozen participants on each side. In theory, the same rules of conduct as for a one-on-one applied to these melees. Historically, knights enjoyed melee combat and took it very seriously as a way to gain reputation. Many contestants were badly wounded or killed; the Church frowned upon tourneys for this reason.**



Magic is a vital aspect of the literary and cinematic tradition of Camelot. It is rare - there are few real mages, and most of the purported users of magic are little more than alchemists. But Arthur's Britain is certainly a magical place.

The guidelines that follow - with the exception of Herbalism (p. 21) - are almost exclusively for the Camelot of literary and cinematic traditions. See the sidebars in this and other sections for suggestions on incorporating magic into a "historical" campaign.

## Merlin

Do not judge the average Arthurian mage by the example of Merlin! The archetypal wizard, Merlin is nearly godlike in his power. Some of this is due to his partly-inhuman nature: depending on the source, his father is either an air elemental, an incubus, or Satan himself! The bulk of his power can be said to come directly from his supernatural parentage.

In addition to his more "mundane" magical powers, he is gifted with prophecy; even as a child, he was known for his predictions. King Vortigern himself consulted the nine-year-old Merlin on matters of importance, and took his comments quite seriously.

However, his image is also the result of careful PR work. It is unclear exactly how much of his power was mere illusion, and how much was more. He was capable of summoning storms and earthquakes even in the earliest tales, but most of the time his magic is minor, even trivial! However, he made a grand show of everything he did, and as a result, people have believed it to be much, much more than it really was.

Remember that Merlin is an extreme case. More typical of the average spellcaster is Dame Brisen, servant to Elaine of Carbonek, whose forte was potions and the occasional illusion. Her powers were limited, but more than sufficient to see (among other tasks) that Lancelot slept with Elaine, thinking her to be Guinevere. Thanks to her machinations, Galahad was born. She is a good example of how a little cleverness can make a bit of magical skill as useful as vast power.



*Magic*

# The Nature of Mages

In many sources, mages are said to be a breed apart from humanity - born from mankind, but separate and different from them. The movie *Excalibur* says as much, but adds that they are slowly dying out, no longer being born to the race of "normal" men. Other texts - including *Le Morte D'Arthur* and the French Vulgate - depict them more along the lines of standard GURPS magic, as sometimes-gifted individuals with mystic training in the use of natural magical forces.

The GM may choose either motif; the magic system outlined in the GURPS Basic Set lends itself well to both. As described on p. 5, an Unusual Background advantage is required to possess Magery; the GM need only vary the cost and nature of the Unusual Background to fit the chosen theme for magic in any particular version of Camelot.

In addition to the more "standard" mages, holy men may be gifted with magic-like abilities, including (most frequently) prophetic visions and the ability to interpret dreams as omens. Finally, potion-makers and so-called wisewomen can be found by those willing to look - and pay - for their services.

## Power Level

The range of magical prowess runs the mystic gamut from herbalist/hedge wizards to Merlin the druid-archmage. Contrary to what might be assumed, the power of magic does not increase in the later tales. In what might be the earliest written account of Merlin, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Vita Merlini (AD 1150)*, he performs such feats of magic as weather control on a scale of miles, and earthquakes used to devastate enemy armies.

However, most of the magic in the stories tends to be on the other end of the scale. Potions and charms are, while not household objects, easily obtained by those who need them. Much of Merlin's everyday magic is cosmetic or of little lasting consequence. More powerful are the enchanted weapons found in the hands of several members of the Table Round - but they are rare indeed. Some, the legends hint, are not even of human origin.

While mages will be rare, the mana level of an Arthurian campaign should be set at either Normal or High; the various magical artifacts common to the literary and cinematic traditions require sufficient mana to power them, and alchemy also has need of plentiful mana. Knowledge of spells, though, especially in a high-mana Britain, should be kept under strict control. Only a few will have the knowledge to use magic, and they have been very reluctant to pass it on throughout the bulk of Arthurian tradition. This tight grasp on the mechanics of spellcasting is the GM's main control on the use of magic in the campaign.

## Magic and Arthurian Society

Magic holds a paradoxical position in the Britain of Arthur. In general, there exists some suspicion and not a little fear of it. In spite of (or *because of*, some would say) Merlin's reputation, there is concern over the ethical basis of magical power. It is no secret that most of the great practitioners of magic (known to the court, at least) have been at best neutral towards Arthur and the Round Table, and at worst have been actively hostile.

It is unclear whether the common folk find a threat in magic. Certainly, the masses are more prone to superstition. However, in most versions of Arthur's Britain, there is little fear of any sort among the populace. On the other hand, the supposedly better-educated and more-urbane aristocrats have greater experience with hostile spell-casting.

The Church, while technically prohibiting the occult arts, turns a blind eye to their benevolent use by the various allies of the Crown. Still, its power can be felt, should it choose to exert itself - except on those so distant or royal that its strength is attenuated, or those non-Christians it cannot directly affect.



## Herbalism and Potions

Potions of one type or another figure prominently in several Arthurian tales. Tristan and Isolde fall in love after drinking a philtre of love. Dame Brisen uses potions to cloud Lancelot's vision and convince him he is sleeping with Guinevere when he is actually with Elaine. Many potions can be found in other stories.

Virtually all potions will be the result of herb lore (pre-TL4 Physician skill), rather than alchemy; the sole exception may be Tristan and Isolde's philtre. Herbalism historically has been one of the mainstays of occult traditions, and its common practice in Dark Ages Britain is undeniable. This, plus its veiled presence in many Arthurian texts and reference works, makes it entirely suitable as a skill a "sorcerer" might possess. In fact, many who may be called "enchanters" by their neighbors may be no more than skilled herbal doctors.

To distinguish herbal compounds from the drinkable alchemical elixirs of *GURPS Magic*, "concoction" will be the general term employed.

### Creation of Concoctions

The creation of any herbal concoction requires that the appropriate plants are available. This is the GM's main control over the use and abuse of concoctions: if a character has overstocked himself with a particular compound, the GM is free to rule that the local supply of its component plant(s) has been completely exhausted! The search for a rare ingredient can be quest worthy of a knight, especially if his lady love or liege-lord is in need of an concoction made from it.

A concoction requires care to produce. A minimum of 1/a pound of each

## Gender and Magic

Of the most powerful mages found in the many Arthurian texts, all but Merlin are female. Morgan le Fay, her sister Morgause, Nimue and the other Ladies of the lake(s) all were powerful sorceresses. Several were easily Merlin's equal (in craft and skill, if not in raw power), and one, Nimue, was his better. Merlin's mentor, Blaise, may also be of a rank equal to his more famous student, but little is known of him. Almost exclusively, mages of lesser power are also women.

This could be for two reasons. Magery might be in part a sex-linked trait, expressed most powerfully in the female. This can be an interesting option for a campaign, one which gives male mages the advantage of being a surprise. The other possibility is more mundane, and much more likely: given the high numbers of prophetic priests and monks encountered by Arthur's knights, it seems probable that

the Church either attracts or recruits magically-gifted males. (Merlin's demonic parentage clearly disqualifies him, leaving him a rare instance of a free-lance wizard.)

In either case, the net result is that women have a near-monopoly on secular magic.

## Historical Magic

Strangely enough, the historical period is very tolerant of magic, should the GM decide to use it. Christian teachings in the 5th century did not yet make any specific prohibitions against sorcery or other occult knowledge. (It was not until much later that the Church banned astrology and other mysticism in a bid to maintain control of the business of prophecy.)

Even pagan religious ceremonies were acceptable - up to a point. It's likely that more than a few of Riothamus' (see p. 72) men were followers of other faiths, like Mithraism or even the old Celtic beliefs. Representatives of these religions would certainly be present, and it would not have been unknown for Christians to consult them on occasion. While the Church did work to convert these "paynims," it did not yet promulgate the violent destruction of their faiths. For an example of such a likely multi-faith society (although it remains greatly in the background), see Parke Godwin's *Firelord*.

*Of course, if it suits the GM's purpose to portray 5th-century Christianity as much more militant, then a balance of power similar to that in the literary tradition might well be the result. Marion Zimmer Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon* shows one such society.*



### *The Celtic Church*

For GMs desiring more historical verisimilitude in their campaigns, it should be remembered that the church found in Arthurian England is not strictly Roman Catholic. Instead, it is the much more mystical Celtic Church. This offshoot of Roman Catholicism was strongly tainted by the Pelagian heresy. Pelagianism stressed freedom and moral responsibility, with an emphasis on self-determination. The Pelagians insisted that humans were not born tainted with Original Sin, and could achieve a good measure of salvation through their own efforts.

On the whole, the Celtic Church is much more lenient on the occult than Roman Catholicism of the same period. From what scholars can reconstruct of it, Celtic Christianity absorbed many "pagan" beliefs and incorporated them into its tenets, including (many researchers believe) the Grail itself. It would be quite possible, in a magical world, for a Celtic priest to be a white magician.

The Celtic Church, with its heretical beliefs, is supposed to have been returned to Roman Catholic orthodoxy by the middle of the 5th century, after two visits to Britain by St. Germanus. With the effective isolation of Britain after the fall of Rome, though, it is possible that it lasted longer. It certainly survived as an attitude all the way to the modern day.

### *Magic*

component plant must be used per final dose. The concoction must "cook" for a minimum of 2 hours before it is usable, with the herbalist in constant attendance. Most concoctions are simple; it is possible to prepare more than one at once, but the herbalist suffers a -1 per simultaneous batch on his skill rolls for all the concoctions cooking. There is no skill penalty for multiple doses in a batch.

At the end of the "cooking" time, the herbalist makes one roll per batch against his Physician skill. On a critical success, a concoction will have a + 1 to its effects and rolls. On a normal success, the concoction acts as described. On a normal failure, the batch is obviously ruined and must be thrown out. On a critical failure, the concoction is potentially poisonous: the subject must roll vs. HT or take 3d damage; whether he makes the roll or not, he will suffer incapacitating stomach cramps for 1d hours. Such a failed concoction is indistinguishable from a successful one until it is ingested.

*Example:* The Damosel de la Foret **Verte** has Physician/TL3 at a level of 16. On May Day she brews a simple healing ointment. After tending her cauldron for 2 hours, she rolls against her Physician skill for a 12; the concoction is a success. Two days later she comes across a pair of woodsmen injured by a boar and must brew an anesthetic, a sleeping draught, and more healing ointments - all simultaneously. Assuming she already has the ingredients at hand and enough cooking vessels, it takes her 2 hours to prepare them, but she is at a -3 to her skill for preparing 3 different concoctions at once. Her effective skill level is 13. She rolls 9, 12, and 15; the third batch is spoiled and she must start over.

In general, fresh plants are more efficacious than dried. If preserved plants are used, the resulting concoction will be at a -1 on any effects it has or rolls it requires. There are exceptions to this. Some herbs are only useful and/or safe when properly dried and prepared; attempting to brew concoctions from them in their raw state may result in anything from nausea to death!

### *Poisons*

The creation of poisons, as noted in the *GURPS Basic Set*, is a different skill entirely, although it does default to Physician-3. A competent herbalist will be capable of producing deadly toxins - if the necessary plants are available.

### *Equipment*

Herbalism is, at its heart, a low-tech, minimalistic science. Concoctions can be prepared in a clean iron or copper cauldron over an open fire at no penalty to skill. A real workshop, with a table and \$1,000 worth of equipment, gives a + 1 to skill, but more extensive laboratories provide no further bonuses.

### *Forms of Concoctions*

Herbal formulas can produce either liquids or ointments. Liquids (also known as "infusions") are taken by drinking, while ointments are applied to the skin, usually to open wounds. Onset times are generally different for the two forms, and are noted in the formula descriptions.

### *Cost and Availability of Concoctions*

Concoctions, when purchased from herbalists, cost a base \$25 per dose. The herbalist's materials are free (or nearly so), and there is relatively little investment in equipment, so the only overhead is the time spent locating and preparing the component herbs.

However, that doesn't mean the price is stable, or even constant. If the herbalist is the only one within one or two days' travel, prices will be much higher because of his monopoly. In an area with more than one herbalist, competition will drive the price down - unless the herbalists make a price-fixing



arrangement. Droughts, floods, contaminated water supplies, forest fires, and other environmental conditions can sharply limit the supply of raw materials and drive prices up by a factor of 10 or more almost immediately. Likewise, a good *growing season can bring prices down. The GM is the final arbiter, as always,* and should set the availability of concoctions to match the needs of the campaign.

Setting a price doesn't necessarily mean that an herbalist gets paid. A knight can simply demand that a commoner make him a concoction, and honor may prohibit a nobly-born herbalist from asking for or accepting monetary payment. However, a holy man who is an herbalist may be able to demand a service from the knight, or a donation for the poor.

### **Herbal Formulas**

The recipes for most herbal preparations are passed on as oral tradition; most herbalists are illiterate. As a result, it is common for two different herbalists to have widely varying versions of the same infusion. Although Nature's bounty cannot be kept secret, it is possible for an herbalist to come up with a unique formula which is known only to him. The GM may choose to make certain formulas "secret" as a means of control over their use.

While the GM has final say over the actual compounds available to the skilled herbalist, the following is a suggested list compiled from the Arthurian tales. Unless otherwise noted, concoctions take effect without a HT roll.

**Anesthetic.** For 20-HT hours the subject can feel no pain, effectively possessing the High Pain Threshold advantage. Onset time is 10 minutes as an infusion, immediately as an ointment. Ointment effect is limited to the specific location where it was applied. Will negate the effect of the *Pain Enhancement* infusion, but then *will* have no further benefit.

**Fever reduction.** Infusion only. Onset is 30 minutes, duration 1d hours. At the end of the onset time, and every hour after that, the user makes a roll against HT-3. A successful roll breaks the fever. Two successful rolls in a row restore 1 HT (if any have been lost). Any critical success on a HT roll restores an additional 1 HT; a critical failure negates any beneficial effects and ends the duration of the infusion.

**Hallucination.** Infusion only. Onset is 10 minutes, after which the subject must roll vs. HT-4; if he fails, he becomes subject to hallucinations for 60-HT minutes. A critical failure doubles the duration'. This infusion can be made in varying strengths, with effects ranging from pretty colors and suggestibility to nightmarish visions.

**Healing.** A healing draught (or more commonly, an ointment) will restore 1d HT over the course of 24 hours to a resting patient. Any exertion *will* prevent the infusion from working! Ointment is applied directly to wounds. This herbal cannot restore lost limbs or bring back the dead, and can normally be used only once per patient per month.

**Pain enhancement.** For 20-HT hours, the subject effectively possesses the Low Pain Threshold disadvantage. Onset is as for Anesthetic; like it, ointment effects are limited to the location where applied. Will negate the *Anesthetic* infusion, but have no further effects.

**Poison.** Prepared using the Poisons skill. Wolfsbane (see sidebar on p. B132) is a typical example. Most other poisons will be digestive, doing anywhere from 1d to 4d with an onset time of an hour; a successful HT roll will prevent all effects.

**Sleep.** Infusion only. After 10 minutes, the subject grows drowsy; he must roll vs. HT-4 every 15 minutes or fall asleep for 20-HT hours. If the subject manages to remain awake for 1 hour after the first HT roll, the infusion has no further effect. Subject may be awakened from his sleep, but will be at -3 to both [Q and DX until the infusion's duration has expired.

### **Special Combat Rules: Invisibility and Darkness**

In a combat situation where some fighters can't see their foes, there will be certain effects on attack and defense abilities:

**Attacker cannot see anything:** Attacker must make a Hearing-2 roll (ore use some other method) to discover his foe's location. If the Hearing roll is failed, he may swing at a randomly chosen hex. His attack roll *will* be at -10 (-6 if he is accustomed to being blind), and cannot be aimed at any particular body part.

Attacker cannot see his foe, but can see his other surroundings: As above, except the attack penalty is only -6.

Attacker cannot see his foe, but knows his location for sure (e.g. defender is in a lone Darkness hex): As above, but no Hearing roll is required and the attack penalty is only -4.

Defender cannot see attacker: If the defender is aware he is being attacked and makes a Hearing-2 roll, he defends at -4. Otherwise he gets no active defense at all! If the attacker is in a hex of Darkness, but the defender is not, he defends normally since he can see the *weapon* coming.

**Example:** Mordecai is invisible, and fighting a bandit in daylight. The bandit must make a Hearing-2 roll to locate Mordecai before each attack - if he succeeds he attacks at -6. Mordecai attacks normally and defends normally. Any defense roll the bandit makes against an attack by Mordecai is at -4, and if he misses the Hearing roll he gets no active defense at all.

Note also that an unseen fighter can safely try things (stand on a table, lie down, etc.) that a normal fighter could never do. He may also just wait in a corner until his foe is exhausted!



# SPELLS

For almost everything that PC mages *will* want (or be able) to do, the spells found on pp. B155-B164 will normally be more than sufficient. However, many of the following spells (originally published in *GURPS Magic*) have been used by one mage or another in the course of the Arthurian mythos. Some are here to define some of the divinely-granted powers of the Blessed or Very Blessed (see p. 6). Note that unless a spell is specifically given as the Blessed person's divine power, the spells requiring

Blessed or Very Blessed status are not automatically available to holy persons - they must be learned normally.

However, these are not by any means all the magics ever worked by the mages of Britain. Some tales - such as Merlin's construction of Stonehenge - are simply too vast to be treated as anything but unique effects. GMs desiring these truly awesome magicks may resort to dramatic *fiat*; they might also wish to consult either *GURPS Magic* or *GURPS Supers*.

## Communication and Empathy

### *Compel Truth*

*Information; Resisted by IQ*

The subject becomes unable to lie, though he may keep silent, or tell partial truths (this must be roleplayed). The spell does not force him to volunteer information; he merely cannot make any statement he believes to be untrue.

*Duration:* 5 minutes.

*Cost:* 4 to cast, 2 to maintain.

*Prerequisite:* Magery 2, Truthsayer.

*Item:* Torc or heavy necklace; wearer cannot lie. Energy cost 600.

## Earth Spells

### *Earthquake*

*Area*

Shakes the affected area. The caster probably won't want the area to include him. Divide the actual distance from caster to edge of effected area by 20 before figuring the skill penalty.

The spell must be cast over a fairly large area to be useful. Shaking one corner of a building *will* upset the occupants, but won't wreck the building. Cost depends on strength of the quake:

Tiny: Just a demonstration - a slight swaying. Pay base cost.

Mild: Slight damage to buildings. Multiply base cost by 2.

DX roll required, every second, for those in affected area to keep their feet.

Severe: Stone walls will crack; towers may fall. Multiply base cost by 4. DX-3 roll required, every second, for those in affected area to keep their feet.

*Duration:* One minute.

*Cost:* 2 to cast, 2 per minute to maintain.

*Time to cast:* 30 seconds.

*Prerequisite:* Magery 2; at least 6 Earth spells, including Earth Vision.

## Food Spells

### *Monk's Banquet*

*Regular*

Lets subject go without food or water for about a day with no ill effects. May be cast repeatedly, but not "maintained."

*Duration:* 24 hours.

*Cost:* 6.

*Prerequisite:* Special in an Arthurian setting; only a person with the Blessed advantage may use this spell.

*Item:* The Grail, among its other powers, can produce food which provides the effects of Monk's Banquet.

## Healing Spells

The spells on p. B 162 are far from the only spells of healing in the Arthurian mythos, although they are the only ones to which player characters should have access. Much more powerful spells are in evidence in Malory and the Vulgate. For example, Dame Lynette twice heals a knight beheaded by Sir Gareth (the second time, Gareth had chopped the head up into a hundred pieces - Lynette simply reassembled them and replaced the knight's head!).

### *Halt Aging (VH)*

*Regular*

Stops the subject from aging for a number of days; roll 5 dice to determine just how many. Cannot be cast again until the first spell wears off.

*Duration:* Roll 5d for number of days.

*Cost:* 20. One try per week.

*Prerequisite:* At least 6 Healing spells, Magery 2.

*Item:* Jewelry. Always on; prevents aging while it is worn.



Kingdoms have been toppled for possession of such things. Energy cost to create: 10,000.

*Note:* The Lady or Ladies of the Lake(s) are, in some tales,

## Illusion Spells

The spells of this College let the wizard create what is not. An illusion has no real substance. Each illusion or creation counts as a spell "on," giving -1 to the caster's other spell rolls.

Illusions of one sort or another seem to be one of the most common classes of magic in Britain. Merlin seems to have specialized in them, according to some sources; how much of his vaunted power was purely illusory is hard to say. According to some evidence in the Vulgate stories, the Lake(s) of the Ladies of the Lake might have been ordinary cities hidden by vast illusory bodies of water.

### Simple Illusion

#### Area

Creates an insubstantial image that can have no physical effect on the real world. An illusion may be a single object or a whole scene. It affects no senses except vision. Any intelligent creature can dispel it by "disbelieving" - concentrating for a turn and making a successful IQ roll. The touch of any intelligent creature, or any attack, or any spell except Control Illusion, will also dispel it. Other things will just go through it. It may move beyond its starting area, or change size or shape up to its maximum size, but the caster must concentrate to do this.

*Duration:* 1 minute.

*Base Cost:* 1 to cast; half that to maintain.

*Prerequisite:* Caster must be able to see and have IQ 11 or better.

### Complex Illusion

#### Area

As above, but affects hearing as well as sight. It is not automatically destroyed by a spell or touch; it has DR 0, HT 1 (about like paper). If it is broken, though, it melts away instantly.

*Duration:* 1 minute.

*Base Cost:* 2 to cast; half that to maintain.

*Prerequisite:* Sound, Simple Illusion.

### Perfect Illusion

#### Area

As above, but affects all the sense except touch; your hand will go through it. It cannot be dispelled except by Dispel Magic or Dispel Illusion. It has DR 0, HT 1. If it is broken, the damage heals as soon as the damaging object is removed.

*Duration:* 1 minute.

*Base Cost:* 3 to cast; half that to maintain. For doubled cost, even the sense of touch will be fooled, though you cannot "really" warm yourself from an illusory fire.

*Prerequisite:* Magery, Complex Illusion.

### Illusion Shell

#### Regular

This is an illusion thrown on an object to make it look, sound and feel different. The base object must be of the appropriate size and shape. The illusion may not be disbelieved, but is otherwise stable. However, it will not move about unless the underlying object moves. Damage done by the underlying object is unaffected.

Example: An illusion shell of a horse could be cast over a wooden horse. It would stamp, nicker, and smell like a horse, but could not be ridden! Concentration is not required to maintain the illusion.

*Duration:* 1 minute.

the sole user(s) of this spell. The Charlemagne cycle and other works note that Morgan le Fay was apparently unaging; she may have had access to this spell.

*Cost:* 1 for an object small enough to be hand-held, or 2 per hex for larger objects.

*Prerequisite:* Simple Illusion.

*Item:* For 200 times the base cost, the spell can be made permanent; it will not be disbelieved!

### Illusion Disguise

#### Regular

This is an illusion thrown over and around a living being to disguise it. The caster must first create the illusion (using any of the four above spells). The Illusion Disguise spell will then superimpose the illusion over the subject, so it covers him and moves with him. The better the illusion spell used, the better and more permanent the disguise; a Perfect Illusion disguise will even fool the sense of touch. Concentration is not required to maintain the disguise. The illusion disguise counts as only a single spell "on."

*Duration:* Until the illusion ends.

*Cost:* 3.

*Prerequisite:* Simple Illusion.

*Item:* Jewelry or clothing; cast an Illusion Disguise (specified when the object is enchanted) over the wearer. Energy cost to create: 150 Simple, 300 Complex, 500 Perfect Illusion. No energy cost to wearer.



### Control Illusion

#### Regular; Resisted by subject spell

Lets you take control of an illusion that someone else has cast. If your spell succeeds, you must pay any further energy costs to maintain the illusion. If you fail, the illusion is still the other caster's. Will not affect an Illusion Disguise. If the spell is cast over something that is not an illusion, the energy cost is still spent but the spell has no effect.

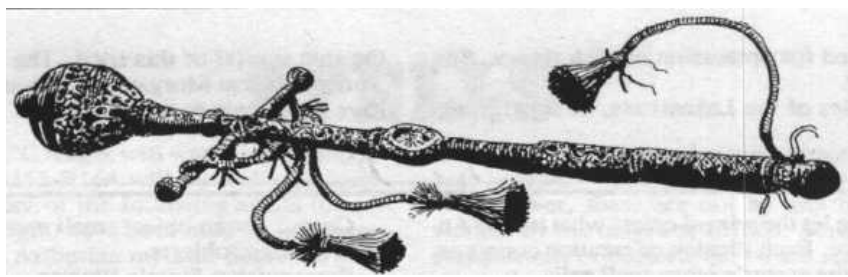
*Duration:* Once established, control is permanent unless someone else takes control.

*Cost:* 1 per hex of size of the illusion. You may not try to control only part of a large illusion; it is all or nothing.

*Time to cast:* 2 seconds.

*Prerequisite:* Perfect Illusion.

*Item:* Wand or staff. Energy cost to create: 300. Item must touch illusion to be controlled.



**Dispel Illusion** *Regular; Resisted by subject spell*

Dispels any Illusion or Illusion Disguise.  
 Cost: 1 per hex of subject size (you can't dispel part of an illusion).  
 Prerequisite: Control Illusion.  
 Item: Wand of staff; must touch subject illusion. Energy cost to create: 400.

**Know Illusion** *Information*

Tells whether the subject is real or an illusion, and just what kind it is. Caster must be able to see subject.  
 Cost: 2.  
 Prerequisite: Simple Illusion.

**Independence** *Area*

This spell can be used with any illusion you control. It lets you "program" it to move about, speak (if it can make sounds), and even react in a predetermined way. All this is done with no further concentration on the caster's part; it does not count as a separate spell "on." If faced with something for which it is not "programmed," it may do nothing or simply vanish, at the GM's whim.

Duration: As long as the illusion lasts.  
 Cost: 2. Does not require maintaining.  
 Time to cast: As long as it takes the casting player to describe the instructions to the GM, or to read them aloud if they are in writing (writing them down will save arguments!). Complex instructions will take a long time to cast. Minimum 5 seconds.  
 Prerequisite: Simple Illusion.

## Knowledge Spells

**Aura** *Information*

Shows the caster a glowing halo, or "aura," around the subject. This aura gives the caster a general insight into the subject's personality - the better the skill roll, the better the insight. In particular, the aura also shows whether the subject is a mage (and about how powerful); whether the subject is possessed or controlled in any way; and whether the subject is in the grip of any violent emotion. All living beings have auras; inanimate things do not. A zombie is detectable by his faint, death-haunted aura. A vampire retains the aura he had in life.

Illusions and created beings have no auras, so a successful casting of this spell will also distinguish them from real persons. A critical success will detect secret magical traits like lycanthropy, vampirism, unnatural longevity, and the like.

Cost: 3 (for any size subject)  
 Prerequisite: Detect Magic.  
 Item: Staff, wand, or jewelry. Usable only by mages. Energy cost to create: 100.

**History** *Information*

Cast on any inanimate object (or 1-hex section of a large object), lets caster determine the recent past of that object, user's personality, etc. - but no names!

Cost: 3 for 1 day's history; 5 for a week; 10 for a month.  
 Time to cast: 1 second for each energy point spent.  
 Prerequisite: Trace.

**Divination** *Information*

Gives the caster a vision relevant to his question, or the answer to one yes-or-no question. There are many sorts of divination; each is a separate spell, and requires the appropriate materials (see below). Each has its own strengths and weaknesses. Those methods which are linked to a particular element or elements will give more detailed answers if the answer has something to do with that element.

Skill modifiers: Standard long-distance modifiers, If repeated

questions are asked on the same subject within a day, the "vibes" are muddled; -4 for the second question, -8 for the third, and so on. Questions about past or future are also harder; use the standard long-distance modifiers again, substituting "days" for "miles"!

Cost: 10.  
 Time to cast: 1 hour unless specified otherwise.  
 Prerequisite: Blessed or Very Blessed advantage (see p. 6); or, History and element spells as specified for the particular method of divination.

Common forms of divination found within the body of the myths, both modern and ancient:

Cartomancy is divination through the Tarot, giving yes-and-no answers, and sometimes hints about the motivations and physical appearance of those important to the subject's future. The only equipment required is a Tarot deck (hand-painted and worth \$1,000 at TL3 and below, but mass-produced inexpensively at higher tech levels). Cartomancy is highly personal. If it is used any way except to divine for a single willing person (or couple) in their presence, it is at a -5. Prerequisite: 3 spells from each of the four elements.

Crystal-gazing is divination by use of a crystal ball, a pool of water, even a handful of ink in one case! If it works, the GM will describe a scene; it is up to the player to interpret it! (In GURPS *Magic*, a specially-enchanted crystal ball is needed, and attempts to use other media are at -10 to skill, but in many different texts, the practitioners of this art move from one focus to another with great ease. The GM may impose the limitations found in *Magic*, or follow the Arthurian precedents.) Prerequisites: 5 each Earth and Water spells.

Ecstatic Vision is divination through prayer and mortification of the flesh. It is restricted to Blessed and Very Blessed characters. It requires no equipment per se, but must be performed in a chapel, shrine, or other place of worship appropriate to the power being called upon. An overnight vigil of at least 10 hours must be spent there in fasting, prayer, and confession. At the end

of the 10 hours, the skill roll is made. If failed, the vigil can be continued, with an additional roll every 2 hours after the first 10. A full 24 hours spent in a vigil gives a +2 on all following rolls. On a successful roll, the GM describes a vision; it is up to the player to interpret its meaning. Remember that a character losing a night's sleep loses 5 fatigue which can only be regained through sleep (see p. B 134). *Prerequisite:* Blessed or Very Blessed advantage.

*Oneiromancy* is the interpretation of dreams. This is com-

## Light and Darkness Spells

### *Shape Darkness*

### *Area*

This spell allows the caster to shape and move (5 yds./sec.) three-dimensional darkness created with the Darkness spell. It **also allows the caster** to shape existing two-dimensional shadows into other shadowy shapes, still only two-dimensional. Shadow sizes can be reduced easily, but enlarging the shadows makes them slightly transparent. The average casual observer won't notice, but anyone looking intently at the shadow gets an IQ roll to notice that it doesn't have the "substance" it should. Shadows do not have to remain attached to the objects that cast them.

*Duration:* 1 minute.

*Base Cost:* 2; the same to maintain. For two-dimensional shadows, the base cost is 1.

*Prerequisite:* Darkness.

*Item:* Staff, wand or jewelry. Energy cost to create: 200.

### *Invisibility*

### *Regular*

The subject cannot be seen, *will* not show up in photos or mirrors, etc. He still makes sounds, leaves footprints, and the like. Anything he picks up also becomes invisible for as long as

he carries it, unless he wills it to stay visible. Infravision *will* not detect him but See Invisible *will*. Invisible characters have a great advantage in combat; see p. 23.

*Duration:* 1 minute.

*Cost:* 5 to cast; 3 to maintain.

*Prerequisite:* 6 Light spells, including Blur.

*Item:* (a) Jewelry, wand or staff; affects only the wearer.

Energy cost to create: 1,200. (b) An item can be made permanently invisible at an energy cost of 500 per hex of size or 50 pounds of weight, whichever is greater.

### *See Invisible*

### *Regular*

Subject can see anything concealed by the Invisibility spell or by "natural" invisibility. These things *will* be slightly translucent; thus you can see through them and tell that they appear invisible to others.

*Duration:* 1 minute.

*Cost:* 4 to cast; 2 to maintain.

*Prerequisite:* Invisibility.

*Item:* (a) Staff, wand or jewelry; affects only the wearer.

Energy cost to create: 400.

## Making and Breaking Spells

### *Shatterproof*

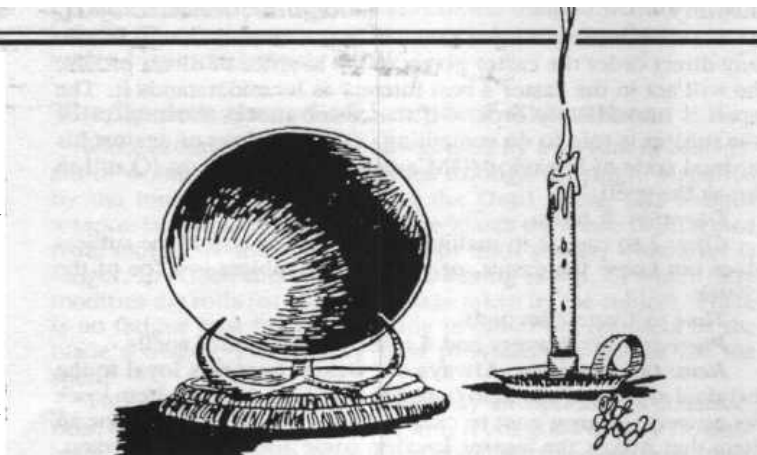
Makes a small object (like a weapon) resistant to breakage. A cheap or regular metal weapon is treated as a "fine" quality weapon while the spell lasts, and a "fine" weapon as "very fine." Other items have their hit points doubled, and will never break due to *accidental* dropping, etc. It will double the DR and HT of a shield if the shield-breaking rules are used (see p. B120). This spell does not increase resistance to "penetration," so it's no good for walls, armor, etc.

*Duration:* 1 hour.

*Cost:* 3 to cast; 3 to maintain.

*Prerequisite:* Repair, Shatter.

*Item:* Any item can be made permanently shatterproof; if the item does break, the *pieces* are no longer enchanted. Energy cost to create: 400.



## Meta-Spells

### *Bless*

### *Regular*

A general spell of aid and protection. Must be cast on another; you cannot bless yourself.

The effect of a blessing is as follows: All the subject's die-rolls are modified favorably by one point (or more, for a more powerful blessing). The modification *will not* affect critical successes and failures. This lasts indefinitely . . . until the subject fails some die roll (or a foe *makes* a good die-roll) and the

subject is in some serious danger. Then the blessing miraculously averts or reduces the danger - and ends. It is up to the GM to decide when the blessing has its final effect, and what form the protection takes. If an arrow is aimed at your heart, a 1-point blessing might move it to your arm, while a 2-point one would send it through your hat, and a 3-point one would let it slay a foe behind you.

*Duration:* As above.



Cost: 10 for a 1-point blessing, 50 for a 2-point blessing, 500 for a 3-point blessing. Blessings may not be "stacked" - a stronger blessing dispels a weaker one.

*Time to cast:* 1 minute for every point of energy in the spell.

*Prerequisite:* Blessed advantage or Magery 2 and at least 2 spells from each of 10 different colleges. Magery 3 is required to cast a 3-point blessing.

*Item:* Any. The blessing is cast on the item rather than a person, and affects the wearer of the item. When the blessing finally averts some great danger, the item loses its enchantment. Energy cost to cast: 10 times the cost to cast on a person.

### Curse

### Regular

Exactly the opposite of Bless. All the subject's die-rolls are modified unfavorably, lasting until he scores some notable success despite the bad rolls - GM's decision as to exactly what this is. Then the success turns somehow to ashes, and the curse is ended.

*Cost:* 3 for a 1-point curse, 10 for a 2-point curse, 20 for a 3-point curse. Like Blessings, Curses cannot be "stacked."

*Time to cast:* 2 seconds for a 1-point curse, 4 for a 2-point curse, 6 for a 3-point curse.

*Prerequisite:* Blessed advantage or Magery 2 and at least 2 spells from each of 10 different colleges. Magery 3 is required to cast a 3-point Curse.

*Item:* Any. The curse is cast on the item rather than the person, and affects the wearer of the item. GMs should make rolls in secret, and otherwise do whatever they can, to keep players from realizing they have encountered a cursed item! When the Curse delivers its final "zap," the enchantment vanishes. Energy cost to cast: 10 times the cost to cast on a person.



## Mind Control Spells

### Loyalty

### Regular; Resisted by IQ

Makes the subject loyal to the caster. The subject will follow any direct order the caster gives; in the absence of direct orders, he will act in the caster's best interest as he understands it. The spell is immediately broken if the caster attacks the subject. If the subject is told to do something very hazardous or against his normal code of behavior (GM's decision), he gets an IQ roll to break the spell.

*Duration:* 1 hour.

*Cost:* 2 to cast; 2 to maintain. *Double* this cost if the subject does not know the caster, or *triple* if the subject is a foe of the caster.

*Time to Cast:* 2 seconds.

*Prerequisite:* Bravery and 4 other Mind Control spells.

*Item:* (a) Any item. Always on; wearer becomes loyal to the original creator of the item (when that person dies, the item loses its power). Energy cost to create: 500. Double this cost for an item that makes the wearer loyal to some specific third person. (b) Staff or wand. Usable by mages only; must touch subject. Energy cost to create: 2,000.

### Emotion Control

### Area; Resisted by IQ

Instills the subject(s) with any one emotion the caster chooses. No "game system" effect unless the GM feels it is necessary, but subjects should roleplay it! Some sample emotions: love, hate, lust, anger, greed, jealousy, hunger, fear, sadness, joy, peace, unrest, depression, patriotism, boredom.

*Duration:* 1 hour.

*Cost:* 2. Cannot be maintained; spell must be recast.

*Prerequisite:* Loyalty.

*Item:* (a) Any item. Always on; wearer is affected by the emotion instilled in the item when it was created. Energy cost to create: 300. (b) Staff or wand. Usable by mage only; must touch subject. Energy cost to create: 1,000 for an item that can instill only one emotion, or 2,200 for one that instills any desired emotion.

*Note:* Nimue, the second British Lady of the Lake, is recorded as using a variation of this spell called "Melancholia," lasting only a minute or two.

## Sound Spells

### Sound

### Regular

Produces any sort of *meaningless* sound the caster wishes - the drone of an insect, the distant babble of voices, the clatter of something falling, or anything similar. Will not produce loud noise. Requires no concentration once the spell is cast.

*Duration and Cost:* 1 to create 5 seconds' worth of sound; 2 to create a sound that lasts for a full minute; 1 per minute to maintain.

*Item:* Any. Continually produces the specified sound. Energy cost to create: 50.

# MAGIC ITEMS

The following magical items are found primarily in Malory and the Vulgate, but several interesting ones from pop culture/cinematic works are also included. These are noted at the end of their descriptions.

Almost all of these items are unique. Most have specific owners or limited spans of existence. Some are included as examples of "expendable" magic - one-use items that may be reproduced by a skilled mage. Virtually all of them are unsuitable for use in a historic campaign unless the GM is incorporating magic.

## Descriptions

Physical descriptions for most of these items are vague or non-existent in the original sources. Many are the swords which are simply described as "fair" or "noble" and left at that. In such cases, the description given is faithful to the flavor of the source as well as believable given the item's history.

## Holy Artifacts

Many of the magical items found in the tales are described as being holy or owned by holy persons. Any such item *will* have an air of divine goodness detectable by various means. The Aura and Analyze Magic spells *will* automatically detect this before any other properties. Blessed and Very Blessed persons *will* also know a holy item when they touch it. Mages can determine if an item is holy by making a detection roll as described in *Magical Aptitude*, p. B21. Again, the item's holy nature is the *first* thing the mage *will* determine about it.

For those GMs who own GURPS Magic, any spell cast by a holy item cannot be dispelled or *Counterspelled*, although it *can* be warded against.

Holy items have an intriguing tendency to wander of their own volition; the Holy Grail is the ultimate example of this. If a PC has come into a possession of a holy item, the GM should roll against its Power-5 (for most such items, this *will* be 15) once every week. Unless the PC's current goals and actions are in accord with the purpose of the item (for instance, taking the Spear of Longinus to heal the Maimed King), *and* if he is not the "destined" owner of it, a critical success on this roll indicates that the item leaves his possession. If he is manifestly evil or misusing the item's powers, a normal success will let the item depart. If he is the "destined" owner, no roll is necessary.

Holy items leave their owners in a number of ways. Mysterious white knights come and challenge the owner, beat him, then ride off with the item. Unfortunate accidents cause it to slip out of the owner's grasp or pack. Or the item simply packs up and moves out under its own power.

## Power Levels

Unless otherwise noted, holy artifacts have a Power of 20, while all other items have a Power of 15.

## The Adventurous Shield

This enchanted shield was owned by Galahad, and according to reliable divine sources, only safely usable by him. It is a large shield of metal and wood construction, white with a red cross upon it, and emitting a pleasant sweet aroma. It is permanently Shatterproof (DR 6, hit points 18/120 - see sidebar p. B120), and enchanted to provide a total PD of 5. It can perform Major Healing at no fatigue cost to the bearer, but only at its own

initiative! When touched by a wounded Christian of great faith, the GM should roll 3d; on a 12 or less, the shield heals him.

The shield's Major Healing is powered by a 4-point exclusive powerstone. When any person other than Galahad attempted to take this shield, he was maimed or killed within 3 days. In one case, a knight dressed in white (possibly an angel) appeared to challenge the bearer of the shield, smote him, and rode off with it.

## Balin's Sword

A thrusting broadsword originally owned by Sir Balin, it was later usable safely only by Galahad. Balin's use of the sword led to his death by mischance at the hands of his brother, Balan; any other knight who attempted to use the sword would invariably wound himself with it. For any wielder other than Galahad, treat all failed rolls with this sword as an automatic roll of 5 on the Critical Miss Table (p. B202).

The sword is enchanted with Puissance +2; it was once thrust into a block of red marble with no apparent damage to it. This may have been an effect of the stone and not the sword, though - the marble block was shortly thereafter sent floating down a river.

The damosel who first brought the sword to the court of King Arthur claimed that only "a knight who is brave and honorable, of good repute and without stain" could draw the sword from its scabbard, but then implied that its user was predetermined but unknown. Only Balin, of many knights, could draw the sword. It seems that this enchantment was on the scabbard and not the sword, given that other knights later could and did try to use the blade in combat.

This unnamed sword is a well-crafted weapon worthy of any knight. Even without its enchantment, it is a very fine weapon with a blade of gleaming steel.

## The Broken Sword of Joseph of Arimathea

More accurately, this sword was used by a servant of Mategrant to wound Joseph of Arimathea through the thigh. Repaired by the touch of Galahad during the Grail quest, this antique weapon is distinctly holy. One who kisses the blade is protected from mortal wounds for 12 hours or until sunset, whichever is longer. In effect, this is a 3-point Blessing (see p. 6) which only modifies die rolls for combat damage taken by the subject. There is no fatigue cost for this Blessing to either the recipient or the blade's owner; presumably God provides the power for the spell.

This ancient sword is not obviously exceptional in construction. Made of iron with a bronze hilt, it is a good quality Roman-style shortsword with no further enchantments inherent in it. According to Malory, the repaired weapon was given to Sir Bors, who wielded it from that point forward.

## Excalibur (Caliburn, Caliburnus)

There is some confusion over the swords of Arthur. Many believe that the famed "Sword in the Stone" was Excalibur, and in fact, Malory does confuse the two. However, the path of least contradiction leads the reader to conclude that they were two different weapons. For the Sword in the Stone, see *Galatine*, below.

Excalibur is a thrusting bastard sword of very fine quality.

The medieval writers implied that it was not of human manufacture; this has been seized upon by modern tale-tellers and expanded greatly. For instance, in Boorman's film *Excalibur*, the sword is a mystic symbol of kingship with potentially earth-shaking powers.

However, the original is not the wonder-weapon pop culture has made it out to be. Its only enchantments are Puisseance +3 and a permanent modified Shatterproof which prevents the dulling of its edge and point. Combined with the +2 damage bonus from its quality, it is easy to see where its name, which means "Cuts-Steel," comes from!

Excalibur is a very beautiful sword, chased with gold on the flat of the blade and inset with gems about the hilt and guard. The craftsmanship is too fine to be human work of the period, and its exact origin remains a mystery.

In the Vulgate, Arthur gives Excalibur to Gawaine to use in his name, as something of a symbol of office. However, Malory describes events which suggest that the sword Gawaine carries is actually the Sword in the Stone. Modern tradition, in keeping with Malory, has Excalibur constantly in Arthur's possession.

On Arthur's death, it is thrown back into a body of water, possibly the Lake. Rediscovery of Excalibur could be the start of a campaign built around the founding of a new Arthurian Cycle!

### Excalibur's Scabbard

In Malory, Merlin asks Arthur which he likes better - Excalibur or its scabbard. Arthur, being a military man, states that he likes the sword better. "More the fool you," says Merlin, "for the scabbard is worth ten of the sword." The wizard then explains that the scabbard is enchanted, so that no matter how badly he is wounded, the wearer would never lose any blood. Unfortunately for Arthur, Morgan le Fay stole it early in his career and threw it into a lake.

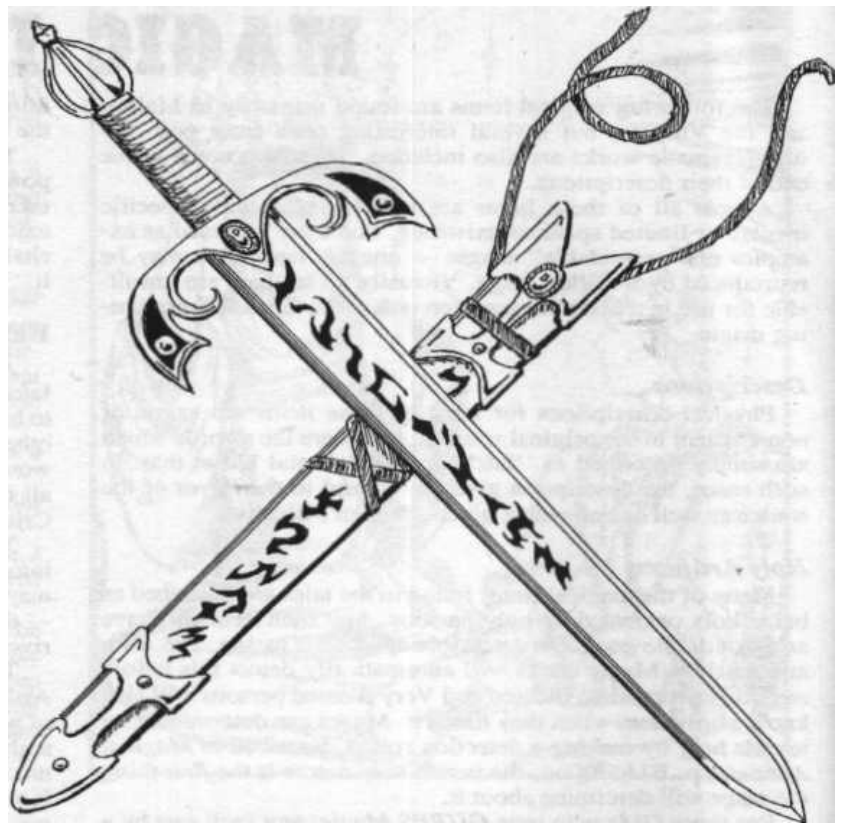
The scabbard is sturdily-constructed of wood and leather, and is heavily trimmed with gold and precious stones. As with any scabbard, it has loops for a belt or strap. When worn, it does not provide any real protection, in terms of PD or DR. Instead, it lets its wearer regenerate 1 HT after every hit which successfully damages him, unless he dies from the blow. (If the optional bleeding rule found on p. B 130 is being used, the wearer of the scabbard instead never bleeds.) After the fighting is over, it automatically provides the effect of *bandaging* (see p. B 127).

The scabbard is powered by one of its inset gems - a 10-point exclusive powerstone. Each HT point regenerated costs 1 point of powerstone Fatigue. If the optional bleeding rules are being used, each wound prevented from bleeding is done so at a cost of 1 Fatigue each per hour.

### Galatine (or Sequence)

Galatine is, as far as can be determined from the various conflicting sources, the famed Sword in the Stone. In Book I, Chapter 9 of *Le Morte D'Arthur*, Malory refers to the Sword in the Stone as Excalibur, but given later events in the same book, it appears this is a mistake on his part. The second name given here, Sequence, is found in the Vulgate, but it is not quite certain if it refers to the same sword.

Galatine is, as Malory puts it, "a fair sword." Another very fine weapon, it too is of possible non-human craftsmanship. This broadsword has an unornamented blade and a simple hilt



wrapped in gold wire. In some versions of the tales, the words "Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone and anvil, is right-wise king born of all England" is written on the blade in letters of gold; in Malory, though, this famous sentence is actually inscribed into the eponymous Stone.

**Whether the enchantment that allowed only Arthur to draw it was on Galatine or on the stone and anvil is impossible to determine.** Once drawn, it was usable by persons other than Arthur (most notably Gawaine, who wielded it as a badge of office), but its sole known enchantment was triggered only once by Arthur. Merlin warned him that the sword was not to be drawn from its sheath until his moment of greatest need. When he finally drew it forth during a crisis in the battle, it blazed forth with "a light like thirty torches," blinding his enemies and giving him a decisive battlefield advantage which he pressed to victory.

Galatine is enchanted with a permanent 6-point Continual Light which only activates when its owner draws it from its scabbard while at a military disadvantage.

### Helyes' Book

Helyes was Duke Galeholt's chief clerk; the Duke said of him that he surpassed all clerks as gold all other metals. He was apparently magically-gifted; the book he owned let him perform feats of magic, but he seemed not to be interested in studying or using it. One time he did consult it in order to summon an apparition to clarify a prophecy about the Duke's lifespan. Of all the clerks in Galeholt's employ, only Helyes was able to use the book; Karr speculates that the other clerks were not learned enough to make use of it.

Helyes' book is a large, leather-bound volume with a brass latch holding it shut. The leather is old and worn, but still

supple, of a deep mahogany color. The cover is unmarked, but the pages are covered with beautifully-executed calligraphy and illumination, providing step-by-step illustrations and commentary on the spell being discussed.

Depending on the needs of his campaign, the GM may portray this item one of two ways. The first is that it is simply a large grimoire and textbook of advanced magical studies. Its spell content is up to the GM and his campaign, but filling it with spells requiring Magery as a prerequisite would duplicate the inability of other clerks to use it.

The alternative makes this a truly magical item in and of itself. In this incarnation, Helyes' book is a mystic tome usable only by mages of IQ 14 +. Every day at dawn, a new spell (chosen by the GM) appears in its pages. If opened with a specific purpose in mind, the spell proffered will be of a useful nature, though not necessarily the most powerful or useful spell possible. For the next 24 hours, the owner of the book may cast that spell as if he knew it at level 15. Fatigue costs and duration are as **normal** - **only the ability to cast the** spell comes from the book.

## The Holy Grail

This is the cup used by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper. The Grail was brought to England by Joseph of Arimathea, whose descendants watched over it in the Castle Carbonek. There it stayed until Galahad, Bors and Percival completed the Grail Quest, after which they took it to the Middle East. From there, it ascended into Heaven at Galahad's death. (Other traditions say that it still remains in England; a modern quest for the Grail would make an excellent basis for a campaign! See Indiana Jones and *the Last Crusade* for ideas along these lines.)

The Grail, in Arthurian lore, is *the* ultimate holy item. In a very real way, it was a physical extension of God, and the quest for it was less a pursuit for ownership than a pursuit for spiritual fulfillment. In fact, the Grail's presence in Castle Carbonek was well-known; the actual goal was not to find it, but to view it unveiled - a clear metaphor for enlightenment. (More details on the Grail Quest - and its requirements - can be found on p. 58.)

The traditional description of the Grail is a golden chalice, bejeweled and engraved. (Realistically, if the Grail indeed existed it would probably have been a simple vessel of wood or brass; however, in some versions the Grail's golden and jeweled form is a covering added by Joseph of Arimathea to the original humble cup.) It is sometimes draped in a translucent veil. In Castle Carbonek, it sat upon a silver table; sometimes this table accompanied it on its travels.

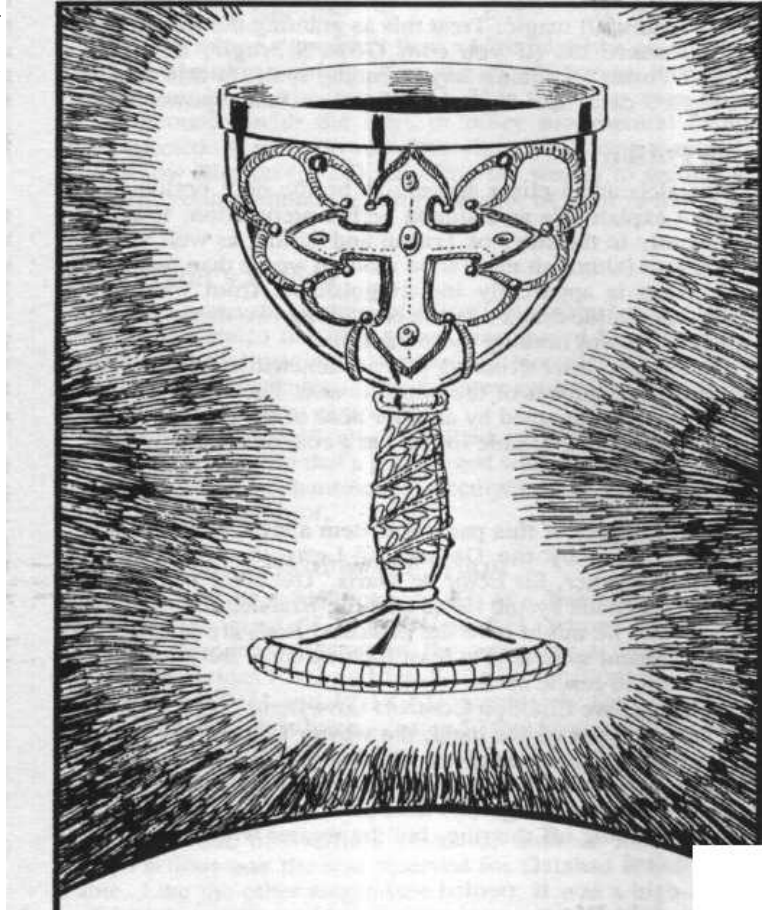
The Grail is possessed of several different abilities. (Where applicable, the following are permanent.) The first is that it radiates Continual Light at the 4-point level. The second is that it feeds the worthy (GM's decision) with a variation of the Monk's Banquet spell that provides actual physical food of the kinds the recipients like best. The third is that it will perform Major Healing upon the wounded. Similarly, it can also cure insanity in those exposed to it. It can Teleport itself (and its silver table) as **per the psionic ability Autoteleport (p. B 175)**. It can also Levitate itself as per the psi skill (p. B 173).

All the above abilities have a Power of 25, except the Levitation, which has a Power of 1. Since it cannot be truly said to have an owner, the Grail is entirely self-powered, and divinely so.

For all practical purposes, the Grail is a sentient being with an IQ of 16; it moves of its own free will, and cannot be taken by any person without its permission. In the case of Galahad and his compatriots, it developed an almost canine devotion to them;

it followed them faithfully, even so far as to appear in a jail cell to succor them for a year.

The GM should play the Grail as a full character in its own right. It is constantly judging all but the purest persons around it. It is sometimes fickle, deigning to feed all the knights of the Round Table one day, then ignoring most of them at other times. In a quiet, unassuming way, it demands respect; anyone who treats the Grail simply as a magic cup will soon lose it as it seeks another more worthy. At times it seems almost playful, with a dry sense of humor. The GM may want to play it as though it had a limited omniscience.



## The Holy Hand Grenade of Antioch

This wondrous holy artifact is found in the film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*; other Arthurian writers appear to have overlooked it. It resembles nothing so much as an emperor's orb of office: it is a sphere of precious metals, encrusted with jewels, about the size of a grapefruit. On its top there is a silver cross about two inches tall.

The Holy Hand Grenade is exactly that - a hand grenade. The cross is its pin; when pulled, the Holy Hand Grenade is armed; it is on a delay fuse, so once the pin is pulled it *must* be thrown. The delay is 4 to 5 seconds; for optimal timing, the user should count to 3 (5 is *right out!*) before lobbing it at his foe. (Use the Throwing skill for targeting the Hand Grenade.)

When the Holy Hand Grenade explodes, it does 5d+2 crushing damage to anything in the same hex and the 6 adjacent hexes. At ranges from 3 to 4 hexes away, it does 1 d + 3. At 5 to 7 yards away, it does 1d-4 (round down). Beyond 7 yards, there is no effect. There is no fragmentation damage from the Holy Hand Grenade.

This is a one-use-only item. It weighs 1 pound. It is normally transported in a jewel-studded coffer lined with heavy padding.

### Lancelot's Ring

In the Vulgate, the Lady of the Lake gave this ring to the young Lancelot before he set out for King Arthur's court. Made of sculpted gold and heavy, the ring had the ability to protect its wearer against all magic. Treat this as granting the wearer Magical Resistance/15. (If you own GURPS Magic, treat this a Ward of Power 15 against any incoming spell. In this case, the ring has a 5-carat opal in it - a 5-point exclusive powerstone.)

### Love Potion

This alchemical elixir appears to be the only potion in the texts not explainable as a simple herbal preparation. It appears prominently in the story of Tristan and Isolde, as well as many other places (although more so in modern works than medieval). This potion is apparently indistinguishable from wine, since Tristan and Isolde drank a bottle containing two doses under the impression it was nothing more than that!

The subject, after drinking this potion, will fall in love with the next-seen member of the opposite sex. The effect is permanent unless counteracted by another dose of the potion.

This potion is available for sale at a cost of \$900.

### Love Ring

Two examples of this particular item appear in the Vulgate. One was given by the Damsel of Lestroite Marche to Sir Lancelot's brother, Sir Ector de Maris. The other was given to Sir Bors de Ganis by the nurse of King Brandegoris' daughter, in order that he might love the princess. Both are golden rings with prominent stones; in at least the first case, the power of the spell is said to reside in the stone.

Both rings are Emotion Control: Love items (see the spell, p. 28). When placed on the hand, the wearer falls in love with the next person of the opposite sex whom he sees. The ring given to Sir Ector was reputed to cause the love felt to ever increase; this would indeed be a dangerous item to some! The spell is broken simply by taking off the ring, but the wearer will be *very* reluctant to do so!

### Lyonesse's Ring

Loaned by Dame Lyonesse to Sir Gareth so that he could fight unknown in a tournament, this ring caused his armor to change colors from minute to minute, confusing onlookers. Lyonesse also claimed that the one who wore it would also lose no blood.

The ring is a simple silver band with a faceted white stone inset. When worn, it casts a modified Illusion Disguise/Perfect Illusion which alters the colors of the wearer's clothing in a random fashion, once every minute. This operates as the standard Illusion Disguise item, and has no Fatigue cost for the user.

If the GM wishes to include Lyonesse's claimed protection from bleeding, he should consult the entry for Excalibur's Scabbard for a description of the enchantment.

### Magic Chessboard

Originally made by Gwenbaus for his princess, this enchanted game set was later brought to Guinevere by Lancelot. It is made of finely-stained wood and comes with gold and silver chess pieces. If a game is started by anyone, the board responds by playing the other side, and very quickly it will win. The enchantment on the board would be broken only upon the death of the only person it could not beat, the "most graceful and best beloved knight." This would turn out to be Lancelot, who, although he was not the best chess player at court, finally beat the device.

The board is made with a combination of enchantments, the upshot of which is that it plays an aggressive game of chess at skill level 25. It is powered by an exclusive powerstone that allows it to play continuously for 12 hours before needing to recharge. If it runs out of power in the middle of a game, it **will** restart where it left off.

### Merlin's Bed

According to Malory (Book 11, Chapter 19) Merlin, as a result of Balin and Balan's deaths, created a bed which caused madness. The purpose behind this is not clear, but the effects are. If a person sleeps in this bed, he is afflicted with one of the following madnesses upon rising from it:

1 - Berserk: Violent attacks against the nearest people. See p. B31.

2 - Catatonic: Stares into space and does nothing useful. If the subject is a wizard, he will not maintain his spells as they expire.

3 - Phobic: Subject is violently afraid of something in the immediate environment. The GM may accept the first good suggestion from spectators.

4 - Hebephrenic: Subject is "nuts," laughing, joking, and giggling. If confronted with danger, there is a 50% chance that his reactions will be useful, and a 50% chance it will be random and silly.

After suffering for 6 hours, the subject may make a Will roll at + 3. If he succeeds, the madness passes. If he fails, the madness is permanent! For those with *GURPS Magic*, this is the Madness spell (p. M58) with a special duration.

The bed is a simple wooden frame with rope supports; a straw ticking provides a mattress. The enchantment is in the bedframe itself; removing the ticking and/or the rope does not break the enchantment.

### Morgan's Drinking Horn

Possibly another attempt by Morgan le Fay to convince Arthur of Guinevere's infidelity, this horn was one of a set of three items, all with essentially the same property: the ability to detect an unfaithful wife. The horn was made of lustrous red gold, and from it no cuckold could drink without spilling.

Its companion pieces were a mantle which wrinkled and changed color on any untrue woman (only one woman at the court could wear it), and a boar's head, which could only be carved by a man who was not a cuckold.

The spells used to enchant these items are not known (although they must be in the Knowledge college).

### Morgan's Mantle

This mantle is quite different from the one mentioned with Morgan's Drinking Horn, above. Where that one was an attempt to sow chaos at the court, this one was an outright attempt at assassination.

The mantle is a richly-appointed cloak, made of black velvet and set with precious stones. It looks more than suitable for a king.

However, when it is put on, it incinerates its wearer. The moment its clasp is closed, its interior bursts into flames, doing 2d damage per second to the wearer until he is dead. The cloak itself is unaffected by the flame. The unclasped cloak may be used as a shield against flame, providing the effects of a Resist Fire spell (p. B159).

Several of the gems set into the mantle are exclusive powerstones, totaling 5 points (effective Fatigue of 15). Each second of incineration costs 2 points. If the fire-shield option is used, cost for Resist Fire is normal.

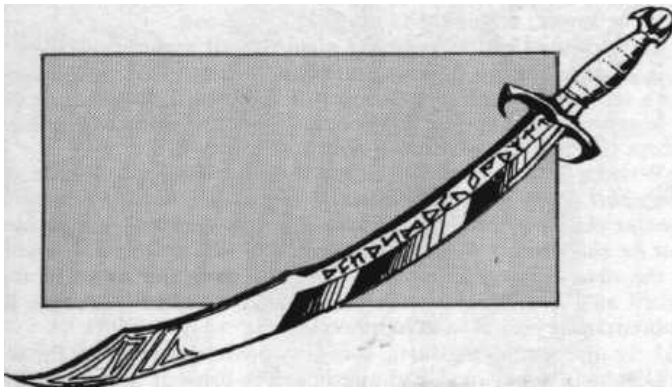
### Percival's Sword

This weapon, it was claimed, could slice through an iron chain and not suffer for it. It is not given a name. It is a standard broadsword of very fine quality and simple design: the blade has no decoration, nor does the hilt, which is simple brass and wire-wrapped. Its enchantment is identical to that of Excalibur (see p. 29).

### Priamus' Balm

This ointment is an alchemical unguent (based on Chiron from GURPS Magic). It restores 1d points of lost HT - or, if HT is normal, restores 2d of lost fatigue. Repeated doses have full effect. In addition, it is the sole cure for the wounds made by Priamus' Sword (below). When applied to them, the balm stops all bleeding, requiring no further HT rolls by the victim, even if the wounds are not fully healed.

In order for Priamus' balm to take effect, though, the wounds anointed with it must then be washed with water from a vial that was, according to Malory, "full of the four waters that came out of Paradise." (Applying one without the other has no effect.) Wounds so treated heal gradually over the course of an hour.



### Priamus' Sword

This blade is of Middle Eastern manufacture, its owner being a Saracen. It is a scimitar of fine quality, beautifully crafted and decorated, inlaid with gold and silver. Several emeralds stud the pommel.

The enchantment on this sword is such that it causes wounds

that continuously bleed. Upon being injured by this sword, the victim must make HT rolls as described in **the optional** bleeding rule sidebar on p. B130. However, any roll which is not a critical failure causes the loss of 1 HT; critical failures are treated as described.

These bleeding wounds will not heal normally, and if the victim is magically healed, the bleeding (and HT loss) will simply begin again. If sufficient magical healing is available, the victim may survive for quite a long time. Only a special balm (also owned by Priamus; see above) will stop the bleeding. (No doubt the Holy Grail can also heal the wounds caused by Priamus' Sword.)

### Ring of True Seeing

This is a minor "generic" item which might be granted by a witch or wizard to a knight. An ordinary silver ring, it casts See Invisible on its wearer (see p. 27). This would be most useful if an encounter with the Fay, or other supernatural beings, was expected. A more powerful version of this ring would also have Know Illusion (p. 26), enabling the wearer to see that the beautiful young woman bearing a basket of fruit is not as she seems ...

### King Ryon's Sword

This is as much an item of historical interest as a magical item. It is claimed that this sword was forged by Vulcan, the Roman god, and originally wielded by Hercules. It is a short-sword of apparent Roman manufacture captured by Arthur during one of his military campaigns.

Although not specifically described as being magical by the Vulgate, it seems odd that a god-forged weapon would not be. A suggested set of enchantments: Accuracy + 1, Puissance + 1, Permanent Shatterproof.

### The Serpent's Skin of the Giant

This leather-like skin (possibly that of a dragon) was worn as armor by the giant of Mont-St. -Michel, whom Arthur slew while in Europe. When worn (by wrapping it around one's body), it provides PD 2 and DR 8. (If hit locations are used, it protects areas 9-11 and 17-18.) Unfortunately for humans and like-sized beings, it is huge - some 30 feet long and 4 feet wide. It weighs about 100 pounds.

### The Siege Perilous

Another one of Merlin's pieces of dubious furniture, the Siege Perilous was the seat reserved for Galahad at the Round Table. Like the other sieges (see below), it was a high-backed wooden chair with cushioned arms, seat, and back. Across the top of its back, golden letters spelled out its name. (In Michael Greatrex Coney's *Fang, The Gnome*, it is simply called the "Hot Seat," and is labeled as such.) Up until the time that Galahad came to court, the Siege Perilous was covered by a white cloth.

In addition to the enchantment common to all the sieges, which spelled out its assigned knight's name when he was near, **the Siege has one additional spell which** gave it its name. In short, if you weren't Galahad and sat in the Siege Perilous, a pillar of flame consumed you. The pillar of fire does 3d damage per second - DR does not reduce this. The offender is reduced to a fine ash by the pillar, which then blows away. Although the heat can be felt by the knights on either side of the Siege, no harm comes to them (or to the Siege's upholstery, for that matter).



A golden chain is strung between the arms of the Siege Perilous in order to prevent unhappy accidents. However, on at least one occasion, one vainglorious knight, Brumant L'Orgueilleus, boasted while in his cups that he could sit in the Siege without harm and swore a vow to do so. To his credit, he did not attempt to escape his vow when sober. The Siege, of course, destroyed him.

Phyllis Ann Karr suggests in *The Idylls of the Queen* that although deadly to knights, the Siege Perilous apparently tolerated animals. In one section, Sir Kay tells how the Siege became the favorite perch of one of the Court's cats - and that no Companion of the Round Table had the courage to pet it as it lay there.

### Sieges of the Round Table

There are 150 sieges (seats) surrounding the Round Table, counting the Siege Perilous. All of them are physically identical, being tall wooden chairs with cushioned arms, seat, and back. The particular magical property of the Round Table's chairs is that each bears the name of its assigned knight in letters of gold as long as he is within a short riding distance (up to 5 miles). If a Companion of the Table rides beyond that distance, the letters fade away until he returns. They therefore are not suitable for determining if a knight is dead or alive.

Only **one seat other than the** Siege Perilous bears no name, and that is the siege to its right. This seat is reserved for Percival, who would be Galahad's companion and friend.

The sieges almost never declare the name of a knight before he is elected to the Round Table; only in the case of Tristram did a siege display his name before his election. Once a knight is chosen, his name appears immediately upon his seat.

The source of the sieges' power, as well as the exact spell(s) used in their enchantment, is a secret known only to Merlin.

### The Silver Shields of Lancelot

These shields were given by Viviane, the French Lady of the Lake, as gifts to Lancelot. There were three large shields in the set, silver in color with 1, 2 and 3 red horizontal bands respectively on them.

It is not clear from the Vulgate text, but given that Lancelot never used them after conquering Dolorous Garde, they may have been one-use items. (More generous GMs may decide that they were only usable once every year, or every century.) Each one had a single spell (or spell-like effect) stored within it. The spell was triggered by setting the shield upon one's arm in preparation for use in battle.

The shield with a single red stripe restored all fatigue lost by its bearer at the time it was activated.

The shield with 2 stripes doubled the bearer's ST for 5 minutes.

The shield with 3 stripes tripled the bearer's ST for 5 minutes. They are otherwise normal large shields.

### The Spear of Longinus

#### (or The Spear of Vengeance)

This ancient holy artifact is the spear that pierced Christ's side as he hung on the cross. It is also the spear with which Balin wounded King Pellam with the Dolorous Stroke, creating the Waste Land. Pellam thereafter was known as the Maimed King until Galahad healed him with blood from the same spear.

Although it was certainly no more than an ordinary spear in the hands of the Roman centurion Longinus, its affiliation with the divine has transformed it into something quite different;

when Balin first beheld it it was, as Malory says, "a marvelous spear strangely wrought." When beheld by Grail Questers in Castle Carbonek, it was often bleeding. On occasion, it was one of the obstacles of Carbonek's Castle Adventurous, wounding questers as they slept. When it was not seen bleeding, the point of the spear seemed to bum like a flame.

Like the Grail (see p. 31), the Spear is almost a sentient being in its own right. It is not nearly as free-willed as the Grail and seems to have been constrained to the vicinity of Carbonek for the most part. Like the Grail, it can Levitate (Power 1), and may perform Major Healing (Power 20), although whether the latter is limited to the Maimed King is unknown. Whatever the case, the healing is performed by anointing the wounded person with the blood dripping from the Spear.

The Spear seems to be both allegorical symbol and physical test for the Grail questers. It bled only when it was not actually inflicting wounds upon the knights, suggesting that it alternated between representing spiritual and earthly challenges. In the end, Galahad took it with him to Sarras, and from there it ascended into Heaven with him and the Grail.

### The Sword of King David

This ancient bronze/iron sword was owned by King David of Israel thousands of years ago. His son, King Solomon, had a vision that his descendant Galahad would have need of it, and placed this sword and various other items on a special ship which was sent out to sea until Galahad came upon it. (The other items on the ship, with the possible exception of the sword's scabbard, were not magical. For details on the ship, see Malory, Book XVII.)

The sword is a weapon worthy of a king. Its iron blade is enchanted with Accuracy +2, Puissance +3, and a permanent Shatterproof. Its hilt contains two bone inserts, both of which bear enchantments. One is the rib of a serpent, and allows the wielder to Resist Fire, as the spell. The other is the rib of a fish which keeps the wielder from ever losing fatigue (this costs 1 point from the sword's powerstone for every point of fatigue that would have been lost). In addition, the sword will automatically cast a Major Healing upon its bearer any time he reaches 3 HT or lower, restoring as much HT as it can.

The pommel of the sword is a stone "all manner of colors" - it is an exclusive powerstone of 20 points. This powerstone has a quirk which affects the user of the sword, whether or not he uses any of the spells: he becomes unable to think of anything except the task for which the sword was drawn.

Written on the sword's hilt are the following words: *Let see who shall assay to draw me out of my sheath, but if he be more hardier than any other, and who that draweth me, wit ye well that he shall neverfall of shame of his body, or to be wounded to the death.* Percival's sister Dindane gave the name of this sword as "The Sword with the Strange Girdles" because its scabbard was belted with hempen cords.

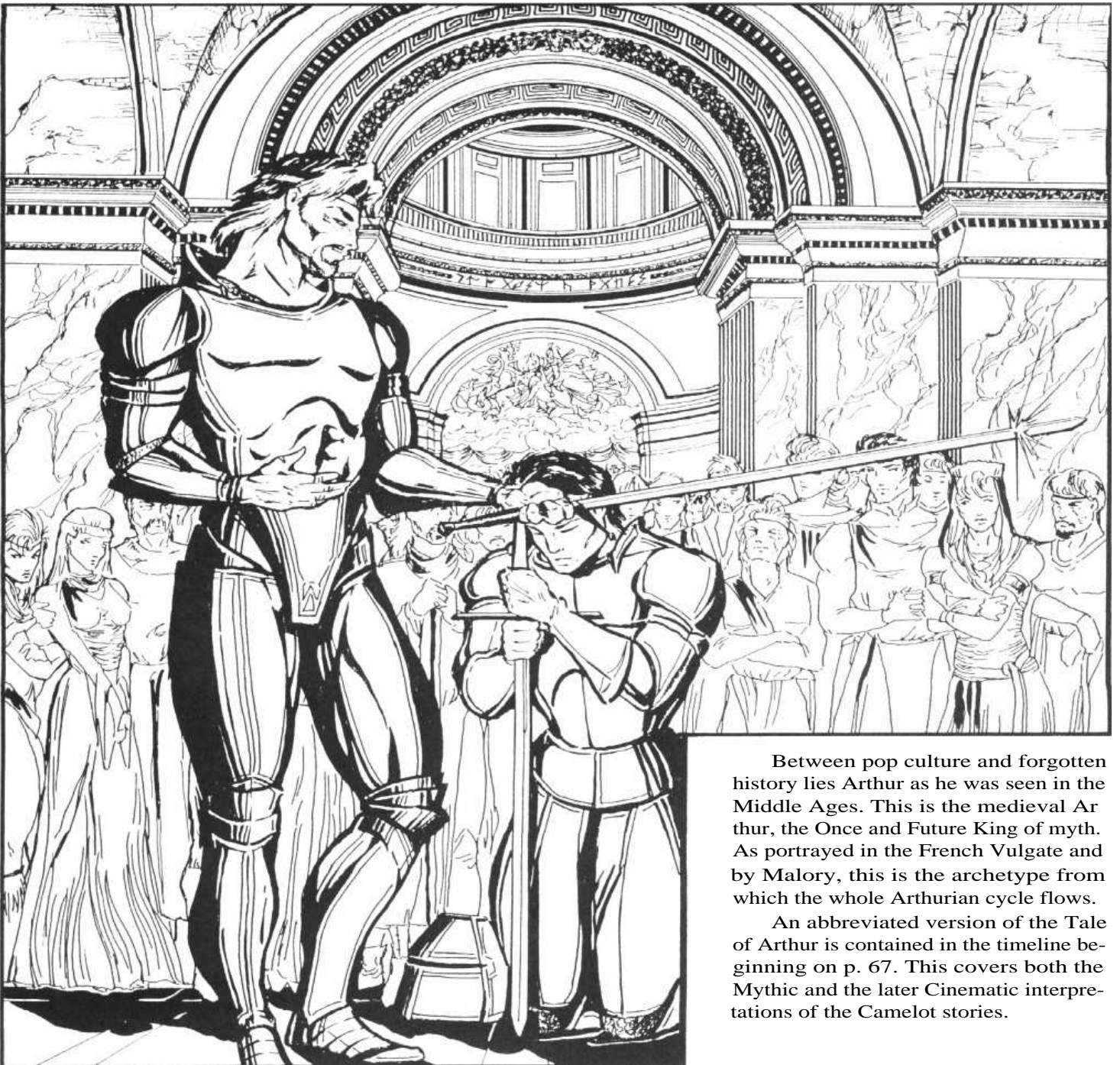
Like many other artifacts, this sword was reserved for the use of Galahad. Other men had attempted to draw it from its scabbard over the centuries, but had failed and drawn some form of retribution. King Lambor, father of King Pellam of the Grail Castle, was killed with this sword, according to the Vulgate.

King David's Sword came in a scabbard which may or may not have been magical, given the punishment inflicted on those who attempted to draw the sword from it. The scabbard was made of serpent's skin as red as blood, and extensive prophecies were written on it in letters of gold and silver on one side, and in letters of coal black on the other. Dindane named it "Memory of Blood."



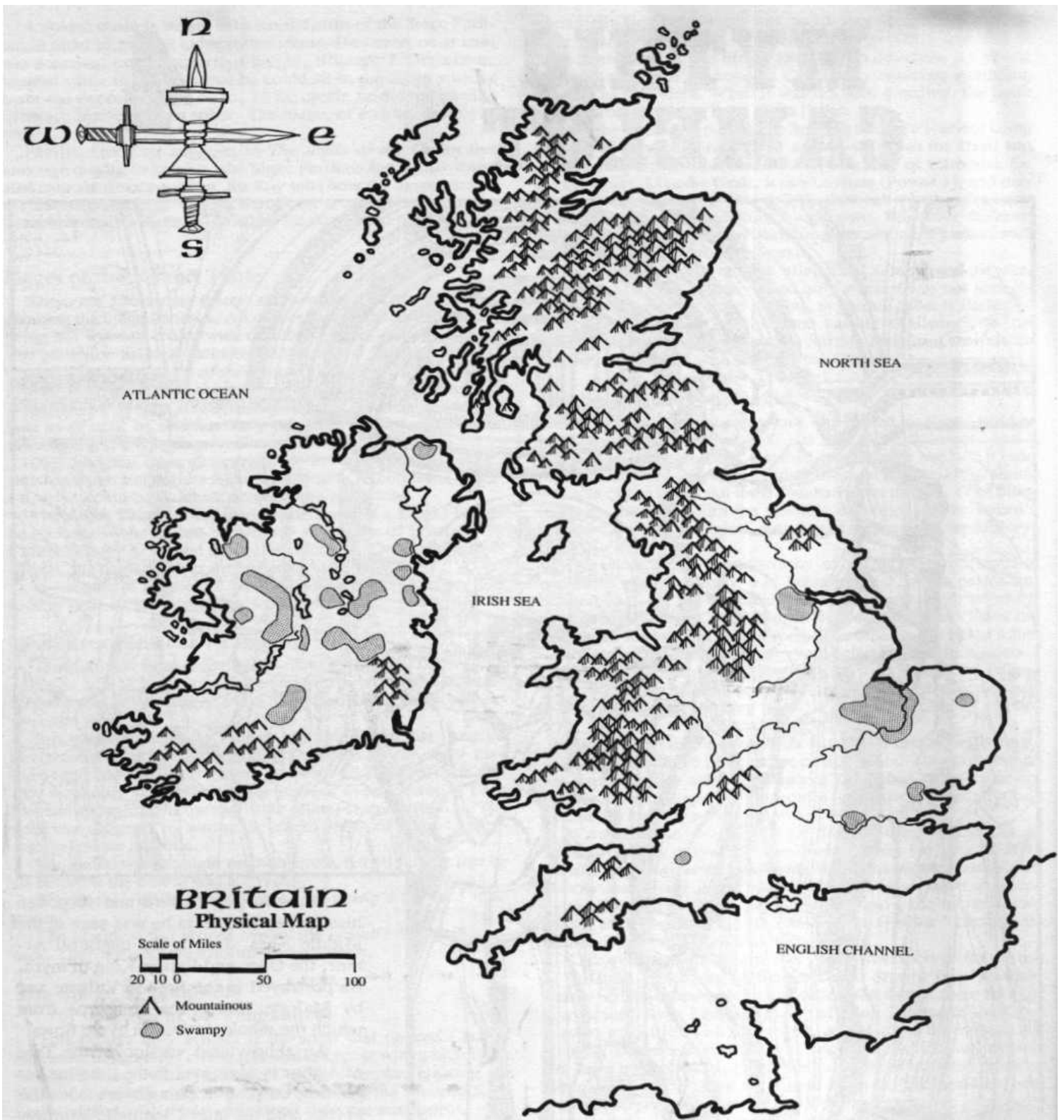
# MYTHIC CAMELOT

# 4



Between pop culture and forgotten history lies Arthur as he was seen in the Middle Ages. This is the medieval Arthur, the Once and Future King of myth. As portrayed in the French Vulgate and by Malory, this is the archetype from which the whole Arthurian cycle flows.

An abbreviated version of the Tale of Arthur is contained in the timeline beginning on p. 67. This covers both the Mythic and the later Cinematic interpretations of the Camelot stories.



# Arthur's Britain

The key to understanding Arthur is understanding the land and the kings before him. They are as important as Merlin's guidance in shaping the course he took. Please note that this is not "true" British history - at least not so far as can be determined - but the mythical constructions of Geoffrey of Monmouth and later elaborators. Some elements, such as the Saxon settlement and wars, are true, but the setting in which Arthurian legend places them is mostly fictional.

## Arthur's Predecessors

To fully understand the social and political environment that led to the Round Table, we must start in the midst of the 4th century.

### Vortigern

Vortigern is the least savory of the kings immediately preceding Arthur. He was not the rightful king - he assumed the crown by arranging the assassination of the legitimate ruler, Constans, by his own Pictish guards. A dozen barons who wanted Vortigern as king killed Constans' oldest son, Maines. Constans' two younger sons, Uther and Aurelius Ambrosius, were spirited away to Armorica (modern Brittany) by their guardians before Vortigern could harm them.

Vortigern, to keep appearances, executed the Pictish guards, which prompted their tribes to begin raiding. Vortigern hired several shipsful of exiled Saxon (German) mercenaries to fight them. They were paid with land on the east coast of Britain, and with Vortigern's permission, more Saxons moved into Britain. With them came Rowena, the daughter of the Saxon chieftain Hengist. In exchange for a larger land grant to the pagan Saxons, Vortigern married Rowena. This disgusted many of his people, including his sons by his first marriage.

The rapid growth of the Saxon settlement, and their interbreeding with Briton women, alarmed the British men. Afraid of being culturally and racially overrun, they supported the usurpation of Vortigern's crown by his eldest son, Vortimer. Vortimer led a brief war on the Saxons that drove most of them back to Germany. However, his stepmother Rowena had him poisoned, allowing Vortigern to resume the throne.

Upon the return of Hengist and a large Saxon army, the situation changed drastically. The Saxons massacred the British representatives at a treaty signing, leaving only Vortigern alive as a figurehead. The Saxons occupied many British cities, abusing the citizens and razing churches.

Vortigern managed to flee to Wales, where he tried to build a fortress, but it repeatedly sank into the ground. He consulted soothsayers, who declared he must sacrifice a child who had no father in order to successfully build. Vortigern's agents found the nine-year-old Merlin, who was brought to the king and who subsequently prophesied to him after showing the true cause for the citadel's instability: two dragons battling underground beneath its foundations. Merlin also warned of Vortigern's impending doom.

This doom was the imminent return of the now-adult Aurelius and Uther. The brothers arrived in Britain with an army raised in Armorica; as soon as they landed, Aurelius (the older brother) was crowned king. Vortigern and his army left Wales, but he retreated to a castle in Monmouth rather than face the bulk of the enemy forces. Aurelius' troops laid siege to the castle and set it on fire; Vortigern died in the blaze.

### Aurelius Ambrosius

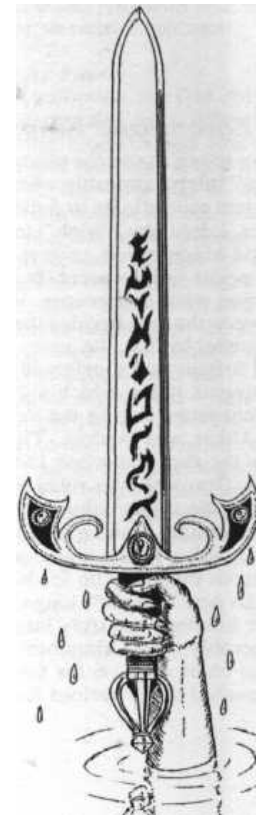
Aurelius did not stop with **simply regaining the crown. Using cavalry that he brought from Armorica, Aurelius then attacked** the Saxons. His assault was

## Geoffrey of Monmouth's History

Like many figures of *medieval* literature, Geoffrey of Monmouth's identity is still partly in doubt. That he considered himself a historian is clear, but most scholars think of him as an unabashed liar.

*His Historia Regnum Britanniae (History of the Kings of England)* is a collection of wishful thinking and outright falsification than a true history. Geoffrey presented a vision of a noble England that never was: founded by refugees from fallen Troy, ruled by a long, unbroken line of kings, partner to the Roman Empire.

In the midst of his mix of prevarication and truth, there is a brief account of a king named Arthur, who repelled Saxon invaders, and even went so far as to invade Europe. His attempt at empire collapsed with his death at the battle of Camlann. For some reason, this particular king, out of all the many in the History, caught the imagination of the people. Little remains now of the original story as told by Geoffrey. Much has been added that is purely mythical. But some scholars feel that Arthur's story is not the complete falsehood that previous generations dismissed it as. In particular, growing evidence suggests that a British warlord known as Riothamus (see p. 72) was the original model for Geoffrey's Arthur.



Mythic Camelot

## 5th Century or 10th

Some later writers, including T.H. White and the Monty Python troupe, move Arthurian Britain completely out of the 5th century. Almost to a one, these new interpretations put it in the 10th century (although it has been placed as late as the 14th!). White even goes so far as to make the boy Arthur contemporary with Robin Hood and his Merry Men!

Either date can be supported, although the 10th century is primarily a cinematic setting. The advantage of the later period is that it is easier to justify the classic arms and armor of Arthurian myth, as well as a political and social structure that is clearly feudal Norman. The disadvantage is that the European politics of the 10th century and later are much better known than that of the 5th, and vastly different; Arthur's continental campaigns are based upon an active, if decadent, Roman Empire. The GM will have his work cut out for him if he tries to reconcile 10th century continental politics with the conqueror Arthur.

The Britain of the Dark Ages, on the other hand, is much more shadowy; that which is known is little more than the stories which engendered Arthur. European history for the time, while far from fragmentary, easily accepts the more excessive claims made for Arthur.

## Barons and Kings

Malory seems to use the terms "baron" and "king" interchangeably when discussing the rulers subordinate to Arthur, who is sometimes called the "high king." Both barons and kings revolt against Arthur at different points in his career. It is difficult to determine what differences, if any, existed between the two besides the name.

It is probable that the many subkingdoms of Britain were originally duchies under previous kings which split off into independent states during the interregnum between Uther and Arthur. This is supported by the fact that when Uther sat on the throne, Cornwall was ruled by a Duke, Gorlois. By the time Arthur has taken up the crown, though, it was a kingdom, ruled by King Mark. The same occurred in areas. Barons then may be feudal subordinates to the new "lesser" kings, or rulers of smaller holdings not truly large enough to be believably called kingdoms.

See the chart on p. 6 for the levels of Status accorded to the various feudal titles.

successful, and drove them back to the North Sea. He captured and executed Hengist.

With the Saxons repulsed, at least for the moment, Aurelius began the process of rebuilding; in particular, the destroyed churches. He also desired to raise a monument to the men slain by the Saxons at the signing of the treaty. Merlin told him of a ring of stones erected in Ireland by giants, and Aurelius decided that they would become the memorial. Merlin, Uther and a crew of workmen sailed to Ireland to disassemble the circle and ship it back to Britain. When the workers could not budge the megaliths, Merlin disassembled the circle magically. Once in Britain, Merlin reassembled Stonehenge on the Salisbury plain over the grave.

Aurelius' rule was ended, like Vortimer and Constans before him, by assassination. One of Vortigern's remaining sons hired a Saxon who, disguised as a doctor, poisoned Aurelius under the guise of giving him medicine.

## Uther Pendragon

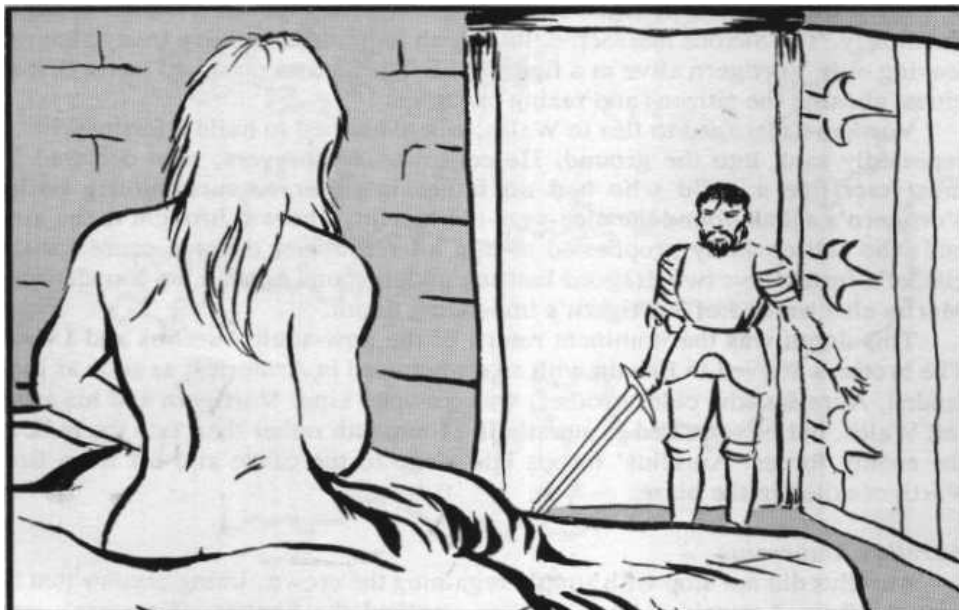
Aurelius Ambrosius' brother Uther succeeded him to the crown. Uther took the surname "Pendragon" (which means "Dragon Head") after the appearance of a dragon-like comet. A spurt of Saxon activity kept Uther busy **for a while, but** after a **decisive victory over the outlanders, peace** again settled on Britain.

It is here that Arthur's story truly begins.

Uther was formally crowned after the end of his Saxon campaign, in London on Easter. At the celebration of his victory, he spied Igraine, the *wife of Duke Gorlois of Cornwall*, and was filled with lust for her. When he made advances, she and Gorlois left London. Uther took this as an insult, and ordered the duke to return to **court**. When Gorlois refused, Uther marched on Cornwall with an army to ravage the ducal **lands**.

The duke secreted Igraine in the remote Castle Tintagel and took up the defense at Castle Terrabil, which blocked the route to Tintagel. However, Gorlois' forces were no match for Uther's. In a short time the king's army had surrounded the duke's, and began obliterating it. Gorlois was killed.

Learning the location of Igraine, Uther called for Merlin. The now 26-year-old wizard gave Uther the likeness of Gorlois, and Merlin himself and one of Uther's knights the semblances of two of the duke's **trusted friends**. But Merlin



demanded a price - the child that would be begotten that night. Uther rode into Tintagel unquestioned and slept with Igraine. Arthur was conceived.

After formally reconquering Cornwall, Uther confronted Igraine with the truth. Relieved (she had thought it might have been a demon when she heard of Gorlois' death), she consented to marry Uther. When she gave birth to Arthur, Merlin came and claimed payment for his services; the child was given to him. Merlin fostered Arthur with Sir Ector of the Forest Sauvage.

Uther reigned for another 15 years, but his health slowly deteriorated. (Sometime during this period, he gave a large round table to King Leodegrance of Camelard.) The Saxons, it turned out, were not as thoroughly defeated as was thought, and they slowly regained their strength. Finally, they again attacked, and a great war ensued. Uther **was too** ill to command in person, and his forces suffered for it. Finally, Merlin came to him and told him to go to the battlefield in a horse-litter, and his presence would bring victory to his men.

Uther did as Merlin bade, and victory did come to the British; the enemy was routed. But the strain was too much for the ailing king, and upon his return to London, he fell into a decline that was clearly his end. At Merlin's prompting, he affirmed the transfer of his crown to his long-lost son Arthur with his last words. With his death, and the apparent lack of an heir to the high kingship, Britain disintegrated into a collection of petty fiefdoms and minor kingdoms.

#### *Britain at the Coming of Arthur*

This, then, was the Britain Arthur inherited: devoid of central government, dozens of city-states and miniature nations all powers unto themselves, widespread anarchy checked only partly by the Church, and a powerful external enemy. Arthur's purpose, as decided by Merlin even before his birth, was to restore the land and its people - a hefty job to give to a 17-year-old squire.

## Political Divisions

Britain at the time of Arthur was subdivided in several different ways. The island of Britain, firstly, was broken down into four major regions (sometimes



### *The Picts*

Natives to Scotland, the Picts are the last remains of the pre-Celtic inhabitants of Britain. They are a nomadic TL1 Bronze age culture with domesticated cattle and a shamanistic religion. Pictish men are known as fierce warriors, fighting with spear and bow. They often use natural poisons on their arrows. Aside from the Saxons, the Picts are the enemy Arthur's forces most often face.

Physically they are a smaller and darker people than the Britons. They wear a minimal amount of clothing, usually made of tanned skins. Some anthropologists suggest that they practiced ritual scarring of the face. In combat or at important ceremonies they paint their faces (and sometimes their bodies) blue, lending them an unearthly air. They are skilled in survival and woodcraft.

It appears that they were a matriarchal and polyandrous tribal society, with the number of husbands taken by a woman proportional to her status within her tribe. In the manner of nomads, each tribe had several homes which they visited in a cycle of travel. These homes are camouflaged or underground, and difficult - if not impossible - for an outsider to spot.

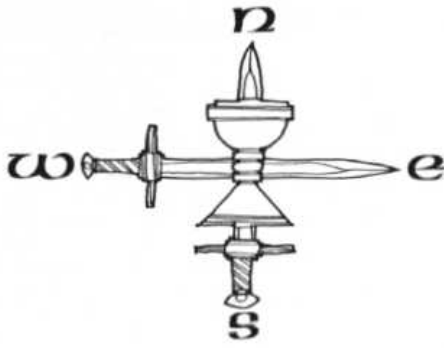
#### *The Picts As Faerie*

This is an option the GM may want to explore, especially in a Historical campaign. Parke Godwin and Mary Stewart both used this concept, and it lends itself well both to the facts and to the gaming milieu. In this interpretation, the Picts are no more magical than anyone else, but their reclusiveness, disdain for steel, and pagan practices mark them with an unusual reputation; their facility with natural toxins is mistaken for magic and "elf-shot."

Britons, especially those living in or near the Pict-lands, will have many tall tales about the mysterious "little people"; unless the party knows a Pict, it will be impossible to know what is true or not!

A Pict may be a player character; see p. 13. If the GM is using the Faerie option, replace the Social Stigma with a -2 Bad Reputation from everyone, all the time: Believed to be a malign supernatural creature.





called major kingdoms, although there is no evidence that they were ever discrete political units). These were Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, and Logres. Ireland was a political power, but it was properly separate from Britain, being a "foreign" kingdom aligned with Arthur rather than subordinate to him.

Each region given here was also divided into subkingdoms and smaller holdings. Most of these fiefdoms were no doubt duchies or other feudal domains subordinate to earlier kings, but which broke away during the chaos following the death of Uther. Unsurprisingly, the rulers of these lands usually fancied themselves kings, and retained the title even after Arthur took the throne.

For the (admittedly conjectural) locations of these subkingdoms, see the map on p. 40. (Although we disagree with some of her conclusions, the authors are indebted to the work of Phyllis Ann Karr in establishing many of the more obscure locations.)

### **Scotland (Caledonia)**

Scotland in Arthur's time was everything north of Hadrian's Wall, including the various islands near the British coastline. Malory mentions that there were "many kings in the north." Scotland was indeed the site of many kingdoms:

#### ***Benoye***

Probably ruled by Prince Boudwin, father of Sir Alisander le Orphelin, Benoye is identified by some scholars as being Albany in modern Scotland, immediately above the Firth of Forth. Benoye was primarily known as the retirement home of Alisander and his wife, Alice La Beale Pilgrim.



(An alternate interpretation of the material in Malory suggests that Benoye could be Alice's homeland instead of Alisander's, ruled by her father Duke Ansirus the Pilgrim.)

#### **Garloth**

The realm of King Nentres, who married Elaine, Arthur's half-sister.

#### ***L'Isle Estrange***

Also known as Estrangor and Stranggore, this kingdom was ruled first by King Brandegoris, followed by King Vagor, who once held Sir Lionel prisoner.

#### ***The Long Isles***

Conquered once by Duke Galeholt, these islands are not specifically located by Malory. However, the Scottish islands of Islay, Jura, Kintyre and Arran certainly match the description of "long islands" better than any others in Britain.

## ***Political Alignments***

Britain under Arthur was not a single unified country. Before he ascended to the throne, the land had gone through a period of political turmoil **during which a number** of subkingdoms had become essentially autonomous bodies. The return of a high king was a threat to the rulers of some of these lands, who enjoyed their independence and unaccountability.

It should be no surprise that there were several rebellions against Arthur during his reign. Even in peacetime, relations with some subkingdoms were strained at best. The sidebars which follow will outline some of the major antagonists and neutrals in Britain - rulers of lands from which may come hostile knights or outright war, or who may be trying walk a tightrope on the balance of power.

However, remember that once an enemy does not mean always an enemy. King Uriens of Gore was the virtual leader of a rebellion, yet in later years was "one of the most prized knights of the Round Table. The reverse may also be true in a campaign where politics plays a great part: a leader assumed to be a staunch supporter of the status quo may turn out to be a secret rebel!

### ***Neutrals***

In general, neutrals will support the status quo without necessarily approving of it. Their lands will technically be part of Arthur's "united Britain," but they keep a certain political distance from Camelot and functions of the court, unless it suits their needs.

***Duke Eustace of Cambenet.*** Eustace was known to be an ally of the eleven kings who first rebelled against the young Arthur upon his ascension to the throne. Although Cambenet was not involved in the rebellion proper, the little-mentioned Eustace seems to keep his distance from Camelot.

***King Brandegoris of Stranggore.*** Originally a member of the first rebellion of kings against Arthur, Brandegoris declined to join any other rebellions which followed. Although technically he was a feudal subordinate to Arthur, he never officially joined the king's court.



## **Enemies**

Uriens of Gore. Brother-in-law to Arthur, husband to Morgan le Fay, and rebel king, Uriens led the rebellion of the Eleven Kings which challenged 18-year-old Arthur's claim to the throne. His period of opposition to Arthur is brief; sometime after the rebellion he became reconciled to the young king and served him faithfully for many years afterward.

*Ryons of Norgales.* Not merely an enemy of Arthur but of everyone, Ryons was one of the most warlike of the sub-kings. During the rebellion of the Eleven Kings (in which he did not participate), he took advantage of Arthur's preoccupation to attack Camelarde. Ryons seems to have been out to conquer anyone he could - and he had had no small success in the past. He wore a cloak decorated with the beards of the kings he had conquered. His one saving grace seems to have been a sharp, ironic wit which he could turn on himself as well as others. Ryons' brother, Sir Nero, was as warlike as he, and apparently was Ryon's second-in-command.

*Mark of Coriswall.* Although he eventually did swear fealty to Arthur, King Mark was a notoriously amoral leader, capable of nearly anything that would further his plans. Eventually slain by his nephew's son, he was responsible for the deaths of a great number of knights - some of them his own, killed during his fits of rage. Since he reigned almost to the end of Arthur's life, he can be a secret enemy and plotter for an extended campaign. Mark is a skilled diplomat, able to sweet-talk the most suspicious observer; he is also cunning and skilled in other political arts. He played the buffoon on the field of combat most of the time, but he does seem to have possessed a certain degree of personal honor.

*King Claudas of Gaul.* Claudas ruled "la terre deserte" - a section of Gaul devastated by Uther Pendragon; as a result, he had both a grudge against Uther's son and a desire for better lands. Claudas seems to be trying to unify Gaul much as Arthur does for Britain, except his technique was annihilation rather than incorporation. In the process of conquering Benoit, Claudas inadvertently determined the life course of Lancelot. Claudas is described as "brave but treacherous" and as possessing an odd mixture of good and bad qualities. He is a remarkable strategist, and fiercely devoted to his men. On at least one occasion, he personally entered Britain in disguise to spy on Arthur. Claudas admires Arthur and is very impressed by his good qualities. Although quite learned and an excellent statesman, he is illiterate.

*Continued on next page ...*

## **Mythic Camelot**

### *Lothian*

The realm, along with the Orkneys, of King Lot, husband of Morgawse, Arthur's half-sister.

### *Orkney*

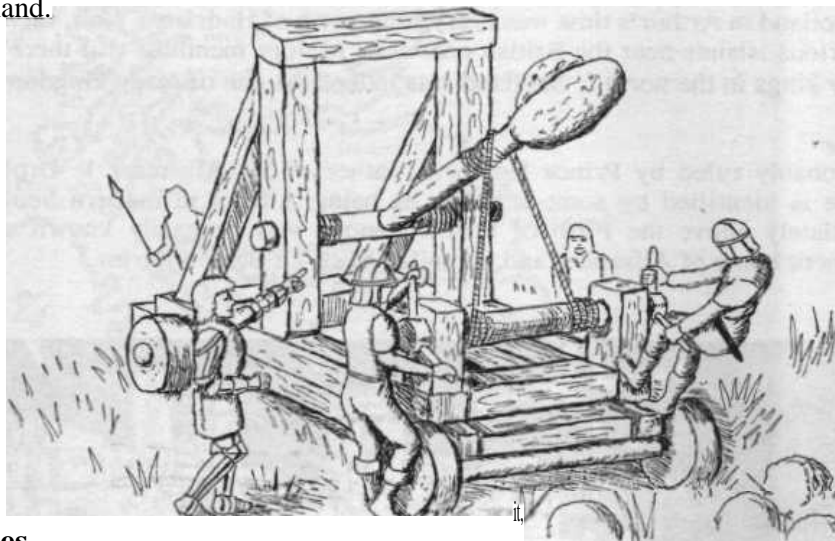
Also ruled by King Lot, Orkney is the modern Orkney Isles. This was the home of Gawaine and his brothers.

### *The Pict-Lands*

The more mountainous areas of the Scottish highlands were home to the nomadic Picts. See the sidebar on the Picts on p. 39 for more information.

### *Pomitaun*

Ruled by King Marsil, who received the island as a gift from Duke Galeholt the Haut Prince. Karr identifies it with the island of Arran off the coast of Scotland.



### **Wales**

Also known as "Gales," "Gales" or "Galles," this region was essentially the same area as modern Wales.

### *Cambenet*

Ruled by Duke Eustace, this territory was immediately to the south of Norgales. Its capital was the city of Cambenic, and within its boundaries were several of Morgan le Fay's bastions.

### *Eseavalon*

In the Vulgate, this kingdom is also called Kaerlyon; modern Caerleon (called Isca by the Romans) was no doubt the capital of this ancient kingdom. Escavalon lies between Sugales and the southern edge of Wales.

### **Gore**

Karr identifies Gore with a triangular peninsula extending west from Wales into the Irish Sea. According to the Vulgate, its capital was the city of Gaihom. Another city of importance is Sorhaute. The best-known king of Gore was Uriens, husband of Morgan le Fay, one-time political and military enemy of Arthur, later a knight of the Round Table. Afterwards it was ruled by Uriens' nephew Bagdemagus, who also in his time became a Companion.

## *The Isles*

The kingdom of King Pellinore. Karr identifies them with Anglesey and Holyhead islands.

### **Norgales**

Literally, "North Wales." The northern part of Wales, from the coast down to the Severn river. No capital city was ever given, although the Vulgate does mention a castle called Kaleph in Norgales. If a capital city is needed, Kynkenadon on the **northern coast would certainly not** be out of place, given that it was a court city for Arthur.

### **Orofoise**

Orofoise is mentioned only once in the Vulgate, in passing. It appears to be between Surlose and Norgales. It was ruled by a Countess.

### **Sorestan**

Sorestan was one of the easternmost kingdoms of Wales, bordering on Norgales, Orofoise, and Surlose. At one time, according to the Vulgate, its queen was an ally of Morgan le Fay. This does not necessarily imply that it was politically opposed to Arthur, given that Morgan's husband himself was a staunch ally of the king.

### **Sugales**

This country is mentioned only in the Vulgate. As Norgales is North Wales, so Sugales would be South Wales. In the Vulgate, a King Belinans of "Sorgales" is mentioned; he may well have been the ruler of Sugales.

### **Surlose**

A fair and green country, Surlose was bordered by Norgales and Sorestan. In the time of Arthur's reign, it was ruled by Duke Galeholt, whose allegiance to the king was won by Lancelot. His immediate predecessor was King Gloier, who during the interregnum after Uther's death had limited the paths of access to the country. By the time of Arthur, only two existed: each had a strong gate-tower, a knight, and a troop of armed men to guard it.

### **Cornwall**

Arthurian Cornwall was composed of modern Cornwall and Devon, plus Lyonesse - a land now sunk into the sea. Although originally a duchy governed by Duke Gorlois, it had, by the time of Arthur, become a separate kingdom under Mark.

### **Lyonesse**

Long-standing tradition places Lyonesse off the southwestern tip of Cornwall. The land is now sunken, its location betrayed only by the Scilly isles. Lyonesse seems to have been separate from the kingdom of Cornwall ruled by Mark, as it was ruled by its own king and queen: Meliodas and Elizabeth, parents of Tristram.

### **The South Marches**

The southeastern portion of the Cornwall peninsula. The South Marches are ruled by a duke, whose name is not known.

### **Tintagil**

The subkingdom commanded from Tintagel castle, it comprises most of northern Cornwall, and was, in fact, the majority of the kingdom. It could be

## **Enemies (Continued)**

*The Chromatic Knights.* These were four brothers: Percard (the Black Knight),

Persant of Inde (the Blue Knight), Pertolepe (the second Green Knight), and ~~Belinans (the Red Knight). These~~ ~~had, for a long time, waged a personal war against members of the Round Table. This conflict ceased around AD 429 when Gareth of Orkney, on his first adventure, slew Percard and extracted vows from the other brothers, who later became Round Table knights themselves. At the time that they preyed on Companions, each was trapped out entirely in the color of his preference; they would challenge knights who passed their chosen stations. They were knights of great skill, and were highly honorable.~~

*Sir Brian of the Isles.* Brian occupied the castle Pendragon (possibly Arthur's ancestral home) and imprisoned anyone who came within his desmenes. He eventually developed quite a collection of knights and ladies. Lancelot defeated him and released the prisoners, and Brian supposedly swore to Arthur. However, on a return trip, Lancelot discovered that Brian's oath was false, and deposed him from his lands, "for cause he would never be withhold with King Arthur."

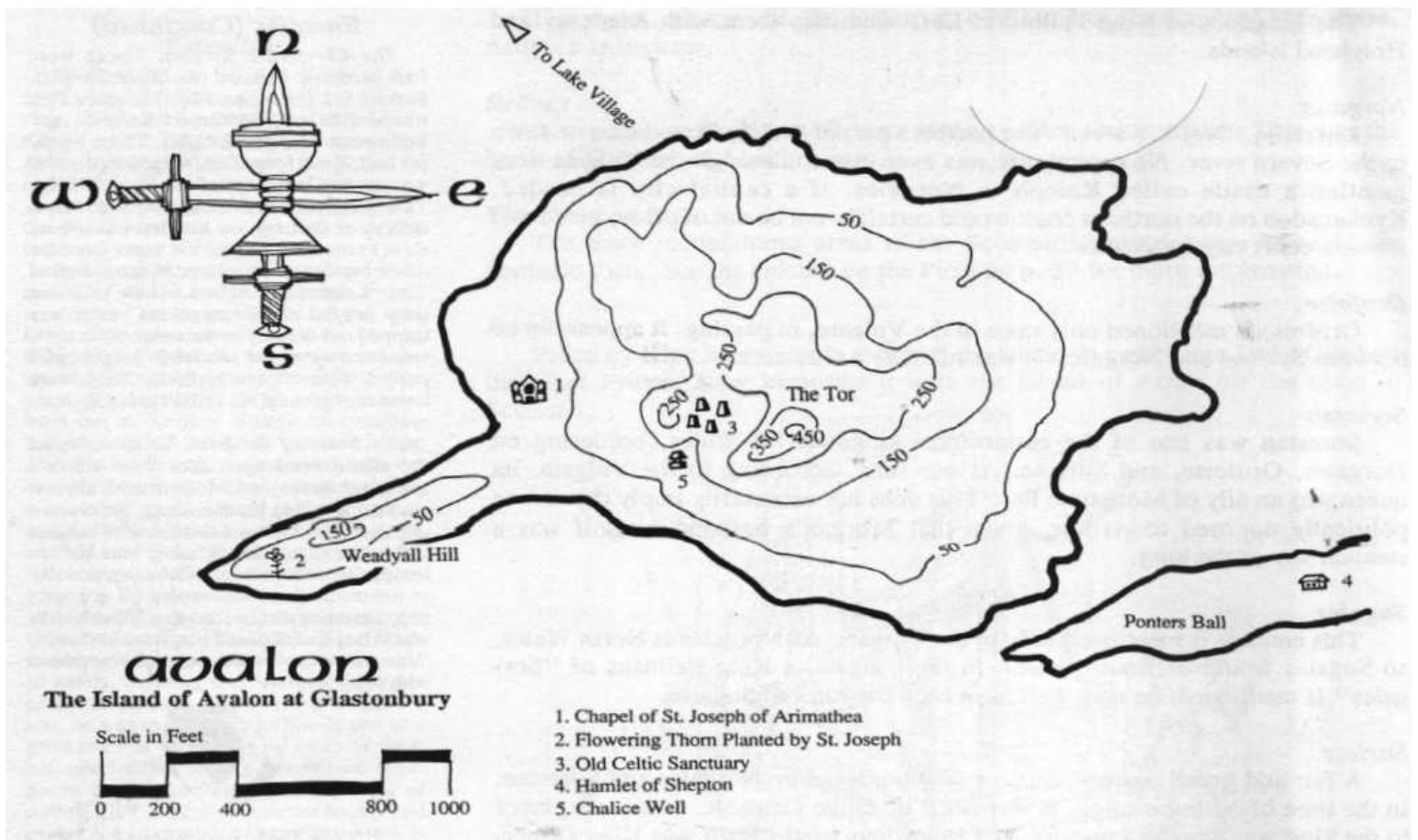


### *The Dolorous Stroke*

Early in the history of Arthur's reign, the knight Balin le Savage visited Castle Carbonek. At a feast there, he slew another knight, and afterwards was chased through the castle by the Fisher King Pellam and his men. Balin's sword broke; in a moment of need, he seized a spear he found enshrined in a room (see the Spear of Longinus, p. 34), and smote King Pellam through the thighs with it.

This was the Dolorous Stroke, and because of it, Pellam became known as the Maimed King. In addition to leaving Pellam with unhealing wounds, it reverberated through Listeneise, devastating it and turning it into the Waste Land. The land remained blighted until Pellam was healed by his descendant Galahad at the end of the Grail Quest many years later.

There are accounts of other Dolorous Strokes in Malory and the Vulgate, all inflicted upon various members of the Fisher Kings and all somewhat contradictory. Malory is obviously confused in a few places, sometimes naming Pelles (Pellam's son) as the Maimed King and inconsistently combining elements of the various stories from the Vulgate's account of Pellam's father Lambor's fatal encounter with the Sword of King David (see p. 34).



considered the "capital district" of Cornwall; it was from here that Gorlois and later Mark ruled.



### Logres

Also called England (and Britain), Logres was everything left over after allotting the other regions. It occupied the bulk of Britain, everything south of Hadrian's Wall and east of Wales. The capital city of this region seems to be London.

For many writers, especially later ones like Tennyson, Logres is something more than another name for Britain. Logres, in their symbolism, is Britain-plus, a spiritually pure and materially perfect Britain-that-should-be. It was the realm into which Arthur was converting the worldly British Isles, and which vanished upon the collapse of Camelot and its ideals.

### Arroy

While described by Malory as a country, Arroy does not seem to be a political unit; rather, it seems "country" is used in this case in the sense of "terrain." Its primary feature was that it was heavily forested, and as such was strategically valuable for its cover, as well as economically valuable for its game.

## Avilion

Avilion was the general name for the lands surrounding the Isle of Avalon at Glastonbury. These lands were under the protection of the Lady Lile of Avilion, who is noted by Malory as being a powerful sorceress. They were mostly marsh and water, and were not heavily settled; Avilion's status as a separate kingdom no doubt came from the combination of its powerful protector and its relative isolation. (Modern Glastonbury is farmland, but in the 5th century it was a maze of brackish swamps; near the center was the Isle of Avalon - modern Glastonbury Tor.)

The Isle of Avalon was special because of its dual nature. At once both Christian shrine and pre-Christian holy place, it possessed symbolic and real power for all comers. Near the summit of the steep-sided island was a chapel reputedly built by Saint Joseph of Arimathea; elsewhere was a flowering thorn bush he planted which blossoms in midwinter.

## Camellard

Homeland of Guinevere, Cameliard was ruled by her father, King Leodegrance. It was prosperous and strong; Leodegrance was able to provide 100 knights to Arthur as part of his wedding gift. It was the target of several attempts at conquest by neighboring rulers, but repelled all invaders. Its capital was the city of Carohaise.

## The Delectable Isle

Ruled during the early part of Arthur's reign by King Hermance, the Delectable Isle was actually a peninsula at the mouth of the Humber River. Its capital was known simply as the Red City. Hermance pursued a course of neutrality, but was murdered by his more ambitious brothers. They themselves were later slain by Sir Palomides, avenging the dead king. Their successors, if any, are unknown; Hermance's people asked Palomides to rule them, but he declined. **Although Malory does not describe this land, it seems reasonable from its sobriquet that it was a fertile and prosperous region.**

## King Amans' Land

The name "Amans" comes from the Vulgate and is the same as Malory's Aniause. This land is not given by any other name in any source. Located north of Cameliard, it was originally home to King Amans, who may have been a contender for the crown of Cameliard. Amans died in battle, trying to take that land. His unnamed youngest daughter, an **excellent administrator, ruled the land after his death**, except for a brief period when her older sister succeeded in gaining control over most of the country.

## Leicester

One of the more shadowy lands in Arthurian Britain, Leicester has no king named, no descriptive epithets, nor any known politics. It is mentioned only in passing in the Vulgate. Its name leads to the obvious assignment of its location to modern Leicestershire.

## Listeneise

Pellam, brother to King Pellinore, was king of Listeneise, which is the country surrounding the Grail Castle, Castle Carbonek. Listeneise was also the Waste Land as well as the Terre *Foraine* ("Foreign Land") of the Grail Quest. Although Listeneise was a country in the political sense, with Pelles performing the **usual duties** of a king, it was set off from its neighbors in that it was mystically-charged by the presence of the Grail. Strange, holy things happened to some people in Listeneise.

## Equipment

For most purposes, the equipment/price list found on p. B212 will be sufficient. In some cases, though, prices are different, sometimes significantly so; this reflects differing conditions of availability.

For details on Arthurian monetary units, see the sidebar on p. 47.

### Food

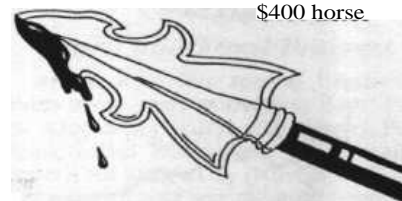
Wine (one quart)	2 lbs., \$30
Brandy	Non-existent

### Outdoor Equipment

Knight's Pavilion (similar to the 4-person tent on p. B212, but made of silk or other fine material and lavishly decorated, usually with the knight's device)

### Riding and Transportation

Chariot (carries up to 500lbs.)	150lbs., \$500
Ship ride within British Isles	\$50 man/ \$200 horse
Ship ride to Gaul/Brittany	\$100 man/ \$400 horse



### Non-Magic Magic Weapons

GMs who do not want to use "real" magic in their Arthurian settings can still have "magic" swords (and other weapons), much in the way that the legends of magical blades probably started. This option is based on the *Weapon Quality* rules given on p. B74.

Instead of the average sword being of "good" quality, it should be of "cheap" quality. Weapons with a quality above "good" should be difficult if not impossible to find. So-called magic weapons become those of "fine" or "very fine" quality. This can be justified as an effect of both resources and Tech Level - 5th-century Britain was not *known* for the quality of its steel.

Pricing and availability are adjusted accordingly, by shifting price categories down by one; i.e., cheap weapons go for the price of good ones, good for the price of fine, etc. Very fine weapons become literally priceless. The GM may wish to rule that they are beyond the ability of nearly all human swordsmiths, or are solely the result of chance (and Critical Successes) during the manufacturing process.



The capital of Listeneise was Castle Carbonek. The land, before and after the effects of the Dolorous Stroke - that is, the maiming of Pellam by Balin le Savage - Was lush, beautiful countryside; during the **period of devastation**, it was virtual desert.

### **Malahaut**

Malahaut was the land ruled by Berraunt le Apres, the King with the Hundred Knights. It was a strong military power, as evidenced by the epithet of its king. Berraunt was one of the kings who joined the rebellion of the Eleven Kings, but who later became a Companion of the Round Table. Berraunt was allied with Duke Galeholt. A town of interest in Malahaut was Le Puis de Malahaut, ruled by the Lady of Malahaut, who seemed to act as a vice-regent to Berraunt.

### **Nohaut**

Nohaut was a small subkingdom near Northumberland; it was ruled by the Lady of Nohaut, who is given no proper name when she appears in the Vulgate. The Lady was a faithful vassal of Arthur. Nohaut had only a minimal military strength.

### **Northumberland**

This region was a narrow strip of land paralleling the west coast of Britain, north of the Humber River (hence its name). It was ruled by King Clariaunce, father of Sir Epinegris. Clariaunce was one of the eleven kings who revolted against Arthur early in his career, but later became a knight of the Round Table.

### **Roestoc**

Ruled by the unnamed Lady of Roestoc, daughter of the late Helyes de Roestoc (once a rebel king), this land was known for its open plains and moors.

### **Nearby Lands**

Arthur's dealings were not limited to Britain, nor was the scope of the tales surrounding him. Several nearby nations and lands appear often.

### **Brittany (Armorica, Lesser Britain)**

According to Geoffrey of Monmouth, this section of Gaul (modern France) directly across the Channel from the south of Britain was a British colony of long standing. Two rulers are mentioned by name: King Carbarecotins of Cornoaille, and Hoel who is called both King and Duke. Both are strong allies of Arthur.

### **Gaul**

Site of Benoit, Normandy, and many other subkingdoms, Gaul was, like Britain, a mass of petty fiefdoms vying for power and control. King Claudas of Gaul, a well-known enemy of Arthur's, was a major power in Gaul; his actions appeared to mimic Arthur's in unifying his homeland, save that his methods were less savory. Arthur eventually battled Claudas in Gaul, and overcame him.

Benoit, ruled at one time by King Ban (father of Lancelot), seems to be identifiable with the Burgundy region. It is said to have been the source of fine wine (a rarity in Britain during Arthur's reign), and Malory mentions that it was called by some men "Bayonne," a city in modern France.

Also present in Gaul seems to be one of the Lakes (as in "Lady of the"), that ruled by the Lady known as Vivien. Although Merlin described the British Lake in typically vague terms in Malory, the Vulgate description suggests that it was, in fact, a city hidden by the illusion of a lake.

### **Money**

*In the Morte*. Malory makes mention of two native and one foreign unit of currency in common use in Britain: the pound (£), the pence (penny), and the besant (bezant, bezaunt). The buying powers of these currencies can be deduced from the texts.

At the time that Malory wrote, there were 12 pence to the shilling, and 20 shillings made up a pound. *While not explicitly mentioned by Malory*, the shilling would make a convenient intermediate unit, and is no more anachronistic than the others.

The relative values of these four denominations, then, are:

1 pence = 90.04

1 shilling = 12 pence = \$0.50

1 pound = 20 shillings = \$10.00

1 bezant = 10 shillings =

10 pence = 900



### **Courts and Royal Progress**

Arthur held five special "festival" courts every year, on five holy days: Easter, Ascension (40 days after Easter), Pentecost (called Whitsuntide; 50 days after Easter), All Saint's Day (November 1) and Christmas. Easter was the most important of the festival courts. In addition, there were other courts held in between these and without their feasting and religious significance.

However, Arthur's court was not permanently located at Camelot; like many courts across medieval Europe, it travelled a grand circle called the "Royal Progress." Moving from city to city and castle to castle, the court would eventually make its way through the entire realm, offering a chance for persons from remote districts to petition the king without having to travel all the way to Camelot. It also prevented the court from exhausting the resources of any one district, for its consumption was great.

Hosting the court on its progress could conceivably bankrupt a small barony; some fiefdoms took years to recover from a royal visit. It is the local lord's obligation to provide for the court's needs during its stay, which could last as long as a month.

As a result of the needs of the progress, the court was remarkably portable; even the Round Table could be broken down and carried along in a wagon. On the road, the Progress would be a caravan of impressively huge size; surrounded by the knights of the Round Table, it need never fear any threat.

## Arthurian Names

Much of the flavor of Arthurian literature comes from the names of the characters, drawn from an amazing variety of sources. Reflecting the wide variety of contributing cultures, the names of the knights of Britain are rarely British: Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Welsh, Breton, and most notably Medieval French have all donated persons of note to the mythos. See Chapter 8 for a list of characters, major and minor, which will give a good sense of Arthurian "style."

There are many ways to name a character, and the proper "feel" is far more important than any dubious claim to historical accuracy. To start with, many names in modern English are suitable.

Names can be borrowed from place-names, here and elsewhere. And stealing a name from an existing Arthurian character is perfectly allowable - the creators of the stories did it quite frequently! There were at least six Ywaines, for example. Varying the spelling slightly or changing the epithet - the "last name" - will make the name sufficiently unique.

New names can also be created by taking elements of existing names. There may not have been any Sir Pellegraunce or King Tollides in the stories, but the names sound right.

When characters are relatives, they can be given similar names, like the brothers Gawaine, Gareth, Gaheris and Agravaine, or the Chromatic Knights (also brothers) Persant, Percard, Pertelope and Perimones.



## Ireland

Ireland is **mentioned frequently in Malory (particularly** in the stories about Tristan), but not detailed. No **cities or kingdoms are known** - at least by name - from any sources. However, there were an abundance of kings, suggesting (not unreasonably) that Ireland was as fragmented as Britain. King Marhalt, King Anguish (also known as Agwisance) and King Ryons (also the king of Norgales) are three mentioned by name. (Anguish is known mainly as the father of Isolde.)

A land which may be part of Ireland is Galway.

## Other Kingdoms

These were not, by any means, **every subkingdom and barony extant**. Many others were only alluded to, or got a brief mention in an aside. The lands listed above, however, were the preeminent states in Britain, the ones with the most political or military clout, or which were notable for their natural or supernatural wonders. GMs may insert minor holdings wherever they feel like it, or wherever it suits the needs of the campaign.

## The Political Environment

One of the possible themes the GM may weave through a campaign is politics, both foreign and local. Given the right circumstances, almost any PC can get caught up in political intrigue.

## International Politics

The **international political situation is chaos**. Outside of Britain, civilization is collapsing. The central authority, Rome, is in its final throes. Arthur himself is nominally the Emperor from AD 415 on, but pays little attention to the empire; *because of* his neglect, Rome eventually considers itself free of him and finally attacks him at the end of his reign.

Elsewhere in Europe, it is almost continual warfare. King Claudas of Gaul (see sidebar, p. 42) attempts to unite all of Gaul through a vicious military campaign. Saxon outcasts from what will become Holland stream across the North Sea to settle unwanted on British soil. Saracens occupy parts of Italy and Spain.

Arthur's attention to Europe is minimal unless an ally, such as King Ban of Benoic, is threatened. However, envoys may come from dozens of nations, fiefdoms and subkingdoms across the Continent to petition him, as Emperor or King of Britain, for his aid, either financial, political or military. Occasionally such envoys may attempt to sway members of the court or the Round Table in order have their causes presented more favorably. Outright bribery is possible.

## British Politics

Arthur's Britain, at least in the classic tradition, is **not on the whole** a tranquil place. At the beginning of his reign, it was a splintered land of petty fiefdoms exploiting each other and their own people. Arthur instituted a policy of reconquest when it became clear that not all of the lesser kings would accept him. This policy was tempered by his other policy of restoring any surviving rebellious ruler to his old post - as a subordinate regent to the high king. If the ruler qualified, he might also be offered a place at the Round Table. Universally, such restored leaders were left with their surviving knights and armies intact.

The effect of these policies was to keep a large number of former enemies of the crown in power - on the **assumption that their personal honor** and life-debt to Arthur would keep them honest. Surprisingly, it seemed to work. Several of



Arthur's early enemies (Uriens of Gore, for example) became his closest friends and allies after he defeated them.

However, it could also leave schemers of only marginal loyalty (such as Mark of Cornwall) in the one place where they could cause the most damage, should they be of a mind to. Sometimes, Arthur's big-hearted policies led, directly or indirectly, to *more* trouble for him.

The GM has the advantage of being able to custom-fit the exact amount of political and military tension he wants in his campaign. Many subkingdoms never have a leader mentioned in either Malory or the Vulgate, and some remain shadowy to the extreme - little more than a name and a debatable location. The GM can easily stock these nations with rulers of any stripe he desires - from fanatic royalists through responsible lords to berserk saber-rattlers and Machiavellian conspirators - without really changing the overall complexion of Arthur's Britain. Arthur's tale is, in the end, the story of a brave but ultimately futile attempt to hold a civilization together in the face of creeping (or galloping!) barbarism. Camelot was eventually destroyed from within; a few plotters more or less in remote or minor kingdoms won't change this at all.

### Alliances, Rivalries, and Hatreds

In addition to the grudges that individual leaders might bear against Arthur and his government (see sidebars, pp. 41-43), there were often disputes between the subkings - as well, of course, as alliances. These will often color interaction at court or even at the Round Table; and traveling knights are often especially vulnerable to the depredations of a local ruler hostile to their own liege-lord.

Such relationships vary over time, of course, and with a reign as long as Arthur's - 55 years by some counts - things can and will change drastically. They change especially drastically when the High King steps in - either politically or militarily - to rectify unpleasant situations. *Therefore,* where necessary, the entries below will have their 'where' space of time noted.

### Enmities

*King Anwns and King Leodegrance.* Amans may have been a contender for (or a pretender to) the throne of Cameliard (p. 45). He took advantage of a Saxon invasion early in Arthur's career (around AD 413) to try his own invasion of Cameliard. This failed, and King Bors of Gaul (the uncle of Lancelot) killed Amans in battle. Amans' designs on Cameliard seem to predate Arthur by many years.

*King Ryons and anyone.* Ryons was land- and power-hungry (see sidebar, p. 42, for some examples). He had an unfortunate tendency to invade kingdoms that took his fancy. A proud and confident leader, he was also a very good strategist who had successfully taken the lands of 11 kings before offering a challenge to Arthur himself. His period of activity ranges from the start of Arthur's reign to approximately AD 415.

*Duke Galeholt and anyone.* Before Lancelot won him over to Arthur, Galeholt had conquered 30 kingdoms, of which only Surlose and the Long Isles are named. Easily the most elegant and likable of Arthur's one-time foes, he kept his warlike ways until AD 429, when Lancelot swayed his loyalties to Arthur. Until that time, though, he could easily threaten nearly any subkingdom anywhere in Britain. Even if he had no immediate military aim, just his casual interest would be sufficient to make the current leaders very nervous.

### Alliances

*Morgan le Fay and Sebile, the Queen of Norgales.* This alliance may imply a well-hidden hostility towards Arthur in Norgales, or the Queen may be pursuing her own extracurricular interests. Sebile aids Morgan's mischief on several

### Storming the Castle: Siege Warfare

While siege warfare is a complex subject and only occurs once of importance in the cycle, given the large number of castles in Britain, it deserves some mention. This is not intended as an extensive treatise on siege warfare, but only a guide.

The basic siege is the blockade of a castle or fort. An army surrounds its target and does not let anyone in or out. If the defenders are not well-stocked, defeat is imminent. However, if the castle's supplies are plentiful and/or the defenders are few in number, this can turn into an extended waiting game. If the besieging forces have good supply lines, or the local countryside provides sufficient forage, it is possible to starve out the defender's. The GM must compare supplies and consumption on both sides carefully to determine the victor, but should remember that besiegers often will withdraw before their supplies are completely exhausted, especially if they are not native to the area and must retreat a long distance.

However, sieges rarely reached this point. With medieval standards of sanitation, disease often swept the besiegers' camp after months or even weeks in the same spot. After the first month of the siege, the GM should roll 3d + TL once every week. If a 8 or less is rolled, a disease breaks out in the camp. (Be creative in its details.) The GM should consult p. B133 for handling PCs and other important characters who may catch the disease. For large amounts of troops, it is more convenient simply to assign a fatality or disability rate (depending on the severity of the illness) and assess the damages accordingly.

### Siege Engines

A less patient commander may understandably want to take an active position in the siege. There exist any number of siege engines which can be constructed, including:

*Siege towers.* These rolling towers are usually built taller than the walls they confront. At a distance, they allow archers a protected nest from which to snipe at the defenders deep inside the castle. Closer up, they provide a means of scaling a wall that was far more efficient and defensible than the simple ladder.

Continued on next page . . .

## ***Siege Warfare (Continued)***

*Petraria.* This is the generic term for any missile-throwing siege engines, such as catapults, trebuchets, ballistae and the like. Ballistae are giant crossbows, which fire iron-tipped javelins for 5dx2 impaling damage; they are used to pick off armored defenders, and are relatively useless against the castle walls themselves. Most others hurl huge rocks to shatter walls and crush inhabitants (doing anywhere from 6d x 10 for a 24-pound missile to 6d X50 for a 600-pounder). Payloads other than rocks can be lofted by catapult. Garbage, especially scrap metal, makes a fine nuisance weapon. Dead horses (to spread pestilence) were occasional missiles.

Trebuchet: Acc 3, 1/2 Dam 200, Max 600, ROF 1/600, TL 3. Shot weights from 100 to 600lbs.

Catapult: Acc 1, 1/2 Dam 300, Max 500, ROF 1/300, TL 2. Shot weights from 10 to 50lbs.

Ballistae: Acc 5, 1/2 Dam 400, Max 500, ROF 1/120, TL 3. Shot weights from 1 to 10lbs.

(A quick rule of thumb for catapult/trebuchet damage: Minimum shot weight is 24 lbs. for a damage of 6d x 10. For every 14 1/2 lbs. over 24 (maximum 600 lbs.), add 1 to the multiplier. Examples: a 70 lb. stone does 6dx 13; a 200 lb. stone does 6d x 22.)

Each weapon requires a crew of 6 men to operate it. ROFs given are for heaviest possible shot; if lighter projectiles are used, ROFs can be improved by up to 50%. Aiming (Acc) bonuses are per shot at a given point. The first round is at +0, the second at + 1, and so forth until the bonus equals the Acc value.

All shots must roll a grenade scatter; roll 2 dice; add + 1 to the scatter for each number the to-hit roll was missed by, or -1 for each number the to-hit roll was made by. The sum indicates the percent of total range the weapon is off.

Catapults and trebuchets do half damage to walls and other vertical objects unless they are close enough to manage a flat trajectory.

*Picks and drills.* These are iron tools used to scrape away at the mortar and stones in the castle walls. Usually employed under a protective roofed cart called a "turtle," picks and drills wear away at the DR, and then the hits, of the wall at the spot they are attacking at the rate of 1 point per 10 minutes. Destroying all the DR and hits results in the loosening or shattering of a block, which can then be removed.

*Continued on next page ...*

***Mythic Camelot***

occasions, and the two are among the four queens who bear the wounded Arthur off after his last battle. Evidence in Malory suggests that she, like Morgan, is a powerful sorceress. This alliance is long-standing - it lasts through almost all of Arthur's reign - and seems to be based on a true and deep friendship between the women.

Morgan and Sir Accolon of Gaul. Morgan took Accolon as a lover and together they hatched a plot to kill Arthur and Morgan's husband Uriens. Accolon died as a result of combating Arthur, but not before he revealed the plot.

## **Round Table Politics**

Conflict was not alien to the Round Table. It was not a pastoral setting, even if it did house the greatest knights in all the world. As with any gathering of people, there was friction and friendships and politics of all forms. The following are among some of the more notable examples.

Sir Pinel le Savage, cousin of Sir Lamorak, bore a great deal of hatred towards Gawaine for many years over the death of his cousin at Gawaine's hands. Late in the reign of Arthur, this hatred erupted into a murder attempt; an innocent man, Sir Patrise of Ireland, was poisoned by mistake.

Lancelot and Gawaine, while the best of friends, each had a body of followers who were constantly feuding over which of the pair was the greater knight. At the end, when Lancelot and Arthur finally parted ways, many (if not all) of Lancelot's faction went with him, seriously weakening the Round Table and rendering it unable to withstand the final battle against Mordred and his forces.

This rivalry is friendly at first, and seems to color most dealings between knights of the two factions. (Sometimes at the expense of others; the story is told that Bors and Agravaire met a Maimed Knight, who could only be helped by the best knight in the world. Bors and Agravaire - much to the Maimed Knight's annoyance - promptly began an argument over who was the best knight!) Eventually the factional rivalry turns sour, culminating in a virtual blood feud when Lancelot and his men rescue Guinevere from the stake.

Lancelot also had a strong friendship with Tristram, stemming from the first time the two met. They fought mightily for hours until both collapsed from exhaustion, with neither having a clear advantage. They ended up talking, and Lancelot for the first time admitted his love for Guinevere to someone other than the Queen herself. Their friendship grew to such a level that they would avoid each other in tournaments, so that they would never again have to meet in combat.

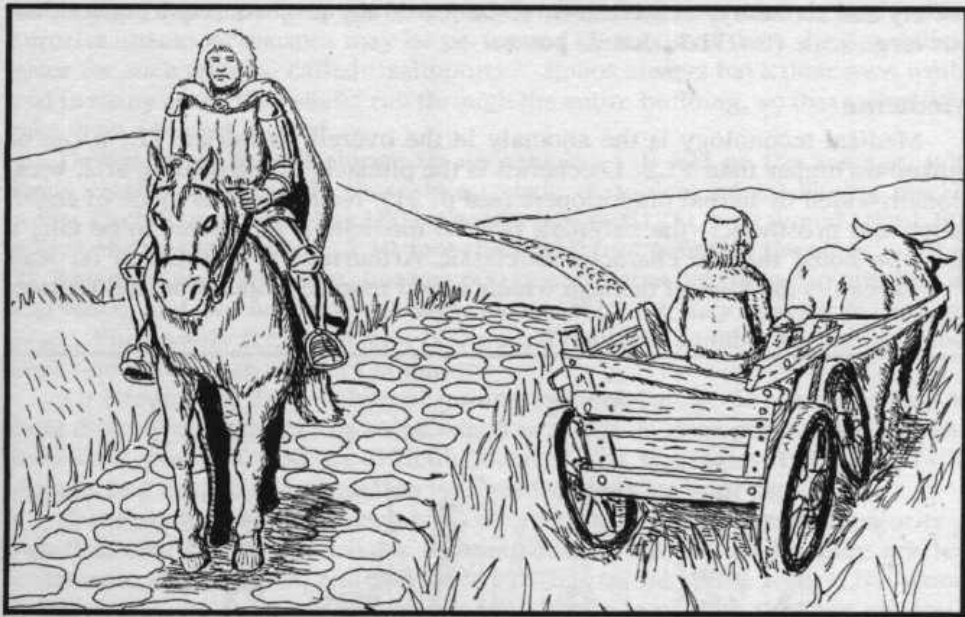
Lancelot was not always so lucky as far as fellow knights were concerned. He had a standing rivalry with Kay, Arthur's foster brother and seneschal. Kay bore a devotion to Guinevere no less strong than Lancelot's own, although platonic, and desired to be her champion. On several occasions he and Lancelot ran head-to-head as to who would fight for her; unfortunately for Kay, Lancelot always won the honor.

## **Technology**

The overall Tech Level of the Mythic version of Camelot is TL3. However, this varies from science to science.

### **Transportation**

There are two basic modes of transport on land: by foot and by horse. "Horse" in this case includes donkeys and mules. See p. B144-45 for details on common riding and draft animals. Riders on horseback have full saddles and stirrups available - a virtual prerequisite for jousting and other mounted combat.



The legendary Roman roads made land travel easier between the main cities of Britain (see map, p. 82). Carts and wagons of various models appear throughout the body of the tales. Although carriages are certainly possible, there is no evidence that any such "mass transport" vehicles ever appeared; the sole exception is the chariot. In general, all persons traveling did so on horseback. Carts were reserved for carrying criminals and traitors, and to ride in one was the most extreme disgrace - especially for a knight. See the chart on p. B212 for capacities and prices of common horse-drawn vehicles.

Ships - primarily galleys of Roman design - are common. There is regular travel by boat around and between the various British Isles, as well as to and from the continent. Ships can be hired, or berths rented, with little fuss by those with sufficient money.

### Weapons and Armor

The most common armor in the Vulgate and in Malory is the combination of helm, chainmail hauberk, and shield. Of all the films based on the Arthurian cycle, Monty Python and the Holy Grail has perhaps the most accurate depiction of "classic" Arthurian armor of any easily-accessible work. Great helms and chain coifs are frequent alternatives. Although scale and plate armor are permissible because of the base TL, the GM may forbid their use, as they are more properly cinematic.

A wide variety of weapons are available; virtually all combat skills listed on pp. B206-7 are usable without fear of anachronism. Fencing is not available, nor are Blowpipe, Bola and Lasso.

Weapons in general will be of "good" quality (but see the sidebar Non-Magic Magical Weapons on p. 45). Large shields are common in jousting, but are often discarded for smaller ones in hand-to-hand combat due their unwieldiness (see sidebar, p. B75). For details on castles, see below.

### Power

Power supplies are typical of TL3: simple horsepower through the use of the horse collar. While water wheels and windmills are possible at TL3, there is no

### Siege Warfare (Continued)

**Battering Rams.** The classic battering ram can be used not only on the gates of a castle, but on its wall. It is made from a single tree trunk, stripped and trimmed, and sometimes fitted with a head of iron. If the trunk is particularly large or heavy, it is slung from ropes in a "turtle." A battering ram does damage equal to the thrusting damage for half the combined ST of all the men that work to swing it. If the ram lacks an iron head, halve the effective strength again. Without an iron cap, a ram cannot be used against stone walls - the tree trunk *will* splinter without damaging the stone.

### Constructing Siege Engines

In general, most of these siege engines were manufactured almost entirely out of local materials. Many required only the Carpentry skill to manufacture, and many medieval soldiers had enough skill to make the weapons that they used. It could take several days to make a catapult or ballista, less for siege towers. Battering rams rarely took more than two or three hours to make.

Engineers specializing in siege engines were needed to supervise the work. One engineer can oversee the construction of 5 siege weapons or 10 towers or "turtles" per week. Battering rams do not need an engineer.

The first time any siege weapon (other than a ram) is used, roll against the supervising engineer's skill (or the highest default, if no engineer was present). On a success, the weapon functions normally. On a normal failure, the weapon will operate for a number of uses equal to (10 minus the number of points by which the roll was failed), then suffer a repairable breakdown. On a critical failure, the weapon loses structural integrity. Leverage weapons such as trebuchets simply fall apart (perhaps dropping their counterweights on unlucky operators). Tension weapons like catapults and ballistae shatter and throw fragments of themselves in all directions for 2d damage (use the fragmentation rules on p. B121-22, with radius of damage equal to 5% of the weapon's  $\frac{1}{2}$ D range).

The "turtles" which protected battering rams and pick/drill teams could likewise be constructed quickly. These were frequently roofed with raw hides or metal plates in order to protect them from fire and noxious substances like boiling oil.

*Continued on next page ...*

## Siege Warfare (Continued)

### Mining

A radically different tactic, and one of the riskiest, was *mining*. Workers dig one or more tunnels under the castle walls, shoring up the stone overhead with stout wooden beams. When a large enough section of the castle's wall had been undermined, the workers were withdrawn and the timbers set on fire. In a short time the supports would collapse, bringing down an entire section of wall and allowing the attackers to stream in.

Of course, the defenders could countermine to halt the process. It would not be unheard of to fight battles *under* the walls of a castle even as the siege continued overhead. The best solution, if the castle had a moat or other source of water, was to flood the enemy tunnel.

### Castle Terminology

**Bailey:** An open area or space within a curtain wall or between two curtain walls. Also called a "ward."

**Battlement:** A walled platform mounted on top of a curtain wall, for use by defending troops.

**Crenels:** The low segments or openings of a battlement, used for discharging missiles.

**Curtain Wall:** The concentric walls surrounding a castle, furnished with battlements for defense.

**Garderobe:** A small latrine or toilet either built into a wall or tower, or projecting out from it.

**Keep:** The central structure - the strongest and most secure - of a castle, built for the lord's living quarters and located in the inner bailey.

**Machicolation:** Openings in the floor of a projecting battlement, used for missile discharge or as latrines.

**Merlons:** The high segment or solid interval of a battlement. Alternates *with* crenels.

**Portcullis:** A grate of iron or wood, hung in the gate of a castle, which could be raised or lowered to control access.

**Turret:** Small tower rising above and resting on a main tower, usually used as a lookout post.

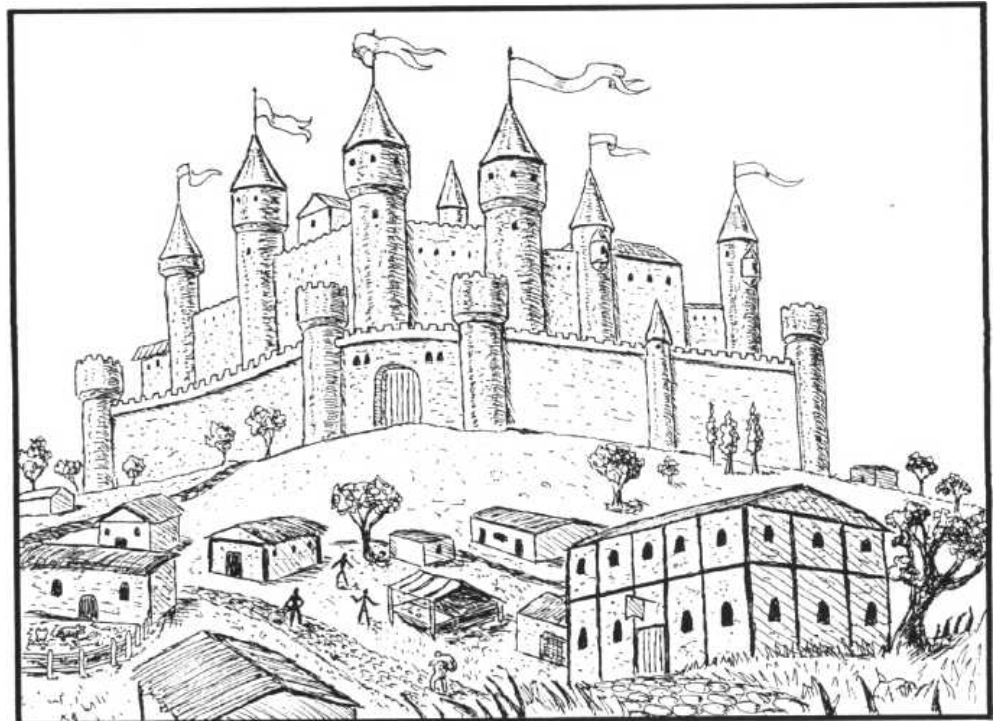
**Wall Walk:** Area along top of walls and towers, from which soldiers can defend.

### Mythic Camelot

evidence that they are in use in Arthurian Britain. This is not a handicap to the society and economy, as there seem to be few if any projects requiring continuous large-scale (for TL3, that is) power.

### Medicine

Medical technology is the anomaly in the overall Arthurian TL; it can be ranked no higher than TL2. Leechcraft is the pinnacle of the healing arts, occasionally aided by herbal practitioners (see p. 21). No mention is made of amputation and prosthetics (the hallmark of TL3 medicine). However, to be fair, it must be noted that no character in classic Arthuriana ever suffered (at least "on-screen") the kind of damage which would require amputation and replacement.



### Fortifications

The typical castle in the Mythic setting is an anachronistic Norman fortress. This style of fortification is usually based around the classic design of the motte-and-bailey (a hill or mound ringed with a moat or ditch). On top of the bailey, stone fortifications were emplaced, particularly keeps. These are commonly ringed by a tall curtain wall of stone. Walls will normally have only one gatehouse, usually reachable only by a drawbridge. Variations are common. In some cases, the central mound may be dispensed with. Curtain walls may have small towers and turrets to provide archers with flanking fire positions against besieging forces. Many castles are surrounded by multiple rings of walls, each with its own defenses. Always at the center is the keep, a 3- to 5-story fortified tower that often qualifies as a castle in and of itself. In fact, some minimalist castles are nothing more than heavily-defended towers.

There is usually one entrance to the keep, on the second floor. This is normally reached by a stairway built into the side of the keep. This stairway is enclosed by the forebuilding in order to render it more defensible; the forebuilding protects the main door by enclosing it and forcing attempt to storm the door

to be channeled through a narrow area easily protected by the defenders. Some keeps have a *postern* - a second, usually disguised, entrance through which surprise attacks or escapes may be performed. Sometimes there are specialized gates for such attacks, called "sallyports." Keeps always have their own wells, and in many cases well shafts run through the entire building, so that every floor may drop a bucket at need.

Defensive walls will always be very thick - 10 feet on the average, with many castles (particularly those in strategic or violent areas) having thicker walls. Each foot of stone has 180 hit points (see p. B125), so it would take 1,800 points of damage to breach a 10-foot-thick wall (not counting the stone's DR of 8). This may seem like a lot, but one 600-pound trebuchet stone can possibly do that much, and two will almost always exceed this - if they both hit in the same place. Fortunately for defenders, 600-pound boulders suitable for use as trebuchet ammunition are not very common.

To circumvent the problem of mining (see sidebar, p. 52), a castle may be built directly on bedrock, or on an island in a lake or large pond. This is such a defensible position, and so difficult to take, that in medieval England (10th century and on), royal permission was needed to locate your castle so.

Stone castles have been dealt with here because they are the clear majority of fortifications, but timber castles are not unheard of. Naturally, they are less resistant to siege attacks, and they have a certain vulnerability to fire, but wooden fortresses are easy to build and defend. Because of this, they are generally built in "safer" areas, and used primarily as homes.

Remember that a castle is always, at its heart, a fortified home. When designing a castle, it is important to keep in mind that creature comforts are as important to its inhabitants as its ability to repel invaders.

### *The Castle at Camelot*

The castle at Camelot itself, as presented here (pp. 54-56), is typical of such Norman-style constructions. Although intended to be a "peace castle" - that is, a castle built more as an extravagant home and business center than a fortress - its design still gives considerable thought to defensibility and sieges.

It is built in three basic levels, on a modified motte-and-bailey design. In keeping with its purpose as a diplomatic and cultural center, the more military aspects of the castle are cloaked by landscaping and topiaries. Each level is higher and smaller in area than the previous one, and a curtain wall surrounds it. These walls are turreted and crenelated, giving the traditional look of a castle, and are made of local rock, 12 feet thick. Each wall has a gatehouse with a gate made of seasoned wood, 1 foot in thickness (DR 6, 90 hit points) and an iron portcullis.

Between the first and second walls is a defensive ditch some 50 feet wide and 35 feet deep. The gatehouses for the two walls are placed opposite each other; the inner of the two controls the drawbridge which spans the ditch. The gatehouse for the third wall is located almost halfway around the castle, in order to force a besieging army to run through a channel of deadly archery fire between gates.

Except in times of rebellion, the gates are left open all day. The outermost gate is closed at night, but is guarded and will be opened for most reasonable requests. Camelot is not built on bedrock.

Within the third wall is the keep. This 5-story tower houses Arthur and Guinevere and their retainers, as well as providing meeting rooms and offices for various kingdom officials. The primary floor of the keep contains two large rooms of note: the great hall (which serves as both feast hall and audience chamber), and the hall of the Round Table. A large kitchen nearby supplies food for all the inhabitants.

### *The Lake*

As a result of the wide dissemination of the Arthurian tales, and their subsequent recombination by Malory, there seems to be more than one Lake. The authors have chosen to follow Phyllis Ann Karr's course of postulating two Lakes - one in France, the other in England - as well as her conventions for naming their Ladies.

The Lake is a place of mystery known by reputation only to most of Arthur's court, and possibly completely unknown beyond that august circle. Its descriptions are manifold and conflicting; the GM should choose the version that suits his vision of Camelot. This much is common to all the variants: The Lake is magical, and within it is a beautiful place where people live. It is ruled by a Lady who is a powerful enchantress. There is a group of women, the Damosels of the Lake, who seem to be assistants or advisors to the Lady, and who may be lesser enchantresses themselves. While reclusive, the Lady and her Damosels do take an interest in the outside world, although to its benefit or detriment is matter of contention. The British Lake can be found within a day or two's ride of Caerleon in Wales, and is located in the rising Welsh headlands. Beyond this point, the accounts vary wildly:

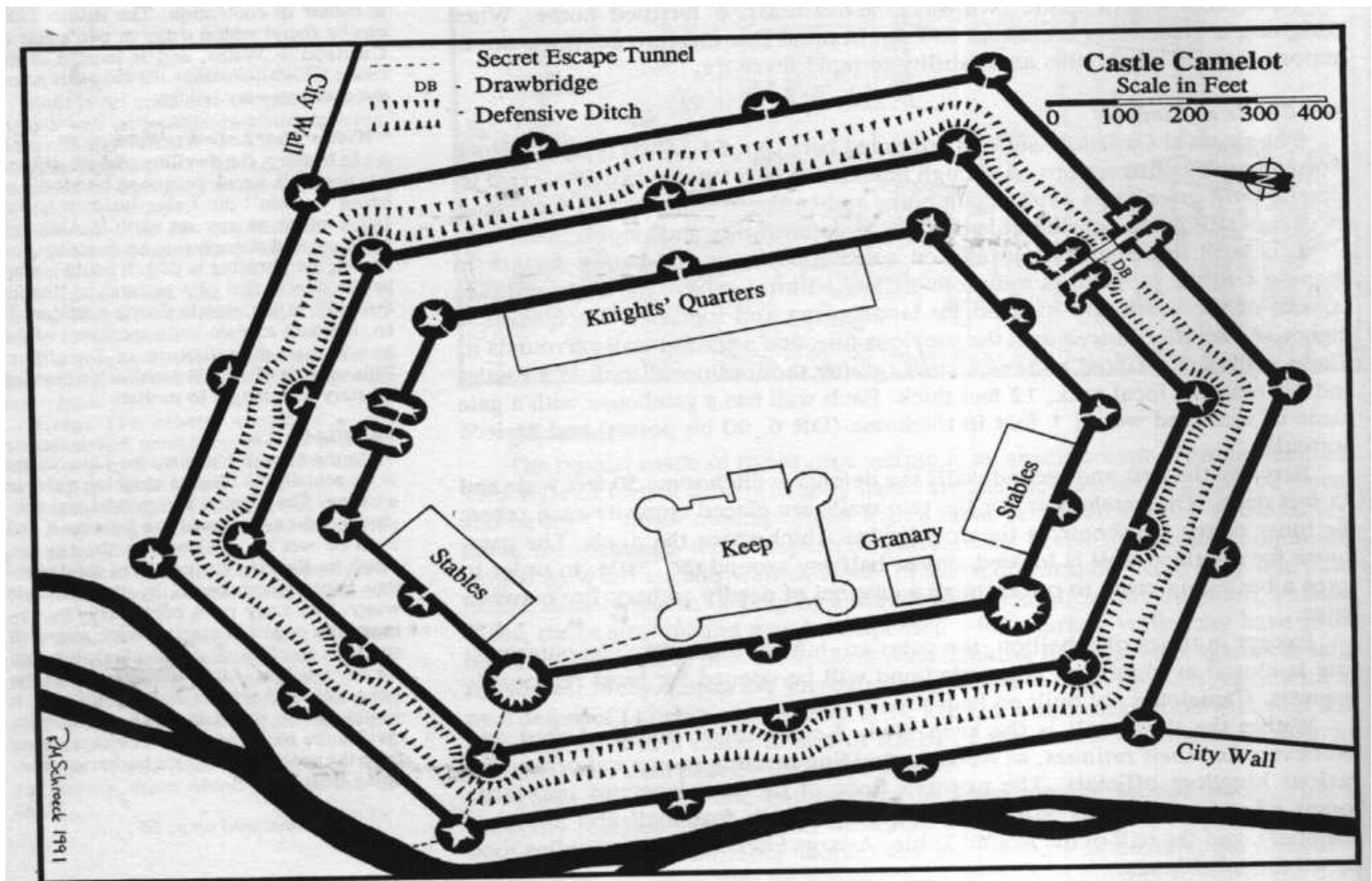
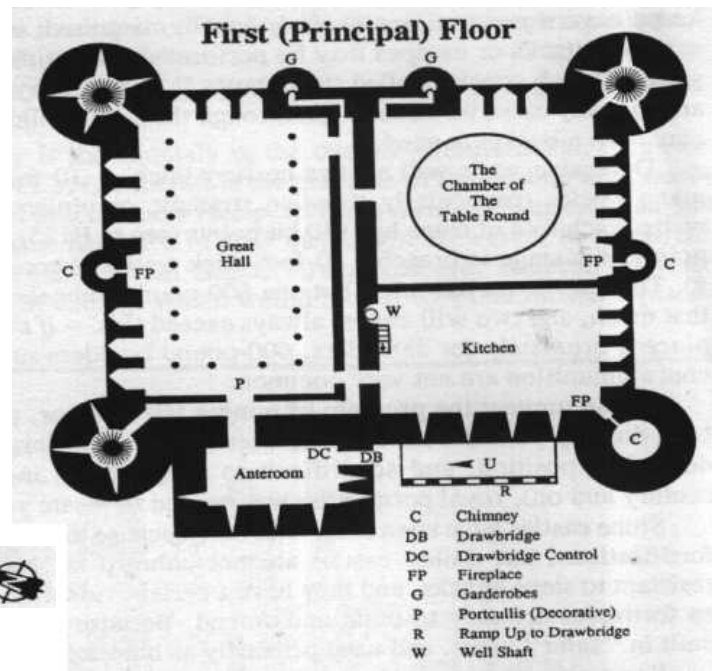
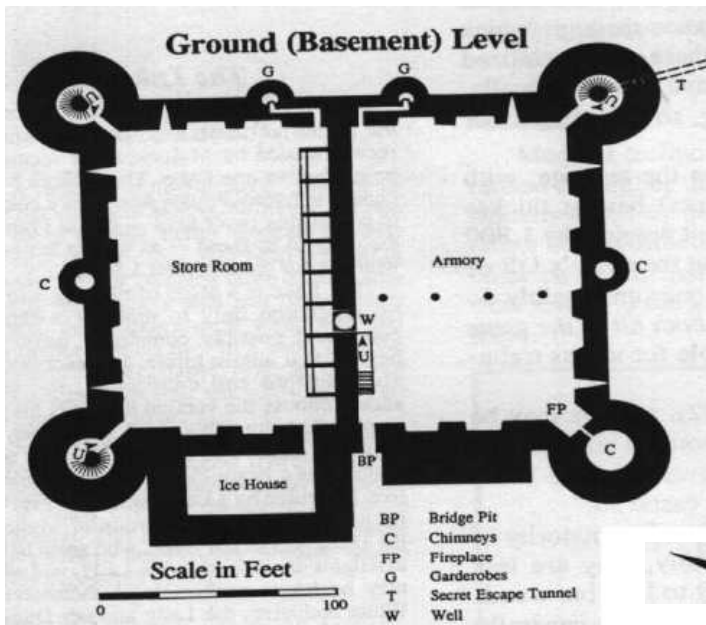
#### *"Within That Lake is a Rock . . ."*

In Malory, the dwelling of the Lady and her people is a rock described by Merlin as being "within" the Lake; inside it is "as fair a place as any on earth." Although Merlin could conceivably be describing an island, the phrasing is odd. It could almost be the description of a gateway to "under the hill" in the classic Faerie tradition. If so, it would explain some traditions of the non-human manufacture of Excalibur. This version of the Lake makes it a place of mystery and danger to mortals.

#### *The Hidden City*

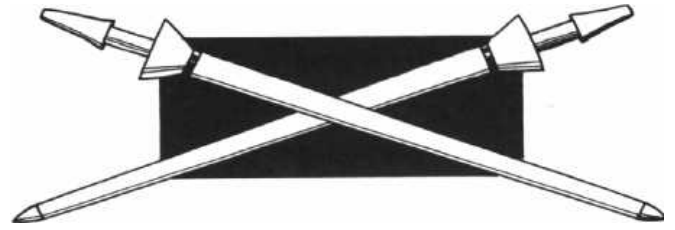
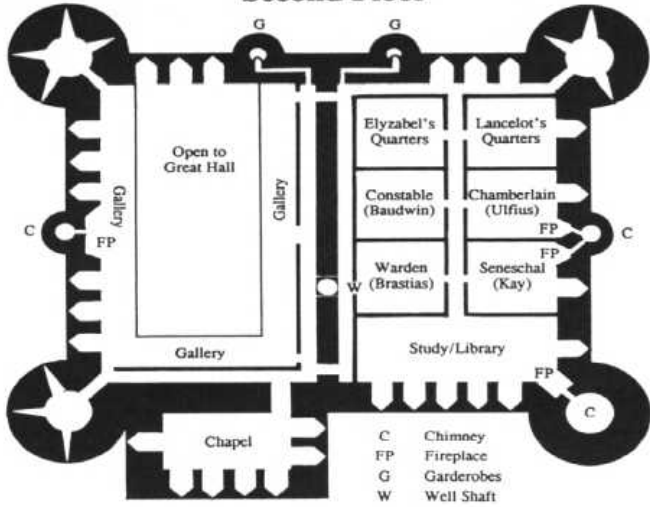
In the French Vulgate, the Lake seems to be actually an illusion cloaking a city in a valley. The illusion is powerful and convincing; the uninitiated can boat on it and even be wet by it! However, the city beneath its illusory surface lives its day-to-day life unencumbered by the phantom water. The Lady rules here, partly by virtue of her power in magic (which may well maintain the illusion of the lake), but also for her wisdom. Little is known about the Lake city and why it hides itself, but it would not be surprising to find a utopian civilization based on magic, cloaking itself from the greedy eyes of the barbarians ravaging Britain.

*Continued on p. 56 ...*

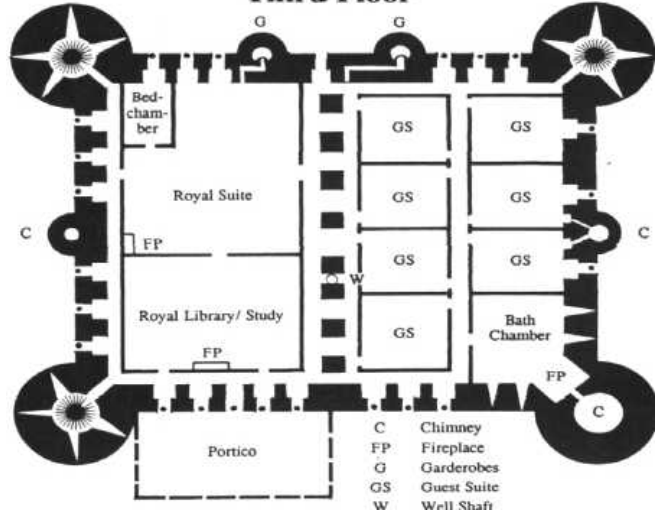




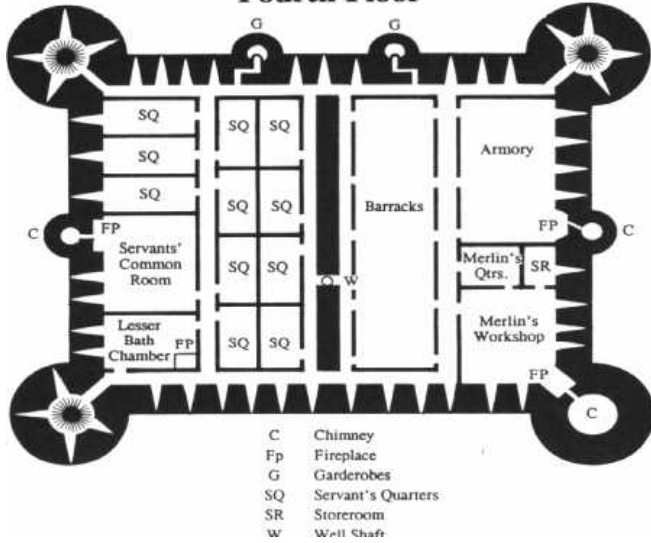
**Second Floor**



**Third Floor**



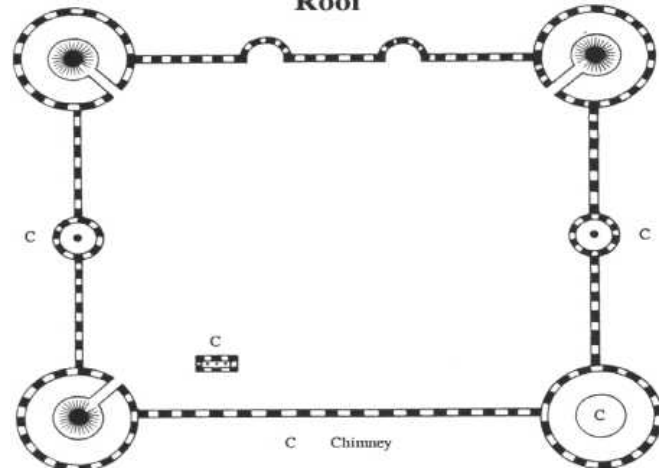
**Fourth Floor**



Scale in Feet



**Roof**





## The Lake (Continued)

This would explain the Lady's alliance with Arthur, the one civilizing force holding back the Saxons and other invaders. Such a Lake would house a vast number of ordinary humans, but their lifestyle would be almost unimaginable to the average Briton. Given the rich trappings of the Lady and her Damosels, it is clear that the Lake enjoys a prosperity above and beyond that of Britain in general.

### Under the Sea

Chretien de Troyes in *Lancelot or The Knight of the Cart*, presents an even more exotic version of the Lake. Here again is the rock in the Lake, but the Lady's people are the Merfolk (see p. 123). These amphibious beings are the young Lancelot's primary teachers. The Lady herself seems to be human, but her subjects are entirely seafolk, and make a home of the Lake as a whole.

### The Irish "Lake"

In her book *King Arthur*, Norma Lorre Goodrich presents an intriguing alternative which could fit a Historical campaign. Accepting the body of Arthurian folklore at face value, she has claimed to have located the Lake - as the Irish Sea! She makes a case that the Isle of Man, in its center, is not just the home of the Lady of the Lake and the childhood dwelling of Lancelot, but also Avalon and the site of the Grail Castle as well. The "mermen" who educated Lancelot would then actually be seamen, sailors who made frequent trips between Man and the various British Isles.

The keep looks out upon an open field which is used as a tilting ground for knightly practice, a parade ground during periods of unrest and even as a fair-ground. The entrance from the keep onto this field is an elaborate forebuilding reached by a ramp and drawbridge, and which houses, on an upper level, the castle's chapel.

The castle is surrounded by the city of Camelot which, according to Malory, eventually became Winchester. A large number of shops and inns have sprung up here to support the traffic flowing in and out of the castle - economically, it is a boom area. Camelot - both the town and the castle - is supported by a ring of farmland several miles in radius.

## Economics

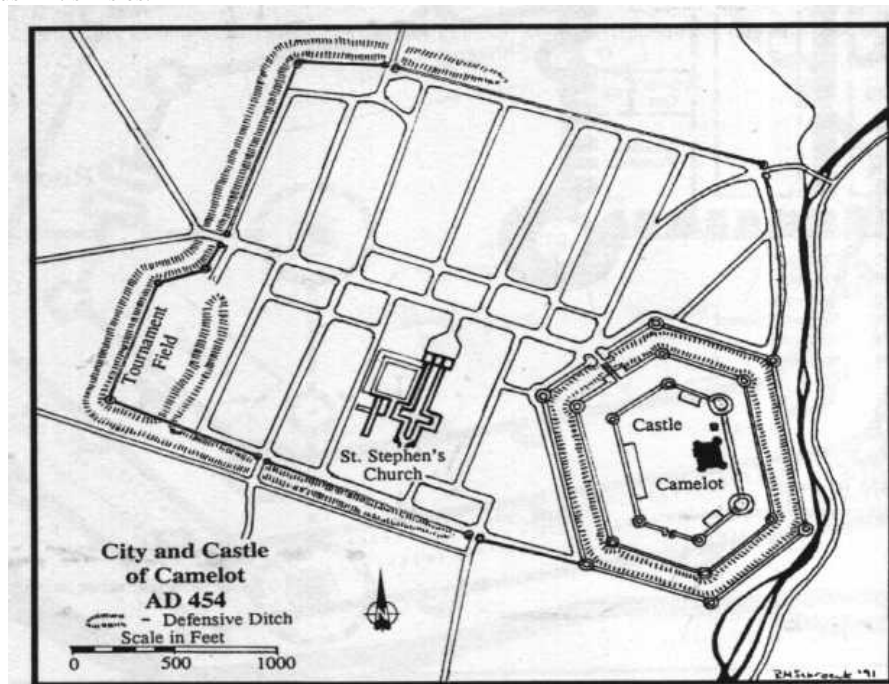
This aspect of Arthur's Britain is completely optional; campaigns can be run without any economic concerns whatsoever **without shortchanging player** enjoyment. However, a campaign **based around the** daily doings of the court will often concern itself with issues faced by the court and Arthur; realistically, economic issues will be among those.

## Prosperity

In "real" history, the departure of the Roman Empire left Britain slightly more prosperous. Britain had become the breadbasket of the Roman Empire; almost all of its grain was shipped across the **Channel, leaving** precious little for the natives, who were also taxed in the grand Roman tradition.

With the withdrawal of the legions and the virtual abandonment of Britain by Rome, the grain stayed and the taxes ceased. The state of Britain improved overnight. However, the Saxon invasions eventually **triggered an economic** collapse. In the Arthurian tales, the opposite is true.

There are clearly none of the symptoms of deprivation and economic depression in Arthurian Britain, except during the brief interregnum between Uther and Arthur. The land is fertile (so fertile, in fact, that only a fraction is cultivated; the rest is left in primeval forest) and crops are almost universally good.



Mythic Camelot

Consequently, herd animals fared well, and meat was not a luxury. Game animals were plentiful, as well, for those who could not (or chose not to) raise or buy meat.

Even the lowest serf seems well-fed; need-motivated crime is low. This contributes strongly to Arthur's popularity. However, it would certainly be an issue raised at the court if anything - drought, pestilence, whatever - were to affect Britain's prosperity.

## Trade

There is more than sufficient evidence that Britain had no small amount of international trade; for example, one of the primary denominations of currencies in use is a foreign coin - the Byzantine *bezant*. Almost certainly, Britain exports its grain. Wool is also a likely export, especially from the northlands. Tin is another possible product, one that the Romans themselves exported from the islands.

Court business is likely to include at least one trade negotiation or dispute in any given session.

## Quests and Errantry

In the classic tradition, quests and errantry are the lifeblood of a knight. A cynical viewer would point out that this sort of activity amounted to "make-work" for the knights, whom Arthur had forced into a kind of semi-retirement by his unifying policies.

On the other hand, there were still many villainous or rebellious knights abroad, whom the questing Companions frequently had to deal with. In fact, a large majority of those "miscreant knights" were defeated (and commonly rehabilitated) by errant Round Table members. It can be convincingly argued that the questing/errantry system was in fact planned by Arthur as a means of both spreading the word about the new order and providing a strong measure of "law enforcement" without appearing tyrannical.

## Errantry

Errantry was simply the practice of riding off and looking for adventure without any plans. It is admirably suited to those characters who feel wanderlust, for the knight is under no obligations or vows, save perhaps for a date when he is expected back. Even that was sometimes ignored; Lancelot had a tendency to disappear for so long that search parties had to be sent out for him.

There was a certain etiquette involved in errantry. This etiquette is included in the Chivalric Code of Honor (p. B31). Its central feature was an almost Zen-like acceptance of whatever adventure Fate threw your way. An errant knight helped the first person to ask him for aid, without investigating the matter to discover the right or wrong of it. This sometimes meant a knight could be helping an unjust cause, if the wrong person got to him first. This was exploited in some cases, including one where the offenders lied to two Companions in order to get them to fight on their side. In other cases, Round Table knights ended up battling each other because they had separately encountered disputants on both sides of the issue.

There was a specific protocol for encountering other knights on the road. Often a knight would encamp, set up a pavilion, and hang his shield on a tree nearby. This indicates that the knight is in, if not specifically "on duty." If another knight strikes the shield with his lance, this is considered a challenge to the encamped knight. The same protocol applied at tourneys.



### *The Imaginary Merlin*

Did Merlin exist? The answer from the medieval texts is, of course, yes. But several modern writers, from Parke Godwin to Lerner and Loewe, have hinted or outright proposed something quite different - that Merlin is a figment of Arthur's imagination or even the other half of a split personality, perhaps grown from an imaginary playmate of the king's childhood. This version of Merlin is still an adviser to Arthur, expressing the ideas and advice Arthur is convinced he cannot give himself.

In Godwin's *Firelord*, Arthur realizes Merlin is an aspect of himself, but strangely accepts it without a qualm, and still holds conversations with the illusory figure who taunts and leads him. In the film of *Camelot* Arthur only sees Merlin when there is no one else around. The encounters have a bizarre dreamlike quality, and Merlin never gives any information or advice to Arthur that he could not think of himself. Other works, primarily literary, offer variations on the same theme.

An imaginary Merlin adds an interesting roleplaying challenge to Arthur. The player must portray a character who not only has a serious delusion but must seem, despite this delusion, more than normally stable and capable. The GM must conspire to maintain doubt on the part of the other players, who (by sheerest coincidence, of course) never happen to be around when Merlin arrives to give his advice. Their implicit assumption that the old wizard is real *will* help sustain the deception.

A delusionary Merlin can be fun, but the option has both advantages and disadvantages. Firstly, of course is that Merlin ceases to be an all-powerful sorcerer/prophet that can often upset the most carefully laid plans of the GM. The flip side of this is that any history directly impinging on Merlin (Nimue learning her magic from him, for example) must be rewritten or obscured. The GM can use the delusionary Merlin to funnel ideas to the player of Arthur, but must be careful not to give him anything he could not observe or figure out himself. Lastly, the GM should be careful of overusing Merlin; doing so could both rob the encounters of their mystical, mysterious air and tip off the other players to what is happening.

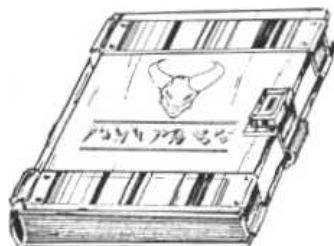
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## ***The Imaginary Merlin (Continued)***

To use this option, Arthur's character sheet (p. 90) should be (secretly) amended to include the disadvantages of Major Delusion: Merlin is real (-10 points) and Split Personality (-10 point version). Merlin not be detailed beyond basic person need

Arthur is effectively alone, and does not "take over" Arthur's body at any time. When "Merlin" manifests, Arthur's delusion will allow him to see the wizard as a separate person. In order to prove that Merlin visited, his delusion will often lead him to manufacture the physical traces of the old man's presence.

The delusory Merlin is admirably suited to a historical setting, but will work equally well in other backgrounds.



## ***Pavilions and Pavilion Etiquette***

Probably in order to prevent an excessive strain on the court coffers (among other reasons), errantry - the practice of riding forth for a set period of time, usually

a year - was subtly encouraged. It is entirely likely that a party on the road may encounter the campsite of an errant knight.

Invariably, errant knights are equipped with pavilions - large, ornate tents suitable for housing the knight, his lady, and his equipment. Any servitors or squires will either sleep in their own lesser tents, or under the open skies. Many knights seem content to stay encamped for an extended time; others may not have a choice.

Despite the behavior of such worthies as Sir Lancelot, it is not polite to wander into an unoccupied pavilion and make oneself at home. In a very real sense, a pavilion is as sacrosanct as a home, and the same protocols should be observed. If a campfire is burning in front of the pavilion, it is allowable to seat oneself there to await the return of the tent's owner.

Judging from the absence of any instance of two pavilions being erected close to each other, there may well be some social rule about the proper "desmenes" defined for a pavilion. It may well be a violation of etiquette to camp too close to another knight, unless all are of the same party.

## ***Mythic Camelot***

An errant knight is not forced to deal with all challenges entirely by himself. He may accept any help which Fate may send his way - usually in the form of other knights he may encounter. However, it is not honorable for the knight to return to Camelot itself for help, or otherwise actively seek out reinforcements. The only possible exception would be if the knight uncovered a major and overt threat to the throne itself. Even then, the knight would be torn between his desire to meet the challenge itself, and his obvious duty to report it to Arthur\_

As a method of dispensing justice, errantry was not always successful, but it did work on most occasions, and successfully spread the word about Arthur's reforms and policies. The adventuring knight became an expected sight, to judge from comments made by persons encountered in Malory. Sometimes, damsels in distress would sit down to wait for the next errant knight to come along!

It is also possible, since returning adventurers were unofficially required to tell their stories, that such sorties were used to both map out less well-known portions of Britain, as well as to assess the political and popular support for Arthur in the regions traveled. Considering the large number of independent castles and fiefdoms that Arthur had to deal with, military intelligence was yet another useful by-product of errantry.

## **Quests**

Quests are unlike errantry in that they are performed with a specific goal in mind, and often have a set time limit. According to Gawaine in the Vulgate, quests lasted a year and a day, whether they were fulfilled or not.

For game purposes, a quest is a Vow (see p. B37 and p. 8). The knight undertaking the quest swears to accomplish a particular feat before the expiration of the time limit; if *he succeeds*, his fame is increased, but no ill effects (usually) accrue if he fails. The knight must know exactly what it is he plans to do, although he need not know just how he will manage it.

A knight who abandons a quest without a good reason (dispensation from a priest, crippling injury, or something equally severe) will lose a level of either Reputation or Status (GM's decision). A knight who achieves his quest should be rewarded with character points earmarked for use only towards his Reputation.

It was not uncommon for a quest to be combined with errantry, especially if the questing knight had no specific ideas about accomplishing his goal.

## ***The Quest for the Holy Grail***

The Holy Grail was the cup (some legends say the dish) used by Christ at the Last Supper. It is described on p. 31.

The Grail Quest was the ultimate sojourn undertaken by the members of the Round Table. Ordained by God, it was less a search for a physical object than for spiritual enlightenment, and in the long run it destroyed the Round Table. Those who entered the quest unworthily came back from it (if they came back at all) worse; after its completion, the Round Table began its long, slow disintegration.

The Quest began when Galahad arrived at the Round Table and was placed in the Siege Perilous (p. 33) by a mysterious old man. The Grail appeared in the hall of the Round Table, veiled in white samite, and fed the knights. Gawaine proposed the quest for the Grail, which was not to possess it but simply to see it uncovered. (Gawaine quickly tired of the quest after receiving several serious wounds, and returned to Camelot.) Out of the 140 or so knights of the Round Table, only half returned from the quest. Only three knights - Galahad, Percival and Bors de Ganis - achieved the Grail.

The requirements for succeeding in the Grail Quest are clear. The first and most important (which never even occurred to most of the knights) is to go to

confession and perform any necessary penance. If you have a lady, she must be left behind (although Galahad acquired a lady - Percival's sister Dindane - on the quest). Some mortification of the flesh seems to help - Bors ate only bread and water, slept on the floor, and wore a hair shirt, but there is no evidence that his companions did likewise. This may be because they were virgins and he was not; virginity was not a prerequisite, although an oath of celibacy for the duration of the quest was.

Whenever possible, the quester should spend the night at a hermitage or church, and again perform confession and penance. Finally, the person questing must not take an active role in searching for the Grail. He should proceed as if taking part in a normal act of errantry, and let God and Fate guide him to the Grail.

It seems likely, given the involvement of both Dindane and Elaine of Carbonek with the Grail or the Quest, that women are not specifically barred from the Quest. The prohibition against the knights' ladies seems more to enforce the vow of celibacy than to exclude females from knowledge of the Grail. It may be that one need not even be a knight as long as one is worthy enough, but this assertion is hard to confirm. (The GM, as always, is the final arbiter of who or what is considered "worthy.")

Every encounter along the path to the Grail was allegorical, showing some aspect of Christian faith and devotion in a physical embodiment. This was true for every quester, not just those most worthy of the Grail. Demonic forces would often manifest to prevent the most promising candidates from proceeding, either by temptation or outright assassination: Bors encountered a lady who demanded he make love to her, or she and 12 other ladies would die. When he refused, they leapt from the top of their tower, and turned into fiends halfway down. Percival, attempting to follow Galahad at one point early in the quest, was given a horse which turned out to be a demon in disguise and which tried to drown him.

The three knights finally achieved the Grail at Castle Carbonek in an ecstatic Eucharistic vision. There, Galahad healed his grandfather, Pellam the Maimed King, and took possession of the Grail and the Spear of Longinus. But that was not the end of the Grail adventures for them. A magical ship took the three to the Middle East, where Galahad became the king of Sarras for a year, then passed into heaven voluntarily. Percival became a holy man and died 14 months later. Only Bors returned to Britain to tell the tale.

The GM should consider beginning the Grail Quest in his campaign very carefully. Because of its destructive side effects, it should probably be used only as a capstone to the campaign. If the Quest is begun, do not feel constrained to follow Malory word-for-word. If player characters qualify by these rules to achieve the Grail, let them! Do not feel that only Galahad, Percival and Bors can ever complete the quest. Don't forget, though, that achieving the Grail can sometimes mean the end of an earthly career.

### Hospitality

The errant or questing knight has certain rights and privileges. One of the most important is that of hospitality. A knight can show up at any castle not belonging to a monster, a sworn foe, or a thorough villain, and he will be welcomed as an honored guest. He will be fed and clothed for as long as he remains, his wounds will be tended, and his **horse and armor will be cared for - or possibly even replaced.** The only debt this incurs is one of general goodwill and a tacit promise to reciprocate, if the host ever needs hospitality.

In most sources, this hospitality is a matter of pure chivalric or personal honor, or religious duty; in others, the King has actually established a fund to reimburse the hosts of visiting knights. Either way, there are often other motives for welcoming a knight - from the need for one who could dispense to King's

## Adventures

There are a few very basic types of knightly adventure that are the hallmarks of the Malory tales, and the stories that followed. Any campaign that starts with knights on a quest should include a few of these adventures, so the players will *know* that they're in the world of King Arthur.

*Rescue a maiden or knight, enchanted or imprisoned in some strange and obnoxious way. Sometimes there will be a whole castle full of prisoners. A knight in need of help may be an unknown, or the most famous of Companions; even Arthur and Lancelot were sometimes imprisoned.*

*Be imprisoned in your turn, and await rescue from friends, or help from a damsel or wandering hermit.*

*Champion someone (typically -a damsel, but it could be anybody), either in formal battle or by informally slaughtering their foes. It is very typical of Arthur's knights to take sides with the first honest-looking faze and ask questions after the bloodletting is over.*

*Deal with a monster or menace: dragon, giant, robber knight, wicked sorceress.*

*Run an incomprehensible errand for a wise-woman or holy hermit (often in return for a prophecy or bit of information).*

*Fight a stranger, just for the glory of it. Encounter a massive illusion, usually the work of a sorceress.*

*Encounter a holy vision, or have an adventure that proves to be purely symbolic.*

*Defeat a knight and send him back to court to tell Arthur (and your lady-love) who beat him. The defeated knight must swear to serve Arthur; if he's skilled, he may be offered a place of his own at the Round Table.*

### Swearing Oaths

Vows and oaths were frequently sworn by knights on both swords and books. These were considered binding for religious reasons: the swords, point down, were considered crosses; the books, no matter their contents, were considered extensions of The Book, the Bible. A knight may also swear upon his knighthood, that is, his personal honor.

One could also swear by a sword when its point or edge was pressed against one's throat. Some knights would keep such an oath anyway, while others would feel free to ignore a promise made under duress.



### **Adventure Seeds**

*Up To Her Pretty Neck.* Riding in a forest, the PCs come upon a tower, from which they hear faint cries for help. Entering, they find a damosel embedded in a block of stone, with only her head visible. She explains that an enchantress has imprisoned her and taken her place in the home of her father, a nearby duke. She asks them to capture the enchantress, break the spell, and restore her to her rightful position. When the PCs visit the duke, they discover that the enchantress is more beloved by the father than the true daughter was. The duke refuses to believe their tale, throws them out of the castle and threatens them with death if they return. If that weren't enough, the enchantress decides to inflict her own punishment on them. How does the party capture the enchantress and free the damosel without getting themselves executed in the process?

*Hunting Season.* Whatever feudal lord the party is near has decided to have a hunt, and they are firmly invited to join the fun. The goal of the hunt is a wild boar locally known as a man-killer. However, everyone gets more than they counted on when, while thrashing through the forest, they accidentally raise a nesting gryphon.

*There and Back Again.* Arthur has had a prophetic dream, but no one at the court can interpret it. The PCs are charged with locating and going to Merlin's "tomb" to quiz the imprisoned wizard on its meaning. Meanwhile, the object of that dream, Morgan le Fay, has taken an interest in toying with the party. Can the PCs withstand her temptations and attacks, and still get back with the meaning of the dream?

*King of the Forest?* Lancelot has gone mad (again) and has fled to the forest of Bedegraine. Beside herself with worry, Guinevere asks the party to pursue the insane champion and return him to Camelot. *Lancelot must not be harmed in any way.* Reaching the forest is easy enough - but how to find Lancelot? Not to fear - Lancelot, in his madness, comes to them! Leaping from the trees naked, he bowls knights off their horses and vanishes back into the bush. The PCs must track Lancelot down through the forest primeval and either cure or capture him.

### **Mythic Camelot**

*justice*, to establishing connections at the King's court, to encouraging a potential suitor for the hand of an unwed daughter! (Any or all of these could be inflicted on a PC knight!)

A knight who abuses a castle's hospitality is not immune to his host's displeasure, and may find himself being encouraged on his way. Parasitism is considered dishonorable and is not tolerated - a knight who stays much too long may find himself ejected from the castle and reported to Arthur!

## **Courtly Love**

"But the old love was not so; men and women could love together seven years, and no licours lusts were between them, and then was love, truth, and faithfulness: and lo, in likewise was used love in King Arthur's days." (Malory, X VII, 2S)

An important aspect of knightly conduct was his behavior towards members of the opposite sex. Despite the often earthy and sensual behavior of knights and their ladies, the "ideal" love affair was often Platonic and even distant. The knight was supposed to worship his lady from afar, sometimes silently and without her knowledge or reciprocation. He would offer to be her true knight "forever and in all places" and often would dedicate his conquests - in tournaments and in the field - to her. Don Quixote's musings on Dulcinea/Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha* are almost archetypal expressions of Courtly Love.

Among the Arthurian tales, there are two particular examples of the "pure" courtly love. One is the relationship between Galahad and Dindane, sister of Perceval, during the Grail quest. The other is the "virgin love" of Lancelot and Amable. (Lancelot's affair with Guinevere may well have started as courtly love, too.)

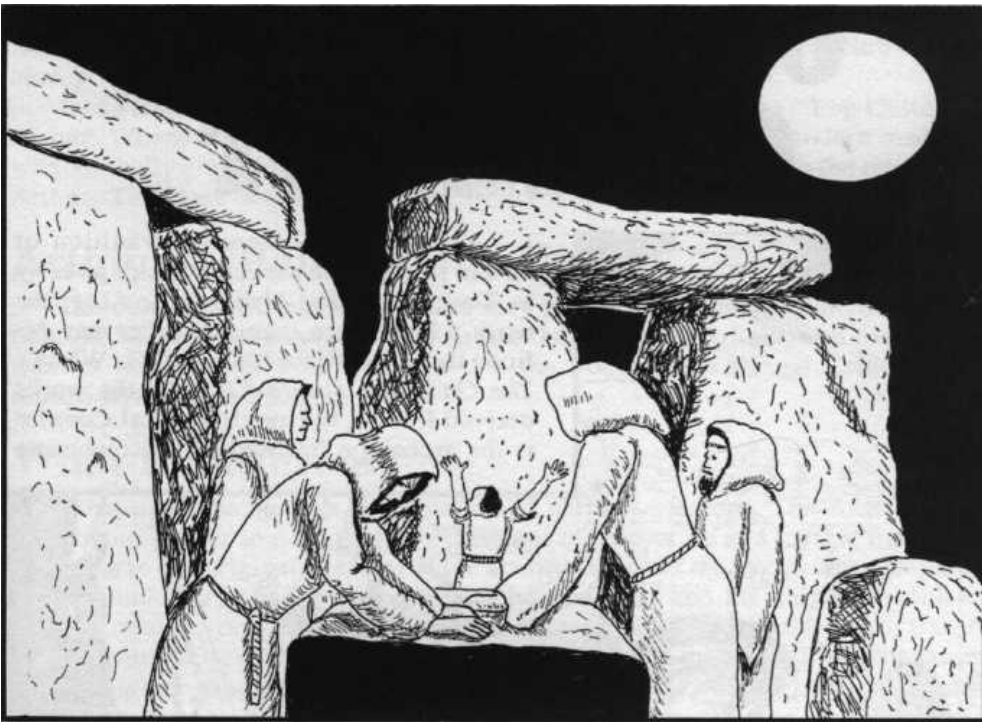
## **Religion**

Religion is the motivating force behind much of what happens in the Arthurian tales. In a way, they try to be an extension of the Bible, a sort of "third testament" witnessing the ultimate in perfection in the human condition - Galahad. (This kind of self-salvation is in keeping with the Pelagian beliefs that preoccupied the British Church in the 5th century. See sidebar, p. 22.)

With Britain being the home of the descendants of Joseph of Arimathea, the link to Biblical settings is that much stronger. In a very real way, Britain becomes a sort of second Holy Land (a notion of which Geoffrey of Monmouth would have wholeheartedly approved). Because of the presence of the Grail, the Spear, and other relics, as well as the line of Joseph, it would appear that Britain is very important to God.

Not surprisingly, priests and other religious figures are always significant enough for knights to stop and speak with them, no matter how important the task they are on. Given the frequency of divine intervention found in Arthur's Britain, this is wise - one never knows when the hermit at the side of the road may have a pertinent prophecy to pass on. Faith in God and devotion to His commandments is the hallmark of the best knights in the world, and that which elevates them out of it.

With the role of Christianity as large as it is, the gamers must roleplay their characters' faith - especially if the character is Blessed, or the GM is preparing his own Grail Quest. Without properly roleplayed devotion, the Grail Quest is meaningless. It is possible, if the GM or players feel uncomfortable, to divorce the religious aspects from the milieu, but then aspects such as the Grail and Blessedness are out of place.



### *The Once and future King*

When Arthur had been mortally wounded in the battle with Mordred, the legends say that four queens, including Nimue and Morgan le Fey, came to bear him away to the mystic Isle of Avalon. (Malory claims that the king's body was later found and buried, but he is alone in doing so and admits it.) Thus begins the most powerful aspect of the tales of King Arthur.

It is said that Arthur did not die, but instead lies sleeping at Avalon as his mortal wound heals. When Britain comes to a great crisis, when his homeland once again needs him, Arthur will return to lead the British people and rescue them.

Countless folk tales and cycles such as the Charlemagne stories place Arthur (and sometimes his knights) asleep in a cave, their weapons ready and waiting. Frequently this cave is in the area of Glastonbury Tor, said to be the Isle of Avalon. Often there is treasure for the taking in the cave, but also a sheathed sword and a horn. Touching or using them in the right order will wake Arthur and the knights; doing so incorrectly will expel the offender from the cave, which he will never find again.

As the centuries passed, Arthur became a messianic figure, especially to the down-trodden Welsh, descendants of the original Britons. The strength of their belief in Arthur's return was such that one English king in the 11th century actually financed the excavation of Glastonbury Abbey, in order to find the bodies of Arthur and Guinevere and lay the disturbing legend to rest once and for all. Contemporary records claim that they were found and re-interred with honors; modern excavations have revealed that *someone* was found where the monks claimed. Whether they were Arthur and Guinevere is impossible to tell, as their new resting place was destroyed with the Abbey some centuries later.

Even today, the "Once and Future King" holds a profound fascination for people the world over. Visions of Arthur were supposed to have appeared to British soldiers during World War II; farmers near Glastonbury (and Stonehenge) still claim that Arthur and his knights ride through the sky with the Wild Hunt. In America, Arthur's incipient return has inspired a number of works pitting the ancient king against the wonders and perils of a modern or future world.

For the GM, the return of Arthur can be a seminal event for a contemporary campaign, a trigger for a radical change of genres. The GM with a taste for challenges might want to try bringing Arthur back sometime in established history: what if Arthur had returned during the War of the Roses? During the time of Cromwell? During World War I or II? Or he could follow the lead of Camelot 3000 with "Knights in Space." The gaming possibilities are endless.

## Other Faiths

### Paganism

Paganism appears in many of the Arthurian tales. Principal among these is the Saxons' bloodthirsty faith, but more quietly hidden within the Christian allegory is the old religion of Britain. It is sometimes implied that the Ladies of the Lake(s) may be followers of the ancient Celtic beliefs.

The Celtic religion is in some versions a duotheistic faith, worshiping a god and a goddess. Some sects worship only a goddess. In either variant, it is highly nature-oriented, and stresses personal responsibility for actions and their *outcomes*. The goddess (and god, if present) are not lawgivers in the sense that the Christian God is; they guide and suggest, but do not lay down strict rules and do not personally punish transgressors. The inherent balancing forces of the universe will do that automatically. The religion stresses ethical behavior and responsibility for one's fellow men. Its highly mystic and ritualistic nature, as well as its holistic viewpoint, finds nothing wrong in magic, and its priestesses are said to have been talented sorceresses as well.

### Islam

Although anachronistic, it is implied that Saracen characters such as Priamus and Palomides were Moslems before they became Christians.

### Judaism

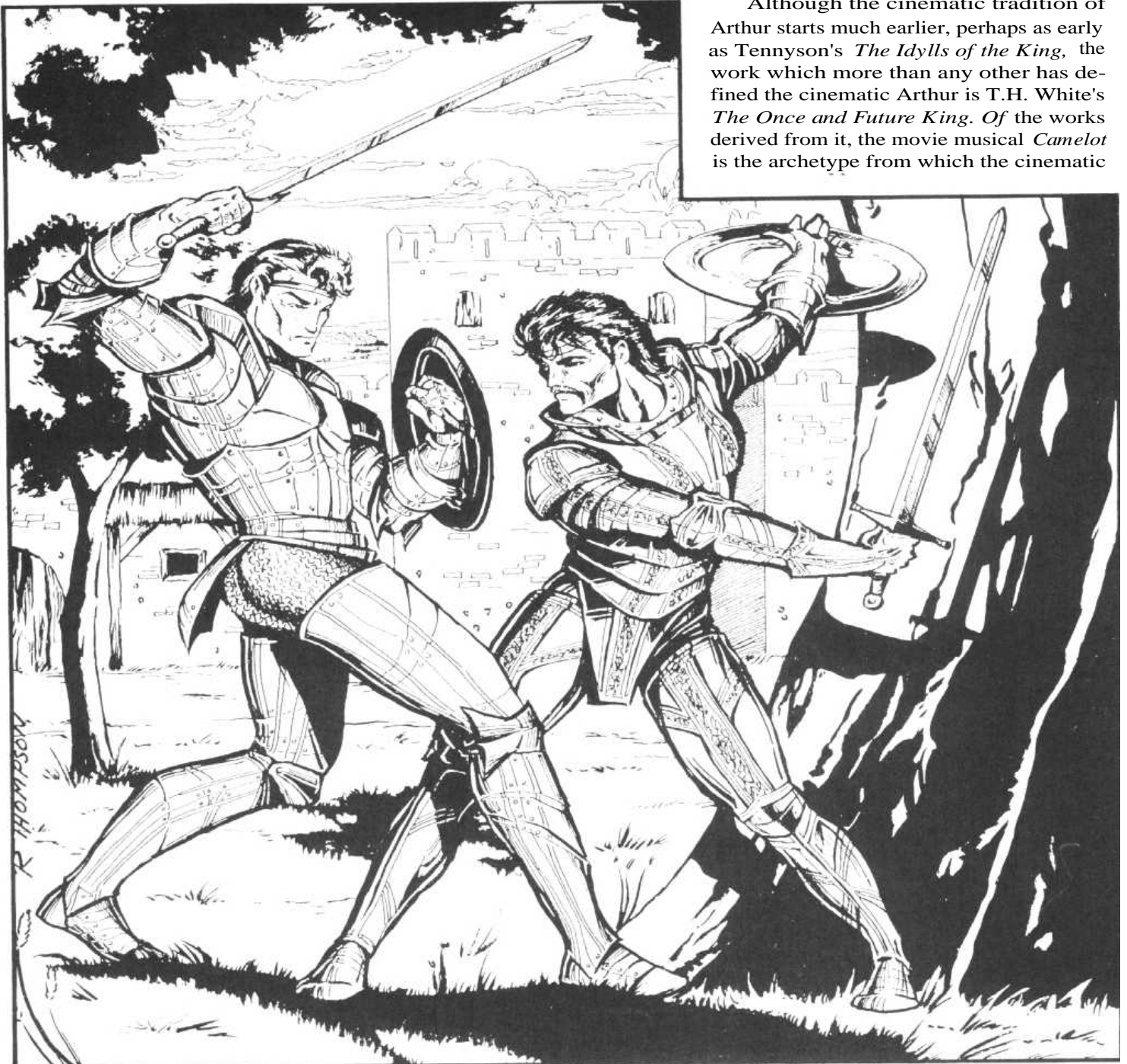
Although none as such ever appear in Malory or the Vulgate, it is reasonable to assume that there must be some Jews living in Arthur's Britain. The line of Fisher Kings of Carbonek is of Jewish descent (as is Lancelot's family) although all are practicing Christians. During the time of the Romans, Britain was a source of trade goods, and Jewish merchants like Joseph of Arimathea were known to make their way there. It would not be impossible for Jewish settlements to exist at the time of Arthur.



# 5

# CINEMATIC CAMELOT

Although the cinematic tradition of Arthur starts much earlier, perhaps as early as Tennyson's *The Idylls of the King*, the work which more than any other has defined the cinematic Arthur is T.H. White's *The Once and Future King*. Of the works derived from it, the movie musical *Camelot* is the archetype from which the cinematic



*Cinematic. Camelot*

form springs. Any GM or player intending to participate in a cinematic game should see this film. (John Boorman's *Excalibur*, for all its chrome armor and flashing swords, is much more mythic in its dark overtones and obscure mysticism.)

It can truthfully be said that the cinematic Arthur is also the "Pop Culture" Arthur. Whenever someone portrays the king and his table in a modern medium without really consulting the source material, he has contributed to the cinematic Arthur. This does not make it wrong - just different.

## Arthur, Britain and the World

The cinematic Britain is grounded very firmly in the medieval mythic tradition. Sir Thomas Malory would recognize the cinematic Britain, and might feel right at home there. The subkingdoms, the politics, the Round Table - all remain virtually unchanged.

## What Is Different?

What does change is a combination of narrative factors. The focus of the tales swings closer to Arthur, who completes his evolution as a mythic figure by returning to his original position as the central figure of the cycle. The elements of scale and glory change as well. Somehow, Arthur and his knights inhabit a larger, grander world, one that is brighter-colored and less stricken with evil that must be uprooted. Arthur's military conquests become more local, but his fame becomes wider-ranging. Arthur, far from being a military mastermind, becomes more of a "peace king." He ceases to be the cruel conqueror, and becomes softer, less certain of himself.

Other characters change, too. Good and evil become polarized, rather than overlapping; some characters change considerably when forced to be one or the other. Some disappear entirely: in some retellings, almost all of the Orkney clan vanishes, leaving only Gawaine and Mordred behind as total strangers to one another. Morgan le Fay's ambiguity vanishes as her hatred comes to the fore.

Magic is more prominent (if not more common), and with it Merlin changes as well. Gone is the half-demon prophet/mage with the uncertain motives. In his place is a muddled old wizard with an animate tea set, living backwards in time. His magic is no less powerful, just ... unfocused.

On a larger scale, the overall flavor of the cinematic Camelot has shifted from the blood-and-guts of myth to the optimism of fairy tale. The time has changed as well - the 5th century is long past, and with it the Briton-Saxon conflict. The new Britain of Arthur is firmly anchored in a later era, and partakes of many other times for its trappings. In the fine tradition of Hollywood, anachronisms are not out of place.

## Technology

Among those anachronisms are those which give the cinematic Arthur its signature image: the weapons and armor which pop culture assigns to a knight. The culture is still TL3 overall, and except as noted, is as described in Chapter 5.

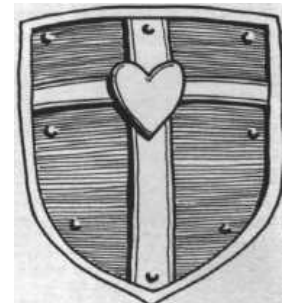
## Weapons and Armor

The most important aspect of the cinematic Camelot is the introduction of plate armor and commonly-available weapons of high quality (see p. B74). Any of the armor types found on p. B210 are available for use, if one has enough money. On the Hand Weapon Table (p. B206-7), Fencing and fencing gear are still unavailable, as are Blowpipe, Bola and Lasso on the *Ranged Weapon Table*.

## T.H. White and the Cinematic Arthur

Although White's *The Once and Future King* is the primary source for the cinematic Arthurian tradition, it itself is mostly a simplified retelling of Malory. The exception is its first book, "The Sword in the Stone," which in one stroke not only recast the entire story of Arthur's youth, but recreated Merlin out of whole cloth, and anchored both firmly in the collective consciousness of the world.

An interesting, if specialized campaign could be set around Arthur's childhood in the Castle of the Forest Sauvage and his adventures with his brother Kay and his tutor Merlin. Perhaps better suited for younger players, this setting does provide the opportunities of learning to be a knight as well as exploration and magic.



## Magic Weapons, Revisited

When plate armor enters the story, enchanted weapons must improve in order not to be left behind. As a result, weapons like *Excalibur* become something completely beyond the pale. Given the performance of magical swords in films and later novels, the enchantments of *Puissance* and *Accuracy* on them may be at the maximums allowed by the magic rules. They may also possess other, strange and exotic properties - usually from the additional weapons enchantments found in the pages of *GURPS Magic* (pp. M38-40). Often, such blades *cannot* be made by mortal craftsmen, nor can they be found easily.

Magic weapons, in addition to their excesses of enchantment, are also *flashy*. Their blades glow in unusual colors, or spit sparks with every stroke, or slice through other blades like butter. It is the rare weapon which is subtle and hard to notice. There are a few advantages to flashy enchanted weapons - less-well-equipped enemies tend to stay away from you, and even other champions give a second thought before attacking you - but the owner of such a weapon will often find himself the immediate target of hostile magic or a sneak thief.

## Faerie Castles

If the Faerie (p. 121) are employed in this setting, they may take physical strongholds in human lands. T.H. White tells of the Faerie castle of Chariot, which changed its aspect to tempt the unwary. In order to rescue two friends, Arthur and Kay entered the castle; they had been warned not to eat any food inside (lest they be permanently caught in Faerie). The castle then took on an illusionary semblance of being built entirely of food!

Faerie castles can be great dangers; even if they are miles from any known fairy mounds, they are effectively gateways into the realm "under the hill." Humans who take appropriate precautions (as described by local folklore at least) may be able to explore their passages unharmed. But even if the Faerie are not hostile to humans in general, it is not likely they would appreciate strangers breaking into their home!



*Cinematic Camelot*

The primary difference in weaponry is that weapons of better than good quality are now common and easy to find, although their prices are unchanged. Knights and other persons of high Status will generally have fine or very fine quality weapons to the exclusion of anything else.

## Fortifications

Forts and castles are still based on the Norman model (see p. 52), **but fairy-tale influences have made inroads on** the cycle here. With the increased peacefulness of the milieu, fortifications have become more extravagant homes than defensive structures. Familiar details like conically-roofed towers and turrets (stolen from medieval French designs) appear as the stereotyped background of pop culture takes over.

These castles are still sturdy and **capable of withstanding a siege, but the aesthetic behind their design has changed** along with the milieu. An almost Victorian sense of ornamentation - light, airy, almost frilly, and no doubt influenced by Tennyson - decorates the cinematic castle; that, or Gothic influences - heavy, dark and **threatening, with spiky extrusions and sometimes even gargoyles** - overcome all. As, elsewhere, the polarization of good and evil affects architecture, and it becomes possible to tell a good knight from an evil knight simply by the kind of castle he inhabits.

## Medicine

Rarely in the films is anyone hurt badly enough to even need to summon a doctor or surgeon. Herbal remedies are certainly present, and more may be in existence. In deference to the abundance of anachronism elsewhere, it seems reasonable to allow a TL of 3 for medicine in the cinematic environment.

## Politics and Warfare

The many battles and wars fought by King Arthur in the medieval texts tend to be thinned out in cinematic portrayals. Notably, there are far fewer revolts against the young king. This demonstrates that the cinematic Arthur is not just a king loved by the common folk, but also one that, despite his questionable parentage, was immediately approved by the aristocracy.

**Having the unanimous or near-unanimous support** of the ruling classes changes the timbre of Arthur's reign considerably. Not having to prove himself to them, his early efforts as a king are applied entirely to the improvement of the state of Britain. His union of the fragmented baronies is almost effortless, and the **resources his mythic counterpart** expended on warfare instead go to a **cultural and economic explosion**.

As a result, Arthur gains a powerful political momentum. This is especially important in those campaigns **where his reign has** been telescoped into a few years (see sidebar); it allows him to establish the Round Table and other Arthurian institutions in record time. His almost continual presence on the throne lends him an air of competence and concern that it took his mythic **counterpart several years** to earn.

Elsewhere, the cinematic Arthur has things easier than the original as well. Foreign intervention on British soil seems non-existent. Virtually all nations that Arthur deals with are subkingdoms of Britain; almost nothing outside the British Isles - with the exception of France, home of Lancelot - **is even acknowledged**. Arthur's fame and power are contained in a tight little world that ranges from the Orkney Islands in the north to the English Channel in the south, and no further. In these tales, Arthur never conquers Rome (the Roman empire is long dead), and frequently never even makes it to France to besiege Lancelot; the pursuit of the ex-champion only gets as far as Joyous Garde before Mordred sets

his plans in motion. There may be Saxons, but their depredations are small and easily repulsed.

## Court Intrigue

The focus of a cinematic campaign may be on political intrigue at the court as well as on the more standard knight-errantry. The film versions of Arthur's reign show a generous helping of plotting and politicking within the court. The two best examples here are *The Knights of the Round Table* and - surprisingly - *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

The themes which arise here are those of morality and betrayal. Factionalism, such as the classic rivalry between Gawaine's followers and Lancelot's, are at the core of both *Round Table* and court conflicts, and (just as in the older tales) aid the eventual destruction of the kingdom. However, actual conspiracy becomes much more frequent at the court as well - paradoxically, because of the cinematic Arthur's power and popularity. His firm grip on Britain prevents the blossoming of evil forces everywhere - except in his own court, which he never even considers as a haven for conspiracy. One campaign theme may be the attempts by a small group of knights to weed out an evil that only they are aware of.

## Religion

All vestiges of pagan worship or competition have vanished in the cinematic setting. Christianity is assumed for all. However, the Pelagian aspects of the British Church have disappeared into Roman Catholic orthodoxy, and the Holy Grail is rarely mentioned.

The importance of a knight's faith is also glossed over in many films. The *Round Table* becomes entirely secular as a result; the overtones of divine favor and providence at the Table vanish. It becomes solely a political and military body. (Some versions depict it as a forerunner of Parliament, and as such it is even further divorced from its roots.) Christianity, on the whole, puts in only token appearances.

Some modern interpretations, though, restore the historically-accurate conflicts between Celtic paganism and Christianity. In these, the reach of Christianity is often equated with the reach of the king; the duties of a knight-errant could then include the placement and protection of missions and missionary priests.

## Magic

With the decline of overt Christianity within the setting, magic takes a corresponding increase in visibility - and in some versions, power. Britain becomes a high-mana zone in the cinematic milieu, and magic becomes cheap and plentiful. It is so common that it can be expended on devastating personal combat in some sources; Peter David's *Knight Life* includes a climactic magical battle between Merlin and Morgan le Fay which quite literally vaporizes the house in which it occurs.

## "Let Us Not Go To Camelot; It Is A Silly Place."

The GM need not feel constrained to present Arthur (cinematic or otherwise) in a consistently serious manner. There are many precedents for a decidedly silly Camelot campaign, from *Bugs Bunny* to *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. Either as an unexpected interlude in an existing campaign or as a game world in and of itself, Silly Camelot can be a refreshing change of pace.

When planning a silly adventure, the GM should decide if the comedy is to come from the characters, their situations, or a combination of both. (Just as a

## The Cinematic Picts

Somehow, even the worst of the Arthurian films to come out of Hollywood - 1953's *The Knights of the Round Table* - manages to fit the Picts into its anachronistic Britain (even if they are only low-tech Scots with bad costumes and an attitude problem). They cause about the only internal strife in Britain which has nothing to do with overt political jockeying.

Even in a cinematic campaign, the Picts as depicted in the sidebar on p. 39 should fit in. Within the classic cinematic moral polarization, vicious primitives from the northlands make perfect villains, suitable for alliances with everyone from Mordred to Morgan le Fay.

## Adventure Seeds

Targets! Without realizing it, the PCs have insulted or upset a court personage of power. But they don't know who - all they know is that they have suddenly been blackballed at Camelot. Then, the next time they leave the capital, someone ties to kill them! Who have they offended, and how? And why is their death necessary?

Promises, Promises. In order to pass an apparently unbeatable challenger, one or all of the PCs must swear an oath to return to him after one year and either answer an unanswerable riddle or forfeit their lives. During the year, they discover a sage who claims to have the answer to the riddle, but who also requires an oath of some seriousness before he will reveal the answer. That oath may be fulfilled with the help of a remote and crotchety old hermit, who insists on an oath to him . . . and so on. The GM should stretch this out as long as possible, turning it into a comedy of errors as the characters scurry to fulfill one oath after another. The especially sadistic GM could top off the sequence by bringing it full circle, requiring yet another oath to the original challenger to get the last piece of aid needed to escape the first oath!

The Ghost Horse. A huge warhorse - completely equipped with all the trappings necessary to a knight's steed - has repeatedly been sighted upon the moors nearby. The local villagers swear that it's a ghost, or worse, an evil omen. If there are any knights in the party, they will suddenly find that no villager will talk to them or even get close to them. When a villager is found on the moor with his head caved in and hoofprints on the ground around him, the party finds itself asked - or ordered - to seek out and destroy the demon steed.

## How Long A Reign?

As can be seen in the timeline, the mythic Arthur reigned for about 50 years. The requirements of most film depictions often force a significant shortening of that period. In some movies Arthur's entire reign is a matter of four or five years - or even less!

Some literary interpretations (both juveniles and pseudo-historicals) also dramatically shorten the time that Arthur rules. Should the GM?

It depends on the campaign scope and goal. If the GM wishes to emphasize the "last hopeless stand against the barbarian hordes" theme, then the telescoping of the timeline will certainly enhance the sense of impending doom. However, if it is the sense of the "long golden twilight of Britain" which the GM wishes to present, then retaining the original history is probably best.

Please note, though, that a brief reign does not necessarily mean a brief campaign. Even a five-year "game time" reign offers enough adventure for a very long "real time" campaign.

This also assumes that the GM will simply stop at the death of Arthur - and this is not at all necessary.

reference, Monty Python is a combination, but with the emphasis on the situations. Within their own characterizations, particularly Graham Chapman's Arthur, most of the knights were reasonably deadpan - most of the time.) Character comedy relies on silly characters dealing with serious situations in a silly fashion; some of the new disadvantages given on pp. 8-9 are especially suitable for this flavor of campaign. The disadvantage of character comedy is that it can degenerate into a Three Stooges-type free-for-all if not carefully managed.

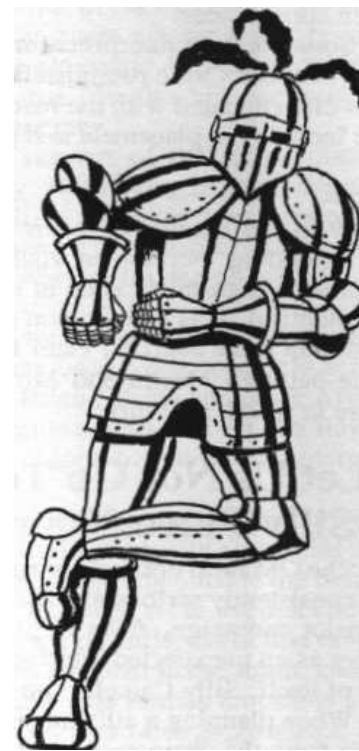
The situational approach inverts this, placing "straight" characters in outrageous plots and places - like anarcho-syndicalist communes or a Camelot filled with opera-mad musical theatre buffs. Any anachronism or non-sequitur is acceptable; the comedy comes from the conflict between the paradigms. Note that only the player characters need be "straight" here - the people around them can (and should) be as bent as necessary.

With either style of play, GMs may wish to consult Toon - The Cartoon Roleplaying Game for inspiration and ideas.

"Serious" Arthurian material can be adapted for silly play quite easily. In Peter David's Knight Life, for instance, Morgan le Fay summons demons to aid her cause. But the demons are at worst morally neutral, while possessing unexpected human characteristics - one of them hyperventilates in stress situations. Any familiar element can have a facet twisted in an unexpected direction, not only to amuse, but also to surprise.

Even background details can add to the atmosphere. For instance (returning to Knight Life), Morgan employs a Divination spell to check up on Merlin locked in his cave. But although it is Divination of the crystal-gazing variety, she uses no crystal, no bowl of water - but a television set tuned to an empty channel!

For long-term gaming, a silly campaign is likely to pale quickly (unless the GM is very inventive). But as an interlude in a continuing serious Camelot campaign, or as a simple one-shot, silly Britain is uniquely enjoyable.



Cinematic Camelot

# MYTHIC/CINEMATIC TIMELINE

This timeline is built around two specific dates given in the medieval texts. The Vulgate fixes a certain return of Lancelot to Camelot at AD 435, while Malory and the Vulgate both give the arrival of Galahad at Camelot as AD 454. Historians place some of the more verifiable personalities, such as Vortigern, at a much later time than does legend. Several different and conflicting calendar schemes in use in the early Christian era, as well as the accumulated errors of repeated transcriptions, make it difficult to ascertain exactly what the "real" dates should be. In many cases, the assignment is admittedly arbitrary.

Many dates and events here are a "best compromise" between Geoffrey of Monmouth, the Vulgate and Malory. For instance, Malory has Uther sickening and dying two years after Arthur is born. Geoffrey has him on the throne for 15 years. Arthur does not succeed Uther until he is almost 18 in both accounts. Fifteen years is a long time without a high king, and it seems likely that the balkanized state of Britain would not have lasted that long. Geoffrey's version seems more likely, in that there would not be enough time for a usurper king to establish himself before Arthur came of age. So Geoffrey's dates are used. For Arthur's later career, it is exclusively between Malory and the Vulgate that conflicts are resolved.

Many cinematic sources transplant Arthurian Britain from its original time into a later period, usually the 10th century. (In one well-known movie interpretation, the date of the Grail Quest is given as AD 972.) GMs preferring a later setting should feel free to add at least 500 years to the dates given below (but see the notes on Arthur's European politics, p. 38).

## AD 348

Vortigern becomes king through conspiracy against the true king, Constans, son of Constantine. After the murder of Constans' oldest son, Maines, his two younger sons, Aurelius Ambrosius and Uther, are sent to Armorica (Brittany).

Vortigern hires Saxon mercenaries to fight Pictish incursions. With Vortigern's approval, the mercenaries and their families settle in Britain. Vortigern marries (his second time) Renwein/Rowena, the daughter of the Saxon chieftain Hengist.

## AD 363

Merlin is born (by some accounts, to a nun).

## AD 365

Vortigern's reign interrupted by British rebellion against the now pro-Saxon king. His son Vortimer is briefly pronounced King by the rebels, but his step-mother has him poisoned. Vortigern resumes his reign.

## AD 372

The Night of Long Knives: Saxon treachery at a treaty signing results in Vortigern becoming a figurehead for Hengist. Vortigern flees to Wales, where he tries to build a citadel, but its walls repeatedly collapse. Soothsayers declare he must sacrifice a child who had no fa-

ther in order to successfully build. Vortigern's agents find the 9-year-old Merlin, who is brought to the king and who subsequently prophesies to him after showing the true cause for the walls' instability. Merlin also warns that Vortigern's doom is near.

Merlin goes to train with the wizard Blaise, but quickly outstrips him in power and skill. Blaise retires to Northumberland, vowing to write a book of Merlin's deeds.

## AD 373

Aurelius Ambrosius and Uther, now grown up, return from Armorica with an army. Aurelius is crowned king as soon as they land. Vortigern moves through Wales to attack their forces, but retreats to a castle in Monmouth when the going gets rough. Aurelius' troops lay siege to the castle and set it on fire; Vortigern dies in the blaze. Using cavalry brought from Armorica, Aurelius then attacks the Saxons, driving them back to the North Sea. He captures and executes Hengist.

## AD 374

Merlin magically moves Stonehenge from Ireland and sets it up as a memorial over the mass grave of the victims of the Night of Long Knives.

## AD 388

A surviving son of Vortigern poisons Aurelius. Uther, taking the surname "Pendragon," succeeds him as king. A

Saxon revival sprouts, but Uther, after a hard-fought campaign, quashes it.

## AD 389

At the combination coronation/Easter celebration following the end of the campaign, Uther takes a fancy to Igraine, wife of Duke Gorlois of Cornwall. He makes obvious advances, but only succeeds in driving Gorlois out of the court and into effective rebellion. Uther marches on Gorlois' lands; Gorlois leaves Igraine in the well-defended Tintagel Castle. Gorlois is killed in battle. With the help of Merlin, Uther assumes the shape of Gorlois, enters the castle, and lies with Igraine, conceiving Arthur. He later marries her.

## AD 390

Merlin's price for helping Uther was the child that was born of the union; he takes the newborn Arthur and fosters him with Sir Ector of the Forest Sauvage. Arthur is raised as the son of Sir Ector, and is made squire to his foster brother, Kay.





Uther's step-daughter Morgawse lies with the prisoner Lot of Orkney and becomes pregnant with Gawaine. When the child is born (in secret) she gives him into the hands of a trusted knight to raise. However, through a series of misfortunes, the young Gawaine is taken from the knight and ends up being raised by the Roman merchant Viamundus.

#### AD 392

Lot of Orkney is freed, and Morgawse weds him. She bears him three more sons.

#### AD 397

Guinevere is born in Cameliard, daughter of King Leodegrance. On the same day, her twin half-sister (also named Guinevere) is born to the wife of Leodegrance's seneschal.

#### AD 402

Squire Dionas of Brittany fathers a daughter on one of the Lady of the Lake's maidens, and the child is named Nimue. As she grows up, she learns much of magic from the Lady.

#### AD 404

Uther gives the Round Table to King Leodegrance of Cameliarde.

#### AD 405

Uther reigns for 15 years in declining health. The Saxons continue to cause trouble, bringing reinforcements and fighting the Britons. They are finally defeated in the last days of Uther's reign - the ailing king appears on the field in a horse-litter to inspire his troops, and they rout the Saxons. The strain of the travel kills Uther, but not before he can return to London and affirm the succession of his missing son Arthur to the throne.

Britain breaks down into petty fiefdoms and warring baronies as Briton and Saxon sides begin a period of touch-and-go warfare. The Sword in the Stone appears in London, and dozens of claimants to the throne attempt to draw it.

#### AD 408

After several years of unsuccessful attempts to draw the Sword, Merlin declares a grand tournament at Christmas.

Arthur accompanies Ector and Kay to the annual tournament. Arthur draws the Sword from the stone while searching for a replacement for Kay's blade, which was left behind. Twelve lesser kings present at the tournament support Arthur immediately; the rest insist Arthur repeat the feat on the next holy day. All in all, Arthur draws the sword several more times on

ensuing holy days, but still must take arms against the reluctant barons.

Beginning of the rebellion of the Six Kings.

Viamundus gives the now-grown Gawaine letters and a ring from his mother which reveal his true parents. He makes his way to Caerleon, where the young Arthur is holding court. There he discovers that the king is his uncle, and that he has two brothers: Gaheris and Agravaine. (Gareth has not yet come to court.)

#### AD 409

Lancelot is born to King Ban in Benoit, a subkingdom of France.

Gawaine's adventure with the Green Knight.

#### AD 410

Arthur wages war upon the rebellious kings for two years. Finally, a great battle is fought near the wood of Bedegraine. Between Arthur's military skill and Merlin's magic, the rebellion is put down. The survivors - including King Lot of Orkney - swear fealty to Arthur.

Arthur's coronation is attended by lesser kings and nobles from all over Britain; it takes place in the "City of Legions" (Caerleon-on-Usk). There he is

crowned High King of all Britain. A tournament follows the coronation, at which the sons of King Lot excel over all other competitors. Arthur meets their mother, Morgawse, and not knowing he is her half-brother, finds her attractive and seduces her. Mordred is conceived from this liaison.

Through his magic, Merlin learns of Arthur's incest and the conception of Mordred.

Tristram, son of King Mcliodas of Lyonesse, is born. His mother dies in childbirth. Mcliodas remarries.

Arthur meets Merlin while hunting alone in a forest. The sorcerer-prophet informs him of his true lineage, and reveals the unwitting incest with Morgawse. Merlin also warns Arthur that the son he has begotten will be his downfall. Merlin becomes adviser to Arthur.

Arthur receives Excalibur from the Lady of the (British) Lake.

#### AD 411

King Ryons attempts to invade Cameliard. Arthur, with the help of Kings Ban and Bors, opposes him. A Saxon attack interrupts the war; all three sides fight a pitched battle, during which King A mans attempts to take Cameliard.

Mordred is born. Arthur declares that all children born on or about the expected date of his birth are to be placed in a boat and set adrift. 500 babes are placed in a ship, which founders upon the rocky coast of Northern Britain. All die except for Mordred, who is washed ashore and rescued by fishermen. Morgawse learns



of his survival through magic and recovers him. By some accounts, she begins to teach him to hate Arthur.

Nineve, the Lady of the (British) Lake, dies.

#### AD 412

Bagdemagus made king of Gore by his uncle, King Uriens.

Prompted by Arthur's slaughter of the innocents, King Lot of Orkney leads the second rebellion of kings against him (The War of the Eleven Kings). The rebellion is quelled and Lot is killed.

Balin le Sauvage, brother of Balan, is banished by Arthur for killing a lady in Arthur's court. Taking shelter in the castle of King Pellam of Listeneise, he wounds King Pellam with the Spear of Longinus (the Dolorous Stroke), and unintentionally creates the Waste Land.

#### AD 413

Balin and Balan kill each other in combat, each unaware of **the identity** of his armored opponent. Merlin buries them both in a single tomb, placing aside Balin's magical sword until the coming of Galahad.

Arthur marries Guinevere. Her father, King Leodegrance, gives the Round Table to Arthur as a wedding gift, along with 100 knights.

Guinevere's twin half-sister (also named Guinevere) attempts to trade places with Guinevere on her wedding night, but fails when the kidnapping of the real Guinevere is foiled by two of Arthur's knights. The false Guinevere is banished.

Morgan le Fay begins an affair with Guioimar, Guinevere's cousin.

In order to quell some of the complaints of the recently-vanquished, Arthur and Merlin conceive of the order of the Round Table. On the day of its inauguration, letters of gold appear on its sieges (seats) spelling the names of the men who are to sit in each. Two seats stayed blank. One was draped with a cloth: the Siege Perilous, reserved for the one destined to achieve the Quest of the Grail: Galahad. The other, next to the Siege Perilous, was reserved for the coming of Percival.

Nimue is brought to court by King Pellinore, who has pursued her on orders from Arthur. As a side-effect of his quest, though, his daughter Eleine commits suicide.

Guinevere learns of the affair of Guioimar and Morgan; she banishes Guioimar, and Morgan leaves the court. Morgan

goes to Merlin and expands her magical knowledge.

#### AD 414

Arthur fights and slays the giant of Cornwall.

Claudias of France visits Camelot in disguise for a year.

Merlin falls in love with Nimue, and teaches her much of his magic.

The second wife of King Meliodas of Lyonesse unsuccessfully attempts to poison the child Tristan, seeing him as a threat to the sons she has borne. When the king discovers this, he banishes her and her sons and sends Tristan to Brittany to be raised by a squire named Gouveral.

Nimue becomes the new Lady of the Lake in Britain, after imprisoning Merlin within a rock in Cornwall.

Invasion of Britain by five foreign kings; battle of Northumberland.

Morgan le Fay attempts to assassinate both Arthur and her husband Uriens; her goal is to put her lover Accolon on the throne. The plot fails, and she permanently leaves her husband and Arthur's court.

In France, Lancelot, the 5-year-old son of King Ban and Queen Elaine (or Clarine) of Ben6ic, is carried away by Vivien (the French Lady of the Lake) when Ban's kingdom is overrun by the forces of Claudus and he is killed. Lancelot is raised nameless by the Lady.

#### AD 415

Arthur's first war with Rome. He defeats and slays Emperor Lucius in battle, and is crowned Emperor. Leaving behind a return to manage the empire for him, he returns to Britain.

Seraide rescues Lionel and Bors from Claudas, and takes them to the French Lake, where they grow and learn with Lancelot.

#### AD 425

Tristram comes from Brittany and fights Marhaus, killing him but being wounded in the process. He is sent to Ireland for healing, where he meets both Isolde and Palomides for the first time.

#### AD 428

The still-nameless Lancelot rides out from the Lady of the Lake's realm until he encounters Iweret, **"the best knight in the world."** When he defeats Iweret, a faerie servant of the Lady tells him his true name. Lancelot then journeys to Camelot.

Lancelot wins the castle Dolorous Garde, and renames it Joyous Garde. Lancelot and Guinevere fall in love.

Breunor le Noir arrives at Camelot, and receives his nickname "La Cote de Malle Taille" ("The Ill-made Coat") from Kay.

Gareth of Orkney arrives incognito at court and becomes a kitchen boy. Kay nicknames him "Beaumains" - "Fairhands."

#### AD 429

Lancelot, still not a Companion, leaves on an adventure. A search is begun for him. When he returns, Lancelot becomes a full member of the Round Table, and he and Guinevere renew their love.

Lancelot wins the allegiance of Duke Galeholt for Arthur.

Gareth "Beaumains" goes upon his first adventure as the protector of Lynnette, and is knighted by Lancelot.

Guinevere's twin half-sister successfully takes Guinevere's place and convinces Arthur that the true Guinevere is an impostor. Lancelot renounces his allegiance to Arthur to defend her in trial by combat, and wins. Queen Guinevere sent to Surlose in exile, where she dwells with Lancelot in Duke Galeholt's castle.

The state of Britain begins a decline.

#### AD 430

The Pope orders Arthur to take back the true Guinevere, but the king refuses. The Pope places a 21-month interdiction on Britain.

The false Guinevere and her *henchman* Bertholai both suffer paralytic strokes; badgered by a holy man, they make a full confession before they die.

Tristram is sent to bring Isolde to her betrothed, King Mark of Cornwall. By accident, they drink a love potion during the ship ride back, and fall in love.

Isolde marries King Mark, but with the help of her handmaid sleeps with Tristram on her wedding night.

#### AD 431

Guinevere restored to her rightful place on the throne. Lancelot repatriated.

Gawaine is kidnapped by Carados at the feast that is thrown for the return of Lancelot and Guinevere.

On the way to save Gawaine, Lancelot falls under the spell of Morgan le Fay, who convinces him that Guinevere no longer loves him. After killing Carados and rescuing Gawaine, he refuses to return to court, and goes (temporarily) mad.

Duke Galeholt dies.

Guinevere kidnapped by Meliagrart while a-Maying. Lancelot recovers from his madness in order to rescue her.

#### AD 432

Tristram is banished from Cornwall by King Mark, who has discovered Isolde's unfaithfulness.

Lancelot departs on another adventure, led by an unnamed damsel.

Mordred, newly knighted, joins the court at Camelot. He departs with others to search for Lancelot.

Lancelot falls ill after drinking tainted water, and is nursed to health by Amable. Amable falls in love with him, and since he cannot be unfaithful to Guinevere, she pledges to be his "maiden love." which Lancelot accepts.

#### AD 433

Lionel finds Lancelot, but is captured by Turquine while Lancelot is kidnapped by Morgan le Fay- Lancelot escapes Castle Chariot with the help of Duke Rochendon's daughter.

Visiting Castle Carbonek after his escape, Lancelot is seduced by Elaine, granddaughter of King Pellam, with whom he fathers Galahad.

Lancelot frees Lionel and other prisoners after killing Turquine.

Morgan captures Lancelot again, and drugs him into submission. Under the effect of her drugs, Lancelot begins painting the story of his life - including his love for Guinevere - on the walls of his room.

#### AD 434

Gawaine and his brothers kill King Pellinore.

Upon seeing a rose, Lancelot breaks out of his drug-induced trance and escapes from Morgan. He meets Mordred and they travel together for a short while.

While traveling with Lancelot, Mordred is told the truth of his birth by a priest, who also foretells his future. Mordred kills the priest, and entirely revises his career plans.

Lancelot trades armor with Kay while on an adventure, much to Kay's annoyance.

Galahad is Born.

Percival is born.

#### AD 435

Morgawse is murdered.

Lancelot returns to Camelot.

Brumant l'Orgilleus, making good on a foolish oath, sits in the Siege Perilous on Whitsunday, and is incinerated by a pillar of fire.

Lamorak is murdered.

#### AD 436

Tristram and Lancelot meet for the

first time and do battle, which ends in mutual exhaustion. They spend the remainder of the day talking; Lancelot for the first time admits his love for Guinevere to someone other than the Queen.

The two knights become great friends.

Tristram joins the Round Table.

#### AD 437

Battle of Mt. Baron (aka Badon Hill). Arthur and his forces deal such a crushing blow to the Saxon invaders that they do not attempt another incursion until after Arthur's death.

#### AD 439

Arthur encounters Gromer Somer Jour, the Grim Baron, and must promise in answer Gromer's riddle in a year and a day\_ Gawaine volunteers to search for the answer.

#### AD 440

Gawaine, in search of the answer to Gromer's riddle, meets Ragnell, the Loathly Lady, who has the answer. Her price is their marriage. He accepts, and Arthur escapes Gromer's doom.

Gawaine marries the Loathly Lady\_ On their wedding night, he breaks the curse which imprisoned Ragnell in her hideous form, restoring her to beauty.

#### AD 442

Tristram imprisoned by King Mark.

#### AD 443

Arthur goes to war with King Claudas of Gaul.

Tristram and Isolde escape from Cornwall to Logres, and Lancelot lets them live at Joyous Garde.

#### AD 444

Defeat of Claudas by Arthur.

A feast is held by Arthur's court to celebrate the defeat of Claudas. Elaine of Carbonek attends. With the help of Dame **Brisen**, she lures Lancelot into her bed once more - in the room next to the Queen! The next morning, Guinevere, who had been expecting Lancelot that night, banishes the knight from her sight. Lancelot goes mad (again) and flees from Arthur's court.

#### AD 445

Ragnell, wife of Gawaine, dies.

#### AD 446

Percival, age 15, arrives at court.

The mad Lancelot finally ends up at Castle Carbonek, where he is cured of his

insanity by the Grail. He takes the name of "Le Chevalier Mal Fet" ("The Ill-Made Knight") and lives with Elaine and Galahad at the Castle of Joyous Isle.

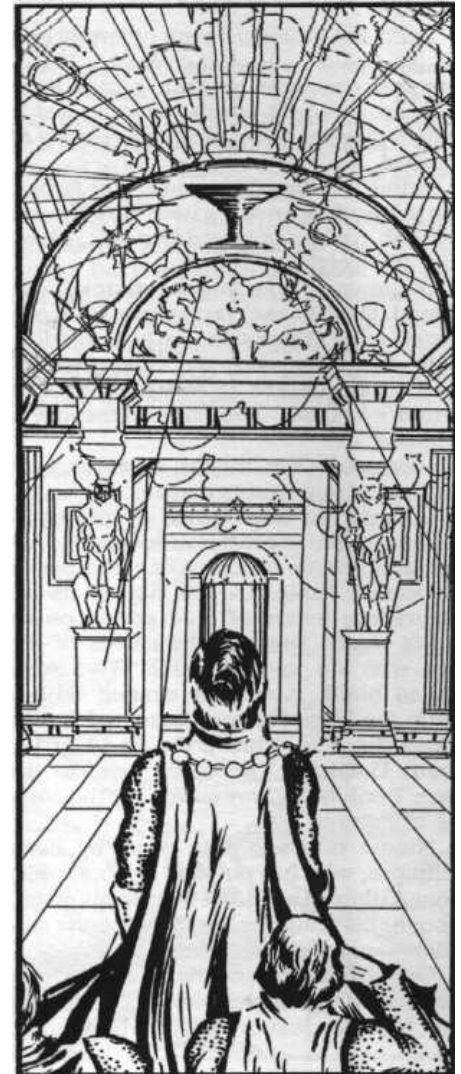
#### AD 451

Percival and Ector de Maris discover Lancelot and convince him to return to court. Galahad accompanies them, but remains in a convent near Camelot rather than join the court immediately.

Palomides the Saracen is baptized.

#### AD 454

Galahad joins the Round Table and takes his seat in the Siege Perilous. The Grail appears veiled in the chamber of the Round Table, feeding the knights there. The Grail Quest starts Percival's Galahad and Bors depart; Percival's sister Dindane joins them in mid-quest. They encounter



the Ship of Solomon, and Galahad takes King David's Sword.

King Mark kills Tristram.

Dindane gives her life to cure the

a barge instead of being buried. The barge brings Lancelot to his son, and they spend half a year together.

Gawaine kills Bagdeinagus.

Various knights have limited revelations of the Grail; many are denied any knowledge of it whatsoever. Lancelot half-achieves the Grail, and falls into a month-long trance.

#### AD 455

Percival, Galahad and Bors achieve the Grail at Carbonek and heal the Maimed King, King Pellam.

The next day, they find the Ship of Solomon waiting for them with the Spear of Longinus and the Grail aboard. The Ship takes them to Sarras. In Sarras, they find Dindane's barge, and inter her body in the Spiritual Palace, where they also place the Grail.

The pagan king of Sarras, Estorause, imprisons them for a year for displaying the Grail. During their time there, the Grail feeds them.

#### AD 456

Estorause, dying, frees the knights and begs their forgiveness, which they grant. After his death, the voice of God tells the people of Sarras to choose Galahad as their king, which they do.

#### AD 457

After a reign of one year, Galahad is given full knowledge of the Grail by the spirit of St. Joseph. His soul then departs for Heaven, and the hand of God takes the Grail and the Spear of Longinus up after him.

Galahad is buried in the Spiritual Palace next to Dindane.

Percival retires to a hermitage near Sarras and becomes a holy man. Bors stays with him, but declines to take up the vocation.

#### AD 458

Percival dies 14 months after joining the hermitage, and is buried alongside Galahad and Dindane.

Bors returns to Camelot and recounts the tale of the quest.

#### AD 461

An attempt to poison Gawaine is made; another knight, Sir Patrise, is killed by mistake and Guinevere is ac-



cused of the crime. Nimue discovers through her magic that Pinel le Sauvage is the culprit, and Lancelot successfully defends the Queen's honor against Patrise's cousin, Mador de la Porte.

#### AD 462

Sir Urre of Hungary comes to Camelot to be healed by "the best knight in the world." All of the Round Table tries, but only Lancelot succeeds.

#### AD 463

Agravaine and Mordred arrange to trap Lancelot and Guinevere *enlagrante*, with Arthur's permission. They succeed.

Lancelot flees, killing the 12 knights sent to capture him, and escapes Camelot with the help of Bors.

Guinevere is sentenced to be burned at the stake, but Lancelot and the knights loyal to him rescue her. Nineteen knights die in the conflict, including Gareth and Gaheris, both unarmed and slain by Lancelot himself in the heat of battle.

At Gawaine's urging, Arthur lays siege to Lancelot and Guinevere in Joyous

Garde. After 15 weeks of siege, Lancelot opens talks with the King, and even jousts with Arthur, but Gawaine will not allow Arthur to accept a negotiated settlement. It is not until the Pope intervenes that the siege ends and Guinevere returns to Arthur's side, despite Gawaine's wishes.

Lancelot is banished and returns to France.

#### AD 464

Arthur and Gawaine lead a force of 60,000 men to besiege Lancelot in France. Arthur leaves Mordred as regent, with command of the land and Guinevere. The conflict stretches on for many weeks, but is complicated by the beginning of the second war with Rome: seeing Arthur's forces split and warring, the Romans leap at the chance.

Kay dies, killed by the Emperor of Rome in battle. Arthur slays the Emperor.

The second Roman campaign is won, but only marginally, by Arthur.

Mordred counterfeits letters declaring the death of Arthur and usurps the throne. He makes arrangements to be wedded to Guinevere, but the Queen barricades herself in the Tower of London with much food and many men-at-arms. Arthur hears of Mordred's treachery and returns to Britain. Mordred's forces meet Arthur's at the port of Dover, but break and run at the force of the king's attack.

Gawaine dies of wounds suffered in this battle, but first dictates a letter of friendship to Lancelot, begging his forgiveness and asking him to come to the aid of Arthur against Mordred.

A parley is arranged between Arthur and Mordred on the plain of Salisbury, but mischief starts the battle just as reconciliation seems imminent. The slaughter is great; only two of Arthur's knights survive. Mordred mortally wounds Arthur just as Arthur kills the usurper.

Arthur is taken away on a barge by four queens, but Bedivere finds him the next morning, dead in a hermitage. Some traditions hold that Arthur did not die, but was taken away to the Isle of Avalon, there to recover and wait for his appointed return.

Queen Guinevere becomes a nun.

Lancelot returns from France, pays his respects at Gawaine's tomb and bids farewell to Guinevere. He then becomes a hermit.

Arthur is succeeded by Constantine.

#### Afterwards . . .

Guinevere dies. Lancelot gives her the last rites and buries her next to Arthur.

# THE HISTORICAL ARTHUR

Was there really a King Arthur? Did he do all that was claimed for him by his earliest biographers? Did he really attempt to conquer Europe and Rome? Historian Geoffrey Ashe and other researchers believe that they have an answer to these questions - "Yes." This chapter presents a summary of life in Britain in the time of the man known as Riothamus - the High King of Britain and, possibly, the man known today as Arthur.



*The Historical Arthur*



# Riothamus

"Riothamus" is probably not a name, but a title. It is the Latin form of the old Briton word "Riootamos," meaning, roughly, "supreme king." It is the name by which a British commander of the 5th century is known to European historians of the Middle Ages\_

Riothamus was a real and documented person. No less than three separate Continental historians record aspects of his career, and a Gallic poet of the Roman Empire named Sidonius Apollinaris wrote a letter to him which still survives. There is no doubt of his reality. Ashe postulates that his real name may have been Artorius, and supports this suggestion by showing a boom in the number of British children with the name Artorius shortly after the dates of Riothamus' most spectacular military successes\_

Some aspects of his career are unclear to this day. He was preceded as High King by Vortigern - the same Vortigern who was a forerunner of Arthur in the mythic history outlined on pp. 67-71. He, too, has been verified, as well as a brilliant general known as Ambrosius Aurelianus (whose name Geoffrey of Monmouth mangled into "Aurelius Ambrosius"). As in the myth, Vortigern hired Saxon mercenaries to help repel Pictish invasions and other Saxons, but defaulted on his payment agreement around the year 454. Justifiably upset, the Saxons attacked the Britons.

Evidence suggests that Artorius Riothamus married a (or the) daughter of Vortigern in the same year, and succeeded his father-in-law to the throne of High King. Within a few years, he and Ambrosius had organized the remaining Romanized Britons into a true army, and then created a cavalry force. Shortly afterward, they began to build a navy.

In 468, the emperor of the Western Roman Empire, Anthemius, sought to make an alliance with Riothamus, for help in driving off the barbarian hordes which were overrunning his empire. Two years later, in 470, a seaborne British army arrived in Gaul to fight on the side of Anthemius as he tried to re-establish Roman control over the province and expel the Visigoths. Riothamus commanded this army himself, left behind in Britain was Ambrosius.

Riothamus' Britons joined up with Armorican (Breton) settlers before proceeding towards the modern region of Burgundy in France. The plan was to join with Roman forces lead by a general named Syagrius. But it didn't work out that way. A deputy of Riothamus' named Medraut betrayed him to the Visigoths. Before the two armies could meet, Visigoth forces led by their king, Euric, attacked the Britons, slaughtered many, and routed them\_ Riothamus and his men retreated into Burgundy - heading for the French city of Avallon. Somewhere between the battlefield and Avallon, Riothamus disappeared from history.

The parallels between Riothamus and Geoffrey of Monmouth's Arthur (see sidebar) are remarkable, and brook little dispute. At least for the purposes of this volume, he is Arthur.

## Britain in the 5th Century

The real 5th-century Britain does bear some resemblance to the mythic setting of King Arthur. There are indeed invading Saxons, ready to slaughter the Britons who defend their land, and barbarian Picts to the north. The Roman Empire has, as in the myth, recently abandoned Britain to its fate. There are other similarities - but the differences are much more telling. Technologically, the period was much more primitive than Geoffrey of Monmouth or popular myth gives it credit for. See *Technology*, p. 76, for more details.

## Riothamus and Geoffrey of Monmouth

Geoffrey of Monmouth, surprisingly, points the intrepid researcher directly at Riothamus with his account of Arthur. First, he gives the names of two emperors and a pope who lived during some of Arthur's exploits. Though garbled, they can be traced to three men who all lived at the same time: the end of the 460's. He states that Arthur invaded Gaul, but was betrayed by a deputy who conspired with the barbarians whom they fought. After a final, devastating battle, he disappeared without a recorded death, and was said to have gone to a place called Avalon.

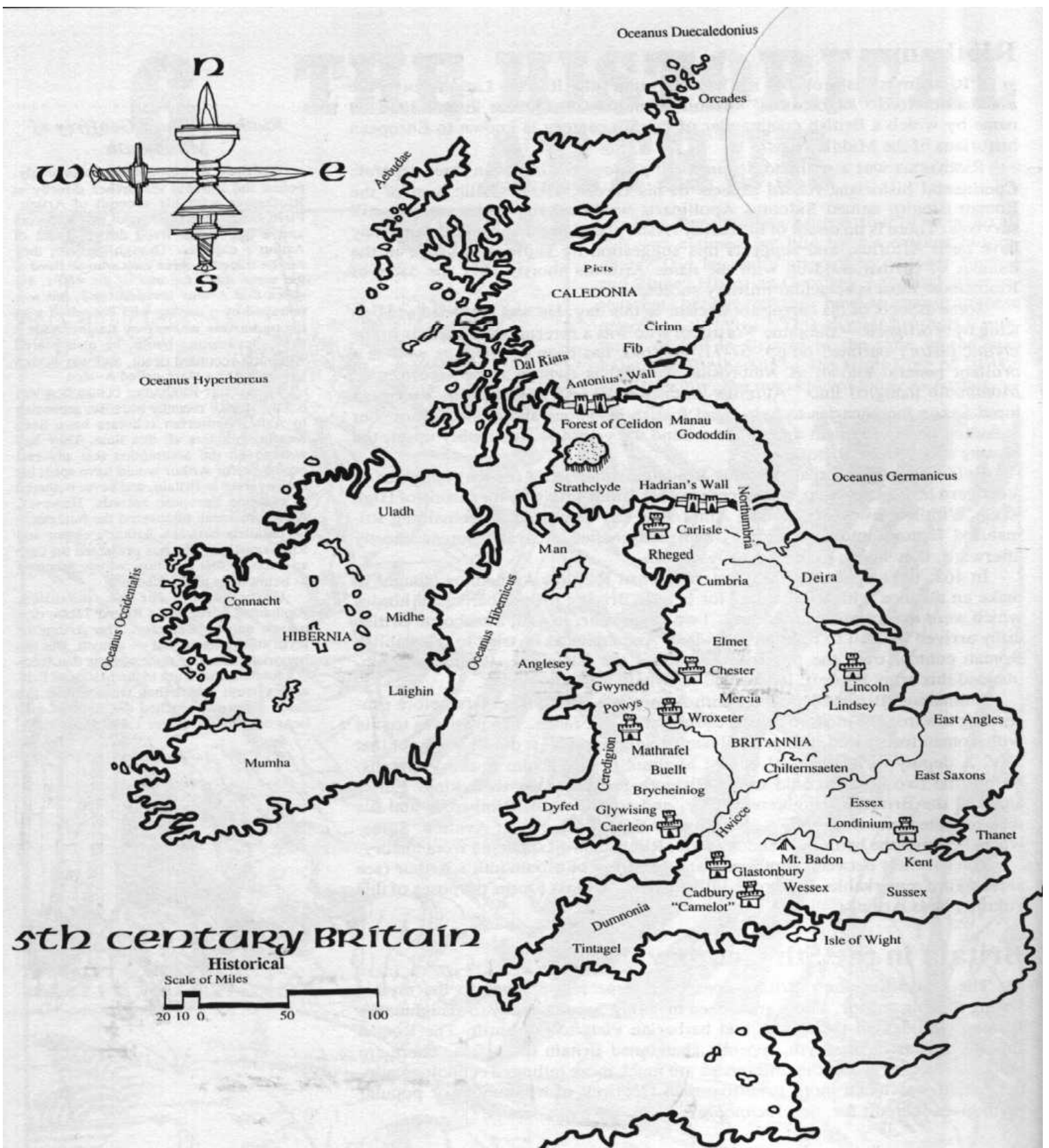
The Arthur-Riothamus connection was not made until recently because, according to Ashe, Arthurian scholars have been wearing blinders all this time. They had worked on the assumption that any real prototype for Arthur would have spent his entire career in Britain, and never bothered to examine European records. However,

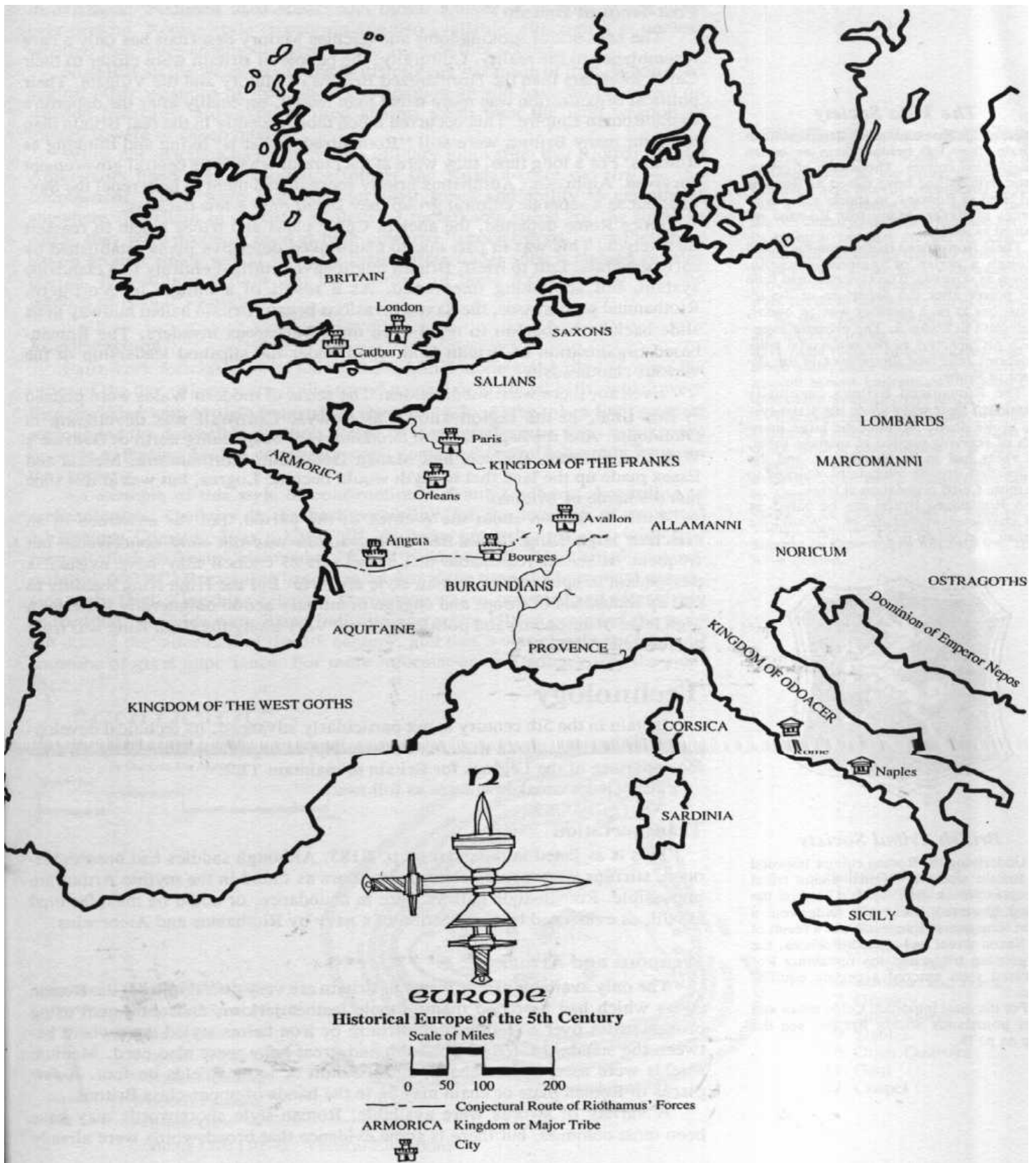
Ashe's research uncovered the fundamental parallels between Arthur's career and Riothamus', and he has presented the case so strongly that it is now widely accepted as being most likely the truth.

Unfortunately for the romantics, Riothamus never had a Round Table, or a palace named Camelot. The Arthur of myth still remains that - a myth. But the important detail to remember is that there is a fundamental truth to the Matter of Britain, a truth which has transcended the Dark Ages and touched the souls of millions.









### *The Villa Society*

When the Roman legions departed from Britain, they left behind them an entire transplanted culture. Thousands of aristocratic Britons had been raised as Romans and lived as Romans, in stately villas with dozens of slaves. Many true Romans remained as well.

These Romanized Britons ran the island through a series of regional councils, known as civitates. The civitates held little real power after the departure of the legions, but to be a member was an honor, equivalent to Status 3. The civitates eventually disappeared as the pre-feudal tribe structures reformed themselves in the absence of Rome.

The Romanized Britons eventually abandoned their ways when the slave system broke down. Without the large numbers of servants needed to manage them, the villas had to be abandoned, and the Romanized Britons reluctantly returned to the more Celtic population at large.

A Romanized Briton can be based on the character archetype of "Would-Be Roman," given on p. 14.



### *British Tribal Society*

Underlying the Roman culture imposed on Britain was the original Celtic tribal structure. When the Empire's hold on the island loosened, the tribes underwent a great resurgence. Eventually, as a result of the Saxon threat and other influences, the burgeoning tribes and the remaining Romanized state entered a certain equilibrium.

For the most important Celtic tribes and their homelands within Britain, see the map on p. 78.

## **Post-Roman Britain**

The network of subkingdoms and duchies Malory describes has only a bare resemblance to the reality. Culturally, the people of Britain were closer to their Celtic forebears than the Normanized Britons of Malory and the Vulgate. Their political organization was more tribal than feudal, especially after the departure of the Roman Empire. This occurred much more recently in the real Britain than in myth; many Britons were still "Romanized," that is, living and thinking as Romans. For a long time, they were at the core of what little central government survived. Ambrosius Aurelianus briefly reorganized them to help repel the Saxons, but as a separate cultural group they lasted only a few decades.

Once Rome departed, the ancient Celtic clans and tribes began to reassert themselves. This was in part due to clan-linked defensive plans established by early generals. Left to itself, Britain might have returned entirely to a clan/tribe system, but something intervened. As a result of a bungle by Vortigern, Riothamus' predecessor, the Saxon invasions began. Britain halted midway in its slide back to barbarism to repel even more barbarous invaders. The Roman-based organization of Britain held, even under the slipshod leadership of the various clan heads.

Even so, there were subdivisions. The seeds of modern Wales were planted at this time, in the region known as Powys. Cornwall was developing in Dumnonia. And the beginnings of Scotland were burgeoning north of Hadrian's Wall in Galloway, Bernicia and Manau Gododdin. Northumbria, Mercia and Essex made up the land that in myth would become Logres, but was at this time just the home of Britons.

Little is known about the politics of the period, but the existence of an effective High King shows that united action was not only conceivable but frequent. It seems reasonable that some sort of council may have existed, a descendant in spirit of the Roman-style civitates. But the High King's ability to call up thousands of troops and engage in military action unilaterally indicates a high level of autonomy and political power. Very likely the High King was truly an absolute ruler.

## **Technology**

**Britain in the 5th century is not particularly advanced.** Its technical development is based directly on Rome's. Fortunately, enough craftsmen remained after the departure of the Legions for Britain to maintain TL2.

The science breakdowns are as follows:

### **Transportation**

This is as listed in the chart on p. B185. Although saddles had been developed, stirrups were non-existent; lance-users as found in the mythic Arthur are impossible. Roman-style galleys were in abundance, or could be manufactured at will, as evidenced by the creation of a navy by Riothamus and Ambrosius.

### **Weapons and Armor**

The only available armor forms in Britain are very different from the Roman styles which had preceded them: simple leather jerkins, and scale mail using bronze scales over a leather coat. Bronze or iron helmets styled somewhere between the standard GURPS pot-helm and great-helm were also used. Medium shields were used on horseback, and medium or large shields on foot. A few pieces of Roman plate or chain may be in the hands of upper-class Britons.

A variety of swords were available; Roman-style shortswords may have been most common, but there is some evidence that broadswords were already

in existence. Footmen used spears and bows. Knives of various styles were ever-present. Roman-style crossbows are also available, although it is unclear whether they were commonly used by the average foot soldier.

**Note that all the weaponry of the British forces was made of iron.** When used against other weapons of iron, their composition should have no net effect on weapon breakage. However, if used against steel, treat the iron weapon as though it were of *cheap* quality.

While not strictly a technology, one military innovation that Riothamus and Ambrosius used was a modification of the Roman-style cavalry - the *cataphractii*. These were employed for their speed and ability to get almost anywhere in Britain in a matter of days - remarkable speed for the time. In battle, they were probably used as high-powered "shock troops" - a Pictish or Saxon ground attack would **virtually disintegrate under such** a massed cavalry charge. It is almost certain that the memory of these forces turned into the legends of Arthur's knights.

### Fortifications

Earthwork fortresses - including the original motte-and-bailey - were the order of the day. These were built around natural or artificial hills, which were then provided with earthen ramparts in several levels. At the top, a final rampart surrounded the defensible position. Some of these earthworks were surrounded by wide defensive ditches or actual moats; some had deep ditches dug between the ramparts.

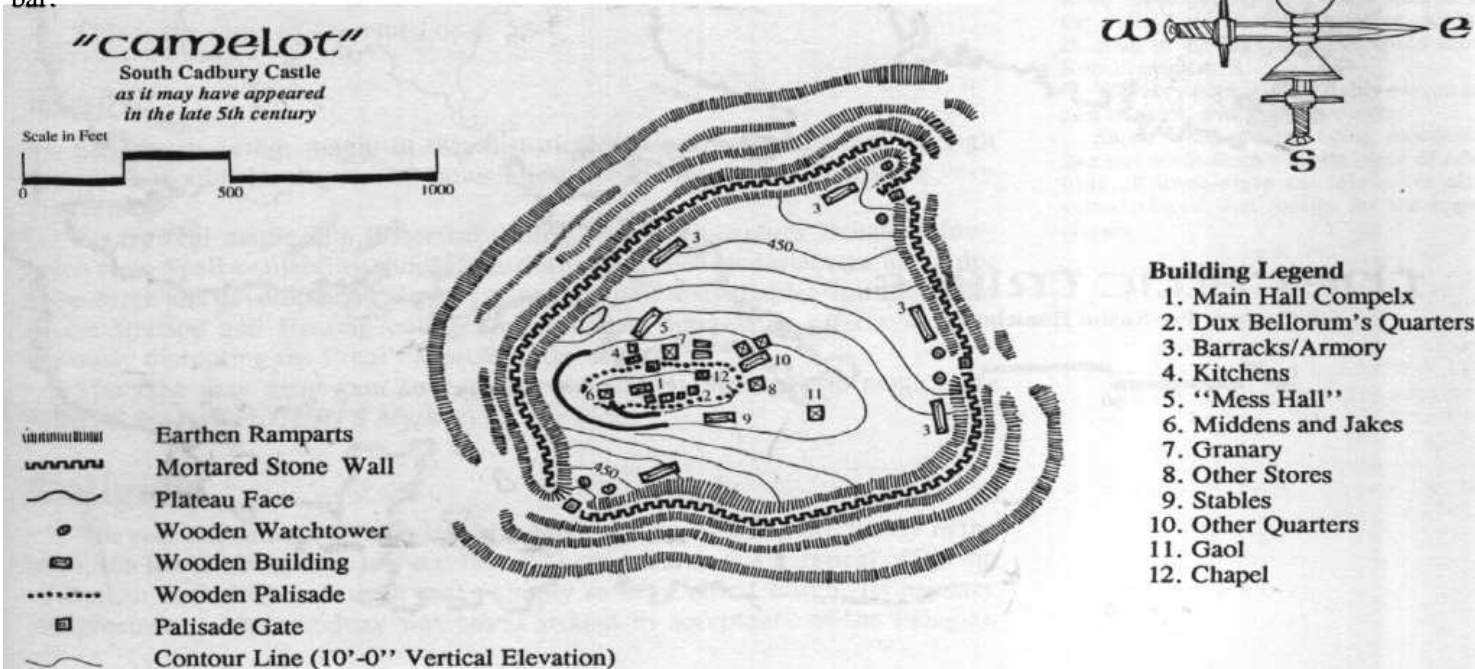
An example of this style of construction is South Cadbury. According to archaeologists, Cadbury is the best possibility for the location of an actual 5th-century Camelot. It is a large hill, or more properly, plateau, with four rampart/ditch defensive perimeters. It had been used as a fort since approximately 1,000 BC. Excavation has revealed that at the time of Riothamus' succession to the High Kingship of Britain, the plateau was re-occupied and extensively re-fortified. Remains were found indicating an entire village occupied the summit during the latter half of the 5th century, and that it was clearly the home of someone of great importance. For more information on Cadbury, see the sidebar.

### The Fortifications at Cadbury

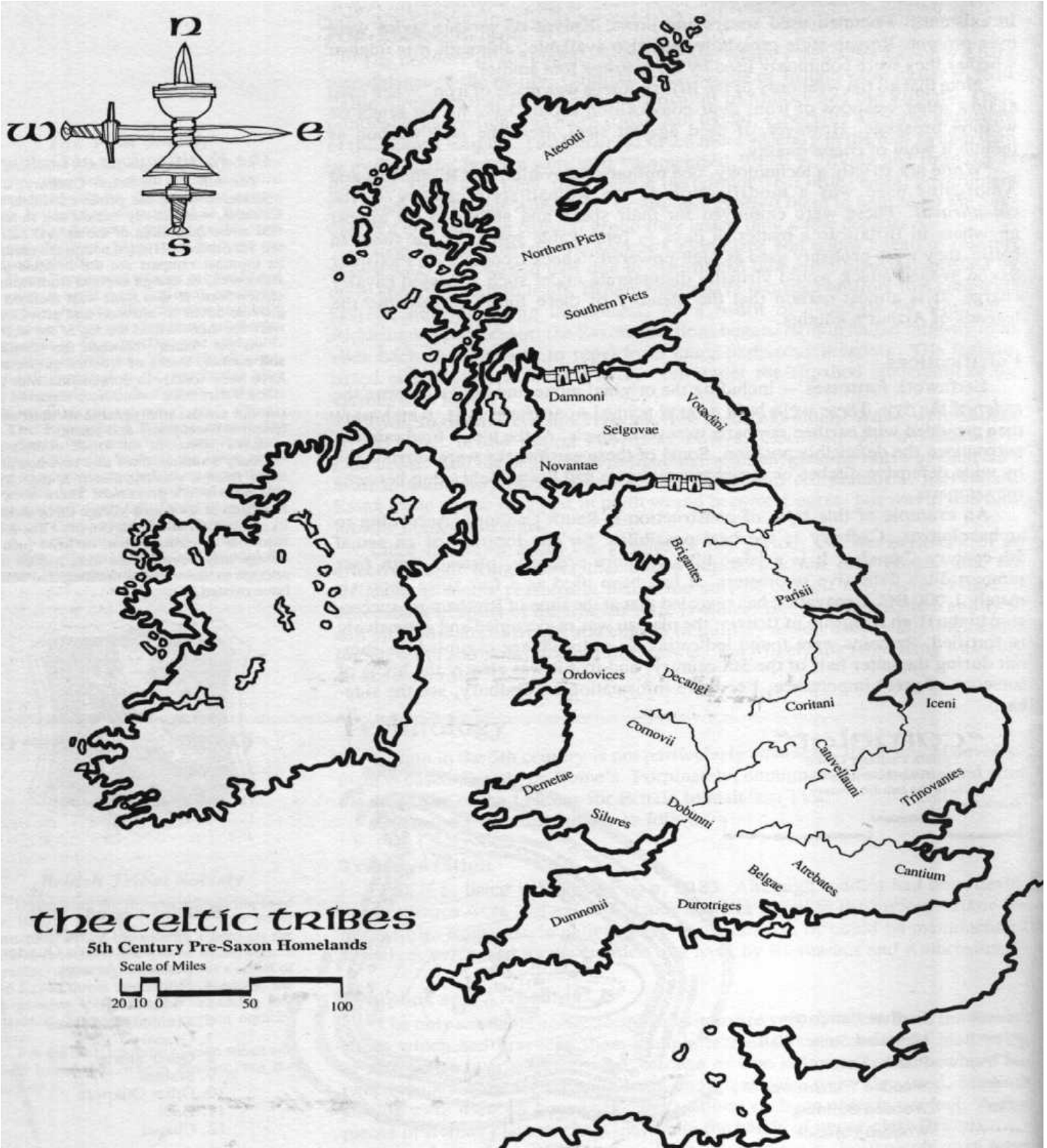
The hill fort of South Cadbury, now considered to be the prime candidate for Camelot, was heavily rebuilt and re-fortified at the beginning of the second half of the 5th century. Hidden within the earth of its topmost rampart are the remains of a stone wall, its design derived from Roman stoneworks. It was built with merlons to provide cover to archers, and provided a walk for them behind the top of the wall.

At the "lanes" between the ramparts and ditches, traces of wooden gatehouses have been found. In conjunction with the stone walls, these would have rendered the summit almost impregnable to most contemporary weaponry and attack.

Excavations of the small plateau on Cadbury's summit have also revealed post holes from a constriction it is theorized was the castle's great hall. There is clear evidence of an entire village there during its occupation in the 5th century. The map below is an extrapolation of what such a village may have looked like; it does not attempt to show every building that could have existed.









### Communications

The hill forts of the south of Britain communicated at night through the use of beacon fires. Horseback messengers also were used.

### Power

Horsepower was extensively used, as well as human muscle-power. Although the windmill is a TL2 technology, it appears not to have been used in Britain during the reign of Riothamus.

### Medicine

This is the same as described on p. 52.

## Magic

Strictly speaking, magic in this historical setting is out of place, though herbalism would. However, the inclusion of low-powered magic could be very interesting.

To try real magic in a historical setting, make 5th-century Britain a low-mana area. Spell availability should be strictly controlled, to reflect the difficulty of research and development. Entire colleges may be unavailable; limiting spells to the Illusion and Healing colleges can produce interesting effects without seriously disrupting the "real" aspects of the setting.

The GM may also want to consider the use of Shamanistic magic (see GURPS *Ice Age* or GURPS *Mythos*) for the Picts.

## Religion

The real 5th-century Britain is Christian. The upper classes are firmly in the faith, the lower classes are less so. However, the church is a heretical offspring of Roman Catholicism, known today simply as the Celtic Church. Its primary disagreement with orthodoxy was based around its acceptance of the Pelagian

### *Clothing Styles of 5th-Century Britain*

Men's clothing was based around three pieces: a knee-length tunic, long breeches and a cloak. The tunic was made of wool, with long or short sleeves, and had a plain round neck. In cold weather, several tunics would be worn at once. Furs could also be worn. Leather belts were cinched around the waist.

The breeches were simple drawstring pants, with a thong at the waist and at the ankles. Like the tunics, these were of wool, although fur was used in colder climes. The cloak was 4 to 5 feet across and lined with fur. It was fastened on the right shoulder with a brooch or cloak pin.

A high-ranking man would also have a linen undertunic called a *camisia* as well as linen underbreeches.

Women wore an ankle-length tunic otherwise much like the men's. The leather belt was optional, but rank was often displayed through highly-decorated belts, with an attached purse and dagger. Over

the tunic could be worn a three-quarterlength gown. The woman also wore a cloak identical to the male style.

As with men, well-to-do women also wore *camisiae*, layering these instead of the outer tunic in colder weather. All the clothing of the higher classes could show Roman influences.

The very poor wore roughly-woven tunics of wool, with pelts as cloaks.

Shoes were simple, being moccasin-like and made from a single piece of rawhide. Roman-style sandals were also manufactured, but mostly for the upper classes.



## A Real "Excalibur" ?

It is doubtful that Riothamus had any specific blade that gave rise to the legend of Excalibur. Excalibur originally comes from Arthur's sword *Caliburnus* in Geoffrey of Monmouth; it seems likely that this was simply one of Geoffrey's extra "details" of dubious truth.

However, if the GM wishes, it could be possible for Riothamus or another person to have a seemingly magical blade. This requires no juggling of prices and availabilities.

Outside of Britain, the first steel weaponry was being manufactured. There existed enough trade across Europe to conceivably bring one of these blades to Britain, or at least Brittany, despite the barbarian hordes. A steel blade in a land of iron and bronze weapons would have an undeniable effect - and would shortly gain the reputation of being magical.

## Status and Rank

The levels of Status in the historical setting are different from those given on p. 6:

- 7 - Emperors of the West and East, the Pope
- 6 - High King of Britain, other "High Kings"
- 5 - Baron, bishop, ambassador
- 4 - Greater landowner, clan leader
- 3 - Lesser landowner, member of a civitate
- 2 - Priest, tribal leader, magistras (Mayor)
- 1 - Notable warrior, monk, nun
- 0 - Freeman, servant
- 1 - Slave
- 2 - Beggar
- 3 - Criminal

Military Rank roughly follows a Roman model

- S - Emperor
- 7 - Dux ("Duke of War")/High King
- 6 - Comes ("Count" - roughly, a general)
- 5 - Tribune
- 4 - Prefect
- 3 - Centurion, Cataphractus
- 2 - Decurion
- 1 - Legionary
- 0 - Conscript, cannon-fodder, "grunt"

The term cataphractus refers to the mounted cavalry used by the Britons as shock troops. They were a highly-respected and envied position. See main text.

heresy, as outlined in the sidebar on p. 22. This led to a very relaxed attitude by the Celtic Church towards many issues on which Roman Catholicism would be militant, such as coexistence with other faiths. The Celtic Church, while not actually accepting them, does not persecute them. As a result, historic Britain may have followers of the old Celtic religion, worshipers of the Roman gods, and disciples of Mithraism all co-existing.

On another issue the Celtic Church pressed its luck - it was much more mystical than the orthodox religion, and actually incorporated many pagan aspects into its belief structure. The Holy Grail, for instance, appears to have its roots in Celtic legends of ever-full platters and god-given cauldrons of magical power. Some aspects of druidism actually were absorbed by the Celtic Church and passed on to Rome! The blessed Saint Bridgit, for instance, was originally the druidic fire goddess Brigit, before she was Christianized.

(Of course, Rome would not stand for this. Twice during the 5th century Britain was visited by St. Germanus - of course, not called a saint then - for the express purpose of stamping out Pelagianism. Both visits were before the advent of Artorius Riothamus, but their effects would certainly be reverberating across the land. An interesting theme for a campaign might be for the PCs to be the harbingers of the new orthodoxy.)

## Character Types

Almost any character suitable for a generic fantasy-style campaign will fit into this setting, as long as the TL limitations are observed. Mages and other magic-employing types are out of the question, unless the GM has sneakily introduced "real" magic to the "real" world. Two character types specific to fifth-century Britain are:

### Cataphractus

This is the heavy cavalryman of Riothamus' army. Since stirrups are not yet invented, true jousting-style lance work is impossible; the lances of Arthur's knights are probably memories of the cavalry's reliance on javelins (spears).



**Often** a cataphractus would ride into battle with his shield on his back and a spear in each hand for throwing. Important skills for a cavalryman are Riding, Shield, Spear, Spear Throwing, and some kind of sword, either Shortsword or Broadsword. Animal Handling is useful, as is Tactics. Being Ambidextrous could make you an important man in the cavalry! A Rank of 2 + is a must.

### **Militiaman**

This is the basic footsoldier of the Romano-British forces. Usually unarmored, he relies on his speed and agility for protection. Like the cataphractus, he carries a shield, a sword, and a spear, the later more for stabbing with than throwing. The appropriate skills are of course necessary.

A subcategory of the militiaman would be the tribal warrior. Usually Welsh in origin, these fighters harkened back to older Celtic ways. Armed with daggers nearly the size of shortswords and composite bows originally of Roman design, they can provide both covering fire and close combat capability.



## Campaign Focus

The GM designing a campaign for 5th-century Britain has several different options. Some of these are explored below. Even more radical possibilities are available; see the sidebar on *History and The Game* for some ideas.

### **Barbarian Onslaught!**

This campaign is based around the goal of holding off or even repelling the Saxon and other invaders who are attempting to gain a toehold on British soil. Characters will most likely be military or adjuncts to the military; an occasional diplomat is possible. The *cataphractii* will be a favorite choice - an entire party could be composed of members of the same cavalry corps.

*Advantages:* This is a simple campaign to run. The enemy makes hit-and-run attacks, or captures a piece of ground and tries to hang on. The PCs either succeed in stopping them, or fall back. It has no conflicts with established history, and can lead up naturally to Riothamus' Gallic campaign.

*Disadvantages:* The campaign may turn into an endless series of minor battles. The focus on fighting may displease players who want less blood and more character interaction. A "predestination malaise" can also set in with this kind of campaign.

### **Infiltrating The Enemy**

This is TL2 espionage, carried out by Britons with enough Saxon blood to pass unnoticed among the invaders. The PCs will rarely be involved in any large-scale combat; instead, they will use their wits to learn about the foe, how he thinks, how he lives, how he plans. They must get in and out undetected - easier than it sounds, since the Saxon settlements tended to be small and separated. But the Saxons are justifiably paranoid! Characters will need any **social skill, some Survival, and at least** one weapon skill. Advantages like Charisma, Empathy and Intuition will be invaluable.

### **"Arthur's Men"**

Because of several obscure references in contemporary writings, and a wide disparity in reported dates for Arthur's activities in Britain and Europe, historian Geoffrey Ashe suggests that there may have existed an elite troop that called itself "Arthur's Men." Either named because of service to the High King, or in his memory *after* his disappearance, this troop seems to have taken part in the Battle of Mount Badon and in the semi-legendary battle of Camlann, their deeds later being attributed to Arthur himself.

If the GM includes such a troop in his campaign, they would likely be built along the Roman model of a small, mobile field force: three infantry units totaling several dozen men, backed with six units of cavalry. Arthur's Men, as a whole, would have a +2 Reputation in Britain.

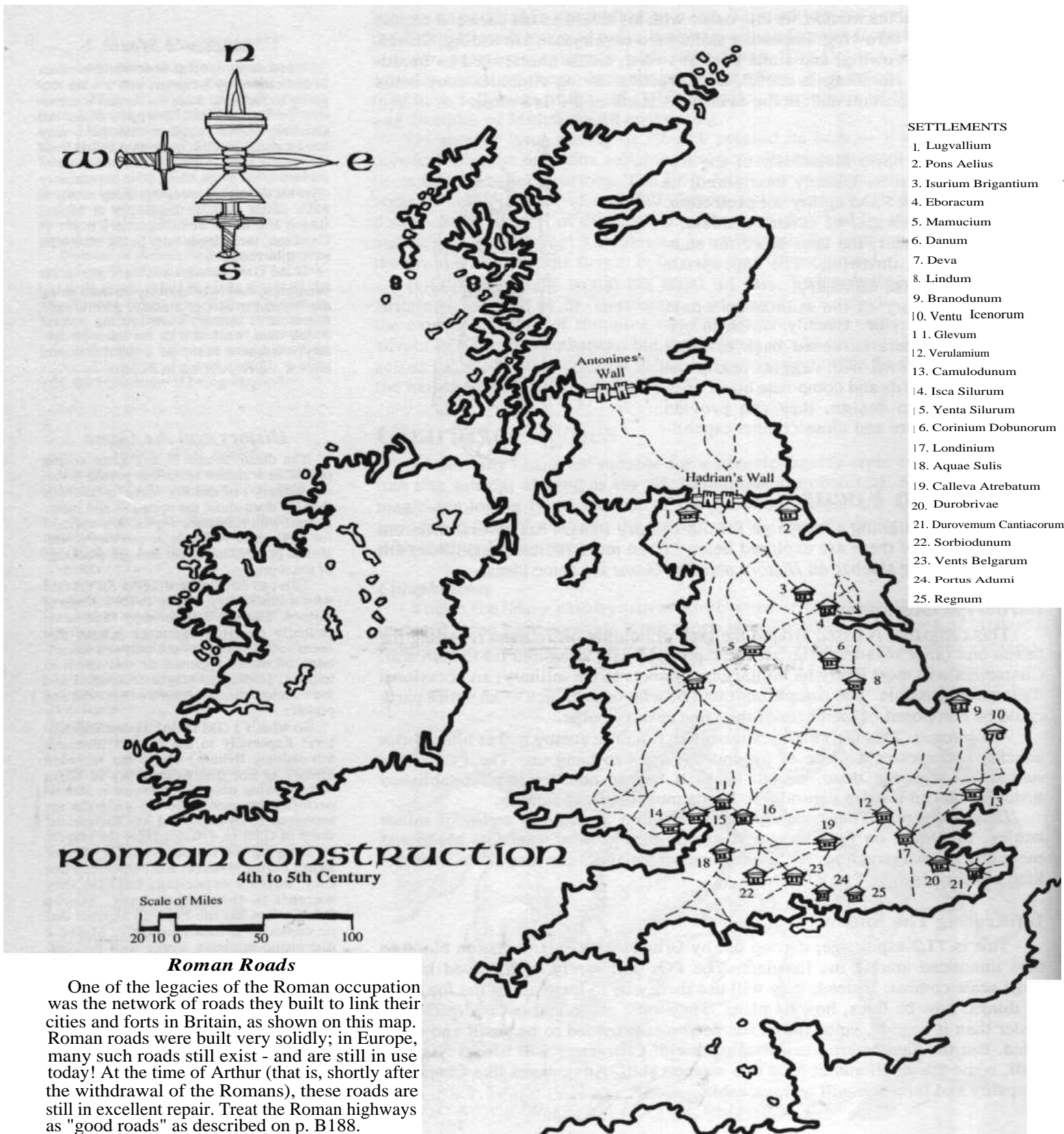
### **History and the Game**

The disadvantage of any game setting placed in a known historical period is that the players can quickly learn as much as the GM does about the milieu - and more. Armed with reference works, it is not hard for a player to suddenly acquire a PC with almost prophetic insight into the workings of the *world*.

This can be a game-wrecker for the GM who wants to stay strictly in the bounds of history. The gamemaster may have to repeatedly overrule character actions that seem to be based on the player's knowledge of what happened or was about to happen, leading to player frustration and the eventual disappearance of both fun and players.

So what's a GM to do? Tinker with history! Especially in the case of historical 5th-century Britain, where the recorded history is not that trustworthy to begin with, moving people and events around is perfectly acceptable. So the Visigoths are supposed to overrun and kill Riothamus' army in Gaul in 470. Surprise the players by delaying the barbarians for a year or more. Throw in details and personages that they weren't expecting, because they weren't in the history book. Maybe Pelagianism has the Pope so worried that he comes to Britain personally. Maybe a diplomatic initiative works with the Saxons, and a joint Briton-Saxon nation arises from the ruins of Rome's occupation.

Veering off into uncharted alternate histories also helps forestall the sense of "impending doom" that can permeate the historic campaign - unless one of the GM's goals is to transmit that feeling to the players.



**Roman Roads**

One of the legacies of the Roman occupation was the network of roads they built to link their cities and forts in Britain, as shown on this map. Roman roads were built very solidly; in Europe, many such roads still exist - and are still in use today! At the time of Arthur (that is, shortly after the withdrawal of the Romans), these roads are still in excellent repair. Treat the Roman highways as "good roads" as described on p. B188.

*Advantages:* Interaction with a wide variety of NPCs will please even the most dedicated roleplayers. Separation from military action reduces the amount of combat the GM must handle, and the unobtrusive nature of the theme will please the most pacifist players.

*Disadvantages:* The GM must have a large roster of non-player characters (or be good at improvisation), and a lot of detail to back them up. And he must create something or someone for the PCs to spy on and learn about.

### Saxon Violence

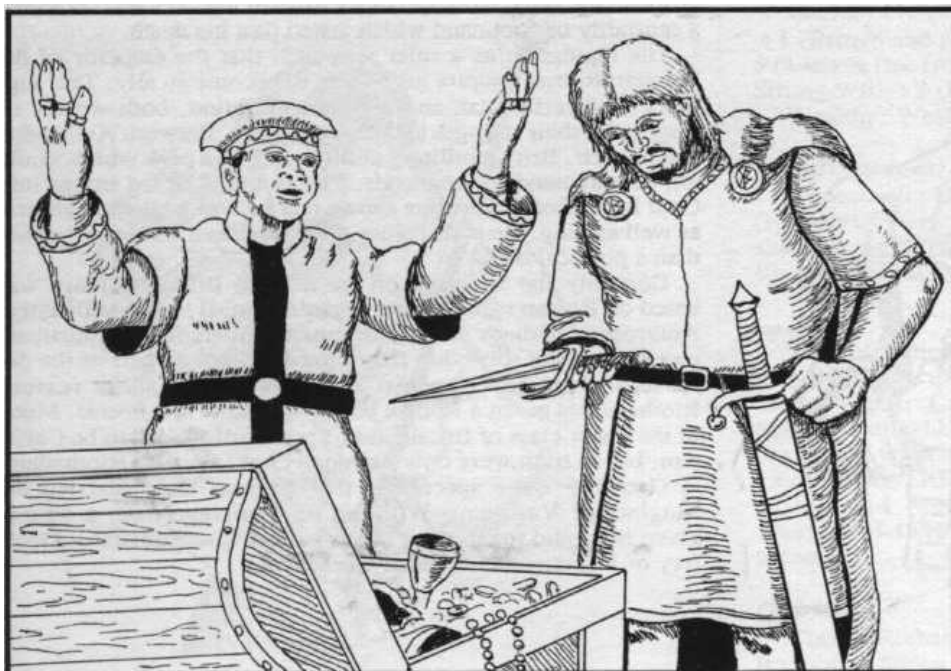
This turnabout places the players on the *other* side - as Saxons. Most character types are still possible, with the exception of heavy cavalry. Campaign goals become to gain and hold on to precious land in the face of the *welsch-menn* - the foreigners.

*Advantages:* This situation will please the most demanding roleplayer. Properly managed, combat will be frequent enough to spice the adventures, while rare enough not to become stale and tedious.

*Disadvantages:* The GM must become better acquainted with Saxon culture than it is possible using this volume. Both sides of the conflict must be portrayed in as three-dimensional a manner as possible, and stereotyping must be strictly avoided! Players strongly attached to the traditional good/evil assignments may be bothered by playing "bad guys."

### Other Possibilities

Certainly more campaign themes exist beyond these three samples. The creative GM will have little difficulty discovering what works and what doesn't for his particular players. Don't feel constrained to follow any predetermined path as set down by "history." Feel free to improvise on the few pieces of information which have come down to us from the Dark Ages. Player characters need not have anything to do with Riothamus' military - what if they were Romanized Britons struggling to re-establish the central governing structure of Britain? What if they were outlaws in the north, dodging the local lairds and the Picts both, and living by their wits? The possibilities are endless.



### Adventure Seeds

These adventure seeds assume that at least one or two members of the PC group are connected to the military, preferably as cataphractii or other highly-placed soldiers.

**The Missionary.** Rome has sent an envoy to ascertain the status of the Celtic Church's return to orthodoxy. The party meets him - he is a loud, opinionated bureaucrat who believes himself to be a natural missionary. Naturally, they are appointed to bodyguard him during his stay. Somewhere along the line, though, he gets "lost" (convincing the party to lose him intentionally helps immensely). The next thing they know, their very important charge is in the hands of the pagan Saxons . . . and they are preparing a human sacrifice - him!

**The Queen Is Missing!** Queen Guenhumara is given to riding off and hunting alone - after all, she is more competent than most men with weapons of war. But this time, she has not returned to Cadbury when she was expected. Rumors suggest that the turncoat Melwas has kidnapped her. His stronghold is nearby, and the PCs are given the assignment (or decide on their own) to investigate.

**Diplomatic Endeavors.** As the sides begin drawing up for a massive, decisive battle, there is a surprising development. The pagan Saxons send forth an emissary, who requests negotiations to forestall the impending bloody conflict. The PCs either stumble upon him, or are assigned to escort him - it doesn't matter. They end up in a crossfire of assassination attempts, intrigues and counter-intrigues, as every different tribe and faction attempts to make its own changes to his mission. Can the PCs get the ambassador to Cadbury from Essex alive? Will they stop the course of the war - or just accelerate it?

# HISTORICAL CHARACTERS

The sample characters below are purely conjectural; they are ideas on what some of the "classic" Arthurian characters might have been like had they really existed in the 5th century. Of these, only Riothamus and Ambrosius are confirmed as real. Beyond them, and perhaps the briefly-mentioned Medraut, nothing is known. Many writers of historical fiction - Parke Godwin and Rosemary Sutcliffe, in particular - attempt to "trace back" the mythic personages to "real" people living at the appropriate time.

This is a satisfying way of populating a historic setting, and the path which is taken here. These four sample characters, taken directly or indirectly from the pages of history, show how one can be faithful to the myth and to history at the same time.

## Artorius Riothamus

Romano-British male, age 36, 5'7", 155 lbs., brown hair and eyes.

ST 12 (20 points)	IQ 11 (10 points)	Speed: 5.5
DX 12 (20 points)	HT 10 (0 points)	Move: 4
Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+2		
Point Total: 150		

### Advantages:

Charisma +2 (10 points); Literacy (10 points); Reputation +2 (Britain and civilized Europe, all the time; 5 points); Status 6 (1 level free from Wealth; 25 points); Wealth: Wealthy (20 points)



### Disadvantages:

Code of Honor (Roman Military: Death before dishonor, come back with your shield or on it, etc.) (-10 points); Overconfidence (-10 points); Sense of duty to Britain and British people (-10 points)

### Skills:

Administration-12 (4 points); Animal Handling-11 (4 points); Area Knowledge (Britain)-13 (4 points); Broadsword-14 (8 points); Diplomacy-10 (2 points); Knife-13 (2 points); Latin-10 (1 point); Leadership-15 (6 points); Old British-11 (0, native tongue); Riding (Horse)-11 (1 point); Savoir-Faire (Post-Roman Britain)-13 (0, default from Status); Shield-14 (4 points); Spear-13 (4 points); Spear Throwing-13 (2 points); Singing-11 (2 points); Strategy-15 (12 points); Swimming-12 (1 point); Tactics-13 (8 points).

### Quirks:

Feels justifiably proud of the changes he has wrought on British society. Deeply, completely in love with his wife; he trusts her implicitly. Nominally Christian, but not seriously practicing. Has a hard time relaxing. Daydreams about taking over Rome.

### Equipment:

Iron broadsword (5 lbs.); Scale mail jerkin (PD 3, DR 4; 35 lbs.); Pot-helm (PD 3, DR 4; 5 lbs.)

This conjectural Riothamus is based on what little is recorded about him. His ability to smoothly take over from Vortigem shows he was probably a popular and charismatic leader. In conjunction with his general, Ambrosius Aurelianus, he changed the basic structure of the British military and cemented a centrality of command which lasted past his death.

His reputation as a ruler was such that the emperor of the Western Roman Empire asked him to become an ally. This suggests a powerful man and a powerful nation, both worthy of respect for their strength and dependability. Between Ambrosius and himself, British military ability reached a peak which would not be surpassed for centuries. The fact that he led troops into Gaul instead of Ambrosius shows that he was a talented general as well as king. He is therefore given here as a war leader rather than a political one.

Certainly the structure of the revived British military was based on Roman methods and organization. It is also known that Ambrosius, perhaps under posthumous orders from Riothamus, reorganized the surviving Romanized Britons as part of the defense arrangements against the Saxons. For these reasons Riothamus is given a Roman background and sentiments. Much of the upper class of Britain at this period professed to be Christian, but in truth were only nominally so. Likewise Riothamus.

Geoffrey Ashe speculates that he may have married the daughter of Vortigem. Working on this conjecture, a wife is given him, and for interest she is named Guenhumara - Geoffrey of Monmouth's original Guinevere.

## Guenhumara

British (Celtic) female, age 34, 5'6", 120lbs., red-gold hair, brown eyes.

ST 11 (10 points)      IQ 12 (20 points)      Speed: 5.75  
DX 13 (30 points)      HT 10 (0 points)      Move: 5  
Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+1  
Point Total: 125

### Advantages:

Appearance: Beautiful (15 points); Charisma + 1 (5 points); Status 6: Wife to High King (1 level free from Wealth; 25 points); Wealth: Wealthy (20 points)

### Disadvantages:

Bloodlust (-10 points); Impulsiveness (-10 points); Sense of Duty to Artorius (-5 points)

### Skills:

Animal Handling-11 (2 points); Area Knowledge (Britain)-12 (1 point); Axe/Mace-14 (4 points); Bow-12 (2 points); Knife-14 (2 points); Latin-11 (1 point); Old British-12 (0, native tongue); Riding (Horse)-12 (1 point); Savoir-Faire (Post-Roman Britain)-14 (0, default from Status); Shield-13 (1 point); Shortsword-12 (1 point); Spear-13 (2 points); Spear Throwing-15 (4 points); Strategy-12 (4 points); Swimming-14 (1 point); Tactics-12 (4 points).

### Quirks:

Makes use of her traditional right to take lovers - but not too frequently. Pays lip service to Christianity, but still respects the old gods. Always wears an ornate dagger given to her by Artorius. Practices her weapons skills daily, no matter what the weather. Enjoys Roman-style baths immensely - visits them whenever possible.



Guenhumara was the daughter of Vortigern who married Artorius Riothamus, opening up the avenue of power to him. Following conjectures by Norma Lorre Goodrich, she is designed on the model of the classic Celtic warrior queen, as epitomized by Boudicca. In the matriarchal Celtic society, such a queen was accorded great honor and respect.

She would also be the one through whom inherited political power would pass; a form of reversed primogeniture empowered the oldest daughter. Her husband would still be king, with all the rights and duties that modern Westerners are accustomed to accord him, but it would be his daughters, not his sons, who carried on the royal line. Riothamus' marriage to Vortigern's daughter was the only legitimate route he had to the throne.

By Celtic custom, she could take lovers at will; the writers of the Middle Ages distorted this into the adulterous queen who betrayed the king.

Guenhumara is not a shy, retiring queen. Taught from childhood to bear arms, she is as likely to enter battle as her husband. She would certainly be more bloodthirsty than he, in the grand Celtic tradition. Guenhumara has some Roman blood in her, and some Roman culture; for all her combat training, she is not a barbarian. Her father, after all, was a civilized High King, if slightly less than competent. Her tastes are Romanized, too, although she doesn't have much experience of the best of Rome's benefits. But Rome has been gone too long, and the long-repressed Celtic traditions have begun to emerge; a cosmopolitan Roman would be aghast at the barbarian queen pretending to civilization.

## Ambrosius Aurelianus

Male Romano-Briton, age 50, 5'1 1", 165 lbs., black hair (balding), green eyes.

ST 11 (10 points)      IQ 12 (20 points)      Speed: 5.25  
DX 11 (10 points)      HT 10 (0 points)      Move: 4  
Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+1  
Point Total: 150

### Advantages:

Literacy (10 points); Military Rank 7 (35 points); Reputation + 1 (Britain and civilized Europe, all the time; 2 points); Status 5 (2 levels free from Rwik, 1 level free from Wealth; 10 points); Strong Will +2 (8 points)  
Wealthy: Wealthy (20 points)

### Disadvantages:

Appearance: Unattractive (-5 points); Roman Code of Honor (Roman Military: Death before dishonor, come back with your shield or on it, etc.) (-10 points); Sense of duty to Britain and British people (-10 points)

### Skills:

Administration-13 (4 points); Area Knowledge (Britain)-13 (2 points); Bard-12 (2 points); Broadsword-11 (default from Shortsword); Carousing-10 (2 points); Diplomacy-11 (2 points); Knife-11 (1 point); Latin-12 (2 points); Leadership-14 (8 points); Old British-12 (0, native tongue); Politics (Roman)-12 (2 points); Riding-12 (4 points); Savoir-Faire (Post-Roman Britain)-14 (default from Status); Shield-13 (4 points); Shortsword-13 (8 points); Strategy-15 (10 points); Tactics-12 (4 points).

### Quirks

Totally Roman in everything he does. Keeps a "poker face" in public. Shuns female companionship. Acts the part of the



"lonely commander" when in the field. Never discounts civilian losses.

*Equipment:*

Roman shortsword (2 lbs.); Pot-helm (PD 3, DR 4; 5 lbs.); Bronze breastplate (PD 4, DR 4; 20 lbs.)

Ambrosius Aurelianus has been a military man for decades. Born to Romano-British parents and trained by the legions, he is the epitome of the cultured Roman male. No matter if the legions and the Empire are gone - Ambrosius preserves the tradition and dignity. But he is not a fop - he is a hard-working, hard-fighting military man who is not afraid to sweat and bleed for his cause. Although his initial rank was purchased by his parents he is not out of touch with the problems of the average legionary and centurion. Because of his concern for his men, he is a popular leader.

Ambrosius originally served Riothamus' predecessor, Vortigern, but the late king's awkward policies often ran counter to the general's grain. When Riothamus became High King, Ambrosius welcomed him, knowing him to be a man who understood the needs and purposes of the military. They have since had a strong and successful working relationship. Together, they revitalized the British army, began rebuilding ancient fortresses, and creating a navy. But their greatest achievement was the organization of the cataphractii - the swift, devastating cavalry force used to repel the Saxons and the Picts.

He is wholly trusted by the King. When Riothamus eventually leaves Britain on his ill-fated mission to Gaul, it is Ambrosius whom he leaves behind and in charge. However, the general has no political ambitions, and does not take the throne when Riothamus' disappearance is finally reported.

He is a careful and quiet man. In public he maintains a studiously unemotional demeanor, but can be relaxed among close friends. Since he lost his wife in childbirth shortly after their marriage, he has shunned the company of women. He is not a misogynist - they just bring back painful memories for him.

**Bedwyr**

Male Briton, age 29, 5'10", 160 lbs., brown hair, hazel eyes  
ST 13 (30 points)      IQ 10 (0 points)      Speed: 6  
DX 13 (30 points)      HT 11 (10 points)      Move: 6  
Damage: *Thrust* 1d; *Swing* 2d-1  
*Point* Total: 150

**Advantages:**

Appearance: Attractive (5 points); Combat Reflexes (15 points); Military Rank 6 (30 points); Status 2 (default from Rank)

**Disadvantages:**

Bad Temper (-10 points); Code of Honor (Roman Military: Death before dishonor, come back with your shield or on it, etc.) (-10 points); Duty to the High King on 15 or less (-15 points); Sense of Duty to the High King and his Queen (-5 points)

**Skills:**

Animal Handling-10 (4 points); Area Knowledge (Britain)-12 (4 points); Armoury/TL2-11 (4 points); Brawling-16 (8 points); Broadsword-15 (8 points); Carousing-10 (default from

HT); Fast-Talk-10 (2 points); Intelligence Analysis-10 (4 points); Knife-14 (2 points); Leadership-10 (2 points); Old British-10 (0, native tongue); Riding (Horse)-14 (4 points); Shield-15 (4 points); Spear-13 (2 points); Spear Throwing-14 (2 points); Swimming-13 (1 point); Tactics-10 (4 points).

**Quirks:**

Hopes the Queen will take him as a lover someday. Screams his head off in battle; he is hoarse for days afterwards. Thinks of the King over his men, **and his men over himself**. Hates Saxons, Visigoths, and all other barbarians. Devout Christian.

**Equipment:**

Iron broadsword (5 lbs.); Scale mail jerkin (PD 3, DR 4, 35 lbs.); Pot-helm (PD 3, DR 4; 5 lbs.)

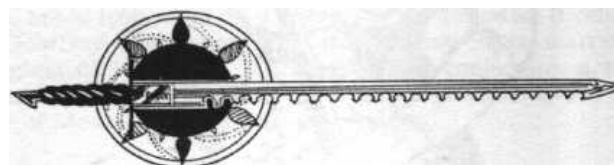
Bedwyr is based on some of the earliest Arthurian tales. Before Lancelot, before Gawaine even, Bedivere was one of the best of the knights. His importance lingers on even in Malory, where he is the last of the Round Table to survive at Arthur's side. There are hints that he predates even Geoffrey of Monmouth; here, the original Celtic-language form of the name "Bedivere" is used to identify a man who might have existed, a man who might have entered into legend at the side of his king.

Bedwyr is the captain of the King's Guard, a group of highly-skilled fighters who act both as a bodyguard for Riothamus and as an elite force. Bedwyr himself is a proficient warrior, although his fiery temper often gets the better of him in battle.

Bedwyr has risen through the ranks. Born the son of Romanized Britons, he grew up fighting Saxon incursions along the east coast, and joined an informal militia. One day, while he was repelling invaders elsewhere, a Saxon force raided his home village, sacking it and killing all its inhabitants. Young Bedwyr was orphaned; in order to survive, he joined the High King's army. His natural talent and anti-Saxon exuberance were soon noticed by Ambrosius Aurelianus, who took the young man under his wing. Under his patronage, Bedwyr grew in both skill and stature. In his sixth year in the army, he personally foiled a Saxon assassination attempt on Riothamus, and was rewarded with a promotion to the King's Guard. Within a year, he became its captain.

In the time he has served directly under the king, he and Riothamus have grown to be good friends. Guenhumara, too, regards Bedwyr warmly; more than once he has been given the duty of escorting the warrior queen or acting as her honor guard. The two have grown quite close, but not close enough for him. He is strongly attracted to Guenhumara, and hopes that she will eventually take him as a lover. It is perhaps best that he has never noticed (or allowed himself to notice) the "disposable" nature of her dalliances - Guenhumara sometimes shares her bed as a reward for service, and sometimes as entertainment, but never with someone who is not "just passing through."

This doesn't mean things won't change in the future, but currently the queen is too fond of **Bedwyr to turn him into a throwaway bed partner.**



# HISTORICAL TIMELINE

This timeline is assembled from several different sources, and represents the "best guess" of several different historians. Its backbone is still Geoffrey of Monmouth, but almost all of the events and persons listed here have independent confirmation in other, more reliable, sources. Others are non-legendary but defensible; they seem likely given what is known about the places and times covered, and at least one historian has seriously suggested them.

Note that while the foreign invaders/settlers of Britain of this time are generally referred to as "Saxons" (as was common in most of the contemporary accounts), they were actually a combination of Angles, Saxons and Jutes, native to what is today Holland.

## **AD 360**

Picts and Scots cross Hadrian's wall and attack Britain.

Huns invade Europe.

## **AD 367**

A revival of the original Celtic religious beliefs begins, and continues for some decades.

## **AD 370**

Theodosius drives Picts and Scots out of Britain.

## **AD 383**

Roman legions begin to evacuate Britain.

## **AD 387**

Establishment of military colony in Armorica by "Emperor" Maximus of Britain (memorialized as Prince Madsen of Welsh and Cornish folklore).

Maximus presses his forces forward and briefly captures Rome.

## **AD 388**

Maximus killed in combat with Theodosius, Emperor of the East. Roman control over Britain is re-established, but never regains the strength it had before Maximus' rise to power.

## **AD 392**

Theodosius the Great becomes the last Emperor of a united Roman empire.

## **AD 395**

Theodosius dies; Roman empire split

into Eastern Empire (ruled from Constantinople) and Western Empire (ruled from Rome).

## **AD 399**

Pope Siricius dies; he is succeeded by Pope Anastasius I.

Roman general Stilicho arrives in Britain with troops to help repulse an Irish invasion led by the high king of Ireland, Niall-of-the-Nine-Hostages. As part of his strategy, Stilicho establishes a defensive system organized under local chieftains, under whom Celtic tribalism begins to revive.

## **ca. AD 400**

British Christians and European missionaries begin conversion work in the British Isles, to last through the middle of the century.

Possible settlement of monks in the Glastonbury area.

## **AD 401**

Pope Anastasius I dies; Innocent I elected Pope.

## **AD 402**

Stilicho withdraws legions from Britain.

## **AD 405**

British sea victory results in death of Niall and the immediate reduction of the Irish threat.

## **AD 406**

Teutonic campaign in Gaul cuts Britain off from Roman control.

Constantine III proclaimed emperor by the remnants of the army in Britain. (This Constantine, remembered by Welsh legend as Bendigeit Custennin, is the Constantine who is father of Constans in the Mythic/Cinematic timeline.)

## **AD 407**

Constantine takes the remaining legions and goes to Gaul, while his second-in-command Gerontius (Gereint) undermines his power from the rear.

## **AD 410**

Saxons attack Britain again. The regional councils, or civitates, of Britain write to Emperor Honorius of Rome and effectively proclaim their independence from the Empire. Honorius'

only reply tells them to look to their safety, ignoring the independence question.

Alaric, king of the Visigoths, sacks Rome.

Constantine and Gerontius die in the chaos sweeping the Continent.

## **AD 415**

Birth of Ambrosius Aurelianus?

## **AD 417**

Pope Innocent I dies; Zozimus made the new Pope.

## **AD 418**

Possible return of Roman forces in a token re-occupation.

Pope Zozimus dies; he is succeeded by Boniface I.

## **AD 420**

Saxons raid Britain as Roman forces finish withdrawing from the isles.

## **AD 421**

Introduction of the Pelagian heresy to Britain by Agricola.

## **AD 422**

Boniface I dies and is followed by Pope Celestine I.

## **AD 425**

Britain is completely abandoned by Rome by this year.

Vortigern gains prominence in central Wales, and begins extending his influence in Britain.

## **AD 429**

St. Germanus come to Britain "to combat Pelagianism, which seems to be favored by Vortigern's faction.

Alliance of Saxons, Jutes and Angles drives Picts and Scots from Southern Britain.

Birth of Artorius Riothamus?

## **AD 432**

St. Patrick begins his mission to Ireland.

Sixtus III becomes the pontiff after the death of Celestine I.

## **AD 433**

Attila becomes ruler of the Huns. Huns attack Roman provinces.

**AD 440**

Saxon raiding continues as the British military decays.

Pope Sixtus dies; his successor is Pope Leo I (also known as "The Great").

Ancient town of Ys in Brittany submerged in great flood.

**AD 446**

Remaining Romanized rulers of Britain send an appeal for help to the Roman general Aetius (Aegidius).

**AD 447**

With no reply from Aetius, the Roman faction is discredited. Vortigern becomes predominant in British politics.

Second visit of St. Germanus to British Isles.

**AD 450**

Vortigern allows mercenary troops composed of Angles, Saxons and Jutes to settle on the island of Thanet at the mouth of the Thames and nearby other land in exchange for their aid in repelling further invasions of Picts and other Saxons. Hengist and Horsa, Jute leaders, settle with their people in modern Kent.

**AD 453**

Death of Attila.

**AD 454**

Vortigern is unable to maintain payments to his foreign mercenaries, and fighting breaks out between British and Saxon forces.

Artorius Riothamus marries the daughter of Vortigern and becomes new High King of Britain.

**AD 455**

Angles join forces with the Picts.

Battle of Aylesford, Riothamus begins the refortification of Cadbury.

Vandals sack Rome.

**AD 457**

Britons flee Kent for London after being overwhelmed by Saxon forces at Crayford.

British society and economy collapses as Anglo-Saxon revolt turns into a large-scale looting of the British lowlands.

British refugees flee to Armorica, establishing "Little Britain" (Brittany) there.

**AD 461**

Ambrosius Aurelianus (Geoffrey's "Aurelius Ambrosius" and the *gwledig* Emrys in Welsh myth) organizes the remaining Romanized Britons. Ambrosius is a high-ranking general under Riothamus.

Pope Leo I dies. He is succeeded by Pope Hilarius.

Aetius becomes a ruler in Gaul.

**ca. AD 463**

Creation of British cavalry forces, to be used against the Saxons.

**ca. AD 466**

Riothamus and Ambrosius begin building a navy.

**AD 468**

Roman emperor Anthemius seeks an alliance with Riothamus.

Pope Hilarius dies. Simplicius is elected as the new pope.

**AD 470**

Huns withdraw from Europe.

A seaborne British army led by Riothamus joins the Armorican settlers to fight on the side of Emperor Anthemius, who attempted to re-establish Roman control over Gaul.

Ambrosius begins a counteroffensive against the Anglo-Saxons in Britain.

Medraut, Riothamus' deputy, intrigues with Euric, king of the Visigoths, against his commander.

The Visigoths attack Riothamus' forces before the Romans can join with the Britons. Overwhelming them with superior numbers, the Visigoths rout Riothamus' army.

Riothamus and his men flee towards the French city of Avallon in Burgundy and disappear.

Revitalization of the British Church.

**AD 476**

End of the western Roman empire as the German chieftain Odoacer overthrows the last Roman emperor, Romulus Augustulus.

**AD 480-90**

Ambrosius' offensive shows success as Britain regains some measure of prosperity and peace.

**AD 500**

British defeat Saxons at Mt. Badon, a possible victory of "Arthur's Men" according to Ashe.

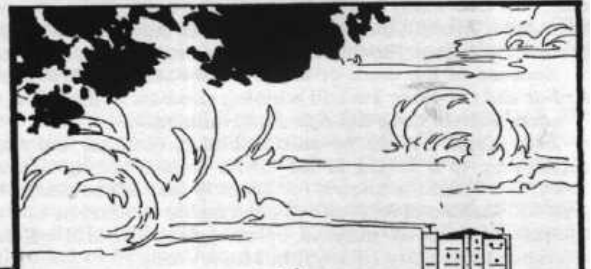
**AD 537**

Battle of Camlann, traditional death of "King Arthur," probably inspired by final defeat of "Arthur's Men."



# 7 A CAST OF THOUSANDS

Herein the GM will find hundreds of the characters of the Arthurian mythos, good, evil and mixed. Complete game stats are given for the most important, and brief descriptions for others. Since the Cinematic Camelot is simply a natural outgrowth of the Mythic one, multiple entries are not given for each (but *see Historical Characters*, p. 84). Instead, the medieval interpretation is provided as a "base" model; at the end of each long entry is a paragraph describing the alterations which will turn that character into his cinematic form.



Please remember that these are representations of legendary figures. They are much larger than life, even their medieval forms, and modern writers (with the exception of those writing historical fiction) have blown them up even further. In particular, most have much more than the standard -40 points in disadvantages. This is not to be taken to mean player characters can have more than the standard allotment! It is just the necessary result of accurate depiction of the characters.

Almost all characters given here are described as they were in AD 454 - the year Galahad joined the Round Table. This date was chosen because it is the only time at which the Table was complete, and most of the important characters were alive. To set the campaign at an earlier date, the GM really need alter only the ages of the characters; being legendary, after all, they change little over the years. But if the campaign is set early enough, some of these characters will not yet be born!

Because of the more-or-less eternal nature of Arthurian heroes - Arthur and Gawaine are still winning combats in their 50s, 60s and 70s - none of them have the Age disadvantage.

Any knight should be assumed to possess all the accoutrements appropriate to a knight in the GM's chosen setting unless otherwise noted. If a knight is known for errantry and adventuring, his personal gear will include at least one of each melee weapon he knows. Unusual equipment, such as magical or unique items, will be noted with a reference to its entry (if any), in Magic Items.

### Arthur Pendragon, King of the Britons (Artus, Artorius, Artur, Artu)

Male Briton, age 64, 6'0", 165lbs., brown hair and eyes, bearded.  
 ST 14 (45 points)      IQ 13 (30 points)      Speed: 6.5  
 DX 14 (45 points)      HT 12 (20 points)      Move: 6  
**Damage:** Thrust 1d; Swing 2d  
**Point Total:** 347 points

#### Advantages

Appearance: Handsome (15 points); Charisma +1 (5 points); Combat Reflexes (15 points); Companion of the Round Table (15 points); Knighthood (20 points); Literacy (10 points); Reputation +2 (Britons, all the time; 5 points); Reputation +1 (Europe, on 10 or less; 2 points); Status 7 (1 level free from Wealth; 30 points); Strong Will +2 (8 points); Wealth: Filthy Rich (50 points)

#### Disadvantages

Chivalric Code of Honor (-15 points); Enemy: Morgan le Fay (12 or less) (-40 points); Enemy: Morgause of Orkney (9 or less) (-10 points); Honesty (-10 points); Impulsiveness (-10 points); Sense of Duty to Round Table (-5 points); Stubbornness (-5 points); Vow, Minor: Never eat a feast until he sees a marvel or is told an adventure (-5 points).

#### Skills

Animal Handling-10 (1/2 point); Area Knowledge (Britain)-14 (2 points); Area Knowledge (Camelot area)-15 (4 points); Bard-16 (6 points); Bow-15 (8 points); Brawling-14 (1 point); Broadsword-18 (24 points); Carousing-10 (default from HT); Chess-15

points); Gesture-13 (1 point); Heraldry-14 (0, default from Savoir-Faire); History (Britain)-10 (1/2 point); Knife-13 (1/2 point); Lance-18 (24 points); Leadership-16 (10 points); Riding (Horse)-16 (8 points); Running-12 (4 points); Savoir-Faire (Britain)-15 (0, default from Status); Savoir-Faire (elsewhere)-13 (0, default from Status); Shield-18 (16 points); Strategy-16 (10 points); Swimming-14 (1 point); Tactics-16 (10 points).

#### Quirks

Minor practical joker. Jealous about Guinevere. Brave to the point of foolhardiness. Regards Lancelot as a brother-in-arms. His word is his bond.

#### Equipment:

Excalibur and scabbard (5 lbs; see p. 29-30).

### A Cast of Thousands

The Arthur of medieval legend is a born ruler and general, but that is not the sum and total of his character. Certainly he was capable of great personal feats of arms - Malory tells of his defeat of Lamorak, who the author accorded the third best knight in the world - but he did not live his life for fighting. His years in fosterage with Sir Ector of the Forest Sauvage not only prepared him for a military career, but turned him into a learned man. That learning blossomed into chivalry and the Round Table. Drawing upon the traditions and philosophies of both the Romans and his own British forebears, he turned a military force into a parliament, a justice system, and a mission. He believes strongly in what he is doing, almost to the point of overconfidence.

However, Arthur is no porcelain king - for all his ideals, he is a passionate man, with strong emotions in every direction. His love for Guinevere is frighteningly intense, as is his rage each time he feels that she has betrayed him. His devotion to his friends is as powerful as his will to conquer his enemies. Outside of tournaments, he is rarely the aggressor; his energies are expended in the defense of himself or his allies; only after he is attacked does he go on the offensive.



Much of his career focused around military activity, though; he faced no less than three revolutions, fought his way to Rome and actually became Emperor of the Roman Empire, all in the first few years of his reign! He was a fierce warrior, though not a berserker like Lancelot, and much loved by his men. In the later, more peaceful years of his reign, Arthur transferred his love of battle to the tournament field, which he often frequented with his men. Like many of his knights, he would adventure incognito. He is no small strategist, and given the vast forces at his employ (he once deployed a "small" force of 54,000 in Gaul), he is cautious with the lives of his men.

However great a military leader he is, Arthur is only an average king. He is a very good authority figure, and has a commanding presence, but his grasp of the detail of ruling is sometimes lacking. Much of the actual day-to-day ruling - the politicking, the diplomacy, the subtle games of influence and power, as well as the everyday management of the kingdom - is actually performed by Guinevere, who is a naturally-talented diplomat and administrator. It would be perfectly accurate to say that while Arthur is the iron fist, Guinevere is the velvet glove. His are the ideas and goals, hers are the means to achieve them peacefully. Together they are a perfectly matched team.

Perhaps an unconscious perception of how much he needs Guinevere fuels Arthur's fierce love for and jealousy over her. When at last her affair with Lancelot is revealed, his rage knows no bounds.

Arthur is not perfect; he is a proud man who sometimes lets his pride get the better of him. He also has a desire for power which, fortunately, he keeps mostly under control. He has incidents in his past he would rather forget - for instance, in a panic partly encouraged by Merlin, he ordered a Herod-like slaughter of infants in order to forestall Mordred's growth and eventual revolt. Not only was this unsuccessful, it accomplished several things that were to cause no end of trouble for Arthur: One, it triggered the second rebellion against him. Two, it ensured the enmity of his powerful half-sister Morgawse, and guaranteed her warping of Mordred against him. Three, Arthur's confidence in his success with this tactic was such that he never considered the possibility that Mordred was his son when the young man finally arrived at Camelot.

Although he has no legitimate sons, Arthur has at least one illegitimate son other than Mordred. Arthur begat his son Borre (or Bohart) le Cure Hardy on Lionors, a lady of his court, before he married Guinevere. Borre grew to be a knight, and eventually became a Companion of the Round Table.

**Cinematic Arthur:** The cinematic Arthur is not the self-reliant king his predecessor in the medieval tales is. Although a much better ruler, he lacks the complete confidence that would guarantee the success of his plans. He is a gentle and idealistic man, and forgiving even of Guinevere and Lancelot's affair, but bound by the legal system he created to watch her burn at the stake. In the end, it is his own compassion which allows the rot to enter the pinnacle of his ideals, and eventually bring about his downfall.

To represent the Cinematic ideal of Arthur, follow these guidelines: Raise ST to 15 and HT to 13. Raise Reputations to +3 and +2, respectively, and Charisma to +3. Add to Advantages Alertness + 1, Intuition, Unusual Background and Voice. Remove Enemy: Morgawse and Minor Vow from Disadvantages, and add Major Vow: Realize the Britain of his dreams and 15-point Sense of Duty to People of Britain. Optionally, add a Delusion (Major): Merlin is real (see p. 57). The Cinematic Arthur's 10-point Unusual Background reflects his training by Merlin in political systems far in advance of the 5th century, as well as a hodge-podge knowledge of the future (mostly unusable) garnered from Merlin's off-hand comments. Add to Skills Administration-12; Area Knowledge (Europe)-13; Climbing-13; Diplomacy-14; Economics-10; Fast-Draw (Broadsword)-16; Fishing-12; Naturalist-12; Law (English Civil)-17; Musical Instrument (Lute)-10; Singing-14. Strike all medieval Quirks and replace with: Knows about Lancelot and Guinevere's affair but won't acknowledge it; Tries to mold Mordred into an ideal knight; Likes to "dress down" as often as possible; Still not entirely comfortable with being king; First reaction in a crisis is to look/wish for Merlin. *Cinematic Point Total:* 422.

## Guinevere (Guenevere, Genievre, Ginevra, Gwenhwyfar, Guenhumara, "Jenny")

Female Briton, age 57, 5'4", 120 lbs., blonde hair, gray eyes, fair complexion

ST 10 (0 points)	IQ 16 (80 points)	Speed: 5.75
DX 13 (30 points)	HT 10 (0 points)	Move: 5

Damage: Thrust 1 d-2; Swing 1 d  
*Point Total:* 232

### Advantages

Acute Hearing +1 (2 points); Ally: Her cousin Elyzabel (101-150 points, appears on 15 or less) (30 points); Appearance: Very Beautiful (25 points); Charisma +2 (10 points); Literacy (10 points); Reputation +2 (Everywhere, All the time) (10 points); Status 7 (30 points); 1 level free from Wealth; Wealth: Filthy Rich (50 points)

### Disadvantages

Duty to British People (15 or less, not life-threatening) (-15 points); Enemy: Morgan le Fay (12 or less) (-40 points); Honesty (-10 points); Secret: Affair with Lancelot (Possible death: -30 points); Sense of Duty to Arthur (-5 points)

## Skills

Acting-16 (2 points); Administration-19 (8 points); Area Knowledge (Britain)-17 (2 points); Chess-25 (18 points); Dancing-14 (4 points); Diplomacy-18 (8 points); English-16 (0, native tongue); French-15 (1 point); Heraldry-17 (4 points); History (British and Roman)-15 (2 points); Hobby: Blackwork-16 (1 point); Knife-13 (1 point); Leadership-18 (2 points); Riding (Horse)-14 (4 points); Savoir-Faire (England)-18 (0, default from Status); Savoir-Faire (elsewhere)-16 (0, default from Status); Swimming-14 (2 points).

## Quirks

Respects Arthur but loves Lancelot. Jealous about Lancelot. Possesses keen senses of humor and fun. Calm, collected and clear-headed in times of stress and never panics.

Guinevere is the daughter of King Leodegrance of Camelot. She is said to have been the most beautiful woman in all of Britain, and even as she grew older, her looks stayed with her. Geoffrey of Monmouth says that she came from Roman stock, and if her abilities are any indication, this is certainly so. She is a born diplomat and administrator, and in truth she (along with Arthur's foster brother Kay) does more of the actual ruling of Britain than Arthur does.

Guinevere first arrived at Arthur's court when she was 16, for her wedding to the king. Her marriage to Arthur was admittedly one of political convenience, but the young princess soon developed an infatuation for the grand romantic figure she had wed. Over the years, that infatuation would transform itself into a profound respect tinged with the love one would have for a close friend. It remained for the advent of Lancelot to bring true romance to Guinevere.

She did not arrive in Camelot alone; traveling with her was Elyzabel, her cousin, who would remain with her past the end of Arthur's reign. Elyzabel and Guinevere had grown up together, and they had become inseparable friends and intimate confidantes. Once in Camelot, Elyzabel took up the position of the queen's personal attendant. Other than La Beale Isolde, Elyzabel was perhaps the only person in whom the queen confided about her love for Lancelot. Elyzabel was a brave and resourceful woman, and on more than one occasion performed tasks Guinevere could trust to no one else.

The 16-year-old princess grew up quickly in Arthur's court, and soon discovered her talents for governing. Arthur was a spectacular military commander and an impressive figure as a king, but his administrative and diplomatic abilities were sadly lacking. Guinevere slid easily into the role of stateswoman and supplied Britain with the practical skill in ruling that it needed. It is debatable whether Arthur ever realized this; during the affair of the false Guinevere the kingdom deteriorated drastically but the king never noticed. Arthur may have loved his wife, but it seems likely that he never fully appreciated her.

Despite the burden of the duties she assumed, Guinevere did not lose her spirit. Cheerful and fun-loving as a child, she remained so as queen, celebrating Maydays uninhibitedly and personally catering parties for friends. Although Arthur himself was an outgoing and

the royalty from becoming stuffy. Guinevere's *joie de vivre*, coupled with her style and grace, earned her the love of many. It is no surprise that she was popular not only with the court, but the common people as well. She inspired unusual devotion in a number of knights, including Gawaine and Kay, and eventually had her own order surrounding her, much as the Round Table surrounded Arthur. This body was known simply as the "Queen's Knights." Its membership overlapped the Table's, but when knights were on the Queen's business, they bore the *vergescu* - tie blank white shield of a beginning knight - rather than their own blazons.

That Lancelot became the Queen's lover is well known; the romance and love she could not share with Arthur blossomed in her relationship with the best of his knights. Its exact start is uncertain, but it is certainly gossiped about by AD 430. Some traditions place their first declarations of love shortly after his first adventure in Britain, although that love would not be consummated for some years.

Their love affair seems to have been an open secret; if not at first, then within a decade. It seems possible that the couple deceived themselves about how well-kept a secret it really was. This is not surprising,



considering both faced execution should the truth ever be revealed to Arthur.

Rising out of the affair with Lancelot comes what is perhaps Guinevere's sole fault - her jealousy. She was given to fits of jealous rage, usually only when provoked; however on several occasions she flared for trivial or imaginary faults on Lancelot's part. Her anger is explosive, and backed with all her power as both queen and lover, it drove Lancelot insane on at least one occasion. Fortunately, it is tempered with a forgiving nature; when the rage leaves her, Guinevere is often seized by overwhelming regret and invariably pardons her lover.



Arthur's half-sister, the enchantress Morgan le Fay (p. 105), has chosen to target Guinevere for many of her more subtle attacks. The two were once friends, but when Guinevere discovered that Morgan was having an affair with her cousin Guiomar, she banished Guiomar. Morgan never forgave her, and now uses every opportunity to try to reveal Guinevere's unfaithfulness - and hypocrisy - to the world.

Guinevere's relationships with other members of the court are generally friendly and open. Because of their shared burden, she is close to Kay, who reciprocates more intensely than she would like to know. However, Guinevere dislikes Mordred; Lancelot once told her of how a priest prophesied that the young Orkney knight would bring about the fall of Camelot. Although she treats him civilly, it is without the warmth she extends to the other knights of the Round Table.

One of Guinevere's primary non-political achievements, according to the Vulgate, is that she is the single best chess player at the court.

**Cinematic Guinevere:** Like many other characters, Guinevere has generally suffered in the translation from myth to pop culture. Her role in governing Britain withered away, and she became little more than a beautiful ornament on Arthur's arm. In the film of *Camelot*, she is cautiously flirtatious and overtly manipulative with several knights; after the establishment of the Round Table, she seems abandoned by a king absorbed in the job of raising his nation up from near-barbarism. To portray her, make the following changes: Reduce IQ to 14. Remove Charisma and Ally from Advantages. Remove Enemy: Morgan le Fay from Disadvantages. Remove History and Leadership from Skills. Add Animal Handling-12; Hobby: Weaving-16; Running-11; Sex Appeal-16. Reduce Administration to 13 and Chess to 16. Remove "Jealous about Lancelot" from Quirks; replace with "Flirtatious and manipulative with men." *Cinematic Point Total: 200.*

## Lancelot du Lac (Launcelot, Lanzelet, Lancilotto, Laneloet)

French male, age 45, 6'2", 180 lbs., long black hair and black eyes  
ST 18 (125 points)      IQ 13 (30 points)      Speed: 7  
DX 16 (80 points)      HT 12 (20 points)      Move: 7  
Damage: Thrust 1d+2; Swing 3d  
Point Total. 440

### Advantages

Charisma +4 (20 points); Combat Reflexes (15 points); Companion of the Round Table (15 points); Knighthood (20 points); Literacy (10 points); Reputation +4; everybody, all the time (15 Points); 1 level free from companion); **Status 6: Queen's Champion/French Prince** (f5 points); 3 levels free from Companion, Knighthood and Wealth; Toughness DR 2 (25 points); Unusual Background: Raised by the French Lady of the Lake, Vivien (10 points); Very Blessed: Gift of Major Healing-18 (Lapsed!) (20 points); Wealth: Filthy Rich (50 points)

### Disadvantages

Berserk (-15 points); Chivalric Code of Honor (-15 points); Enemy: Morgan le Fay on 12 or less (See note in text.) (-40 points); Glory Hound (-15 points); Honesty (-10 points); Lover's Distraction (-15 points); Odious Personal Habit: Uses other people's pavilions without asking first. (-10 points); Secret: Affair with Guinevere (Possible death: -30 points); Sense of Duty: to Crown and Country (-10 points)

### Skills

Animal Handling-12 (2 points); Area Knowledge (France)-13 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Britain)-16 (6 points); Artist (Painting)-12 (2 points); Broadsword-20 (24 points); Chess-15 (4 points); English-13 (2 points); Fast-Draw (Bastard Sword)-17 (1 point); Flail-17 (8 points); French-13 (0, native tongue); Heraldry-14 (4 points); Lance-20 (24 points); Leadership-15 (1 point); Riding (Horseback)-19 (16 points); Savoir-Faire (France)-15 (0, default from Status); Savoir-Faire (Britain, elsewhere)-13 (0, default from Status); Shield-20 (16 points); Strategy-14 (6 points); Tactics-16 (10 points); Two-Handed Axe/Mace-18

(8 points).

### Quirks

Wears white and silver in preference to other colors. Strongest of friends with Gawaine and Tristram. Likes to disappear on adventures without telling anyone where he's going. In love with Guinevere, but feels guilty about it. Talks in his sleep about his love for Guinevere.

### Equipment:

Thrusting bastard sword (named "Joyeux") and scabbard (5 lbs.)  
Large shield (25 lbs.)

Like many of the other important knights at Arthur's court, Lancelot is a prince of no small regard. Born the first son of King Ban of Benoic in France, he eventually would become a king in his own right, but instead chose to serve Arthur and Arthur's ideals in Britain. This did not cut him off from his family - far from it! His father and his uncle were both long-standing allies of the British king; two of his cousins (Sir Lionel, and Sir Bors de Ganis) and his own half-brother (Sir Ector de Maris) were members of the Round Table with him.

Lancelot's story begins in AD 414, when King Claudas of France began his expansionist war. He besieged and conquered Benoic, forcing Ban, his wife, and their 5-year-old son to flee. However, Ban suffered a fatal fit of some sort upon looking back and seeing his castle in flames, and as his wife tended to his last minutes, Vivien (the Lady of the French Lake) carried away the boy.

Vivien raised him in the Lake, along with his cousins who were later rescued. According to French tradition, she never told Lancelot his name, calling him only "Fitzroy" - "King's son." In the Lake, the three princes learned the basics of knighthood from various tutors. When they came of age, they were sent on to King Arthur.

Lancelot, still nameless, was the first to leave. On his journey to

Britain, he encountered Iweret, the best knight in the world and an evil one as well. They fought, and Lancelot killed him. A faerie servant of the Lady appeared to him and revealed his name and his parentage, and added, "Your rightful heritage is to be the best knight in the world."

Lancelot was 18 years old when he arrived at Camelot along with his cousins. Arthur knighted him, and it appears that he joined the Queen's knights at this time. Before formally joining the court, though, he began the first of his many adventures of knight-errantry in Britain. Before returning, he would conquer the castle Dolorous Garde, renaming it Joyous Garde, and would win the friendship of the warlike Duke Galeholt for both Arthur and himself. Upon his return at the end of these adventures, he and Guinevere first declared their love for each other, but it was not consummated until several years afterwards.

Lancelot's deeds are too many to summarize here. He quickly became known as a virtually unbeatable knight; of all the knights in Britain, only Tristram was able to match him (for which the two became fast friends). During the affair of the false Guinevere, he fought for the true Queen and saved her from Arthur's wrath; the two then dwelt at Galeholt's castle in Surlose until the death of the false Guinevere. He took up the mantle of Queen's Champion upon their return to the court. Some years later, he visited Castle Carbonek, and was drugged into sleeping with Elaine, granddaughter of Pellam the Maimed King, upon whom he fathered Galahad.

His prowess in battle seems to have been God-given, to judge from the defeats he suffered during the Grail Quest. Ultimately, he was unworthy of the Grail, but he was allowed to see its achievement by his son, after which he fell into a month-long coma. Some legends give him the ability to heal with his touch, but his adultery with the Queen soiled his righteousness and robbed him of the power. However, near the end of Arthur's reign he healed Sir Urre of Hungary, who had been cursed with ever-bleeding wounds.



Although it never really was a well-kept secret, the affair between Lancelot and Guinevere was discreet and carefully arranged. However, they grew careless in the end, and were discovered by Agravaine and Mordred. Lancelot escaped to rescue the Queen from being burnt at the stake, accidentally killing two of Gawaine's brothers (who were unarmed at the time) and earning Gawaine's enmity in the process. At Gawaine's urging, Arthur besieged Lancelot both in Joyous Garde and then in his home castle in France; only Mordred's treachery broke the siege, and Lancelot returned to Britain too late to do anything more for

his liege and friend than mourn for him. Lancelot ended his life a hermit priest in Britain, near the grave of his king.

According to the French traditions, Lancelot might have been good-looking if not for a hugely disproportionate torso - no doubt from his extraordinary strength. T.H. White, while not making him physically malformed, does make him distinctly ugly. Malory diplomatically says nothing of his looks. But it appears that the drop-dead-handsome Lancelot is an invention of films and modern writers. Malory does mention that at some point midway in his career, Lancelot received a distinctive facial scar that proved to be a useful identifying mark.

Despite his (occasionally) holy status and royal rearing, Lancelot has several bad traits. The most severe of these is his tendency to berserk in battle (the Lancelot of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, right down to his apologies afterwards, is an exact depiction of the mythic Lancelot in this regard). Only slightly less distressing was his habit of occupying other people's pavilions without asking first; often, when he was surprised in the morning by the rightful owners, his combat-trained reflexes took over and blood would be shed.

Lancelot also tended towards insanity. More than once he suffered severe fits of madness in which he ran through the forests of Britain naked and raving, sometimes for as long as two years! This is not listed among his disadvantages as these fits are entirely at the discretion of the GM. They only occur at moments of extreme emotional stress (one was triggered by an angry Guinevere banishing him from her presence forever) and will not normally affect play.

Morgan le Fay's preoccupation with Lancelot is different from her angry obsession with other members of Arthur's court. She seems to alternate between hate and desire, and any given encounter between the two could go in either direction. Whenever she makes her "enemy" appearance for Lancelot, the GM should roll 1d; on a 1-3 Morgan's motive is seduction, on a 4-6 it is destruction. Once determined, her motives will not change for the duration of that encounter.

Lancelot, alone of the Round Table and court, knows the secret of Mordred's birth and destiny. While riding together early in Mordred's career, they encountered a priest who hailed them as potential destroyers of Camelot, and then proceeded to announce the truth of the younger knight's birth. This was a shock to Mordred, who had believed himself to be the true son of King Lot of Orkney, and in a rage he slew the priest. Lancelot kept this secret to himself, telling only Guinevere, and telling her only the prophecy, not Mordred's parentage.

*Cinematic Lancelot:* In his transition into pop culture, Lancelot has been considerably romanticized. He loses none of his prowess; only his unattractive aspects are stripped away. As befits a hero of high romance, his looks are improved to an almost preternatural level.

Remove references to disproportionate torso, and add Appearance: Very Handsome. Remove Berserk, Glory Hound, and Odious Personal Habit from Disadvantages. Add to skills: Buckler-18, Knife-18, Shortsword-17. Remove "Talks in his sleep..." from Quirks, add 1

humble that he's seen as arrogant about it." *Cinematic Point Total:*517.

## Sir Kay (Kai, Caius, Cei, Keu, Kei, Kex)

British male, age 67, 6'1", 180 lbs., red hair, blue eyes,  
 ST 12 (20 points) IQ 14 (45 points) Speed: 6.75  
 DX 13 (30 points) HT 14 (45 points) Move: 6  
 Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+2  
*Point Total:* 246

### Advantages

Companion of the Round Table (15 points); Knighthood (20 points); Literacy (10 points); Status 6: Arthur's Seneschal (15 points, 3 levels free from Companion, Knighthood, and Wealth); Wealth: Very Wealthy (30 points)

### Disadvantages

Bad Temper (-10 points); Chivalric Code of Honor (-15 points); Honesty (-10 points); Odious Personal Habit: Sarcasm (-5 points); Reputation -2 (Churlish and sarcastic bully; Britain, all the time) (-5 points); Sense of Duty to Arthur and his court (-10 points); Stubbornness (-5 points)

## Skills:

Accounting-14 (4 points); Administration-18 (10 points); Area Knowledge (Britain)-16 (4 points); Area Knowledge (Camelot)-17 (6

points); Area Knowledge (Royal Progress Cities)-16 (4 points); Brawling-15 (4 points); Broadsword-15 (8 points); Chess-16 (4 points);

Dancing-12 (1 point); English-14 (0, native tongue); Detect Lies-14 (4 points); Falconry-12 (2 points); Heraldry-16 (6 points); Lance-14 (4 points); Merchant-15 (4 points); Savoir-Faire (Britain)-16 (0, default from Status); Savoir-Faire (elsewhere)-14 (0, default from Status); Shield-15 (4 points); Two-Handed Sword-14 (4 points); Riding (Horse)-15 (8 points).

## Quirks:

Feels unjustly slighted by his reputation and annoyed that no one realizes how hard his job really is. Regrets his sharp tongue - *after* the fact. Jealous of Lancelot's favor in Guinevere's eyes. Has a tendency to brag, but *will* not take credit for deeds he did not do. Often regards an "adventure" as a nuisance that keeps him away from work.



Kay is misunderstood and unjustly remembered. *The Sword in the Stone* portrays him as an unrepentant bully who has to be dragged down to kneel before the new king. Later medieval romancers make him out to be a loud, oafish buffoon. But the oldest sources make it clear that he is no less a hero than any other Companion of the Round Table. Even Malory grudgingly admits cases where Kay performed great deeds of arms.

Kay is perhaps the most interesting male character in the Arthurian myths. Raised as a brother to Arthur and groomed to be a knight, Kay's whole world was shattered when his younger brother turned into the High King. Before he could get a word in edgewise, his father, Sir Ector of the Forest Sauvage, volunteered him to be Arthur's seneschal (something of a chief administrator). There is obviously a certain amount of bitterness in him about "might-have-beens," but no small degree of pride, both in himself and his foster brother.

Although Chretien de Troyes turns him into a hopeless bumbler on the field, Kay is, in fact, more than competent with arms. It seems, from the veiled hints in more than one source, that Arthur uses him to test incoming candidates for knighthood. This would require a fighter who was not only skilled enough to protect himself, but controlled enough to do so without hurting the student! A joust with Kay would deter the hopeless farm boy or reveal the potential Companion; unfortunately, Kay seems to be remembered only for his defeats at the hands of outstanding young prospects like Percival and La Cote Malle Taile.

Of course, his duties as Seneschal would inevitably lead to a certain amount of deterioration in his combat skills. A competent and capable administrator, he was in charge of keeping the court running day-to-day, as well as overseeing the actual process of the Royal Progress. All the palace and court servants were under his command, and it appears that he was a demanding (but not cruel) taskmaster. With Kay in com-

mand, life at court proceeded like clockwork. One of Kay's few complaints with his life is that no one seems to realize just how much work his position entails, and that he never gets recognition when things go well - only when they go wrong.

He is, however, in a position of utmost trust. When Arthur sends a small, select band of knights to perform a special task, Kay is invariably included. He was a member, as well, of Arthur's personal bodyguard.

Kay's most outstanding trait, throughout all the chronicles, is his sharp tongue. He is quick with insults and sarcasm, and this has earned him a reputation as a vicious and bullying knight both in the court and beyond. He also brags, although not to excess; he once refused to take credit for acts performed by Lancelot while wearing his armor. Some of his boasts and pride are for his "protoges" like Gareth Beaumains and La Cote de Malle Taile, who served under him in one role or another.

Kay nurses a deep devotion towards Guinevere. It is a platonic version of Lancelot's love, but not by Kay's choice. Not surprisingly, a strong rivalry developed between the two knights, and Kay never quite got the best of it. The close working relationship between Kay and the Queen, who between them do most of the actual day-to-day governing of the kingdom, has only exacerbated Kay's feelings.

Surprisingly, Kay bears no jealousy towards his brother. His affection for Arthur is deep and genuine, and his dedication to Arthur's cause is strong and sincere. For his part, Arthur is still emotionally close to his brother, although his duties leave him little time for purely familial niceties. Kay understands this, and does not begrudge Arthur *his time*.

*Cinematic Kay:* Kay's churlish nature grows in most later stories, until he is almost a buffoon. Simultaneously, his abilities decline, contributing to a final image of a knight who is all bluster with no ability to back it up. The only change in the character sheet that the GM need make is the reduction of Kay's combat skills except Brawling by 2. More recently, modern writers have begun the process of returning Kay to his exalted place as a hero among the members of the Round Table. *But* some films have abandoned his sarcastic nature entirely, losing the most distinctive aspect of his character. Cinematic Point Total: 231.

## Galahad (Galehaud, Galaad)

British male, age 18, 6'2", 180lbs., black hair and eyes  
ST 17 (100 points)      IQ 16 (80 points)      Speed: 6.5  
DX 15 (60 points)      HT 11 (10 points)      Move: 6  
Damage: Thrust 1d+2; Swing 3d-1  
Point Total: 480

Appearance: Handsome (15 points); Charisma +3 (15 points); Combat Reflexes (15 points); Companion of the Round Table (15 points); Knighthood (20 points); Literacy (10 points); Status 5 (10 points, 3 levels free from Companion, Knighthood and Wealth); Very Blessed: Deus ex Machinas (50 points); Wealth: Filthy Rich (50 points)

## Disadvantages

Chivalric Code of Honor (-15 points); Duty to God, all the time (-15 points); Honesty (-10); Truthfulness (-5); Vow, Great: Find the Grail, see it unveiled (-15 points); Vow, Minor: Chastity (-5 points)

## Skills:

Administration-15 (1 point); Animal Handling-15 (2 points); Aramaic-14 (1/2 point); Broadsword-18 (16 points); Buckler-18 (6 points); Diplomacy-17 (6 points); English-16 (0 points, native tongue); Greek-14 (1/2 point); Hebrew-15 (1 point); Heraldry-17 (4 points); Knife-17 (4 points); Lance-20 (32 points); Leadership-18 (1 point); Riding (Horse)-18 (16 points); Savoir-Faire (Britain)-18 (0, default from Status); Savoir-Faire (Elsewhere)-16 (0, default from Status); Shield-18 (8 points); Swimming-15 (1 point); Theology (Christian)-14 (1 point).

## Quirks:

Humble and self-effacing. Never feels fleshly desires. Has a profound religious faith, and as a result, trusts God to lead him where he must go. Has a Platonic love affair with Percival's sister Dindane. Reluctant to slay a foe and distressed by battlefield excesses.

### Equipment:

The Adventurous Shield (p. 29); Balin's Sword (p. 29)

During the Grail Quest, Galahad found and bore the Sword of King David (p. 34).

Upon the completion of the Grail Quest, Galahad was the nominal possessor of both the Holy Grail and the Spear of Longinus (pp. 31 and 34).

Galahad is the son of Lancelot by Princess Elaine of Carbonek. Although he was engendered by deception, Lancelot and Galahad had a close and loving relationship, as evidenced by the six months they spent together while on the Grail Quest. However, for most of his childhood, Galahad saw little of his father. He was raised until age 15 by his mother and grandfather (King Pelles) at Castle Carbonek; from there he was brought to a convent near Camelot where he stayed for 3 years.

At Pentecost in his 18th year, Lancelot was brought to him and to knight Galahad. However, he did not join Arthur's court right away. Not until the block of marble bearing Balin's sword floated down the river to Camelot did he arrive, led by an ancient man and dressed in red. The old man seated him in the Siege Perilous, which now bore his name. Later that same day Galahad drew Balin's sword from the block of marble, and was hailed as the new best knight in the world by a damsel on horseback.

Galahad's history after this point is primarily the history of the Grail Quest. In the course of the year-long quest, his adventures both alone and with Lancelot purified and strengthened him. He joined forces with Perceval, Bors de Ganis and Dindane to pursue the Grail, borne by the Ship of Solomon, which had presented itself to them. Dindane became Galahad's virgin love, but soon sacrificed herself to cure the Leprous Lady of her ailment. After her death, they placed her body in a ship along with a letter explaining their quest so far.

After splitting up for a time (during which Galahad spent the 6 months adventuring with Lancelot), they rejoined company and came at last to Castle Carbonek, where they achieved the Grail in a climactic Eucharist celebrated by Josephe, son of Joseph of Arimathea. Galahad then healed the Maimed King using the Blood of Christ on the Spear of

Longinus. Afterwards, the three of them, bearing the Grail and the Spear, sailed in a magic ship to Sarras (probably Caesaria in Israel).

In Sarras, they found Dindane's body on its funeral barge, and buried her in that city's Spiritual Palace. Estorause, king of Sarras and a pagan, imprisoned them for a year; the Grail fed them for the duration. Estorause freed them when on his deathbed, and Galahad succeeded him as king by Divine decree. He ruled as king for one year, at the end of which his soul ascended to Heaven with the Grail and the Spear.

Galahad was a boy and man of high ideals and almost unconscious purity. He is called a "spiritual" knight to differentiate him from his father and others who were "worldly" knights; much of his prowess may be the result of his closeness to the divine. It is clear that he is especially favored by God, because actual divine interventions occurred for him on a regular basis: for example, he was elected king of Sarras after the voice of God told the ruling council to do so!

His humility is his other outstanding trait. It is mild and unobtrusive, and manifests itself as a deference to others in all things and an underestimation of his own abilities.

It has been suggested that Galahad lacks free will. It does seem that his entire short life (he died at about age 20) was pre-programmed by God solely for the achievement of the Grail. Through much of his adventures, Galahad relied on his faith that God would guide his footsteps in the proper direction, and never really took an active role in determining his course - he just let himself be swept along by a pre-existing Heavenly plan. GMs should note that Galahad's Blessed power of Deus ex Machina should not be available to PCs unless they are willing to accept the same lack of free will!

Cinematic Galahad: Add Odious Personal Habit: Inhumanly Perfect (-15) to Disadvantages. Galahad, like Mordred, has fared badly in the transition to pop culture. Thanks in no small part to the boastful prig found bearing his name in Tennyson's *The Idylls of the King*, the Cinematic Galahad has sometimes come to be seen as self-righteous and half-witted, a hypocrite in shining armor. Not all modern treatments deal so harshly with him; he still achieves the Grail, after all (although some accounts now give Percival alone that honor, in keeping with the oldest tales). Cinematic Point Total: 465.



### Percival (Percivale, Percevale, Parsifal, Parzival, Peredur)

Welsh male, age 23, 5'10", 150 lbs., blond hair, blue eyes

ST 11 (10 points)                      IQ 12 (20 points)                      Speed: 6.5

DX 15 (60 points)                      HT 11 (10 points)                      Move: 5

Damage: Thrust 1d-1; *Swing* 1d+1

Point Total: 277

### Advantages

Appearance: Handsome (15 points); Companion of the Round Table (15 points)

Knighthood (20 points); Literacy (10 points); Reputation +4 (Britain, all the time, 7 points; 1 level free from Knighthood); Patron: Faerie folk on 6 or less (13 points); Status 5 (10 points; 3 level free from Companion, Knighthood and Wealth); Wealth: Very Wealthy (30 points); Very Blessed (no known divine gift) (20 points)

### Disadvantages

Chivalric Code of Honor (-15 points); Honesty (-10 points); Lover's Distraction (-15 points); Vow, Minor: Chastity (-5 points); Vow, Great: Find the Grail, see it unveiled (-15 points)

### Skills

Animal Handling-11 (2 points); Area Knowledge (Britain)-14 (4 points); Arca Knowledge (Wales)-15 (6 points); Bow-15 (4 points); Broadsword-17 (8 points); Buckler-18 (6 points); Climbing-14 (1 point); English-12 (0, native tongue); Heraldry-13 (4 points); Knife-15 (1 point); Lance-18 (16 points); Naturalist-10 (1 point); Riding-18 (16 points); Savoir-Faire (Britain)-14 (0, default from Status); Savoir-Faire (elsewhere)-12 (0, default from Status); Shield-18 (8 points); Shortsword-16 (2 points); Spear-15 (2 points); Spear-Throwing-18 (8 points); Staff-16 (8 points); Swimming-16 (2 points); Tactics-10 (1 point); Tracking-14 (6 points).

## Quirks

Dislikes Mordred and Kay for their early mockery of him. Dislikes the Orkney brothers for their murder of his brother Lamorak. Possesses a powerful religious faith. Devoted to his surviving family.

## Equipment:

Percival's Sword (see p. 33).

Percival was the youngest legitimate son of King Pellinore (the son of King Pellam of Carbonek). Fearing to lose him to the appeal of chivalry as she had lost his father and his brothers (Lamorak, Aglovale and Dornar) to the Round Table and its intrigues, Percival's mother raised him ignorant of the very existence of knighthood. But it was to no avail. At the age of 15, Percival sighted several Round Table knights riding in the forest and thought them angels. He approached them, and learned what his mother had been hiding from him.

Chivalric fever infected him immediately, and he decided to join the Round Table. Taking the best horse available (which was a broken-down old nag) and improvising a saddle and trappings, Percival departed for Arthur's court, but not before receiving advice on knightly behavior from his mother. Unfortunately, his first attempt to follow this advice left a less than favorable impression when he good-naturedly ransacked a pavilion and kissed the bewildered maiden within 20 times against her will. (Percival eventually had to rescue this maiden from her jealous lover, who was convinced she had been unfaithful to him.)



Percival was not at Arthur's court more than a few minutes - and not even knighted - when he fought a red-armored knight to avenge an insult to the queen. He won by casting a javelin into the eyeslot of his foe's helmet. Having earlier obtained a promise of knighthood from Arthur, he then rode off with his late foe's equipment in search of adventure.

In the course of his errantry, Percival learned much of what it meant to be a knight. According to Chretien de Troyes, he became the student of the faerie folk of the Otherworld, who taught him much about the use of arms. (It may have been the fees who gave Percival his magical sword.) He finally returns to court in the company of his brother Aglovale, acting as squire to the older son of Pellinore. At Aglovale's request, Arthur knights Percival and commands him to sit with the knights. However, a mute maiden who served the Queen spoke for the first time to hail him as God's knight, and led him to the empty seat at

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the right of the Siege Perilous, which she declared was reserved for him alone.

This presages his importance in the Grail Quest, for it is Galahad who finally occupies the Siege Perilous. He and Percival become friends and companions on the Quest, and Percival's sister Dindane becomes the virgin love of Galahad. Together with Bors de Ganis, he and Galahad finally achieved the Grail at Castle Carbonek. Immediately thereafter, they set forth in a magic ship for Sarras, bearing the Grail and the Spear of Longinus. After Galahad's death in Sarras, Percival became a hermit for 14 months, after which he, too, died.

Percival, like Galahad, is a holy knight. Until the day he died, he was a virgin, although Chretien de Troyes suggests otherwise; he did serve a lady, although she seemed more allegorical than real. The Vulgate states that he was second in holiness only to Galahad. At one point, before the Quest, he once prayed for healing for himself and a knight with whom he had jousting, and the Grail came and healed both.

However holy he is, Percival is no prig or prude. When not absorbed by the seriousness of a task in front of him, he seems to have been a cheerful and optimistic young man. He refused to believe ill of anyone - Mark of Cornwall's accusation of adultery between Tristan and Isolde fell on his deaf ears. He could hold a grudge, though; Kay and Mordred taunted him on his initial arrival at Camelot, and he had fierce words to give them some years later; he also bore some ill will towards the Orkney group for their murder of his older brother Lamorak.

**Cinematic Percival:** In some later tales and films, Percival is a farm boy or woodsman - unrelated to the Grail Kings - before being a knight, rather than highborn. To reflect this, reduce Wealth to Average and reduce Status to 4. Add to skills Agronomy-12. Add to quirks "Regards Galahad with something akin to hero worship." Cinematic Point Total: 248.

## Tristram (Tristan, Tristam, Drustan, Drustanus)

Cornish male, age 44, 6'5", 210 lbs., Auburn hair, green eyes, mustachioed  
ST 17 (100 points)                      IQ 14 (45 points)                      Speed: 7.25  
DX 15 (60 points)                      HT 14 (45 points)                      Move: 7  
Damage: Thrust 1d+2; Swing 3d-1  
Point Total: 516

## Advantages

Ally: La Beale Isolde (201-250 points, appears on a 15 or less; 60 points); Ally: Sir Dinas of Cornwall (151-200 points, appears on a 12 or less, 30 points); Appearance: Handsome (15 points); Companion of the Round Table (15 points); Knighthood (20 points); Literacy (10 points); Musical Ability +3 (3 points); Reputation +4 (**Britain, all the time, 7 points**); 1 level free from Companion; Status 5 (10 points); 3 levels free from Companion, Knighthood, and Wealth; Wealth: Very Wealthy (30 points)

## Disadvantages

Chivalric Code of Honor (-15 points); Enemy: King Mark of Cornwall on 12 or less (-20 points); Honesty (-10 points)

## Skills

Area Knowledge (Britain)-13 (1/2 point); Area Knowledge (Cornwall and Lyonesse)-16 (4 points); Broadsword-18 (16 points); Carousing-14 (2 points); Climbing-12 (default from ST); Chess-18 (8 points); Dancing-13 (1/2 point); Diplomacy-13 (2 points); English-14 (0, native tongue); Falconry-16 (6 points); Fast-Draw (Broadsword)-17 (4 points); Fishing-14 (1 point); French-13 (1 point); Heraldry-15 (4 points); Knife-16 (2 points); Lance-17 (8 points); Riding (Horse)-16 (4 points); Savoir-Faire (Britain)-16 (0, default from Status); Savoir-Faire (elsewhere)-14 (0, default from Status); Sex Appeal-14 (2 points); Shield-18 (8 points); Singing-18 (2 points); Musical Instrument (Harp)-18 (6 points); Staff-15 (4 points); Stealth-16 (4 points); Teaching-14 (2 points); Tracking-15 (4 points); Traps/TL3-15 (4 points); Two-Handed Sword-18 (16 points).

## Quirks

In love with La Beale Isolde, the former Queen of Cornwall. Ig-

nores his kingly duties and never visits his homeland of Lyonesse. Forgiven and compassionate. Satisfied with his life and rarely rides off looking for adventure.

### Equipment

Thrusting bastard sword and scabbard (5 lbs.); Small Irish harp (8 lbs.)



This is a portrait of Tristram in his last months of life. Shortly after the start of the Grail Quest, he was murdered by King Mark of Cornwall.

Tristram, as his name implies (it means "sad" in Latin), did not have an entirely happy childhood. He was born to King Meliodias and Queen Elizabeth of Lyonesse, but his mother died in childbirth. His father remarried, but his *stepmother* did not come to love the young prince; she once tried to poison him so that her sons *would* rule *Lyonesse*. But when she failed and was caught, Tristram pled for leniency for her.

Shortly thereafter, Meliodias sent the young Tristram to France, there to spend 7 years being educated and trained in the ways arms by Gouvemail (Gouvernail later became his squire). He became quite learned and adept at many fields, including almost any kind of hunting. He learned to play the harp with exceptional skill, and he sang equally well. Most importantly, Tristram became perhaps the only "worldly" knight capable of standing up to Lancelot.

The story of the affair between Tristram and la Beale Isolde is a long and complex tale, and defies simple summarization. The two met in Ireland when the 18-year-old Tristram needed healing from an envenomed blade. Because it was discovered that he was the killer of Isolde's uncle, Tristram was forced to flee Ireland for Cornwall and the court of his uncle, King Mark. Mark, who disliked his nephew, sent him to bring Isolde to become queen in the hopes that Isolde's kin would kill him. Instead, Tristram completed his mission and he and Isolde renewed their growing love affair. On the ship ride home, the lovers unknowingly drank a love potion (intended for Mark and Isolde), which permanently cemented their feelings for each other. Isolde went on with the marriage, but the two began a long-standing affair on the wedding night. Eventually Mark discovered the truth, and he banished Tristram for 10 years.

Wandering Logres, Tristram had many adventures. He re-encountered Sir Palomides, whom he had first met in Ireland during his convalescence. The two had been rivals for Isolde's love. After Tristram saved his life, Palomides agreed to a final challenge to settle the matter. However, Palomides missed the appointment and Tristram mistook Lancelot, riding with a covered shield, for the Saracen. The two

knights battled for hours, then declared it a draw. As a result, they became fast friends, and Lancelot saw to it that Tristram was made a member of the Round Table.

Tristram and Isolde made various attempts to be together, but King Mark always interfered. As a result of the persecution of Tristram, Mark's seneschal Dinas abandoned his post and lands to become the knight's companion and ally. After one interlude in which Mark stole Isolde back, Tristram was wounded; Isolde sent a message which told him to see a certain surgeon in Brittany: Isolde of the White Hands. Tristram evidently got his Isoldes confused; he married the Breton girl, much to the shock and surprise of almost everybody in Britain. He never consummated the marriage, though, and eventually returned to the Irish Isolde.

In the end, the two managed to escape Cornwall together; Lancelot gave them shelter in Joyous Garde, where they remained for more than ten years. Tristram was present at court when the Grail Quest started, but he declined to join the Quest in order to return to Isolde. Not long afterwards, he was killed by King Mark.

Despite his remarkable prowess as a fighter, Tristram was a gentle man. He was skilled as a musician and as a teacher - at the beginning of their love, he taught Isolde how to play the harp. Unlike many other knights, he was not compulsive about combat, and was quite content to spend literally years in relaxation with Isolde.

*Cinematic Tristram:* Tristram generally is shortchanged in cinematic and other modern renditions; he and Isolde, if not excised entirely, are off-screen and merely talked about by other characters. Those few interpretations that retain him seem to focus on his prowess. Raise ST to 18. Remove Sir Dinas as an Ally. Any change in the point total of Isolde will change her Ally entry, as well. Cinematic Point Total: 511.

### La Beale Isolde (Iseult, Iseulte, Isolt, Yseult, Yseulde)

Irish woman, age 44, 5'6", 125 lbs., red hair, green eyes  
 ST 10 (0 points) IQ 14 (45 points) Speed: 5.5  
 DX 12 (20 points) HT 10 (0 points) Move: 5  
 Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d  
 Point Total: 230

### Advantages

Appearance: Very Beautiful (25 points); Empathy (15 points); Literacy (10 points); Patron: Tristram on 15 or less (45 points); Reputation +2 (Irish beauty and renowned surgeon, 10 or less; 5 points); Status 6 (Irish princess, sometime queen of Cornwall; 30 points); Wealth: Comfortable (10 points)

### Disadvantages

Code of Honor, Surgeon's: Never deny aid to one in need; Never harm anyone with your skills; Always do your best to help those who need it. (-5 points); Enemy: King Mark of Cornwall on 12 or less (-20 points); Honesty (-10 points); Sense of Duty (Actually, several separate Senses of Duty: to King Mark, to Tristram, and to her patients; total is small group for -5 points)

### Skills

Acting-15 (4 points); Area Knowledge (Cornwall)-13 (1/2 point); Area Knowledge (Ireland)-13 (v- point); Area Knowledge (Northumberland)-15 (2 points); Bard-13 (1 point); Dancing-12 (2 points); Diagnosis/TL3-16 (8 points); Diplomacy-15 (6 points); English-14 (0, native tongue); Falconry-14 (2 points); First Aid/TL-3-16 (4 points); Heraldry-13 (1 point); Knife-13 (2 points); Musical Instrument (Harp)-14 (4 points); Physician/TL3-13 (2 points); Physiology/TL-3-14 (8

points); Riding (Horse)-13 (4 points); Savoir-Faire (Britain)-16 (0, default from Status); Savoir-Faire (elsewhere)-14 (0, default from Status); Surgery/TL-3-16 (16 points); Swimming-13 (2 points).

### Quirks

Corresponds regularly with Guinevere. Mirthful, with a fine sense of humor. Generous and hospitable to guests. Conscientious and concerned about her patients.



### Equipment:

TL3 doctor's "black bag" (15 lbs.)

La Beale Isolde ("La Beale" is medieval French for "the beautiful") was a princess - the daughter of King Agwisanice of Ireland. She was not a cloistered, pampered daughter of royalty, though; Isolde became a talented surgeon with a reputation that extended throughout Britain. It was this reputation which sent Tristram to her when he was wounded by a poisoned spear.

An outline of her relationship with Tristram is given in his entry. Isolde's life was inextricably intertwined with his, even during his banishment and other periods when he was forced to be away from her.



Isolde's medical skills were outstanding for the period and Tech Level. It is implied that her survivor rate was significantly higher than the average; this is a tribute both to her high *skill* and her conscientious follow-ups. Isolde is honestly devoted to her patients and does everything in her power to assure their recovery.

But Isolde was more than just a surgeon. Although her devotion to her craft is great, she has other sides. She is a royal and gracious woman, as well as a passionate one. At turns sober and mirthful, she is a complex woman who never ceases to delight and surprise her lover. She is known as a hostess, and many members of Arthur's court visited Joyous Garde while she was its mistress. She and Guinevere by all rights should have been jealous of each other, but instead they remained great friends; they regularly exchanged fond letters until the end of Isolde's life.

No one knows exactly when Isolde died, but it seems likely that she did not long survive Tristram, who died not long after the beginning of the Grail Quest.

This description is essentially a snapshot of her just before the Grail Quest. If an earlier period is chosen for the campaign, some details of her character may change. For instance, if the setting is during the time when Tristram was often travelling, the GM should reduce the frequency of Patron: Tristram to 12 or less or even lower. Note that if her point total is lowered to below 200, then Tristram's own total will change as well.

Cinematic Isolde: Like many of the capable women of Arthurian myth, Isolde is often reduced by cinematic convention to a generic "damsel in distress." Although some sources retain her medical train-

ing, most convert her into a somewhat vain princess of no known skills. *Cinematic Point Total:* Variable by campaign.

### Palomides

Saracen male, age 47, 6'2", 180 lbs., black hair, brown eyes.

ST 15 (60 points)      IQ 13 (30 points)      Speed: 7.25  
DX 16 (75 points)      HT 13 (30 points)      Move: 7

**Damage:** Thrust 1d+1; Swing 2d+1  
Point Total: 315

### Advantages

Appearance: Handsome (15 points); Companion of the Round Table (15 points), Knighthood (20 points), Reputation +3 (Britain, all the time; 1 level free from Companion) (5 points); Status 6 (15 points; 3 levels free from Knighthood, Companion and Wealth); Wealth: Filthy Rich (50 points).

### Disadvantages

Bad Temper (-10 points); Overconfidence (-10 points); Social Stigma: Infidel (-10 points); Vow, Major: Not to be baptized *until he* had done 7 true battles for Jesus' sake (-10 points).

### Skills

Area Knowledge (Britain)-13; Area Knowledge (Tuscany)-13; Broadsword-18; Diplomacy-13; English-13; Heraldry-14; Knife-16; Lance-17; Poetry-13; Riding-16; Saracen-13; Savoir-Faire (Tuscany)-15; Savoir-Faire (Elsewhere)-13; Singing-13; Survival (Forest)-14; Tracking-14; Two-Handed *Sword*-16.

### Quirks

Loves la Beale Isolde. Dislikes Tristram for receiving Isolde's affections. Pursues the Questing *Beast*. *Polite* to most everyone except Tristram. Fights often on behalf of dames and damosels.

This is Palomides shortly before the seventh great battle of his vow, and before his final reconciliation with Tristram, just before the Grail Quest. A Saracen prince from Tuscany, he and his two brothers Safere and Segwarides joined the Round Table about midway through Arthur's reign. Palomides was the original (and family-approved) suitor for La Beale Isolde's hand, and it devastated him when she chose to give her love to Tristram. He developed a hatred for the Cornish prince that lasted, with various interruptions, almost 20 years.

Despite his feud with Tristram, Palomides had many allies among the knights of the Round Table. Among others, he had sworn eternal friendship with Lamorak. He was known for his remarkable courtesy and honor, and was always a dependable champion as well as an extraordinary fighter.

His rivalry with Tristram ended when, just before the beginning of the Grail Quest, the two met, and Tristram decided to give Palomides the seventh battle he'd been looking for. Tristram won the bout after two hours and the two were finally reconciled, and Tristram stood at Palomides' side as the Saracen was finally baptized.

Palomides has been ignored in most cinematic depictions.

### Breuse Sans Pite

Briton man, age 45, 5'10", 145 lbs., sandy-blond hair, dark eyes

ST 14 (45 points)      IQ 13 (30 points)      Speed: 6.5  
DX 13 (30 points)      HT 13 (30 points)      Move: 6

**Damage:** Thrust 1d; Swing 2d

Point Total: 255

### Advantages

Alertness +3 (15 points); Combat Reflexes (15 points); Danger Sense (15 points); Extraordinary Luck (30 points), Intuition (15 points); Peripheral Vision (15 points); Status 1 (5 points)

### Disadvantages

Bloodlust (-10 points); Code of Honor (evil): harass the Round Table and flout the laws of chivalry (-15 points); Enemy: Just about

everyone (-40 points); Intolerance of Nobility (-5 points); Sadism (-15 points), Reputation (-3 with almost everyone, -7 points).

### Skills

Acting-11 (1/2 point); Animal Handling-11 (1 point); Area Knowledge (local)-15 (4 points); Axe/Mace-13 (2 points); Bard-13 (2 points); Brawling-13 (1 point); Broadsword-14 (4 points); Camouflage-13 (1 point); Disguise-12 (1 point); Escape-14 (8 points); Fast-Draw (Knife)-14 (1 point); Fast-Talk-17 (10 points); Flail-12 (2 points); Heraldry-15 (6 points); Knife-13 (1 point); Lance-15 (8 points); Riding (Horse)-8 (15 points); Savoir-Faire-13 (1 point); Shield-16 (8 points); Stealth-14 (4 points); Survival (Forest)-12 (1 point); Swimming-15 (1/2 point); Tactics-14 (6 points); Tracking-13 (2 points); Traps-13 (2 points)

### Quirks

Revels in wickedness. Tramples foes when they're down. Doesn't hesitate to flee when necessary.

Of all the evil knights to trouble Arthur's realm, Breuse was the worst. Unlike almost every other foe of the Round Table, Breuse was *never* captured, slain, or converted to the cause of Camelot. He was a knight of great skill but no honor, given to attacks from behind, wearing false colors, trampling downed knights with his horse and general dirty fighting. When seriously threatened, he would simply turn tail and run. On occasion he enlisted the aid of others by claiming that the knight chasing him was actually Breuse!

Note that he is not listed with the advantage of "Knighthood" - what status and powers he has, come from his own strong arm and wits. He is called a knight because he has a horse and armor and calls himself a knight.

Breuse committed murder, rape, robbery, kidnapping, assault and any other deviltry that came to his mind. Although often foiled, he always got away.

### Generic Knight

This is an experienced, above-average knight skilled in several weapons. He has no sporting or social skills, but these can be inserted or improvised as the GM sees fit. This template can be easily adjusted to produce rank beginners or exceptional champions, by adding useful advantages, DX and sometimes ST. His PD and DR depend on the type of campaign; knights will wear the heaviest armor type extant.

ST 13 (30 points)	IQ 10 (0 points)	Speed: 6
DX 12 (20 points)	HT 12 (20 points)	Move: 3
Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+2		
Dodge: 3	Parry: 7 (Broadsword)	Block: 4

### Advantages

Knighthood (20 points); Reputation + 1: Britain, all the time (20 points); Status 2 (5 points; 1 level free from Knighthood); Wealth: Wealthy (20 points)

### Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Robber knights may take Pirate's Code; ordinary knights may take a modified Chivalric; Companions are urged to take Full Chivalric)

### Skills

Area Knowledge (Home turf)-13 (4 points); Axe/Mace-13 (4 points); Broadsword-14 (8 points); English-11 (0, native tongue); Flail-12 (4 points); Heraldry-11 (2 points); Knife-13 (2 points); Lance-14 (8 points); Riding (Horse)-14 (8 points); Savoir-Faire (Britain)-13 (0, default from Status); Savoir-Faire (elsewhere)-11 (0, default from status); Shield-14 (4 points).

### Equipment:

Heaviest armor normally available in the campaign; Large shield (25 lbs.); Thrusting broadsword and scabbard (5 lbs.; sw+1 cut., thr+2 imp.)

Dagger (A lb., thr-1 imp.); Lance, 12-foot (6 lbs., thr+3 imp.; based on horse's ST); Warhorse (ST 40-50).

## The Orkney Brothers

Sons of Arthur's half-sister Morgawse, these five men span the gamut of the worst to the best among the knights of the Round Table. In order of birth, they were Gawaine, Agravaine, Gaheris, Gareth and Mordred.

### Gawaine (Gawein, Gauvain, Walewein, Walwanus, Gwalchmai)

Scottish male, age 64, 5'9", 165 lbs., red hair and brown eyes, bearded

ST 12 (20 points)	IQ 11 (10 points)	Speed: 6.75
DX 14 (45 points)	HT 13 (30 points)	Move: 6
Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+2		
Point Total: 264		

### Advantages

Allies: The other Orkney brothers (Agravaine, Gaheris, Gareth and Mordred) on 12 or less (Bought as a Patron group; 30 points); Appearance: Attractive (5 points); Combat Reflexes (15 points); Companion of the Round Table (15 points); Knighthood (20 points); Reputation +4 (Britain, all the time, 7 points; 1 level free from Companion); ST doubles between 9 am and noon (35 points; see below); Status 5 (10 points; 3 levels free from Companion, Knighthood, and Wealth); Wealth: Very Wealthy (30 points)

### Disadvantages

Chivalric Code of Honor (-15 points); Fanatic: Family Honor (-15 points); Sense of Duty to Arthur and the Round Table (-10 points); Major Vow: Always champion a lady in need, and never turn down a request for aid from a lady. (-10 points)

### Skills

Area Knowledge (Britain)-13 (4 points); Area Knowledge (Orkney)-14 (6 points); Axe/Mace-14 (2 points); Brawling-16 (4 points); Broadsword-16 (8 points); English-11 (0, native tongue); Heraldry-11 (2 points); Knife-15 (2 points); Lance-16 (8 points); Riding-14 (2)



points); Savoir-Faire (Britain)-13 (0, default from Status); Savoir-Faire (elsewhere)-11 (0, default *from* Status); Shield-17 (8 points); Swimming-14 (1 point).

## Quirks

Loves and aids the poor. Never speaks ill of any person. Fiercely loyal to Arthur. Holds strong, long-lasting grudges. Loves fruit and eats some at every meal.

## Equipment:

Poignard (dagger), named "Mercy of God" (Vs lb.)  
Galatine (see p. 30) and scabbard (5 lbs.)

Gawaine is the oldest nephew of King Arthur, first-born of Morgawse and King Lot of Orkney, and chief of the Orkney clan. He is also Arthur's favorite among his nephews, and in many sources held positions of importance in the kingdom government. He was named for a saintly hermit, who baptized him and prayed that he might receive a special gift. The prayer was granted, and Gawaine received strength that waxed from 9 in the morning until noon, when it doubled; after noon, it faded at the same rate.

The increase is gradual, at the rate of 1 point of ST gained every 15 minutes. It tops out at noon, when he has ST 24 (2d+ 1 Thrust, 4d+2 Swing) until 12:15 PM. Some accounts suggest that he regains lost fatigue at noon as well, but this is actually an effect of the doubling process, *which* provides 1 point of fatigue for every point of ST gained.

Gawaine arrived with his brothers at Arthur's court before the second rebellion against the king. At that time, Arthur's true parentage was still unknown. It was not until around the time of Arthur's wedding to Guinevere that the king's true parentage *was* revealed and with it their uncle-nephew relationship. Gawaine had his first major quest on the day of the wedding feast, sent by Merlin's advice to pursue the white hart which had run through the feast hall. Unfortunately, during this quest he accidentally slew a damsel; Guinevere ordered Gawaine to forever champion women as retribution.

Gawaine was elevated to the Round Table after he and several other knights performed what amounted to a commando raid on the leaders of a foreign invasion. Although it was King Pellinore who sponsored Gawaine's membership, the young Scotsman later swore blood vengeance on Pellinore when the King of the Isles accidentally slew his father, Lot of Orkney, on the practice field. This he later achieved, much to the despair of his uncle.

He and his brothers (except for Gareth) also claimed the right of blood vengeance on Prince Lamorak, Pellinore's son, who had become the lover of their mother, Morgawse. Although they later slew Lamorak, it was not until after Gaheris accidentally slew Morgawse as she lay sleeping with the prince. Gawaine's fanatical devotion to preserving the honor of the Orkney family ever distressed King Arthur.

Gawaine was one of the most adventure-prone knights of the Round Table; his career cannot begin to be summarized. Suffice it to say that he is one of the best-known of Arthur's knights, and for good reason.

Gawaine and Lancelot were good friends, despite Gawaine's murderous history - or perhaps because of it, given Lancelot's own bloody slaughters. The two knights ignored the factional disputes that sprang up around them, and remained on close terms until Lancelot's rescue of Queen Guinevere, near the end of Arthur's reign. In the course of that rescue, Lancelot unintentionally slew Gaheris and Gareth, who were both unarmed. Gawaine, predictably, swore blood vengeance, and instigated the sieges of both Joyous Garde and Lancelot's French fortress. In the hours before his death, though, Gawaine forgave his friend and begged him to come to the aid of Arthur against Mordred's revolt.

According to the Vulgate, Gawaine was made constable of Arthur's household and given Galatine (see p. 30). Until the arrival of Mordred (and the revelation of his parentage), Gawaine was Arthur's heir and successor.

Gawaine, although a favorite with the ladies, was a devoted family man. Sadly for him, *none* of his marriages lasted long; he was often widowed. His favorite wife was Ragnell, the ex-Loathly Lady, who bore his son Gingalin. He had two other sons, Florence and Lovel, who were killed by Lancelot during his escape from the trap set by Agrava-

ine and Mordred. (Surprisingly, for these deaths - and that of Agravaine at the same time - Gawaine was willing to forgive Lancelot.)

Gawaine, despite a gruff exterior and a lady-killing manner, is a fine and faithful knight. He is deeply concerned with honor, more for his family than himself, and does his best to always act honorably. His past excesses (except those committed in the name of family honor) shame him and color his actions in any similar situations. Gawaine's fundamental nobility shines through in everything he does.

**Cinematic Gawaine:** Modern accounts tend to emphasize Gawaine's attraction for the ladies, while diminishing his battlefield prowess. His extraordinary strength usually disappears completely from these retellings. T.H. White portrays him as the most conservative of the brothers, maintaining a Scots accent to remind his siblings and the court at large of their northern heritage.

Raise ST to 16. Remove ST doubling from Advantages, and change

Appearance: Attractive to Handsome. Remove Vow from Disadvantages and insert Bad Temper. To skills add: Carousing-13; Fast-Talk-14; Sex Appeal-15. Change English-11 (0, native tongue) to English-11 (2 points) and add Gaelic-11 (0, native tongue). Remove "Loves the poor" and "Never speaks ill" from Quirks and replace with "Womanizer" and "Affects a Gaelic accent." Cinematic Point Total: 317.

## Agravaine (Aggravain, Agrivayne)

Scottish male, age 59, 6'2", 165 lbs., black hair, hazel eyes  
ST 13 (30 points) IQ 10 (0 points) Speed: 5.75  
DX 12 (20 points) HT 11 (10 points) Move: 5  
Damage: Thrust 1d; Swing 2d-1  
Point Total: 242

## Advantages

Allies: The other Orkney brothers (Gawaine, Gaheris, Gareth and Mordred) on 12 or less (Bought as a Patron group; 30 points); Appearance: Very Handsome (25 points); Companion of the Round Table (15 points); Knighthood (20 points); Literacy (10 points); Status 5 (10 points); 3 levels free from Companion, Knighthood, and Wealth; Wealth: Very Wealthy (30 points)

## Disadvantages

Bad Temper (-10 points); Compulsive Behavior: Gossiping (-10 points); Duty to Crown and Britain on 12 or less (-10 points); Fanatic: Family Honor (-15 points); Jealousy (-10 points); Overconfidence (-10 points)

## Skills

Area Knowledge (Camelot)-13 (6 points); Area Knowledge (Orkney)-13 (6 points); Bard-12 (6 points); Bowing-14 (4 points); Broadsword-14 (8 points); Chess-12 (4 points); Diplomacy-11 (6 points);

English-10 (0, native tongue); Fast-Talk-13 (8 points); Heraldry-11 (4 points); Lance-14 (8 points); Knife-14 (4 points); Knife Throwing-15 (8 points); Lip Reading-12 (6 points); Riding-13 (4 points); Savoir-Faire (Britain)-14 (4 points); Savoir-Faire (elsewhere)-10 (0 points, default from Status); Shadowing-13 (8 points); Shield-15 (8 points); Shortsword-14 (6 points); Stealth-13 (4 points).

## Quirks

Professes a Code of Honor, but actually has none. Vicious and mean. Actually likes Mordred. Pitiless and loveless. Does not care whether he is liked or not.

Agravaine, second son of Lot of Orkney and Morgawse, Arthur's half-sister, has very little going for him. Clearly the most handsome of the five brothers, he was spoiled as a child and thus spoiled for life.

Malory and the Vulgate both agree that as a knight, he was one of the more skilled members of the Round Table. However, he is best known for his treachery and envy, and for his hobby of malicious gossip. If one seeks damaging information on anyone in the court, be it true or not, Agravaine is the person to speak to. Without really trying, he has placed himself in the center of a vast network of rumor, which he can tap and control at will.



With three of his brothers (Gawaine, Gaheris and Mordred), he conspired to murder Lamorak, son of Pellinore and the (latest) lover of their late mother (at that time recently killed by Gaheris). This they accomplished, attacking as a group in order to overcome Lamorak's great skill in combat.

Even more importantly, Agravaire triggered the downfall of Arthur and the Round Table. Desiring out of envy and hate to hurt Lancelot, he began spreading rumors about the affair between the queen and her champion. In the end, it was he, accompanied by Mordred, who made the first open accusation of the affair to Arthur, and who gained permission to trap Guinevere and Lancelot together.

This was to be his own downfall. When he, Mordred and 12 other men attempted to capture Lancelot in the queen's quarters, he was slain by Lancelot.

Agravaire is a thoroughly unlikable character; one receives the impression that the only reason that his brothers tolerate him is that they have built up an immunity to him since childhood. He is vicious and petty, with no feelings of concern or compassion towards anyone. He is perhaps more culpable than Mordred for the downfall of the Round Table, because while Mordred is hungry for power, Agravaire's sole motivation is spite and hatred of Lancelot.

Cinematic Agravaire: There really is no Cinematic variant for Agravaire, unless you count his virtual disappearance from later versions of the fall of Camelot. In keeping with T.H. White's early cinematic portrayal, though, the GM may wish to give him the disadvantage of Alcoholism, and change English-10 (0, native tongue) to English-10 (2 points) and add Gaelic-10 (0, native tongue). Cinematic Point Total: 229.

### Gaheris

Scottish male, age 56, 5'11", 160lbs., red hair, blue eyes.  
 ST 12 (20 points)      IQ 11 (10 points)      Speed: 7  
 DX 14 (45 points)      HT 14 (45 points)      Move: 7  
 Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+2  
 Point Total: 245

### Advantages

Alertness + 1 (5 points); Allies: Orkney Clan (30 points), Companion of the Round Table (15 points); Knighthood (20 points), Literacy (10 points); Status 5 (10 points; 3 free from Companion, Knighthood and Wealth); Wealth: Very Wealthy (30 points).

### Disadvantages

Bad Temper (-10 points); Code of Honor: Modified Chivalric (-10 points); Fanatic: Family honor (-15 points).

### Skills

Area Knowledge (Britain)-11; Area Knowledge (Orkney)-12; Axe/Mace-15; Brawling-16; Broadsword-15; English-11; Heraldry-11; Knife-16; Lance-16; Riding-15; Savoir-Faire (Britain)-13; Savoir-Faire (Elsewhere)-11; Shield-17; Tracking-11.

### Quirks

Not entirely stable. Holds strong grudges. Flip-flops between almost saintly and almost insane behaviors. (The GM can escalate this into full-blown schizophrenia to make Gaheris even harder to deal with.)

Gaheris is the third-born of the Orkney brothers. Originally squire to his brother Gawaine, Gaheris soon became a Companion on his own. In many ways he acted as his older brother's conscience even after his own knighting, but this moral behavior was sadly diluted by the Orkney bloodlust for vengeance. Together, the two eventually slew King Pellinore, "not manly but by treason," in vengeance for their father's accidental death at Pellinore's hands.

Even for an Orkney brother, though, Gaheris was violent. He slew his own mother while trying to kill her lover, Lamorak; failing his original purpose, he later joined with his brothers (except for Gareth) to slay Lamorak by ambush. At times he seems to have a tendency towards wanton slaughter, and yet he is portrayed as also being a conscientious and considerate knight. The two aspects of his personality seem almost irreconcilable; it's possible he may suffer from some form of split personality.

Gaheris is also noteworthy in that his right arm is said to have been distinctly longer than his left.

He has been ignored in the cinematic tradition.

### Gareth ("Beaumains")

Scottish male, age 55, 6'2", 165 lbs., curly red hair, brown eyes  
 ST 16 (80 points)      IQ 13 (30 points)      Speed: 7  
 DX 15 (60 points)      HT 13 (30 points)      Move: 7  
 Damage: Thrust 1d+ 1; Swing 2d+2  
 Point Total: 397

### Advantages

Appearance: Handsome (15 points); Companion of the Round Table (15 points); Knighthood (20 points); Literacy (10 points); Reputation +4 (Britain, all the time, 7 points; 1 level free from Companion); Status 5 (10 points; 3 levels free from Companion, Knighthood, and Wealth); Wealth: Very Wealthy (30 points)

### Disadvantages

Chivalric Code of Honor (-15 points); Honesty (-10 points)

### Skills

Animal Handling-11 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Britain)-14 (2 points); Area Knowledge (Orkney)-14 (2 points); Bard-14 (4 points); Broadsword-20 (32 points); Chess-17 (8 points); Cooking-16 (6 points); Dancing-13 (1/2 point); Disguise-12 (1 point); English-13 (0, native tongue) Falconry-12 (1 point); Heraldry-14 (4 points); Lance-18 (16 points); Leadership-12 (1 point); Riding-17 (8 points); Savoir-Faire (Britain)-15 (0; default from Status); Savoir-Faire (Elsewhere)-13 (0; default from Status); Shield-18 (8 points); Tactics-17 (12 points); Throwing-16 (8 points); Two-Handed Sword-16 (4 points).

## Quirks

Generous and charitable. A favorite with the ladies, and he likes their *company*. Married to Lyonesse and loves her deeply. Estranged from Gawaine because of the latter's vengefulness.

The youngest son of Lot and Morgawse, Gareth is said to have been the fourth best knight in the world. He and Tristram are the only "worldly" knights known to have fought Lancelot to a standstill in a sword battle.

Gareth's story starts with his anonymous arrival at Camelot (disguised as a peasant in some versions), where he asked Arthur for three boons: the first was to be fed for a year, after which he would ask the other two. Arthur agreed, and turned the young man over to Kay. Kay installed him in the kitchens and nicknamed him "Beaumains" - "Pretty Hands." Gareth made many friends while a kitchen drudge. Lancelot and Gawaine among them.

At the end of the year, the damosel Lynette came to court to find a champion to rescue her sister Lyonesse from a siege raised by the Red Knight of the Red Launds, Sir Ironside. To the amazement of all, Beaumains requested - and received - his two remaining boons: the right to take up the challenge, and a request that Lancelot be sent after them to grant him knighthood.

Lynette was not pleased with the arrangement, and began a stream of mockery that did not cease until the end of the adventure. Kay rode after the pair to give Beaumains his first test, and was promptly unhorsed in their joust. Lancelot followed shortly afterward. Although he unseated Beaumains, when their combat continued on foot he was sorely pressed and eventually called it a draw; with great pride he knighted the young man.

Gareth's first adventure set the tone for the rest of his career; during its course he conquered and converted numerous knights, including the surviving Chromatic Knights (see p. 43), after killing their brother, the Black Knight. After defeating the great Sir Ironside and sending him back to become a Companion of the Round Table, Gareth eventually won the love of Lyonesse. They were married shortly after a great tournament thrown by Lyonesse, where Gareth fought his brother Gawaine to a standstill.

Gareth's true identity had been revealed shortly before when his mother Morgawse visited Arthur's court. With his true name revealed, Gareth retained "Beaumains" as a nickname. He remained at Arthur's court for the rest of his life, carefully avoiding the depredations of his brothers and maintaining his friendship with Lancelot. Gareth finally died when, against his *will*, he was ordered to join the knights taking Guinevere to the stake. He and his brother Gaheris were unarmed and unarmored, and were struck down by accident by Lancelot in the confusion.

Gareth was the most "innocent" of the Orkney brothers, less given to their irrational devotion to family honor, and certainly much more courtly. He lacked their bad points, and seemed to combine the best of his brothers in a single package. Malory always clearly points out that whenever any of his brothers are up to no good, Gareth is never involved. In fact, says Malory, there was a certain estrangement between Gareth and Gawaine because of the latter's vengeful nature. Not surprisingly, Gareth frequently ended up in the company of Lancelot and his faction.

Still, he retained the love of those of his brothers who could love. It was in vengeance for Gareth's death that Gawaine called for the sieges raised against Lancelot - not for the deaths of Agravaine and two of Gawaine's own sons.

*Cinematic Gareth*: Gareth is another one of Malory's extraordinary characters who seems to vanish completely in the cinematic setting. *The Once and Future King* retains him, as do a few other sources, but everywhere else, he joins his brothers in the cinematic limbo of lost knights.

A suggested cinematic adaptation, based on his few appearances, would be: Add Charisma + 1 and Luck (15 point level) to Advantages. In skills, change English-13 (0, native tongue) to English-13 (2 points), and add Gaelic-13 (0, native tongue). Add "A true innocent at heart" to Quirks. *Cinematic Point Total*: 418.



## Mordred (Modred, Medraut)

Scottish male, age 43, 6'1", 170 lbs., curly blond hair and brown eyes

ST 11 (10 points)

IQ 13 (30 points)

Speed: 5.75

DX 13 (30 points)

HT 10 (0 points)

Move: 5

Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+1

Point Total: 345

### Advantages

Alertness +3 (15 points); Allies: The other Orkney brothers (Gawaine, Agravaine, Gaheris, and Gareth) on 12 or less (Bought as a Patron group; 30 points); Appearance: Handsome (15 points); Companion of the Round Table (15 points); Knighthood (20 points); Literacy (10 points); Reputation +2 (Britain, all the time; 2 points; 1 level free from Companion); Status 5 (10 points; 3 levels free from Companion, Knighthood, and Wealth); Wealth: Filthy Rich (50 points)

### Disadvantages

Overconfidence (-10 points)

### Skills

Acting-15 (6 points); Animal Handling-11 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Britain)-13 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Camelot)-15 (4 points); Area Knowledge (Orkney)-13 (1 point); Broadsword-15 (8 points); Chess-21 (16 points); Detect Lies-14 (6 points); Diplomacy-14 (6 points); English-13 (0, native tongue); Falconry-13 (2 points); Flail-14 (8 points); Forgery/TL3-14 (6 points); Heraldry-13 (2 points); Knife-15 (4 points); Lance-16 (16 points); Leadership-12 (1 point); Riding (Horse)-15 (8 points); Savoir-Faire (Britain)-17 (4 points); Savoir-Faire (Elsewhere)-13 (0, default from Status); Shield-15 (4 points); Shortsword-13 (0, default from Broadsword); Stealth-15 (8 points); Swimming-15 (1 point); Tactics-16 (10 points).

### Quirks

His good looks are spoiled by his perpetual "wicked" expression. Avoids encounters with Lancelot, partly out of dislike, partly out of shame. Cares not at all about the pain or suffering of others. Tom between fulfilling his destiny and his desire to prove the prophecy wrong. Cold and cynical in all dealings with all people.

Mordred is the bastard son of King Arthur by his half-sister, Queen Morgause of Orkney. Neither was aware of the relationship at the time of his conception; Merlin (as usual) would not tell Arthur about his parentage until it was too late. Merlin's warning (see p. 68) panicked Arthur, who nine months later ordered the death of all babies born anywhere near the expected delivery date. Five hundred infants were gathered and set adrift in a ship; when the ship crashed upon the shore, only Mordred survived. As a side effect of Arthur's decree, Mordred's nominal father, King Lot of Orkney, organized the second rebellion against Arthur.

Mordred was rescued by fishermen and raised by them for a short time, until Morgause located him by magic. She brought him home, and according to some tales, began to teach him to hate the King. However, when Mordred finally arrived at court, a young man of 20, he seemed untouched by his mother's venom. Everything went well for him - he was knighted almost immediately and welcomed by his four older brothers and their cadre of followers. He showed exceptional potential and was clearly an up-and-coming young knight.

Two years later, all that changed. While adventuring with Lancelot, the two encountered a priest, who hailed them as the two knights who would destroy Camelot. The priest then disabused Mordred of the notion that Lot had been his father and revealed his true parentage. In a rage, Mordred slew the priest (much to the annoyance of Lancelot, who wanted to know what he was going to do to destroy Camelot).

Mordred's personality underwent a drastic change. Torn between wanting to fulfill the priest's prophecy and wanting to spite it, he became cynical and cold, with little concern or compassion for others. Still a knight of great prowess, he was a valuable member of the Round Table. But he was not liked. Even among his half-brothers he was the odd man out. He still retained a sense of humor, although it was of a

dubious nature. While he joined in on harmless pranks played by other knights, his own japes had an unpleasant, mocking edge.

Mordred never revealed the secret of his birth to anyone; Lancelot kept his silence, too, except to tell Guinevere the prophecy that Mordred would destroy Camelot. Mordred's relationship with Lancelot from that time forward was strained at best, and the two had little to do with each other. Perhaps as a result of his rivalry with Lancelot, Kay seems to have made some effort to maintain a friendship with Mordred.

Mordred does not actively plot against the King. His final betrayal seems a crime of opportunity rather than an act planned in advance. He spends his free time observing the politicking that occurs among the Round Table knights and collecting useful information. In the end, he and his brother Agravaine start the collapse of Arthur's empire by betraying Lancelot and Guinevere; he from desire for the throne, and Agravaine simply out of spite.

*Cinematic Mordred:* Remove Allies and Reputation from Advantages and add Patron: Morgan le Fay on 12 or less and Voice. Add Cowardice and Jealousy to Disadvantages. T.H. White actually makes him malformed, with *Lame: Crippled Leg*. In skills change English-13 (0, native tongue) to English-13 (2 points) and add Gaelic-13 (0, native tongue). Also add to skills: Lockpicking-14; Poisons-13; Sleight of Hand-13. Reduce all combat skills to 11. Remove Forgery. Mordred's story changes drastically between Malory and the present day. He becomes the son of Morgan le Fay and loses his heroic character, becoming an almost effeminate coward. He comes to court alone and stays that way, since he no longer has the support group of his half-brothers. In some versions, he becomes almost a caricature of evil - the only thing lacking is black mustachios for him to twirl. *Cinematic Point Total.* 324 (without Lameness).

## Magic-Wielders

### Merlin (Merlyn, Myrddin)

Welsh male, age 51 (in 414; 91 in 454), 5'8", 150 lbs., white hair, gray eyes

ST 9 (-10 points)                      10 16 (80 points)                      Speed: 5.75

DX 12 (20 points)                      HT 11 (10 points)                      Move: 5

*Damage: Thrust 1 d-2; Swing 1 d-1*

*Point Total:* 297 + Grimoire

#### Advantages

Eidetic Memory (30 points); Gift of Prophecy (See *Grimoire* section below; 50 points); Immunity to Disease (10 points); Literacy (10 points); Magery 3 (35 points); Reputation +2; Powerful wizard and adviser to kings (Britain, all the time; 5 points); Status 6: Court Magician/Chief Adviser (30 points); Unusual Background: half-demonic (10 points)

#### Disadvantages

Odious Personal Habit: Disguise (-10 points); Overconfidence (-10 points); Vow, Minor: Never speak a prophecy in plain English (-5 points); Vow, Minor: Never to harm Blaise, his former master (-5 points)

#### Skills

Acting-19 (4 points); Animal Handling-14 (1/2 point); Area Knowledge (Britain)-20 (4 points); Bard-19 (4 points); Carousing-12 (4 points); Carpentry-16 (1/2 point); Detect Lies-16 (2 points); Diplomacy-15 (1 point); Disguise-21 (6 points); English-16 (0, native tongue); Fast-Talk-17 (2 points); Heraldry-17 (2 points); History-18 (4 points); Psychology-18 (4 points); Savoir-Faire (Britain)-18 (0, default from status); Savoir-Faire (elsewhere)-16 (0, default from status); Staff-13 (8 points); Strategy-17 (3 points); Tactics-17 (3 points).

#### Quirks

Likes flashy magic. Slightly misogynistic, but not immune to a pretty face. Frequently visits his teacher Blaise in Northumberland. Generally crotchety and hard to get along with. Expects everyone to take his word as law on all things.





## Grimoire

Merlin knows all spells available in the campaign at a minimum level of 20. In addition to these, Merlin has demonstrated unique personal spells, including a large-scale (multi-ton) version of Apportation (perhaps a spell form of Telekinesis), a spell of movement capable of transporting anywhere from 1 person to thousands 1,000 miles overnight - undetected by anyone, and spells of weather control with vast areas of effect. There is also the spell which Nimue used to trap him, which he could not break.

Merlin also possesses a Gift of Prophecy - an inherent Divination ability similar to the spell found on p. 26. This broadly-based talent, claimed to be a

gift from God, includes oneiric dream interpretation and true long-range prognostication. It is not a spell, and does not require a skill roll, or cost any Fatigue points to use. This leniency is set off by Merlin's refusal to phrase any prophecy in clear terms; it does not seem that Merlin uses this ability to help himself in any case. Since this is not a spell, it cannot be taught.

Merlin taught magic to several enchantresses, among them Nimue and Morgan le Fay. Of them, only Nimue seems to demonstrate any range that would indicate mastery of a complete course in the spells that Merlin knew.

## Equipment:

Staff

Merlin was born, according to a pre-Malory legend, to a virgin woman (some tales say a princess, others a nun) who was impregnated by a demonic spirit. The child was covered with thick black hair and spoke in perfect English on the day of his birth. Thus Merlin entered the world.

His mother was to be burned for witchcraft for his birth, but the infant Merlin spoke at the trial, prophesying and revealing embarrassing details about the judges; his mother went free.

Merlin was known as a prophet, but more commonly he was known as a boy who had no father. When Vortigem's advisors said such a boy's blood was needed to mix with the mortar for his sinking tower, the 9-year-old Merlin was found and brought before the king. His prophecies and revelations on the site of Vortigern's fortress saved his life and made him a legend, but he disappeared from the sight of men to study magic with the master Blaise.

When Merlin quickly and definitively exceeded his master in power, Blaise retired to Northumberland. Merlin vowed never to hurt him, and asked Blaise to write a book of all Merlin's deeds: the master agreed.

Merlin was a powerful sorcerer at a very early age. He was only 11 when he helped transport Stonehenge from Ireland to Britain. His power grew as he aged; by the time of Arthur, he was capable of summoning storms and earthquakes to aid the young king.

He acted as adviser to the British kings from Vortigern to Arthur, warning them about their futures and sometimes guiding their reigns. Arthur seems to be the capstone of a long career in shaping Britain into some private image of Merlin's, for Arthur's life, of all the kings, is most intimately entwined with Merlin's. The story is well known how Merlin transformed Uther Pendragon into the likeness of Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall, so that he might sleep with the Duchess Igraine and beget Arthur. Merlin hid the boy away upon his birth. Merlin also set up the Sword in the Stone, the test that was to dramatically reveal Arthur's heritage. The wizard then helped Arthur defend his kingdom against rebellions. Once Britain had settled down a bit, Merlin became something more of an adviser than a military aide.

Merlin's undoing is the damsel Nimue, who learns all his secrets of magic and then locks him away in either a tree or a rock, depending on the source. However much later writers castigated her for this act, it seems clear that she was acting in self-defense; that her motives were never evil is shown by her taking on Merlin's role as adviser to the king (perhaps at the wizard's request?) once she became the new Lady of the British Lake. And note that Merlin, although sealed up, was not dead and was far from unreachable; more than one knight passing by his "tomb" held conversations with him.

Even in his youth, Merlin was sharp and critical of those around him - not surprising, considering the limited omniscience he seemed

to possess. As he grew up, his sharp tongue became something of a trademark, for he did not fear to snap even at kings. He never stunted on his prophecies or his opinions, and gained respect for his refusal to toady. He seemed to hold no specific loyalties to anyone or anything - the Vulgate calls him "treacherous and disloyal by nature" - but that

could be because he held true to a vision of a greater good that surpassed individual kings. Or it could be, as some suggest, because he was indeed influenced by his half-demon side, and had more than a touch of evil.

Merlin used to give his knowledge of the future in plain language, but after an unfortunate incident he began to couch his prophecies in vague terms. A man came to Merlin three times, in three disguises, and asked how he was to die. Merlin gave three different answers: by hanging, by drowning, and by falling off a horse. Disgusted at the

fraud he thought he'd found, the man rode off. He died shortly afterwards when, while riding across a bridge, he fell off his horse, got his neck tangled in the reins, and ended up hanging upside down with his head under water.

In addition to vague prophecies and a caustic wit, Merlin had other bad habits. He was a wanderer, nearly as bad as Lancelot when it came to vanishing suddenly. It appears that he genuinely enjoyed being outdoors with nature and away from men. He also loved disguises, to the point of annoying Arthur and his men; whether through magical or mundane means, if Merlin could disguise himself, he would. At one time or another he took the forms of everything from a toddler to a stag, although he seemed to prefer looking like a churl, or peasant.

Merlin also possessed an imperial attitude, perhaps inherited from his princess mother (if that version of his origin is used). He truly seems to expect everyone who hears his wisdom to accept it automatically, and is more than a little upset when it is doubted or not acted upon. Arthur was king because he said so, and those rebellious barons and subkings should know better than to doubt him! As he grew older, this seemed to become a general cantankerousness.

Most distressingly, Merlin never arrived in time to do the most good. He would usually show up only after the damsel died, or in time to write an epitaph, or to castigate the virtuous loser of a battle. This is despite his known ability to travel vast distances very quickly. Perhaps he did not want Arthur's knights depending on Merlin to get them out of every little scrape. Or maybe he just didn't care!

Most of the magics Merlin used on a daily basis were illusions of one stripe or another. He liked showy effects that took little effort, and indeed, served little utility. He did have a great talent at enchanting items which used combinations of spells for unusual effects, such as the sieges (seats) of the Round Table (see p. 34). But Merlin did very little magic which was truly lasting or of significance. No small number of his permanent magical efforts were of dubious value, such as a bed which drove insane any who lay in it (p. 32). (Perhaps this, and other less-than-useful items, were the result of magical backfires.)

*Cinematic Merlin:* The ambiguous Merlin of medieval legend became an almost angelic wizard in pop culture; perhaps the only modern writer to actively disparage Merlin was Mark Twain. In general, the sarcastic prophet gave way to a powerful, but sometimes muddled, wizard of clearly beneficent motives. T.H. White added the most endearing and endearing modern detail to Merlin: his reverse aging. If the GM wishes to employ this, he should carefully consider the options. One interpretation is that Merlin simply ages backward - he was born old, and will die a baby. The more challenging form has him actually living backwards, remembering the future and unaware of the past. (This accounts for his gift of prophecy.) Occasionally, this will require the GM to "force" situations and conversations, so as not to conflict with Merlin's "memories." In either case, Merlin is given as having an extraordinarily long lifespan.

Other changes: Remove Gift of Prophecy and Immunity to Disease; replace with Unaging. Remove Odious Personal Habit and Vows, and add Absent-Minded. In Skills, remove Acting, Carousing and Disguise. Change History-18 to History (5th Century to Modern)-18. Add Economics-15, Sleight-of-Hand-11; Teaching-16. Remove Quirk about Blaise and replace with "Gets confused about future and past."

*Knight Life*, by Peter David, has a unique portrait of Merlin. The setting is the 20th century, and the wizard has youthened to a ripe 12 years old. He has lost none of his imperial attitude and crotchiness,

and his magical power has increased dramatically. He remains adviser to the revived Arthur, incongruous with his apparent youth and centuries of wisdom. Cinematic Point Total: 247 + Grimoire.

## Morgan le Fay (Morgaine, Morgana)

Cornish female, age 72, 5'2", 110lbs., black hair, blue eyes  
ST 10 (0 points)      IQ 14 (45 points)      Speed: 6.25  
DX 14 (45 points)      HT 11 (10 points)      Move: 6  
Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d  
Point Total. 283 + Grimoire

### Advantages

Absolute Timing (5 points); Appearance: Very Beautiful (25 points); Literacy (10 points); Magery 3 (35 points); Status 6: Queen of Gore (1 level free from Wealth; 25 points); Strong Will +3 (12 points); Wealth: Filthy Rich (50 points)

### Disadvantages

Bad Temper (-10 points); Lecherous (-15 points); Reputation -3: Power-hungry evil sorceress (Britain, all the time; -7 points)

### Skills

Acting-15 (4 points); Administration-13 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Britain)-17 (6 points); Chess-16 (4 points); Dancing-13 (1 point); English-14 (0, native tongue); Fast-Talk-16 (6 points); Heraldry-13 (1 point); Knife-17 (8 points); Physician/TL3-16 (8 points); Research-15 (4 points); Riding (Horse)-14 (2 points); Savoir-Faire (Britain)-16 (0, default from Status); Savoir-Faire (elsewhere)-14 (0, default from Status); Sex Appeal-14 (8 points); Stealth-15 (4 points).

### Quirks

Only half-heartedly hates Arthur, and that for the sake of her mother. Hates Guinevere for disrupting her first love affair - with Guiomar, Guinevere's cousin. Has alternating love/hate feelings for Lancelot. Has had many lovers and paramours, all of whom she loved strongly and to whom she was faithful.

### Grimoire:

Morgan's spell list is tentative; unlike Merlin who receives sufficient superlatives that it is safe to assign him all known spells, Morgan's magic is hard to pin down. Some of her powers may actually be the result of magic items. Of her abilities, whatever their source, this much is certain:

Morgan specializes in the Illusion, Mind Control and all Elemental colleges. She has a smattering of Light and Darkness - enough to have Invisibility under her belt. She has created magic items in the past, so she must have some proficiency in the Enchantment college. It also seems likely that she has knowledge of the Healing college up to and including Major Healing. It is virtually certain that she has unique spells in the Knowledge and other colleges. Of course, she possesses all prerequisites for any specific spells given here for her. Morgan is also an Herbalist (Physician/TL3; see p. 21).

Given her IQ and Magery, her minimum skill with any spell will be 15. All Illusion and Mind Control spells known by her are at 17.

Morgan was the youngest of the three daughters of Igraine and Gorlois, and half-sister to Arthur. When she was still a child, her stepfather Uther Pendragon married off her two older sisters Morgawse and Elaine in political unions, and almost as an afterthought sent her to a nunnery. There she grew up and gained an extensive education, including herbcraft and - if we are to believe Malory and others - some knowledge of magic.

By the time Arthur was married and his parentage known, Morgan had either left or been released from the cloister, and had taken up residence at the court. Some time after his rebellion and ensuing repatriation to Arthur, King Uriens of Gore married her. Judging from some of her later actions, this too may have been a political wedding, arranged to ensure the support of Gore for the king. To Uriens she bore a son, named Uwaine.



Morgan and Guinevere were close friends in those early years. The queen once gave keepsake rings (almost identical in appearance) to both Morgan and Lancelot. But the friendship ended when Guinevere discovered that Morgan had taken her cousin Guiomar as a lover. Enraged, she banished Guiomar. Heartbroken, Morgan left the court, and made her way to Merlin, from whom she learned magic (or expanded upon her existing knowledge of it). No doubt her *ill-will* towards Guinevere deepened into true hatred when she discovered the queen's hypocrisy in taking a lover and denying her friend the right to have one.

When Morgan finally returned to Camelot, she began her long career of harassing and harming the court. Her first attempt was crude **and obvious** - a simple simultaneous assassination plot against both her husband and her brother, involving her new lover, Accolon of Gaul. Accolon died when he bungled the job of killing Arthur, and Morgan was stopped from killing Uriens by their son. She and her men escaped capture, and in the process she managed to steal the enchanted scabbard of Excalibur (see p. 30) and throw it into a deep lake. Not long afterwards, she made one further attempt on Arthur's life, sending a mantle trapped with a fire spell (see *Morgan's Mantle*, p. 32). On advice from Nimue, Arthur forced the damsel who delivered the mantle to wear it first, and it immolated her.

After that, Morgan seemed to think better of assassination plots. She instead began sending the court hints of Guinevere's unfaithfulness to Arthur, and magical items designed expressly to prove it. But it was all to no avail - either Arthur refused to believe her accusations, or the magical items worked so well (on every woman at the court) that they could be dismissed as trickery. The only time one of her devices worked as she had planned, it was ill the wrong court! Morgan's drinking horn (see p. 32) was diverted to the court of King Mark of Cornwall, and revealed to him the adultery of his wife La Beale Isolde.

It appears that after her attempt on her husband's life, he and Morgan separated and went their own ways. Uriens remained at Arthur's court, and Morgan traveled around Britain, basing herself in one after another of several different castles owned by her. She used no less than

three castles across Logres and Wales, at least two of which she owed outright, independently of her husband.

It has been suggested that Morgan, along with several cronies, was at the head of an organized network of sorceresses and villainous knights. There is some evidence for this; King Mark of Cornwall once requested them to let loose a tidal wave of evil sorceresses and knights.

Judging from incidents in Malory, it seems that Morgan's ill-will toward Arthur was only half-hearted. Unlike her attempts to reveal the unfaithfulness of her former friend Guinevere, she made only two direct attacks on Arthur, very early in her career. Morgan eventually retired to her castle, where she remained quiescent for so long she was thought dead. However, Arthur came upon her one day while hunting, and stayed a week with her. They enjoyed the time together; Morgan made no attempt to harm Arthur, and only tried once to convince him of Guinevere's infidelity. At the end of the visit, Arthur asked Morgan to return to Camelot, but she graciously declined. The next time she appears, she is leading the ladies who bear Arthur away to Avalon.

It seems likely that Morgan's early antagonism towards Arthur was actually displaced anger at Uther, who killed her father, married her mother, sent her sisters away, and shut the young Morgan herself away in a convent. When she finally left the convent, Uther was dead, and only his son remained; with her anger at Guinevere filling her, it seems reasonable that some of it spilled over and opened old wounds. However, she eventually came to terms with it, and evidently came to love her half-brother once again. She was one of the four queens who came to bear him away to Avalon after his last, fatal battle.

*Cinematic Morgan:* Morgan grew meaner and nastier with age. Modern writers (until recently) have portrayed her as evil incarnate, vicious and unrepenting; Machiavellian while at court and outright subversive when away. Twain makes her Merlin's co-conspirator against Arthur and the Comiecticut Yankee. French tradition all the way through the Charlemagne cycle portrays her as an immortal temptress, although not necessarily evil. Many other traditions make her immortal, as well. An interesting permutation of unknown origin frequently makes her the mother of Mordred. For this Morgan, add Unaging to Advantages. Remove Ally. Add Sadism to Disadvantages. Add Carousing-12 and Hypnotism-15 to Skills. She is known to have performed Divination of both the cartomancy and the crystal-gazing varieties, and will have those spells at a skill of 19. Some sources ascribe the ability to summon demons to her as well.

Other writers portray her in a more favorable light; Sanders Anne Laubenthal and Marion Zimmer Bradley are the most notable. In this view, Morgan is one of the last priestesses of the Celtic religion, and her animosity towards Arthur is at least partly because of the Christianization of Britain which he represents. This Morgan can also be Unaging. Remove Ally from Advantages. Reduce Status to 4 and Wealth to Comfortable, and add Clerical Investment. Remove all existing Disadvantages and replace with Duty to Goddess and Sanctuary on a 12 or less, Enemy: Christian Church on 9 or less (-40 points), Sense of Duty to Worshipers (-10 points) and (optionally) Minor Vow: Celibacy. To Skills, add Theology (Celtic)-17 and remove Sex Appeal. *Cinematic Point Totals:* Version 1: 293 + Grimoire; Version 2: 227 + Grimoire.

## Nhnue

Briton woman, age 56, 5'7", 120 lbs., chestnut hair, hazel eyes.  
ST 10 (0 points) IQ 15 (60 points) Speed: 5.75  
DX 12 (20 points) HT 11 (10 points) Move: 5  
*Damage; Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d*  
*Point Total:* 318 + Grimoire

## Advantages

Ally: Sir Pelleas (husband) (30 points); Appearance: Very Beautiful (25 points); Common Sense (10 points); Intuition (15 points); Literacy (10 points); Magery 3 (35 points); Reputation +2 (Arthur's court, all the time) (3 points); Status 5 (1 free from Wealth) (20 points); Strong Will +2 (8 points); Wealth: Filthy Rich (50 points).

## Disadvantages

Duty to Britain on a 9 or less (not life-threatening) (-5 points); Duty to the people of the Lake on a 12 or less (not life-threatening) (-10 points); Honesty (-10 points).

## A Cast of Thousands



## Skills

Administration-17; Area Knowledge (Britain)-16; Area Knowledge (The Lake)-18; Bard-16; Dancing-12; Diplomacy-16; English-15; Fast-Talk-17; Heraldry-15; Hypnotism-15; Knife-13; Savoir-Faire (Britain)-17; Savoir-Faire (Elsewhere)-15; Sex Appeal-14; Swimming-13; Teaching-14.

## Quirks

Cautious and deliberate. Married to (and loves deeply) Sir Pelleas. Rarely leaves the Lake. Supports Arthur and his policies both directly and indirectly.

## Grimoire

As for Merlin.

Nimue (pronounced nim-YOU-ay) has been involved with the court of King Arthur since the founding of the Round Table. Her sudden appearance at its first feast - on horseback, chasing a white deer and a white hunting dog through the room - triggered the first adventures of the Table. When she was finally brought back to Camelot by King Pellinore, she became the student of Merlin, who was lovesick for her. He taught her all of his magic, and may have been responsible for installing her as the second Lady of the British Lake.

Merlin's interests were not entirely political and academic. To escape his lecherous advances, Nimue used the magic he had taught her to imprison Merlin - various sources say within a stone, a tree or a cave. (Earlier sources have her supervising a voluntary retirement for Merlin out of genuine affection - a theme revived by T.H. White.) Either out of guilt or at Merlin's request, she seems to have taken up his role of adviser and mystic protector of the court.

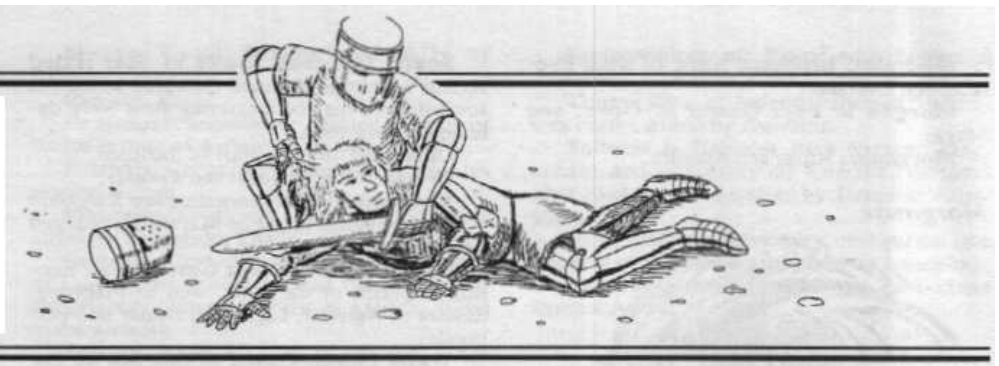
Much later, Nimue wed Sir Pelleas and possibly sponsored his membership in the Round Table; however, Pelleas seems to have spent the rest of his life in the Lake with her.

Nimue was one of the four queens who came to bear away the mortally-wounded Arthur to Avalon after his last battle.

## Other Characters

Here we present brief descriptions of many of the characters who appear in Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Marie D'Arthur*, as well as important characters from the Vulgate romances.

This list can be used by both GMs and players for inspiration or imitation. Any of these characters could come to life as PC or NPC, ally or foe.



## Nobility

**Adrawns/Elise/Elyce:** Duke, Arthur's uncle.

**Agrippe:** King of Wales. His daughter was imprisoned in iron bands by his enemy, King Vadalon, and rescued by Bors de Ganis.

**Alain:** King of Escavalon.

**Amans/Aniause/Anyaus(e):** King, would-be conqueror of Cameliard, whose youngest daughter Bors later championed. Killed by Bors in battle.

**Ansirius/Anserus the Pilgrim:** Duke, kinsman of Ban.

**Argustus:** Son of King Harlon.

**Aristance:** Earl; see *Knights*.

**Arrouse:** Earl, one of the men of the King of Pomitain.

**Arthur:** King of Britain. See p. 90.

**Bagdemagus:** Heir to Uriens, later King of Gore (see *Knights*).

**Bandes/Baudes:** King; his daughter is loved by Corsabrin.

**Berrant le Apres:** The King of the Hundred Knights (see *Knights*).

**Boudwin:** Prince; see *Knights*.

**Brandegoris/Brandegore/Brandgorys:**

King of Stranggore; one of the 11 kings who rebelled against Arthur.

**Brandelis/Brandeharz/Brandreiz:** Duke of Taningues.

**Calles:** Duke; disinherited sons for his daughter and blood feud erupted; killed by Lancelot and Lionel because they were ill-informed of the facts.

**Cameliard, Queen of:** Wed to Leodegrance.

**Carados:** See *Knights*.

**Clamadon:** King, father of Byanne.

**Clarivaus:** King of Northumberland; see *Knights*.

**Constantine of Cornwall:** Arthur's successor; see *Knights*.

**Corneus:** Duke; father of Lucan and Bedivere.

**Cradelment:** King of Norgales; see *Foes*.

**Del Parc:** Count of Turquine's (Terican's)

Hill.  
**Doutre les Marches, King of:** Ally of Duke Galeholt.

**Eastland, Queen of the:** See under *Foes*.

**Elaine/Elayne of Tintagil:** Queen of Garloth, daughter of Igraine and Gorlois, sister of Morgawse and Morgan le Fey, half-sister of Arthur, wed to King Nentres.

**Elizabeth/Elyzabeth:** Queen of Lyonesse, sister of King Mark of Cornwall, wed to King Meliodas of Lyonesse. Mother of Tristram; died giving birth to him.

**Esclamor:** King of Le Tertre Deuce.

**Ethelwold:** Earl, and ally of Priamus.

**Eustace:** Duke of Cambenet/Cambines/Cambynes, ally of the 11 kings against Arthur. Encounters Aristaunce on the seventh day of the Tournament of Surlose.

**Evelake:** Pagan king of Sarras; see *Of The Faith*.

**Fergus:** Earl; see *Knights*.

**Fisher King, The:** See Pellam.

**Galeholt, the Haut Prince:** Duke; see *Knights*.

**Gloier:** King of Soreloise (Surlose), killed by Galeholt, who fostered his orphan daughter.

**Grail King, The:** See *Pellam*.

**Guinevere:** Queen of Britain; see p. 91.

**Guinevere (false):** See *Foes*.

**Harlon:** King, father of Argustus.

**Helaes de La Forest Perilleuse/the Beautiful:** Countess of Limos, an orphan, the sister of Clapor le Riche, niece of Meleager le Rous, cousin of Damoisele a la Harpe. Determined paramour of Gawaine; enlisted the aid of Orioliz the Dane to get in his bed.

**Heliades:** King of Scotland; see *Foes*.

**Hermance/Harmaunce/Hermaunce:**

King of the Red City. Brother of Hermind, uncle of Helake and Helius.

**Hermel:** Duke, knighted Sir Garnish, daughter is loved by Garnish.

**Hernox:** Earl of Castle Carteloise, had three sons and one daughter, imprisoned by incestuous sons.

**Idres:** King of Cornwall, one of the 11 rebellious kings.

**Igraine:** Duchess of Tintagil, wed to Gorlois, mother of Morgawse, Elaine, and Morgan le Fey. Later wed to Uther Pendragon and Queen of Britain, mother of Arthur by Uther. Sent for by Arthur after he learns the truth of his heritage, becomes Queen Mother.

**Isolde/Isoud/Ios(u)de/Isould(e), La Beale:** Queen of Cornwall, wed to King Mark. Loved by Palomides. See p. 97.

**Labor/Lambor:** King of Listenoise, a Fisher (Grail) King, son of Manuel, father of the Maimed King, killed by Hurlame in the first Dolorous Stroke by the "Sword with the Strange Girdles."

**Lake, King of the:** See *Knights*.

**Lambaile:** Earl; see *Knights*.

**Lodegrance/Lodegrean(s):** King of Cameliard, wed to the Queen of Cameliard, father of the two Guineveres, gave his lands, Guinevere and the Round Table (given him by Uther) to Arthur.

**Lianour/Lyanowre/Lianor:** Duke, lord of the country and Castle of Maidens.

**Lot:** King of Lothian, Louthe and Orkney; one of the six and 11 kings against Arthur, wed to Morgawse, father of Gawaine, Agravain, Gaheris and Gareth, defeated by Arthur, accidentally killed by Pellinore.

**Lothus:** King of the Scots (Lothus may be the same as Lot).

**Marboar/Malboac:** King of Castle del Molin.

**Mark of Cornwall:** See *Foes*.

**Meliodas/Marsyl:** King of Pomitain, a vassal of Galeholt.

**Mathem:** Duke, father of Avenable (Gris-andoles).

**Meliodas/Melyodas:** King of Lyonesse; wed to Elizabeth, brother-in-law of Mark, father of Tristram.

**Merlan Le Dyable:** See *Foes*.

### Igraine



**Modrains:** Baptismal name of King Evelake; see Evelake.

**Morgan le Fey:** Queen of Gore; see Mages.

**Morganor:** King; see *Knights*.

### Morgawse



**Morgawse/Morgause:** Queen of Orkney, wife of King Lot, half-sister to Arthur. Mother of Gawaine, Agravaine, Gaheris, Gareth and Mordred. Beheaded by Gaheris while abed with Lamorak, her lover.

**Nentres:** King of Garloth; see *Knights*.

**Nero:** See *Foes*.

**North Gales/Gales/Walys/Norgales, King of:** See Ryons.

**North Gales/Gales/Walt's/Norgales, Queen of:** See *Sebile*, under *Mages*.

**Out Isles, Queen of:** See *Foes*.

**Orofoise, Countess of:** Arthur fought a giant on her behalf.

**Pase, Earl of:** Deadly enemy of Morgan le Fay, uncle of the damosel (Morgan's cousin) who helped Alisander le Orphelin escape from La Beale Regarde.

**Pellam/Pelham:** King of Listenoise, "The Maimed King." Also known as the Grail King and the Fisher King. Son of Labor, brother of Garlon, father of Pelles, wounded by Balin with the Spear of Longinus, healed by Galahad with the Spear.

**Pelles:** King of Listenoise, son of Pellam, cousin of Joseph of Arimathea, father of Elaine and Eliazar, uncle to Castor.

**Pellinore of Listenoise:** Known as King of the Isles; see *Knights*.

**Plains/Playns, Earl of the:** Adversary of the nephew of the Lady of Hervin in a tournament at a castle in the valley.

**Premier Conquis:** King; ally to Duke Galaholt.

**Rowse/Rouse, Duke de la:** Defeated by Gareth and sent to Arthur's court with a hundred knights as prisoners, became Gareth's wine sewer (server) and knight of the Round Table.

**Ryons:** King of North Wales; see *Foes*.

**Sanam:** Earl.

**South Marches, Duke of the:** Hated Arthur's knights because Gawaine killed his seventh son; his six remaining sons were defeated by Marhaus.

**Ulhawes/Ulause:** Earl of Surluse.

**Uriens:** King of Gore; see *Knights*.

**Vadalon:** King of Norgales; see *Knights*.

**Vagor:** King, father of Marabron; charged Lionel with treason.

**La Veuve Dame de Is Gaste Forest Sou-taine:** Queen of the Isles, wed to Pellinore, mother of Agloval, Lamorak, Donar and Percivale.

**Waste Lands, Queen of the:** See *of The Faith*.

**Welshe King:** Defeated the Viscount of Rome.

**West Wales, Lord of:** A mighty duke, gives 30,000 men to Arthur to war against Rome.

### Foreign Nobility

**Agwissance:** King of Ireland and Scotland; see *Knights*.

**Areas:** See *Foes*.

**Arouz:** Count of Flanders, killed by Arthur's army on way to fight Claudas.

**Arrant:** King of Denmark, brother of the King of Ireland, father of Melias de Lile, one of the Five Kings against Arthur.

**Astlahor:** King, father of Palomides, Safer, and Segwarides.

**Ban:** King of Benoit, son of King Lancelot, brother of King Bors, wed to Elaine/Clarine, father of Lancelot, Arthur's ally in the war of the 11 kings. With Arthur and Bors he rescued Leodegrance, returned to France to help fight Claudas.

### Ban



**Bors:** King of Gaul, son of King Lancelot, brother of King Ban, wed to Evaine, father of Bors de Ganis and Lionel, Arthur's ally in the war of the 11 kings, with Arthur and Ban rescued Leodegrance, returned to France to help fight Claudas.

**Brittany/Bretayne, Duchess of:** Wed to Howel of Brittany, killed by the giant of Mont-St.-Michel.

**Carbarecotins/Kabbaaranturs/Carbar entins:** King of Cornoaille, ally of Arthur against Claudas.

**Chaleins/Galeschin:** Duke of Clarence; see *Knights*.

**Clarisin/Clarysyn the Countess:** Appealed to Arthur to spare her city in Tuscany.

**Claudus:** King of Gaul; see *Foes*.

**Constantine/Constantyn(e):** Emperor of Rome, son of Heleine.

**Dauphin/Dolphyn:** Duke of Lorraine, killed by Gawaine in the forage battle.

**Edolf:** King, ally of Lucius, ambushed prisoner convoy to Paris at Troyes.

**Edwarde:** Pagan king, ally of Lucius, ambushed prisoner convoy to Paris.

**Egypt, King of:** Killed with Lucius at Sessoine by Arthur's knights.

**Elaine/Elayne/Clarine:** Queen of Benoit, wed to King Ban, sister of Evaine of Gaul, mother of Lancelot, founded a holy order called the Royal Minister after the death of Ban and the abduction of Lancelot by Viviane, visited Lancelot in Gannes, retired with her sister to the Royal Minister.

### Estorause



**Estorause/Esto(u)rause:** Pagan and tyrant King of Sarras, imprisoned Galahad, Bors and Percival for one year, fell sick, released them and died of his malady, succeeded by Galahad.

**Ethiopia/Ethiophe, King of:** Killed with Lucius at Session.

**Evaine:** Queen of Gaul, wed to King Bors, sister of Elaine of Benoit, mother of Bors de Ganis and Lionel, retired with her sister to the Royal Minister following the death of Bors and seizure of her young sons.

**Faramon:** King of France; his daughter was in love with Tristram, sent Tristram a bracket, and died for the love of him.

**Frolle:** King of Alemaigne, tried to take advantage of Arthur's attack on Claudas by invading Gaul at the same time.

**Grip/Gryp:** Earl; made war with Howel, seriously wounded Kehydius, killed by Tristram.

**Howel/Howles:** King/Duke of Brittany; ordered by Arthur to build a church on Mont-St.-Michel.

**Ireland, Queen of:** Daughter of Marhault, sister to Marhaus, wed to King Agwisance of Ireland, mother of La Beale Isolde.

**Ladinas/Ladynas de la Rouse:** Duke, French knight, defeated by Griflet.

**Longtains, King of the Isle of:** One of the five kings against Arthur.

**Lorralne/Lorayne, Duke of:** Roman ally whose presence was reported to Gawaine by Priamus.

**Lucius/Lucius Iberius:** Roman Emperor; sent Arthur a message demanding tribute, killed by Arthur in battle.

**Marhault:** King of Ireland, father of Marhaus and Queen of Ireland.

**Moyses Land, Marquis of:** Ally of Lucius.

**Pannor:** King.

**Pantelion/Pantesileus:** Master Consul of Rome at time of Arthur's war with Claudas.

**Patrides:** Count of Flanders, by Arthur replacing Arouz.

**Pignores:** King; ally of Sesnes (Saxons), attacked Vandalior Castle.

**Sextore:** King of Lyly/Lyble/Lybye, ally of Lucius, designated to lead the ambush of the prisoner convoy to Paris at Troyes, killed in the ambush.

**Soleyse, King of:** One of the five kings against Arthur.

**Syria, Sultan of:** Killed with Lucius at Sessoine.

**Thoas:** King of Ireland; attacked Vandalior castle, killed by Gawaine.

**Tolleme la Feintes:** Rich Saracen king, cousin and adversary of Evelake, defeated after Evelake was baptized by Joseph of Arimathe.

**Vale, Earl of:** Adversary of Aguraus (the nephew of a dead hermit found by Lancelot).

**Vale, King of:** One of the five kings against Arthur.



## Ladies

**King Agrippe's daughter:** Killed 5,000 of King Vadalon's invading troops by poisoning wells. Imprisoned in iron bands by Vadalon, rescued by Bors de Ganis.

**Alice/Alys la Beale Pilgrim:** Daughter of Ansirus, kinswoman of Ban, wed to Alisander le Orphelin, mother of Bellegerus le Beuse.

**Amable:** Damosel who led Lancelot to Turquin and Peris de Forest Savage. Healed Lancelot with a combination of medicines after he drank from a poisoned fountain; falls in love, and promised to be his virgin love. Friend of Brandegoris' daughter.

**Amans'/Aniause's daughters:** After their father's death, the elder sister usurped the rule of the younger, who had been made heir by Amans. The younger sister was later championed by Bors de Ganis against the elder sister's champion Pridam le Noire.

**Anglides/Anglydes:** Wife of Boudwin, cousin to Bellangere, witnessed Boudwin's murder by Mark, kept Boudwin's armor for protection, promised Sadok to avenge Boudwin's death.

**Astrigis:** See *Foes*.

**Avenable:** Daughter of Duke Mathem, disguised herself as a man, using the name Grisandoles. Starting as a squire she advanced to the position of seneschal in the Emperor of Rome's court. When her sex was revealed, Avenable wed the Emperor.

**Bagdemagus' daughter:** Helped rescue Lancelot from Castle Chariot from the four queens. Her price was that he champion her father against the King of Northgalis.

**Beauvivante:** See *Maledisant*.

**La Beale Regard, Damosel de:** Cousin to Morgan le Fey and Earl of Pase. Apparently familiar with arms and armor; once rode out bearing sword and shield to strike Alisander le Orphelin with the flat of her blade, after he had become transfixed by love.

**Beloe, Lady of:** Grieved at the sight of Gawaine's body, claimed in front of her husband that Gawaine was her only true love, and was promptly beheaded by him. Her body was borne with Gawaine's by Arthur's knights.

**Benigne:** Damosel of Castle Glocedon, cousin of the Damosel of Hongrefort, rescued by Bors from knights attempting to drown her after killing her love, later joined her cousin in her search for Bors.

**Biempensant:** Name given to Damosel Maledisant by Lancelot.

**Bragwaine:** See *Seneschals and Servitors*.

**Brandegoris' daughter:** Paramour of Bors de Ganis, was a prize of the tourney of Castle de la Marche and was won reluctantly by Bors. Mother of Helin le Blank by Bors, by way of an enchanted ring.

**Brandiles' sister:** Wed to or paramour of Gawaine, mother of Florence and Lovel; see also *Floree*.

**Lore de Branlant:** Cousin of Drians le Giaz of Castle Giaz, lady of Branlant Castle; her seneschal was Bruns de Branlant. Among the many that loved Gawaine.

**Briestoc, Lady of:** Sovereign lady who lost all her knights in an attempt to rescue Gawaine from Carados of the Dolorous Tower.

**Brisen:** See *Mages*.

**Byanne:** See *Mages*.

**Camille:** See *Mages*.

**Colombe/Columbe:** Lady of Lanceor, killed herself upon Lanceor's death by Balin. Damoiselle de la Blanche Land; Gaheris' sweetheart.

**Damosel Savage:** See "Lynette" under *Mages*.

**Dindane:** See *Of The Faith*.

**Elaine/Eleyne:** Daughter of Pellinore and the Lady of the Rule, betrothed of Miles of the Launds, killed herself after Miles was murdered.

**Elaine/Elayne le Blanc:** "Fair Maiden of Astolat," daughter of Bernard, sister to Tirre and Lavaine, loved Lancelot, given Lancelot's shield in keeping by him. Lancelot (incognito) bore her sleeve. She died for love of Lancelot, was put on a funeral barge with note; given mass and buried by Lancelot.

**Elaine/Eleyne of Carbonek:** Daughter of Pelles, lover of Lancelot, slept with Lancelot twice by the enchantment of Dame Brisen. Mother of Galahad.

**Elaine the Peerless:** Wed to Persides of Gazewilte, claimed her beauty was superior to his prowess, was thus imprisoned by her lord. Rescued by Ector de Maris at the request of her sister.

**Elyzabel:** Cousin and intimate personal confidante to Queen Guinevere.

**Enid:** Daughter of Earl Yniol, niece to Nudd, cousin to Edym, wed to Gereint. Was

presented by Gereint to Guinevere as a handmaiden, but later taken back home by him. Because of a misconstrued statement she made, she endured a long test of faithfulness by Gereint.

**Ettard:** Proud lady loved by Pelleas. She became the lover of Gawaine, then was enchanted by Nimue into loving Pelleas. Pelleas then rejected her for Nimue and she died for the love of Pelleas.

**Felelolie/Felelolye/Felelolle:** Sister of Urre of the Mount, wed to Lavaine.

**Floree:** Daughter of Alain of Escavalon, wed to Gawaine, mother of Florence and Lovel (Brandiles' sister?).

**Galvoie, Lady of:** Sent a request to Arthur's court for Lancelot or Gawaine to champion her; championed by Bors instead, who defeated her enemy Mariales. Wed to Gaidon.

**Gloiers' daughter:** Orphaned daughter of the King of Soreloise, fostered by his enemy Duke Galeholt.

**Guinevere (false):** See *Foes*.

**A La Harpe, Damoselle:** Healed Orioloz the Dane, either sister or cousin of Heleas de la Forest Perilleuse.

**Helaine de Tanningues'sister:** Paramour of Gawaine; received from Gawaine a girdle and locket originally given to Gawaine by the Lady of Roestoc.

**Heliap:** Lady love of Sagamore le Desirous.

**Herlew's Lady:** Wed to Herlews le Berbeus, with the aid of Balin le Savage went on quest to avenge her husband's murder by Garlon the Invisible. Carried the truncheon that killed her husband, and survived her encounter with the Leprous Lady to give that truncheon to Balin to kill Garlon; killed during Balin's maiming of King Pellam.

**Hongrefort, Damosel of:** She and her younger sister were left Castle Hongrefort upon their father's death, and were besieged by their uncle Galindes because she refused to marry his seneschal. Her younger sister enlisted the aid of Bors de Ganis. Galindes was defeated but the damosel had offended Bors, who rode off with Seraide; she rode after him and obtained his pardon.

**Huntress of Windsor:** Lady who lived in Windsor Forest, hunted daily only with wom-



en, accidentally shot Lancelot in the buttocks near Brastias' hermitage.

**Ilhis:** Lady whom Gaheris appropriated for himself while inebriated; he ended up in her and her husband's bed, creating a jealous scene between the two. Thinking the lady was in danger he literally cut the husband in two, then insisted she remain with him, making her swear never to love another knight. Her four brothers were defeated by Gawaine attempting her rescue, but she finally escaped Gaheris by becoming a nun when they stayed overnight in a nunnery.

**Isoude le Blanche Mains:** Daughter of Howel, noted surgeon, wed to Tristram (unconsummated).

**Landoine/Landoigne:**

*Daughter of Berrant le Apres, King of the Hundred Knights.*

**Launds/Laundes, Lady of the:** Cousin of Agwisance, who held a tourney to find a husband; her tourney was won by Tristram, who didn't bother to collect the prize.

**Laurel:** Niece of Lyonnesse and Lynette, wed to Agravaive.

**Lady Leech of Cornwall:** Prophesied that Tristram would never be whole if he remained in Cornwall and that he must go to Ireland.

**Leprous Lady:** See *Foes*.

**Lestoite Marche, Lady of:** Daughter of Lord of Lestroite Marche, who made all knightly guests defend his castle for a half-day so he could find her a husband. She fell in love with Ector de Maris, who had defeated Marganor while a guest. When she discovered he loved another, she gave him a magic ring which made him love her.

**Leverzep, Damosel of:** Lady rescued by Lancelot and sent to Arthur to let the king know he was still alive. Rewarded by Arthur with Castle Leverzep.

**Lile of Avelion:** See *Mages*.

**Lionors/Lyonors/Lyzianor/Lisanor:** Chatelaine of Castle Karadigan, daughter of Earl Sanam, paramour of Arthur, mother of Arthur's son Borre.

**Loathly Lady:** See Ragnell.

**Lore of Carduel:** See Seneschals and Ser-vitors.

**Lynette:** See *Mages*.

**Lyonnesse/Lyon(n)es(se)/Lyonors, Dame:** Lady of the Castle Perilous or Dangerous, sister to Lynette and Gringamore, cousin to Nimue, wed to Gareth.

**Maledisant:** Companion to La Cote Malle Taille (Breunor le Noire). Renamed Damosel Bienspansat by Lancelot; again renamed Lady Beauvivante after being wed to Breunor.

**Lady of Malohaut:** Governed the town of Le Puis de Malohaut. Loved by and in love with Duke Galeholt.

**Malvis:** See *Foes*.

**Damosel of the Marches:** Vassal of Arthur's, was aided by Arthur when Duke Galeholt invaded her country.

**Morgan's Damosel:** See *Foes*.

**Nimue/Nymue:** See *Mages*.

**Nohaut, Lady of:** Ruler of Nohaut and vassal of Arthur.

**King of Northgales' daughter:** Wed to or paramour of Gawaine.

**Oruale/Orvale De Guindoel:** Cousin to Lancelot, rightful heir to Castle Guindoel, attacked and imprisoned by Marigart, rescued by Ector de Maris.

**Perse:** Paramour of Ector de Maris, promised in marriage by her dying father to Zelotes; was reunited with Ector after he fought and killed Zelotes.

**Phelot's wife:** See *Foes*.

**Ragnell:** The "Loathly Lady," sister of Gromer Somer Jour, wed to Gawaine. Enchanted to be ugly until spell broken by

Gawaine on their wedding night. Mother of Gingalin.

**Roestoc, Laady of:** Ruler of Roestoc, in love with Gawaine. Widow or orphan of Helyes li Chatelains de Roestoc.

**Rock/Roche, Lady of:** Disinherited of her barony by Edward and Hugh of the Red Castle through extortion, championed by Uwayne le Blanchemains and reinstated to her lands.

**Rossignol:** One of the two Damosels of the Lake sent by Viviane to help Lancelot in Britain; mistakenly believing Lancelot dead she stayed in Britain and became a nun.

**Rule, Lady of:** Lover of Pellinore, mother of Elaine.

**Sebile:** See *Mages*.

**Segwarides' wife:** Paramour of Tristram, loved by King Mark.

**Senehauz:** Paramour of Blios, rescued by Sagramore to whom she bore a daughter, whom she sent to court for Guinevere to raise.

**Uncourteous Lady:** See *Foes*.

**Vance, Lady de:** Wed to duke of Vance, lover of Ryons.

**Vawse, Lady de:** Whose tournament for the circlet of gold is won by Marhaus:

**Venturesome Damosels:** Three damosels - age 60 (golden garland), 30 (golden circlet), and 15 (garland of flowers) - encountered by a fountain in Arroy forest by Uwayne, Marhaus, and Gawaine. Each offered to lead a different errant knight in a year of adventuring. Each knight encountered marvelous adventures ending back at the fountain in Arroy. There the damosels wait for the next set of errant knights.

**Verrine:** Highborn damosel of Guinevere's court, mute until Percival's arrival to court, upon which she greeted him and led him to the seige next to the Seige Perilous.

## Knights

Several notations are used in this section. (R) denotes a Companion of the Round Table. (G) indicates a member of Gawaine's faction. (L) indicates a member of Lancelot's faction.

**Abelleus/Abilleus:** Lord of the White Brachet, beheaded by Tor on his quest for the white brachet.

**Ablamor/Blamoure of the Marsh:** The Knight of the White Hart, whose lady is accidentally beheaded by Gawaine. Defeated by Gawaine and sent to Arthur as his prisoner. (R) (G)

**Accolon of Gaul:** Morgan le Fay's lover, attempted to kill Arthur with the help of Morgan's craft, killed by Arthur with the help of the Lady of the Lake.

**Adtherp:** Knight who rescued Isoud La Beale after she escaped from Palomides, wounded by Palomides.

**Agloval:** First legitimate son of Pellinore. Killed by Lancelot in the rescue of Guinevere from her execution. (R)

**Agravaive/Aggravain(e):** Second son of Lot and Morgawse, brother to Orkney Clan. See p. 100. (R) (G)

**Aguarus:** Nephew of the dead hermit found by Lancelot, at war with Earl de Vale, seeks uncle's council.

**Agwisance/Agwisaunce/Anguish/Anguyssh(e):** King of Ireland and Scotland, wed to King Marhault's daughter, father of la Beale Isolde. Principal in the wars of 11, six and five kings against Arthur. (R)

**Alardin/Alardyn of the Isles:** The knight killed by Gawaine in the quest for the white hart.

**Alain/Aleyn:** Brother of Trian.

**Aliduke/Aladuke:** Kinsman of Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Alisander le Orphelin:** Nephew of King Mark, cousin of Tristram. Wed to Alice la Beale Pilgrim.

**Alphegus:** Son of the Earl of Spain, killed by Urre.

**Amant:** Companion of Bersules, retainer of Mark, accused Mark of treason before Arthur.

**Annecians:** Godson of King Bors. (R)

**Antemes:** One of the knights sent to keep Ban and Bors' land from Claudas. (R)

**Arehad:** Brother of Gonerics.

**Arguais:** Nephew of Alain, King of Escavalon.

**Arguis/Arguas:** Kinsman of Mark of Cornwall, leader of Mark's army against Elias and Sessoins.

**Aristance/Aristause/Arystaunce:** Earl, encountered by Duke of Cambines at the Tournament of Surlose. (R)

**Arnold/Arnold(e)/Raynold(e)/Reynold:** Brother of Gauter and Gilmore, knight of Cornwall. (R)

**Arrok de Grevault:** (R)

**Arthur(e)/Artur/Artus/Artu:** King of Britain; see p. 90. (R)

**Astamore/Astamor(e):** (R) (G)

**Bagdemagus:** King of Gore after Uriens, cousin of Arthur. (R) (L)

**Balin le Savage:** The Knight with the Two Swords, brother of Balan, killed Garlon, wounded Pellam (the Maimed King) with the Spear of Longinus, killed by Balan and was killed by him, incognito.

**Balan:** Brother of Balin, killed and was killed by him, incognito.

**Baudwin of Britain:** See *of The Faith*. (R)

**Beaumains:** See Gareth.

## A Cast of Thousands



**Bedivere/Bed(e)wer(e)/Bedwyr:** Son of Corneus, brother of Lucan, accompanied Arthur and Kay on a pilgrimage to Mont-St.-Michel. Charged with throwing Excalibur in the Lake by Arthur (required three times to complete the charge). (R)

**Bellengerus/Bellengere le Beuse:** Son of Aligander le Orphelin and Alice la Beale Pilgrim, becomes Earl of Laundes. (R) (L)

**Belleus/Bellyas:** Wounded by Lancelot in a misadventure, becomes a knight of the Round Table at Lancelot's request. (R)

**Belliance/Belleance/Bellyas le Orgulous:** Brother of Froll, hates Lamorak for killing his brother. Killed by Lancelot in the rescue of the Queen. (R)

**Bellies/Bellyas/Bellyas/Bloyas of Flanners:** One of Arthur's knights in the war with the 11 kings.

**Bellinor:** Given Sir Bors' seige when he left with Lancelot's faction. (R)

**Bendelaine/Bendal(a)yne/Bendalaynis:** Killed by Gareth, whom he challenged in a mountain pass.

**Berluse:** Lieutenant of a castle belonging to Tor, whose father was killed by Mark.

**Bernard/Barnard of Astolat:** Father of Tirre, Lavaine, and Elaine le Blank.

**Berrant/Baraunt le Apres:** King of the Hundred Knights, principal in the wars of 11 and six kings against Arthur. (R)

**Bersules/Bersyles:** Companion of Amant, accompanied Mark to England, murdered by Mark.

**Blamor/Blamour(e) de Ganis:** Son of Nestor, brother of Blamor, cousin of Lancelot, Bors, Ector and Lionel. Made Duke of Limousin by Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Bleoberis de Ganis:** Son of Nestor, brother of Blamor, cousin of Lancelot, Bors, Ector and Lionel, godson to King Bors. Made Duke of Poitiers by Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Bliant/Blyaunt(e):** Brother of Selivant, cuts off Bertolet's hand.

**Blois de la Case:** Arthur's knight in the war with the 11 kings.

**Borre/Bohart/Lohot le Cure Hardy:** Arthur's illegitimate son by Lionors. (R)

**Bors/Boors de Ganis:** Son of King Bors,

brother of Lionel, cousin of Lancelot, lover of Brandegoris' daughter, father of Helin le Blank. (R) (L)

**Brandiles:** Companion of Kay, killed by Lancelot in Queen's rescue. (R)

**Brastias/Bracias:** Arthur's Warden of the North. (R)

**Breunor/Brewnor of Castel Pluere:** See Foes.

**Breunor le Noire (La Cote Malle Table):** Son of Breunor, brother of Dinadan, wed to Maledisant, given Castle Pendragon. (R)

**Brian/Bryan de Listenoise:** Knight imprisoned by Turquin. (R)

**Brian/Bryan of the Isles:** Sworn brother of Meliot.

**Brian/Briant de la Forest Savage:** Brother of Sorlouse, one the knights in the war of the 11 kings.

**Brian/Bryant of Norgales:** The Knight with the Black Shield.

**Bromel le Pleche:** Loves but is spurned by Elaine of Carbonek. He vowed to guard the bridge to Carbonek to keep Lancelot from visiting Elaine. Defeated by Bors, who got there first.

**Brumant L'Orgueilleus:** Knight who sat in the Seige Perilous and who was consumed by a pillar of flame.

**Cardok:** One of the knights who tried to heal Urre. (R)

**Cador of Cornwall:** Father of Constantine, counseled Arthur about the war with the Romans. (R)

**Carados/Karados:** King of Scotland/Estrangore. Principal in the wars of 11 and six kings against Arthur. (R)

**Castor:** Nephew of Pelles.

**Caulas:** One of Arthur's knights in the war with the 11 kings.

**Chaleins/Chaleyns/Galeschin/Galeshyn:** Duke of Clarence. (R)

**Clariance/Claryaunce de la Forest Savage:** One of Arthur's knights in the war of the 11 kings, defeated by Lot.

**Clarivaus/Clariance:** King of Northumberland, father of Epinogrus, one of the 11 kings against Arthur. (R)

**Clarrus/Claryus of Cleremont:** Knight in the Roman war, knight in the prisoner convoy to Paris, made Duke of Normandy by Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Claudin/Claudine:** Son of Claudas of Gaul.

**Clegis/Clegys:** Leader in Arthur's army, sent with Florence and Gawaine to forage in Tuscany, became Earl of Argente by Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Cleremond:** In Arthur's army, sent with Florence and Gawaine to forage in Tuscany.

**Claudin:** Son of Claudas of Gaul; one of the 12 knights in Castle Carbonek at the end of the Grail Quest representing the 12 Apostles.

**Cloddrus:** Knight in the prisoner convoy to Paris. (R)

**Colgrevaunce de Gore:** In the war of the 11 kings was killed by Lionel. Later killed again (!!) by Lancelot while escaping the trap in the Queen's chamber. (R) (G)

**Constantine/Constantyn of Cornwall:**

Successor to Arthur, chosen King of Britain. Son of Cador of Cornwall. (R)

**Corsabrin the Saracen:** See Foes.

**Crosselme:** (R)

**Curselaine/Curselayne:** One of the 12 knights sent with Agravaime and Mordred to capture Lancelot and Guinevere together. (G)

### Breunor le Noire (La Cote Malle Taile)



**Dalan:** Knight whose father was killed by Dinadan, chased by Breuse Sans Pite and Dinadan.

**Daname:** Nephew of Darras.

**Darras:** Uncle of Daname; an old knight who imprisoned Tristram, Palomides and Dinadan in the Castle of Maidens. Later freed them out of his compassion for knighthood. (R)

**Degrane/Degraue Saunce Velany:** (R)

**Dinadan/Dynadan(n)/Dynodan/Dynadam:** Brother of Breunor le Noire, companion of Tristram. The practical joker of the Round Table. (R)

**Dines/Dynes:** Brother of Edward of Carnarvon and Priamus, seneschal of Cornwall to King Mark, helped Tristram and Isolde escape, made Duke of Anjou by Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Dinaunt/Dynaunt:** Cornish knight, rescued from Taulas by Tristram.

**Dodinas/Dodynas/Dodyus le Savage:** (R)

**Dornar/Dornar(d)/Durnore:** Third legitimate son of Pellinore. (R)

**Driant/Dryaunt(t):** Brother of Alein, killed by Lancelot in the Queen's rescue from execution. (R)

**Ector:** Father of Kay, foster father of Arthur, one of the knights in the war with the 11 kings. (R)

**Ector de Marls:** Half-brother of Lancelot. Crowned King of Benic by Lancelot. (R) (L)  
**Edwarde:** Son of Roulande, knight of Arthur.

**Edward of Caernavon:** Brother of Priamus. (R)

**Edward of Orkney:** Brother of Sadok, cousin to the Orkney clan. (R)

**Edward of the Red Castle:** See Foes.

**Eggglame:** Knight of Arthur's, defeated by Pellinore.

**Elias/Elyas:** Captain of the Sesoins (Saxons), killed by Tristram.

**Eliazer/Elyazar:** Son of Pelles, a holy knight who lived in Carbonek, brought to Carbonek the broken sword of Joseph of Arimathea.

**Ells/Elys(e) le Noire:** Cousin to Arthur, knight of Chalein of Clarence.

**Emerause:** Knight of Arthur in the war with the 11 kings.

**Epinogrus/Epynogris:** Son of Clarivaus. (R)

**Ethelwold:** Earl, and ally of Priamus.

**Evadeam:** Prince enchanted into a dwarf. Paramour of Byanne, who guided his early adventures.

**Felot of Langduk:** Defeated by Tor.

**Felot of Listenoise:** Knight of Arthur's court, defeated by Marhaus.

**Fergus:** Earl, and Cornish knight. (R)

**Flannedrius/Flannedreus** of the Castle of Ladies: One of the knights in the war of the 11 kings.

**Floridas/Florydas:** Knight sent with Florence in vanguard toward Rome.

**Florence/Florens/Florys:** Son of Gawaine and Brandiles's sister, brother of Gringalin and Lovel. One of the 12 knights with Agravaire and Mordred sent to capture Lancelot and Guinevere together. (R) (G)

**Froll(e) of the Out Isles:** Brother of Belliance le Orgulus, killed by Lamorak.

**Gahalatine:** Made Duke of Ouerne by Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Gaheres:** Nephew of King of Norgales, given Gareth's seige after he died. (R)

**Gaheris:** Son of Lot and Morgawse, brother of the Orkney clan. Killed by Lancelot in the rescue of the Queen. See p. 100. (R) (G)

**Gainus/Gaynus:** Cousin of Lucius, killed by Gawaine.

**Galagars:** One of the "old" knights who became a knight of the Round Table at Pellinore's request. (R)

**Galahad:** Son of Lancelot and Elaine of Carbonek; great-grandson of the Maimed King. Achieved the Holy Grail with Percival and Bors. See p. 94. (R)

**Galaholt/Galahaut/Galaholt/Gala(u)Ite/Galaha(u)d the Haut Prince:** Duke/lord of Surlose, ally of Arthur, friend of Lancelot, former conqueror of kingdoms, son of Bruenor. (R) (L)

**Galihodin/Galyhondyn:** King in Surlose, brother of Galihud, kinsman of Galeholt, made Duke of Sentonge by Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Galihud/Galyhud:** Brother of Galihodin, made Earl of Perigot by Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Galleron/Gal(l)eron of Galway:** Co-god-fathers of Palomides, one of the 12 knights with Agravaire and Mordred sent to capture Lancelot and Guinevere together. (R) (G)

**Garaunt of Cameliard:** Brother to Guiomar, cousin to Guinevere.

**Gareth (Beaumains):** Fourth son of Lot and Morgawse; known as one of the four best knights in the world, killed by Lancelot in the Queen's rescue from execution. See p. 101. (R) (L<sup>o</sup>)

**Garnish/Garnyssh(e) of the Mount:**

Knights of Duke Hermel. Killed the lady he loved, her lover and himself.

**Gauter/Gaunter:** Brother of Arnold and Gilmere, knight of Cornwall. Killed by Lancelot in the Queen's rescue from execution. (R)

**Gawaine/Gawayn(e)/Gaweyn/Gwalchmai:** First son of Lot and Morgawse. Nephew of Arthur, wed to Brandiles's sister, father of Gingalin, Florence and Lovel. See p. 99. (R)

**Gawdelin/Gawdelyn:** Brother of Goodewin, killed by Agloval.

**Gereint/Geraint/Erec:** Wed to Enid, presented Enid to Guinevere as a handmaiden; then because of rumors retired with her into seclusion, but first put her through a long test of faithfulness. (R)

**Gerin/Geryne le Grose:** Knight given a Damosel by Alisander le Orphelin to wed.

**Gherard of Wales:** Knight killed in the forage battle by Jubance.

**Gilbert/Gylbert(e), the Bastard:** Knight of the Black Brachet. Wed to Meliot's sister, killed by Meliot de Logris.

**Gilmere/Gyl(le)mere/Gyllymer:** Brother of Gauter and Arnold, killed by Lancelot in Queen's rescue from execution. (R)

**Gingalin/Gyngalyn(e):** First son of Gawaine and Brandiles's sister, brother of Florence and Lovel, one of 12 knights with Agravaire and Mordred sent to capture Lancelot and Guinevere together. (R) (G)

**Godelake:** (R)

**Gonerries/Gomoryses:** Brother of Archade, neighbor of the damsel who requests aid at the court of Galeholt.

**Goodewin/Goddewyn:** Baron, brother to Gawdelin.

**Gorlagon:** French knight; werewolf.

**Gracian/Gracyens/Gras(t)ian(s) le Castlein:** Sent by Ban and Bor with Placidias to hold Benolc and Gaul against Claudas.

**Griflet, le Fise de Dieu:** Son of Cardol, killed by Lancelot in the Queen's rescue from execution. (R)

**Gringamore/Gryngamor(e):** Brother of Lyonesse and Lynet, cousin to Nimue.

**Grisandoles:** See Avenable under Ladies.

**Grummor/Grummore Grummorson:** One of the 12 knights with Agravaire and Mordred sent to capture Lancelot and Guinevere together. (R)

**Guiomar/Guy of Cameliard:** Brother to Garaunt, cousin of Guinevere. Lover of the young Morgan le Fay; banished by Guinevere when she learned of the affair.

**Gumret/Guyart le Petite:** (R)

**Gwinas/Gwymyart de Bloi:** One of the knights in the war with the 11 kings against Arthur.

**Harry/Haree/Harry le Fise Lake:** Son of King Lake. (R)

**Harvis/Haruys de la Marches:** Knight defeated by Alisander le Orphelin.

**Hebes le Renoumes:** Knight of Tristram, kinsman of Lancelot. Made Earl of Comange by Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Hectimere/Hectymere:** (R)

**Helake:** Brother of Helius, nephew of Hermance, with his brother killed Hermance.

**Helin/Helyn(e) le Blank:** Son of Bors de Ganis and King Brandegoris's daughter. (R)

**Helius/Helyus:** Brother of Helake, nephew of Hermance, who with his brother killed Hermance.

**Helyan of Ireland:** Was given Lancelot's seige after he and his faction left. (R)

**Hemison/Hemyson:** Jealous paramour of Morgan le Fay, killed by Tristram.

**Herlews/Harlouse le Berbeus:** Knight killed by Garlon.

**Hermind/Erminide/Ermynde:** Brother to Hermance, cousin of Lamorak, father of Helake and Helius. (R)

**Hervise/Heruys(e) de Revel:** One of the knights in the wars of the six kings and the five kings against Arthur. (R)

**Hervis/Heruys(e) de la Forest Savage:** (R)  
**Hewgon/Heugon:** Knight defeated by Alisander le Orphelin.

**Hugh/Hew/Hewe de la Montaine:** Knight of Norgales, brother to Maddock de la Montaine.

**Hugh/Hewe/Hue of the Red Castle:** See Foes.

**Idrus/Ider:** Son of Uwain. (R)

**Ironside, Red Knight of the Red Launds:** Known for dishonorable customs and marvelous strength, defeated by Beaumains (Gareth), later joined the Round Table. (R)

**Jordans/Jordanus:** Knight of Gorlois.

**Kainus/Kay(nus)/Kay le Strange:** Nephew of Carados, kinsman of Brandegoris, killed by Lancelot in the Queen's rescue from execution. (R)

**Kay/Kei/Kex the Seneschal:** Son of Ector, foster brother of Arthur. See p. 93. (R)

**Kehydus/Kayhedyus/Kehydyous:** Son of Howel, brother to Isoud la Blanche Mains, unrequited lover of Isoud la Beale, died of the love of Isoud la Beale.

**La Cote Malle Taile:** "The Ill-Tailored Coat." Nickname given to Bruenor le Noire by Kay.

**Ladinas/Laydynas of the Forest Savage:** Knight of the Queen's Knights, badly wounded in her abduction.

**Lake, King of the:** One of the "old" knights, joined Round Table on Pellinore's recommendation. (R)

**Lamhaile:** Earl, defeated by Ossaise of Surlose. (R)

**Lamhegus:** Killed by Lancelot in the Queen's rescue. (R)

**Lamiel/Lamyel of Cardiff:** Known as "a great lover." (R)

**Lamorak/Lamerack/Lamorake/Lamaryk de Gales:** Second son of Pellinore and Queen of the Isles, one of the four best knights in the world. (R) (L)

**Lancelot/Launcelot du Lac/Lake:** Premier knight of the Round Table, the Queen's champion and lover, and one of the four best knights in the world. See p. 92. (R)

**Lanceor/La(u)nceor/Lancyor:** Son of the King of Ireland, lover of Columbe, killed by Balin.

**Lardans:** Defeated by Ector in the war with the 11 kings against Arthur.

**Lavaine/Lauayn(e):** Son of Bernard of

**Astolat**, brother of Tirre and Elaine le Blank, wed to Felelolie, made Earl of Armagnac by Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Leomie/Leomye**: Sent by Lucius after Arthur.

**Lionel/Lyonell**: Made King of France by Lancelot, killed Colgrevaunce of Gore. (R) (L)

**Love/Loel**: Third son of Gawaine and Brandile's sister. (R) (G)

**Lucan/Lucanere/Lucas the Butler**: Son of Corneus, brother of Bedevere. (R) (G)

**Lyonesse/Lyonse(s)**: Lord of the Country of Payame, one of the knights in the war with the 11 kings against Arthur.

**Maddock/Madok de Ia Montaine**: Brother of Hugh de la Montaine, knight of Nor-gales.

**Mador/Mador(e) de la Porte**: Accused Guinevere of the murder of Patrice, defeated by Lancelot. (R) (G)

**Malgrin/Mal(e)gryn(e)/Maulgryn**: See *Foes*.

**Mansassen/Manessen**: Cousin of Acco-ion.

**Marhaus/Marhah/Marhaws**: Brother of the Queen of Ireland, adversary of Tristram. (R)

**Marrok**: Knight betrayed by his wife who made him a werewolf for 7 years. (R)

**Matto le Breune**: Knight who went mad when Gaheris won his lady, a "naked fool" encountered by Dagonet.

**Meliagaunt/Meliagrance**: Son of Bagdemagus, unrequited lover of Guinevere. Abducts the queen, and is killed by Lancelot. (R)

**Melias de Lile**: Made Earl of Tursan by Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Melion/Melyon de Tartare**, of the Mountain: One of the 12 knights with Agravaine and Mordred sent to capture Lancelot and Guinevere together. (R) (G)

**Meliot de Logris**: Cousin of *Nimue*, sworn brother of Brian of the Isles, one of the 12 knights with Agravaine and Mordred sent to capture Lancelot and Guinevere together. (R) (G)

**Melot de la Roche**: Knight of Arthur's in the war with the 11 kings.

**Menaduke/Menadeuke**: Kinsman of Lancelot, made Earl of Rouerge by Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Miles/Mylls**: Knight killed by the knight at the well (Pellinore, incognito); his death caused Griflet's first adventure.

**Miles/Myles of the Launds**: Betrothed of Elaine, the daughter of Pellinore; killed by Lorraine le Savage.

**Mordred**: See *Foes*. (R) (G)

**Morganor/Morganor(e)**: King, seneschal of Baraunt, one of the allies of the 11 kings, illegitimate son of Uriens. (R)

**Morians/Moryans of the Castle of Maidens**: Knight of Arthur's in the war of the 11 kings.

**Morls/Morys/Marlet de la Roche**: Knight of Arthur's in the war of the 11 kings.

**Nanown/Nanowne le Petite**: Last knight killed by Nabon le Noire; cousin of Lamorak. (R)

**Naram**: Pre-Table knight of Arthur.

**Nentres/Nauntres**: King of Garloth. Wed to Elaine daughter of Irgraine and Gorlois, principal in the wars of 11 and six kings against Arthur. (R)

**Nerovens/Nero(u)ueus de Lile**: Knight of Lancelot's, made Earl of Pardiac by Lancelot, appointed constable of Castle Pendragon. (R) (L)

**Ontzlake/Ontz(e)lake**: Deprived of his birth rights by his brother Damas, vindicated by Arthur.

**Oriolz/Ogier**: The Dane, son of King Am-inaduf of Denmark. Identified with "Holger Danske" in Scandinavian legend.

**Ossaise/Ossayse of Surlose**: Defeated by Gaheris and Lambaile in Tournaments.

**Ozana le Cure Hardy**: (R)

**Palomides/Palamides**: Saracen knight, son of Astlabor, brother of Safer and Segwarides, unrequited lover of Isonde La Beale and rival of Tristram. Follower of the Questing Beast after death of Pellinore. Made Duke of the Provence by Lancelot. See p. 98. (R) (L)

### Palomides



**Patrice/Patryse/Patryce**: Knight of Ireland, cousin of Mador de la Port, killed in a murder attempt on Gawaine's by Pincel le Savage. (R)

**Pedivere/Pedyuere**: Beheads his wife, sent to Guinevere by Lancelot who sends him to Rome for penance, eventually became a holy man.

**Pedivere/Pedyuere of the Strait Marches**: Defeated by Bors, sent to Arthur's court as Bors' prisoner.

**Pellandris**: Brother to Plaine de Force, Plaine de Amours, Plenorius, Pillounes, and Pellogris, 6th of the six brothers defeated by Lancelot at the second bridge of Surlose.

**Pelleas**: Lover of Ettarde, enchanted by Nimue into seeing Ettarde as she really is, rejects Ettarde to wed Nimue. He is not fond of Gawaine. (R)

**Pellinore/Pellynore of Listenoise**: Known as King of the Isles, illegitimate father of Tor, father of Agloval, Domar, Lamorak and Percival. Accidentally killed Lot in battle. He followed the Questing Beast. He brought Nimue to the court after her first appearance. (R)

**Pellogris**: Brother of Pellandris etc., fifth of the six brothers defeated by Lancelot at the second bridge of Surlose.

**Pellounes/Pellonus**: Father of Persides. Percard: Black Knight of the Black Launds. Brother of Persant, Pertolepe and Perimones, killed by Beaumains (Gareth).

**Percival/Persivale de Gales**: Youngest son of Pellinore. One of the three knights who achieved the Grail. See p. 95. (R)

**Perimones/Perymones**: The Red Knight. Brother of Percard, Persant and Pertolepe, serves as butler to Gareth. (R)

**Perin/Peryn de la Montaine**: Knight defeated by Alisander le Orphelin.

**Perin/Peryn de Mount Bellard**: Knight killed by Garlon.

**Persant of Inde**: The Blue Knight. Brother of Percard, Pertolepe and Perimones, defeated by Beaumains (Gareth), became Gareth's sewer-chief (chief servant) at the Round Table. (R)

**Persides/Percydes de Bloyse**: Son of Pellounes, wounds Mordred. (R)

**Pertolepe/Pertolepe/Pertilope**: The Green Knight. Brother to Persant, Percard and Perimones, defeated by Beaumains (Gareth), became Gareth's chamberlain. (R)

**Petipace/Petypase**: Knight of Winchelsea defeated by Tor. (R) (G)

**Phariance/Phariaunce/Pharyaunce/Pharien**: Sent back to Bendlic by Ban and Bors.

**Pillounes**: Brother to Pellandris, etc., fourth of the six brothers defeated by Lancelot at the second bridge of Surlose.

**Pinel/Pynel/Pyonel le Savage**: Knight who killed Patrice by accident when attempting to kill Gawaine with poisoned apples in retribution for the murder of his cousin Lamorak de Gales. (R)

**Placidis**: Defeated by Tor and sent to Arthur's court as Tor's prisoner.

**Plaine/Playne de Amours**: Brother of Pellandris, etc., second of the six brothers defeated by La Cote Malle Taile at the first bridge of Surlose.

**Plaine/Playne de Force**: Brother of Pellandris, etc., first of the six brothers defeated by La Cote Malle Table at the first bridge of Surlose. (R)

**Plenorius**: Brother of Pellandris, etc., third of the six brothers defeated by Lancelot at the second bridge of Surlose. (R) (L)

**Priamus/Pryamus**: Saracen knight of Tuscany. Killed by Lancelot in the rescue of Queen Guinevere. (R)

**Pridam/Prydam/Priadan le Noire**: Knight-champion of the elder of Aman's daughters against Bors de Ganis.

**Raynolde**: Son of Roulonde, brother of Edward, appointed to the prisoner convoy to Paris by Lancelot and Cadore.

**Sadok/Sadok(e)**: Friend of Tristram, Din-as and Alisander de Orphelin, made Earl of Surlat by Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Safer/Safer(e)/Safer**: Son of Astlabor, brother of Palomides and Segwarides, made Duke of Languedoc by Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Sagramore/Sagramo(u)r(e) le Desirous**: Nephew of the Emperor of Constantinople, battled Alisander for Alice's affection. (R)



**Sauseise/Sauseyse:** Good knight who encounters Meligaunt at Bagdemagus's request.

**Segwarides/Segurades:** Son of Astlabor, brother to Palomides and Safer. (R)

**Selises/Selyses of the Dolorous Tower:** Nephew of Berrant le Arres. (R) (L)

**Selivant/Selyuant:** Brother of Bliant, lord of Castle Blank, praised God and the incognito Lancelot for saving his brother.

**Semound the Valiant:** With 40 knights he aided Galeholt's party against that of the King of Norgales.

**Sentraile/Sentrayle du Lushon:** Rescued Tristram. (R)

**Servause/Seruause le Breuse:** Knight who will not battle men, only giants, dragons, and wild beasts. (R)

**Sorlouse of the Forest:** Brother of Brian of the Forest.

**Suppinables/Suppynables:** Knight of Brittany who traveled to Arthur's court and informs Lancelot of Tristram's marriage. (R)

**Tirre/Tyrre:** Eldest son of Bernard of Astolat, brother of Elaine le Blank and Lavaine.

**Tor le Fise/Fise de Vayshoure/le Fise Aries:** Eldest and illegitimate son of Pellinore, raised by Aries the cowherd. Killed by Lancelot in the rescue of Queen Guinevere. (R) (G)

**Trian:** Brother of Alein, encounters King Mark.

**Tristram/Tristan de Lyonesse:** Son of King Meliodas and Queen Elizabeth of Lyonesse, nephew of King Mark, lover of La Beale Isoude. See p. 96. (R) (L)

**Ulbawes:** Earl of Surluse. (R)

**Ulfius/Ulfyus:** Knight of Uther Pendragon, later Arthur's chamberlain. (R)

**Uriens/Uryen(s)/Uryence:** King of Gore, wed to Morgan le Fay, father of Uwains Le Blanchemains, principal in the wars of the 11 and six rebellious kings. (R)

**Urre of the Mount:** Knight of Hungary, wounded by Alphegus of Spain and could only be healed by the touch of the best knight in the world; is healed by Lancelot, last of the Round Table to try. Later made Earl of Estrake by Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Uwaine/Ywaine/Swain/Owain/Yvain/Yvonet le Grand/le Blanchemains:** Son of Uriens of Gore and Morgan le Fay. Befriended a lion. (R)

**Uwaine/Ywaine/Swain/Owain/Yvain/Yvonet le Avoutres/ Adventurous:** Son of Uriens and his seneschal's wife. (R)

**Vadalon:** Brother to the king of Norgales, known as a cruel knight. Given Ector de Maris' seige when the latter left with Lancelot's faction. (R)

**Vains/Vayns:** Knight defeated by Alisanter le Orphelin.

**Villiers/Vyllyers/Vyllyars/Wyllyars le**

**Valiant:** Lancelot's kinsman, made Earl of Beearn by Lancelot. (R) (L)

**Wisshard/Wysshard/Wychard:** Sent with Florens and Gawain by Arthur to forage in Tuscany.

### *Uwaine le Blanchemains*



## Foes and Troublemakers

**Andred/Andret:** Nephew of Mark, cousin and enemy of Tristram, betrayed Tristram to Mark, leads second group against the Sessions.

**Annower:** See *Mages*.

**Areas:** Son of the King of Saxony, leader of Mordred's first division against Arthur.

**Argustus:** Son of Harlon, held a tournament in which Lancelot was shamed.

**Arnold/Arnolde de Breuse:** Brother of Gerard, killed by Beaumains (Gareth).

**Bercilak/Bertilak de Hautdesert:** The Green Knight that Gawaine encounters.

**Bertolet:** Brother of Breuse Sans Pite, in combat was disarmed by Lancelot and had his hand struck off by Bliant.

**Bertholai:** The best knight of Cameliard, banished by Leodegrance for the murder of another of the king's knights. Co-conspirator with the false Guinevere.

**Brandus Des Illes:** Lord of Castle Dolorous Garde before Lancelot conquered it; attacked Arthur, imprisoned Gawaine, Uwaine and other knights. Killed by Lancelot in the rescue of the knights.

**Breuse/Breunis/Breunys/Brewse/Brunys Sans/Saunce Pite:** Brother of Bertelot; the "most mischievous" and "most villainous" knight, enemy of the knights of the Round Table. See p. 98.

**Brian/Bryan de les Isles:** Lord of the Casde Pendragon, enemy of the knights of the Round Table, defeated by Lancelot and taken prisoner.

**Breunor/Brewnor of Castle Pluere:** A knight who imprisons Tristram and Isoude, beheaded by Tristram in battle.

**Brown Knight Without Pity:** May be the same as Breuse Sans Pite. Slew knights and imprisoned their ladies. Collected 30 ladies before being killed by Gareth (if he was Sir Breuse, then he obviously let a henchman fight Gareth in his place).

### *Breuse Sans Pite*



**Caliburn/Callyburne of Pavie:** Killed by Bors.

**Camille:** See *Mages*.

**Carados/Caradus of the Dolorous Tower:** Brother of Turquin, killed by Lancelot.

**Chromatic Knights:** See *Knights*: Percard, Pertolepe, Perimones, Persant.

**Claudas:** King of Gaul, enemy of Ban and Bors, would-be conqueror of France.

**Clochides:** Lord of Castle Le Tertre Denlee, paramour of King Esclamor's daughter, escaped with the princess in a castle he built, defended it against all knights for 20 years, imprisoned and killed knights and companions, defeated and mortally wounded by Bors de Ganis.

**Corsabrin/Corsabryn the Saracen:** Loved the daughter of Brandes, beheaded by Palomides.

**Cradelment/Cradelmant/Tradelmas:** King of Norgales, one of the 11 kings against Arthur, enemy of Arthur.

**Damas:** Brother of Onzlake, deprived Onzlake of his inheritance; a "false" knight who imprisoned Arthur.

**Druas:** Lord of Le Tertre as Caitis, brother to Sornehan, defended his hill against all errant knights, killed and wounded many Companions, if defeated his Dwarf would blow a horn to bring his brother. Killed by Agravaive, who was saved from Sornehan by a damosel.

**Eastland, Queen of the:** See *Mages*.

**Edward of the Red Castle:** Brother of Hugh, with Hugh disinherited the Lady of the Rock of her barony and lands by extortion,

killed by Uwain, protector of the Lady of the Rock.

**Estoraue:** See Foreign Nobility.

**Feldenak:** A Roman knight, sought revenge for Gainus, killed by Gawaine.

**Ferant/Feraunt of Spain:** Knight who challenged and was killed by Florence in the forage battle.

**Gheard/Gherard de Breuse:** Brother of Arnold de Breuse, killed by Gareth.

**Garlon:** See Mages.

**Gromore Somir Jaure/Gromer Somer Jour:** Scottish knight, the Grim Baron of Castle Hewin, brother of Ragnell (the Loathly Lady), brother-in-law to Gawaine. (G)

**Guinevere (false):** Daughter of Leodegrance and a paramour, twin half-sister to Guinevere born on the same day. Aided by Bertholai, she attempted twice to usurp Guinevere's position, succeeded on second try.

Confessed on deathbed.

**Heliades:** King, given Scotland by Mordred during Mordred's rebellion.

**Helior/Helyor le Preuse:** Abducted an Earl's daughter; defeated by Safir.

Hellawes: See Mages.

**Hontzlake of Wentland:** Abducted Nimue, killed by Pellinore.

**Hugh/Hewe/Hue of the Red Castle:** Brother of Edward of the Red Castle, with Edward disinherited the Lady of the Rock of her barony and lands, killed by Uwain protecting the Lady of the Rock - or may have reformed and become a Companion of the Round Table. (R?)

**Ironside, Red Knight of the Red Launds:** See Knights.

**Leprous Lady:** Suffered such that she needed the blood of maidens to remain alive; her knights enforced deadly donations from passers-by. Dindane's blood cured her, but in vengeance for Dindane's death, Heaven sent lightning which destroyed the Lady's castle and all within.

**Lorraine/Lorayne le Savage:** Unchivalrous knight who killed Miles of the Launds. Malgrin/Mal(e)gryn(e)/Maulgryn: The evil neighbor of a damosel, overcome and beheaded by Alisander le Orphelin.

**Malvis:** Damosel who came to Arthur's court bearing the sword that became Balin's. Called "the falsest damosel that liveth" by Merlin.

**Marigart/Mangars/Margarit/Mariagart li/le Rois/Roux/Rox:** Raped and imprisoned Oruale of Guindoel; defeated by Gawaine.

**Mark:** King of Cornwall, brother to Elizabeth, Queen of Lyonesse. Married to La Beale Isolde. Knighted Tristram, killed Bersules, killed Boudwin, killed Alisander and Tristram.

**Maten:** Lord of Castle de la Blanche Espine, enemy of Arthur and the Round Table, killed and his town and castle burned by Lancelot, Bors, Gareth and Bagdemagus when he was found abusing Mordred simply because he was a Companion.

**Melehan:** Eldest son of Mordred, he and his brother seized England after Mordred's death, killed Lionel, killed by Bors.

**Meliagaunt/Meliagrance:** See Knights.

Merlan le Dyable: King, killed and hanged his father in Carteloise forest.

**Mordred/Modred:** Incestuous son of Arthur and Morgawse; dealt the death blow to Lamorak. Co-conspirator with Agravaime. Made regent by Arthur during the siege of Lancelot's French castle, and attempts to usurp the throne. Killed and was killed by Arthur in the Last Battle. See p. 102.

**Morgan le Fey:** Queen of Gore; see Mages. Seep. 105.

**Morgan's Damosel:** Masqueraded as Damas's daughter in his castle; delivered Morgan's mantle to Arthur and was incinerated when forced to wear it herself.

**Nero:** Prince, brother of Ryons, joins the 11 kings, joins Lot in war against Arthur, reported killed.

**Nineve:** See Mages.

**Norgales, Queen of:** See Sebile under Mages.

**Out Isles, Queen of:** See Mages.

**Peris/Perys de Forest Savage:** A villainous knight killed by Lancelot.

**Persides:** Lord of Gazewilte Castle, imprisoned his wife Helaine the Peerless for claiming her beauty exceeded his prowess, was defeated by Ector de Maris.

**Phelot:** Killed when he ambushed the weaponless Lancelot.

**Phelot's wife:** Tricked Lancelot into her husband's ambush by begging him to recover her falcon.

**Pinel le Savage:** See Knights.

**Ryons/Rience/Ryence:** King of North

Wales, Ireland and the Isles, invades Arthur's kingdom, captured by Balin and Balan.

Sebile: See Mages.

**Sornehan:** Brother of Druas, would defeat all errant knights who defeated his brother's attack on them, defeated and imprisoned Agravaime and Gaheris, was finally defeated by Gareth who rescued his brothers.

**Turquin(e)/Turquyn(e)/Terican:** Brother of Carados, killed by Lancelot. A robber knight. Imprisoned the knights whom he defeated.

**Uncourteous Lady:** Bound Sir Persides in chains to a pillar of stone at the end of a stone bridge when he refused to be her paramour, Persides was rescued by Percivale.

**Vandalon:** See *Knights*.

## Giants

**Galapas:** Giant killed by Arthur at Sessione.

**Hargodabrans:** Leader of the Senses (Saxons) that attacked Vandalions, helped Camille attack Arthur, wounded and imprisoned by Lancelot, stabbed himself when taken away.

**Jubance/Jubaunce:** Giant, killed Gherard of Wales.

**Lucius' Bodyguard:** "Fifty giants which had been engendered of fiends," used in siege of Arthur by Lucius.

**Maudit:** Cornish giant; he and his mother were the only survivors of the giants exterminated by Arthur. Raised by a knight, himself knighted but later went on a rampage.

**Giant of Mont-St.-Michel:** Giant that forced damosels to roast babies and killed King Howell's wife by rape. Killed by Arthur, Kay and Bedivere on their way to fight Lucius.

**Giant of the Mount of Araby:** Giant killed by Arthur.

**Nabon le Noire:** Lord of Savage, a giant who hated all knights of Arthur, killed by Tristram.

Taulurd: Giant, brother of Taulas, killed by Marhaus.

**Taulas/Tawleas/Taul(e)as:** Giant, brother of Taulurd, attacked Dinaunt and is killed by Tristram (incognito).

**Giants of Tintagil:** Two giants who ransacked Tintagil between the reigns of Gorlois and Mark, imprisoned ladies and damosels, killed by Lancelot.

## Other Notables

### Of The Faith

**Archbishop of Canterbury:** Bishop Eugene. Crowned Arthur King of Britain, officiated at his wedding, and blessed the sieges of the Round Table. Forced into retirement when Mordred tried to usurp the throne.

**Amustans:** Arthur's chaplain, knew both Guineveres from childhood, took the deathbed confessions from the false Guinevere and Bertholai, helped reconcile Guinevere and Arthur afterwards. Retired to a hermitage.

**Baudwin/Baudewyn/Bawdwynd/Bawduyn of Britain:** Constable of England, governor of the realm, surgeon and good leech,

healed Lancelot's wounds, later became a hermit. (R)

**Bishop of Baudwin:** See Baudwin of Britain.

**Bors de Ganis:** See *Knights*.

Brasias: See *Knights*.

Claudine See *Knights*.

**Dindane:** Sister of Percival, virgin love of Galahad on Grail Quest. Gave her life to cure the Leprous Lady. Buried in the Spiritual Palace of Sarras.

**Elaine of Carbonek:** See *Ladies*.

**Elaine/Elayne/Clarine:** See *Foreign Nobility*.

Eliazer: See *Knights*.

**Eugene, Bishop:** See Archbishop of Canterbury.

**Evaine:** See *Foreign Nobility*.

**Evelake:** Pagan king of Sarras, also known as Mordrains after his baptism. Contemporary of Joseph of Arimathea, blinded and paralyzed by looking at the Grail, but allowed to live to see Galahad, who healed him.

**Gawaine:** Hermit, namesake of Gawaine son of Lot and Morgawse. His prayers at Gawaine's christening resulted in that knight's remarkable strength.

**Joseph of Arimathea:** Brought Holy Grail to Britain.



## Dame Brisen



**Joseph:** First bishop; son of Joseph of Arimathea.

**Mordrains:** See Evelake.

**Nacien/Nacyen the Hermit:** Prophesied to Arthur that he would achieve the greatest worship that ever befell a King. Declared that knights on the Grail Quest must travel without their ladies. Interpreted Gawaine's vision, interpreted Ector's vision, rebuked Gawaine and Lancelot.

**Pellam:** See *Nobility*.

**Pelles:** See *Nobility*.

**Pelles' sister:** Abbess of the convent where Galahad was sent to complete his education.

The Pope: No name is given.

**Rochester, Bishop of:** Noble clerk and papal emissary to Arthur; ordered him to take Guinevere back as his Queen and to reconcile with Lancelot.

**Ulfyn/Ulfyn:** A hermit near Carbonek, in whose hermitage Galahad stayed.

**Waste Lands, Queen of the:** Aunt of Percival, female recluse in a hermitage, one of the Queens who took Arthur to Avalon.

## Song and Merriment

**Aneurin:** One of the four great bards of the Arthurian Age.

**Dagonet:** Arthur's fool, almost killed by Tristram (when mad).

**Eliot/Elyas:** Harper to whom Dinadan taught his satiric lay about King Mark.

**Llywarch Hen:** One of the four great bards of the Arthurian Age.

**Merlin:** Called one of the four great bards of the Arthurian Age; see *Mages*.

**Taliessin:** One of the four great bards of the Arthurian Age.

## Mages

**Annowre/Annoure:** Sorceress who loved

## Plot Hooks

**Aries/Aryes the Cowherd:** Wed to the mother of Tor.

**Chestelain/Chestelayne:** Child ward of Gawaine, killed in the forage battle.

**Chromatic Knights:** See Percard, Per-tolepe, Perimones, Persant under *Knights*.

## A Cast of Thousands

Arthur, beheaded by Arthur for attempting to murder him.

**Blaise/Bleyse/Blaise:** Merlin's master who lived in Northumbria.

**Brisen/Brysen, Dame:** Enchantress and companion to Elaine of Carbonek, gave Lancelot a potion to influence him to sleep with Elaine. Tricked Lancelot into sleeping with Elaine a second time. Advised Pelles how to handle Lancelot when he was found mad.

**Byanne:** daughter of King Clamadon, paramour of Evadeam (king's son enchanted in the form of an ugly dwarf). Guided Evadeam to knighthood and accompanied him on adventures. Turned Gawaine into a dwarf (temporarily).

**Camille:** Lady of the Castle La Roche, Saxon enchantress, lover of Arthur, lover of Gadrasolain, enemy of Arthur in the Battle against the Saxons, imprisoned Arthur and Gaheris with 40 knights, who were later rescued by Lancelot.

**Easfand, Queen of the:** One of the four queens of Castle Chariot, imprisoned Lancelot.

**Ganieda:** Apocryphal twin sister of Merlin.

**Garion:** Brother of Pellam, killed by Balin. Able to become invisible, and slew knights at will.

**Gwenbaus:** A wise clerk of nigromancy, brother of Ban and Bors. Friend of Merlin. Met and loved the daughter of a king in the Forest Perilous.

**Hellawes/Hellawaes the Sorceress/Helaes of the Forest Perilleuse:** Lady of the castle Nigramous, dies when spurned by Lancelot.

**Helyes of Thoulouse:** Chief clerk of Duke Galeholt; possessed untrained magical talent, but had a wondrous book which let him cast powerful enchantments.

**Lake, Lady of the (English):** See Nineve.

**Lake, Lady of the (French):** Vivien. Gave Lancelot his name, raised Lancelot.

**Lile/Lyl(l)e:** Lady of Avelion. Said to be a powerful enchantress. Gave Malvis a sword only the best knight of the realm could pull (Balin's Sword) in order to avenge the death of her paramour against her brother.

**Lunette/Lynet/Linet/Lunette/le Damosel Savage:** Sister of Lyonesse and Gringamore, cousin of Nimue. Practices sorcery and surgery. Was a scornful companion to Beaumains (Gareth), but later became more civil. Wed to Gaheris.

**Merlin/Merly(o)n:** Son of a (or the) devil and a woman, named for his paternal grand-

father, pupil of Blaise, lover of Nimue, sorcerer, advisor to Uther and Arthur. See p. 103.

**Morgan le Fey/Morgaine/Morgana:** Queen of Gore. Daughter of Igraine and Gor-

lois, half-sister to Arthur, sister to Elaine of Garloth and Margawse of Orkney, wed to Uriens of Gore (estranged), mother of Uvain le Blanchemains. One of the queens who took Arthur to Avalon. See p. 105.

**Nimue/Nymue:** Damosel of the British Lake, cousin of Meliot de Logris, later Lady of the Lake. One of the queens who took Arthur to Avalon. See p. 106.

**Nineve/Nynyue:** First Lady of the British Lake. Gives Excalibur to Arthur, beheaded by Balin for killing his mother, succeeded by Nimue, one of the Damosels of the Lake.

**Out Isles, Queen of:** One of the four Queens at Castle Chariot.

**Sebile:** Queen of Norgales, paramour of Berrant. One of the most powerful women in magic next to Morgan le Fey and the Lady of the Lake; one of the four Queens at Castle Chariot and one of the Queens who took Arthur to Avalon.

**Tim:** Welsh enchanter, specialist in the Fire college.

## Seneschals and Servitors

**Bragwaine:** Chief gendewoman to *Isoude* La Beale, an herbalist.

**Brisen, Dame:** See *Mages*.

**Car de Gomoret:** Brother of Elias de Gomoret, reported to Morgan le Fay the adventures of Alisander le Orphelin.

**Eliezer:** Squire to Gawaine.

**Gareth's Dwarf:** Faithful servant to Gareth; steals disguise ring from Gareth during tournament.

## Gouvernail



**Gouvernail/Guernayle:** Tutor and companion to Tristram.

**Lore/Lorete of/de/la Carduel/Kardoil/Fille Doon:** Served as King's cupbearer; paramour of Duke Galeholt's seneschal.

**Sorceresses:** See *Mages*.

**Venturesome Damosels:** See *Ladies*.

**Werewolves:** See Gorlagon, Marrok under *Knights*.



# 8

# ARTHURIAN BESTIARY

This chapter describes creatures and races - some "mundane," some not - found in the many versions of the Arthurian myth. Only the wild beasts are suitable for use in a "straight" historical campaign, but a clever GM could weave a few of the others into his plot lines.

Not included are any of the creatures from the humorous or parodic renditions of the tales. These are easy enough to re-create from the original sources, if a silly campaign is wanted.

All creatures are described in the manner of the various GURPS bestiaries, while races follow the model of GURPS Fantasy Folk and GURPS Aliens.





## Key to Animal Statistics

The following is an abridgement of material found on p. FB5 and p. BY3. For more details and information, the gamemaster is referred to those volumes.

*ST, DX, IQ, HT, HT* will often have two numbers separated by a slash (e.g., 15/35). The first number is the "health" the creature would roll against, the second is "hit points". *ST* and "hit points" are sometimes given as a range. *DX, IQ* and "health" are single numbers; they may vary by a point or so in either direction.

*Move/Dodge*. When an animal has more than one Move score, the first is for the most common situation, e.g. flying for birds. Other Moves are given in the text. When Speed is needed, use Dodge.

Dodge (most animals' only active defense) is 1/2 Move or 1/2 DX, whichever is better, up to a maximum of 10.

*Damage*. Listed damage is for the creature's most common attack, and is for an average member of the species; stronger members may do more.

*Reach*. C = Close Combat; 1, 2, etc. = reach in hexes; R = Ranged attack; see description.

*Size*. The animal's size in hexes. Small creatures take up less

than a hex (represented by '< 1'), and several can fit in the same hex. See p. B 141 for more details.

*Origin*. In this listing, *Origin* will refer the reader to the specific literary source for a fictional creature. Where multiple sources cite the creature, the earliest source identifiable will be used. Real creatures are coded "R."

*Habitat*. Where the creature is commonly found; the primary habitat for each animal is listed first. Habitats are abbreviated as follows:

A = Arctic      J = Jungle      Sub = Subterranean  
D = Desert      M = Mountain  
F = Forest      P = Plains

F (forest) means all temperate forests.

P (plains) includes all grasslands, including prairie (largely flat land), steppes (rolling hills) and savannas (dotted with trees).

Note: D (desert) includes any dry areas, including scrub woodlands.

An asterisk (\*) in a creature's description means that the ability or attack is special in some way - see the text for details.

A "-" means that the heading does not apply.

A sign means that there are exceptions to the number given - see the text for details.

## Mystical and Magical Beings

### Angels

*ST*: 30-40      **Move/Dodge**: 10/10      **Size**: 1 hex  
*DX*: 16-22      **PD/DR**: 2/5      **Weight**: 180-230lbs.  
*IQ*: 18-25      **Damage**: 4d-1 thr/  
6d+1 sw      **Origin**: Malory;  
the Bible  
**HT**: 16/35-60      **Reach**: C      **Habitats**: Heaven,  
holy places

Angels should be considered a race and not "creatures," but they are rare and often charged with specific duties; thus, they could be considered similar to magically-summoned "guardian" beasts. They have very limited contact with humanity, and are not available as player characters.



Angels are humanoids of a divine nature, usually robed and winged, who act in the role of servants to a power of Good. In Malory and elsewhere, angels appear as guardians, guides, and even co-celebrants in religious ceremonies. While much more intelligent (on the average) than humans, they often seem to be strictly confined to their duties. It is impossible to sway an angel from his task or tasks.

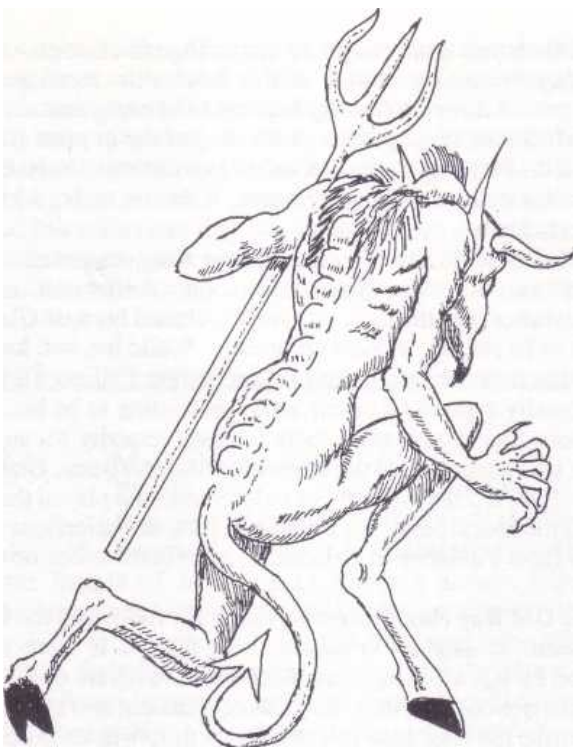
Angels are automatically Very Blessed and Very Beautiful. They do not age or die. If reduced to 0 HT, they either vanish from this plane, or are miraculously restored to full HT, depending on the nature and importance of their mission. Charisma and Voice are very common advantages for them. They have the disadvantages of both Truthfulness and Honesty, plus Fanaticism for the power they serve; angels will never have any other disadvantages. They are capable of Winged Flight, but also have the ability to translate (Autoteleport) to and from their native plane at will. They have the inherent magical abilities of Emotion Control (Awe only), Continual Light and Illusion Disguise (on themselves only), all at skill 17.

Angels are individuals; each angel may have up to 5 quirks (excluding vices) to distinguish himself. Unless they choose to look identical, humans can tell them apart readily. While technically they have no gender, it is not uncommon for them to assume the appearance of one sex or the other in their dealings with mortals.

Angels are commonly armed; they have been reported bearing spears or flaming swords, and sometimes shields. They wield these items with the appropriate skill(s) at a level of 20. Their Move of 10 is for flight; on foot they have a Move of 5.

### Demons

*ST*: 6d+2      **Move/Dodge**: 6/6      **Size**: 1 hex  
*DX*: 1d+9      **PD/DR**: 1d-1/1d      **Weight**: 200 lbs.  
*IQ*: 2d+3      **Damage**: By ST#/      **Origin**: Bible,  
Weapon      Vulgate  
**HT**: 1d+9#      **Reach**: C      **Habitats**: Hell



Demons are rare in "classic" Arthurian literature, but do appear in numbers to tempt or destroy knights on the Grail Quest.

More than 20, singly or in groups, appear at one point or another in Malory and the Vulgate. Later works have Morgan le Fay and others summoning demons to serve her or work her *will*. In the earlier works, demons are expressly evil creatures, set on missions of temptation or even assassination. The demon Aselaphes killed King Tholomer before he could be converted to Christianity in Volume 1 of the Vulgate! In the later works, where they appear at all, they are ambivalent magical creatures more humorous than horrifying, but still malign.

Demons are notoriously variable in abilities. Roll as indicated above to determine their attributes and traits. Demons with a HT of 15 *will* have hit points above their HT; hit points will be 6d+ 15. Most demons do cutting damage with their taloned hands, but 1 in 6 will do merely crushing damage. Half of all demons have (and know how to use) a weapon at a skill equal to their DX.

In the Arthurian tales, demons are able to assume different forms. Treat this as a Perfect Illusion Disguise (see p. 25). Other magical abilities are common: Invisibility, Teleportation (as per the Psionic ability, p. B 175, Power 10 or greater) or even Magic Resistance! Some will have extra arms, all with weapons capable of attacking simultaneously. Some will be truly *different*. When creating demons, the GM should not be bound by believability or common sense.

Demons cannot harm a truly good (and Christian) or innocent person. Embarrass him, slaughter his friends, destroy his property ... but not harm him. What constitutes "good" is moral and ethical behavior by medieval Christian tenets (killing one's enemies in fair combat is moral, for example); the character need not be Blessed.

Persons who are Blessed and Very Blessed may dispel a demon. If the Blessed one crosses himself upon meeting the demon, there is an immediate Quick Contest of Wills; a Blessed person has a +5 to his Will for this roll, and a Very Blessed person has a +10. If the demon wins, the Blessed one may immediately begin a Paternoster (the Lord's Prayer); this takes 15 seconds, at the end of which another Quick Contest is rolled

with the same modifiers for Blessed status. If the demon fails either roll, it is immediately banished back to Hell.

### *Dragon*

**ST:** 50-60      **Move/Dodge:** 18/6#      **Size:** 10 hexes  
**DX:** 14      **PD/DR:** 4/6      **Weight:** 1,500-2,500 1  
**IQ:** 8      **Damage:** 3d imp#      **Origin:** Various  
**HT:** 15/55-70      **Reach:** R,C-2      **Habitats:** Various

The Move listed is for Flying. Move on the ground is 6. Unlike the standard GURPS fire Drake, the dragon of Arthurian myth appears to be a mute beast with only limited intelligence.

Almost all dragons encountered in the tales of the Round Table are fully grown; the attributes given here **are for such a one**. Some dragons are found in allegorical visions, but many are quite physical and usually guardians of some precious object or prisoner. At least one Round Table knight - Servause le Breuse - made a specialty of killing dragons and other beasts!

When left to themselves, dragons are motivated by pride and greed - both for food and treasure. They are never common. It takes a large territory to provide enough fresh meat for a wild dragon, and a resourceful owner to provide for a captive one; a full-grown dragon can eat two cows a week.

### *Dragon Magic*

Dragons are profoundly magical. Their hearts, blood, scales, teeth and claws are all useful as spell components; the heart is particularly potent. Their scales derive some of their high PD and DR from the mana stored in them. Dragons are unaffected by mana level - except that in a no-mana area, they lose 1 HT per turn.

### *Dealing with Dragons*

In the Arthurian cycle, dragons rarely have sophisticated motives. Either they are guardian creatures charged with slaying all who attempt to pass them, or (more rarely) they are dangerous monsters who must themselves be slain. If its slaughter is not the goal, the best way to approach a dragon is with food and treasure. Threats are unlikely to work, and often result in the sudden demise of the adventurer.

Dragons have a basic sensory roll of 16, and are very difficult to sneak up on.

### *fighting with Dragons*

Dragons have several methods of attack. Like most beasts, they can bite and claw, doing the listed damage. A dragon may also lash *with* its tail. This may be a "sweep" to knock foes over or a "strike" against one particular foe. The dragon may lash into any of its rear hexes, and any hex *adjacent* to a back hex!

For a *sweep*, the dragon picks either the rightmost or leftmost foe in range and rolls a quick Contest *of* ST. If it wins, the foe falls over and the dragon rolls against the next foe - and so on. If the dragon ties or loses, the foe remains standing and the sweep is over.

A *strike* is an attack rolled against one foe at the dragon's normal DX. It does crushing damage equal to its biting damage.

Dragons breathe fire, of course. The range of a dragon's breath is equal to its area in hexes; a 10-hex dragon (as used here) can breathe fire 10 hexes away! Each breath costs the dragon 2 fatigue points. Damage from the breath is 1 point less than its biting damage. Dragon breath hits automatically (but cannot fire through one figure to get another); the only defense is to Block, or Dodge *and* Retreat (see *Flame*, p. B 129).



### **Gryphon, Greater**

**ST:** 100-120    **Move/Dodge:** 15/7#    **Size:** 130 hexes  
**DX:** 15    **PD/DR:** 3/3    **Weight:** 128 tons  
**IQ:** 5    **Damage:** 13d-1 cut    **Origin:** T.H. White  
**HT:** 16/100-110    **Reach:** C    **Habitats:** M, F

The gryphon is a beautiful creature with the head, wings and forefeet of an eagle, and the hindquarters of a lion. It is a fierce predator of the forests and mountains, and is fondest of horse-flesh. Its feathers store mana, which aids it in flight.

The greater gryphon is a monstrous version of the ordinary gryphon. Fully 16 hexes long and 8 hexes high at the shoulder, the greater gryphon was a guardian creature controlled by Morgan le Fay, encountered by the young Arthur and Kay when they rescued three friends from Morgan's clutches. It is doubtful that it can be truly tamed, but it can be controlled by certain spells, known (so far) only to Morgan.

As with the lesser gryphon, the gryphon's maximum load is Light encumbrance. It has Speed 6 on the ground, 15 in flight (11 if encumbered). It attacks by clawing and pecking in combat.



### **Gryphon, Lesser**

The "lesser gryphon" is the gryphon described in the sidebar on p. B 145.

#### **Questing Beast (Glatasant)**

**ST:** 35-40    **Move/Dodge:** 10/9    **Size:** 2  
**DX:** 15    **PD/DR:** 1/1    **Weight:** 500 lbs.  
**IQ:** 8    **Damage:** 1d+ 1 cr    **Origin:** Malory  
**HT:** 15/30    **Reach:** C    **Habitats:** All?

This unique creature is not a dragon, but is clearly related to the draconians. According to the few who have seen it, Glatasant has the body of a leopard, the head and neck of a snake, the hindquarters of a lion, and a stag's hooves - as illustrated on p. 117. From its belly issues the sound of 30 pairs of hounds baying. Its throat can cry like an eagle (that is where it gets its name, from the French, "Faigle glatit").

She (Glatasant is clearly described as female by several writers) is being pursued by King Pellinore when she first appears in Malory; later, after Pellinore's death, Sir Palomides takes up the

quest. Both men seem caught up in a strange fascination with the Questing Beast. The source of this fascination is unclear; no small part of it is undoubtedly because of her apparent ability to maintain an interesting chase in the face of the greatest trackers in Britain. Part may be for her value as a curiosity to be kept in Arthur's menagerie. In some ways, it seems to be a kind of magical charm.

T. H. White, in *The Once And Future King*, proposed another explanation: the chase of Glatasant is out of affection, and the beast relishes the attention. Glatasant is chased because Glatasant wants to be chased, as Karr comments. White has two knights, believing they are doing their fellow knight Pellinore a favor, accidentally capture Glatasant while pretending to be her. King Pellinore angrily upbraided them for their temerity for suggesting he take advantage of the moment to slay the Beast. Glatasant, meanwhile, fell in love with Sir Palomides, who played the front end of the mock beast. As a result of this, her affections transferred from Pellinore to Palomides, who became her new pursuer.

The GM may choose the motivation for following the Questing Beast. If magical in nature, treat it as if it were a spell resisted by IQ, affecting only those who are lovers of the hunt. If such a one comes within 30 yards of Glatasant and sees her, he must make his resistance roll or eagerly drop whatever occupies him at the moment to pursue her. This infatuation will last for 7 days, unless the pursuer is again within range of the effect, at which time he must again roll to resist.

The alternative places the onus of considerable roleplaying upon the GM. Glatasant must attract her quester and intrigue him. She will be at turns playful and coquettish, mysterious and elusive. Glatasant will never attempt to escape her pursuer, merely stay merrily out of his reach. (She may well be the animal kingdom's embodiment of "playing hard to get.") If he loses her trail entirely, she will come back to find him and begin leading again. She will eventually attach herself to her quester with an almost romantic devotion.

In either interpretation, Glatasant has the skills of Camouflage, Shadowing, Stealth and Tracking (for changing/covering her tracks - and for finding pursuers who have gone astray) all at level 18. She also has Alertness +2. Glatasant cannot speak, but is so eloquent in her body language and facial expression that she effectively has Gesture at 13.

In order to successfully track Glatasant, the tracker must roll a regular contest between his Tracking skill and whatever skill the Beast is currently using to evade him. All modifiers listed for Tracking on p. B57 apply. Glatasant may, if her follower is having difficulty, actually use less than her full skill level in order to ensure that he remains on her trail!

The GM should carefully adjudicate the results of these rolls. A successful Tracking roll should keep the hunter on the Beast's trail or reveal a change in her tactics. Critical success should allow the tracker to shorten the distance when pursuing, locate the hiding Beast, or identify a new tactic. In all cases, a failure means the trail is lost until it is rediscovered it with a normal Tracking roll - or until Glatasant realizes that he's gone wrong. A critical failure sends the PC in the wrong direction entirely!

One tale reveals a considerably darker side to the Questing Beast. According to this tale, Glatasant is the offspring of an incestuous princess, who summoned a demon to force her brother to make love to her. The demon's price was that she should sleep with it first. Her lust for her brother turned to hatred after the night with the demon, and she accused him of rape with the demon's encouragement. On her testimony, her brother was found guilty and executed, but not before he predicted she would give birth to a monster.

This she did, the offspring of herself and the demon: the Questing Beast. After it fled into the forest, she confessed to falsely accusing her brother and was condemned to death.

Much later, after many years of pursuit, Sir Palomides finally slew Glatissant by slitting open her belly with his sword. "Thirty couple of grisly hounds" leapt from the slit, and would have attacked Palomides had they not scented water. Drinking excessively, the hounds burst, one by one, after which Palomides fell asleep. When he awoke, an old woman stood where the Beast's

body had lain, and she explained that she had been Glatissant, cursed by her mother's sin. She asked to be taken to a holy man to be shriven, so that she might finally die. Palomides obliged, finding a hermit. When she confessed her sins, she died.

This story portrays a tragic, distressed Glatissant at odds with more light-hearted depictions of the Beast. If the GM wishes to use this variant, the Beast's true nature should remain an absolute secret from the players; not even rumors should suggest that Glatissant is anything but a strange, dragon-like monster.

## Beasts

### Lion

**ST:** 24-30    **Move/Dodge:** 10/6    **Size:** 2  
**DX:** 13    **PD/DR:** 1/1    **Weight:** 400-600 lbs.  
**IQ:** 4    **Damage:** 2d-2 cut    **Origin:** R (Malory)  
**HT:** 15/16-20    **Reach:** C    **Habitats:** P, J, D, M

In the Britain of Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, lions are strangely common. Unlike their counterparts overseas who live in prides of 3 to 20 individuals, British lions tend to be solitary. Also unlike their foreign cousins, who prefer the plains, they tend to be forest creatures. Lions are more diurnal than most cats, but adapt well to a nocturnal existence if hunted.

In some cases, lions have been reported as being used as mounts, but this may be limited to allegorical visions. However, if such truly existed, the rider almost certainly is using a spell or item of *Mammal Control* - not to mention an unusual specialization of the Riding skill!

That the British lion's native habitat is not limited solely to visions is attested to by the story of Sir Ywayne, known as *Le Chevalier au Lion* - The Knight of the Lion. He once rescued a lion from a serpent, and the grateful beast became his constant companion through a long series of adventures and afterwards, presumably to the end of Ywayne's life.

If wounded, a lion will charge angrily and attempt to kill anyone in its way. Likewise, running away from one will sometimes spark its instinct to chase. Lions attack in close combat, biting and clawing for 2d-2 cutting damage. The actual attack is usually on the neck, strangulation being the most common method of killing.

### Wild Boar

**ST:** 20-24    **Move/Dodge:** 8/7    **Size:** 2  
**DX:** 14    **PD/DR:** 1/2    **Weight:** 200-400 lbs.

**IQ:** 6    **Damage:** 1d+ 1 cut#    **Origin:** R  
**HT:** 15/20-25    **Reach:** C    **Habitats:** F

Large, short-tempered pigs, wild boars have long, razor-sharp tusks. They live in groups of 6 to 50 animals, with the boars protecting the sows and young. They are active from the late afternoon to early morning. Boars are distressingly common in the less-settled areas of Britain.

They are famous for bursting from the underbrush, and are capable of breaking a horse's leg and disemboweling the rider before he hits the ground. Treat their attack as a slam doing 1d+ 1 cutting damage if they hit. Once it has downed an opponent, the boar will continue to gore for 1d+ 1 cutting, or trample for 1d-1 crushing.

Boar hunts are common social events for the upper classes in Arthurian Britain. For further information and options, see the sidebar on p. B 144.

### Wolf

**ST:** 8-10    **Move/Dodge:** 9/7    **Size:** 1  
**DX:** 14    **PD/DR:** 1/1    **Weight:** 70-170 lbs.  
**IQ:** 5    **Damage:** 1d-2 cut#    **Origin:** R  
**HT:** 11-13    **Reach:** C    **Habitats:** F, M, A, P

Like the wild boar, wolves are exceedingly common in early Britain, much to the despair of the yeomen and farmers. Wolves are courageous and intelligent, with great fighting ability and endurance. They are largely nocturnal, though they do hunt in the day. Packs range from 4 to 30; lone wolves can also be encountered.

Wolves usually hunt in packs. They attack by biting in close combat for 1d-2 cutting damage. They tend to rush in, slash, then dodge out of the way. Eventually the prey weakens from shock and loss of blood, and can be dragged down.

## Races

### Fee/Fay/Faerie

If the Godwin/Stewart option of the Picts as "Faerie" is not employed, the GM may wish to use a "real" race of faerie folk in the campaign. This is not without precedent - Morgan le Fay's name hints that she is only partly human, and many later and modern works clearly mention the presence of the Old Ones in Arthur's Britain. Outside of Malory and the Vulgate, many old tales explicitly include faerie people, including a faerie queen who takes a Companion of the Round Table as her eternal love. Some have the fays training young Percival in arms.

The following is a distillation of many conflicting descriptions and traditions about Faerie associated with Arthurian stories. (For much more detail and more options about the "Good Folk," see GURPS *Faerie*.)

The Fay are a highly magical race, who dwell in a kind of "half-world" parallel to Arthur's Britain. They may enter and

leave their world at will, to visit among the mortal folk. While not specifically hostile to men, the Faerie are very jealous of their privacy and secrets, and react badly to overly curious humans. However, they are not overtly hostile; the Fays have been

known to aid mortals for their own inscrutable reasons; Excalibur and other enchanted blades may be their handiwork.

The average Fee is suitable for use as a player character in all the various Camelot campaign types, although they work best in the cinematic milieu: They require a minimum of 100 points, but a range of 150-300 points is the optimum. As NPC aides, advisors and opponents they can be an unexpected and delightful addition to any Camelot campaign - even a historical one!

The Faerie are similar to Elves (p. B11). They have +2 to both DX and IQ (20 points each for 40 points), and -1 to ST (-10 points).



All Faerie have a minimum Appearance of Attractive (5 points).

They have Alertness +4 (20 points), Combat Reflexes (15 points), 5 points of Extra Fatigue (25 points), and one level of Magical Aptitude (15 points). They are Unaging (15 points), but have the disadvantage of Vulnerability to Iron (2 levels, Common substance, -30 points). They have a racial Bad Reputation (Unpredictable and Possibly Hostile Supernatural Folk, -1; -5 points). They are also Compulsive Carousers (-5 points). They have the racial skill of Stealth at DX+1 (4 points). All Faerie know at least 4 spells from the Illusion College (p. 25, pp. M45) at IQ (16 points).

It costs 105 points to play a Fee.

The Extra Fatigue provides 5 points of fatigue above and beyond the strength of the individual Fee. Their 2-level Vulnerability to iron applies to steel, also, and causes them to take 2d extra damage from any attack made with the metal. If the initial attack does less than 1d, multiply the damage by 2.

The Faerie are a reclusive people who in general regard ephemeral humans with a cold neutrality. They have their own land separate from the mortals - either a realm of caves "under the hill" or a nearby dimension, depending on the GM's needs and purposes - and thus feel no territorial pressures from man. More often than not they are amused by the antics of mortal folk, but rarely condescend to interact with them on a social level. They do mingle with men to observe and be entertained; their grasp of illusion allows them to pass unnoticed.

Some members of the race seem to exhibit a sadistic sense of humor. These fays will occasionally appear before a solitary individual to tease, taunt and frighten him. Here, too, their illusionary skills are employed, to make them look like 100-foot giants or six-inch pixies, or weird eldritch horrors terrifying enough to paralyze their victim with fear. Mind Control spells are used to confuse and bemuse men. Sometimes Flies of both genders kidnap humans to keep as lovers, or simply bespell attractive victims and take advantage on the spot.

But not all their interaction with humans is to the humans' harm. Some kidnapped lovers eventually gain great status and respect in the Faerie land, and may return years later to their former homes, enriched both in personal power and in gold. More than once flies (particularly the women) have been attracted to mortals, and court them in the human manner to win their love. One knight of the Round Table eventually wed the Queen of the Faeries, who loved him truly.

Those humans who show the proper respect, however antiquated and couched in superstition, can receive unasked-for aid in times of need. But these instances are rare and little talked-about; as ever, the negative travels further than the good, and the Faerie have developed a poor reputation in many areas.

Their culture has been described as "dissipated and decadent." With no clear racial needs other than the dispelling of boredom, the Faerie live a life of sensual pleasure and vicious politicking. Many wonder how they find time for the works of art and enchantment which they do produce, or to study the magical craft. It is true that great enchanters are present among the Fays, but they rarely leave the homeland.

Faerie work in brass, copper and tin, as well as gold and silver. They make outstandingly fine glass and ceramics. Few of their wares ever leave their homelands. Their sense of beauty is highly developed, but untempered by the Elves' holistic viewpoint; very often wretched excess is celebrated over any other theme.

It is rumored that one family of Faerie is immune to the effects of cold iron, and is actually skilled at the forging and shaping of steel, especially enchanted weapons. If these rumors

are true, they may be the makers of **Excalibur and the other great magical blades.**

The Fays will not abide being called "fairies," and woe unto him who uses this degrading term in their presence.



### Giants

Extremely large humanoids, giants are feared inhabitants of Britain in most versions of the Arthurian mythos. The Arthurian giant is exclusively of the "standard" 9 to 15-foot variety. Also, while the giants of legend are in general a mutable race given to freakish malformation, those of Britain closely resemble humanity.

Almost all giants are at odds with mankind, although good giants are possible. They are not suitable as player characters at the recommended point levels for Camelot campaigns, requiring at least 200 points, and preferably 300 to 400 points. However, as NPCs they can add both surprise and challenge to otherwise predictable encounters.

Giants have ST + 3 (30 points) and the Increased Strength advantage (50 points), HT +4 (45 points) and 3 Extra Hit Points (24 points), and DX -1 (-10 points). They have the advantages Acute Smell/Taste +3 (6 points), DR 2 (10 points), Enhanced Move (10 points), Extra Reach: 1 Hex, Both Arms (20 points), High Pain Threshold (10 points) and PD 1 (25 points). They have the Disadvantages Bad Temper (-10 points), Inconvenient Size (-10 points), Intolerance or Shyness (-10 points), Reputation -2 (-10 points) and Stubbornness (-5 points).

It costs 175 points to play a Giant.

The Increased Strength advantage doubles the Giant's Strength after the addition of the +3 bonus, for a base ST of 26. Enhanced Move doubles the Giant's calculated Move. Figure height based on ST before the racial modifiers are added, then increase it by 60%. Weight is 4 times that of a man of the same ST (before racial bonuses are added).

Giants are normally a reclusive people; they live far in the wilderness areas of Britain - as far away as possible from the annoying swarms of smaller folk. Cornwall was at one point a Giant homeland, populated by savage tribes eventually exterminated by Arthur. But no matter where in Britain they dwell, they are neutrally to malevolently disposed towards humanity. Most are dull-witted primitives (with the appropriate Disadvantages), but others are clever and well-equipped with the finest in arms and armor. Arthur's one-time foe, the Roman emperor Lucius,

is **said to have had a bodyguard** of 50 giants, "which had been engendered of fiends."

Giants have few customs and little culture. They do not *even* build shelter (being almost immune to the elements anyway), though some set up housekeeping in large, open caves or ancient human ruins. Most Giants live the lives of simple hunters, with few skills beyond their favorite weapons. Some actively prey upon nearby humans and their farm animals.

### Merfolk

According to some sources, the people ruled by the Lady of the Lake (see p. 53) are Merfolk in the classic sense - with the head, arms and torso of a human, and the lower body of a fish, complete with a finned tail and scales. The skin of their upper bodies can be any color from very fair to swarthy, but it always has a blue or greenish cast. Their hair is thick and wavy and can be any color from platinum to jet black. Red hair is almost unknown, but vivid blue or green tresses are common. Merfolk eyes are always vivid blue or green. Their fish-halves are covered with glistening scales of blue and green, and their tails are forked. Their upper bodies are proportioned normally for their ST, but they weigh 30 % more than normal.

Being legless is not a disadvantage to the Merfolk - they spend their life in an environment where legs aren't needed!

Merfolk do not wear clothes, but do like to wear decorations of coral, shell or plant matter. They often wear equipment harnesses of fishgut or seaweed.

Merfolk have the advantages Enhanced Move (Swim) (10 points), Pressure Support (10 points) and Sonar Vision (25 points). They have the disadvantage Dependency (Water, daily) (-15 points). It costs 30 points to play a Merman.

As with Giants above, Enhanced Move doubles the calculated Move of the species, in this case for swimming. Pressure Support at 10 points allows the race to withstand up to 20 times normal pressure, allowing Merfolk to dive to significant depths without harm. Sonar Vision allows the Merfolk to "see" in the lightless reaches of the deep sea by emitting and interpreting sound waves. The disadvantage requires the Merfolk to be in water for at least an hour at least once a day or lose 1 HT per hour starting 24 hours after their last exposure.

The Merfolk of the Lake are native to fresh water, but may inhabit salt water with no ill effects. They are a settled and highly advanced people, inhabiting a city deep within the Lake. Ruled by the magically-gifted Lady, they are very learned; they are noted for being the teachers of the child Lancelot. Under the tutelage of the Lady, it is possible that some have themselves become mages, but if so, none have made themselves known to the surface world.

They fight with short spears and knives, and sometimes use weighted, braided nets. Within the limitations of their environment, the Merfolk are clever craftsmen. Their tools and ornaments are customarily carved with intricate seascapes and swirling abstract patterns.

Merfolk have both gills and lungs, and can breathe either air or water for a more or less indefinite time. In practice, a merman



must immerse himself in water for at least an hour a day, or suffer from drying skin, cracks, sores, and eventual infection. Several hours' daily swimming is also needed to prevent muscle atrophy.

The Merfolk of the Lake, while maintaining an exuberant *joie de vivre*, are a highly moral and ethical people. They will not knowingly aid anyone of ill intent, and may provide food and supplies unasked to those in need under cover of night. They and the Lady are on generally good terms with the Round Table and will not hesitate to aid a Companion.

A normal Merman cannot function as part of a conventional adventuring party in Arthurian England; they are best reserved as NPCs. They should be built on 50 to 100 points, with an occasional 200 - point champion.

### Werewolf

At least two knights, Sir Marrok and Sir Gorlagon, were known to have been werewolves at one time. This condition is, overall, an advantage worth 15 points. However, most Britons react at -3 or worse to a known were!

A werewolf is not automatically evil, but some who possess the trait may believe that they have no choice in the matter. Others may strive valiantly to resist the impulses of the wolf form.

A werewolf in wolf shape appears to be a natural wolf. His ST and IQ remain normal. DX becomes 14 (unless it was already higher). HT becomes HT +2. Instead of a natural wolf's DR 1, the were has DR 3. He may bite for cutting damage as per p. B 140 - his only attack.

The process of changing shape from human to wolf takes 3 seconds. During this time, he can do nothing and take no active defenses. Unlike the traditional werewolf, the Arthurian were must take off and hide his clothing before changing. Hiding it is important - if the clothing is gone, he cannot change back! Sir Marrok's wife stole his clothes because she fancied another knight and forced him to remain a wolf for seven years.

The werewolf must spend at least one night a month in wolf shape, at the full moon. He may change at will at any other time. When in wolf shape, the were can use his DX only for fighting and other "animal" functions - not to open locks, write letters, etc.

Werewolves *regenerate* damage. In either form, they regain HT lost to injury at 1 extra hit per 12 hours, in addition to any <sup>66</sup>normal, magical or medical healing they receive. Crippled limbs regenerate; lost limbs do not. Regeneration, however, will not work if the werewolf carries so much as a single silver coin on his person; additionally, weapons made of or with silver do double damage to a werewolf.

All wounds taken in wolf form carry over into human form. A dead or unconscious werewolf *will* revert to his human form.

Unlike the traditional "modern" werewolf, the Arthurian werewolf does *not* transmit its shapeshifting ability through its bite. Were-dom is more likely to be the result of a curse or some form of penance. The GM should require PC werewolves to explain how they came to suffer from this. It makes an excellent Secret.



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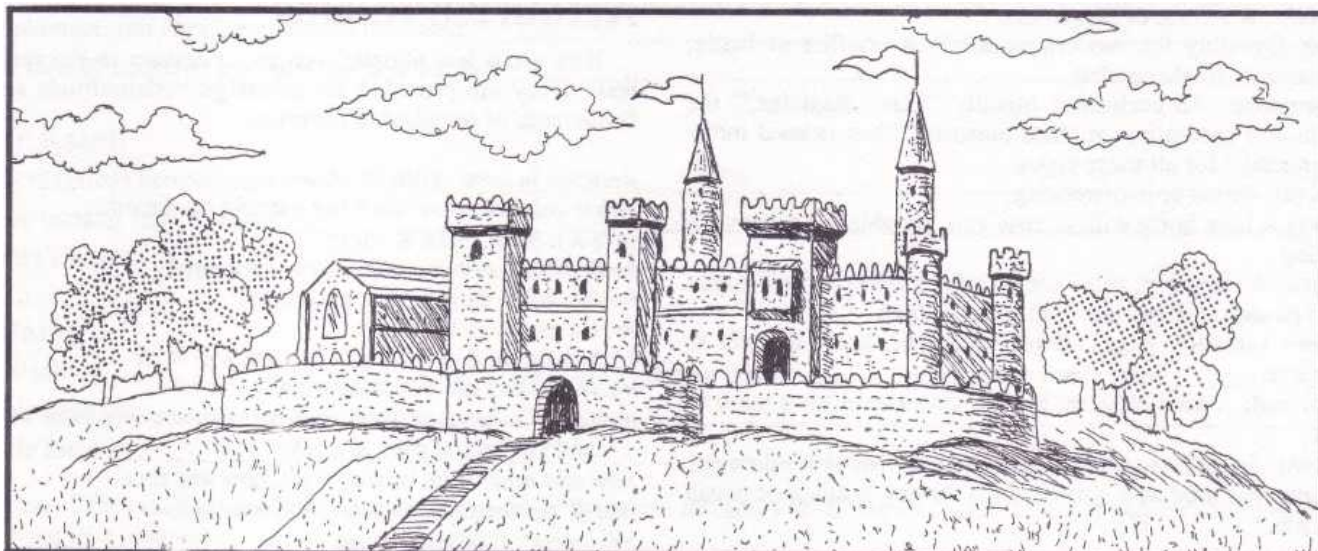
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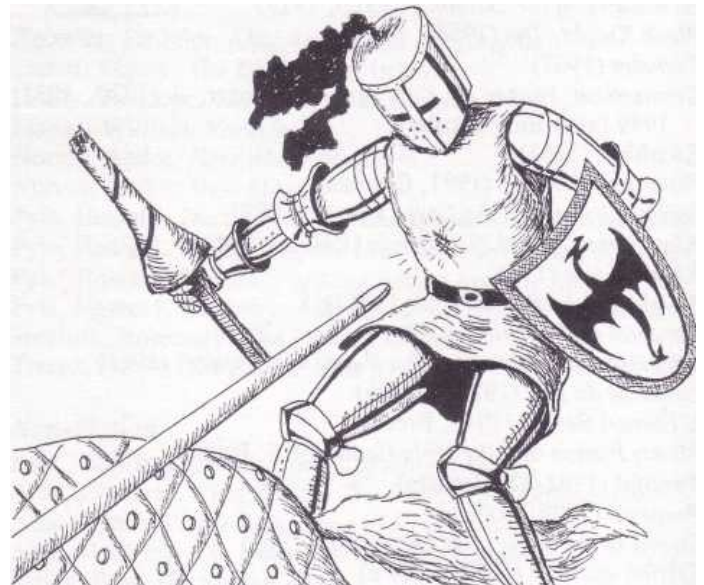
# GLOSSARY

Most of these terms have had their spelling modernized for easier reading. In the earliest printings of Malory, there were often two or three spellings for any given word, none of which more than faintly resembled the modern one.

For much larger glossaries of the archaic Arthurian language, see any "scholarly" edition of *Le Morte D'Arthur*.

**Abylement:** War equipment.  
**Appertices:** Displays of skill in arms.  
**Bachelor:** A young knight.  
**Barber:** Surgeon.  
**Bezant:** Gold coin, originally from Byzantium, worth half a pound, or \$5 in GURPS terms.  
**Brachet:** A small hunting dog.  
**Castellan:** The lord of a castle or fort.  
**Chamberlain:** Chief officer in the household of a king.  
**Chatelaine:** Feminine form of *castellan*.  
**Destrier:** A warhorse or charger.  
**Enbrace:** To put a shield on one's arm.  
**Errantry :** Wandering in search of adventure.  
**Extorsion:** Unjust violence.  
**Fantasy:** A liking or attraction.  
**Fewmet:** The droppings of an animal.  
**Fewter:** (noun) A brace for a lance, usually built into the breast-plate or saddle of a knight, which both supports the weapon and distributes its shock evenly across the body. (verb) To couch or level a spear or lance.  
**Foin:** To thrust with the point of a weapon.  
**Gaol:** Jail.  
**Garnish:** To fortify a castle.  
**Ghostly:** Spiritual (as in the modern "Holy Ghost").  
**Guise:** Manner, custom or fashion.  
**Herbegeour:** A servant or other person sent ahead to arrange lodging.  
**Ho! Stop! Halt!**  
**Horsbere:** A horse litter.  
**Jazerant:** A light coat of riveted plate armor.  
**Leech:** A doctor, usually skilled at herbcraft. Distinct from a surgeon, which was a more highly regarded position.  
**Lewd:** Boorish or common.  
**Lists:** The enclosed field where tournaments are held.  
**Maintain:** A retinue of supporters.  
**Medle:** (Possibly the modern *meddle*?) A conflict or battle, sometimes single combat.  
**Nigromancer:** An enchanter; literally "black magician," the term is a corruption of "necromancer," but is used indiscriminately for all mage-types.  
**Orgulous:** Proud or overweening.  
**Palfrey:** A light horse with an easy gait, suitable for a woman's riding.  
**Pavilion:** A large tent, often very ornate, used to house a knight and (sometimes) his lady while on the road.  
**Paynim:** Literally, pagan. Often used specifically to refer to Saracens.  
**Pursuivant:** A kind of lesser herald; also a term for a messenger.  
**Saracen:** An ethnic Arab, sometimes of Moorish descent. Sometimes used as a generic term for any heathen or pagan person.

**Seneschal:** The steward of an estate or castle, usually its chief administrator and "boss" of all servants.  
**Sewer:** Servant.  
**Sewer-Chief:** Head servant.  
**Stone:** To hit with heavy blows; related to "stun."  
**Stoure:** Armed conflict.  
**Suffragan:** A bishop who serves as an assistant to the bishop of a diocese.  
**Swerded:** Armed with a sword.  
**Varlet:** A servant or groom to a military leader.  
**Vavasour:** An older, "retired" knight, occupying a feudal post approximately equal to the modern "baronet."  
**Vergescu:** A plain white shield carried by an untested knight; also carried by knights who wish to remain anonymous.  
**Villein:** A serf or other lowly person.  
**Wise-fighting:** Skillful in combat.  
**Wood:** Mad, insane.  
**Yeoman:** A man of low rank; also a Bowman.



## Arthurian Idioms

Here are a few idiomatic phrases common in the medieval texts. They are provided for campaign verisimilitude and the furtherance of roleplaying pleasure.

desirous in arms: keen in battle  
either embrace other: each put a shield on the other  
give X a heat: make X angry  
healed hard with the leaf: barely recovered  
heart-whole: courageous, undaunted  
in that guise: in that way  
Is the wind in that door?: Is that the way it is?  
made no fare: did not act unusually  
maugre X's head: in spite of X's resistance (compare with the modern "going over X's head")  
now and now: from time to time, now and then  
tear X lymmemeale: tear X limb-from-limb  
wild wood: thoroughly mad



# ARTHURIAN CAMPAIGN PLAN GM: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign name: \_\_\_\_\_ Campaign's starting year: \_\_\_\_\_ ??Rate game time passes: \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign base type: \_\_\_\_\_ Historic \_\_\_\_\_ Mythic/Medieval \_\_\_\_\_ Cinematic

Campaign focus: \_\_\_\_\_ Military \_\_\_\_\_ Political \_\_\_\_\_ Errantry \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Campaign Political Background:

Base region or subkingdom: \_\_\_\_\_ Base City or Castle: \_\_\_\_\_

Leader or Lord: \_\_\_\_\_ What is his relationship with the Crown? \_\_\_\_\_

Does this region have any rivalries or alliances with other regions? \_\_\_\_\_

Relative military strength of this region: \_\_\_\_\_

## Technology:

Base TL: \_\_\_\_\_ Are there any TL anomalies? \_\_\_\_\_

Are very fine quality weapons within the ability of human smiths? \_\_\_\_\_

## Magic/Divine Power:

Magic allowed? \_\_\_\_\_ General mana level: \_\_\_\_\_

Are there areas of other mana levels? \_\_\_\_\_ How large, how common? \_\_\_\_\_

Is magery sex-linked? \_\_\_\_\_ How common are mages? \_\_\_\_\_

Attitude of the general public towards magic and mages: \_\_\_\_\_

Attitude of the ruling class towards magic and mages: \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any magical or fantastic creatures inhabiting the land? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are Blessed characters allowed? \_\_\_\_\_ Do they receive divine gifts? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, which gifts are available? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Can humans make magic items such as enchanted swords? \_\_\_\_\_

Do holy relics actually possess divine power? \_\_\_\_\_ How much and to what effect? \_\_\_\_\_

How common is divine/diabolic intervention? \_\_\_\_\_

\*Does the Lake exist? \_\_\_\_\_ What is the Lady's relationship with local authority? \_\_\_\_\_

With Arthur? \_\_\_\_\_

\*Is the Lake: \_\_\_\_\_ Real water \_\_\_\_\_ Illusionary \_\_\_\_\_ Metaphorical \_\_\_\_\_ Extradimensional

\*Are the inhabitants human or nonhuman? \_\_\_\_\_ If nonhuman, what race(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

## Faerie:

\*What is the basis of the Faerie? \_\_\_\_\_ Picts \_\_\_\_\_ Standard Elves \_\_\_\_\_ True Faerie \_\_\_\_\_ Are Faerie PCs allowed? \_\_\_\_\_

\*Faerie attitudes toward other peoples: \_\_\_\_\_

\*If nonhuman, can Faerie and human interbreed? \_\_\_\_\_

\*What kind of magic (if any) is allowed to Faerie? \_\_\_\_\_

## Other Races:

Are there (other) non-human races? \_\_\_\_\_

How do humans react to them? \_\_\_\_\_

PC races allowed: \_\_\_\_\_

## PC Data:

Base Wealth: \_\_\_\_\_ Maximum Starting Status: \_\_\_\_\_ Starting Point Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Possible Patrons: \_\_\_\_\_

Possible Enemies: \_\_\_\_\_

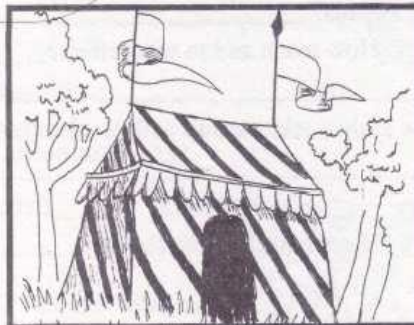
\*GM note: PCs would probably not know the answers to questions marked with an asterisk. Don't tell the players anything you don't want PCs to know.

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